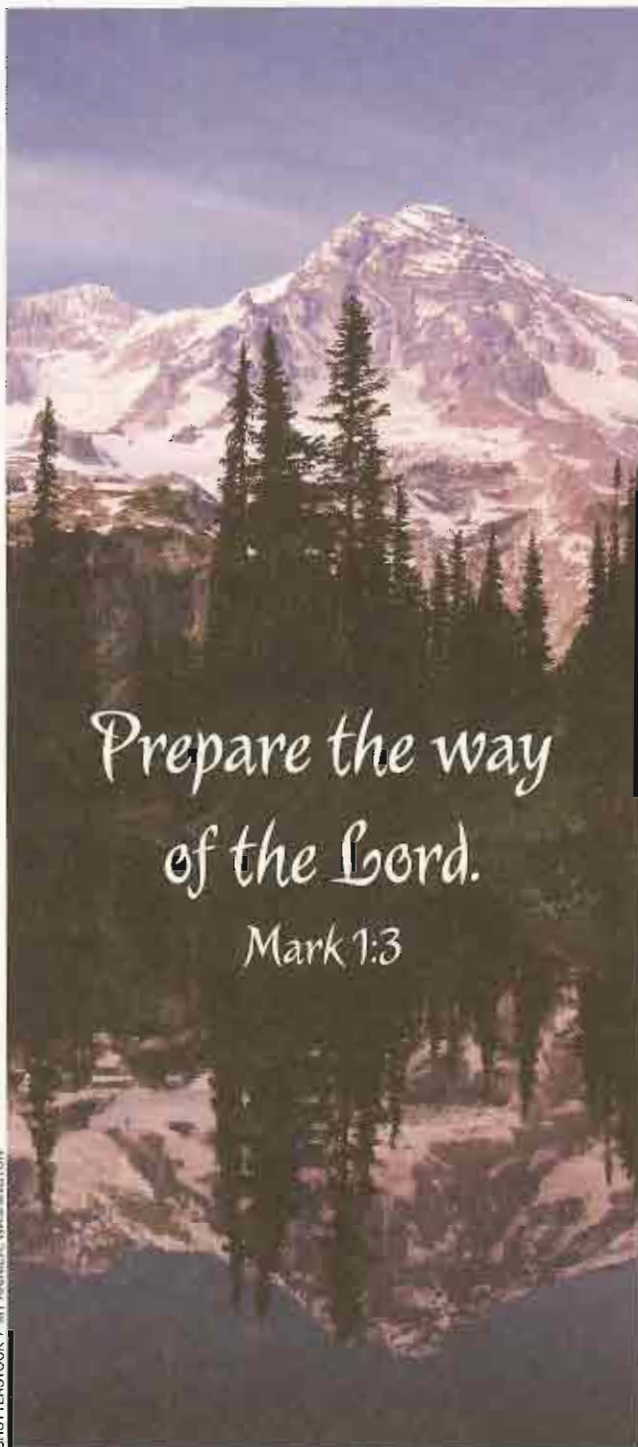


Advent

December 7, 2008

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Prepare the way
of the Lord.
Mark 1:3

Today's readings are the stuff songs are made of.

"Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low" (Isaiah 40:4).
"Prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).

Yet as much as our hearts are lifted to sing, foreboding lies in these texts. Isaiah and Mark work hand in hand during Advent to tell us God does what is promised. But we hear the strain in their message. In Isaiah, a voice cries out. Mark's Gospel begins in a wilderness. There is Good News—a messenger has come. But he is stark; he wears camel's hair and eats strange food. He is stripped down in waiting. He is honest, though, and clear-sighted.

The somber tone of the message fits our need. If we are honest, during this season and often in other times, we feel troubled. Our liturgical tradition is blunt; we wait for the light that comes into the world because we need the light. Watch the news. What do so many places in the world lack?

Our waiting is hard. As desperately as we need it, hope can be incredibly difficult for us. It is serious business, creating a new heaven and a new earth. Hope can be explained only by metaphors of large-scale change—mountains torn down and valleys filled up. What will it take in our world, to create a place "in which righteousness dwells?"

