



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Catholic Church

JANUARY 2, 2022



THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



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. - Mt 2:10-11

Sacraments

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday Vigil	5:00 pm
Sunday	7:30 am
	9:00 am
	11:30 am
	6:00 pm

1st Sunday Spanish 1:30 pm

Daily Mass Times

Mon. - Fri.	6:30 am
	8:15 am

Holy Day Mass Times

6:30 am
8:15 am
12:00 pm
7:00 pm

Reconciliation / Confession

Saturday 3 - 4:30 pm
& by appointment

All Other Sacraments

Please call the office for information.

Clergy

Fr. Renier Siva

Pastor

Fr. Cleetus Karakkat

Parochial Vicar

William Goeke

Jim McFadden

Deacons

Fr. Ignatius Haran

Pastor Emeritus

Parish Office

Mon.- Fri. 8:30 am- 4:30 pm
307 Montrose Drive, Folsom
Phone: 916-985-2065

Website:

FolsomCatholic.org

Social Media:

@FolsomCatholic

Bulletin

FolsomCatholic.org/bulletin

Bulletin Date Ads Due by 5pm

January 9	December 20
January 16	January 6
January 23	January 13
January 30	January 20

Welcome to

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

We are a community where we welcome all as members of the Body of Christ.

We are welcoming, faithful, passionate, joyful, authentic,
sacramental, loving and charitable.

Today's Readings

Is 60:1-6 / Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 [cf.11] / Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 / Mt 2:1-12

"Lord, every nation on earth will adore you. "

(Ps 72)

Gospel Meditation

In his Apostolic Exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis references a thought from Pope Benedict XVI: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." Today we celebrate an encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ! This simple but holy event in time dramatically changes human life, pointing it toward a new horizon and giving it a decisive direction. This is a message and truth that is not meant to be shared with only a select few who qualify but with the entire world. Pope Francis continues saying, "Thanks solely to this encounter or renewed encounter with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being."

Look around at people. Where is life heading for them? What gives them direction? Even we who are people of faith can get distracted and lose our focus. God, in all of His fullness, is revealed in Jesus Christ and we can encounter Him! God is tangible, real, vulnerable, poor, and full of wonders, surprises, and opportunities. For those who are struggling and lost, today is a day of great joy. All they have to do is reach out and touch the truth of Christ. This presence is revealed in the poor, exploited, and vulnerable ones who cry out for compassion and love. But it is also found in the faithful ones who see in the Epiphany of God a liberation from structures and systems that hurt us, a narrowness of mind and heart that constricts us, and an absorption in our self-agenda that prevents us from seeing anything other than ourselves as important.

We have been given the charge of preaching this Good News. If only we could find a way to be more effective, it might stand a chance of doing what God intended it to do. There is always tomorrow and our memory of that bright new light that shone so brilliantly that Bethlehem night pointing us to truth and reminding us that we are loved.

Scripture Reflections

First Reading

The prophet Isaiah foresaw a time of great joy for Israel when nations and kings would come to Israel praising the Lord. How do you show gratitude to the Lord for the great joys of your life?

Second Reading

It was revealed to Paul that God intended to save all people (Jews and Gentiles) through his Son, Jesus Christ. Paul tried to convey the significance of this revelation to the Ephesians by using the language of "coheirs" and "copartners." What does this language signal to you?

Gospel

The visit of the magi is one of the most well-known stories from the Gospel infancy narratives. It was an event that manifested God's revelation of His newborn Son to the world.

It also foreshadowed the threat that some would experience because of Jesus.

How does Jesus challenge the status quo even today?



Office Closure

The parish office will be closed Monday, January 3. We will reopen January 4.

Knights of Columbus

Bishop Gallegos Council 6197
Free Throw Program and Competition
Saturday, January 8, 9am -1pm
Gallagher Hall
Contact: Greg Sinclair, 916-337-4239
Percy Park, 916-936-6145

All boys and girls, ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition and will compete in their respective age divisions. Participants are required to furnish proof of age and written parental consent. For your Form 1598 Application/Score Sheet forms or additional information, contact Greg or Percy.

