TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

Church of the Epiphany

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage.
Matthew 2:10-11 (NABRE)

827 Vienna Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
Tel. (415) 333-7630
Fax. (415) 333-1803
www.epiphanysf.com
facebook.com/cotesf94112

Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.
James 5:4

Pastor
Rev. Eugene Tungol ext: 118

Parochial Vicar
Rev. Michael Rocha ext: 116

In Residence
Rev. Rolando Caverte ext: 126

Deacon(s)
Deacon Ven Garcia, Jr. ext: 114
Deacon Jerald Geronimo

Directors of Music
Leon Palad (English),
Roberto Garcia-Leiva (Spanish)

Director of Finance & Plant Management
Terry O'Neill

Bookkeeper
Willie Lim ext: 112

Parish Office & School of Religion Support Staff
Jesús Pedroza ext: 113

Elementary School Principal
Brian Joost

School of Religion/ Faith Formation
Phillip Carrion ext: 115
RCIA : Jesús Pedroza ext: 113

Daily Masses/Misas Diarias:
6:30am & 8:00am
Saturday Masses/Misa los Sábados:
8:00am & 5:30pm
Sunday Masses/Misas los Domingos:
6:30am, 8:30am, 10:00am (livestream),
11:30am (español) & 1:00pm
Adoration/Adoración:
First Fridays/Primer viernes del mes
8:30am-12:00pm

School of Epiphany:
600 Italy Ave. San Francisco, CA 94112
Office: 415-337-4030
Fax: 415-337-8583

Parish Office Hours:
Monday-Friday 8:30am – 12:00pm

Confessions: Saturday 4:00pm-5:00pm
Confesiones: Sabados 4:00pm-5:00pm

Sick Calls
In case of an emergency, please contact the parish office at 415-333-7630 any hour of the day or night.

Copyright © J.S. Paluch Co. Inc.
Photos: © PD-Wikimedia,
Des Glaneuses by Jean-François Millet
Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass
© 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970, CCD.

Reflections ~ Reflexiones

Gospel: Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Like Moses before him, Jesus wants God's healing power to be shared by as many as possible. When a disciple complains about a man who is healing in Jesus' name but who is not one of their company, Jesus assures him, "Whoever is not against us is for us." Doing good is not to be restricted to an exclusive few. Giving a good example to the "little ones" or those of simple faith will be rewarded. Anyone who leads them astray deserves punishment. Since our hands, our feet, and our eyes can lead us into sin, we are to use them instead in ways that honor God's Kingdom of love, justice, and peace. By doing so, we help to make God's reign visible in our midst.

1.) How might we apply what Jesus says in today's Gospel to the ways in which we support those who serve in his name?
2.) What does Jesus say about those who lead the little ones astray?
3.) Name some of the ways you have used your hands, feet, and eyes to help make God's reign visible to others.

Evangelio: Marcos 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Igual que Moisés antes que él, Jesús quiere que el poder sanador de Dios sea compartido por la mayor cantidad de personas posible. Cuando los discípulos protestaron sobre un hombre que quería ser sanado en nombre de Jesús porque no era de su grupo, Jesús le aseguró: "El que no está contra nosotros está con nosotros". Hacer el bien no es exclusivo de unos pocos. Dar buen ejemplo a los "pequeños" o los de fe simple será recompensado. Todo aquel que dé mal ejemplo merece ser castigado.
Porque nuestras manos, pies y ojos pueden llevarnos a pecar, debemos usarlos en formas que honren el reino de amor, paz y justicia de Dios. Haciendo esto ayudamos a hacer visible el Reino de Dios en nuestro medio.

1.) ¿Cómo debemos aplicar lo que Jesús nos dice en este evangelio sobre las formas en que debemos apoyar a los que sirven en su nombre?
2.) ¿Qué dice Jesús sobre los que dan mal ejemplo a otros?
3.) Nombra algunas de las formas en que has usado tus manos, pies y ojos para ayudar a hacer visible el Reino de Dios a otros.

