

*I leave this in for one more week in case you missed it before now*



Our Catholic faith calls us to participate in the life of our communities. From conception to natural death, our faith calls us to protect life and to promote dignity and respect for all human beings. In their 2008 *Faithful Citizenship* statement, the U.S. Bishops write these challenging words. “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation.” (Page 4, par. 13)

In response to this challenge, the bishops of California have established a state-wide legislative network of Catholics who are being asked to become more engaged in the political process. On the weekend of December 5 & 6, every parish in the Diocese of Sacramento will hold a *Life & Dignity Sunday*. During each Mass, the Network will be explained and parishioners will be invited to register for the Network. Registration cards will be forwarded to the California Catholic Conference for inclusion in the state-wide data base. All names will be returned to Bishop Soto for use only on public policy issues.

The Catholic Legislative Network is an organizational vehicle that will enable members to become well informed and to act on important issues in our state. Through a brief, weekly e-newsletter called *Public Policy Insights*, network members will learn about issues and actions being taken on certain priority issues. In addition, periodic Action Alerts will be sent to members asking them to send an e-mail, a letter, or to make a phone call to their Senator or Assembly member. If a Senator receives 10 E-mail messages on an issue, he/she probably pays little attention. If that same senator receives 1000 messages, he/she may decide to pay attention. A strong *voice for life and dignity* can make the difference.

There could not be a more important time for this network to emerge. California is in crisis morally and economically. Staggering budget deficits have shredded the safety net that once protected vulnerable children and aging adults. But while funding for life-giving programs is eliminated, financial resources for abortion clinics have not been similarly reduced, and each year proposals to allow doctors to assist their patients in committing suicide gain momentum in the legislature. The state is also struggling to decide what a marriage looks like. As Catholics we care deeply about all these “life and dignity” issues. The state needs a strong, loud, moral voice for life and dignity now!

Your willingness to participate within this network will help the Catholic Church become a loud and strong *Voice for Life and Dignity in California*.

*Join now at [www.cacatholic.org](http://www.cacatholic.org)*  
*Be a Voice for Life & Dignity in California*



*Working to Reduce Poverty in America.*

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT MEDITATION ON CATHOLIC CHARITIES December 6, 2009

Baruch 5:1-9 | Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11 | Luke 3:1-6

The reading from Baruch speaks to those dark times when life is miserable and we long for a return from exile, for the moment when despair and hopelessness can be banished and our lives restored and shaped into a new reality. During this Advent season, where can we be the presence of a rebirthing of courage and hope for another?

Oh to have the confidence of Paul!! We can bathe in the renewal of such confidence! For Paul, the challenge is easily met if we but take on the love that we have through Christ. For Paul, who openly declares his immense affection for the church community at Philippi, love is the force that gives us clear vision, pure hearts and transformative justice.

Oh to be as bold as the evangelist Luke, who, bravely, into the context of the domination of imperial forces, declares an alternative vision for the world, reminding the community of what John the Baptist first proclaimed: that salvation is not—as might be thought—in the hands of the prevailing forces of the day; rather, the true righting of God’s creation lies in the courageous uprooting of an unjust status quo. The words of Isaiah serve as echoes of God’s prophetic messengers of old, reminding the community of God’s power to overturn all wrongdoing and of their commitment to partner in God’s labor of compassion and solidarity.

What a message of hope for the most vulnerable and despairing in our midst! Stories abound, in our society, of God’s transforming power present in our own day... Stories of young teenagers like Louise and her unborn child, for whom the genuine care and concern of a Catholic Charities Crisis Pregnancy Counselor was a beacon of hope at a time of confusion and fear. When she was leaving the hospital, she was delighted and surprised to receive a basket from a local parish filled with items of self care and note cards of thanks for the gift of adoption that she had offered to an infertile couple. Stories abound... Stories of young women like Aimee, for whom the outstretched hand of a Catholic Charities counselor in Phoenix’s DIGNITY program was the symbol of hope, a pathway out of the life of prostitution in which she was trapped.

To be offered a new reality is to have our world restored. How can we, in this period of Advent renewal, become places of hope restored? Let us, as St. Paul suggests, “discern what is of value” and forge communities of transformation.

### **PRAYER**

For all those whose dignity is at risk and whose lives are threatened by violence or exploitation, that we may become emboldened by the power of Christ’s love and renewed in our advocacy on their behalf, we pray to the Lord.

### **COMMENT**

Vulnerable families and children need not only our material support but also our voices raised in advocacy on their behalf. In support of Catholic Charities USA’s centennial celebration, please consider joining our advocacy network at [www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org/advocacy](http://www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org/advocacy).

