

This Advent: PSSS!

 Advent is a time we “Prepare for the coming of Christ.” I wish to give some concrete suggestions for how *From the Pastor* to do that. But first I’d like to say a bit more about Advent.

Hasn’t Christ already come 2,000 years ago? Why then do we have a season where we prepare for the coming of Christ? In advent, the church speaks of the two comings of Christ. The first was a little over 2,000 years ago. The second will be at the end of time. Jesus tells us in the scripture, and our faith teaches, that Jesus will come in power at the end of time, to judge the living and the dead. In the second reading this Sunday from 2 Peter 3:8-14, we see that since with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, the prophesized “Day of the Lord” is a period of many human days. It begins gently, with the first coming of Christ. A child, who grows up amongst us, shows us God’s love for us, dies for our sins, but rises, shares the Holy Spirit, ascends to heaven, and will then come back in the same way, to Judge the Nations on earth. God has designed it this way, so that more people will be saved! God’s plan of mercy is to delay the second coming so that more will be saved. This can only happen if we ourselves do not grow weary of waiting and become cold in our faith and service. So, in Advent, the Church encourages us to “Be Prepared” for the coming of Christ!

How do we do that? May I suggest that we **PSSS!** That is, that we **Pray**, receive the **Sacraments**, **Study** and **Serve**! This mnemonic helps me to remember how to structure my life with the essential elements needed to keep the flame of faith burning brightly. Each day we should spend at least 15 minutes in quiet prayer. (We should especially use Scripture in our prayer, and of all scripture, the Gospels have precedence.) We must regularly receive the sacraments; especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. The sacraments are a receiving of divine grace, a power beyond us that fosters Christ living in us. We should also grow in our faith by study. The easiest way to do this is through spiritual reading. Have you ever read a Catechism for adults? There is an official Catechism of the Church, but it is intended more as a reference. Other Catechisms attempt to explain and develop the teachings of the official Catechism. Personally, I’ve found *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, edited by Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, Ronald Lawler OFM Cap, and others to be very helpful. Finally, service is required. Without service, even our best efforts at prayer and study can be self-centered. We are created to give ourselves away in love for others. Giving and serving directly our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest, and those we might feel uncomfortable around, is essential to a healthy spirituality.

Now my most important and impassioned plea. For those who live in families, especially parents of young children, please do these things **TOGETHER as a FAMILY!** Take time to pray together. The Rosary is excellent for this. Go to Mass and Confession together. Studying together can be fun and easy by watching a religious movie and discussing it. There are also family study guides that help prepare for the coming Sunday readings at Mass. (Fr. Tom likes to recommend massimpact.us/live-it-gathering-family-edition/). And finally, and beautifully, volunteer together as a family at a local soup kitchen, food pantry, homeless shelter, or visit the sick or elderly at a nursing home. Additionally, each member of the family can throughout the year, gather up old clothes and toys and donate them to a charity. Each member of the family can even tithe, by save up and distribute money to the poor. This Advent, let us **PSSS – Pray, receive the Sacraments, Study the faith, and Serve!**

In my work as a vocation director, I talk to many young people about becoming a Religious Sister, Brother, or Priest. They wish to ‘someday’ find their vocation. But really, we all have the same vocation, and we don’t have to wait. It can start today! **PSSS!** Pray, receive the Sacraments, Study, and Serve. This way of life, will lead all of us to the unique way of life, and our unique way of serving God, that we call a vocation. Especially to our parents; you can make your home and family like a Religious Order! You are the Pastors of your “Home Church!” Your mission is forming disciples! All vocations to The Church, and the world, begin in the family. Your job is most sacred!

Read more about finding your call (that is your vocation, or your mission in life) on my vocation office website: franciscandiscernment.org.

Peace and All Good, Fr. Paul.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Again, this year, we are inviting you to remember family members and friends through a Flower Offering which will help us to purchase plants and other decorations we need to beautify our sanctuary. You may list the names of loved ones you wish to remember or memorialize by using the special flower envelopes --or by submitting the name to the Parish Office. A list of names of all who are remembered will be available after Christmas. Thank you for considering this thoughtful and helpful way to remember those you love.