Treasures from our Traditions ~ Tradiciones de nuestra Fe

Did you ever notice how often the angels are referred to during Mass? We commonly meet them in the Confiteor ("I ask blessed Mary, every virgin, all the angels and saints"), prefaces ("with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven"), the Roman Canon ("we pray that your angel may take this sacrifice"), and Eucharistic Prayer IV ("countless hosts of angels stand before you to do your will"). Last week and this week angels abound as we celebrated Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael yesterday and will honor the Guardian Angels on October 2.
September 29 was originally the feast day for Michael alone. Gabriel and Raphael joined him in the 1969 reform of the Church calendar. The celebration of the Guardian Angels has been observed since the sixteenth century in Spain. Pope Clement X assigned the feast to the first free day after St. Michael's in 1670, and there it has remained. Take some time this week to reflect on these, God's messengers and our protectors, and maybe even celebrate with a little angel food cake! —*Rev. James Field*,
Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

En 1648 el franciscano, Matías Abad llegó a la selva chocoana en la costa pacífica de Colombia. Allí, a pesar de los ataques indígenas en contra de los misioneros, pudo celebrar la fiesta de san Francisco (4 de octubre). Al pasar de los años la devoción a San Francisco en Chocó se convirtió en una mezcla de la fe católica, las religiones africanas y la brujería. Este sincretismo es una forma de superstición que busca utilizar al santo en lugar de imitarlo.
Esta confianza en imágenes y estatuas es común y hasta peligrosa entre los latinoamericanos. Las hazañas de ciertas imágenes milagrosas llegan a proporciones exageradas. Por ejemplo, la imagen de "San Pachito", como lo llaman los chocoanos, se le atribuye haber apagado un incendio que amenazaba la población. La pusieron delante de las llamas y las apagó con su propio sudor.
Hay que tener cuidado con la importancia de las imágenes sagradas de nuestras tradiciones. En un descuido pueden convertirse en ídolos o amuletos en lugar del recuerdo de la presencia divina y el desafío de vivir en santidad.
—*Fray Gilberto Cavazos-Glz, OFM,*
Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

Thank you!

*My Heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the following parishioners who have so far responded to our 2021 Archdiocesan Annual Appeal. As of now, we have received **$53,000** of our assigned goal, which is **$101,636**. If you have not received a brochure, please pick one up in the Church or the Parish office. Thank you for your generosity!! May God bless you and your families.*

Rev. Eugene Tungol
Pastor

Ms. Ligia Afu-Li
Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Antonio
Mr. Juanito Barrientos
Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd L. Bartolome
Ms. Maria Evelia Bonal
Mrs. Nalisce Cabitac
Ms. Julie B. Cavestany
Ms. Christina Cerda
Ms. Yolanda Chankuo
Ms. Petra Diao
Mr. & Mrs. Edgardo Dizon
Mr. Durand Garcia
Ms. Clarissa B. Go
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher L. Holland
Ms. Corazon Javier
Mrs. Doris Lewis
Ms. Juliet Llaguno
Ms. Ashley Moreno
Mrs. Zosima Pangilinan
Mrs. Elsa Pascual
Mr. & Mrs. Pablo Pastor
Ms. Patricia Pianko Paz
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Z. Sim
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Tannehill
Ms. Belen Uchi
Mr. William Zapata

If your name is not listed above, please understand that it takes time to receive the donor's list. Please be patient and again thank you for your generosity.

