

*St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church
Martinez, California*

December 27, 2020



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**The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

**The child grew and became strong,
filled with wisdom;
and the favor of God was upon him.**

Luke 2:40

LITURGY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY: 8:00 AM - LIVESTREAMED ONLY

SUNDAY: 8:30 AM - OUTDOOR - Please register for Car or Individual Seating

11:00 AM - OUTDOOR - LIVESTREAMED (Drive-thru communion after Mass)

DAILY ROSARY: Monday - Saturday 7:30 AM

DAILY MASS: 8:00 AM - Livestreamed Only

DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET: 8:30 AM

NO ADORATION

RECONCILIATION: TBD

Please call the office or email for an appointment.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: Please call the office.

PARISH & SCHOOL STAFF

PARISH OFFICE: (925) 228 - 2230
FAX: (925) 228 - 1318

Fr. Anthony Huong Le,
Parochial Administrator
franthonyl@stcmtz.org

CHURCH LOCATION:

606 Mellus Street, Martinez, CA

PARISH OFFICE/CENTER & MAILING ADDRESS:

1125 Ferry Street
Martinez, CA 94553-1720

PARISH WEBSITE: www.stcmtz.org

OFFICE HOURS: PLEASE CALL FOR APPOINTMENT

Sylvia Lloren Ext. 1
Office Administrator/Sacramental Coordinator/Bulletin
sylvial@stcmtz.org

Troy Killorn Ext. 3
Director of Music Ministry / Maintenance Manager
troyk@stcmtz.org

Karen Glen Ext. 4
Bookkeeper / Safe Environment Coordinator / RCIA
kareng@stcmtz.org

Andrea Watkins Ext. 5
Director Religious Education (K-8)
Family Sunday Faith Formation Ministry
andreaw@stcmtz.org

Deacon Albert Dizon Ext. 7
dcnalbertd@stcmtz.org

Deacon David Holland Ext. 7
dcndaveh@stcmtz.org

Paul & Jennifer Holland Ext. 8
Co-coordinators, Confirmation Ministry
paulh@stcmtz.org & jennyh@stcmtz.org

ST. CATHERINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jessica Griswold, Principal jgriswold@csdo.org

SCHOOL K-8: 604 Mellus Street,
Martinez, CA 94553

TELEPHONE: 925-228-4140

FAX: 925-228-0697

OFFICE HOURS: TBD

SCHOOL WEBSITE:

<http://school.stcatherinemartinez.com>

ST. CATHERINE PRE-SCHOOL 925-229-

2255

Mea Auld, Pre-School Director mauld@csdo.org
scpreschool@comcast.net

PRE-SCHOOL LOCATION: 1125 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA
TELEPHONE / FAX: 925-229-2255 / 925-229-2474

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: Before serving or continuing in your ministry or organization, please complete the Diocesan required Safe Environment for Children Project Training @ www.virtusonline.org



PARISH REGISTRATION

Are you Registered with our Parish? Has your family status changed? If you would like to register or update your current family information with the Parish, you may do so with our new on-line form located on our website, www.stcmtz.org or call the office, and we can help you with any update.

The Mass schedule has been updated to the following **OUTDOOR** masses only.

The Rosary is prayed before all masses (livestreamed)
8:00 AM Daily Mass (Mon-Sat. Livestreamed Only)

8:30 AM Sunday, Mass (Outdoor - Bilingual) Please register online through the Parish website or Eventbrite. Both Pedestrian and Vehicle registration available. You may sit outside of your cars if you choose.

11:00 AM Sunday, Mass (Outdoor - Livestreamed)
Communion provided for 15 minutes after the Mass.

Please continue to sign up via:
Eventbrite or on our **Parish Website**.
The link is also available through **MyparishApp** message and/or our **Facebook** page.

DECEMBER 27th:

Fr. Anthony Le's - Farewell Mass
*Special send-off following both the
8:30AM and 11AM Masses*

JAN. 1st : New Year's Day Mass - 11 AM
Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

(Upper parking Lot and Livestreamed)

"Let's stay connected" via one of our many social media platforms:



Parish Website: www.stcmtz.org

Bulletin Submission email:
stcathmtz@yahoo.com

Submissions are due no later than 12 PM every Friday for the following Sunday.
Exception: Early Holiday Deadlines



Facebook:
<https://OfficialStCatherineofSienaChurch>



Myparishapp:
Please download:
myparishapp to your phones.

