

Our Challenge: Love One Another

In today's First Reading from the Book of Leviticus, we are given a challenge: if we truly believe in God's holiness, then we too will reflect that holiness in our lives; seeking no revenge, holding no grudge, loving others as God loves us; this is our Christian challenge. • The Responsorial, from Psalm 103, reminds us that God's greatness is most expressed in His mercy. Though He has every right to our fidelity, He nonetheless is always willing to forgive our sins, especially since that is what brings us misery. Our sin is self-destructive and God's forgiveness, specially offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, rescues us from that and what we truly deserve. In this Sacrament, God's mercy is a free and loving gift. God does not forgive us because He has to, but because He wants to. God is a loving parent who wants to heal and love us. Throughout today's readings we are challenged to be merciful to others as God is with us. • In the Second Reading, St. Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts, and in a special way through the Eucharist. So, we should treat others and ourselves with sacred dignity, as we strive to follow Christ wholeheartedly. We all belong to Christ and all that belongs to Christ, belongs in turn to God. • In Matthew's gospel today, Jesus turns the Old Law on its head. Jesus calls us to go beyond the pagan/tax collectors' kind of love of just being nice to those who are nice to us, and challenges us to be perfect (pure) in our love of others. The Old Testament tried to limit revenge to an eye for an eye, but Jesus wants us to go beyond that level of responsibility and respond to hurt and injustice with even greater generosity and goodness. It is only Love, after all, that can break the cycle of hurt and revenge.

Prayer of the Week

Let us pray to God of power and might, for his mercy is our hope. • Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, faith in your word is the way to wisdom, and

Faith First

to ponder your divine plan is to grow in the truth. Open our eyes to your deeds, our ears to the sound of your call, so that our every act may increase our sharing in the life you have offered us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Season of Lent

Lent may share the liturgical color violet with Advent, but it is very different: there are no greeting cards, no colored lights. Lent is a season for serious contemplation about our spiritual lives. Lent is 40 days that the Church sets aside and calls us to deepen our prayer life. Lent is a season for change. • We are asked to fast and sacrifice as reminders of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. We are urged to give more of our time and treasure to the poor and needy. Following these three pillars of our Lenten devotion--prayer, fasting, and

almsgiving--will open our hearts to the changes--maybe even transformations--of our spiritual lives as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday. • Lent is a time to examine our faults, our failures, our sins. Where can we improve? How can we avoid sin and do good? These and other questions can prepare us for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lent is the ideal time to confess our sins, show true remorse and make the changes in our lives that help us grow closer to God. • So take some time to set goals for your Lenten journey. Choosing practical and doable goals is the best way to avoid setting the bar too high and being disappointed. Five minutes of prayer a day is probably a more realistic option for most of us that a nine-day novena or a trip to Lourdes. Whatever you decide to do, do it with love, enthusiasm, and an eye toward letting the Holy Spirit work within your heart.

Ash Wednesday, February 26

Masses at 8:00 am, 12(noon), and 5:30 pm
Ashes will be distributed at all Masses.

Stations of the Cross Fridays at 12(noon)

In Our Prayers

Daily Mass Intentions February 23 - March 1

Sun	8:00am	Don & Anita Cerqui (+)
	9:30am	Ed Humphrey (+)
	11:00am	Mauraid Cahill (+)
Mon	8:00am	All Souls (+)
Tue	8:00am	Int...Rick Barbaria
Wed	8:00am	Bob & Bud Kunst (+)
	12:00pm	Int...Lopez Family & Children
	5:30pm	Thomas Wolfanger (+)
Thu	8:00am	Jose, Anna & Lucy Oliveira (+)
Fri	8:00am	Joshua Wingert (+)
	5:30pm	Alex Dean (+)
Sat	9:00am	Kang Simon Lee (+)
	5:30pm	Nita York (+)
Sun	8:00am	For the People of the Parish
	9:30am	Melecio M. Santos
	11:00am	Grayson Kemp (+)

In Memoriam

Noreen McNulty • February 17, 2020

Saints of God, come to her aid!
Hasten to meet her, angels of the Lord!
Receive her soul & present her to God the Most High.

Please Pray for the Sick

Adria Laubacher, Margarita Enriquez, Marjorie Green, Robert McAleese, Helena Enright, John Vostrez, Robin Aurelius, Diana Zuniga, Suzy Riehl, Isabel Harper, Richard Honey, Dale Wooldridge, Donald Anderson, Nancy McGarry, Patrick Valenzuela, Michael Fletcher, Gary Pepe, William Daniel Reed, Stephanie Merenda, Victoria Generoso, Jim Collins, Robert Arkebauer, Libby Basurto, Dena Foster-Cook, Marie Schumacher, Ralph Goodall, Josephine Haddock, G.R. Gurley, Darren Stewart, Marge Mugartegui, Angel Curiel, Phillip Worth, Sonia Damiano, Ava Grace Arnold, Karen Amnon, Mary Terese Henriksen, Pamela Saenz, Stan Boyd, David Hunn, Addison Parker, Brett Stover, Norma Clark, Robert Clark, Jr.