**~ THREE MINUTE LITURGICAL CATECHESIS ~**  
**ARTICLE 3: WELCOMING THE LORD**

Imagine that you are coming to church next Sunday. As you come through the door, you realize that someone is right behind you and you naturally hold the door open for that person. As he comes in behind you, you suddenly realize that it is Jesus himself, looking just as you always imagined him. What do you do now? What do you say?

I suspect most of us would do whatever we could to make Jesus feel welcome in our community. Of course, it's not very likely that he will show up next Sunday, looking like a first-century Jewish rabbi. He will show up here, but he'll probably look different from our usual image of him. Christ will arrive looking like your neighbor or your friend, or perhaps like a person you've never met before. He might look like a member of your family, or he might look like a homeless person who needs a bath and a haircut.

Our faith tells us that Christ dwells in every member of his body, that we can find him in the people who gather with us here every Sunday. That's the deepest reason for us to be hospitable to one another as we assemble for the Eucharist.

So often, we hear people say that the Catholic Church is not very friendly. When strangers visit a Protestant church, they are usually warmly greeted and made to feel quite welcome. Many people report a very different experience in the Catholic Church. Of course, many Catholic parishes are very large, which makes it harder to know who is a visitor and who is a member of the parish. Maybe that just gives us even more reason to be hospitable toward everyone around us, whether stranger or friend.

Through the week, all of us who are members of the body of Christ are scattered throughout our community. On Sunday, when we come to Mass, we need to reconnect with the other members of the body. Smiling and saying hello to those who gather with us can help us to connect again. Brief conversations about family members and other concerns can express the love of Christ that binds us to one another.

This is not irreverent in church, because it is the way that we welcome the Lord into our midst. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). His presence in one another is the first way that he reveals himself to us at Mass. Reverence requires us to recognize him there and to respond to him in one another. This doesn't have to be loud and raucous, but it does have to be sincere and caring.

This gathering and reconnecting with the other members of the body is an important step in getting ready for Mass. Christ invites all of us to share in his sacrificial offering to the Father. We can only do that as members of Christ's body, so linking up with the other members of the body helps us to get ready to worship together. How will you welcome Christ the next time we gather here?

**~ PRAYER OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX TO KNOW GOD'S WILL ~**

Lord grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by you, always follow your plans, and perfectly accomplish Your holy will.

Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever you may require of me. Help me to respond to the slightest prompting of Your grace, so that I may be your trustworthy instrument. May Your will be done in time and eternity, by me, in me, and through me. Amen.

**~ POPE'S PRAYERS ~**  
**“HOPE” FOR ADVENT ... AND HEALING FOR AIDS**

Pope Benedict XVI prayed as follows on the First Sunday of Advent:



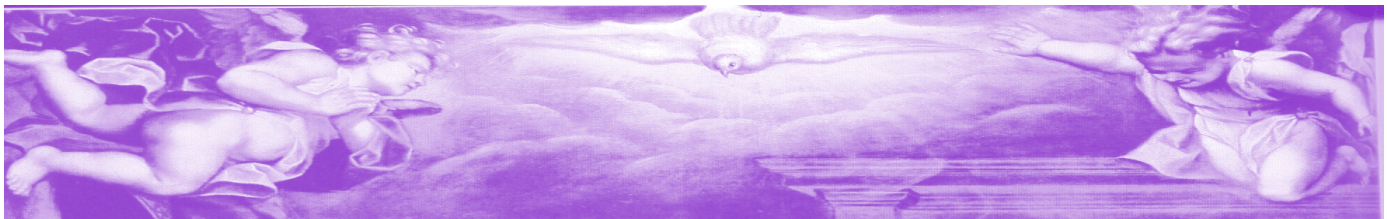
“The contemporary world needs hope above all; this is true for developing peoples but especially for developed peoples. Increasingly, we realize that we are in the same boat and that we can save ourselves together. With the collapse of so many false certainties, we are becoming especially aware of how we need reliable hope and that this is found only in Christ, who according to the Letter to the Hebrews “is the same yesterday, today and forever” (13:8). The Lord Jesus came in the past, comes in the present, and shall come in the future. He embraces all of time’s dimensions. Because he died and rose, he is always there, offering us God’s stability. He is “flesh” like us and “rock” like God. Anyone who yearns for freedom, justice, and peace can stand erect and raise his head because in Christ redemption is at hand (cf Lk, 21:28).”

“My thoughts and my prayers go to all persons affected by this sickness, in particular children, to the poorest and to those who are rejected. The Church does not cease to combat AIDS, through her institutions and the personnel dedicated to it, I exhort everyone to make their own contribution with prayer and care, so that those who are affected by the HIV virus will feel the presence of the Lord who gives support and hope. Finally, I hope that, by multiplying and coordinating efforts, this sickness will be halted and eradicated.”

