

Octave of Christmas

From the Pastor We've just celebrated the joyous occasion of Christmas. Each year we celebrate the liturgical birth of our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We heard phrases from the sublime, et incarnatus est (and he became man) to a child's observation, that's not any baby in the crib...that's God!

Now, we move into a period of rejoicing referred to as the Octave of Christmas, literally the eight days of Christmas. This phrase is from the Latin word, Octava, and comes from the ancient practice of celebrating Christmas for eight wonderful days. The faithful of Our Lady of Grace would like to invite all to celebrate this period of Christmas by the proper observance - of continuing Christmas for eight days. We are celebrating the Word made Flesh! Can we properly celebrate this unfathomable mystery in just one morning? By observing the Octave, we hope to "re-order" our Christmas observance, quite frankly, away from the modern American practice of celebrating Christmas during December (when the Church observes Advent) while disregarding the Christmas Season. By December 26, the candles are snuffed, the weight has been gained, and we cast a forlorn look toward spring as so many are burned-out on reindeer, elves and candy canes.

The practice actually is as ancient as the Old Testament. The Hebrew people observed many of their feasts for a period of eight days. The "Feast of Tabernacles" and the "Dedication of the Temple" are two of the more notable. Later, the Roman Emperor Constantine continued the tradition by celebrating the dedication of basilicas in the Christian World for the same period of eight days. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, which closed in 1965, the Church granted certain feasts the dignity of an octave. In addition to the more prominent liturgical observations of Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany, the feasts of Sts. Peter and St. Paul, St. Lawrence, and St. Agnes were observed. Today we celebrate two feasts with Octaves: Easter (being the more prominent) and Christmas (adapted from an unknown source).

Life in the ancient world was so hectic and filled with pressure, and families had grown apart and were being swept up in the older pagan traditions, the Church granted a period of eight days in order to contemplate the mysteries experienced in the Church's liturgy. Comparatively speaking, we obviously need the Octave even more than the Christians of the ancient world! The ancient world did not have television, shopping malls, computers, telephones, fast food, automobiles, magazines and newspapers... if the Ancients were busily distracted, what has become of us!? We need to enjoy this time! If you need, take off work, visit family, feast, attend Mass, praise God, visit the poor, celebrate charity, and most of all be humbled before the Mystery: The Word of God has become man!

May the Christ Child, his blessed Mother and honorable guardian, Joseph, remain with you and your loved ones now and throughout this joyous season.

In Christ Jesus and St. Augustine,

Fr. Gregory Heidenblut, O.S.A.



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FOR YOUR NEW YEARS RESOLUTION LIST OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

Still pondering your resolutions for 2015 why not consider our Parish Mission Statement: *A community that endeavors to live our faith grounded in Jesus Christ. We celebrate Christ's presence in Word, Sacrament, and the shared experiences of our faith—community.*

1. St. Mary's Center (outreach to poor elderly)
2. Servicing meals to the elderly at Strobridge
3. Helping Hands (helping prepare receptions after funerals at OLG.)
4. Parish Maintenance & Gardening
5. St. Vincent DePaul Outreach (outreach to the poor)
6. CYO Athletic Programs
7. The Parish Festival
8. Working in the Religious Education Program
9. Working on the Confirmation team
10. Working with the RCIA team
11. Visit the Sick/Eucharistic Minister to the Sick and Homebound
12. Eucharistic Minister at Mass
13. Lector at Mass
14. Altar Society

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The 2014/2015 catechetical year is off and running! Our Catechists are amazing, sharing their faith with enthusiasm and joy. Want to join them in this adventure in evangelization? All our classes need extra eyes and hands. If you are interested in helping, please contact the Faith Formation Center for more information. Classes meet Tuesday afternoons (3:45-5:00pm) and Sunday morning (10:30-11:45am). Let us help you with your New Year's resolution to get more involved! Contact the Faith Formation Center at 510-582-9266, ffc@olgcv.org

A NOTE FROM ITALIAN CATHOLIC FEDERATION

Due to inclement weather the ICF Christmas party was cancelled in December, but we are going to try again on **January 8, 2015**. We will still be accepting donations, for Birthright, of new baby clothes and layette items size 0 to 3 months and diapers are also needed. Please contact either Stella Taddei at 510-581-5863 or Juanita Madrid at 510-582-7242 for reservations. Merry Belated Christmas!

