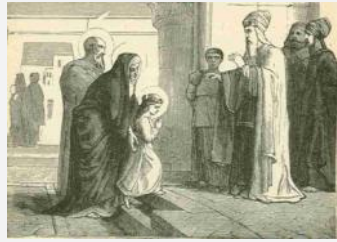


Sunday, November 17, 2013
Resumed 6th Sunday after Epiphany



Sun. 17 Nov. Resumed 6th Sunday after Epiphany, II Class

8:30 am Mr. & Mrs. Ignatius Sanchez
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Jeff Morse

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 18 Nov. Dedication of the Basilicas of SS. Peter and

Paul, III Class
 7:00 am Special Intention
 12:15 pm †Richard Alfred Becker

Tues. 19 Nov. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow, III Class

7:00 am Thanksgiving
 6:30 pm Jennifer Rego

Wed. 20 Nov. St. Felix of Valois, Confessor, III Class

7:00 am FSSP Priests
 12:15 pm Chrissy, George & Gemma Wing

Thurs. 21 Nov. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, III Class

7:00 am George Wing Sr.
 6:30 pm FSSP

Fri. 22 Nov. St. Cecilia, Virgin & Martyr, III Class

7:00 am Fr. Matthew McNeely
 12:15 pm †Harriette Morton
 6:30 pm the White family

Sat. 23 Nov. St. Clement I, Pope & Martyr, III Class

7:00 am Bertha Taresh
 9:00 am †Christine Allen & the comfort of her family

Sun. 24 Nov. 24th and Last Sunday after Pentecost, II Class

8:30 am Very Rev. Fr. John Berg
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Bill Rhoads

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Sick Calls

If anyone is in need of the Sacrament (i.e. homebound) please call the parish office. If it is an **emergency**, outside of office hours, dial (916) 455-5114, then press 1, leave a message, and the priest-on-call will be paged immediately.

...In Memoriam

†Ray Keller, †Elin Frances Terra, †Martha Robison, †Gabriel Vargas, †Olympia Gonzalez, †Forrest Long, †Jenna Telles, †Bernard Beronio, †Georgia Munsill, †Patricia Greco, †Draga Kozina, †Doug McNeely, †Louis Solton, †Rhoda Bowen, †Mary Margaret Mantsch

Save the Date!

Save the date—**Saturday, January 25, 2014** Walk for Life. Contact **Mike (916) 335-4553** or **Kathleen (916) 204-9125** to make bus reservations.

Important Upcoming Dates

Nov. 19—Chesterton Society meeting after 6:30 Mass
 Dec. 8—Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 Dec. 12—Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
 Jan. 25—Walk for Life
 March 26—Confirmation
 May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass at the Cathedral
 June—21-28—Camp Sacred Heart

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Although Holy Scripture does not tell us anything about the presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, this belief is based upon evidence authorized by a very ancient Christian tradition, and the Church has given it official recognition by making it the object of a special Marian feast. Mary, who leaves her home and parents in her most tender years in order to live in the shadow of the Temple, speaks to us of detachment, of separation from the world, of complete dedication to the service of God, of virginal consecration to the Most High. After her, countless virginal souls will present themselves in the Temple to offer themselves to God, but no offering will be as pure, as total, as acceptable as Mary's.

Our Lady is truly the privileged one among all creatures, who, from the first moment of her existence, heard the great call: "Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house." The Most High is enamored of her beauty and wills that she be wholly His. Mary responds, and her answer is eminently prompt and complete. The response of souls who God calls to the Altar, to the religious life or to virginal consecration in the world, should resemble Mary's. These souls must also be separated from the world, leave parents and friends; they must detach themselves from their people and their homes. There cannot always be a spiritual one, that is, a separation in the realm of the affections. It is the heart which must be detached, be secluded, because the Lord's elect can no longer belong to the world: "they are not of the world," Jesus said. To live in the world without being of the world is not easy, but it is absolutely essential in order to answer the divine call. There are virginal souls who fail in their consecrated vocation, or neglect to correspond fully, because they are still attached to the world—to its maxims, its vanities, its affairs, its comforts; they have not had the courage to effect a true separation, or at least, if they have undertaken it, they have not remained faithful. This can happen not merely to souls living in the world but even to those in the cloister, for the world penetrates everywhere, and everywhere it invades hearts that are not entirely detached.

Corresponding to complete separation is oblation, total consecration. Mary gave herself wholly to God, unreservedly, forever. "Lord, in the simplicity of my heart I offer myself to You this day as Your servant for evermore, for Your homage and for a sacrifice of perpetual praise." Such must have been the dispositions with which this holy child offered herself to the Most High, dispositions which were lived with a fullness and coherence incomprehensible to our wretchedness.

Never for a moment did Mary fail in her complete consecration; God was able to accomplish in her all that He willed, without meeting the least resistance. Circumstances of an exceedingly difficult and painful nature abounded in the life of our Blessed Lady. She made no objections nor did she marvel that her immolation should reach such proportions.

What a contrast to our life as consecrated souls! How easily we take back the gift made to God! We take back our heart when we admit human affections; we take back our will when we refuse to submit to certain commands of obedience which mortify or contradict us, when we will not accept that which entails sacrifice, when we complain, protest or defend our rights. Yet the only true right of a soul consecrated to God is that of letting itself be used and consumed for His glory.

Let us ask Mary, presented in the Temple, to take our poor offering into her maternal hands, to purify and complete it by her offering, so pure, so perfect; to include and hide it in hers, so great and so generous, that being thus purified and renewed, it may be agreeable to God.