Annual Appeal This Weekend

This weekend is the Annual Catholic Appeal. Unlike many dioceses, our diocese uses 100% of the funds raised in the Appeal for charitable work within our diocese. The money does not benefit the operating fund of the parishes or the diocese. Instead, the funds are used to give tuition support for schools, to pay for the education of seminarians, and to give donations to many Catholic charities at work in Northern California. 25% of the amount collected at Sacred Heart parish is returned to us for our parish's use in charitable activities. (Last weekend, you heard how the parish provided the money for knitting supplies for the 7th grade project of knitting hats for the homeless). For the cost of one Starbucks coffee a month, you can contribute \$60 over a year. If you already donate, consider increasing your donation by the cost of one coffee per month. If you have food on your table and a roof over your head, you are already better off than the majority of the charities' recipients. Please show your gratitude by donating generously to the Appeal.

Youth Group Update

The next meeting of the Youth Group will be on Wednesday, February 26. The meeting will feature a reflection for Ash Wednesday. • If you are a student in grades 8 through 12, please consider joining us. All meetings are from 6:30-7:30 pm in St. Anthony Hall. • If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Sunderman at psunderman@sacredheartschool.net

Parish Safety Measures

The Parish underwent an independent Vulnerability Assessment of the church, parish hall, and rectory conducted by the Central California Intelligence Center. The Parish Safety Committee reviewed the Assessment Report and made its recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council. Several of the recommendations are currently being implemented, e.g. expanded security cameras inside and outside the church, parish hall, parking lot, and rectory; new and enhanced security fencing/gates, especially between the church and the medical building; installation of exterior lighting on the 39th Street side of the church and in front of the rectory, etc. There are also plans to reopen the exterior door in the Pieta chapel and use it as an emergency exit only. • You will notice work on these projects and others in the coming months.

Food Pantry Donations

This weekend February 22-23, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul will be collecting non-perishable food items for our pantry and for the students that visit the Catholic Newman Center. The pantry is in need of canned meat (chicken, ham, tuna, Spam, etc.) marinara sauce, peanut butter/jelly, crackers, canned fruit, cereal, mayo, mustard, ketchup, salad dressings and cake/brownie/cookie mixes. The Newman Center is in need of ready to eat, small individual/single serving size items such as instant soup/meal in a cup, Top Ramen, mac & cheese, energy/granola bars, instant oatmeal/cereal, fruit/dessert cups, tuna/chicken salad individual pouch/can, dried fruit/nut snack packs, small cracker packages, microwave popcorn and hot coco packets. Please check expiration dates on all items as we are not able to distribute out-of-date food. Your bag of food may be left inside the altar rail. Many local families and Sacramento State students rely on assistance from our Society of St. Vincent de Paul pantry. Thank you for your ongoing generosity!

Meetings & Events

Time to Return Your Palms

Many of us keep the palms we received on Palm Sunday and display them behind a hanging crucifix. Now is the time to return the old, dried palms to the basket in the vestibule. The old palms will be burned and the ashes used on Ash Wednesday this year. The palms, which symbolized joy on Palm Sunday, now become symbols of the fact we are sorry for our sins. This reflects the joy of the people when Jesus first rode into Jerusalem, which turned to sorrow when he died on the Cross to save them from their sins. Tomorrow, February 24, is the last day to bring your palms.

Communion on the Tongue

During the flu season, Bishop Soto has requested parishioners to receive communion **only in the hand and not on the tongue**. Please respect this directive, especially during this difficult time of viral outbreaks. The Diocese will inform parishes when these restrictions are lifted.

Disciples on the Journey Lenten Program

Sign-ups for the *Disciples on the Journey* program will take place after each Mass this weekend, and next weekend, February 29-March 1. Small groups meet in homes for the six weeks of Lent to discuss the Sunday Scripture readings and their application to daily life. Guide booklets will be available at the first meeting. The cost of the booklet is \$5. We are looking for group leaders and participants. • If you have questions please contact the Parish Office at 916-452-4136, ext. 2 or shchurchoffice@gmail.com.

Be my protector, O God.

For you are my rock, my stronghold.

Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name. cf. Psalm 31

Annual Sacred Heart Men's Retreat

During this weekend, you can experience God's love, healing, peace, and forgiveness. Join men of the parish on the from Friday evening, February 28 to Sunday afternoon, March 1 at Christ the King Retreat Center in Citrus Heights. Don't miss out on this wonderful experience of spiritual and physical renewal. • Call Jim Paquette at 916-479-1542 or go to www.christthekingretreatcenter.org to make a reservation.

Verdi Requiem Concert

The Verdi Requiem will be performed on Saturday, March 21 at 8:00 pm in the Memorial Auditorium to honor the longtime Sacramento chef Biba Caggiano by Sacred Heart's Schola Cantorum and the Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra. The program will also feature four outstanding soloists from the Metropolitan Opera and will be given in place of Schola's annual Lenten Choral Mysteries concert. • For tickets please visit sacramentochoral.com or call 916-808-5181.

Missoula Theatre at the Parish School

Again this year, the school children will participate in the Missoula Theatre Camp. They will be performing a production entitled, "The Snow Queen." There will be two performances, Friday, February 28 at 6:30 pm and Saturday, February 29 at 12:30 pm. Both plays will take place in the School gymnasium. Tickets are on sale at the school, \$2 for children, \$5 for adults. • Parishioners are most welcome to attend, especially the Saturday afternoon performance.