**~ RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS ~**

Were you aware that about 58% of women and men religious are past age 70; 7% past age 90, and more than 4,900 need skilled nursing care? Community living provides some help, but health care and living costs in most religious communities far exceed income, as most elderly religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of just \$4,402 per year (the average U.S. beneficiary receives \$12,948 annually). Your gift makes a difference! Please give generously to next week's special collection. Please make your check payable to "Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament." For more information see [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

**~ THE CHILD ~**



Soft he comes, the Son of God, into the midst of man. Soft he weeps, the Word made flesh. Can such weakness be divine?

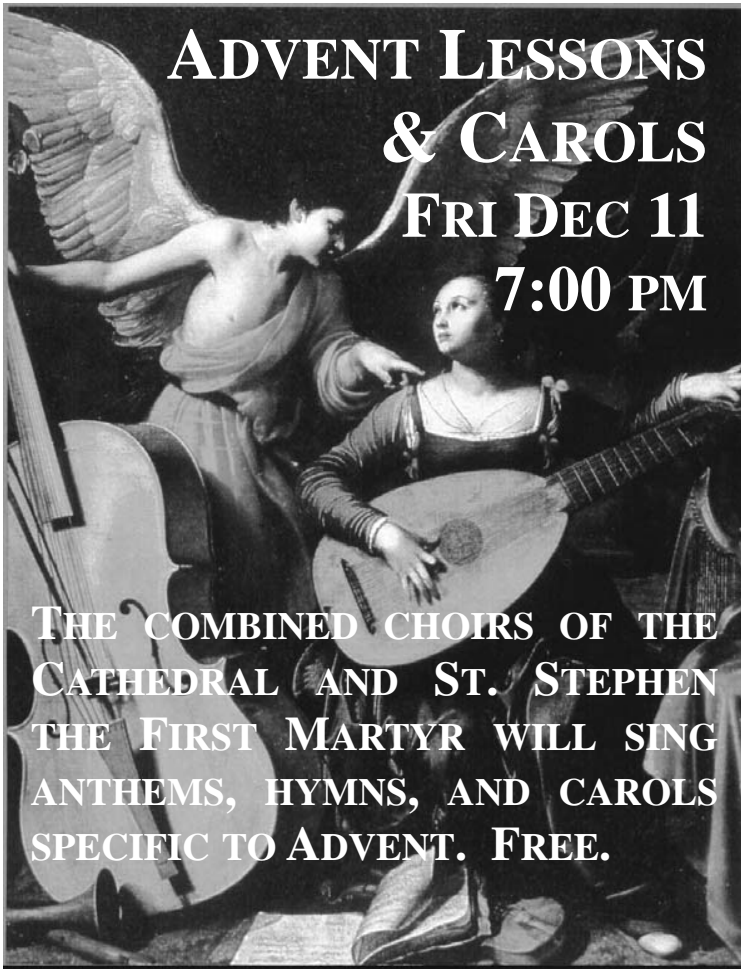
Where is your power, helpless child: where your mighty arm? Why come you so to this cold cave; this world much colder still? Know you not the hatred that awaits you as you come; The scourge, the thorny crown, the bloody gibbet on the mount?

“Yea, I know, but not for that weep I, but not for that. Love is my power; Love my mighty arm. Helpless I come, for love to die, for love to give man life. I am Life. My tears I shed for those who would not have Me.”  
 By James McSharry

## PARISH DIRECTORY AT A GLANCE

MINISTRY	LEAD	TELEPHONE
Parish Council	Peter Ruffing	478-1198
Liturgy Committee	Rex Rallanka	Rectory 444-3071
Finance Committee	Robert Ingenito	Rectory 444-3071
Cantor	Lola Krist	Rectory 444-3071
Choir-English	Rex Rallanka	Rectory 444-3071
Choir-Spanish	Jerry Vanoye	Rectory 444-3071
Docents	Denise Fracchia	Rectory 444-3071
Environment Committee	Chris Houlemard	Rectory 444-3071
Eucharistic Adoration	Isabella Cazares	391-1760
Evenings of the Engaged	Steve and Mariana Rose	421-2281
Festival of Trees & Lights	Valerie Chun	Rectory 444-3071
Gift Shop	Sister Jenny	444-5364
Hispanic Apostolate	Deacon Raul Leon	Rectory 444-3071
Hospitality Committee	Maria Balaskin	Rectory 444-3071
Knights of Columbus	Fr. Kiernan	Rectory 444-3071
Liturgical Ministries (Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altarservers)	Mike Ognisty	Rectory 444-3071
Parish Vocation Committee	Matthew Mlakar	648-3073
Rectory Volunteers & Staff	Fr. Kiernan	Rectory 444-3071
Religious Education & RCIA	Sr. Jenny	444-5364
Social Committee	Dawn Ruffing	Rectory 444-3071
Social Justice Committee	David Clements	646-1800
St. Vincent de Paul Society	Deacon Jorge Usi	Rectory 444-3071
Ushers	Tom Waddock	Rectory 444-3071
Visiting the Sick	Deacon Raul Leon	Rectory 444-3071
Welcome Back Program	Tim Longdon	Rectory 444-3071
Youth Spanish Group	Edgar & Leticia Hilbert	440-6211 or 261-6504

