December 11, 2016    Third Sunday of Advent

St. Philip the Apostle Church

A refuge to renew your spirit and heal your brokenness

info@saintphilipparish.org    www.saintphilipparish.org

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Stephen Howell,
Pastor

Rev. Brendan McBride
In residence
Irish Pastoral Center

LITURGIES

Sunday:
8:00 a.m.
10:30 a.m.

Saturday:
Vigil 5:00 p.m.

Weekdays:
8:00 a.m. - Chapel

Holy Days:
8:00 a.m.
9:00 a.m.
7:00 p.m.

Confessions:
4:15 p.m. (Saturday)

DEVOTIONS

Rosary - Monday - Saturday
after 8:00 a.m. Mass
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Tuesday after 8:00 a.m. Mass

725 Diamond Street, San Francisco, CA 94114   Phone 415-282-0141    Fax: 415-282-8962
LIVING THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Advent is a time for joyfully seeking the comings of the Messiah. Advent is a time to increase our own self-knowledge as those who continue Jesus’ saving ministry. Just as Jesus pointed to his good works to reveal his identity as the Messiah, so must we live so that our own good works witness to who we are: those baptized into Christ’s saving mystery and who share in his identity. We are the Body of Christ. Like Jesus, we are to reach out to those blinded by their own selfishness, lamed by their own indifference, diseased by their own callousness, deafened by their own conceit, deadened by their own selfishness. To be humble as was John the Baptist, we must always remember that it is not what we do, but what Christ accomplishes in and through us. We are to be Christ’s messengers, point to his good works.

JESUS IS OUR JOY—(Reflection from Pope Francis)

The human heart desires joy. We all desire joy, for every family, every people aspires to happiness. But what is the joy that the Christian is called to live out and bear witness to? It is the joy that comes from the closeness of God, from his presence in our life. From the moment Jesus entered history, with his birth in Bethlehem, humanity received the seed of the Kingdom of God, like the soil receives the see, the promise of a future harvest. There is no need to look further! Jesus has come to bring joy to all people for all time. It is not just a hopeful joy or a joy postponed until paradise, as if here on earth we are sad but in paradise we will be filled with joy. No! It is not that, but a joy already real and tangible now, because Jesus himself is our joy, and with Jesus joy find its home. . .

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11
December 11, 2016

Reflecting on the Gospel

Dear Parishioners and Guests,

This gospel could well be the original “show-and-tell” time! Missouri has the slogan “Show-me-state” on their license plates. We contend that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Sometimes believing is hard to come by. To move forward we need to see concrete evidence for ourselves. We want to see or hear, taste or feel the evidence. We want to be shown. When John the Baptist sends his disciples to inquire if Jesus is “the one who is to come,” Jesus is very concrete about his response. He does not ask John and his disciples to believe only because he says so, but points to the concrete good works that he does. Jesus is a Messiah not according to their one who comes with care and compassion, with mercy and forgiveness, with good news proclaimed to everyone. The Messiah’s identity is revealed not as the people expected him to be, but according to God’s plan for those who wish to be in “the kingdom of heaven.”

In reality, three identities are revealed in this gospel. First, John seeks to know if Jesus is “the one who is to come.” Jesus does not respond with a simple yes, but invites John and his disciples to discover his identity by hearing and seeing his good works. Then Jesus reveals who John is. Even “more than a prophet,” he is the messenger of the Messiah. He is the one who diverts attention from himself to prepare his hearers to accept a Messiah revealed not by power and wealth but by self-giving regard for others. Finally Jesus reveals who we are. We, “the least in the kingdom of heaven,” are greater than John. How can this be?

The crowds went out in the desert to see a prophet and Jesus assures them they saw even more and extols John’s greatness. Now here is the real shock of the gospel: as great as John is, as privileged as he is to be the messenger of the Messiah, we who follow Jesus—even the very least of us—are still greater than John! We are those who inherit “the kingdom of heaven,” provided we take up Jesus’ tender and merciful servant ministry and continue to bring sight and healing to those in need and proclaim the Good News to all those we meet. Now it is to be our work to announce to others that the Messiah is among us, within us.

Let us see John for who he really was—the humble messenger pointing to the Messiah. Let us see Jesus for who he really is—the Messiah-King whose power is in his being the self-giving, tender, merciful servant. Let us see ourselves for who we really are—God’s beloved people who, when we minister as Jesus did, are even greater than John. Yes, seeing is believing—but only when we see and hear evidence of God’s in-breaking. Only when our own way of living is concrete evidence that the Messiah comes, that “the kingdom of heaven” is upon us.