HIGH SCHOOL CONFIRMATION

This year, we have 23 students preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The annual Confirmation weekend retreat will take place **January 9th-11th**, 2015. Please keep them in your prayers as they grow in faith.

Looking for a gift-giving opportunity? We have students in need of scholarships for the retreat. The cost for one student for the weekend is \$200. Donations of any amount are welcome. If you are able to help, please mark donations "*Confirmation retreat*" and send them to the Faith Formation Center. For more information, please contact Robyn Lang at 510-582-9266, ffc@olgcv.org. Thank you!



JANUARY CYO SIGN UPS

It's time for Girls CYO Basketball (grades 2nd–8th) sign-ups this January. The dates will be Wednesdays, **January 7th, and 14th**, in Stack Center from 6:00–8:30pm, and Sundays, **January 4th and 11th** from 8:30am–12:30pm in Stack Center. All non–OLG school students must bring copies of their birth certificates and a utility bill (water, PG&E, garbage) that list the property address. These will be the only sign up dates, practices begin **February 1st**.

If you are interested in coaching or helping with CYO in another position please contact Elizabeth Antonio at olgcyo.registrar@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE

Due to the holiday schedule of our bulletin publisher we are not able to report the weekly offerings for most of December. The Sunday offerings will be updated with next weeks bulletin along with the Christmas Offering.

**Our Lady of Grace Church
Campaign Newsletter**

January, 2015

**RECLAIMING CHRIST'S
MISSION TOGETHER**

**Pledge Totals Surpass \$228,508 at
Our Lady of Grace Church!**

The Campaign Committee would like to thank all the families who have contributed to date and have made the campaign a great success. We have received \$228,508 in pledges from only 94 parish families. At this time, we are awaiting a response from over 1,450 families. We hope to hear from those families very soon. Currently, we are at 44% of goal from only 6% of our parish.

Please keep in mind that we will receive 25% of all monies collected up to our campaign target of \$513,246 and 50% of all funds raised above and beyond that target.

One of our goals is to have 100% participation. If you have not yet responded, WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP!!!

Our campaign is based on every family making an equal sacrifice, not an equal gift. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to support this campaign for both our parish and our Diocese. Please respond generously. It is only through prayer and sacrifice that we can make this campaign successful. Make your gift today to help reduce the number of follow-up calls our Campaign Committee will have to make over the next few weeks.

NOTE: Pledge and Gift totals are as of 12/15/14

SUNDAY COLLECTION

Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that if you give ten percent of your income to the Church and charity for example, God will help you live on the rest.

Offerings of December 14th:

Sunday Plate:	\$ 8,475.00
Last Year this week	\$ 8,114.00
Weekly Budgeted Goal:	\$ 8,815.00
Year-to-date this year:	\$393,506.00
Year-to-date last year:	\$404,370.00

December Budgeted Expenses \$ 46,700.00

May God bless your continuing generosity.



Your Prayers Are Requested

Please lift up in your prayer those many among us who are ill and those who have asked for our prayerful remembrance:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jose Cisneros | Richard Martin |
| Kathleen Denning | Marvin Picha |
| Estela Enriquez | Preston Parker |
| Mary Franks | Vernon Rodrigues |
| Byron Griffith | Florence Sharp |
| Liz Griffith | Josephine Sisler |
| Raymond Lowe | James Van Wert |
| | Yvonne Wheeler |

As we pray for an end to war and violence in our world, let us remember in prayer those family members of our parish community serving on active duty, including:

DAVID SANCHEZ MICHAEL SANCHEZ



Please remember in your prayers the recently deceased in our parish families and all who mourn the loss of a loved one.

ALL VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

**Gospel for THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
(January 11th)
Mark 1:7--11**

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Augustinian Volunteers are Catholic men and women between the ages of 21-29 who wish to serve God's people in partnership with the Augustinian Order and others. The service of the volunteers is with established educational, social, and health programs and varies according to the needs of the sponsoring site and the individual volunteer. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2015-2016 volunteer year for our sites in Chicago, IL, Lawrence, MA, Philadelphia, PA, San Diego, CA, Ventura, CA and Chulucanas, Peru. If interested, please visit www.osavol.org or contact us at osavol@gmail.com

2015 CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Catholic Extension 2015 Family Appointment Calendars: We are grateful and we extend our sincere appreciation to Holy Angels Catholic Funeral, Cremation & Cemetery Services of the Diocese of Oakland for again sponsoring the 2015 Family Appointment Calendars. If you have not picked up your copy in the church, you may do so in the parish office during normal business hours.