The power of the Gospel is in this; God enters where we are. We cannot explain why the world knows pain; we cannot explain while we wait. But we know God uses what we have *here*. We need redemption, but we *are* worth saving. God is not slow. God is patient.

The second letter of Peter reminds us we are waiting. We know that all too well. Do we dare sing while we wait?

DAN FINUCANE

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Liguori

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Today's Readings

Is 40:1–5, 9–11

2 Pt 3:8–14

Mk 1:1–8



St. Stephen Catholic Church

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817-596-9585
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Office Hours – Monday through Friday
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Rectory – 1904 Bethel Road
817-596-9586

Web Page – www.ss-cc.org

Gift Shop – Saturday 5:30 to 6 PM
Sunday 9:45 to 11:00 AM
Noon to 12:30 PM

Club House—817-599-8423
Pro Shop—817-599-8431

MASS SCHEDULE

All Masses are held at the Church on Bethel Road unless otherwise noted

Saturday 6:00 PM ♦ Confessions Saturday 5:00 PM
Sunday 8:00 AM & 10:45 AM (English) ♦ 12:30 PM (Spanish)
Holy Days 7:00 AM & 7:00 PM
Daily Mass 8:45 AM

WELCOME NEW FAMILIES AND VISITORS

Please complete a registration card at the Welcome Table in the church foyer and return it at your earliest convenience. Thank You!

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday	December 6	6:00 PM	Dolores Mees, RIP	<i>St. Nicholas, bishop</i>
Sunday	December 7	8:00 AM	Irma Fuhrmann, RIP	<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>
		10:45 AM	David Meza	<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>
		12:30 PM	La Comunidad	<i>2º Domingo de Adviento</i>
Monday	December 8	7:00 AM	Natalia Selga, RIP	<i>The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>
		7:00 PM	Our Community	<i>Memorial of St. Juan Diego, hermit</i>
Tuesday	December 9	8:45 AM	Communion Service	<i>Advent Weekday</i>
Wednesday	December 10	11:00 AM	Andres Farias	<i>Memorial of St. Damasus I, pope</i>
Thursday	December 11	8:45 AM	Genaro Rivera, RIP	<i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>
Friday	December 12	6:00 AM	Nuestra Sra de Guadalupe	<i>Memorial of St. Lucy, Virgin and martyr</i>
Saturday	December 13	6:00 PM	Bob & Marlene Fronk	<i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>
		8:00 AM	Our Community	<i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>
		10:45 AM	Paul & Zina Houle	<i>3º Domingo de Adviento</i>
Sunday	December 14	10:45 AM	Paul & Zina Houle	
		12:30 PM	Matias Hernandez, RIP	

Marriage – six months notice required – please see Fr. Casey. **Aviso para el Matrimonio –** seis meses es necesaria

Baptism Instruction—English (1st Thursday of each month); Spanish (1st Monday of each month)

Quinceañera – three month notice required – girl must be attending CCD and Mass *regularly* – please see Fr. Casey

Prayer Chain Coordinators—Ann Allen (817-594-8637) Bette Binzer (817-599-0454) LaVerne Cardwell (817-594-3805)

Weekly Visitation of the Sick & Shut-Ins. Contact the church office to be on the schedule.

Census Information—Please notify the church office if you are new to our Parish, have a change of address or phone number, or move to another Parish.

Bulletin Notices are to be written or typed and in the office at least one week prior to event – notices may be e-mailed – deadline for bulletin is Noon on Tuesday – your cooperation is greatly appreciated – Thank You!

REGULAR COLLECTION
November 29-30
\$9,456.44



*Flowers for the Altar this Weekend
Are A Gift from
Trish Jones & Rick Talley
In Memory of
Mother, Lillian Mantei Talley*

HOLY DAY
Monday, December 8,
The Solemnity of the
Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary.
Mass will be at 7 AM & 7 PM

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE
Please note there will be a few extra priests here at
St. Stephen Church on Thursday, December 18
at 6:30 PM to celebrate confession—
Sacrament of Reconciliation.