Please note: **only new donors (those whose names have not appeared before in the bulletin) will be listed.**

Please be sure to visit:
https://epiphanysf.com/parish-online-giving

ONLINE GIVING

Calendar / Calendario

Sunday, September 26, 2021
12:00pm: OKH Grupo Oración – Deacon Ocón Talk
2:30pm: RH EFCB
2:30pm: CH Spanish Baptisms
6:00pm: CH San Lorenzo Ruiz Novena
7:00pm: OKH Sunday Silence-AA

Monday, September 27, 2021
7:00pm: OKH St. Vincent de Paul
7:00pm: OKH Grupo Progreso-AA

Tuesday, September 28, 2021
5:00pm: RH Legion de María

Wednesday, September 29, 2021
8:45am: AS Legion of Mary
7:00pm: OKH Grupo Progreso-AA

Thursday, September 30, 2021
7:00pm: OKH Grupo de Oracíon

Friday, October 1, 2021
6:30pm: RH Outreach Commission
6:30pm: OKH Ep. Youth Group

Saturday, October 2, 2021
4:00pm: CH Confessions

Sunday, October 3, 2021
9:30am: RH Spanish Baptism Preparation Class
2:00pm: OKH Knights of Columbus
2:30pm: CH English Baptisms
7:00pm: OKH Sunday Silence-AA

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Priesthood Sunday
Monday: St. Vincent de Paul
Tuesday: St. Lawrence Ruiz and Companions; St. Wenceslaus
Wednesday: Ss. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael
Thursday: St. Jerome
Friday: St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus; First Friday
Saturday: The Holy Guardian Angels; First Saturday

Intentions/Intenciones

Sunday, September 26, 2021
6:30am: Deborah Sheehan †
8:30am: Ludovico Cava †
10:00am: People of the Parish
11:30am: Lucrecia Murillo †
1:00pm: Carlos Marquez, IV †

Monday, September 27, 2021
6:30am: Ludevico Buenaventura †
8:00am: Jim Manley †,
Alicia Masangcay †,
Maria Araceli Mendoza †
Guadalupe Valdivia-Ortega †,
Intention for: Jaymie Garcia

Tuesday, September 28, 2021
6:30am: Bert & Mary Ohlander †
8:00am: Giovanni & Maria Lombardi †

Wednesday, September 29, 2021
6:30am: Ludevico Buenaventura †
8:00am: Ponciano Juangco & Miguela J. Gozun †

Thursday, September 30, 2021
6:30am: Victor Tolosa †
8:00am: ***Thanksgiving:*** Rita II Mendoza

Friday, October 1, 2021
6:30am: Efren Tungol †
8:00am: Robert Ha †

Saturday, October 2, 2021
8:00pm: Victoria Casuga †
5:30pm: Analiza B. Guevarra †

Sunday, October 3, 2021
6:30am: Christian Matthew Klotz †
8:30am: Ludovico Cava †
10:00am: People of the Parish
11:30am: Gabriela Pacello †
1:00pm: Jovy Milano Elizarde †

COLLECTIONS

September 19, 2021 – 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
1st Collection: $9,724.16
2nd Collection: $1,458.00

Thank you for your generosity!

Second Collections:
Today: Priest's Retirement Fund
Next Week: Parish School

Epiphany Parish News

PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY

Today is Priesthood Sunday, a nationally celebrated day on which Catholics affirm our priests who dedicate their lives for our salvation. The most important way to show our appreciation is to pray for our priests. Take a moment each day to remember our priests who serve us. Through them Christ is made present in our lives. COVID is doing its BEST to interrupt the communications between our priests and us. We need our priests, and our priests need us. Email your priest(s) a note of affirmation; send them Spiritual Bouquets or cards of thanks and support. If you are financially able, send them a gift card or make a donation to the parish in their name. We are our priests' families; make them feel like a valued and loved member of your family. Vocations to the priesthood are at an all time low, maybe because young men might avoid this special calling because they see it as a lonely life. Making our priests part of our families would help to change this perception, and help to motivate those discerning the priesthood. Prayer cards for vocations are available in the vestibule of the church.