New to the Parish?

Contact: Joyce Starosciak
jastaros@gmail.com
916-740-4628

The St. John the Baptist Welcoming Ministry is holding two orientation sessions for new parishioners:

- January 8, 3:45 pm
- January 9, 10:15 am

You will get to meet other new parishioners, learn about our ministries, and take a guided tour of the parish facilities. The orientation will end before mass. Please contact Joyce to register.

Senior Visitation Ministry

Contact: Charlene Agles
charleneagles@gmail.com
916-984-9602

We are a group of dedicated compassionate individuals, from our parish, who volunteer their time in visiting the homebound and elderly in our community who live alone or in an assisted living facility. During their visits they may offer Spiritual and Emotional Support, Companionship and Socialization. Men, women, and couples are welcome to have visits from our Ministry. If you are interested in having someone visit or may be aware of anyone that would benefit from our Ministry, please contact the Parish Office, or contact Charlene. There are brochures in the church vestibule.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Week of January 16 & 23
Contact: Shannon Frazier
rsfrazier4@comcast.net

Pope Francis has called for a world-wide synod of bishops which will take place in Rome 2023. He has titled the synod, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission."

The Holy Father is inviting every Catholic to participate at the diocesan level through a process of "listening and discernment." These sessions will be conducted in each parish throughout the world. When the bishops come together for the synod in 2023, they will present the life-giving experiences, burdens, challenges and dreams of the people to the Holy Father. As baptized members of the Body of Christ, we have the right and responsibility to share in the church's life and mission and to speak of our experiences, hopes, and challenges.

Our parish will be hosting several listening sessions during the weeks of January 16 and January 23, 2022. This will be your opportunity be heard and to give voice to the direction of the Church. Please contact Parish Council Chair Shannon Frazier to participate in one of the listening sessions. Each session will be approximately 1 hour in length with morning and evening hours to accommodate work and school schedules.

May the Holy Spirit show us what God's priorities are for his Church today and moving forward.





At St. John the Baptist Parish, time in conversation with our Lord is at the center of our lives.

Mass Intentions

Sunday, January 2nd

- 7:30am People of the Parish
- 9:00am William J. Tierney+ & Mary Forde+
- 11:30am Ellen, Ellen, Phelim Needham+
- 1:30pm Rico Family
- 6:00pm Henry & Conchita Enrado+

Monday, January 3rd

- 6:30am Cora Gonzales (*thanksgiving*)
- 8:15am Gluse Doan+

Tuesday, January 4th

- 6:30am Jasmine Doan (*birthday*)
- 8:15am Illuminada Cedro+

Wednesday, January 5th

- 6:30am Erika Tecson (*birthday*)
- 8:15am Joann Siruno-Perez

Thursday, January 6th

- 6:30am Lori Rico+
- 8:15am Rochi B. Cabusas

Friday, January 7th

- 6:30am Prasanna & Placita Rupasinghe (*wedding anniv*)
- 8:15am Lori Rico+

Saturday, January 8th

- 5:00pm: Jose Alfredo+ & Hilarion Aspera+

Observances

We Celebrate This Week

Mon: The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Tues: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Wed: St. John Neumann

Thu: St. André Bessette

Fri: St. Raymond of Penyafort

January is Dedicated to:

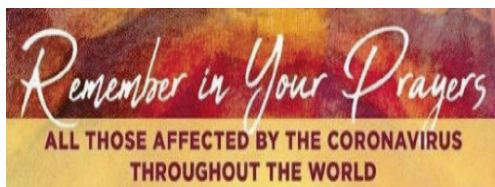
The Holy Name of Jesus

Pope Francis'

Monthly Intention for January

For true human fraternity

We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.



