

**Ready to Celebrate New Life?**

Today's First Reading is a classic example of the Holy Spirit giving new meaning to the words of a prophet. The Prophet Micah was hoping God would raise up a new King and a new dynasty with small town values - hence the choice of Bethlehem, not Jerusalem. So, Jesus is that true Good Shepherd, with small town values, who brings peace to the whole world. u The Responsorial Psalm expresses anxious expectation for the day we celebrate the Savior's birth. We ask God to visit and protect us; He's the only one who can truly save us. This is what the name *Jesus* means: *Yahweh saves*. With His strength, we can change our ways and walk in God's love. Christmas is a celebration of *new life*, the new life of the Babe in Bethlehem, and new life in ourselves. His birth gives us new possibilities. At Christmas, we experience the only thing that brings us true peace and fulfillment; God's love made real in the Baby Jesus. May this new life, Love Incarnate, renew and refresh our mind and heart in Him. u The Gospel recalls what happened to Mary between her agreeing to be the mother of God's Son, and Jesus' birth. Our Lady proved her generosity, forgetting herself and traveling to her cousin Elizabeth's home, in order to help her, since she too was with child. Before a word is spoken, the baby in Elizabeth's womb, John the Baptist, recognizes the presence of Jesus and leaps to greet Him. (*The first person to recognize Jesus' presence in the world is an unborn child.*) Elizabeth greets Mary with great respect, for the Holy Spirit had revealed the truth to her, that Mary was now the Mother of her Lord. May this truth fill us, too, with awe and joy.

**Prayer of the Week**

Father, all-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Faith First**

**The Christmas Season**

Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church Year, second only to Easter itself. It is the feast of the Incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh (the Latin "in carne" means "enfleshment"). It is a uniquely Christian teaching, the Divine choosing to become one of us. Because of this belief, God is not only Transcendent, but also wholly Immanent. Emmanuel (God-with-us). While remaining Transcendent (meaning we must rise above our present condition to reach Him), He is at the same time Immanent (meaning He is with us as we rise toward Him). Every Eucharist is like Christmas where the bread and wine are transformed into His flesh, His Body and Blood, and, in a sense, He is born anew on the altar. • The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve, includes the feasts of the Holy Family; Mary, the Mother of God (January 1); Epiphany; and concludes with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with Him...including the fact that He was born to die for us.

**Words of Appreciation**

*Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love* (Saint Teresa of Calcutta). • Thank you to all who make Christmas so special here at Sacred Heart!

**Parish Mission/Retreat: Save the Date**

As previously announced there will be a Parish Retreat beginning Sunday, February 10, 2019 and concluding Tuesday, February 12. The presenter will be Father Robyn Ryan, Ph.D. a Passionist priest whom you may recall gave a down-to-earth lecture on God and the Mystery of Human Suffering last year. The theme of the retreat will be *Gazing on the Face of Christ*. Watch the bulletin for specific information about these talks. If you have any question contact Rita Spillane, Adult Faith Formation coordinator, at 916-452-4830.

**In Our Prayers**

**Daily Mass Intentions  
December 23 - December 30**

<b>Sun</b>	8:00am	Anita & Don Cerqui (+)
	9:30am	Marilyn Walker (+)
	11:00am	Joe Vanacore (+)
<b>Mon</b>	8:00am	Irene Biederman (+)
	4:00pm	Linda Ryle (+)
	6:30pm	Terence McCartan (+)
	10:00pm	Genevieve Dallosta (+)
<b>Tue</b>	8:00am	Joshua Wingert (+)
	10:00am	For the People of the Parish
<b>Wed</b>	8:00am	Thomas Flatley (+)
<b>Thu</b>	8:00am	Margaret Mayer (+)
<b>Fri</b>	8:00am	Betty Baumgartner (+)
<b>Sat</b>	9:00am	Michael George (+)
	5:30pm	Isagani Zamoria (+)
<b>Sun</b>	8:00am	Barbara Dovichi (+)
	9:30am	For the People of the Parish
	11:00am	Mary Ann Rich (+)

**In Memoriam**

**Rev. Philip Brady • October 6, 1929**  
**Msgr. Michael Lyons • May 27, 1958**  
**Msgr. Gerald O'Driscoll • August 7, 1976**  
**Msgr. Thomas Markham • July 12, 1989**  
**Msgr. Edmund O'Neill • March 8, 1994**  
**Rev. Michael O'Hara • December 19, 2001**  
 Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**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 Henriksen, Pamela Saenz, Stan Boyd, David Hunn, Addison Parker, Brett Stover, Norma Clark, Robert Clark, Jr.

**Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.**

**Meetings & Events**

**2019 Church Calendars**

The 2019 calendars are available for parishioners to pick up after Mass in the church vestibule. They have been made available through the courtesy of the Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services, a ministry of the Diocese of Sacramento. Be sure to read the message from Bishop Soto in front of the calendar. • In order to make sure that every parishioner who wants a calendar receives one, please take only one calendar this weekend. If you would like to have a second one extra calendars will be made available next weekend, .

**Advent Giving Tree**

Thank you for making our Sacred Heart Giving Tree a success again this year. Our parish community has brightened the holidays for hundreds of local men, women, and children. The recipients of your generous gifts are deeply grateful. • A special thank-you to Sharon Rich for coordinating this outreach program.

**School 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.

**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](http://www.christthekingretreatcenter.org).

**Please Do Not Park in Lot Across the Street**

The building across the street to the east has offices opened on Saturdays and Sundays. Although the owner of the building has never minded parishioners using his lot before, his tenants now need that little lot and he is requesting that parishioners no longer park there. • Please be courteous and honor his request.

**Children's Church**

The Children's Church program at the 9:30 am Sunday Mass will not be offered on December 23 and December 31. The program will resume on Sunday, January 6. • If you are interested in helping periodically with the sessions, please contact Christie Montelongo at 916-455-5949. (You do not need to have a child in the program to volunteer.)

**Parish Office Closure**

The church office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25 and on Monday and Tuesday, December 31 and January 1 for Christmas and New Year's. Of course, you may leave a message on the office extension on those days; your call will be returned when the office reopens on Wednesday, December 26 and on Wednesday, January 2.

**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 1<sup>st</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> grades. • For more information, please contact the Parish School at 916-456-1576.

**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.

**Safe Environment Information for Volunteers**

All employees and all volunteers who work with children are required by the Diocese of Sacramento to complete a child abuse prevention and diocesan policy training program once every three years. The on-line training program, *Safe Haven*, is a three part video series offered through Catholic Mutual Group. Volunteers who have regular contact with children are also required to be fingerprinted and undergo a background check. • For more information, please contact the Parish Office at 916-452-4136 or the Diocesan Safe Environment Office at 916-733-0237.

**May it be done to me according to your word. Luke 1:38**