2nd Sunday of Advent
God calls us to proclaim the Good News. How do you share that
Good News? Pray for the grace to be a faith-filled
witness of God's love.
(Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11)

2º Domingo de Adviento
Juan Bautista apareció en el desierto proclamando al Señor. ¿Quién
lo proclamará a esta generación?
(Marcos 1:1-8)

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FOR DECEMBER
December 7-8—Land Purchase
December 13-14—National Collection for Retired Religious

PROPERTY PURCHASE INFORMATION
Cost of New Property—\$1,631,842.00
Monthly Interest Payment—\$9,700.00
Total Contributions to Date—\$59,769.59
Interest Paid to Date—\$59,219.31

**WELCOME TO ALL, INCLUDING VISITORS AND
NEW PARISHIONERS.**

Please join us this Sunday between Masses for breakfast in the parish hall, provided by the Ladies Altar Society.

REMINDER: Altar Society will be selling Christmas baskets, handmade mini capes, and bake good items in the Holy Spirit Center on **December 6** after Mass and at the breakfast on **December 7**.

60+ will gather for Mass at 11 AM followed by a covered dish luncheon on **Wednesday, December 10**. Please come and join us!

LUNCH BUNCH is cancelled for **December**. Mark your calendars and join us on **January 14, 2009**. Watch the bulletin for time and place.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS AND LECTORS/COMMENTATORS - It's time to make the rotation schedule for 2009. Letters of commitment have been mailed to all existing Lay Ministers. **The completed forms are requested to be returned by Sunday December 14 so that the 2009 schedule can be arranged.** To continue service in the St. Stephen parish, all Lay Ministers must be current in their "Keeping Children Safe" training. If you have questions regarding how to become a Lay Minister, please contact Sharmayne Bierschenk at 817-596-9141 or sbiersch@ont.com.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT-CALLED TO PROTECT: Keeping Children Safe session will be held at **St. Stephen on Tuesday, December 9 at 6:30 PM**. For information call the office at 817-596-9585.

LA CELEBRACION del 12 de diciembre empezará con las mañanitas a las 5:00 AM. Tocarà el coro de la iglesia, a las 5:30 tocarà un mariachi, a las 6:00 AM se celebrará la misa y al terminar habrá compartimiento en el salón.

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE. Everyone is invited to attend a celebration honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe on **Sunday, December 14 at 1:30 PM in the Holy Spirit Center**. Festivities will include a re-enactment of her appearance to Juan Diego, traditional dancing and music, food, and cultural fun for all. Questions? Contact Carlos Frias 817-307-8332 or Jeanette Houle at 817-613-8008 or doschicas@att.net

LAS POSADAS. Everyone is invited to participate in the Las Posadas celebrations, running **December 16 through December 23, 6 to 8 PM, in the Holy Spirit Center**. Willing to help sponsor an evening's snacks? Questions? Contact Jeanette Houle at 817-613-8008 or doschicas@att.net.

CHILDREN'S BILINGUAL CHRISTMAS EVE MASS. The **6 PM Christmas Eve Mass** will be a Children's Mass with a Nativity presentation during the Gospel. Christmas Carols to begin at 5:30 PM. Come join in the celebration!

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS RAFFLE WINNERS. The winning ticket for the Horse was 4411474, John Frisson. The Table and Chairs winning ticket 5996644, Kylie Schabow, new granddaughter of Chuck and Theresa Schabow.

LOST: Woman's diamond and gold bracelet—reward offered—contact church office at 817-596-9585. Black Leather-Bound Missalette—contact Gerald Villanueva at 806-786-9370

MANNA. an all volunteer organization, helps the needy of Parker County. Those suffering hardships always request children's' clothes and shoes. If you have good, used children's' clothes or shoes, please donate them. The address is 129 E. Spring St., one block west Albertsons. Drop items at the opened garage door Monday through Friday from 8 AM—2 PM.

If you would like to adopt a child or family for Christmas, please call the office at 817-596-9585 or pick up a name from the basket in the church foyer.

Si le gustaria adoptar un nino o familia para esta Navidad, por favor llame a la Oficina de la Iglesia al 817-596-9585 o saque un nombre de la canasta en el foyer de la Iglesia.

Center of Hope will distribute Christmas food baskets on **December 15-18** and Manna sign-up for toys is **December 10-11**.