Intercessory Prayers

Prayers for the Sick

We pray for our sick parishioners, family and friends, and those in need of healing of the body and soul.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Alice Sulik | Junior Palma |
| Amelia Barlow | Katrina Bojorquez |
| Anh Tang | Kimanh Davis |
| Calvin Dickerman | Lily Wood |
| Cathy Lowe | Lucy Tran |
| Cayme Family | Marelou Montemayor |
| Christopher Kovarik | Mario Palma |
| Danielle Reda | Maureen Jarboe |
| Dave Asmus | Michael Sullivan |
| Dave Loveall | Minh Davis |
| Dominador Palma | Nancy Wilkins |
| Dorothy Wilhite | Richard Mason |
| Gary Lowe | Rick Moon |
| Joseph Cardenas | Rose DeHerrera |
| Joseph Flores | Savannah Smith |

Prayers for Our Troops

We pray for our military personnel abroad and at home, and for their families.

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|---------------|------------------|
| Brian Manning | Michael Dalupan |
| | Shaquara Manning |

Prayers for the Recently Deceased

We pray for the souls of all who have recently died, our family members, friends, and parishioners. May they rest in peace.

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|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Alfredo Bito | Jimmy Ledda Tan |
| Art Fortis | John Donoghue |
| Anthony King | John Gomez |
| Arlene Malandrone | Joseph Rendon |
| Beatrice Cisneros | Joseph Szymusik |
| Beatrice Rhea | Juana Bernert |
| Brendan Harrington | Juanita Bersabal |
| Cathy Kovarik | Kathleen Lowe |
| Cheryl Cassel | Lois Boeck |
| Chris Cordova | Luis Lopez-Alvarez |
| Delores Torok | Marcella Raper |
| Don Russell | Maria Luisa Sia |
| Eddie Duarte | Marianna Ort |
| Edgar Curameng | Marianne Giordani |
| Esmeralda Farrales | Nikia Aaliyah Davis |
| Felisa Curameng | Patricia Cwynar |
| Gonzalo Bito | Pierre Lavapie |
| Helen Donoghue | Ranibel Babylon |
| Hilarion Aspera | Rene Dios Sabino |
| Ilona Johnson | Richard Nedwick |
| Irene M. Biancanello | Robert Henriquez |
| Jaime Manabat | Roberta Saniga |
| James McArdle | Ruben Antonio Sanchez |
| James Ronald Kister | Susan Goltiao |
| Jennifer Batish | Virginia Olson |
| Jim Sullivan | Xavier Kennedy |



Prayer Requests

Prayer requests for the sick, military or recently deceased may be made by calling our Parish Office. Names will appear for four months.



The Adoration Chapel

Chapel hours are: Mon-Fri 9am - 8pm,
Sat 9am - 5pm and Sun 7am -11am

First Friday of every month Eucharistic Adoration:
9am to 7pm in the church

The Adoration Ministry has immediate need for dedicated adorers for these hours

Monday:	9 - 10 am	12 - 1 pm	4 - 5pm	5 - 6 pm	6 - 7 pm
Tuesday:	12 - 1 pm	4 - 5pm	5 - 6 pm	6 - 7 pm	
Wednesday:	4 - 5 pm	6 - 7 pm	7 - 8 pm		
Thursday:	5 - 6 pm	6 - 7 pm			
Friday:	9 - 10am	6 - 7 pm	7 - 8 pm		
Saturday:	11 - 12 pm	12 - 1 pm	2 - 3 pm	3 - 4 pm	4 - 5 pm

To sign up please contact Veronica Thomas at thomas_vera@yahoo.com

Confession

**Saturdays: 3 - 4:30 pm
and by appointment**

Confessions at this time are offered outside of the confessional. We will continue a face to face format in a larger setting.

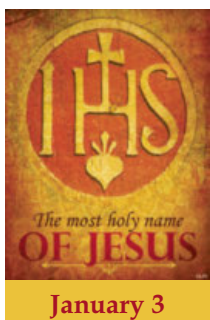
Respect Life

Planned Parenthood
201 29th Street, Sacramento, Ca 95816
Contact: Joanne Dudgeon
916-607-2228

779 babies were saved from abortion this recent 40 Days for Life (including seven here in Sacramento), praise the Lord!

