



The Grotto At Greccio

Known as the Franciscan Bethlehem, the shrine is an imposing architectural compound which clings to the bare rock. The original core of the shrine is the Cappella del Presepio (Nativity Chapel), built in 1228, the year of Saint Francis' canonization. The chapel stands over the grotto where, on Christmas Eve 1223, Saint Francis, with the approval of the Pope and the help of Messer Giovanni Velita, a lord in Greccio, re-enacted the birth of Jesus for the first time in the history of Christianity, thereby establishing the first nativity reenactment during Mass. The chapel is a grotto excavated in the stone, with a semi-circular vault.

The bare stone where the Saint laid down the simulacrum of Jesus can be seen in the modern-style altar, while a fine fresco by the school of Giotto can be found on the wall at the back. Its two scenes represent the Nativity in Greccio and the Nativity in Bethlehem, with the Virgin Mary breastfeeding Jesus. In the lunette, Mary Magdalene, protector of the hermits, is depicted.

The Nativity Scene in Greccio is similar to the fresco that Giotto painted on the same subject in the Upper Basilica of Assisi; Francis, wearing the deacon's white dalmatic, adores Jesus on his knees, while at the top right, the priest officiates the mass. Behind Francis, the other participants in the event can be seen; in the foreground a man in a long red tunic, who according to local tradition is Giovanni Velita, a lord in Greccio and descendant of the Berardi di Celano counts, who became a very good friend of Francis, and on his left, his wife Alticama Castelli di Strocone and the people of Greccio.

The wonder of God becoming human is one of the most profound mysteries to contemplate. May we this Christmas enter the mystery like St. Francis and contemplate the infant nursing in Mary's arms.

Prayer At The Manger
By St. Clare of Assisi

O marvelous humility!
O astonishing poverty!
The King of the angels,
The Lord of heaven and earth
Is laid to rest in a manger!

Please remember Our Lady of Grace Church this Christmas.
Come let us Adore Him!

Final Call For Pilgrims for Poland Oberammergau

If you are interested, please contact me quickly so I can see if there are tickets available for the play in Oberammergau . We have added stops in Vienna & Salzburg. If you would like more information, please contact Fr. Tom at the Parish Office.

Mark your calendars for our Volunteer Appreciation Reception on **January 18th** at 2:30pm.

Consecration To Our Lady

I want to thank all who consecrated themselves to Our Lady on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. To complete your consecration in the Militia Immaculata, you must register your consecration by going to www.missionimmaculata.com. Once you register your consecration, you receive a plenary indulgence.

End Of The Year Donations

If you have been blessed by the Lord this year and would like to share it with Our Lady of Grace community, please drop off your end of the year donations to the Parish Office on **December 27th, 30th & 31st by Noon**, so you may record your donation in your 2019 taxes. We appreciate your generosity!

Memorial Mass Cards

The Friars at St. Maximillian Kolbe Friary will be offering a one-year enrollment in our Purgatory Mass Association. Every 1st Saturday Mass, those enrolled will be remembered for a year. The Friars will also remember your loved one in our prayers daily. The Mass will be offered along with our 1st Saturday Mass at Our Lady of Grace in the Church. A memorial card of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or Our Lady of Grace is given to you to offer the family.

Contact Jay in the office for more information and to register your loved ones. We begin our Masses on **Saturday, January 3rd**.

May the love of God fill your heart and bless your family!
Peace to you from Our Lady of Grace Staff and the Franciscans!

Fr. Thomas Czeck OFM, Conv.

Fr. Francisco Nahoe OFM, Conv.

Fr. Paul Fazio OFM, Conv.

Fr. Thomas Hamilton OFM, Conv.

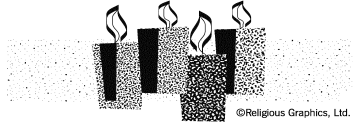
CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Vigil Masses, Tuesday, December 24th

Family Mass: 5:00pm
 Mass at Night: 10:00pm

Wednesday, December 25th

Mass at 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am, 1:30pm (Spanish)



NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Sunday, December 29th

Mass at 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am, 1:30pm (Spanish)

New Year's Eve: Tuesday, December 31st

Vigil Mass at 5:00pm

New Year's Day: Wednesday, January 1st

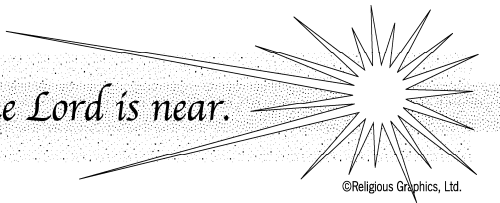
Mary, the Mother of God

Mass at 9:30am, 11:30am & 1:30pm (Spanish)

2020 CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Catholic Extension 2020 Family Appointment Calendars are available. We are grateful and we extend our sincere appreciation to the Catholic Funeral Cremation & Cemetery Services of the Diocese of Oakland for again sponsoring the 2020 calendars. If you have not picked up a copy in the church you may find one in the parish office. *Please only one per household.*

Rejoice! The Lord is near.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

We invite 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 will be available after Christmas. Thank you for considering this thoughtful and helpful way to remember those you love.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS



The Parish Offices will close early at Noon on Tuesday, **December 24th**. On Wednesday, **December 25th** and Thursday, **December 26th**, the Offices will be closed. We will re-open on Friday, **December 27th** at 8:30am. Additionally, the offices will close early at Noon on Tuesday, **December 31st** and will be closed on Wednesday, **January 1st** and will re-open on Thursday, **January 2nd** at 8:30am. The entire Parish Staff wishes you all a Blessed Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!

