St. Patrick’s Catholic Parish
Sonora, California

The GOOD News

... in Our Parish

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23, 2018

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”
Luke 1:41-42

“The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.”

On behalf of St. Patrick’s Parish, I joyfully welcome you. Our hope is all who come to St. Patrick’s will know the love of Christ. By God’s mercy, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our patron St. Patrick, you will truly encounter the risen Lord and experience the Joy of the Gospel.

If you would like more information about our parish, please visit our website at www.StPatsSonora.org. If you are new to the area, we encourage you to request a new member packet. I would like to meet all of you. I am available for appointments. Please call me at (209) 532-7139 ext. 112 or email frsam@stpatssonora.org. God bless.

In Christ, Fr. Sam West, Pastor

Staff
Fr. Sam West, Pastor
Fr. Joseph Lawrence, Parochial Vicar
Mike Kubasek, Deacon
Ron Ivey, Business Manager
Marie Dahlin, Coordinator of Liturgy
Sandra Betti, Music Director
Kathy Casas, Religious Education
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In this season of Advent, I have tried to encourage all of us to focus on joy – the joy God wants for each one of us. At our special Advent Prayer Service last Saturday, we begged our Lord Jesus, who was truly there present in the Blessed Sacrament, to restore the joy of those who have been hurt and betrayed by members of the Church and to restore our own joy as Catholics. Using ordinary rocks, we made a simple gesture of letting go of any resentment, anger, fear, and shame that has weighed us down, preventing us from knowing the real joy our Lord Jesus has come to give us. In my own experience, we first need to acknowledge the pain and sorrow sin causes, either our own sins or the sins of others, before we can be free of it. Considering our own sin, we “let go” of the burden of the guilt of sin, “the yoke of sin,” when we receive God’s forgiveness, especially in the Sacrament of Confession. We trust when we receive absolution in this amazing sacrament of healing, God applies the Blood our Lord Jesus shed on the Cross to our sins, no matter how bad, and wipes them away. We no longer have the heavy burden of guilt to carry. As for carrying the shame and suffering caused by the sins of others, we look how Jesus Himself took on the consequence of sin. Although our Lord Jesus never sinned, He willingly took on the guilt and shame of all the sins ever committed or ever will be committed. Out of love for us and for the salvation of the world, Jesus takes upon Himself the burden of the shame, which is always the consequence of sin. We too at times are asked by God to “bear” the burden of the sins of others. God invites us to participate in the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus by asking us to carry, at times, the consequence of the sins of others. However, we certainly cannot bear them on our own and God does not ask us to do so. We give them to our Savior, who became one of us and truly has all-power to bear the consequence of every and all sin. Only He is able to transform the suffering caused by sin into something beautiful by the power of His redeeming love. To be free from the weight of the sins of others, we continue to offer God, in union with our Lord Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross, any feelings of anger, frustration, resentment, and shame caused by the sins of others.

During the prayer service after letting go of the burdens sin causes, symbolized by dropping the rocks in front of Jesus in the monstrance on the altar, we then “picked up” joy in hearing the words of the Gospel from the scene of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. This is the same Gospel we have today for the fourth and final Sunday in the season of Advent. I have probably said this more than once – the scene of the Visitation is my favorite. It is truly a joy-filled scene and gives us great hope for joy in our Lord’s coming.

Bringing joy to others is the very first thing Jesus does after He becomes human, by the Holy Spirit, in the immaculate womb of His virgin Mother. The Blessed Mother carries her Divine Son to “the hill country in haste to a town of Judah” to bring joy to Elizabeth and the infant John the Baptist in her womb. Since this is our Lord Jesus’ “first act,” we can conclude our Lord’s mission is to bring joy to the world. He begins to fulfill this mission as soon as He enters His mother’s womb! Both the joy Jesus gives from His mother’s womb and the joy John the Baptist received in Elizabeth’s womb is reflected in the joy each and every child brings into the world at the moment of their conception. At this precise and miraculous moment, the person conceived is a real, living human person and not just a “clump of cells.” Since the fertilized human egg is a human person, she or he needs to be protected and nurtured so to grow fully into the person God has made them to be. Every child brings joy simply by being who they are. Even if a conceived child sadly is not accepted by his or her own parents, he or she still brings joy to God.