Your life-saving prayers are still needed at the Planned Parenthood Sidewalk,, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (8am to 1pm), which are busy surgical abortion days. Carpool available from St Johns on Wednesdays from 11am-1:00, contact Joanne or you can sign up for Tuesday or Wednesday hours at our 40 Days for Life website, so that we know who is coming when, allowing us to make sure people and resource packets are always present.

*Jesus, we trust in You, as we unite together,
peacefully praying for an end to abortion and
for the eternal salvation of all souls.*



The entrance antiphon for the feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus gives us a glimpse into how important Jesus' name is:

*At the name of Jesus,
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and
under the earth, and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.*



The name of Jesus is a name of gladness, a name of hope and a name of love. A name of gladness, because if the remembrance of past transgressions afflicts us, this name comforts us, reminding us that the Son of God became man for this purpose, to make himself our Savior.

A name of hope, because he that prays to the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus may hope for every grace he asks for: If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.

A name of love. For the name of Jesus brings to our remembrance all the sufferings which Jesus has endured for us in his life and at his death.

*Excerpted from
St. Alphonsus de Liguori, The Incarnation
Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*



At St. John the Baptist Parish,
time in conversation with our
Lord is at the center of
our lives.



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At St. John the Baptist Parish,
we foster a
commitment to lifelong
spiritual growth.

Workshop on Pope Francis' Environmental Encyclical Laudato Si'

Join Dcn Jim McFadden for 7-Week Online Series

January 11 - February 22, 7pm

Contact: Theresa Grant
tgrant@talkpathlive.com

- Week 1** (1/11): *Introduction to Laudato Si'*
- Week 2** (1/18): *What is Happening to our Common Home?*
- Week 3** (1/25): *The Gospel of Creation – the Pope's Franciscan Vision*
- Week 4** (2/1): *Human Roots of the Ecological Crises*
- Week 5** (2/8): *Integral Ecology*
- Week 6** (2/15): *Guidelines for Action Based on Dialogue*
- Week 7** (2/22): *Ecological Education and Spirituality*

Participants can obtain the encyclical letter via the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website: https://store.usccb.org/products/on-care-for-our-common-home-laudato-si_pos=1&_sid=75ac05401&_ss=r

The encyclical is also available on line, but a hardcopy is recommended.

To register for the series, please email Theresa Grant. You will receive an email prior to the scheduled session with the Zoom link & instructions. Please check your spam/junk mail in case you do not receive the email in your inbox.

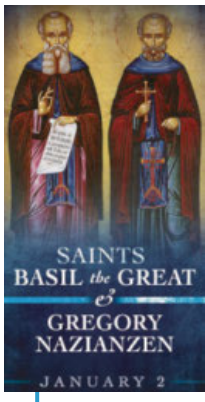
World Marriage Day 2022

Renewal of Vows

Saturday, February 12, 2022, 9:30 am
Mass at St. Lawrence the Martyr Church,
North Highlands

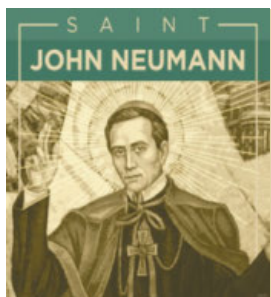
Diocese of Sacramento
Office of Family and Faith Formation
(916) 733-0133

Join us as we honor marriage and salute the beauty of faithfulness, sacrifice, and joy in married life. There will be a special blessing for sacramentally married couples and an opportunity for them to renew their marital commitment. After Mass, there will be an opportunity to receive a blessing and picture with Bishop Soto. Special certificates will be distributed at the reception honoring couples celebrating milestone anniversaries (10, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 50+). Please register at: <https://catholic.formstack.com/forms/wmd2022>



