

Sunday, March 16, 2014
Second Sunday of Lent



Sun. 16 Mar. Second Sunday of Lent, I Class

8:30 am Bec & David Gisla
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Kathleen & Mike DeSantis

3:00 pm Vespers & Benediction

Mon. 17 Mar. St. Patrick, Patron of Diocese, I Class

7:00 am Intentions of Jan England
 12:15 pm Poor Souls who have no one to pray for them

Tues. 18 Mar. Feria of Lent, III Class

7:00 am Father Simon Slana
 6:30 pm †Louis Solton

Wed. 19 Mar. St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I Class

7:00 am Father John Lyons FSSP
 12:15 pm Arthur McGrath
 7:00 pm †Enrique Mendoza

Thurs. 20 Mar. Votive Mass for the Anniversary of the Coronation of the Pope, II Class

7:00 am Georgia Munsill
 6:30 pm FSSP

Fri. 21 Mar. Friday of Lent, III Class

7:00 am Father Greg Staab OMV
 12:15 pm Kathryn, Julia, Stanley, & Andrew Kwansny
 6:30 pm †Louis Solton

Sat. 22 Mar. Saturday of Lent, III Class

7:00 am Father Fernando Cuenca
 9:00 am Mr. & Mrs. Culter Haley Souza

Sun. 23 Mar. Third Sunday of Lent, I Class

8:30 am Miss Regina Johnson
 10:30 am Pro Populo
 1:00 pm Father 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.

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.

...In Memoriam

†Charles Cantoni, †Manuel Nino, †Margaret Correa,
 †Maureen Nazarkewich-Batkis

Important Upcoming Dates

March 18—Chesterton Society Meeting
 March 20—Confraternity Evening of Recollection
 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 22-28—Camp Sacred Heart
 July 13—17—Silent Retreat

Humility

Charity is the essence of Christian perfection, for charity alone has the power to unite man to God, his last end. But for us poor, miserable creatures, whom God wishes to raise to union with Himself, is charity the ultimate basis of the spiritual life? No. There is something deeper still which is, so to speak, the *basis* of charity, and that is humility. Humility is to charity what the foundation is to a building. Digging the foundation is not building the house, yet it is the preliminary, indispensable work, the condition *sine qua non*. The deeper and firmer it is, the better the house will be and the greater assurance of stability it will have. Only the fool "built his house upon the sand," with the inevitable consequence of seeing it crumble away very soon. The wise man, on the contrary, "built...upon a rock"; storms and winds might threaten, but his house was unshakable because its foundation was solid.

Humility is the firm bedrock upon which every Christian should build the edifice of his spiritual life. "If you wish to lay good foundations," says St. Teresa of Jesus to her daughters, "each of you must try to be the least of all" that is, you must practice humility. "If you do that...your foundation will be so firmly laid that your Castle will not fall.

Humility forms the foundation of charity by emptying the soul of pride, arrogance, disordered love of self and of one's own excellence, and by replacing them with the love of God and our neighbor.

The more humility empties the soul of the vain, proud pretenses of self, the more room there will be for God. "When at last [the spiritual man] comes to be reduced to nothing, which will be the greatest extreme of humility, spiritual union will be wrought between the soul and God."

The soul who desires to reach the sublime heights of union with God must walk in the path of profound humility, for as the divine Master taught, only "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The higher the ideal of sanctity to which we aspire, the more sublime the end toward which we tend, the more we will have to descend and excavate in ourselves the fertile abyss of humility. "*Abyssus abyssum invocat*"; the abyss of humility calls to the abyss of infinite mercy, of grace and of the divine gifts, for "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace." We must humble ourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, sincerely recognize our nothingness, take account of our poverty; and if we wish to glorify ourselves, we must glory, like St. Paul, solely in our infirmities. It is only in our weakness, humbly acknowledged, that grace and divine virtue work and triumph. Even if we are of the number of those good souls who sincerely desire to advance on the road to perfection, but who are relying too much on their own powers and personal initiative, we can apply to ourselves to great advantage the valuable warning that St. Therese of the Child Jesus gave a novice: "I see clearly that you are taking the wrong road; you will never reach the end of your journey. You want to scale a mountain, and the good God wills to make you descend... It is Jesus who takes upon Himself to fill your soul according as you rid it of imperfections."

The sublime ideal of union with God totally exceeds our capacities. However, God stoops only to the humble; the more lowly He finds a soul, the closer He draws it to Himself. (*Divine Intimacy* by Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, OCD)

Jesus Falls the First Time

At the very first step of the way to Calvary, Jesus stumbles and falls. He is down on His knees in the dirt!

What has happened to this man? This man who had just now declared himself to be king of a spiritual world with legions of angels at his command, who has been known to hold back the overwhelming force of the storm and still the raging seas by an act of his will, who by a mere touch of his hand caused a living fig tree to wither, and has fallen now under the purely material weight of the cross he so lately welcomed!

Only a few moments ago he held out his arms to receive it, seemingly with joy. Now, at the very first shock of its weight on his shoulder, he has fallen!

The crowd thronging outside the judgment hall are laughing derisively. Some of them remember hearing Him say that—that any man who wanted to follow Him could only do so, carrying His cross. Now it seems that He can't even take the first step on the way to be marked out by His footprints without falling!

