

Called to Conform to the Good News of Jesus Christ

Today's First Reading (from the latter part of Zephaniah) speaks of Jerusalem's restoration. God would visit the city to protect it and bring a great period of rejoicing. It expresses well the theme of the Third Sunday of Advent called *Gaudete* Sunday, a Latin phrase that means *Rejoice* Sunday. We rejoice because the birth of Jesus is near, but also because we are working to transform our hearts during this season of conversion. ● Continuing the theme of restoration, the Responsorial proclaims the power of God's love and intervention, for He dwells amongst us. This foretelling is fulfilled in the birth of the Baby Jesus. ● Again, in the Second Reading, we are reminded to dedicate ourselves to what is really important: to be thankful, pray, and be joyful. If God is our focus, then this can occur even in difficulties. ● In today's Gospel we are instructed by St. John the Baptist. The Lord's Day is coming: a day of judgment for the world. St. John calls us to turn away from sin. Unlike some of the other Gospel writers, here St. Luke tells us how tax collectors and soldiers can convert their ways, not by abandoning their occupations but simply exercising their responsibilities honestly. God does not ask us to reject who we are, He simply asks us to be as virtuous as we can be. The time had come for people to decide. God would separate the good from the evil, as wheat from chaff. This Third Sunday of Advent is a time to make some serious decisions concerning how we live, work, play, etc. Like the tax collectors and soldiers who spoke to St. John the Baptist, we are called to conform our ways to the Good News we hear.

Prayer of the Week

Let us pray this Advent for joy and hope in the coming Lord. ● Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your Church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Faith First

What Conversion Involves

The words *conversion* and *repentance* are synonymous. In the gospel, when Jesus calls for his followers to convert and to embrace the gospel (the Good News), he is talking about interior or conversion, that is interior repentance. This interior conversion is first a gift from the Holy Spirit who gives us the grace to return to the Lord, to have the courage to begin anew. Interior conversion involves reorienting our lives, returning to God, rooting out sin in our lives, and hating the evil we have committed. It also involves deeply wanting to change our lives, firmly intending to sin no more, and trusting fervently in God's infinite mercy and grace. A wonderful help for Christians to help reorient their lives is to look at Christ Jesus suffering on the cross for our sins. ● Interior conversion manifests itself in external actions of penance. Scripture and Tradition have always stressed the importance of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving - three acts that express conversion in relation to self, to God, and to others. Other traditional ways to express interior conversion include efforts to make peace, prayer for one's neighbors, the intercession of the saints, and works of charity. ● Conversion is accomplished by efforts at reconciliation, concern for the poor, works of justice, frequent examination of conscience, whatever cross may come one's way in imitation of Jesus. The Eucharist, reading the Bible, frequent prayer, and participating in the Church's seasons and days of penance all nourish a spirit of conversion in Christians trying to conform themselves to Christ Jesus.

Why Silence is Part of the Mass

At certain times during Mass, you may notice silence. There is no praying, no music, no moving round. Is this on purpose? It is! For example, just before the Opening Prayer (called the Collect), after the priest says, "Let us pray," there is a period of silence for reflection. Pope Francis recently reminded us not to be in a hurry. "Silence is not reduced to the lack of words, but in being open to listen to other voices: That of our heart and, especially, the voice of the Holy Spirit." For the same reason, a short pause in silence should be observed after all scriptural readings, including the psalm. Next time you are at Mass, be aware of the silent periods and listen for the Holy Spirit.

In Our Prayers

**Daily Mass Intentions
December 16 - December 23**

Sun	8:00am	Int...Eduina Oliveira
	9:30am	Karl John Schnetz (+)
	11:00am	For the People of the Parish
Mon	8:00am	Int...Altar Society Members
Tue	8:00am	Joan T. Koster (+)
Wed	8:00am	Nita York (+)
Thu	8:00am	Katherine Creeggan (+)
Fri	8:00am	John Silveira (+)
Sat	9:00am	Int...Sergio F. Brida
	5:30pm	For the People of the Parish
Sun	8:00am	Anita & Don Cerqui (+)
	9:30am	Marilyn Walker (+)
	11:00am	Joe Vanacore (+)

In Memoriam

Let us pray for all those who have died and are in need of prayer. May they enjoy peace, happiness and light.

Please Pray for the Sick

Bishop Francis Quinn, Rick Cwynar, Kang Simon Lee, Diana Zuniga, Suzie Riehl, Laurel Sunderman, Isabel Harper, Rouzbeh Daylami, Howard Huston, Mark Zane, Richard Honey, Josephine Davila, Dale Wooldridge, Donald Anderson, Teresa Yeung, Nancy McGarry, Vivian Stolp, Rita Doherty, Patrick Valenzuela, Cheryl Halm Lincoln, Michael Fletcher, Grayson Kemp, Gary Pepe, William Daniel Reed, Stephanie Merenda, Victoria Generoso, Jim Collins, Grace Grant, Robert Arkebauer, Libby Basurto, Dena Foster-Cook, Marie Schumacher, Ralph Goodall, Josephine Haddock, G.R. Gurley, Darren Stewart, Marge Mugartegui, Angel Curiel, Phillip Worth, Sonia Damiano, Barbara Cramer, Ava Grace Arnold, Karen Amnon, Mary Terese Henricksen, Pamela Saenz, Stan Boyd, David Hunn, Addison Parker, Brett Stover, Norma Clark, Robert Clark, Jr.