- Step 1.** Text App to number 88202.
Step 2. Download the app via the link.
Step 3. Search for St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Martinez.
Step 4. Now stay connected!
Step 5. Share with others, you know.
Go to the **menu**, click **share**, and choose

Dear Family and Friends,

May this Advent bring you closer to Jesus and his Mother. May the joy of Christmas radiate through you to those you love.

It has been a challenging year for all of us. When Covid-19 hit our land early this year, we were caught off guard. We did not prepare to stay away from the Church, community, families, and in-person worship for such a prolonged time. The pandemic changed our lives in many ways. Personally, serving our community during this time, I am reminded of three beautiful lessons.



First, the Lord is still in charge. Everything shall pass, and He will remain forever. The virus does not stop Him from doing miracles in the lives of His people. He continues to gather, feed, and care for us. Those who could not go out found live-streamed Masses and Devotions spiritual lifesavers as they were nurtured by God's word and the faithful community.

Second, our Faith is more potent than viruses and death. Our Faith binds us together in a time of distress. Our Faith has proven to be life-sustaining food as Covid-19 brings death and fear to the world and each of us. Inspired by our Faith, many of us walked extra miles to provide faith formation, spiritual package, and on-going support for those in need. We thank you very much to all those who participate in small or big ways.

Third, St. Catherine Parish is a small-but-mighty community. As a community, we never left the Lord during this time. We continue to gather virtually and in-person to celebrate our Faith. We support the Church wholeheartedly. We never stop sharing our blessings with our neighbors in need. We were so grateful for your support and prayers that help to maintain our community financially and spiritually. We believe that COVID-19, while terrifying and destructive, unveils the most profound spiritual truths that if we continue to remain faithful and committed to His mission as a community and individual faithful; we will survive and thrive regardless of the situation.

These lessons will go with me as I continue my journey as the Pastor of St. Joseph, Mission San Jose, Fremont, CA, effective **on January 1st, 2021**. I thank our Bishop and you all for three years of graces and challenges. Together with you, I have grown so much. I have learned to serve and love both in good and in bad times. Please continue to pray for me and especially for Fr. Michael Nufable as he comes to serve St. Catherine of Siena Parish and School. He is a good man and a good priest whose love for God and our Holy Mother Church is contagious and worthy of admiration. He speaks English without an accent, and he understands American culture very well as a person of Filipino descent. He has unwavering obedience to the teachings of the Church and our Bishop. Please love and support him from earth to heaven and back!

May the Lord of love and mercy award you all for your support, prayers, and gifts to the parish, and me personally these past three years and three months. Please know that I will pray and hold all of you in my heart.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family.
Yours in Christ,

Fr. Anthony Le
Parochial Administrator

“Thank You Fr. Anthony for your endless commitment and support to the community of St. Catherine of Siena Church and School.”

St. Catherine of Siena Parish follows Jesus by welcoming all, sharing our gifts, and giving glory to God.

December 27th, 2020

Gathering Hymn: Once in Royal David's City

IRBY /Henry J. Gauntlett / Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander

1. Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed. Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven Who is God
and Lord of all, And his shelter was a stable, And his
cradle was a stall. With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Penitential Act:

First Reading: SIR 3:2-6, 12-14

God sets a father in honor over his children;
a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. Who-
ever honors his father atones for sins, and preserves
himself from them.

When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who
reveres his mother. Whoever honors his father is
gladdened by children,
and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his
father will live a long life; he who obeys his father
brings comfort to his mother. My son, take care of
your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as
he lives.

Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him;
revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a
father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the
debt of your sins —a house raised in justice to you.

Responsorial Psalm

R. (7a, 8a) The Lord remembers his covenant forever.

Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name; make
known among the nations his deeds. Sing to him, sing
his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.

R. El Señor nunca olvida sus promesas.

Del nombre del Señor enorgullézcanse
y siéntase feliz el que lo busca. Recurran al Señor y a
su poder y a su presencia acudan.

R. The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

You descendants of Abraham, his servants,
sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He, the LORD, is our
God; throughout the earth his judgments prevail.

