



Fourth Sunday of Advent December 20, 2020

The child to be born
will be called holy,
the Son of God.

—Luke 1:35

THE ETERNAL GOD

King David wished that the ark of God might have a more permanent home. David may have envisioned something like the cedar palace where he resided. God had in mind something more: a throne where David's descendants would rule for ever, a kingdom where Jews and Gentiles alike would be welcome.

Mary's prayerful nature led to an even more disturbing message. She would conceive and bear a Son though she was not yet married. "How can this come about?" Mary wondered. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," she was told (Luke 1:35).

Mary's acceptance of this difficult challenge ushered in this, the final age of God's reign. What was once a secret known only by chosen people like King David and his descendants must now be made clear to all so that, as Saint Paul wrote to the Romans, we can be brought to the "obedience of faith" "according to the command of the eternal God" (Romans 16:26). —J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH Gathering

When Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States in 2008, tens of thousands gathered in Yankee Stadium to celebrate the Eucharist with him. What made them different from all the other excited crowds who have assembled there through the years? When they began to sing together, to listen together, to pray together, they ceased to be a crowd, and became a liturgical assembly. It was not where they were but what they did that set them apart.

The Gospels speak of many instances when Jesus prayed alone to his Father. But Jesus also put a special value on communal prayer. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," he told his disciples, "there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Jesus gave his own mission to his followers, sending them forth to do everything he did: to heal, to teach, to proclaim the kingdom. Jesus wants us to meet God in and through each other. So the Christian community continues to gather, Sunday after Sunday. When we get up on Sunday morning and come to Mass, we respond to Jesus' invitation, and we express our trust in his promise that whenever we come together, he comes, too. —Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56
Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66
Thursday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]
Friday: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]
Saturday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22
Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-5

CHRISTMAS IN THE HEART

Christmas! 'Tis the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial fire of charity in the heart.

—Washington Irving



CONTINUAL CHRISTMAS

A good conscience is a continual Christmas.

—Benjamin Franklin

Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!

For the month of **December/January** offerings:

PLEASE mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. *Include your offering envelope # with your donation.*

12/25: Capital Expenditures. 12/25: Christmas.

1/1: Mary Mother of God. 1/3: Operating Expenses.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA Zoom

Finance Council [FC]: TBA Zoom

Liturgy Committee: TBA Zoom

St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044

St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

Centering Prayer ZOOM: Tues. noon/Fri. 9:30am - info www.stphilipstteresa.org

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

12/20 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

12/20 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Brendan Smith

12/27 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

12/27 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Bob Tiller

Prayer Requests: Leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Mary K., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Jacque W., Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James, Dennis M., Art H., Lynn, Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N.

PARISH MEMO ON MASSES:

Dec/Jan -- The times and locations of our next outdoor Masses--

12/20 St. Philip's, 8:00am in the parking lot fronting St. Philip's church

12/20 St. Teresa's, 9:30am on the steps of St. Teresa's church

12/24 St. Philip's, 2:00pm in the parking lot fronting St. Philip's church

12/25 St. Philip's, 8:00am in the parking lot fronting St. Philip's church

12/25 St. Teresa's, 9:30am on the steps of St. Teresa's church

12/27 St. Philip's, 8:00am in the parking lot fronting St. Philip's church

12/27 St. Teresa's, 9:30am on the steps of St. Teresa's church

1/01 St. Teresa's, 9:30am on the steps of St. Teresa's church

The above **red** Masses are going to be on **Zoom**, with a different link:

See below for login information.

Please mute your microphone and turn off video when joining.

The Zoom will begin 15 minutes before each **red** Mass.

Join Zoom Meeting [for red Mass]:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87947306753?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87947306753?pwd=YkQyZURhaHR0UnFnRXRiTElyQWJoUT09)

[pwd=YkQyZURhaHR0UnFnRXRiTElyQWJoUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87947306753?pwd=YkQyZURhaHR0UnFnRXRiTElyQWJoUT09)

Meeting ID: 879 4730 6753

Passcode: 227477

One tap mobile

+16699009128,,87947306753#,,,,,0#,,227477# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,87947306753#,,,,,0#,,227477# US (Houston)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

Meeting ID: 879 4730 6753

Passcode: 227477

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdcTjOCZQv>

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for December 2020

We prepared for potentially cold and stormy skies for the December Rural Food distribution by purchasing drive through tents to shelter our volunteers and the precious commodities they prepared to distribute.