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CELEBRATION DECEMBER 12TH

The Hispanic Group invites the entire Parish community to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe on Her Feast Day, Tuesday, **December 12th**, beginning with Mañanitas, at 5:00am in the Church, followed by a reception in Stack Center. A Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass will be held at 7:00pm in the Church followed by a reception in Stack Center.

El Grupo Hispano invita a toda la comunidad parroquial a honrar a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el martes, **12 de diciembre**, comenzando con Mañanitas, a las 5:00am en la Iglesia, un recepción sigue en el Stack Center. Una misa de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se llevará a cabo a las 7:00 pm en la iglesia seguido por una recepción en el Stack Center.

CHRISTMAS POSADA DECEMBER 17th

The Hispanic Group is hosting a Christmas Posada and Pot Luck on **December 17th** after the 1:30pm Spanish Mass in Stack Center.

El grupo hispano les invita a la posada navidena el 17 de diciembre despues de la misa de las 1:30pm.



DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS

The committee is in need of help to get the church ready for Christmas, so please make plans to help ready the church on **December 15th** at 10:00am and again on **December 22nd** at 10:00am. The more hands, the quicker the work will be completed. Thanks in advance for your assistance!



ADVENT CONFESSIONS READY THE WAY OF THE LORD

Confessions will be available during Advent during **Adoration** on Thursdays at 7:00pm & Saturday mornings at 8:50am. Saturday afternoon Confessions will be from 3:30 – 4:30pm.

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT COLLECTION DECEMBER 10TH - TODAY

Please give to those who have given a lifetime. This annual appeal helps retired sister, brother and religious older priests, who spent their lives in church ministries such as education, healthcare and social service. Envelopes are in the pews and at the entrances of the church for your use. Please give generously. Religious women and men thank you for each merciful action you take on behalf of others and pray for your spiritual peace.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" EVENING!

Smalltown Society, a local group of artists and social justice advocates, will be holding "A Christmas Carol" evening on **December 14**, 6:00-8:00pm. The event will feature OLG parishioner and lector Mark Vaz reading Charles Dickens' own abridged version of his holiday classic at the Smalltown Community Center, 22222 Redwood Road, Castro Valley (at Trader Joe's, separate entrance facing Redwood Road by the bicycle racks). Join us!

FESTIVAL RESULTS ARE IN !

We are pleased to announce the results of our Fall Festival. We received \$44,658 in net profit. As is our tradition we commit 10% of our net profit to local charities benefiting families and children. Our Lady of Grace School received \$20,129 of the net income and \$20,129 will be used for expenses in the Parish programs. Thank you once again to all those who contributed to the success of our annual Parish Fall Festival.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

As we come to the end of this calendar year, we want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your financial support of our parish this past year.

We have been blessed by much this year allowing for the refurbishment of Stack Center as well as some additional extraordinary property improvements and we are grateful to all those who made that possible.

Our Christmas Offering Budget is \$28,000. We are grateful for your offering to accomplish this goal.

HELPING THOSE IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

ST. VINCENT de PAUL

"For I was naked and you clothed me"
(Matthew 26:36)

This year the Our Lady of Grace St. Vincent de Paul Conference will be participating in the One Warm Coat Drive . We invite parishioners to donate new or gently used men's, women's or children's coat to this drive. These coats will be distributed through the drop-in centers and clothing closet at St. Vincent de Paul's main campus in Oakland . Please bring your donation and place in the barrel at the Somerset entrance of the Church or in the Parish Office. We will be accepting coats through December 31st. Also, if you can donate toys, we will be taking toy donations from November 6th through Sunday December 3rd.