ATHLETICS VOLUNTEER

The parish sports program is looking for help monitoring the gym for the games by checking in fans at the door. If you're interested, please contact the gym office at (415) 333-5562.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In all our thoughts and actions we ought to remember the presence of God, and account all lost in which we think not of God.
—*St. Bernard of Clairvaux*

FEAST OF FAITH

The Lord's Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the great "Amen," the acclamation of assent by the assembly. Then the Communion rite begins with the Lord's Prayer. We pray this prayer in many contexts, both inside and outside the Church's liturgy. Here, in the context of the Mass, the Lord's Prayer is profoundly eucharistic. When we ask for our "daily bread," we are asking for the gift of the Eucharist. When we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others, we are seeking forgiveness and purity of heart before we approach the altar to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood—"so that what is holy may, in fact, be given to those who are holy" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 81).
At Mass, a prayer for peace is inserted between the prayer and the doxology. In this prayer, called the embolism, the Church asks God for freedom—freedom from sin and all anxiety and distress. We are living in an in-between time; even as we rejoice in Christ's presence, we await his coming in joyful hope. —*Corinna Laughlin*,
Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

PROCLAIM THE WONDER OF GOD

The gift of the Spirit is given freely, not according to human expectations, but according to the generosity of God. Joshua wants Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying in the camp, when they were not with the others as the spirit was bestowed on them. Moses, so close to God's mind in the matter, wishes everyone could possess the spirit of God and proclaim it to the nations.
Psalm 19 celebrates the perfection of God's law, and how it brings joy and delight. It is better than the finest gold or the sweetest honey. Moreover, God gives the wisdom of the prophets to everyone, especially the simple and lowly ones, even to children. It is the "little ones" who proclaim the wonder of God to all. *Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.*

EPIPHANY GABRIEL PROJECT

Epiphany is a Gabriel Project Parish, but we need a coordinator! The Gabriel Project is a marvelous way to show the community that your parish cares about pregnant mothers in need and that there is no reason for any mother within its boundaries to feel that she is helpless and alone. To this end, printed materials, training of parish volunteers, the central toll-free helpline, and overall project coordination are provided to parishes at no cost. Please consider this ministry, or, if you know someone who would be great at helping these young women, please invite them to contact the parish office with your name and number, and the Outreach Commission will get in touch with you. Also, you can read about the Archdiocesan program. https://sfarchdiocese.org/gabrielproject.

ARCHDIOCESE GABRIEL PROJECT (SPANISH SPEAKING)

This volunteer opportunity is for the Archdiocese, not just Epiphany who speaks Spanish. This important ministry helps pregnant women who feel overwhelmed, alone, and need assistance. Besides friendship and emotional support, project "Angels" (parishioners) provide pastoral care and as well as more tangible help. For more information about this wonderful pro-life volunteer opportunity please contact the parish office with your name and number, and the Outreach Commission will get in touch with you.

NURSE VOLUNTEERS

The Archdiocese is looking for nurse volunteers to assist the Priests' Care Manager in supporting our senior and infirmed priests. Interested active or retired nurses can contact Ms. Rachel Alvelais, Priests' Care Manager below: alvelaisr@sfarch.org, 415-297-2549

Noticias de Epifanía

DOMINGO DEL SACERDOCIO

Hoy es el Domingo del Sacerdocio, un día celebrado a nivel nacional en el que los católicos afirman a nuestros sacerdotes que dedican sus vidas por nuestra salvación. La forma más importante de mostrar nuestro agradecimiento es orar por nuestros sacerdotes. Tome un momento cada día para recordar a nuestros sacerdotes que nos sirven. A través de ellos Cristo se hace presente en nuestras vidas. COVID está haciendo todo lo posible para interrumpir las comunicaciones entre nuestros sacerdotes y nosotros. Necesitamos a nuestros sacerdotes, y nuestros sacerdotes nos necesitan. Envíe por correo electrónico a su(s) sacerdote(s) una nota de afirmación; enviarles Ramos espirituales o tarjetas de agradecimiento y apoyo. Si tiene capacidad financiera, envíeles una tarjeta de regalo o haga una donación a la parroquia en su nombre. Somos las familias de nuestros sacerdotes; hazlos sentir como un miembro apreciado y querido de tu familia. Las vocaciones al sacerdocio están en su punto más bajo, tal vez porque los hombres jóvenes podrían evitar este llamado especial porque lo ven como una vida solitaria. Haciendo que nuestros sacerdotes son parte de nuestras familias ayudaría a cambiar esta percepción, y ayuda a motivar a los que están discerniendo el sacerdocio. Las tarjetas de oración por las vocaciones están disponibles en el vestíbulo de la iglesia.