R. El Señor nunca olvida sus promesas.

Ni aunque transcurran mil generaciones,
se olvidará el Señor de sus promesas,
de la alianza pactada con Abraham, del juramento a
Isaac, que un día le hiciera.

R. El Señor nunca olvida sus promesas.

Segunda Lectura

Hermanos: Puesto que Dios los ha elegido a
ustedes, los ha consagrado a él y les ha dado su
amor, sean compasivos, magnánimos, humildes,
afables y pacientes. Sopórtense mutuamente y
perdónense cuando tengan quejas contra otro, co-
mo el Señor los ha perdonado a ustedes. Y sobre
todas estas virtudes, tengan amor, que es el vínculo
de la perfecta unión. Que en sus corazones reine la
paz de Cristo, esa paz a la que han sido llamados,
como miembros de un solo cuerpo. Finalmente,
sean agradecidos.

Que la palabra de Cristo habite en ustedes con toda
su riqueza. Enséñense y aconséjense unos a otros
lo mejor que sepan. Con el corazón lleno de grati-
tud, alaben a Dios con salmos, himnos y cánticos
espirituales; y todo lo que digan y todo lo que ha-
gan, háganlo en el nombre del Señor Jesús, dán-
dole gracias a Dios Padre, por medio de Cristo.
Mujeres, respeten la autoridad de sus maridos, co-
mo lo quiere el Señor. Maridos, amen a sus espos-
as y no sean rudos con ellas. Hijos, obedezcan en
todo a sus padres, porque eso es agradable al Se-
ñor. Padres, no exijan demasiado a sus hijos, para
que no se depriman.

R. Alleluia, ,alleluia, alleluia.

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the
prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us
through the Son.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 2: 22-40

When the days were completed for their purifica-
tion according to the law of Moses,
They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the
Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Eve-
ry male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to
the Lord,
and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or
two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in
the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, He took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted—and you yourself a sword will pierce—so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Profession of Faith

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(*At the words that follow, up to and including "and became man," all bow*)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I
look forward to the resurrection of the dead
And the life of the world to come. **Amen**

Presentation of the Gifts: Away in a Manger MUELLER

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

Holy, Holy, Holy / Great Amen / Lamb of God

Communion: What Child Is This GREENSLEEVES

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap
is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain

**This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds
guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring him
laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

2. Why lies he in such mean estate Where ox and
ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear: for sinners
here The silent Word is pleading.

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, Come
peasant, king, to own him; The King of kings salvation
brings, Let loving hearts enthrone him.

Text: 87 87 with refrain; Bramley and Stainer's Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871; William C. Dix, 1837–1898. Music: Trad. English melody, 16th cent.; Bramley and Stainer's Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871.

Sending Forth: Angels We Have Heard

1. Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing
o'er the plains, And the mountains in reply Echo
back their joyous strains.

Refrain

Verses

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous
strains prolong? Say what may the tidings be Which
inspire you heav'nly song.



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POWER IN PRESCRIBED RITUALS

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple at eight days old, as was prescribed by Mosaic law. For many Catholic families, baptismal gowns were handed down through generations, and a baptism was a time of great celebration. Sadly, in our culture, baptisms continue to decline. There are many reasons for this: fewer practicing Catholics, more interfaith marriages, more secular weddings, fewer weddings by clergy, and problems or misunderstandings that turn people away. Many have left the church altogether because of the way they were treated. For some the parish is not a welcoming place. For others baptism has become just a ritual they go through for the sake of the grandparents.

When someone does present a child for baptism, it can become too easy for others to pass judgment because the parents don't know the rubrics well, or aren't dressed better, or "why is that single mother having her baby baptized during Mass?" Notice that the Gospel says nothing about the priests of the temple and how they received Jesus. Rather it talks about Simeon and Anna. They are worth a study in themselves. Simeon is a devout man who is there waiting for a particular sign, and it is fulfilled when he see the Christ Child. Anna is just in the temple praying, as is her custom. After the presentation of Jesus, she does what she does best—she goes back to praying in the temple. Perhaps these readings teach us how we as a faith community can see the sacredness in those families presenting their children for baptism, and welcome them as did Anna and Simeon. May we all learn from their wisdom!