Also in this scene of the Visitation, we see how both Mary and Elizabeth were joyful because they trust fully in God’s promise and His power to save. Although Mary was asked by God to take on the most important role in human history, to be the mother of God, she accepts with joy this life-changing event for her personally and “universe-changing” event for every other person who ever lived. In addition, we remember Elizabeth is an older woman, probably older than normal childbearing age, and she is now six months pregnant. Both Mary and Elizabeth would have been under enormous stress and anxiety. However, in their visit there is not one mention of worry about the future. We hear only phrases like what Elizabeth tells Mary, “Blessed are you among women ... Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” We hear of blessedness and babies “leaping” in wombs! We hear what great things God has done and how He has fulfilled His promise to save. We too will have the joy when we see God has done and is continually doing great things for us. He has truly fulfilled His promise to save us in His Son Jesus, whose mission is to bring us joy. We will also have joy in recognizing the gift of each person God brings into our lives. We have joy and no fear of the future when we rest securely in God’s promise, trusting He will save us. For our part, we just need, as both Mary and Elizabeth do, is to remain faithful to His plan.

Jesus is our joy now and forever! Let us ask our Lord’s mother, and our mother, Mary to help us know the joy Jesus has truly come to give us!

In Christ, Fr. Sam West
This Week in our Parish

Sunday 12/23 ~ No Meet & Greet

Monday 12/24 ~ Parish Office closed until Wednesday 1/2/19

Monday 12/24 ~ Christmas Eve Masses
OLMC 4:00 pm; St. Patrick’s 5:00 pm (Parish Hall)
St. Patrick’s 11:00 pm Musical prelude, followed by Midnight Mass (Church)

Tuesday 12/25 ~ Christmas Day Masses
OLMC 9:00 am; St. Patrick’s 10:00 am
St. Anne’s (Columbia) 12:00 noon

Saturday 12/29 ~ Altar Duty: Jeanne Kiely
                      Martha Gandee

Sunday 12/30 ~ No Meet & Greet

Pastoral Council Update

St. Patrick’s Pastoral Council wishes you joy in the season, joy in our faith, and joy in our shared community. We are excited to have supported several ongoing efforts of the Parish including the special Advent Prayer Service which was held on December 15th, and many At One With The Spirit spiritual growth opportunities, including delving into “The Bethlehem Star” on December 16th.

The Council is currently working on creating a “Bereavement Ministry” to offer help and companionship for those facing the end of their life on this earth and support to those who love them. The Council is also supporting work on a program that helps people define their specific callings and gifts with which one can be of service to the community and the world. Both of these efforts are expected to be offered to the parish in the Spring. And in the meantime, bids are being received for work on the front of St. Patrick’s Church in Sonora to eliminate the step into the church, and streamline its entrance. Lastly, the Council is fine-tuning ways to be more welcoming – to parishioners, to visitors, to those seeking inner peace – and will be offering opportunities for parishioners to offer their time, their talents, or their treasures for all to realize the joy of faith. May the blessings of the season be with each of you.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 15th
6:30 pm, Parish Hall Room 6

Christmas Mass Schedule

Monday Dec 24 ~ Christmas Eve
4:00 pm, OLMC
Family Mass 5:00 pm, St. Patrick’s (Parish Hall)
12:00 Midnight Mass, St. Patrick’s (Church)
Midnight Mass is preceded by wonderful seasonal music
starting at 11:00 pm

Tuesday Dec 25 ~ Christmas Day
9:00 am, OLMC
10:00 am, St. Patrick’s (Church)
12:00 noon, St. Anne’s

Please join us for a joyful musical prelude to the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve!
† St. Patrick’s choir will be singing beloved Christmas songs, including Christmas Lullaby, What Child is This, and Hail Mary, Gentle Woman.
† Our women’s quartet will be singing a lovely rendition of Dona Nobis Pacem and a lively Infant Holy, Infant Lowly.
† You will hear vocal solos by Cecilia Woosley, Kathy Adriano, and a duet first performed by Bing Crosby and David Bowie will be sung by Kathy Adriano and Sandra Betti.
† Sue Julian will be playing our historic Whaley pipe organ, and Sandra Betti will play O Holy Night on the flute, with Sue on piano.

Warm your heart and stir your soul as we welcome the birth of our Savior with music!

In Loving Memory

INTO YOUR HANDS, O LORD, we commend the souls of
Edward V. Soares
William Cloyd Johnson
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Welcome to St. Patrick’s Catholic Church

Please Pray for the Sick in our Parish, and their family members.

Diane Abdelnour  Kristine Kitamura
Rich Abdelnour, Jr.  Judi McGuire
Catherine Bentz  Cindy Merritt
Al Biedrzycki  Joseph Murtagh
Jackie Bolling  Juan Pinela
Jan Buck  Juan Pulido
Vern & Jo Froehlich  Mike Schirmer
Bill Gookin  Clay Sweeney
Ed Hall  Roy Volpetti
A. J. Holmes  Kerry & Judy Wilder
Donald C. Kellogg  Mitch & Trish Woods
Bill & Rolene Kiesling

To add or remove a name from this list or the prayer chain, please contact Sandy Pallante at 532-7625.