VOLUNTARIO DE ATLETISMO

El programa de deportes de la parroquia está buscando ayuda para monitorear el gimnasio para los juegos al registrar a los fanáticos en la puerta. Si está interesado, comuníquese con la oficina del gimnasio al (415) 333-5562.

FIESTA DE LA FE

Eucaristía y justicia

Al celebrar la Eucaristía siempre podemos caer en la tentación de desencarnarla de la vida diaria, sobre todo de lo que implique organización social, educación, promoción humana, justicia, en fin, todo lo que es pro vida, a favor de la vida. San Juan Crisóstomo nos lo recuerda casi a manera profética: "¿Deseas honrar el cuerpo de Cristo? No lo desprecies, pues, cuando lo encuentres desnudo en los pobres, ni lo honres aquí en el templo con lienzos de seda, si al salir lo abandonas en su frío y desnudez. Porque el mismo que dijo: "esto es mi cuerpo", y con su palabra llevó a realidad lo que decía, afirmó también: "Tuve hambre y no me disteis de comer", y más adelante: "Siempre que dejasteis de hacerlo a uno de estos pequeñuelos, a mí en persona lo dejasteis de hacer" [. . .]. ¿De qué serviría adornar la mesa de Cristo con vasos de oro, si el mismo Cristo muere de hambre? Da primero de comer al hambriento, y luego, con lo que te sobre, adornarás la mesa de Cristo»: San Juan Crisóstomo, Homilías sobre el Evangelio de Mateo, 50, 3-4: PG 58, 508-509.
—*Miguel Arias*, **Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.**

PROCLAMEN LA MARAVILLA DE DIOS

El don del Espíritu se da libremente, y no de acuerdo con expectativas humanas, sino de acuerdo a la generosidad de Dios. Josué quiere que Moisés ponga un alto a Eldad y Medad que estaban profetizando en el campamento, porque no estuvieron con los demás cuando el espíritu descendió sobre ellos. Moisés, tan cerca de la mente de Dios en este asunto, quiere que todo el mundo pueda poseer el espíritu de Dios y proclamarlo a las naciones.
El Salmo 18 celebra la perfección de la ley de Dios y la forma en que trae alegría y deleite. Es mejor que el oro más fino o la más dulce miel. Además, Dios nos da la sabiduría de los profetas a todos, especialmente los sencillos y humildes, incluso a los niños. Son los "pequeños" que proclaman las maravillas de Dios a todos. **Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.**

PROYECTO GABRIEL DE EPIFANÍA

Epifanía es una parroquia del Proyecto Gabriel, ¡pero necesitamos un coordinador! El Proyecto Gabriel es una manera maravillosa de mostrarle a la comunidad que su parroquia se preocupa por las madres embarazadas necesitadas y que no hay razón para que ninguna madre dentro de sus límites se sienta indefensa y sola. Con este fin, el material impreso, formación de voluntarios de la parroquia, el centro de la línea de ayuda de teléfono gratuito, y la coordinación general del proyecto se proporcionan a las parroquias sin costo. Por favor, considere este ministerio o, si conoce a alguien que sería excelente para ayudar a estas jóvenes, invítelo a comunicarse con la oficina parroquial con su nombre y número, y la Comisión de Alcance se comunicará con usted. Además, puede leer sobre el programa arquidiocesano. https://sfarchdiocese.org/gabrielproject.

