

**Sunday, January 12, 2014
Feast of the Holy Family**



Sun. 12 Jan. Holy Family, II Class
8:30 am Saralyn Taormina
10:30 am Pro Populo
1:00 pm Thomas & Dee McDonough

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 13 Jan. Commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord, II Class
7:00 am Fr. Simon Slana
12:15 pm Anna Knorr

Tues. 14 Jan. St. Hilary, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor, III Class
7:00 am Dominic Klapperick & Rupert Klapperick Families
6:30 pm †Louis A. Solton

Wed. 15 Jan. St. Paul, the First Hermit, Confessor, III Class
7:00 am Dr. George Stote
12:15 pm Rose Wedinsky

Thurs. 16 Jan. St. Marcellus I, Pope & Martyr, III Class
7:00 am Souls in Purgatory
6:30 pm Francis McDonough

Fri. 17 Jan. St. Anthony, Abbot, III Class
7:00 am †Richard Alfred Becker
12:15 pm Nicholas McDonough
6:30 pm Souls in Purgatory

Sat. 18 Jan. Saturday of Our Lady, IV Class
7:00 am Unborn Children
9:00 am Leila Fowler

Sun. 19 Jan. 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, II Class
8:30 am Kathleen & Mike De Santis
10:30 am Pro Populo
1:00 pm Fr. Simon Slana

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, and the priest-on-call will be paged immediately.

...In Memoriam
†Charles Cantoni

Please Keep in Your Prayers ...

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

Important Upcoming Dates

Jan. 12—Confirmation class—12:30 pm
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
Feb. 16—Septuagesima begins
Feb. 22—Chair of St. Peter
March 5—Ash Wednesday
March 26—Confirmation
April 13—Palm Sunday
April 18—Good Friday
April 20—Easter Sunday
May 3—May Procession & Solemn Mass at the Cathedral
May 10—First Holy Communion
June—21-28—Camp Sacred Heart

Living in Christ

“Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” We can attain to God and His kingdom only through Christ, through our incorporation in Him. This was effected in us by “water and the Holy Spirit,” on the day of our holy Baptism. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again”; and this means truly a new birth, because in Baptism we receive the seed of a new life. Before we receive this Sacrament, we have only a human life; afterwards, we participate in divine life. Because we have become incorporated in Christ as His members, we receive the Holy Spirit, who diffuses Christ’s grace in us. St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, “For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.” On the day of our Baptism, we are born in Christ and in Him we have become that “new creature” born not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, “born not of blood. . . nor of the will of man,” but solely “of God.”

Being born in Christ, we are to live in Christ and walk in Christ, following the exhortation of the Apostle, “Walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith.” Baptism gives us our birth in Christ; the other sacraments are not only to restore, but also to root, invigorate, and build up our life in Christ.

“O God. . . Grant that we may be made *partakers of His divinity*, who has condescended to become partaker of our humanity.” We may say that this prayer, which the Church repeats at the Offertory of every Mass, has been answered beforehand, because, from the day of our Baptism, we have been made partakers in Christ’s divinity. However, this gift, bestowed on us without any merit on our part, requires our cooperation. “Recognize your dignity, O Christian,” St. Leo exclaims, “and having become a sharer in the divine nature, beware lest you return to your former baseness by unworthy conduct. Remember the Head and Body to which you belong.”

Every sin, fault, or voluntary negligence dishonors Christ, our Head, and grieves the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. A consecrated soul, however, cannot remain content with merely avoiding sin; we must also strive to make Christ’s life increase in us. In the life of nature, we grow without the help of our own wills; but this is not true of the life of grace. Without our cooperation, it is possible for this life to remain stationary in us for twenty, thirty, fifty years after our baptism, after hundreds of confessions and Holy Communion. What a tremendous disproportion! We may be adults, or even aged in years, but children according to grace!

We must grow in Christ; and He must increase in us. The worlds of St. John the Baptist form our program, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” See what the development of grace in us exacts—the death of the “old man” with his bad habits, faults, and imperfections, so that the “new man,” the Christ-life in us, may grow to perfection.

“*Divine Intimacy*” by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD)

A Supernatural Goal

When we look back at our spiritual life up to now, we are amazed—perhaps even dismayed—by our slow progress or maybe by our lack of any progress. Why, after a number of years of trying to live a spiritual life, are we still reproaching ourselves for the same weaknesses and failures? Haven’t we from the very beginning been neglecting the most important thing, been following the wrong path?

There is only one door that leads into the kingdom of divine life. Vain are our efforts to get there some other way. Insuperable obstacles arise in our path. We resemble not very skillful thieves, who try stealthily, but in vain, to find their way into a well-guarded house. “He who does not enter. . . By the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.”