Cinnamon Sundays at OLMC

All are invited to join us on December 30th, the last Sunday of the month, at Our Lady of Mt Carmel. Immediately after the 9:00 am Mass, we will gather in the Parish House for fellowship, coffee and warm cinnamon rolls, or whatever goodies you wish to share!

Pray the Rosary

The Knights of Columbus will be praying the Rosary prior to the 7:30 am and 11:00 am Masses on December 30th, the fifth Sunday of the month. Please come to Mass early and join us in this beautiful devotion.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Poinsettias

During Advent, OLMC families can donate Christmas poinsettias for a loved one. Please print “OLMC Poinsettias” on the envelope and on the check, and also who the poinsettia is for: “In memory of _____,” or “In honor of _____. Please print your name on the envelope as well, then place your donation envelope in the collection basket during Advent.

NEW Religious Study at OLMC
The Mass - Encountering Heaven on Earth
6 sessions, begins January 3
Thursdays 4:00-5:30 pm
This study will help you understand how to fully, consciously, and actively participate in the source and summit of the Christian life - the Catholic Mass.
Please contact Warren Belisle ASAP to sign-up and receive your Session 1 handout.
Call 962-4309, or email bellale@msn.com

Update on our Parish Offertory Program

The commitment phase of the Offertory Program is nearing an end. Commitments were received from 259 parish households. Parishioners committed to contribute $392,028 annually to our parish offertory. In the first three weeks of December, we have already seen a 10% increase in offertory over last year for the same three week period.

This was undoubtedly one of the most significant projects tackled by our parish recently and we are a much stronger parish community because of it. Fr. Sam extends his deepest appreciation to the Parish Offertory Committee and the parish staff for all of their hard work.

We are still collecting commitment cards, for there are many outstanding. If you have not yet completed one, please do so and drop it off in the office or collection basket.

A very special thank you is extended to all of those who responded to this request for a definite commitment. These responses will enable the Finance Committee to develop a very accurate income budget and to manage the funds very effectively.

Project Warmth

If you would like to share the gift of warmth with those in need, our Project Warmth coat rack is located in the Parish Hall. Please bring any new or gently used coats, jackets, scarves, beanies, gloves, or any other winter wear and place them on or near the coat rack. Anyone in need of warm winter clothing is free to take an item from the coat rack.
**Mass Intentions for the Week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday December 22 ~ Sunday December 30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Victor Espinosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Lizbeth Gutierrez</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Roland Eichman</td>
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<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am Josephine Esparza</td>
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<td>9:00 am Mary Lou Gonzales</td>
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<td>11:00 am Adolfo Negrete</td>
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<td>11:00 am Roberto Gregorio</td>
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<td>5:00 pm Lupe Diaz</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Alicia Sanchez</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Michael Johnston</td>
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<td><strong>We say the rosary after each 8:00 am weekday Mass.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Leno &amp; Doris Fletcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Allen Spencer</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am Lizbeth Gutierrez</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm No Intentions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am Harry Gonzalez (Healing)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am Stan &amp; Marcie Sowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am Gary &amp; Theresa Stevenson (Anniversary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am Joseph Perez (Happy Birthday!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am Irene V. Martinez</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Doris Fletcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm Jack &amp; La Von Woodcock</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am Louise Goicoechea (Happy Birthday!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am Adolfo Negrete</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am Charlie Barbarini (Healing)</td>
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**READINGS FOR THE WEEK**

**Monday December 24 ~ Sunday December 30**

**Monday:** 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

**Tuesday:** Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]


**Wednesday:** Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

**Thursday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

**Friday:** 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18

**Saturday:** 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

**Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

**SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

**Sunday December 23 ~ Saturday December 29**

**Sunday:** Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Monday:** Vigil of Christmas

**Tuesday:** The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

**Wednesday:** St. Stephen

**Thursday:** St. John

**Friday:** The Holy Innocents

**Saturday:** Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Thomas Becket

**Upcoming Events ~ Save the Date**

**Monday 12/31 ~ New Year’s Eve**
Mass 11:00 pm St Patrick’s, Bells rung at midnight

**Tuesday 1/1 ~ Mary, the Holy Mother of God (New Year’s Day)**
Masses: 9:00 am OLMC; 9:00 am St. Patrick’s

**Thursday 1/3 ~ OLMC religious study begins**

**Friday 1/4 ~ Rectory Open House**

**Sunday 1/13 ~ Volunteer Appreciation Lunch**

**Saturday 1/26 ~ Walk for Life West Coast**

**Wednesday 5/15 ~ Confirmation Mass 6:00 pm**