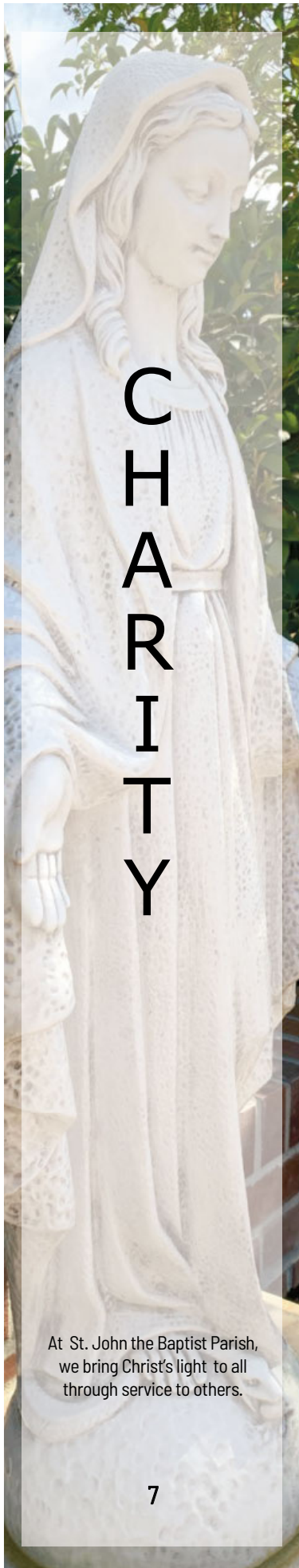
The story of St. Gregory of Nazianzen (325 – 390) is a great example of how ordinary people can do extraordinary things! Baptized at the age of 30, St. Gregory eagerly accepted his friend St. Basil the Great's request to join him in a newly

founded monastery. But soon after, St. Gregory's father, a bishop at the time, needed help in his diocese. According to the story, St. Gregory was ordained a priest almost forcefully, and only reluctantly accepted the responsibility asked of him. He managed to avoid a split that threatened when his father made compromises with believers of the Arian heresy. At 41, St. Gregory was chosen Suffragan Bishop of Caesarea, and soon after came into conflict with the Emperor Valens, who supported the Arians. In addition, his friendship with Basil, his archbishop, became strained. After with the death of Valens, St. Gregory was called to rebuild the faith in Constantinople, which had been under Arian teachers for more than three decades. He dreaded being drawn into a vortex of corruption and brutality, but he managed to stay at a friend's home, which soon became the only orthodox church in the city. In such surroundings, he began giving the great sermons on the Trinity for which he is famous today. In time, Gregory did rebuild the faith in the city, but at the cost of great suffering, slander, insults, and even personal violence. St. Gregory Nazianzen shares his feast day with St. Basil the Great.



WE CAN BELIEVE
WHAT WE *choose*.
WE ARE ANSWERABLE
FOR WHAT WE CHOOSE
TO *believe*.

Feast Day January 5



2nd Collection

This weekend our second collection is for our RE Program and SJND.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Retirement Fund for Religious on December 18/19. Elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have offered their lives in service to others — educating the young, comforting the sick, and ministering to the less fortunate. Today, many are frail and need assistance. Your gift helps furnish medications, nursing care, and more. Together we collected \$2323.

Next weekend our 2nd collection will be for our Building & Maintenance Fund.



The patron saint of Catholic schools, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (August 28, 1774 – January 4, 1821) was born in New York City to a prominent family of the Episcopal faith. When she turned 19, she married a wealthy

businessman with whom she had five children. He later died of tuberculosis in 1803, leaving her a young widow. After discovering the Catholic faith in Italy, where her husband had died, she returned to New York and converted to Catholicism in 1805. After several years struggling as a single mother, Elizabeth moved in 1809 to Emmitsburg, Maryland, where she founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, the first community for religious women established in the United States. She also began St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, which started a chain reaction of Catholic-based education in the United States that continues today. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was canonized September 14, 1975 in St. Peter's Square by Pope Paul VI and was the first citizen born in the United States to be given the title of "saint."

Stewardship of Treasure the Lord Has Entrusted to Us

Weekly goal: \$25,529.00

Weekly Offerings:

December 18/19 \$17,119

The Light of the Moon

If you own a television that has been turned on at any point in the last month or so, chances are you've caught at least a scene or two of the 1946 classic film "It's a Wonderful Life."

If you're not familiar with the movie, it follows the life of George Bailey from childhood through adulthood. A dreamer by nature, George has big plans for himself that involve world exploration and adventure — but family and community obligations keep him tethered to the same spot on the map, leading an altogether ordinary life.