This solitary door is Christ: “I am the door.” It is faith in Him. “Whoever believes in Me has eternal life.” But only a faith vivified by love, which is clothed with strength from above, and allows this love more and more to shine forth according to the model of divine Love.

An asceticism that strives only for the perfection of one’s own self or ego is to be rejected as egocentric and therefore completely inadequate. Its results would always be very poor and its fruits deceptive. If what one sows is only human, what one reaps will also be only human.

Christian asceticism instead rests completely on a divine principle, a principle that vivifies, inspires, and leads one to one’s goal: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” That’s the epitome and high point of the Old Testament Law. The New Testament took over this first and highest commandment, perfected it, and proclaimed it as generally binding throughout the world in all its radiant simplicity and electrifying power.

Right at the beginning of their spiritual lives, souls should be steered to this sea of love, to God. One who turns elsewhere does not understand the deepest meaning of Christianity. He will naturally be drawn back to egoistic strivings and goals. He will build like the architects of the pagan antiquity and today upon a vainglorious heroism, and nurture a barren culture springing out of his own ego.

How differently our lives will appear when we once and for all are convinced of the truth of the words of our heavenly Master: “Apart from Me you can do nothing. “Lord, send forth Your Spirit, thus was all created; and you shall renew the face of the earth.” Filled with this truth of love, we will strive to practice not just this virtue or that but all the virtues without exception, in the conviction that God must be not only the goal but the source of all of our willing and doing as well.

We will use all our strength as if the success of all depended on us alone, but will remain humble in regard to our progress and trusting despite our failures. Deeply conscious of the fact that we ourselves are nothing, and by ourselves can do nothing, but that through Christ we are all powerful—“I can do all things in Him who strengthens me” - we will be neither discouraged by our failures nor proud of any acts of virtue that we succeed in performing through God’s grace.

Yes, we dare to say even more. For a soul who has experienced his or her own helplessness on the one hand and God’s omnipotence on the other, failings and weaknesses are not hindrances any more, but, on the contrary, means for progress. For they offer us an opportunity, by awakening an heroic act of virtue, to increase our faith in the goodness and mercy of God and to throw ourselves trustingly into His arms once again; since, precisely in our failures, we have experienced and proven that everything falls apart that does not clearly and purely have God as it’s goal. “I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may be shown in me.” (*Life in God’s Presence—a Simple approach to Prayer*” by a Carthusian)

Spiritual Adoption Progress Report—Month 1

Don’t forget to check out the new Spiritual Adoption poster in the vestibule to see the development progress of our parish spiritually adopted “babies”! He/she is now one month old in utero. Your spiritually adopted baby has been quite active over the past month. Already your baby is 10,000 times bigger than at conception. Your baby has developed the foundations of his brain, spinal cord, and nervous system by the 20th day. His heart began to beat on the 21st day and is pumping blood through its own circulatory system. The blood type can be different from his mother’s. Your baby is most vulnerable during the next month of being aborted. Pray that the Lord of Life might move the heart of his mother to give him the most generous gift of all—the gift of life. Keep praying!

January 16, 2014

Evening of Recollection Confraternity of St. Peter

Don’t miss out on the spiritual benefits of our CSP Evening of Recollection on Thursday, January 16th, beginning with Holy Mass at 6:30 pm. Each month we are given a wonderful sermon and conference along with Holy Mass and CSP prayers.

The Confraternity of St. Peter is a group of lay men and women united to the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

- Conforming our lives in the Spirituality of the Holy Mass
 - Praying for the priests and seminarians of the Fraternity of St. Peter.
 - Praying for more vocations to the Holy Priesthood
- For more information visit www.confraternityofstpeter.com or call the parish office 916-455-5114.

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.

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.

Reminder—Chesterton Society meeting:

Jan. 21th at 7:30pm

We will be reading :
Orthodoxy - The Flag of the World &
Fr. Brown - The Head of Ceasar
All are welcome!

Confraternity Prayer for Priests

V. Remember, O Lord, Thy congregation.
R. Which Thou hast possessed from the beginning.
Let us pray.
O Lord Jesus, born to give testimony to the Truth, Thou who lovest unto the end those whom Thou hast chosen, kindly hear our prayers for our pastors. Thou who knowest all things, knowest that they love Thee and can do all things in Thee who strengthens them. Sanctify them in Truth. Pour into them, we beseech Thee, the Spirit whom Thou didst give to Thy apostles, who would make them, in all things, like unto Thee. Receive the homage of love which they offer up to Thee, who hast graciously received the threefold confession of Peter. And so that a pure oblation may everywhere be offered without ceasing unto the Most Holy Trinity, graciously enrich their number and keep them in Thy love, who art one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory and honor forever. Amen.