

Sunday, December 29, 2013
Sunday in the Octave of Christmas



Sun. 29 Dec. Sunday in the Octave of Christmas, II Class

8:30 am The Watts family
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Dr. George Stote

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 30 Dec. 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class

7:00 am The Rangel family
 12:15 pm †Draga Kozina

Tues. 31 Dec. 7th Day in the Octave of Christmas, II Class

7:00 am James Vickerman & family
 6:30 pm †Paul H. Nolte

Wed. 1 Jan. Octave Day of Christmas, I Class,

Holy Day of Obligation
 8:30 am Special Intention
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Special Intention

Thurs. 2 Jan. Feria of Christmastide, IV Class

7:00 am For Poor Souls
 6:30 pm St. Monica Sodality

Fri. 3 Jan. Feria of Christmastide, IV Class

7:00 am Unborn Children
 12:15 pm Priests, living and dead
 6:30 pm Suffering Souls in Purgatory

Sat. 4 Jan. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Widow, III Class

7:00 am Anna Solari & family
 9:00 am Kenneth J. Wieduwilt

Sun. 5 Jan. Most Holy Name of Jesus, II Class

8:30 am Rose Wedinsky
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Fr. Jeff Wilson

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, †Teresa Reali

Important Upcoming Dates

Jan. 4—Epiphany Around the World—Parish party
 Jan. 5—Confirmation class 12:30 in classroom
 Jan. 5 —Blessing of Epiphany Water
 Jan. 6—Epiphany
 Jan. 11—First Communion Classes begin
 Jan. 16—CSP Evening of Recollection
 Jan. 21—Chesterton Society meeting 7:30 pm
 Jan. 25—Walk for Life
 Feb. 2—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 March 26—Confirmation
 May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass at the Cathedral
 May 10—First Holy Communion
 June—21-28—Camp Sacred Heart

Peace To Men

At Bethlehem the angels announced two things: glory to God and peace to men; the one corresponds to the other. No one glorifies God as much as that little Babe lying on the straw. He alone, being the eternal Word, can give God the perfect, infinite praise that is worthy of Him. And no one more than Jesus, our Savior, brings peace to men; making reparation for sin, He reconciles man with His Creator and establishes a new covenant between them: the Creator will become Father, and man, His son.

Something similar is verified in our daily life. Those who obey God's law enjoy peace; observing the Divine law they also glorify God. The glory of God corresponds perfectly to the peace of men. But we are treating of that peace which comes only from Jesus, from His grace, peace which we will seek in vain elsewhere.

"Peace is the tranquility of order." Order is established by the law and will of God. Those who respect this order fully, possess the plenitude of interior peace; those who depart from it, even in a slight degree, lose their peace in proportion to their deviation from it. Peace is the refreshment and repose of the soul in the midst of the struggles and sorrows of life, but this is not the only reason for which we should try to obtain and possess it. We should desire it above all because it gives glory to God.

The angels promised peace "to men of good will." Our will is "good" when it is upright, docile, and resolute. It is *upright* when it is sincerely and entirely oriented toward good; *docile*, when it is prompt to adhere to the will of God, even though difficulties and obstacles arise, and sacrifices are required. The Lord is continually urging us to generosity and abnegation in all the circumstances of life, even the smallest ones. We must give ourselves to God without hesitation, certain that if God asks anything of us He will also give us the strength to carry out His wishes. Such was the conduct of the shepherds; as soon as they heard the message of the angel, they left all, their flocks and their rest, and "came with haste [to Bethlehem] where they found . . . the Infant lying in the manger." They were the first to find Jesus and to taste His peace.

St. Theresa of Jesus says, "Holy peace consists in a union with God's will, of such a kind that no dissension arises between the will of God and the soul, but they are both one—not in words or in desires alone but in works. When a soul finds that by doing something it can serve its Spouse better, it listens to no objections raised by its mind, nor to any fears . . . but allows faith to act, and considers not its own project nor its own tranquility." This is perfect "good will." Mary and Joseph are unsurpassable models of it. Despite the obscurity of the mystery and the great sacrifices entailed, they clung to the divine plan in total abandonment, and had the supreme joy of receiving the King of Heaven in their arms. To the greatest good will corresponds the greatest union with God, and the deepest peace and joy.

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

Registration for First Holy Communion

For children who will be at least 7 years old by January
 Please pick up a registration packet in the office or bookstore for First Communion classes. Completed forms and copy of your child's Baptism certificate can be returned to the office or bookstore. Classes will begin January 11, 2013.