CASTRO VALLEY HOMELESS OUTREACH

We would like to thank those who have assisted with the CV Homeless Outreach. You continue to be very generous and the recipients of your kindness are incredibly appreciative. You indeed share God's blessing with these people. We are still in need of food (canned or prepared), propane for camp stoves, flashlights, batteries, plastic flatware, lanterns, pallets, plywood or OSB sheets- full (4x8) or half (4x4) and tarps. You can drop off your donation to the Parish Office or we can arrange to pick-up your donation and deliver to those in need. For further inquiries, please contact Ken White at k2rm@comcast.net at (510) 909 - 5774 or Sean Nalty at sean.nalty@ogletree.com at (415) 369-3552 .

CATHOLIC VOICE ANNUAL APPEAL STILL TIME TO DONATE FOR THIS YEAR !

Please consider a donation to the Annual Appeal for The Catholic Voice. Your donation helps our Parish offset its payment for this important communication ministry. The Voice is the only regular source of Catholic news and information delivered to all parishioners in the Diocese. **Please be generous in your support our Parish pays \$707.00 each month for this subscription. Your donation of \$25.00 would help offset the parish expense.**

Checks should be made payable to Our Lady of Grace. Envelopes are in the pews.

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 10th:

Sunday Plate:	\$ 10,841.00
Last Year this week	\$ 9,228.00
Weekly Budgeted Goal:	\$ 8,920.00
Year-to-date this year:	\$419,944.00
Year-to-date last year:	\$409,678.00

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:

Glen Alcorn	Dieter Hahn
Kathleen Andrews	Don Jordan
Susanna Ax	Elaine Jordan
James Barthman	Laura Martell
Jackson Tyler Bishop	Alice McLaughlin
Leonardo Cabardo	Rosy Pereira
Antonio O. Chocha	Stephanie Rosevear
Jose Cisneros	David Rountree
Claudia Dobbs	Florence Sharp
Lynn Franks	Mercedes Tellez
Bill Fuller	Iwan Tunggal
Byron Griffith	

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

MARIE EVANS

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

The Lord IS CALLING You!!?? MEN'S FAITH SHARE

All men of the parish are invited to join Our Men's Faith Share and Bible Study every Tuesday evening from 7 – 8:15pm in Stack Center-Room 7. Each week Fr. Paul leads a discussion on the meaning and application to our lives for the upcoming Sunday Mass readings. COME & YOU WILL SEE! (Jn 1:39). Next meeting is December 12th.



ROSARY MEDITATIONS FROM ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Militia Immaculata Celebrating 100 years!

100 years ago St. Maximilian Kolbe along with

6 other Franciscans began a prayer movement of Consecration to the Blessed Mother to evangelize the world and lead people through Mary and her mission of bearing Christ to the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In honor of this anniversary and the witness of the life and heroic death of St. Maximilian Kolbe we will use his reflections to help us enter into the mysteries of the Rosary. Our Reflection this week is The Glorious Mystery of The Assumption:

"The Glorious Mysteries

The Assumption--Isaiah 61:10

The Immaculata is the ultimate limit between God and creation. She is a faithful image of God's perfection, of His sanctity.

One's degree of perfection depends on the union of one's will to the will of God. The greater the perfection, the closer the union. As the Blessed Mother, with her perfection, surpassed all the angels and saints, so also her will is united and identified most closely with the will of God. She lives and works solely in God and through God. Therefore, by fulfilling the will of the Immaculata we fulfill by that very reason the will of God. (KW1232)



OUR LADY OF GRACE SCHOOL FUNDRAISER

Fox Sox is offering 30% off their great socks for the holidays. These socks make great gifts for adults and children. Just go to www.FoxSox.com and click on "Shop Online" to get started. Order soon as popular styles may sell out! Use promo code: PR17OLG and get a discount as well as earning money for our school! **Hurry offer expires December 31st.**



RCIA CORNER Knowing Your Faith Series

We offer a warm, accepting setting in small group discussions to find ways to deepen our faith and to nurture those seeking membership into the Catholic Church. Our next meeting will be on **December 19th** at 6:00pm. On **December 12th**, instead of our regular meeting, join us as we celebrate the Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe at 7:00pm in the Church. For more information, please contact Marie at rcia@olgcv.org