PROYECTO GABRIEL DE LA ARQUIDIÓCESIS (EN ESPAÑOL)

Esta oportunidad de voluntariado es para la Arquidiócesis, no solo para la Epifanía que hablan español. Este importante ministerio ayuda a las mujeres embarazadas que se sienten abrumadas, solas y necesitan ayuda. Además de la amistad y el apoyo emocional, el proyecto "Ángeles" (feligreses) proporciona atención pastoral y ayuda más tangible. Para obtener más información sobre esta maravillosa oportunidad de voluntariado pro-vida, comuníquese con la oficina parroquial con su nombre y número, y la Comisión de Alcance se pondrá en contacto con usted.

LA MEDIDA DE DIOS

Debemos amar a Dios porque él es Dios, y la medida de nuestro amor debe ser amarlo sin medida.
—*San Bernardo de Claraval*

Today's Readings:

First Reading — Moses said, "Would that all the people of the LORD were prophets!" (Numbers 11:25-29).

Psalm — The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart (Psalm 19).

Second Reading — Come now, you rich. The wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud (James 5:1-6).

Gospel — Whoever is not against us is for us (Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from *Lectionary for Mass* © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Readings For The Week:

Monday	Zec 8:1-8; Ps 102:16-21, 29, 22-23; Lk 9:46-50
Tuesday	Zec 8:20-23; Ps 87:1b-7; Lk 9:51-56
Wednesday	Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 or Rv 12:7-12a; Ps 138:1-5; Jn 1:47-51
Thursday	Neh 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12; Ps 19:8-11; Lk 10:1-12
Friday	Bar 1:15-22; Ps 79:1b-5, 8-9; Lk 10:13-16
Saturday	Bar 4:5-12, 27-29; Ps 69:33-37; Mt 18:1-5, 10
Sunday	Gn 2:18-24; Ps 128:1-6; Heb 2:9-11; Mk 10:2-16 [2-12]

Pray for the Sick:
Oremos por los enfermos:

Mary Anduha, Leticia G. Agpoon, Lydia Artuz, Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, Adora L. Carabio, Kay Castle, Linda Cheng, Regina Connors, Daniel Copenhaver, Kenny Devenere, Ruben Garcia, Jr., Daniel Gotaj, John Gutierrez, Paul Gutierrez, Charles Hanneman, Nathan Hanneman, Mario & Petra Laguatan, Rosario Lapuz, Elenor Lasola, Maggie Lopez, Almira Montemayor, Jose-Edson Naval, Robert Neri, Jose Ortega, Delia O. Pangilinan, Sandra Patzan, Tam Pham, Tien Pham, Efrain Sanchez, Maria Silmaro, Ramon Solorzano, Dante Tayag, Elena S. Tolentino, Trifuna Tomagan, Fr. Eugene Tungol, Armando Uy, Conrado Uy, Jr., Ricardo Uy, Rolando Uy, Javier Vasquez, Franz Wall

&

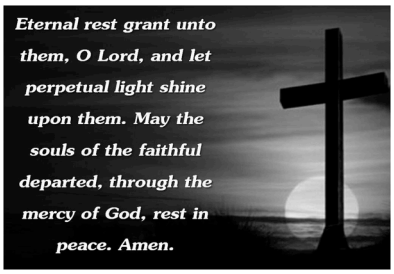
Those suffering from COVID-19

Please help us to keep our prayer list current. We will keep all requests on our prayer list for <u>ONE</u> MONTH unless notified to keep them on longer.

Pray for the Recently Deceased
Oremos por los Recientemente Difuntos:

William Frederick Gottheld, Mitchel Arthur Kiefer, Kanga Yap

And for those who have died by violence this past week.



<u>Sacrament of Baptism</u>

Registered parishioners are invited to have their children baptized at Church of the Epiphany. Parents and Godparents must participate in our Baptismal Preparation program.

