



Third Sunday of Advent December 12, 2021

With joy you will
draw water
at the fountain
of salvation.

— *Isaiah 12:3*

REJOICE

The prophetic writings we hear in today's scriptures call us to rejoice and celebrate the goodness of God. Zephaniah, Isaiah, Saint Paul, and John the Baptist in Luke's Gospel all follow the rich tradition of the Biblical prophets, a tradition that reaches full expression in Jesus. The prophets warn that human failings have truly disastrous consequences. All are summoned to repent, and to change their lives. Today we hear the Good News that God's gracious love exceeds and overcomes all human corruption. God has not given up on us. Indeed, God keeps pursuing us, and eagerly seeks to reconcile with us. God's initiative to set the world aright culminates with Jesus, whose coming John the Baptist announces. John's prophetic message summons us to join in God's reconciling work, by living generously and justly in our daily lives. As we rejoice in God's grace, we then extend the fruits of this grace to all.

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PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Third Sunday of Advent

O God, who see how your people
faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity,
enable us, we pray,
to attain the joys of so great a salvation
and to celebrate them always
with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

How am I faithfully awaiting the Lord's Nativity?

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc-9; Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-19, 23; Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday: Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b; Lk 7:24-30
Friday: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17
Saturday: Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25
Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Third Sunday of Advent

Monday: St. Lucy

Tuesday: St. John of the Cross

Our Current Parish Mass Schedule:

St. Philip, *Occidental*: 8am & 11:15am Sun.; 9am Wed. & Fri.

St. Teresa, *Bodega*: 5pm Sat.; 9:30am Sun.; 9am Tues. & Thurs.

Note: Please wear a mask in church. Thank you.

Finance Corner: Your generosity

is **greatly needed and appreciated!** For the month of **October** offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection box or 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. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one] with your donation. Bless you!



12/5-12/8: summary provided soon.

12/12: Retirement Fund for Religious. 12/19: Capital Expenditures.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA

Finance Council [FC]: TBA

Liturgy Committee [LC]: TBA

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

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

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

12/11 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
12/12 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Emily & Joe Palmer
12/12 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
12/12 Sun. 11:15am Mass
12/15 Wed. 9am Mass ✠ Sr. Mary Nativity
12/18 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
12/19 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Tina Bartolo
12/19 Sun. 9:30am Mass
12/19 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People

Prayer Requests: Please 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., 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., Chuck, Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James G., Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Samantha S., Gary E.

[Mission San Jose \(link\)](#)



(the California missions are featured in our current bulletins)

- 1. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on** Tues. (12/14) and Wed. (12/15), at church after the 9am Mass (for about an hour or so, starting at 9:30am).
- 2. Fr. Bala is available also on other days for Confessions** by appointment.: govindu77@gmail.com

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for November 2021

Heavy rain and wind did not deter our dedicated volunteers from providing bags and bags of proteins, cheeses, fresh milk, eggs and warm socks at this month's Rural Food distribution. On Tuesday, November 9, 54 families (138 individuals) received nutritional support during our distribution at the St Philips Parking lot and parish hall. Star Child sign-ups were completed for our traditional December distribution of toys, clothes or gift certificates for children in the parish. In December, we will continue our tradition of providing each family with enough blankets, scarves or hats for each member of the family.

If you are aware of a family which needs nutritional assistance, please let them know about our program. Leave a message at the parish office, (707) 408-2650 to get a call back with additional information.

This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, 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 the Parish Hall and parking area: Saturday, December 11, 9-10:00am repackaging; Monday, December 13, 9:00 – 11:00am set up and Tuesday, December 14, 7:30 – 11:00am to distribute food to clients.



[Dementia](#)

Dementia has to do, among other things, with becoming disoriented about time, people, and places – progressively at different rates. I first experienced my wife Jane's symptoms about twenty two years ago but the event passed and all returned to normal until seven years ago – coincidental with a needed surgery – after which the decline has been steady, a fading away as into a mist of sorts – and myself reaching into the mist for whatever tangibility can be possible.

She is now comfortably settled into residential care while I inhabit a home furnished as if she were present – everything in place as it has been for years but more like a place to “muse” as in a “museum” than to dwell.

I visit her every day and there is recognition – no conversation, just touch and the caress of my words, little nothings that I utter like reminders of things we used to do, places to which we used to go (supplemented by photographs), paging through her old high school and college year books, which makes you marvel at how quickly time and youth and beginnings pass away.

All of which hurts – but there is (you could say) a positive cost/benefit. At long last in the isolation of these moments you finally know without a doubt what love IS – and how frustrating it can be when you *now* know it in the wake of opportunities long past when maybe you were too busy to know it and show it.

And there is another such benefit of this phase of our lives. Jane's residence houses perhaps twenty or more other residents, not all dementia cases – but all elderly and each a personality. Their past may be forgotten but their moves, their looks, their individuality, uniqueness stand out – they are a community of interesting human beings that make you want to know more about them. Compared to my living at home, I find myself wanting to visit not only Jane but experience the company of this fragile yet fascinating humanity. (Indeed, I worry that I am becoming too much “at home” there!)