Mass Intentions

Our Mass intentions for next year are almost half filled, therefore we are asking that families request no more than 10 Masses during the year.

We now have a calendar which will allow for requesting special dates from June forward as they are available.

Blessing of Epiphany Water

The beautiful ceremony of blessing the Epiphany water will take place at 2:30 pm on January 5th, everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

If you would like to leave water to be blessed, please do not leave small containers—gallon size minimum. Smaller containers may be filled up from the containers in the vestibule after the blessing. Also, make sure your container is well marked with your name, on some place other than the lid.

A School of Prayer

Blessed John Paul II once said that a Christian who doesn't pray is a Christian "at risk." In today's world, it is no longer possible to rely on the good influence of society in order to keep one on the straight and narrow path. Instead, God's guidance and strength must be sought out deliberately in prayer if one is to follow God's will.

Pope Benedict XVI, ever-mindful of this great need of Christians today, began offering a catechesis on prayer in the spring of 2011. Through his regular Wednesday audiences in St. Peter's Square he has given the Church profound meditations on prayer as it has been practiced by some of the great figures of history, beginning with Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, leading up to Jesus, our great model in prayer, and continuing on to the prayer of the disciples after the resurrection. These addresses, given from May 2011 to May 2012, reveal to the Christian in the modern world how he too can speak with God who is always present.

("A School of Prayer" by Pope Benedict XVI)

Epiphany Around the World

Mark your calendars!

You are invited to an international potluck to celebrate the Great Feast of Epiphany at St. Stephen's .
 The festivities will begin at 5 o'clock,
 Saturday, January 4th, 2014

The talents of your family and other parish groups are wanted as our entertainment for the evening!

If you are interested in leading a carol or two, reading poetry, performing a short skit or helping with our celebration in any other way, please contact Pat Feldman at FeldmanPat@ymail.com or (916)383-2231
 Our celebration would not be the same without you!

Save the Date!

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

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

Mike Hayes, Jim Carlson, Kaehler Family, Mike McGrath, Barbara Graichen, Munsill Family, Sister Marie Jeanne, Charles Cantoni, Mitzi Vandenburg, John Reyes, Dr. Gerald Foy, Cindy Yumoto, Carlos Aldana, Liliana, Luz & Ceasar Morales, Mark Garcia Family, Richard Corbin, Philip Rutschow, Manuel Nino

The New Star

When Saint Elizabeth of Hungary lay dying on November 16, 1231, she spent her last hours telling about the life of Jesus, as she had learned to see this and understand it in the Bible and in the preaching of the Church. Toward midnight, she asked those present to be utterly silent: "Let us speak about the Savior and about the Christ child, for midnight is close at hand, when the sweet child Jesus was born." In the hour of her dying, she entered the silence of Christmas night. In the night of her dying, she entered the night of light.

This shows how deeply she had imbibed the words and the realities of the faith, so that these now totally filled her soul and her senses. She had allowed the history of the faith to structure the rhythm of her own time to such an extent that for Elizabeth, the hours of the day were no longer merely phases in the movements of the sun and the stars: they were hours that told the story of God's love for us.

Silence, the sphere where God is born

Saint Elizabeth asked those around her to be utterly silent, since a child was about to be born. This might seem almost playful—the child wants to sleep, and one should not disturb him? But this apparent playfulness is in reality the expression of that reverence which alone is able to open up the path to the mystery. Silence is the space of this child. Silence is the sphere where God is born. It is only when we ourselves enter the sphere of silence that we reach the point where God is born.

Thus, these words of Saint Elizabeth echo one of the earliest texts of the Christmas liturgy, which came in the course of time to inspire so many hymns: the Book of Wisdom says, "While gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, your all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed."

As early as the beginning of the second Christian century, Ignatius of Antioch drew on this passage when he wrote of three mysteries that cried aloud but were hidden from the prince of this world since they had taken place in the silence of God.

Learning to listen in the silence

Christmas invites us into this silence of God, and his mystery remains hidden to so many people because they cannot find the silence in which God acts. How do we find it? Mere silence on its own does not suffice to create it, for a man may be silent externally while in himself he is torn this way and that by all the confusion of the world. It is possible to keep silent yet experience a terrible din within oneself.

Becoming silent means discovering a new order of things. It means that I do not limit my attention to those things I myself can produce and display to others. It means that I do not limit my interest to those things men consider important and valuable. Silence means developing the inner senses, the sense of the conscience, the sensitivity to the eternal in us, the ability to listen to God.

Excerpt from The Blessing of Christmas by Joseph Ratzinger

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.