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. As most of you have probably experienced in your own homes and businesses, our expenses have also risen and our income has not kept pace with the increase in expense. This has been the pattern over a number of years and so we too must be very careful in our stewardship of the parish. Your continuing support is most important and most appreciated. Please know that your special Christmas and regular Sunday donation will help us to meet our end-of-year expenses and hopefully, allow us to begin our new fiscal year on a positive note. Our Christmas Offering Budget is \$30,000. We are grateful for your help in accomplishing this goal.



**CHRISTMAS POSADA
 DECEMBER 22nd**

The Hispanic Group is hosting a Christmas Posada Celebration **today, December 22nd** after the 1:30pm Spanish Mass in Stack Center at 3:00pm.

El Grupo Hispano les invita a la Posada Navideña, el día **22 de diciembre** después de la Misa de 1:30pm. Comenzaremos la peregrinación al terminar la Misa, dentro de la Iglesia con destino al Stack Center a las 3:00pm.

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 22nd** at 3:00pm and again on **December 23rd** at 10:00am. The more hands, the quicker the work will be completed. Thanks in advance for your assistance!

SUNDAY COLLECTION UPDATE

Please note due to the holiday schedule of our bulletin publisher, we are not able to report the weekly offerings for **December 15th**. The Sunday offering will be updated with the **December 29th** bulletin.



**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
CRAB FEED
Saturday, February 1, 2020
6:00pm-10:00pm
Stack Center**

Get your Crab Feed Tickets today!

Live Music Featuring Triple Play and Rust. Dancing,
50/50 Raffle and Great Food!

No-Host Bar
\$15 Corkage Fee

Kids care opens at 6:00pm (\$15)

Crab Feed tickets make a great stocking stuffer, get them while they last!

Tickets are available in the Parish and School Offices and online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/our-lady-of-grace-crab-feed-tickets-84526453899>

Prices are \$45 each **if purchased by Dec. 25th** or \$50 each after the deadline

Group Purchases Welcome (Tables of 10) - \$450

Chicken option if ordered at the time of ticket purchase. Bring your own Crab Butter!



SEE'S CANDY SALE

The Knights of Columbus is excited to offer See's Candies Christmas gift wrapped treats! Council members will be taking orders before and after all weekend Masses. Orders will be ready for pickup the following week before or after the Masses.

**HELPING THOSE IN NEED
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL**

Do you or someone you know need assistance this holiday season? The Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Our Lady of Grace can help you with food for the holidays or other resources as needed. Please call our message line at 510-581-2164 or email svdp@olgcv.org and leave a message. We will get back to you the next day. All names are kept confidential.



SUNDAY COLLECTION

Stewardship of treasure involves trust in God. You have to really believe in God's Providence and trust that if you give 10% of your income to the Church and charity, for example, God will help you live on the rest.

Offerings of December 8th:

Sunday Plate:	\$ 8,880.00
Weekly Budgeted Goal:	\$ 9,038.00
Over/[Shortfall]	\$ [158.00]
Year-To-Date Over/[Shortfall]	\$ [3,462.00]

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 | Rose Montalban |
| Maria Bettencourt | Mona Mulvaney |
| Maureen Boeh | Leticia Nelson |
| Peggy Burton | Florence Sharp |
| Heidi Carne | Howard Songey |
| Ana Cochran | Lurdes Sousa |
| Theresa Ferrari | Mercedes Tellez |
| Byron Griffith | Bettylu Vaz |
| Linda Guzman | Denyse Verhaegen |
| Wally Lim | Mary Lou Vincent |
| Laura Martell | Arthur Williams |
| Sheila McAlinden | Peggy Winkenbach |

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

MAXINE KRUZEL

JESUS MANUEL ALVARADO

ROSANNE DAVIE

Real Men




BARBERSHOP CHORUS

Join us for Retro Night with a men's quartet including our very own Dave Swanson, from Devil Mountain Chorus of Walnut Creek on Friday, **January 24th, 2020** at 7:30pm in Stack Center. Tickets are \$12 which include fried chicken and root beer floats. Tickets may be purchased at the Parish Office or please see Bonnie Ricketts after the 7:30am & 11:30am Masses.