And speaking of positive cost/benefits: you finally begin to recognize how it is the little, ephemeral, even split-second things that really matter in life – that have been like a treasure hidden in a field or a pearl of great price unnoticed upon a counter of costume jewelry or like that grain of sand or wild flower of which William Blake wrote: *To see a world in Grain of Sand / and a Heaven in a Wild Flower.*

In the end it is not the big moments of your life you hang on to but those catalogued by Ira Gershwin when he wrote: *The way you wear your hat / The way you sip your tea / The memory of all that / No, no, they can't take that away from me // The way your smile just beams / The way you sing off-key / The way you haunt my dreams / No, no, they can't take that away from me // . . . The way you've changed my life . . .*

--Geoff Wood, 12/05/2021



[Click image link](#) to request a prayer from the Marian Sisters



Pope Francis in Greece: Meeting with His Beatitude Hieronymos II

On the first day of his apostolic visit to Greece, Pope Francis visited His Beatitude Hieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, the leader of the Orthodox Church of Greece, at the Orthodox Archbishopric of Greece. After the two leaders greeted one another and the archbishop had given his address, the Holy Father spoke.

Below is the full text of his address:

**Pope Francis' address to His Beatitude Hieronymos II
"Throne Room" of the Orthodox Archbishopric of Greece in Athens
Saturday, 4 December 2021**

Your Beatitude,

"Grace to you and peace from God" (*Rom 1:7*). I greet you with these words of the great Apostle Paul, the very words he addressed to the faithful of Rome while sojourning in Greece. Our meeting today renews that grace and peace. As I prayed before the great shrines of the Church of Rome, the tombs of the Apostles and martyrs, I felt compelled to come here as a pilgrim, with great respect and humility, in order to renew that apostolic communion and to foster fraternal charity. I thank Your Beatitude for your kind words, which I reciprocate with affection. Through you, I also greet the clergy, monastic communities and all the Orthodox faithful of Greece.

[Five years ago, we met at Lesbos](#), amid one of the great tragedies of our time: the plight of so many of our migrant brothers and sisters, who cannot be regarded with indifference, seen only as a burdensome problem to be managed or, worse yet, passed on to someone else. Now we meet again, to share the joy of fraternity and to view the Mediterranean that surrounds us not simply as a site of difficulties and divisions, but also as a sea that brings peoples together. A short time ago, I mentioned the age-old olive trees that our lands have in common. Reflecting on those trees that unite us, I think of the roots we share. Underground, hidden, frequently overlooked, those roots are nonetheless there and they sustain everything. What are our common roots that have endured over the centuries? They are the apostolic roots. Saint Paul speaks of them when he stresses the importance of being "built upon the foundation of the apostles" (*Eph 2:20*). Those roots, growing from the seed of the Gospel, began to bear

abundant fruit precisely in Hellenic culture: I think of the early Fathers of the Church and the first great ecumenical councils.

Tragically, in later times we grew apart. Worldly concerns poisoned us, weeds of suspicion increased our distance and we ceased to nurture communion. Saint Basil the Great says that true disciples of Christ are "modeled only on what they see in him" (*Moralia*, 80, 1). Shamefully – I acknowledge this for the Catholic Church – actions and decisions that had little or nothing to do with Jesus and the Gospel, but were instead marked by a thirst for advantage and power, gravely weakened our communion. In this way, we let fruitfulness be compromised by division. History makes its weight felt, and here, today, I feel the need to ask anew for the forgiveness of God and of our brothers and sisters for the mistakes committed by many Catholics. Yet we are comforted by the certainty that our roots are apostolic and that, notwithstanding the twists and turns of time, what God planted continues to grow and bear fruit in the same Spirit. It is a grace to recognize one another's good fruits and to join in thanking the Lord for this.

The ultimate fruit of the olive is oil. Olive oil was once kept in the precious vases and artifacts that abound among the archeological treasures of this land. Oil provided the light that illuminated the nights of antiquity. For millennia, it was the "liquid sun, the first mysterious state of the flame of lamps" (C. BOUREUX, *Les plantes de la Bible et leur symbolique*, Paris 2014, 65). For us, dear Brother, oil calls to mind the Holy Spirit who gave birth to the Church. Only he, with his unfading splendour, can dispel the darkness and illumine the steps of our journey.

This is so, because the Holy Spirit is above all the *oil of communion*. Scripture speaks of oil that makes people's faces radiant (cf. *Ps 104:15*). How much we need to recognize in our own day, at every level, the unique worth shining forth from every man and woman, from every brother and sister! To recognize this our shared humanity is the point of departure for building communion. Sadly, though, "communion seems to strike a sensitive chord", not only in society, but often also among the disciples of Jesus "in a Christian world fueled by individualism and institutional rigidity". Yet if our distinctive traditions and features, our "otherness" is not – as a great theologian has said – "somehow balanced by communion, only with difficulty can it give life to a satisfactory culture" (J. ZIZIOLAS, *Comunione e alterità*, Rome 2016, 16).