<u>Sacrament of Matrimony</u>

To be married at Church of the Epiphany either the bride or groom must be ***Roman Catholic***.

1. You qualify as an "in parish" couple if you live within the parish boundaries or, have been registered and active for six months; or if you're an alumni of School of the Epiphany.
2. If you do not meet one of the qualifications above, then you are considered an "outside of the parish" couple. Contact the parish office at least six months prior to the date of your proposed wedding to participate in our marriage preparation program.

<u>Anointing of the Sick</u>

This sacrament is for the seriously ill, or those scheduled for surgery. Call the parish office when a family member is admitted to a hospital or nursing facility.

<u>REGISTERING TO OUR PARISH:</u>

https://epiphanysf.com/register-as-new-parishioner or visit the parish office

<u>Our Mission Statement:</u>

We the people of the Church of the Epiphany strive to be a peaceful and welcoming parish. We strive to be mutually supportive of diverse communities. We strive to show compassion without distinction of age, gender, race or culture. Epiphany seeks to be a caring and loving community ever growing in faith formation.

Twenty-sixth
Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 26, 2021

© J. S. Paluch Co., Inc. · Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass* © 2008, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970, CCD. All rights reserved. Photo: a child gives water to an elderly woman; Renáta Sedmáková/Alamy Stock

Any who give you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose their reward.

Mark 9:41

THE FREEDOM OF GOD

Today's readings remind us that God is free: God acts as God wills regardless of what human beings might expect. In the reading from Numbers, God's spirit enters two men, Eldad and Medad, even though they had not been with the others who had received the spirit of God. And in Mark's Gospel, Jesus endorses an unknown exorcist, who did God's work in the name of Jesus but was not officially sanctioned by the disciples. That God's spirit is shared widely does not threaten Moses or Jesus. They celebrate the notion that God's spirit blows where it wills. Moses was shaping the people of Israel, and Jesus similarly was shaping the community of disciples, to encounter a radically free God who doesn't fit their preconceptions. This encounter, when received with humility, widens their vision and deepens their faith. God continues to shape the Church similarly today, to open us up to God's freedom.

LOOK WITHIN

A wrestling match of sorts takes place in this section of Mark's Gospel. Jesus tries mightily to describe what it will mean to be his followers, and the disciples try mightily to avoid the subject. They point to an outsider, and the dangers he poses. Jesus turns the tables and asks his disciples to look within themselves: how are they a danger to Jesus and his work? Jesus uses graphic language, invoking self-amputation, to underscore his point.

Sometimes our most difficult obstacles lie deep within. Like our hands and feet, some attitudes and habits are deeply a part of us, and their removal would be traumatic for us. Yet we know that some beliefs (such as idolatries based on race, wealth, or gender) or behaviors (such as addictions) seriously harm ourselves and many others. We need a prayerful, non-neurotic watchfulness about our inner life. When necessary, we need a fierce resistance to anything that places us or others in danger.

UNITY IN CHRIST

Jesus, in today's Gospel from Mark, says "whoever is not against us is for us." Mark was speaking to his own Christian community. From its beginnings, there were tensions in the Church about who speaks for Jesus. Jesus himself always called for unity of heart and a diversity of expression as a sign of the truth of the Gospel. It is no secret that in Christian history and continuing today, divisions have seriously damaged the message and cause of Christ.

In our own time and place, cultural and political divisions have reduced our ability to solve problems and to live together in a just and peaceful society. Perhaps this is a time for Christians to step up, to remember that our unity in Christ is far deeper than the differences that we perceive. We are called to reach out and listen to each other, to honor each other as members of the Body of Christ. Christians can lead the way, and show everyone watching how it's done.

TODAY'S READINGS

Numbers 11:25–29
Psalm 19:8, 10, 12–13, 14
James 5:1–6
Mark 9:38–43, 45, 47–48