Today's Readings: Gn 15:1–6; 21:1–3; Ps 105:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9; Heb 11:8, 11–12, 17–19;
Lk 2:22–40 [22, 39–40]

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12/27/2020



***A Heartfelt Good-bye to Fr. Anthony;
our Priest, Friend, and Inspiration***

It is not often that a stranger enters your life and makes such an impact that you do not realize it until you stop and think about it because the reality of their departure is upon you. This is the case for many of us as we say good-bye to Fr. Anthony Le.

Fr. Anthony joined our parish at a time when we were getting comfortable with and developing an understanding of his predecessor. With Fr. Clarence's abrupt departure, our parish was again thrown into disarray with a variety of unfulfilled hopes and expectations and a continued desire for spiritual guidance and growth.

When he first arrived, the energy, passion, and love of Christ exuberated by Fr. Anthony was inspiring and, to some, a little intimidating. Soon after coming to our small parish, decisions were made, changes implemented, spiritual missions instituted, and a passion for spiritual improvement infused in many of us. It took some getting used to, but his impact on our parish is easily identifiable; from the renewed youth Faith Formation to the broad welcoming family Ignite ministry, the family and couple outreach effort, to the physical improvements to the Church, and Parish buildings; and his overall positive disposition shared with the students, staff, and Parishioners alike. Fr. Anthony is truly a man of God that we should all aspire to emulate.

As with all families or close communities, there will always be hurt feelings or misunderstandings that lead to conflict. However, in the case of our Parish and Fr. Anthony's desire to help us improve for the glory of God, it can only be said that his efforts and desires were positive and with good intention. Change is always hard. Fear of the unknown is difficult to face and overcome. However, Fr. Anthony has continually inspired us to have faith in God and one another.

He has worked with us as a leader to make us leaders, not just followers. We must continue his mission to make St. Catherine's focal point of faith and understanding in our community. We must continue to be the leaders in our faith as he has been for us, and as Jesus is for us all. We will welcome Fr. Michael with open arms and trust that God has placed him in our parish, in Fr. Anthony's 'shoes,' not to continue the path of Fr. Anthony but to make it his own, new, with a different perspective all while continuing to guide us to deepen our relationship with God as Fr. Anthony has.

Fr. Anthony, we thank you for the love, energy, passion, and dedication to Christ that you have provided over the past few years. You have inspired our children, our spouses, and each of us in one way or another.

We will miss you and hope you come back to visit. We wish you the best of luck at St. Joseph's, but please know that you will always hold a warm place in the heart of the St. Catherine of Siena Parish.



WORSHIP

To facilitate a transforming encounter with God as we come together in worship.

A beautiful Mass and dedication was celebrated on the Feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Special thanks to all those involved in making this Shrine a beautiful loving image for the entire Parish and Martinez Community.





STEWARDSHIP

To create a culture in the parish rooted in gratitude and generosity.

WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS

<u>Week of December 13th</u>		<u>ONLINE</u>
Weekly Offering:	\$3,048.00	\$2,172.00
All Saints / All Souls:	\$ 170.00	\$
Immaculate Conception:	\$ 130.00	\$ 165.00
Retirement:	\$ 310.00	
Maintenance:		\$ 20.00
Central Vietnam:	\$345.00	
St. Vincent de Paul:		\$ 155.00
Advent Tree:		\$ 781.00
School Scholarship:		\$ 60.00

Thank you for your continued support, both spiritual and financial.

Activity Center/Gymnasium: PACE I, II, FTP

Repurposed Donations: Week Ending 12/04/2020

Households/Individuals: 0 Amount: \$0

Reclaimed Donations:

Households/Individuals: 0 Amount: \$0

YEAR TO DATE

Week Ending 12/04/2020

Household/Individuals

Repurposed: \$791,064.75 254

Reclaimed: \$335,153.90 78

***As of 12/04/20 \$292,338.06 has been paid to back to Donor's.*



DISCIPLESHP

To empower a community of Christian people walking together as disciples of Jesus in order to share His good news.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