HELP WANTED IN THE PARISH OFFICE



We are looking for volunteers to help in our Parish Office Monday-Friday from 1:00-2:00pm. If you are able to help, please call Jay at 510-537-0806



ONE WARM COAT DRIVE

This year the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at Our Lady of Grace 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 coats** to this drive. These coats will be distributed through our local Conference and the drop-in centers and clothing closet at St. Vincent de Paul's main campus in Oakland. We will also be collecting **sleeping bags, blankets, handwarmers & tarps**. Please bring your donations 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**.

USE SCRIP WHILE YOU SHOP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

You can do your holiday shopping using SCRIP gift cards and spend it at local stores where you already shop. SCRIP cards (at face value) help Our Lady of Grace's Evangelization Program earn 2%-17% per certificate. Stop by the Parish office and look over the list. This is a great fundraiser for the church. Orders placed on the 1st & 3rd week of the month will be ready for pick-up on the 2nd & 4th week of the month. Payment is due at the time of your order. Forms are available at the back of the church or in the Parish Office. Questions? Please contact the Parish Office at 510-537-0806.

THE HEAVENS ANNOUNCE THE LORD'S COMING



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LANDSCAPING IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH

We have begun the landscaping project at the front of the church. We will be widening the concrete walkway leading to the front parking lot in addition to adding new top soil and grass as well as drought tolerant native plants. The sprinkler system will also be completely replaced. The cost of this much needed beautification to the church property is \$11,600. Please consider making a direct donation to this project.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 22nd:

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Coffee & Donuts
After 9:30am Mass--Stack Center

New Parishioner Registration
10:30am--Stack Center

Christmas Posada Celebration
After 1:30 Spanish Mass--Stack Center

Tuesday, December 24th:

Parish Offices Close at Noon

Christmas Eve Vigil Masses
5:00pm--Church
10:00pm--Church

Wednesday, December 25th:

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Parish Offices Closed

Thursday, December 26th:

Parish Offices Closed
No Eucharistic Adoration tonight

AA Serenity Group
7:30pm--Augustine Center, Room A2

Sunday, December 29th:

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph



HOLIDAY BULLETIN DEADLINES

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

January 5th Bulletin: due December 18th

CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO MASS

At the entrances of the church, you will find 2 different Children's Guide to the Catholic Mass cards. The first is for young children and uses pictures and a simple description suggesting participation and sequential parts of the Mass. The second card with 25 windows is for children who can read and gives a simple description of the sequential activities during Mass. Please feel free to use these during the Mass and return these cards to the baskets at the end of Mass.

Mass Intentions for the Week

All Masses are celebrated in the Church

SUNDAY, December 22nd
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
9:30am Debi Telles--D

MONDAY, December 23rd
St. John Kanty, Priest
8:15am Sean Hickson--L

TUESDAY, December 24th
8:15am Marvin Picha--D
5:00pm Family Mass

WEDNESDAY, December 25th
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
7:30am *The Solemnity of Christmas*
9:30am *The Solemnity of Christmas*
11:30am *The Solemnity of Christmas*
1:30pm *The Solemnity of Christmas (Spanish)*

THURSDAY, December 26th
St. Stephan, The First Martyr
8:15am Antonio S. Barroso--D

FRIDAY, December 27th
ST. JOHN, APOSTLE & EVANGELIST
8:15am Fred Hammer--D

SATURDAY, December 28th
The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
8:15am Ted, Joni, & Kathleen Linney--D
5:00pm Stephanie Rosevear--D

SUNDAY, December 29th
THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH
7:30am Edmar Victorino--D
9:30am Greg Dickson--D

NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION

We extend a warm welcome to new parishioners & guests. Please stop by Stack Center, today, **December 22nd**, after the 9:30am Mass 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.

RELEVANT RADIO - 1260 AM

Relevant Radio brings you the best in Catholic Radio 24/7! Playing on 1260AM and dedicated to sharing the heart of the Catholic Faith and changing lives.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

December 23rd through December 29th

Monday: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66
Tuesday: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Luke 1:67-79
Wednesday:
Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25
Night: Isaiah 9:1-6; Timothy 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14
Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Timothy 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20
Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18
Thursday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22
Friday: 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1-8
Saturday: 1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18
Sunday: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

INTERFAITH COUNCIL DISPLAY

The Eden Area Interfaith Council recently installed an interfaith exhibit on the theme of "Adornment" in one of the entrance display cases at Castro Valley Library. The compelling objects include Our Lady of Grace's contribution of a powerful image of St. Maximilian Kolbe. The next time you're in the library, stop and take a look! The display will be up through December.



FLOWER REMEMBRANCE FUND

In Memory of We are grateful for the generous donation from Phyllis Barthman in memory of James W. Barthman. Flower donation envelopes can be found at the entrances of the church to make a donation in memory of or in honor of a loved one or other occasion. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jay at 537-0806. Your donation in honor of your loved one will be mentioned in the bulletin.

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:

JP's FAMILY RESTAURANT & SPORTS LOUNGE