



My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On Christmas Eve 1223, in the small village of Greccio, Italy, Saint Francis gathered at midnight with his friars and townsfolk in a mountaintop cave to reenact the scene of Jesus' birth. As he chanted the Christmas Gospel, Saint Francis became so deeply moved by the humility of God-become-Man that the Christ Child miraculously appeared to him on the hay, and Greccio was transformed into a "New Bethlehem."

As part of the celebration of the 800th Anniversary of the creation of the Nativity Scene at Greccio, the Franciscan Family asked Pope Francis for the approval of a plenary indulgence in order to promote the spiritual renewal of the faithful and increase the life of grace.

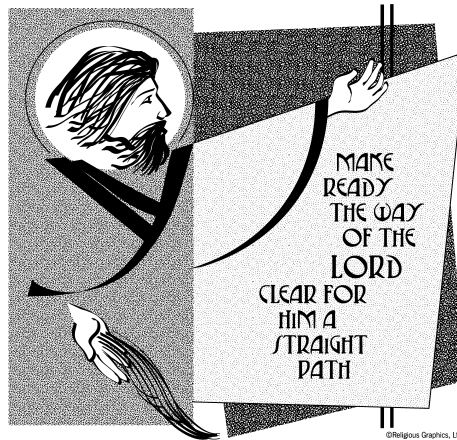
It is a great gift and privilege that the Holy Father has granted this request, the approval of a plenary indulgence, on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of Christmas in Greccio.

This year, Catholics will be able to receive a plenary indulgence from December 8th, The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to February 2nd, 2024, The Feast of the Presentation in the Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by praying before the Nativity Scene either here at Our Lady of Grace Church or at Transfiguration Church or before the Nativity Scene in any Franciscan Church.

The usual conditions are required to receive a plenary indulgence (Sacramental confession, Holy Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope). Sacramental confession and receiving the Eucharist can happen up to about 20 days before or after praying before a Nativity Scene in a Franciscan Church. It is appropriate that Communion and the prayer for our Holy Father take place on the same day. One Sacramental confession is sufficient for several plenary indulgences. However, for each plenary indulgence one wishes to receive, a separate reception of the Eucharist and a separate prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required. Those who are sick or unable to participate physically can obtain the indulgence by offering their sufferings up to the Lord or by "carrying out practices of piety."

It is a great gift and privilege that the Holy Father has granted. Here and in all churches entrusted to Franciscans for pastoral care, it is possible for all the faithful to receive a plenary indulgence from December 8th, 2023 to February 2nd, 2024.

-Fr. Raphael



Third Sunday of Advent (December 17th)

John 1:6-8, 19-28

A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?" He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ." So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" He said: "I am *the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'make straight the way of the Lord,'*" as Isaiah the prophet said." Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CELEBRATION

The Hispanic Group invites the entire Parish community to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe with Rosaries and Masses.

December 10th & 11th: Rosary at 7:00pm
Diciembre 10 y 11: Rosario a las 7:00pm

December 12th

Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Join us as we begin with Mañanitas (joyous Mexican Folk Music) from 5:30-7:00am. Immediately following, Mexican hot chocolate and bread will be served in Stack Center. At 8:15am we will celebrate Mass with the School. At 7:00pm we will celebrate Mass in Spanish.

Diciembre 12

Celebraciones En Honor a al Virgen de Guadalupe

Mañanitas a la 5:30 am en la Iglesia. Se servirá inmediatamente después chocolate y pan mexicano en el Stack Center. Misas a la 8:15 am con la escuela en inglés y a la 7:00 pm en español.

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT COLLECTION December 9th & 10th

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

This annual appeal helps retired sisters, brothers and religious order priests, who spent their lives in church ministries such as education, healthcare and social service, usually with little to no compensation. Consequently, a significant number currently have insufficient retirement funds, combined with escalating health-care costs. Numerous religious communities in the U.S. are experiencing challenges with providing for their elderly members and are confronting a sizable disparity between available funds and the costs of care. Please give generously. Envelopes are in the pews for your use. *Religious women and men thank you for each merciful action you take on behalf of others and pray for your spiritual peace.*



OLG'S 75th ANNIVERSARY BOOK More Copies Are Here!