One of the most memorable scenes from that movie is of George dancing with his sweetheart Mary while they sing "Buffalo Gals — Won't you come out tonight/And dance by the light of the moon?"

That lyric always catches my ear. Of course, the moon doesn't have any light of its own. All the moon has is the ability to reflect the light that shines upon it.

The same holds for us, doesn't it? Our stewardship is purely a reflection of the grace granted to us by another. "Upon you the LORD shines," writes Isaiah, "and over you appears his glory." Every good action we will ever take begins in the mind of God. The fact that we have the honor of carrying it out on His behalf is a beautiful gift. It is God that makes our ordinary lives extraordinary.

In the end of the movie, George Bailey realizes that he had a far greater life because, instead of being the hero of his own story, he allowed himself to reflect goodness onto others.

Remember — the magi didn't chart their own course. They merely followed the star.

~ Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

Sharing the Gospel

Isn't God amazing? He made all the stars and planets to move, so every night the sky looks a little different. When God created the world, he planned exactly when the wise men would see the star. He wanted them to find Jesus.



Unscramble these words from today's Gospel

wise-men king Mary
child star gifts
born worship dream

wsie mne	<u>w</u> <u>i</u> <u>s</u> <u>e</u> <u>m</u> <u>e</u> <u>n</u>
brno	— — — — —
knig	— — — — —
derma	— — — — —
cildh	— — — — —
wrsohpi	— — — — —
Mrya	— — — — —
gfsti	— — — — —
srt a	— — — — —

Mission for the Week

Visit a planetarium to learn more about the star of Bethlehem.



Dear God, thank you for making the planets and stars so the wise men could find Jesus.

Read the Gospel and Color

Mt 2:1-12



"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

KID'S CORNER



Our parish is enriched with many ministries, please consider learning about and engaging in one or more of our ministries. Call the contact listed or see a Minister of Hospitality after Mass.

Welcoming Ministries

Communications Ministry

Parish Office, 916-985-2065

Ministers of Hospitality

Parish Office, 916-985-2065

New Parishioner Welcoming Ministry

Joyce Starosciak, 916-740-4628

Ushers

Stanley Posis, 916-705-9192

Prayer Ministries

Companioned Prayer

Dcn. Bill Goeke, 916-673-7996

Divine Mercy Devotion/Cenacle

Zoanne Tafolla, 707-333-7359

-*Chaplet/Rosary/Morning Prayer*

-*Divine Mercy Chaplet/Mass*

-*Cenacle* - Zoanne Tafolla, 707-333-7359

-*Cenacle-Spanish* - Ana Haid, 916-956-1177

Eucharistic Adoration

Veronica Thomas, thomas_vera@yahoo.com

1st Friday of the Month - 9am - 7pm (church),

Sign Up for adorers is in the vestibule

Marian Cenacle (Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle)

-*English* - 1st Saturday of the month

Sally Gomez, 916-693-2411

-*Spanish* - Every Saturday

Ana Haid, 916-956-1177

Our Lady of Fatima

Henry Altamirano, 925-899-7769

Spiritual Growth Ministries

Adult Scripture Study

Lee & Teresa Weider, 916-983-8065

Couples for Christ

Myrah Empleo, 661-993-4721

Praise & Worship

David Brauer, dabrauer@hotmail.com

Religious Education

Shannon Langer, 916-985-7338

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

Shannon Langer, 916-985-7338

Theology on Tap

Aaron Santos, 916-985-2065

WINGS (Women in Growth Spiritually)