"Divine Intimacy" by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD)

The Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Ordinary Life of the Catholic

The ends of the Mass are achieved in different ways and to a different extent. The ends that refer directly to God—namely, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving—are always produced infallibly and with all their infinite value, independently of our collaboration. This is true even when the Mass is celebrated without the presence of a single member of the faithful. God our Lord is praised infinitely every time the Eucharistic sacrifice is celebrated and thanksgiving is offered up. This oblation, says, St. Thomas, pleases God more than all the sins of the world offend him, since Christ himself is the actual Priest who offers, as well as being the actual Victim who is offered in every Mass.

The other ends of the Eucharistic sacrifice (propitiation and petition) which are for our benefit and are called the fruits of the Mass, however, do not in fact always achieve the fullness of which they are capable. These fruits—of reconciliation with God and of obtaining our petitions from him—could also be of infinite value. They too rest on the merits of Christ. We never actually receive these fruits to that perfect degree, however, since they are applied to us according to our personal dispositions. The more ardently and intently we take part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, the greater the fruits of propitiation and petition we will receive. Christ's own prayer multiplies the value of our prayer to the extent that we unite our petitions and atonement to his in the Mass.

(Taken from *The Most Holy Eucharist* by Fr. Thomas J McGovern)

Spiritual Adoption Project

To help stop the anti-life push in the US, the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen encouraged the spiritual adoption of an unborn child. This is done by praying that one particular but unknown child's life be spared abortion and be allowed to continue to live.

To help accomplish this, it is recommended that an individual say the following daily prayer for a period of nine months: "*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion.*"

During our earthly life, this spiritually adopted child of ours will be known only to God, but in the world to come, it is hoped that we will meet the child whose life was spared by our prayers and spend eternal happiness with them. We are also invited to name our spiritually adopted baby.

At St. Stephen's we will start a parish spiritual adoption project on **Sunday, December 8th**, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Mother. Spiritual Adoption prayer cards will be distributed after all Masses and a poster will be displayed in the vestibule each month to show the progress of our little ones! Every parishioner is encouraged to get involved in this project.

On Sept. 8th, 2014, to celebrate the birth of our babies, we will have a parish baby shower with the proceeds to go to the Sacramento Life Center and Bishop Gallegos Maternity Home.

New to St. Stephen's?

Please stop by the office or bookstore and pick up a registration form. It is very helpful for us to have contact information for your family, even if you cannot come to St. Stephen's every week.

If you do not have envelopes and would like them you can pick up a box in the bookstore. The use of envelopes is very helpful for our bookkeeping system.

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, Sister Marie Jeanne, Charles Cantoni, Mitzi Vandenburgh, John Reyes, Dr. Gerald Foy, Cindy Yumoto, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Ceasar Morales

The Grace of God

Among the mysteries of Catholicism, none is more practically important for our personal and social lives than the doctrine of grace. It is the very heart of Christianity on its human side, since it describes the panorama of God's dealings with each one of us in the depths of our souls. The study of grace corresponds in theology to the science of psychology, but with implications in every aspect of the Christian religion that have no counterpart in merely human philosophy.

All the dogmas of faith take on new meaning from the existence of a supernatural order. The Trinity of persons is meaningful because their eternal communication within the Deity are the source of His gifts outside the divinity. They are the fountainhead of grace from the Father, through His Son, our Lord, in the Spirit who dwells in the souls of the justified.

By the very fact that we believe in things unseen and hope for the promised reward of those who love God, we are witnesses to the action of a superhuman power, which is divine grace operating on the mind and will and enabling us to see and want what the natural man cannot perceive or desire.

We say that the sacraments are seven signs instituted by Christ to confer the grace they signify. And more broadly we hold that the Catholic Church is the great sacrament of the New Law that Christ founded to be the unique channel of grace to all mankind, with special title to those who are baptized and active members of the Mystical Body of Christ. But no matter how conceived, the sacraments are so far significant and membership in the Church so much more appreciated if we see the great mysteries of Christ in their true perspective as visible and human agencies for the transmission of invisible divine blessings to the human race.

As we look to the future prospects of a heavenly reward, it is grace again that gives haven its only meaning, as a prolongation of the life in God's friendship here on earth. Our faith here becomes vision there, our hope here becomes possession there, and our charity in time the measure of our love of God in eternity—all aspects of the same mysterious reality that completely distinguishes the Christian religion from every other. We might in justice define Christianity as the "religion of grace." Except for Judaism, from which it arose and above which it stands. Christianity is unique among living religions in resting its whole structure on the existence of a supernatural world of which the visible and natural universe is only a feeble analogy.

If the love of God is conditioned on knowledge, the depth of love will be determined by the extent of our knowledge of Him, not only as the Creator of nature but as the Author of grace. And since faith is required to recognize this higher operation of divine goodness, we have in the Catholic doctrine on grace the single most powerful motive for the apostolate.

In sending forth His disciples, Christ directed them before all else to teach, make disciples, and thus to convert the world. If the Church's ultimate purpose is to sanctify the souls of men, this purpose would not be conceivable unless people were first instructed to believe that holiness is necessary and acquirable through the outpouring of grace, notably, in the Mass and sacraments, which God chose to institute and reveal.

Having understood the importance and dignity of grace, the mystics attested to its excellence. Neither the gift of prophecy, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, however sublime, is of any value without it. For the gifts of nature are common to the good and bad; but grace is the proper gift of the elect, and they who are adorned with it are esteemed worthy of eternal life.

(*"The Catholic Catechism"* by Fr. John Hardon, S.J.)

Reminder— Chesterton Society meeting:

Nov. 19th at 7:30pm.

We will be discussing Chapter 3 of "Orthodoxy" "*The Suicide of Thought*," and the Father Brown mystery "*The Man in the Passage*."