Just in time for Christmas—our 2nd order of Anniversary books are available for purchase in the Parish Office. Cost is \$14 per copy. Beautifully written by long time parishioner Mark Vaz, these keepsakes may be autographed upon request.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Vigil Masses—Sunday, December 24th

Carols will be sung 30 minutes before the evening Masses

Family Mass at 5:00pm

Mass at Night at 10:00pm

Monday, December 25th

Masses at 7:30am, 9:00am, 11:00am & 1:00pm (Spanish)

HOW YOU CAN HELP THOSE IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



St. Vincent de Paul Warm Coat Drive

We are thankful for the generosity from those who have given so far. St. Vincent de Paul is collecting coats, blankets and socks through December. Our main need is men's coats in larger sizes; but we will accept women's and children's sizes too. We have collection barrels at the 2 main entrances to the church and in the Parish Office. **PLEASE DO NOT** leave other items of clothing. Thank you!

If you know someone in our community what could use our help, or if you have interested in knowing more about this ministry—please call our SVdP line at 510-581-2164 and someone will get back to you.

FESCO & Castro Valley Outreach "Adopt A Family" Christmas Giving Trees

Thank you to all who have given so generously! If you have still yet to return your gifts, please do so with the ornament and receipt to the Parish Office by **Thursday, December 14th**. This will allow our Outreach members time to catalog your gift.



CYO Christmas Toy Drive

Philanthropy is a key part of OLG CYO, and there is no better time than the holiday season to help those less fortunate. OLG CYO is partnering with the Alameda County Fire Department on their annual toy drive. You will find a donation barrel located in the Parish Office. Please bring new, unwrapped gifts by **December 15th**. Your donation is much appreciated!

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Office will be closed on Friday, **December 22nd**, Monday, **December 25th** and Tuesday, **December 26th**. We will re-open on Wednesday, **December 27th** at 8:30am.

Additionally, the office will be closed on Friday, **December 29th** and Monday, **January 1st**. We will re-open on Tuesday, **January 2nd** at 8:30am.

The entire Parish Staff wishes you all a Blessed Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!

**ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS
NEW DATE! December 17th**

Join us at 5:00pm in the Church for a special service celebrating the upcoming birth of Jesus. The story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus is told in nine short scripture readings from Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir music. Immediately following will be a Cookie Exchange in Stack Center. If you like to bake, please bring a Christmas tin and 2 dozen of your favorite cookies to participate in the share and "exchange". You don't have to bake in order to participate.

**ICF CHRISTMAS PARTY
December 14th**

Branch #343 of the Italian Catholic Federation invites all parishioners for Christmas Cheer and Raffle on **December 14th** in Stack Center. Doors open at 5:30pm and dinner will be served at 6:00pm. Cost is \$20 per person and includes 7 Fishes Appetizers, Salad, Ham, Scalloped Potatoes and Dessert.

We are also asking for donations for newborns such as onesies, diapers, blankets, booties, cash and gift cards. We thank you for your generosity! Buon Natale!

**CYO GIRLS BASKETBALL
REGISTRATION**

Girl's Basketball registration (open to grades 2nd-8th) will be available online beginning December 16th for OLG School Students and current Faith Formation Students ONLY. All other students residing in our Parish boundaries may register beginning December 30th. Fee for the 2024 program year is \$195. Space is limited. **Registration closes on January 10th.** To register, please visit: www.olgcvcyo.com. For more information, questions or if you would like to coach, please email: olgcycv@gmail.com. Go Lions!

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 for the Month of NOVEMBER:

Sunday Plate for the month:	\$ 35,342.00
Month Budgeted Goal:	\$ 38,000.00
Over/[Shortfall]	\$ [2,658.00]
Year-To-Date Over/[Shortfall]	\$ [969.00]

May God bless your continuing generosity.

**Your Prayers Are Requested**

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

Jaime Arce
Phyllis Barthman
Lois Belmessieri
Jot Brown
Raul Cepeda
Nancy French
Joan Gabrielli
Skeet Jennings
Grace Letteer
Brian Linney

Sheila McAlinden
Cec Penland
Julie Richardson
Diana Riley
Jenny Roberts
Al Rojas
Alyssia Tortora
Arthur Williams
Peggy Winkenbach

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

In Memorial**FIDEL GAITEN****VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN
THE MIDDLE EAST****VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE****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.



OUR LADY OF GRACE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Did You Know??

- 800 year ago, in the small town of Greccio, Italy, St. Francis of Assisi introduced the “crèche” to the world. Living Nativities have been a part of Advent/Christmas celebrations for Christians ever since. OLG students are busy preparing their own living crèche in remembrance of St. Francis’ first and presenting it to parents and friends on Tuesday, December 19th at 6:30pm in the Church.
- Our 6th-8th grade team has begun preparing for the National Junior High academic decathlon. Please keep these hard-working students in your prayers.
- The TK’rs have all passed their Spanish-only reading assessments with flying colors. Our littlest scholars are getting closer to being literate as well as bilingual in the OLG early childhood center.