Fraternal communion brings God's blessing. In the Psalms, it is compared to "precious oil upon the head, running down upon the beard" (*Ps 133:2*). Indeed, the Spirit poured into our hearts impels us to seek ever greater fraternity, *to structure ourselves in communion*. So let us fearlessly help one another to worship God and to serve our neighbour, without proselytism and in full respect for the freedom of others, for as Saint Paul wrote, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (*2 Cor 3:17*). I pray that the Spirit of love will overcome every form of resistance and make us builders of communion. Indeed, "if love truly casts out fear and fear is transformed into love, then we will discover that what saves is unity" (SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Homily*

15 on the Song of Songs). On the other hand, how can we testify before the world to the harmony of the Gospel, if we Christians remain separated? How can we proclaim the love of Christ who gathers the nations, if we ourselves are not united? Many steps have already been taken to bring us together. Let us implore the Spirit of communion to spur us to follow his lead and to help us base communion not on calculations, strategies and expedience, but on the one model to which we must look: the Most Holy Trinity.



[Pope Francis visits His Beatitude Hieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, on December 4, 2021, during his apostolic visit to Greece. Photo courtesy of Vatican Media.](#)

The Spirit is also the *oil of wisdom*. He anointed Christ and he desires to inspire Christians. In docility to his gentle wisdom, we grow in the knowledge of God and open our hearts to others. Here, I would like to express my appreciation for the importance that this Orthodox Church, heir to the first significant inculturation of the faith, with Hellenic culture, devotes to theological training and preparation. I would also point to the fruitful cooperation in the area of culture between the *Apostoliki Diakonia* of the Church of Greece – whose representatives I was pleased to meet in 2019 – and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, as well as the importance of the inter-Christian symposia sponsored jointly by the Orthodox Faculty of Theology of the University of Salonica and the Pontifical University *Antonianum* in Rome. These occasions have made it possible to establish cordial relations and to engage in beneficial exchanges between scholars of our confessions. I also appreciate the active participation of the Orthodox Church of Greece in the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue. May the Spirit help us to persevere in wisdom along these paths!

Finally, the same Spirit is the *oil of consolation*, the Paraclete who is ever at our side, balm for the soul and healing for our wounds. By his anointing he consecrated Christ, so that he could preach good news to the poor, release to captives and liberty to the oppressed (cf. Lk 4:18). Even now, the Spirit urges us to care for the weak and poor and to bring their cause, paramount in the eyes of God, to the world's attention. Here, as elsewhere, the support given to those most in need during the most difficult moments of the economic crisis has been essential. Together may we develop forms of cooperation in charity,

may we open our hearts and cooperate in addressing ethical and social issues, in order to serve the men and women of our time and to bring them the consolation of the Gospel. Indeed, the Spirit is calling us, now more so than in the past, to heal the wounds of mankind with the oil of love. In Gethsemane, in his hour of anguish, Christ asked his disciples for the comfort of their closeness and prayer. The image of oil thus leads us to the Garden of Olives. "Remain here and watch" (Mk 14:34), Jesus said. His request to the Apostles was in the plural. Nowadays, too, he wants us to watch and pray. We need prayer for one another in order to bring to the world God's consolation and to heal our wounded relationships. This is essential if we are to achieve "the necessary purification of past memories. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today" (SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 2).

We are impelled to do this especially by our faith in the resurrection. The Apostles, fearful and hesitant, were reconciled with the bitter disappointment of the Passion once they saw the risen Lord appear before them. In his wounds, apparently impossible to heal, they found new hope, unprecedented mercy, a love greater than their mistakes and failures; this turned them into one Body, united by the Spirit in the multiplicity of its many different members. May the Spirit of the crucified and risen Lord come upon us and grant us "a calm, clear-sighted and truthful vision of things enlivened by divine mercy and capable of freeing people's minds and inspiring in everyone a renewed willingness" (ibid.). May he help us not to remain paralyzed by the negative experiences and prejudices of the past, but instead to view reality with new eyes. In this way, past trials will leave room for present consolations, and we will be comforted by the treasures of grace that we will rediscover in our brothers and sisters. The Catholic Church has just set out on a path aimed at deepening synodality and we feel we have much to learn from you. This is what we sincerely desire, certain that when brothers and sisters in the faith draw closer, the consolation of the Spirit comes down to fill our hearts.

Your Beatitude, dear brother, may the many illustrious saints of these lands, together with the martyrs who, sad to say, are more numerous in today's world than in the past, accompany us on this journey. Despite their different confessions here below, they now dwell together in heaven. May they intercede for us, so that the Spirit, the holy oil of God, may be poured out on us in a new Pentecost, even as he was on the Apostles from whom we descend. May he kindle in our hearts the desire for communion, enlighten us with his wisdom and anoint us with his consolation.

[Courtesy of Libreria Editrice Vaticana](#)





(12/24/21 Friday)

DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASSES

3:30PM CHILDREN'S MASS ST PHILIP

5PM CHRISTMAS EVE ST TERESA

10PM CHRISTMAS EVE ST PHILIP (CAROLS AT 9:30PM)

(12/25/21 Saturday)

DECEMBER 25: CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

8AM ST PHILIP

9:30AM ST TERESA

(note: no 5pm on 12/25 at St. Teresa)