SAT	12/26	8:00	Int. Sabrina Ortiz
		4:30	Eleida Del Portal†
SUN	12/27	7:00	Int. of Parish Clergy & Staff
		8:30	Mario and Jennie Balestrieri†
		11:00	Walter & Michael Narodzonek†
		1:00	Int. People of the Parish
MON	12/28	8:00	Robert & Barbara Case†
TUE	12/29	8:00	Anthony Arias†
WED	12/30	8:00	Int. St. Catherine School Families
THUR	12/31	8:00	Paul Pabelico†
FRI	01/01	8:00	Int. People of the Parish
SAT	01/02	8:00	Marselina & Alejandra Gonzalez†
		4:30	Int. Benjamin Quisumbing-Birthday
SUN	01/03	7:00	Int. of Parish Clergy & Staff
		8:30	Robert & Barbara Case†
		11:00	Int. James Singh
		1:00	Int. Tomas Gallardo & Family



St. Catherine Parish offers deepest sympathy and prayers for the families and, the repose of the soul of all who entered into eternal life.

Dorothy Wright

Teresa Welch

James Singh

Victims of the Coronavirus

17th Annual WEST COAST WALK FOR LIFE

Saturday, JANUARY 23, 2021

Yes, the West Coast Walk for Life will happen; however, for the safety and health of our parishioners, we will not be renting a bus for a group walk this year. We will be offering our prayers for the end of abortion the day of the Walk at the 8:00AM Mass. Please plan on praying the Holy Rosary with us before the Mass at 7:30AM. Unless we are allowed to participate in Church, this will be a livestream event. Please look for updates on the Church website or Facebook. If you are planning to attend the WFL, please be aware of the possibility of a last-minute cancellation due to potential changes from the City of San Francisco, or for general public safety. Check the website (www.walkforlifewc.com) for any updates.



2021 Memorial Votive Candles are available to honor the deceased. They are located in the Sacred Heart of Jesus alcove in the church and can be reserved for one year, renewable thereafter. Forms are available on the website and at the parish office. Please call Sylvia at the office for more information.

THE CHILD GREW
AND BECAME STRONG,
FILLED WITH WISDOM;
AND THE FAVOR OF GOD
WAS UPON HIM.

LUKE 2:40



THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

DECEMBER 27, 2020

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FAMILY

On this feast of the Holy Family, we want to offer all families blessings. “Family” may have a lot of different connotations these days. In the United States, the “father, mother, child” family is less common now, and large Catholic families are not as common as they once were. The concept of family is more fluid with many forms of blended families due to second marriages, multigenerational households, and other living arrangements. In a recent survey by the Pew research center, four in ten babies are born to single mothers. Other children are being raised by grandparents or foster parents. In today’s Genesis story, Abraham was ready to concede to another form of family, making the child of one of his servants his heir. The reading from Hebrews reiterates the story of Genesis, and “your descendants will be more numerous than the stars.” The Gospel relates the story of the presentation in the temple.

POWER IN PRESCRIBED RITUALS

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple at eight days old, as was prescribed by Mosaic law. For many Catholic families, baptismal gowns were handed down through generations, and a baptism was a time of great celebration. Sadly, in our culture, baptisms continue to decline. There are many reasons for this: fewer practicing Catholics, more interfaith marriages, more secular weddings, fewer weddings by clergy, and problems or misunderstandings that turn people away. Many have left the church altogether because of the way they were treated. For some the parish is not a welcoming place. For others baptism has become just a ritual they go through for the sake of the grandparents.

EXAMPLES IN OUR ELDERS

When someone does present a child for baptism, it can become too easy for others to pass judgment because the parents don’t know the rubrics well, or aren’t dressed better, or “why is that single mother having her baby baptized during Mass?” Notice that the Gospel says nothing about the priests of the temple and how they received Jesus. Rather it talks about Simeon and Anna. They are worth a study in themselves. Simeon is a devout man who is there waiting for a particular sign, and it is fulfilled when he see the Christ Child. Anna is just in the temple praying, as is her custom. After the presentation of Jesus, she does what she does best—she goes back to praying in the temple. Perhaps these readings teach us how we as a faith community can see the sacredness in those families presenting their children for baptism, and welcome them as did Anna and Simeon. May we all learn from their wisdom!