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 10th:

The Second Sunday of Advent

Liturgy of the Word

9:30am--Augustine Center

Coffee & Donuts

After 9:30am Mass--Stack Center

New Parishioner Registration

10:00am--Stack Center

Spanish Prayers to Our Lady

3:00pm--Church

ALPHA/Youth Ministry

6:00pm--Stack Center

Monday, December 11th:

Spanish Prayers to Our Lady

7:00pm--Church

Tuesday, December 12th:

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mañanitas

5:00am--Church

Our Lady of Guadalupe Reception

6:30am--Stack Center

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

9:30am--Parish Office

Men's Faith Share

7:00pm--Stack Center, Room 7

RCIA

7:00pm--Church

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass

7:00pm--Church

Our Lady of Guadalupe Reception

8:00pm--Church

Thursday, December 14th:

Adoration

7:00pm--Church

ICF Christmas Dinner Party

6:30pm--Stack Center

AA Serenity Group

7:30pm--Augustine Center, Room A2

ALTAR SERVER MINISTRY REGISTRATION

Altar serving is a privilege and a necessary ministry, assisting priests and deacons. It is open to students in 5th thru 12th grades who have received the 1st 3 Sacraments of the Church (Baptism, 1st Reconciliation & 1st Communion). Registration forms are available in the Parish Office & on the organ console.

Mass for the Intentions Week

All Masses are celebrated in the Church.

MONDAY, December 11th

St. Damascus I, Pope

8:15am Lilia Sousa (D)

TUESDAY, December 12th

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

8:15am Alexandria Gutierrez (L)

WEDNESDAY, December 13th

St. Lucy, Virgin, Martyr

8:15am Rudy & Augie Enriquez (D)

THURSDAY, December 14th

St. John of the Cross, Priest, Doctor of the Church

8:15am Richard Benson (D)

FRIDAY, December 15th

8:15am Jerome Gann (D)

SATURDAY, December 16th

8:15am Jim & Kristi Reetz & Family

5:00pm Dulcilia Chocha Chaviel (D)

SUNDAY, December 17th

The Third Sunday of Advent

9:30am Aurora & Manuel Soares (D)



THIS WEEK--Continued

Saturday, December 16th:

Adoration

8:45am--Church

Sunday, December 17th:

The Third Sunday of Advent

Coffee & Donuts

After 9:30am Mass--Stack Center

Liturgy of the Word

9:30am--Augustine Center

Whole Family Catechesis

10:50am--Stack Center

Posadas Reception

After 1:30pm Spanish Mass--Stack Center

ALPHA/Youth Ministry

6:00pm--Stack Center

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

December 11th through December 17th

Monday: Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday: Zechariah 2:14-17; Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday: Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30

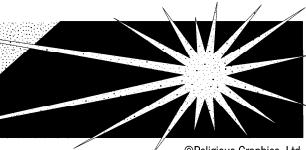
Thursday: Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15

Friday: Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

rejoice for
the lord
is near.



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NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION

We extend a warm welcome to new parishioners and guests. Please stop by Stack Center **today, December 10th**, from 10:00am-11:00am. to register or update your information. A Hospitality volunteer will greet you at the New Parishioner Registration Table. We are grateful to our volunteers for providing this ministry on our behalf.

HOLIDAY BULLETIN DEADLINES

Please have items for the bulletin to the Parish Office no later than the deadlines shown below:

December 24th bulletin: Due **December 11th**

December 31st bulletin: Due **December 14th**

A BIG THANK YOU FROM ICF

Grazie tante, that's an ICF Thank you very much, to all the bakers and buyers at our recent Bake Sale. Because of your support we had a very successful sale. Hint, there is talk of a Biscotti sale again in 2018! More later.

THANK THEM WITH YOUR SUPPORT

Please support our advertisers who make our weekly bulletin possible and so generously support our Parish. We are grateful to them!

This week we extend our gratitude to:

MERLE'S HALLMARK SHOP