Meetings & Events

Schola's Christmas Concert

Enjoy the annual family program of music for Christmastide featuring candlelit processions, Gregorian Chant and familiar and new carols. Dr. Donald Kendrick will conduct Schola Cantorum in their annual Christmas Concert "From Heaven On High" on Saturday, December 15 at 8:00 pm and Sunday, December 16 at 2:00 pm in Sacred Heart Church. ● Suggested donation is \$15 General or \$10 Students/Seniors. Tickets are available after the 11:00 am Mass on Sundays or by calling 850-545-4298. ● The choir has a variety of CDs that make wonderful gifts. Visit our website at www.scholacantorum.com

Advent Giving Tree

Our parish Giving Tree has been placed next to the Our Lady of Grace Chapel, near the piano. Tags hanging on the Tree will benefit the children at St. Francis Terrace, those served by the Sacramento Catholic Diocesan HIV/AIDS Ministry, low-income seniors at Arden Villa Senior Citizens' Center, and people served by the Human Trafficking Medical Home. ● Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Home Tour Thank You!

Heartfelt thanks to the following people who selflessly gave of their time to organize the annual Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour: Katie Kolitsos—chair, Ashley Andrews—design/operations, Kris Quigley—Marketing, Katherine Groppo and Erin Macko—Sponsorship, Donna Cazneaux—Boutique, Michelle Shaw, Gretchen Gill—Café, Kelly Frei—Finance. ● Every parent of a Sacred Heart student also volunteered at least 6 hours of their time to make the tour a great success! Thank you!

Christmas Break

Students, teachers and staff will enjoy the Christmas Holiday this year from December 24 to January 4. School will resume on January 7. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Sacred Heart Parish School.

Parish Mission/Retreat: Save the Date

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend our Parish Retreat beginning Sunday, February 10, 2019 and concluding Tuesday, February 12. Father Robyn Ryan, PhD, will be our presenter. He is a Passionist priest who teaches at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Parishioners who attended God and the Mystery of Human Suffering last year will remember Fr. Ryan as a gifted and down-to-earth teacher. Fr. Ryan will give presentations on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings here at Sacred Heart. He will also give a morning presentation on Monday or Tuesday. The presentation is entitled: *Gazing on the Face of Christ*. Fr. Ryan writes: Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. You are invited to reflect on the various dimensions of the mystery of Christ. As you do so, you will increase your faith and strengthen your life as a believer. Through this special retreat, you will connect the everyday concerns of your life with the presence and action of Jesus. ● Questions? Please contact Rita Spillane, Adult Faith Formation coordinator, at 916-452-4830.

Altar Society Christmas Flowers

Please consider a donation *in memory of* or *in honor of* a loved one to help us beautify the church sanctuary with poinsettias for Christmas. Checks should be made payable to *Sacred Heart Altar Society*. Please include your name, telephone number, and the name(s) of those being remembered or honored. Place in an envelope marked "Attention: Altar Society" and drop in the collection basket or mail to Claire Hyde at 5500 Spillman Ave., Sacramento 95819. Please return donations by December 18. ● Thank you.

Parish School Now Accepting Applications

The School is now accepting applications for the 2019-2020 school year. Applicants for Transitional Kindergarten must be 4 years old by September 1, 2019 and applicants for Kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1. We will also be accepting applications for 1st - 6th grades. ● For more information, please contact the Parish School at 916-456-1576.

Sacred Heart Parish School Christmas Program

Please join us for our annual Christmas Pageant on December 21 at 9:00 am in the school gymnasium. The students will sing and read the nativity story. Our sweet performance will warm your heart and prepare you for a holy holiday.

Retreat for Women

Join the women of Sacred Heart signing up for the annual retreat at Christ the King Retreat Center on the weekend of January 11-13, 2019. Ask someone who has made the retreat and they will tell you they have never been more at peace with God and the world. A retreat once a year is a vital necessity these days. Consider giving the gift of a retreat this Christmas! ● For more information please call Kim Paquette at 916-479-1736. Sign-up forms are also available in the church vestibule. You may register on-line at www.christthekingretreatcenter.org.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near

Consider Making an End of Year Gift

Many parishioners make a special end of year gift to the Parish. This is very much appreciated, enabling the Parish to meet the growing expenses of Parish operations. Such a gift has the added benefit of being tax deductible. You may want to designate your gift to *Sacred Heart Building Fund* for the maintenance and preservation of our church, rectory, and parish hall or to *Sacred Heart Parish School Endowment Foundation* for school families needing tuition assistance or to *Sacred Heart Church* for its general operations. ● We are most grateful for our parishioners' regular and special donations to second collections throughout the year. ● If you are not contributing on a regular basis, please consider doing so. If you have not increased your weekly contribution in some time, and your financial circumstances allow you to do so, please consider increasing your weekly contribution. Like your household expenses, parish expenses continue to increase. ● Thank you for considering this end-of-year appeal.