TODAY’S READINGS

Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3
Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9
Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19
Luke 2:22–40 [22, 39–40]

READINGS & REFLECTIONS

Sunday, Dec 27, 2020

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

The measure of success

Fruitfulness is a sign that we're doing something right. Plant a seed, water it, give it light, and it brings forth a shoot. Neglect it, and get nothing. We measure success in terms of fruitfulness: schooling completed, jobs held, relationships that endure, children raised, financial security, years lived, virtues practiced. God blessed Abram with wealth and years, but to that old man, the only true measure of success was a child. By what standard do you evaluate your life's worth? What's required for you to say in the end: "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace"? **TODAY'S READINGS:** Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Luke 2:22-40; or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40 (17). "But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless?'"

Monday, Dec 28, 2020

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

Suffer little children

On the heels of the joyful celebration of the birth of our Savior, we remember the Holy Innocents—all the baby boys who were murdered by Herod in his attempt to kill the child Jesus. Remember too all those innocents who die today at the hands of their governments and who are victims of institutional and structural violence. About the Holy Innocents, Matthew quotes Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children . . ." Console today's mourning mothers by fighting for children's rights and protections. **TODAY'S READINGS:** 1 John 1:5—2:2; Matthew 2:13-18 (698). "My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin."

Tuesday, Dec 29, 2020

FIFTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; MEMORIAL OF THOMAS BECKET, BISHOP, MARTYR

Choosing right vs. might

Thomas Becket found himself having to choose between an earthly king and Christ the King. The cleric Thomas befriended England's Henry II—leading Henry to appoint him chancellor. Later, when Henry spotted a chance to wield power over church affairs, he named his friend the archbishop of Canterbury. But Thomas would not go along with Henry's plans. Repercussions followed, and in 1170 Thomas was brutally murdered—in Canterbury Cathedral—by the king's men. Though perhaps with less dramatic outcomes, standing up for your convictions may cost you, too. Are you willing to pay the price? **TODAY'S READINGS:** 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35 (202). "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many."

Wednesday, Dec 30, 2020

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

The party never ends

On this sixth day of the Octave, the Christmas celebration continues. Or it can—even if the culture around us has moved on. Especially in pandemic days, you may feel challenged to find hope and joy in the promise that God is with us. So celebrate by sharing that Divine Love, however you feel able to. Bake and share cookies, make a call to someone you may have overlooked this busy season, write a note of gratitude to

someone who challenges you, or contribute to an organization that cares for mothers and children in this season of the Holy Family. Take time in prayer to recollect and give thanks for any awareness of God's presence in recent days. *Loving God, help me remember that Christmas is not a day but rather a season that invites me to see you at work in my life every day.*

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 (203). "And coming forward at that very time, [Anna] gave thanks to God and spoke about the child."

Thursday, Dec 31, 2020

SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

The light still shines

We might well ring out a difficult year with the words of today's psalmist: "Let the heavens be glad and the Earth rejoice!" Rejoicing implies an expectation of better things to come, placing us firmly within the Christian virtue of hope. Christians are hopeful for many reasons, starting with the fact that Jesus's death led to resurrection. The church teaches, too, that hope lies in building the kingdom of God on Earth, "as it is in heaven." Lift up your hopes for 2021 to God, and be ready to work for them with God's grace.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204). "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Friday, Jan 01, 2021

WORLD DAY OF PEACE; OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Renew the face of the Earth

We have longed for the year 2020 to be over, to move away from the pandemics that have wounded us collectively and individually. With 2021 on the calendar now, it feels like maybe, just maybe we can start anew at some point. Given the chance, we, along with all of creation, have the capacity to renew, that is, to be "new again"—not only each year but each moment. An essential ingredient to renewal is peace. The church calls us to follow Christ the Way of Peace, as Pope Benedict said on this day in 2007, "with hearts full of hope, notwithstanding the dangers and difficulties that surround us." Let us pray for *and choose* peace for ourselves and for the world in all that we renew this year. **TODAY'S READINGS:** Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."

Saturday, Jan 02, 2021

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

Spiritual friendship lasts for ages

Spiritual friendship is one of the greatest gifts of life in a faith community. Basil and Gregory, fourth-century patriarchs of the Eastern Church, had such a friendship and spurred each other on to great accomplishments and service in their spiritual lives. We all need community and spiritual support as we work through the mysteries of our own personal lives and the challenges presented by a suffering world. Who can you count on for support and encouragement in these hard times? Do your resolutions for this new year include cultivation of spiritual community and friendships? **TODAY'S READINGS:** 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). "All the ends of the Earth have seen the salvation by our God."

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