

## *Season of Christmas*

*From the Pastor* We all know that Christmas officially begins on Christmas Eve, but when does Christmas end? On the Feast of the Epiphany (celebrated either on January 6 or on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8), the Church celebrates the event where the Magi, also called the Three Wise Men or Three Kings, traveled from the East to pay homage to the newborn King, Jesus Christ. Many Catholics believe that this is the date when the Christmas season officially ends, being the end of the 12 days of Christmas.

However, according to the Roman Catholic Calendar for 2014, Ordinary Time doesn't officially begin until the Monday after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which falls on the Sunday after Epiphany. This means that the Christmas season actually extends beyond the "Twelve Days of Christmas."

In older traditions (which are still kept in the liturgical calendar of the Extraordinary Form of the Mass) Christmas lasted until Candle-mas, or the Feast of the Purification of Mary and the Presentation of the Lord, which isn't until February 2nd. This marked the end of a long 40 day "Christmastide" that corresponded to the 40 days of Lent. On February 2nd the Church celebrates the day that Mary entered the temple with the Child Jesus when her days of purification after giving birth were fulfilled (according to the Mosaic law) and when Simeon made his well-known prophecy about Mary and the Child. It is called "Candle-mas" because of Simeon's prophecy of Jesus being a light for the Gentiles.

Last week I provided an explanation of the Octave of Christmas which ends on the eighth day after Christmas, which is January 1 and the Feast Day of Mary, the Mother of God. So now we'll answer your question, with the help of the Catholic Company, as to when Christmas actually ends.

### **So, When Does Christmas End?**

When Christmas ends depends on the Rite (Latin or Eastern), the liturgical calendar (Ordinary or Extraordinary), and whether you're looking for the end of the Christmas 'feast' or the end of the Christmas 'season.' But overall, here is what sounds good to me:

- The Christmas feast itself ends on the final day of its octave, which is the feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on January 1st. Keep your feasting and merriment going for the full 8 days.
- The 'peak' of the Christmas 'season' is Epiphany, the end of the 12 Days of Christmas. Jesus is now revealed as a light to the Gentile nations. Keep your Christmas decorations, especially your Christmas lights, up at least until this day is over; or better, 8 days for the full octave.
- The official end of the Christmas season is the Baptism of the Lord the following weekend (the end of the octave of Epiphany), after which Ordinary Time begins. Keep your nativity scene displayed up through this day or until the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd.

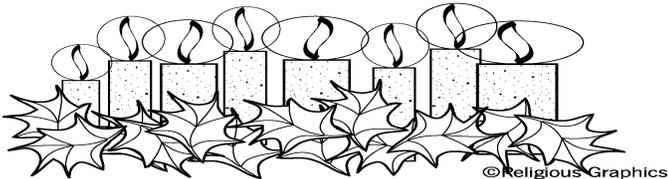
These are just suggestions of course. The varying Christmas traditions reflect the universal nature of the Church (all tribes and tongues!) which has been going strong for 2,000 years. Everyone is on the same page generally speaking in keeping the feast of Christmas, even though there have naturally arisen differences over the millenia in exactly how this is done from place to place.

In Christ Jesus and St. Augustine,  
Fr. Gregory Heidenblut, O.S.A.

**HOLIDAY MASS SCHEDULE**

*New Year's Eve: Wednesday, December 31st*  
Mass at 5:00pm

*New Year's Day: Thursday, January 1st*  
*Mary, the Mother of God*  
Mass at 9:00am

**PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS**

The Parish Offices will close at 12:00Noon on Wednesday, **December 31st** and will re-open on Friday, **January 2nd**. The entire parish staff wishes all a Blessed Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year !

**SACRAMENT PREPARATION**

Thank you to the OLG community for your support of the 9 students who celebrated the Rite of Acceptance at the 11:00 Mass on **December 7th**. They will continue preparation to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Please keep them and our First Eucharist students in your prayers as they journey together in faith.

**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](mailto:ffc@olgcv.org). Thank you!

**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!

**RECLAIMING CHRIST'S MISSION TOGETHER  
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

As part of the *Reclaiming Christ's Mission Together* campaign, Our Lady of Grace has been given a goal of \$513,246. Our Lady of Grace will receive 25% of all monies collected up to our goal. Once we meet and surpass our goal we will receive 50% of all monies collected over our goal.

By achieving our goal we can raise approximately \$128,000 for our Parish. Our Parish share of the funds raised through *Reclaiming Christ's Mission Together* campaign will be used in the following areas: *Renovation of Stack Center, Repairs to the Church and the parking lot.*

Our projects are an important part of this campaign. To complete all the projects, we need strong participation to reach, and hopefully exceed, our overall goal and raise maximum funds for our parish.

We thank everyone for their prayerful consideration and support of this historic effort in our Diocese.