Center of Hope distribuirá Canastas de Comestibles para Navidad Diciembre 15-18. Para recibir juguetes, regístrese con *Manna* los días Diciembre 10 y 11.

Lord, so many people in the world are needy. Help us remember Christmas is a time of giving, not receiving. As we prepare to celebrate your birth, help us remember those without home or shelter—as you were that first Christmas night. May our prayers and actions bring light into their lives, as your life brought light to the world. Amen. Thank you for your help.

TEEN CORNER

YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY, December 10. Families invited—dinner served at 6 PM. Invitations were mailed—please RSVP to Susan Ourada at 817-596-3872 or Jeanette Houle at 817-673-8008.

Pure Reality Rally: Youth rally for grades 8-12 presented by the Catholic Pro-Life Committee and Catholics Respect Life on **Sunday, February 8, 2009, 4-9:30 PM in Arlington**. The rally will focus on teaching teens that chastity and abstinence are the true paths to freedom. Cost is \$25.00 to include transportation, entrance, dinner, and t-shirt. Registration and payment due no later than Sunday, December 7, 2008. Contact Susan Ourada at 817-596-3872 or Jeanette Houle at 817-613-8008 or doschicas@att.net.

All youth ages 13 and above are invited to participate in the **Youth Music Ministry**. Join us **Sundays at 6 PM**.

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(All activities held at Bethel Road)

Sunday, December 7

9:15 AM Religious Education Classes (English)
9:15 AM Adult Catechism (Room 19)
9:15 AM Adult Bible Study (Room 3)
11:15 AM Religious Education Classes (Spanish)

Monday, December 8

7:00 AM Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)
7:00 PM Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)
7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop #72

Tuesday, December 9

9:30 AM Ladies Bible Study (Rm. 1 & 2)
6:30 PM Called to Protect: Keeping Children Safe
7:15 PM Knights of Columbus

Wednesday, December 10

11:00 AM Mass followed by 60+ Covered Dish Luncheon
6:00 PM Youth Group Christmas Party
6:30 PM Choir Practice

Thursday, December 11

10:00 AM Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
10:00 AM Quilting Group (Pro Shop)
7:00 PM Grief Group

Friday, December 12

6:00 AM Mass—Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

Saturday, December 13

7:00 PM Cursillistas Ultreya—Bilingual

Dear Padre

Where should I pray?



Where is the best place to pray? I can't get to church every day. I have a noisy household, and I can't pray at work. Any ideas?

Michael

Dear Michael,

The best place to pray is in solitude. But solitude in this case doesn't mean an isolated place; it is, rather, a state of the heart.

Many Christians can enter into a state of solitude on a crowded train. I've talked with others who find solitude while sitting on a bench in a crowded shopping mall.



SHUTTERSTOCK

However, to cultivate this interior state that opens a Christian to heartfelt conversation with God, many of us need to physically shut out distractions. As Jesus advised, go into your room—your secret place—close the door, and pray there.

For some people, this "secret place" is a church or chapel. Many people pray before or after Mass. Some churches have a special oratory or chapel for the Blessed Sacrament. But, like you, many people find it difficult to go to a church or chapel every day, so some of them devote a special corner of their home to prayer. This prayer corner usually has a Bible, crucifix, statue, sacred picture, candle, or plant.

We can find solitude in the car, in a favorite nature spot, in the garden, or on a morning jog. Once you start looking for it, solitude isn't as difficult to find as you might have expected because God is present in every place and in every moment—so wherever we can find solitude, he will be there.

Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
□	■ □	■	■ □	□	■	■ ■
December 8	December 9	December 10	December 11	December 12	December 13	December 14
<i>The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Advent Weekday</i>	<i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	<i>Saint Lucy, virgin and martyr</i>	<i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>
Gn 3:9–15, 20 Eph 1:3–6, 11–12 Lk 1:26–38	Is 40:1–11 Mt 18:12–14	Is 40:25–31 Mt 11:28–30	Is 41:13–20 Mt 11:11–15	Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab Lk 1:26–38 or 1:39–47	Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 Mt 17:9a, 10–13	Is 61:1–2a, 10–11 1 Thes 5:16–24 Jn 1:6–8, 19–28