We were happy to see sunny skies and warm weather on Tuesday, 12/8, as we distributed food to 60 families totaling 139 people, including 24 seniors and 34 children. We received warm smiles and much appreciation as we also distributed socks, masks, scarves, hats and Union Hotel handmade cookies for all families who received nutritional support at the distribution.

We are so thankful for the support provided to make this program flourish. A new volunteer told us, "We were so happy to be there and it really touched our hearts to see all the love present."

This program is funded through the Rural Food Collection each month, private donations and awesome volunteers. Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.

RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in Hall

Sat., January 9, 9-10:00am: repackaging

Mon., January 11, 8 -11:00am: set up

Tues., January 12, 8 -11:00am: food distribution

Bishop Speaks...

Following the Memo from Bishop Vasa (Bulletin #81) dated December 1, 2020, the counties of the Diocese now fall into the tiers noted below:

"PRESENT COUNTY TIER STATUS: According to the latest (December 1, 2020) data, Lake County has a negative change in the Tier status from **Tier 2 (Red)** to **Tier 1 (Purple)**. Thus, for now ALL of our [diocesan] counties remain in or go to **Tier 1 (Purple)**.

Humboldt County - Stays at **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Del Norte County - Stays at **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Lake County - From **Tier 2** to **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Napa County - Stays at **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Mendocino County - Stays at **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

Sonoma County - Stays at **Tier 1**

- Outdoor only with masks and social distancing.

NOVEMBER 21 STAY AT HOME ORDER: The following notice was posted by the Acting State Public Health Officer on November 21. (I had not noticed it before.) "Therefore, as the State Public Health Officer, I am issuing a Limited Stay at Home order, effective in counties under Tier One (Purple) of California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy, requiring that all gatherings with members of other households and all activities conducted outside the residence, lodging, or temporary accommodation with members of other households **cease between 10:00 pm PST and 5:00 am PST**, except for those activities associated with the operation, maintenance, or usage of critical infrastructure or required by law. This order does not apply to persons experiencing homelessness. Nothing in this order prevents any number of persons from the same household from leaving their residence, lodging, or temporary accommodation, as long as they do not engage in any interaction with (or otherwise gather with) any number of persons from any other household, except as specifically permitted herein." <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/limited-stay-at-home-order.aspx>

This order is scheduled to remain in effect until December 21 and we must anticipate that it may not end before Christmas. It seems prudent to plan that no Masses begin later than 8:00 pm." ~ RFVasa

A CONCORD PASTOR COMMENTS

ON SPIRITUALITY, WORSHIP AND PRAYER IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

Pause for Prayer: THURSDAY 12/17



Been praying over the weather report, Lord...

Of course I'm praying this storm will be less severe than predicted...

And I'm praying that the homeless find shelter from the wind and snow, a warm place to stay, dry clothing a bed for rest and a good hot meal or two...

And I'm praying that the plow platoons will be safe in their work, making streets and highways safe for us...

And I'm praying that not too many will lose power and that those who do will have it restored sooner than rather than later...

And I'm praying for first responders who keep and rescue us from harm and fire regardless of the snow's accumulation...

And I'm praying that pretty soon, Lord, we'll all find something to talk about besides the temperature, Fahrenheit and Celsius...

But most of all, Lord, I'm praying we all might learn to focus half as much:

on you as on the weather,
on your will as on the wind chill
on your word as on the whiteout,
on your wisdom as on the winter...

And if the storm should slow us down, Lord, help us find some time, some dedicated time to spend with you out on a walk or sitting by a window, wondering at the mystery of your presence revealed in every solitary flake, or drifting as dunes, clean, pure and sparkling with your grace... Amen.

Concord Pastor

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Parish Message:

***New Missals** will soon be available at Sunday Mass for you to take home/bring back weekly for your personal use.*

***Calendars** will be available in Dec./Jan. at Sunday Mass.*

Other Notes

***Star Child Note of Appreciation:** Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, we were able to provide \$40 gift cards to the 50 children from 15 families in our Rural Food Program. The parents expressed heartfelt thanks for your support during these difficult times. Thank you all, Peg Duffy and Diane Schwab*

Letter from 107-year-old Irish woman about fighting COVID blues is a must-read



[Cerith Gardiner](#) - published on 10/25/20

Having lost her husband, twin daughters and many friends, Nancy Stewart appreciates life's challenges.