Come Check Us Out! Visit www.olgschool.org for more information and to apply.

BISHOP'S MINISTRIES APPEAL

We are grateful to all those who have made a pledge or outright donation to the 2023 Bishop's Ministries Appeal. Your generosity has enabled Our Lady of Grace to exceed our appeal goal. As a reminder, all funds exceeding our goal will be returned to Our Lady of Grace for our needs. *If you have made your pledge to the 2023 Appeal, please complete your donation by **December 31st**.* May God Bless your continuing generosity.



CYO ATHLETICS CRAB FEED February 3rd, 2024

Join us for an exciting evening of delicious crab, Silent Auction and community. Tickets will be sold online beginning next week. Check back for the link.

If you are interested in joining the Crab Feed Committee and volunteering your time and talents, please email Joe Perry at CrabFeed@olgschool.org

MAXIMILIAN KOLBE QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The renewal of a religious order is equivalent to the conversion and sanctification of its members. Therefore, the closer a religious order comes to the Immaculata, the more it renews itself, it develops, it flourishes, becoming endowed with fruits, saints and even canonized saints."

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 10th:

Second Sunday of Advent

Whole Family Program
10:15am—Augustine Center

1st Communion-Year 1 Class
10:15am—Stack Center

Confirmation-Discipleship Conferences
12:15pm—Stack Center

Rosary
7:00pm—Church

Monday, December 11th:

Rosary
7:00pm—Church

Tuesday, December 12th:

Our Lady of Guadalupe Festivities

Mañanitas
5:30am—Church

Hot Chocolate & Bread
7:00am—Stack Center

Mass w/ School
8:15am—Church

Mass in Spanish
7:00pm—Church

Reception
8:00pm—Stack Center

Men's Cursillo Meeting
6:00pm—Stack Center, OLG Room

Men's Faith Share
7:00pm—Stack Center, Room 7

Wednesday, December 13th:

RCIA
7:00pm—Parish Office

Thursday, December 14th:

ICF Christmas Party
5:30pm—Stack Center

AA Serenity Group
7:30pm—Augustine Center

Saturday, December 16th:

Adoration & Reconciliation
8:45am—Church

1st Reconciliation
10:00am—Stack Center & Church

OLG Movie Night
5:00pm—Stack Center

Mass for the Intentions Week

SUNDAY, December 10th

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

7:30am OLG Community

9:00am Emma & Mike McCormick – L

11:00am Joe Kozel – D

1:00pm Rosa Martinez Reyes – D

MONDAY, December 11th

St. Damasus I, Pope

8:15am Frank Groves – D

TUESDAY, December 12th

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

8:15am Mattina Lee – L

7:00pm Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

WEDNESDAY, December 13th

St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

8:15am Ferdinand Perdido – D

THURSDAY, December 14th

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

8:15am Lilia Sousa – D

FRIDAY, December 15th

8:15am Jerome Gann – D

SATURDAY, December 16th

8:15am Manuel & Dorothy Callier – D

5:00pm Gilberto C. Marquez – D

SUNDAY, December 17th

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

7:30am Jesusa Perdido – D

9:00am OLG Community

11:00am Jennifer Guerrero – L

THIS WEEK--Continued*Sunday, December 17th:**Third Sunday of Advent*

Advent Lessons & Carols

5:00pm—Church

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 13th**December 31st Bulletin: **Due December 18th**January 7th Bulletin: **Due December 20th****READINGS FOR THE WEEK:****December 11th through December 17th**

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

Tuesday: Zechariah 2:14-27; 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 17:9-13

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

FLOWER REMEMBRANCE FUND

We are very grateful for the generous donation from Marie Houts in memory of Mary E. Burgess, Tom Burgess and Mary P. Burgess. Flower donation envelopes may 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 510-537-0806. Your donation in honor of your loved one will be mentioned in the bulletin.

**ADVENT RECONCILIATION
Ready the Way of the Lord**

Reconciliation during Advent will follow our regular Reconciliation schedule with Adoration:

Thursdays: 6:00-7:00pm**Saturdays: 8:45-10:00am****PAX CHRISTI QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"The chief difference between violence and nonviolence is that violence depends entirely on its own calculations. Nonviolence depends entirely on God and His Word."

-Thomas Merton, 1967

To join our work with Pax Christi, please contact the Parish Office at 510-537-0806.

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:

THE LAW OFFICE OF EDUARDO ROBLES