I am grateful to all who serve our parish in these ministries. We need more to help in these areas and new ministries can develop as in God's grace people come forward. May the Holy Spirit lead us and the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, inspire us.



**ADVENT LESSONS  
& CAROLS  
FRI DEC 11  
7:00 PM**

**THE COMBINED CHOIRS OF THE  
CATHEDRAL AND ST. STEPHEN  
THE FIRST MARTYR WILL SING  
ANTHEMS, HYMNS, AND CAROLS  
SPECIFIC TO ADVENT. FREE.**

**~ IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ~  
✠HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION  
TUESDAY DECEMBER 8, 2009**

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary fall nine months before her birth celebrated on September 8. A summary of the Church's teaching on this solemnity may be found in today's Preface which reflects Vatican II's document *Lumen Gentium*. First, Mary was free from sin from the moment she was conceived. Second, Mary, as a sign of the Church, is the bride of Christ, radiant in beauty. Third, the purity of Mary emanates from the innocence of the Lamb. And Fourth, Mary was predestined to be the advocate of grace and the model of sanctity for the People of God. We come to Mass today with the words of the angel Gabriel echoing in our hearts:



**"Blessed are we among the people because we  
have been chosen to bring Him into this world  
anew today."**

Masses for this solemnity will be on Monday December 7, 5:10pm Vigil, Tuesday, December 8, 12:10pm and 5:10pm.

**~ VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN PROGRAM ~**

Sacramento's volunteer community chaplain program responds with law enforcement to homicides, suicides, drowning, and other tragedies, providing profound comfort to traumatized survivors. It is the model program of its kind throughout the nation. If this is the kind of ministry to which you think you might be called, please visit [www.sacchaplains.com](http://www.sacchaplains.com) or call 916-857-1801 for more information.

**~ SINGLE ADULT RETREAT ~**

A retreat for separated, divorced, widowed and never-married Catholics will be held at Mercy Center in Auburn on Saturday, December 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (with Mass at 4:00 p.m.) For more information contact Steve Patton with the Diocese of Sacramento: 916-733-0133.

**~ CATHEDRAL YOUTH GROUP ~**

The Cathedral Youth Group (English and Spanish young people) meets every other Wednesday evening in the Lower Level from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday December 16, 2009. Please join the group for a young persons Catholic experience. For more information, contact Leticia and Edgar Hilbert at 457-1552 or Sister Jenny at 444-5364.

**CATHEDRAL MASS SCHEDULE**

- MON 12/7/2009 ST. AMBROSE, DOCTOR**  
Is 35: 1-10; Lk 5: 17-26  
12:10 pm: The Kelly Family, S.I.  
5:10 pm: Leone Ryan +
- TUES 12/8/2009 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**  
✠HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION  
Gen 3: 9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 1-12; Lk 1: 26-38  
12:10 pm: Alejandro Salazar +  
5:10 pm: Lorna Reschke, S.I.
- WED 12/9/2009 ST. JUAN DIEGO, HERMIT**  
Is 40: 25-31; Mt 11: 28-30  
12:10 pm: Michael E. Gutierrez +  
5:10 pm: Khan Nguyen +
- THU 12/10/2009 ADVENT WEDNESDAY**  
Is 41: 13-20; Mt 11: 11-15  
12:10 pm: Ryan Lumagui +  
5:10 pm: Toan Nguyen +
- FRI 12/11/2009 ST. DAMASUS I, POPE**  
Is 48: 17-19; Mt 11: 16-19  
12:10 pm: Ruben G. Gutierrez, S.I.  
NO EVENING MASS ON FRIDAYS

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**  
WED & THUR 12:40PM-4:45PM FRI 12:40PM-3:45PM  
TO SIGN UP CALL ISABELLA CAZARES 391-1760 OR 833-1948,  
OR E-MAIL [BECAZ96@SBCGLOBAL.NET](mailto:BECAZ96@SBCGLOBAL.NET)

**CATHEDRAL TOURS EVERY SUNDAY  
AFTER 9:00 AM AND 11 AM MASSES**