Ireland's oldest citizen, Nancy Stewart, has put pen to paper to try and give people in need of a boost some encouragement to get through this pandemic — although her advice is perfect for any challenging situation.

Her gentle, kind words really help to put life in perspective, and her simple recommendations, such as having a cup of tea and saying the Rosary, are something everybody can include in their daily lives.

To Anyone Who Needs a Reason to Keep Going:

My name is Nancy Stewart and I was born on the 16th of October 1913. This weekend I turn 107 years of age. Imagine turning 107 in a world pandemic. This definitely is something very unusual even for me and all I have been through. I live in Clonard in County Meath and have lived in my home for over 83 years.

I lost my husband in a car crash in 1989, and lost my twin daughters, Margaret in 2007 to motor neurone [ALS] and Anne in 2010 to utter heartbreak of losing her sister. I've lost all my friends throughout the years, which comes with living so long on this earth.

I'm very lucky to still have three daughters Kathleen, Mary, and Olive, and one son, Finian, and I have 84 grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren.

I have faced many heart-breaking moments and also have seen many hard times in our country witnessing world wars, division in our people and numerous sad times for our nation.

I write to you today to send you my love and to offer you my prayers. We are in a very difficult time at the moment in our country, in our lives and in our world. But **I reach out to you in this letter to offer you hope, faith and belief that everything will be OK in the end.**

We are in another stage of this battle against the virus but we will get through this. Like everything I've been through since the day I was born in 1913, no matter how bad things have got, I'm the living proof that we can survive and in years to come, this will just be a distant memory.

I have a great faith and it has helped me keep positive throughout the struggles I've met. I thank you for keeping your faith and for keeping your resilience strong, through this hard time. Sadly for the moment, we can no longer stretch out to a friend and embrace them nor can we call to each other's houses. But I'm here to share my story. I have been in lockdown in my house since March, alongside my granddaughter Louise and even though it has been a tough time, we have got through it together. **We drink tea. We say prayers. We bake. We laugh. We make phone calls. I can even video call lots of my family and friends and am making new friends everyday that God gives me on this earth.**

And that's a very important thing to say. If you are feeling low, make sure to try call someone or even go for a walk. **I also ask God to help me if I'm feeling low.** This is a hard time for everyone but please make sure you keep yourself well and wear your mask. If you keep healthy, your mind will stay healthy too. Keep talking to one another. **All my life I have always believed in chatting and drinking tea and saying a prayer or a decade of the rosary and it has got me through. This is our moment to keep our faith and to keep believing that everything will turn out ok.**

We must try to make sure we leave nobody behind and also that we don't lose sight of each other. **This is a moment for humanity to step forward to take care of the other.** We must mind ourselves but we must also mind all those around us. Look up and smile even if you have your mask on.

Your eyes will smile and that might be all someone needs to keep going. No good deed ever goes unnoticed so try your best to keep being good. **We are not here to live for ourselves but to live for each other.**

I can't believe I've made it to this age, I only feel like I'm 50, but now that I'm here, all I can say is please God I'll be here for my next birthday. We must always look forward. I can't believe I'm the oldest person in Ireland living in my own home, I don't feel that old. When God wants me, he will come take me but for now I will keep enjoying my life, I'll keep loving my family and I'll keep saying my prayers day by day ... oh and not to forget eating lots of good wholesome food is my tip. **Good food and lots of tea is my secret to a long life as well as keeping positive as best we can. We must always look forward and hope for the best.**

Thank you for thinking of me in your prayers and your thoughts and I promise I will think of you in my many rosaries I say every day.

Thank you so much for reading my letter also and I hope I have, in even a little way, helped you feel less alone in this moment. There is always hope and once we keep talking to one another, no day will seem empty and we can get through this together. **It only takes a small candle to take away the dark and in each of us, we can be that light in the world.**

This hard time will indeed pass like all the rest and all that matters is that we helped each other through.

Many blessings and much love,
Granny Nancy x
Clonard
Co Meath.

If you'd like further inspiration from the Emerald Isle, take a look at these popular sayings that will make you smile and feel grateful for all life has to offer:

[Click here to launch Irish popular sayings slideshow](#)