Is not this the man who claimed to be the Son of God? Why, he is not even a superman, he is not even equal in stamina to one of those splendid young Roman soldiers who are prodding him with their spears to get up! After all he is just an ordinary man, like any other in that huge crowd milling around him!

Yes, Christ is living through the experience of ordinary men, of each and every ordinary man in whom He will abide through all the ages to come. He has not come into the world to indwell only exceptional men, or supermen. He is not here and suffering His Passion in order to be glorified in those who succeed where others fail, or to make Himself an exception to ordinary men. He has come to live out the life of every man, of any man who has any love for Him at all and tries to keep His word. "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

The cross which Christ has fallen under is the cross that most ordinary human beings fall under, and that at the beginning of adult life; a material cross, the burden of the material struggle that nearly everyone must shoulder. This is the first fall, the first fall that each one of us knows, with the shock of it and the shame. Jesus takes the shock and the shame for us all.

There in Him we are watching ourselves today. There is the young man or woman taken by surprise by the violence of the first sudden onslaught of the temptations of grown-up life. There is the one who a little while ago, from the dream world of adolescence, welcomed the hardships and struggles of economic life in a spirit of adventure, tripped up by the first stumbling block of the materialism of the real world. There is that one who imagined that natural love alone could sustain a marriage on a meager wage, flung down by the first impact of grinding poverty for himself and his bride. There, too, is the most brokenhearted one who in a land of martyrs believed he could accept suffering and dreamed of martyrdom for himself, but at the first shock of the terrible reality, the first hard, rough crushing of the cross on his own back, has fallen—an ordinary man, persecuted by the supermen of the ideologies, derided and mocked by his own disillusioned fellow countrymen.

Yes, Christ, prostrate there under the cross, lives through the humiliation and bewilderment of those who seem to fail at the start. Those taken suddenly and by surprise, who came out full of self-confidence to wrestle with and overcome the world, to overcome its materialism, its political and economic systems, its injustice, its hardships and its terrors, confident that they could set their feet in Christ's footsteps, shoulder His Cross, and make the journey of life, only to find themselves tripped up in His first footprint.

He who never yielded to temptation Himself has already lived through and overcome the discouragement and the sorrow of those who do. That is why Christ chose to be not a superman, not in a physical sense an extraordinary man, but an ordinary man. (*The Way of the Cross* by Caryl Houselander)

Choir News

The St. Stephen's choir seeks new members. We're especially short on tenors and baritone/basses. Musical experience is helpful, though you need not have an exceptional voice. To learn more, contact our new choir director, Mr. Keven Smith, at ksmith_writer@yahoo.com or 559-593-5012. Or speak with Keven after the Sunday 10:30 Mass.

MUSIC CLASS FOR CHILDREN: Our choir director, Keven Smith, is considering offering a beginning music class for children ages 8-12 using the Ward Method. The goal is to teach children the fundamentals of reading music, training the ear, and developing the voice for future participation in our parish choir. If you are interested, please stop by the bookstore for more information and to sign up.

Camp Sacred Heart 2014

Camp Sacred Heart will be held June 22—28 this year. Registration is open to boys age 9—18, boys unknown to the chaplain must get a letter of recommendation from a priest.

For more information call the parish office or 916-223-3112. Forms may be obtained by e-mail stephenproto@yahoo.com You may also stop by the parish office or bookstore.

Sponsors needed for Camp

If you are able to help sponsor a boy for camp, there is a great need, especially for large families. Your help is very much appreciated!

Reminder— Chesterton Society meeting:

March 18th at 7:30pm

We will be reading :

Orthodoxy - The Eternal Revolution & Fr. Brown - The Perishing of the Pdragons

All are welcome!

Calling All Cooks

Soup is needed for Fridays during Lent. Please sign up for one or more weeks. Soup and bread will be available for all after the 6:30 pm Masses on Fridays. Questions? Stop by the Parish Office or Bookstore.

40 Days for Life—Ash Wednesday, March 5th—April 13th

All are asked to be generous with your time and to come and spend just one hour, as often as you like! Your presence at an abortion clinic speaks powerfully of your commitment to the unborn.

This life-saving, peaceful, prayerful apostolate will be at 1442 Ethan Way, Sacramento (across the street from Cal Expo), Monday through Friday 7 am—7 pm.

Update on the ONE Campaign

As of March 6th, \$119,837 has been pledged by 55 individuals from our parish. Our given goal is \$314,585. Of that amount, \$235,939 would remain with the diocese and \$78,646 would be returned to St. Stephen's. We are still far, however, from reaching our goal. Many thanks to those who have already contributed. For those who have not, pledge cards may be found in the vestibule of the church. Once filled out they may be placed in the collection basket or turned into the office or book store. **You may designate to what specific aspect of the campaign you would like your donation to be applied. Just write it on your pledge card.** For example, "the Vianney Retirement Village" which will house retired priests of the diocese; or "Catholic Social Services" which includes the Sacramento Food Bank. We will keep you informed of progress as reports come in.

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, Robert Nunez, Renee Burns, Fr. Vladimir Kozina