IMMACULATE HEART RADIO

Dedicated to sharing the heart of the Catholic Faith and changing lives, Immaculate Heart Radio brings you the best in Catholic Radio 24/7! Now playing 1260AM.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 4th:

Coffee & Donuts After All Masses

Children's Liturgy of the Word
9:00am--Mass

Tuesday, January 6th:

Bible Scripture Study
9:30am--Parish Office

Religious Education Classes
3:45pm--Stack Center

Wednesday, January 7th:

Nursing Home Mass
11:00am--Eden Villa

St. Vincent de Paul Meeting
7:00pm--Parish Office

Thursday, January 8th:

ICF Dinner Meeting
6:00pm--Stack Center

Serenity Group
8:15pm— Stack Center

Sunday, January 11th:

Coffee & Donuts After All Masses

Children's Liturgy of the Word
9:00am--Mass

Religious Education Classes
10:30am--Stack Center

Youth Ministry
After 9:00am Mass in the Gym

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
SATURDAY, JANUARY 17th**



Our next Holy Hour with the Blessed Sacrament:
Saturday, January 17th
Following 8:30am Mass
In the Chapel,
Private Devotions
All are welcome.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Please note: During the school year, our 8:30am Monday Mass will be celebrated in the Church. Unless otherwise noted all other weekday masses will be held in the Chapel.

MONDAY, JANUARY 5th (CHURCH)

St. John Neumann, Bishop
8:30am Leslie Braga (D)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6th

St. Andre Bessette, religious
7:00am Sean Maher (D)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7th

St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest
7:00am Sean Maher (D)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8th

7:00am Sean Maher (D)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9th

7:00am Joe & Marie Silveria (D)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10th

8:30am Marguerite Palmer (D)



FAIR TRADE COFFEE

We have a few bags of *Just Coffee* ground organic Fair Trade coffee available for purchase in the Parish Office. If you missed your chance to buy it last weekend during the Fair Trade Christmas Boutique stop in the Parish Office and pick up a 12oz bag for \$12.00.



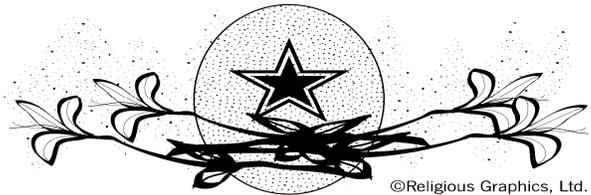
YEARLY CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

For your convenience in preparing your tax return, a contribution statement for 2014 will be prepared at your request. Please phone the Parish Office at 537-0806, with your name and envelope number. Your statement will be available for you to pick up once it has been signed.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

January 5th through January 11th

- Monday: 1 John 3:22--4:6;
Matthew 4:12-17, 23-25
- Tuesday: 1 John 4:7-10; Mark 6:34-33
- Wednesday: 1 John 4:11-18; Mark 6:45-52
- Thursday: 1 John 4:19--5:4; Luke 4:14-22a
- Friday: 1 John 5:5-13; Luke 5:12-16
- Saturday: 1 John 5:14-21; John 3:22-30
- Sunday: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34--28;
Mark 1:7-11



ST. MARY'S CENTER WINTER SHELTER

St. Mary's Winter Shelter is the only shelter in Alameda County solely serving adults 55 or older. The program relies heavily on volunteer support. Volunteers are needed to provide the evening meal for 28 adults Tuesday – Sunday, **now through April 30th**. There are still dates available.

Gather your friends, family, SCC or other group together check your calendars to find a time to help with this very worthwhile ministry. Please call Colleen Lindberg at the parish office (537-0806) for additional information regarding serving at St. Mary's Center. You can contact Sr. Marilyn at St. Mary's Center directly by calling 510-923-9600 ext. 220.

THANK THEM WITH YOUR SUPPORT

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This week we extend our gratitude to:

**BRAD LA VERNE PLUMBING
JAY THOSEN**