Parish Office, 916-985-2065

Youth/Young Adults Ministries

Aaron Santos, asantos@folsomcatholic.org

Parish Committees/Councils

Finance Council

Joyce Starosciak, 916-740-4628

Liturgy Committee

Barbara Bowden, 916-984-9476

Pastoral Council

Shannon Frazier, 916-761-2912

Outreach/Charity Ministries

Bereavement Hospitality/Receptions

Nina Pucci, 916-947-6386

Catholics for Life

Kathy Baxter, 916-337-6824

Gabriel Project

Debbie Sultan, 916-337-5786

Grace Quilters Ministry

Catherine Scott, 831-402-4681

Grupo Pastoral Hispano

Rommel Hernández, 530-387-1009

Knights of Columbus

Hugo Schmidt, 916-817-4541

Pastoral Care Ministry

Dan Dunne, 916-817-1675; Sunday

Candice Ralston, 916-806-8090; Tuesday

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Catherine Scott, 831-402-4681

Prison/Restorative Justice Ministry

-Folsom Prison - Fr. H. Gomez, 916-985-2561 x 4206

-CSP Sacramento - Greg Mellor,

Catholic Chaplain, 916-985-8610 x6425

School Ministry (St. John Notre Dame)

Keith Martin, Principal, 916-985-4129

Senior Visitation

Charlene Agles, 916-984-9602

St. Vincent de Paul (Helping Hands)

Mercy Knight, 916-985-4630

Liturgical Ministries

Altar Servers

Hugo Schmidt, 916-817-4541

Children's Liturgy during Mass

Shannon Langer, 916-985-7338

Extraord. Ministers of Holy Communion

Steve & Maryanne Ashley, 916-479-2214

Lectors

Patti Midtlyng, 916-837-8322

Liturgical Environment

Arlette Peterson, 916-220-5968

Music - See choir director after Mass.

Additional Ministries

Children's Babysitting at Mass

Georgia Oatmeyer, 916-201-3193

Family Fellowship

Carol Stephenson, 916-952-6744

Gift Shop

Connie Aley, 916-984-9284

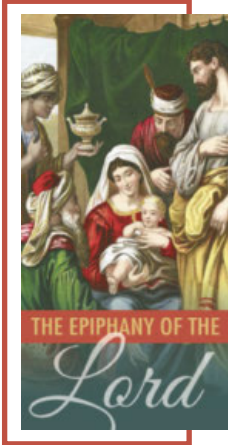
Women's Game Day

Roberta Puzio, 916-933-2561

MINISTRIES

"Here am I, Lord;
I come to do your will."





Besides the Wise Men, what is significant about the Epiphany?

Epiphany means “manifestation,” or public display. The feast is usually celebrated January 6. In the US, it is celebrated on the Sunday nearest to January 6. It originates from a story unique to Matthew (2:1-12). Magi from the East come to offer homage to the newborn King, presenting him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This part of Matthew’s infancy narrative differs from Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus. In Luke there are no Magi, star, nor gifts. Luke has Jesus being born in a stable after Mary and Joseph’s long travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Matthew seems to have the family living in a house in Bethlehem, where the Magi find them.

Why these differences? They stem from the needs and concerns of the audience the authors were addressing, as well as the theological stance of each author. Knowing the original intention helps get at the correct interpretation of the text.

Since Matthew was writing primarily to a Jewish community, his concern was to show that Jesus did not come just for Jews, but for Gentiles as well. From his very birth, Jesus not only manifests himself to Jews, but also to Gentiles, who are prominently included in the manifestation, symbolized by the Magi and their journey. This is the most significant aspect of the feast of Epiphany. How do you manifest Jesus to all with whom you come into contact?

The song "We Three Kings" details the gifts of the Magi, but do you know what you're singing? "Born a king on Bethlehem's plan, gold I bring to crown Him again." This one is the most straightforward - gold symbolizes the Kingship of Christ. "Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom." Myrrh is an embalming spice. Already at Christ's birth, we have the symbolic reminder of his death. "Frankincense to offer have I. Incense owns a deity nigh." In many religious traditions, incense symbolizes prayers rising to heaven. In some pagan traditions, it is thought to help "call down" the deity. The gift of frankincense symbolizes Jesus' role as the Great High Priest, sanctifying the world through his sacrifice.



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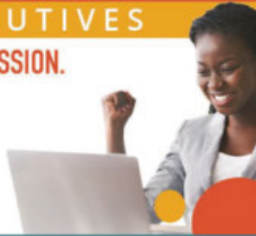


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