**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](mailto:ffc@olgcv.org)

**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 after the first of the year along with the Christmas Offering.

**UPDATE: St. Vincent de Paul**

*Blessed are the merciful,  
for they shall receive mercy*

The Our Lady of Grace St. Vincent de Paul Conference would like to thank all who have so generously contributed gifts of food and money this year. Your ongoing support enables us to be "neighbors helping neighbors". Since January 2014 your generosity has enabled us to assist 136 people with rent, motel stays, utilities and mortgage payments. Over 400 people have received food from our pantry or in the form of gift cards. Our Members have been able to make over 200 home visits and we have helped a total of 515 people. We could not do this without your help. May God continue to bless you and please keep those that we serve in your prayers.

**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL COLLECTION**

The last Sunday of every month our St. Vincent de Paul Society members are outside to receive your financial donations. Your generosity enables this ministry to help the less fortunate in our parish community. With your support our community families will be more able to handle the economic challenges that are impacting their lives. Thank you for your past support and current generosity.

**DEVOTIONAL CANDLES  
OUR LADY OF GRACE**



Candles for our candle stand are available for purchase in the Parish Office or in the Sacristy after mass on Sundays. The candles will burn for 5 days. The cost per candle is \$3.00. *The glass globes in the candle stand must be left in the church. Simply insert the plastic candle in to the globe in the candle stand.*

**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 7th:**

Sunday Plate:	\$ 9,491.00
Last Year this week	\$ 7,608.00
<b>Weekly Budgeted Goal:</b>	<b>\$ 8,815.00</b>
Year-to-date this year:	\$385,031.00
Year-to-date last year:	\$396,256.00

**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 EPIPHANY OF THE LORD  
(January 4th)**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. 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. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

**CATHOLIC VOICE ANNUAL APPEAL**

There is still time to make your donation for The Catholic Voice 2014 Appeal if you have not yet done so. 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. ***The parish pays \$631.00 each month for our parishioners subscription.*** Please be generous in your support. **Check should be made payable to Our Lady of Grace.** Envelopes are in the pews for your use.



**ROSARY FOR WORLD PEACE**

The rosary will be recited for World Peace after the 8:30 am Mass each Monday in the Church. Please join us.

**THIS WEEK**

**Sunday, December 28th:**

*Coffee & Donuts After All Masses*

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

**Wednesday, December 31st:**

Parish Office  
Close at Noon

**Thursday, January 1st:**

Serenity Group  
8:15pm— Stack Center

**Saturday, January 3rd:**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament  
3:30pm--Church

**Sunday, January 4th:**

*Coffee & Donuts After All Masses*

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

**ADORATION OF THE  
BLESSED SACRAMENT  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 3rd**



Our next Holy Hour with the Blessed Sacrament:  
**Saturday, January 3rd**  
From 3:30--4:30pm  
Followed by Benediction,  
Closing at 4:45pm  
*All are welcome.*

**RENEW YOUR SAFEWAY ESCRIP  
CARD TODAY**

Have you renewed your Safeway cards for our Escrip program? Your valuable contributions will stop unless you renew your cards this month. Note: if you have not yet signed with Religious Education eScrip stop by the Parish Office and we will sign you up.

**REMEMBER OUR LADY OF GRACE**

Please consider remembering Our Lady of Grace in your Will or Trust.

Should you have any questions, call Fr. Greg at the Parish Office, 537-0806.

## 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, DECEMBER 29th(CHURCH)

*St. Thomas Becket, Bishop, Martyr*  
8:30am Debi Telles (D)

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30th

7:00am Peter Mc Shane (L)

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31st

*St. Sylvester I, Pope*  
7:00am Peter Mc Shane (L)  
5:00pm *Solemnity, Mary, Mother of God*

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 1st

9:00am *Solemnity, Mary, Mother of God*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 2nd

*St.'s Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops, Doctors of the Church*  
7:00am Peter Mc Shane (L)

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 3rd

8:30am Joni & Kathleen Linney (D)

### ST. MARY'S CENTER WINTER SHELTER

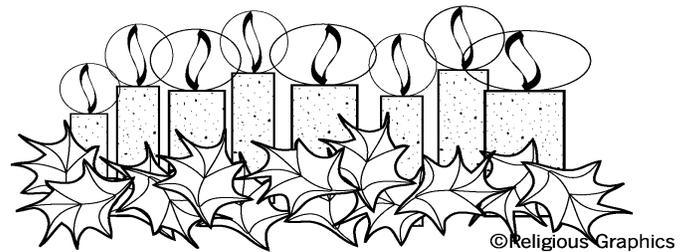
St. Mary's Winter Shelter is the only shelter in Alameda County solely serving adults 55 or older. The program relies heavily on volunteer support. Volunteers are needed to provide the evening meal for 28 adults Tuesday –Sunday, **now through April 30th**. There are still dates available.

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.

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

#### December 29th through January 4th

Monday: 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35  
Tuesday: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40  
Wednesday: 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18  
Thursday: Numbers 6:22-27; Luke 2:16-21  
Friday: 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28  
Luke 21:29-33  
Saturday: 1 John 2:29--3:6; John 1:29-34  
Sunday: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3;  
Matthew 2:1-12



### 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](http://www.FoxSox.com) and click on "Shop Online" to get started. Order soon as popular styles may sell out! Use promo code: PR14OLG and get a discount as well as earning money for our school! Hurry offer expires **December 31st**.

### 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.

### 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:

**BLAHA, HARFORD & PERRY**