The Word of God comes to us through the Scriptures. May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts to respond to the gospel teachings.
**MASSES FOR THE WEEK**  
*December 4, 2016*

12/10 Saturday 8:00 a.m. † Michael J. O’Donnell  
(by: McLaughlin Family)  
5:00 p.m. † Celestina Denegri  
(by: Agnes Piva)

12/11 Sunday 8:00 a.m. For the People of the Parish  
10:30 a.m. † Jane Bonner  
(by: The Sullivan Family)

12/12 Monday *Our Lady of Guadalupe*  
8:00 a.m. † Bob Killian  
(by: Candy Ashe)

12/13 Tuesday *St. Lucy*  
8:00 a.m. Kathleen Martin (Spl. Intention)  
(by: The McLaughlin Family)

12/14 Wednesday *Saint John of the Cross*  
8:00 a.m. † Gabrielle Moyles  
(by: Nicole, Marie & Brigid)

12/15 Thursday 8:00 a.m. † Rodger & Celia Furey  
(by: Ellen Furey)

12/16 Friday 8:00 a.m. † Robert Schroer  
(by: Mary Schroer)

12/17 Saturday 8:00 a.m. † Kee-Ho Lui  
(by: Mary Tom & Family)  
5:00 p.m. † Aida Carrillo  
(by: Tom & Danny)

12/18 Sunday 8:00 a.m. For the People of the Parish  
10:30 a.m. † Robert Smith  
(by: Candice Smith)

**Remember in your Prayers…**

Let us remember the sick, homebound and elderly of our Parish that they may find comfort and healing in Christ.  

Isabel Juarez  
Mow, Kain Chiu  
Mary Crowley  
Patricia Crowley  
Mary Dekle  
David Dickey  
Laura Garcia  
Douglas Martin  
Dolores Martin  
Agnes Piva  
Bill Matthews  
Mary Leung  
John Bamber  
Leo Juarez  
Gina Wood  
Fred Jungmann  
Tom Welch

Those Who Have Entered Their Eternal Rest.  
May the Perpetual Light Shine upon them.

For those preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage

**MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**Tuesday’s Choir Practice**  
Adults  Tuesdays, 7:30PM in the Church  
Children’s Choir - Tuesdays 4PM in the Parish Hall

12/11 Candle lighting Mass at 10:30 a.m. Mass  
12/11 Retirement Fund for Religious Second Collection  
12/13 Children’s Choir Christmas Musical Performance, 6PM, Parish Hall  
12/14 Boy Scouts Christmas Caroling, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Parish Hall  
12/15 School Christmas Program, 7PM in the Church  
12/17 Parish-Wide Penance Service, 4:00 to 4:45 p.m, Church  
12/22 The Bells of St. Mary’s Movie Showing, Parish Hall, 12:00 noon RSVP 415-282-0141  
12/24 Christmas Eve Carols before Mass, 8:00 p.m., Church  
12/14 Christmas Eve Mass 8:30 p.m.

**Walk For Life**  

Fellow parishioner Daniel Roddick is hoping to get a St. Philip's group to walk, as other parishes do. Please contact him at danielroddick@hotmail.com if you're interested in meeting there and walking as a group. Either way we hope you will attend. See the Walk For Life website for details, speakers, and event schedule.

**Year end Tax Contributions**

This is the time of year when you may be reflecting on catching up on your charitable contributions for the 2016 tax year. If you plan to add Saint Philip to your list, please make sure your donation is dated by December 31, 2016 in order to receive credit for 2016. As always, year-end tax contribution letters are available to you by request.

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**We receive God’s gifts gratefully by giving thanks to God and we express that thanks through prayer and worship.**  
We are sincerely grateful for your supporting Saint Philip and its ministries.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Thursday, December 22, 2016**

**THE BELLS OF ST. MARY’S**  
**MOVIE IN THE AFTERNOON**  
**12:00 TO 2:00 P.M.**  
**PARISH HALL**

RSVP: 415-282-0141  
FREE!  
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

December 4, 2016 $4,239.00
A dvent can be a great time to reflect upon first part of the message of Pope Francis' exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Though the exhortation is long, it is easy to pick up any part of it and find fruit for prayer. Following are several quotations from the beginning of the document to help us begin to taste the blessings of this message for our Advent prayer.

The heart of what Pope Francis says is contained in the opening sentence of the exhortation:

**The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.** [1]

The Holy Father continues:

**Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness.** With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come. [1]

Pope Francis is sharing with us the Good News itself and encouraging us to be filled with the joy which can come from believing the Gospel. It is this joy, which will change the way we live and the way we are perceived by others, which will animate our sharing of the Gospel with others.

Pope Francis begins by warning us about how our culture impacts us and robs us of our joy and our compassion:

**The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience.** Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ. [2]

Then, Pope Francis offers the remedy for this danger - our personal relationship with Jesus:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. [Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete in Domino (9 May 1975)] [3]

The Holy Father suggests this prayer:

Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace”. [3]

Pope Francis makes it clear that we can trust that our Lord wants to embrace us: **God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.** [3] The Pope acknowledges that joy is not always easy, but it is the source of our healing and life:

**I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.** I understand the grief of people who have to endure great suffering, yet slowly but surely we all have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust, even amid the greatest distress: “My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is... But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness... It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (Lam 3:17, 21-23, 26).[6]

So, with this first part of the exhortation, we have much for our reflection at this point of Advent. We can renew our desire for this personal encounter with our God, who is loving and merciful. The joy of that experience of love can begin to soften and warm our hearts again, and it can open the way to loving others differently.
Our children's choir would like to extend an invitation for you to join them on Tuesday, December 13, at 6:00 p.m. in the parish Hall for a Christmas Musical. FREE

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
Christmas Eve - Saturday, December 24
Vigil of Christmas
Children’s/Family Mass: 5:00 p.m.
Christmas Carols: 8:00 p.m.
Evening Mass: 8:30 p.m.

Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25
Mass of the Lord’s Nativity - 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Dec. 26 - Monday 8:00 a.m.
Dec. 27 - Tuesday 8:00 a.m.
January 1, 2017—Sunday
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Masses: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

We wish you a Happy and Holy Christmas!

St. Philip’s Giving Tree Returns!
Once again we have an opportunity to share our blessings with those disadvantaged in our community.
Please place your unwrapped gift under our giving tree located by our Mary statue by December 16, which will give us time to deliver them to:
Riley Center Women’s Shelter, St. Vincent de Paul, Holy Family Day Home and St. Joseph’s Family Shelter.
If you would like to volunteer to sort & deliver gifts, we could use your help too. Contact the parish office at 415-282-0141.
Gifts for infants, toddlers, tens, adults & seniors are needed.

Advent Retreat at Mission Dolores
All are welcome to Advent Retreats with Father Joe Spieler, S.J., on consecutive Saturdays, in the Mission Dolores Auditorium. Free admission, lunch is provided, and donations will be accepted.

English-speaking Retreat on December 17, noon to 5:00 p.m. To register call 415-621-8203 or email: parish@missiondolores.org

Advent Penance Service
Receive God’s Amazing Grace
We will conduct our parish-wide Penance Service this Advent Season on Saturday, December 17 from 4:00 to 4:45. Individual confessions will be available.

Praying Over My To-Do List
I sit here with my list, Lord, and I know I need help finding a balance. I am so looking forward to Christmas Day, with the family here, the company, the wonderful celebration. But, Lord, there is SO much to do! How will I get it all done? How will I maintain any semblance of inner peace in this "peaceful" season? I think, Lord, that I need some balance in my life. I feel so torn between wanting to cook and fill my house with wonderful welcoming smells, and wanting to finish decorating the house. I have shopping to do, the house to clean and cards to write and mail. When? How? Help me, guide me, Lord. Help me to set priorities around doing those things that will bring me closer to you. Maybe my house really is clean enough, or maybe I can ask my family for help. Can the cards wait until a quiet afternoon after Christmas? Can my house decorations be simpler? Is there more than a little ego involved when I want so desperately to have my house "magazine perfect" for the holidays? Help me rediscover the joy of simplicity, Lord. Help me to remember what I am celebrating. Help me to find it in my heart to call out, "Come, Lord Jesus."
The feast in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe goes back to the 16th century. Chronicles of that period tell us the story. A poor Indian named Cuauhtlato-huac was baptized and given the name Juan Diego. He was a 57-year-old widower and lived in a small village near Mexico City. On Saturday morning, December 9, 1531, he was on his way to a nearby barrio to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady. He was walking by a hill called Tepeyac when he heard beautiful music like the warbling of birds. A radiant cloud appeared and within it stood a young Native American maiden dressed like an Aztec princess. The lady spoke to him in his own language and sent him to the bishop of Mexico, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. The bishop was to build a chapel in the place where the lady appeared.

Eventually the bishop told Juan Diego to have the lady give him a sign. About this same time Juan Diego’s uncle became seriously ill. This led poor Diego to try to avoid the lady. The lady found Diego, nevertheless, assured him that his uncle would recover and provided roses for Juan to carry to the bishop in his cape or tilma.

When Juan Diego opened his tilma in the bishop's presence, the roses fell to the ground and the bishop sank to his knees. On December 9, 1531, he was on his way to a nearby barrio to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady. He was walking by a hill called Tepeyac when he heard beautiful music like the warbling of birds. A radiant cloud appeared and within it stood a young Native American maiden dressed like an Aztec princess. The lady spoke to him in his own language and sent him to the bishop of Mexico, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. The bishop was to build a chapel in the place where the lady appeared.

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When Juan Diego opened his tilma in the bishop’s presence, the roses fell to the ground and the bishop sank to his knees. On December 12, 1531.

December 13—St. Lucy
Every little girl named Lucy must bite her tongue in disappointment when she first tries to find out what there is to know about her patron saint. The older books will have a lengthy paragraph detailing a small number of traditions. Newer books will have a lengthy paragraph showing that there is little basis in history for these traditions. The single fact survives that a disappointed suitor accused Lucy of being a Christian and she was executed in Syracuse (Sicily) in the year 304. But it is also true that her name is mentioned in the First Eucharistic Prayer, geographical places are named after her, a popular song has her name as its title, and down through the centuries many thousands of little girls have been proud of the name Lucy.

One can easily imagine what a young Christian woman had to contend with in pagan Sicily in the year 300. If you have trouble imagining, just glance at today’s pleasure-at-all-costs world and the barriers it presents against leading a good Christian life.

Her friends must have wondered aloud about this hero of Lucy’s, an obscure itinerant preacher in a far-off captive nation that had been destroyed more than 200 years before. Once a carpenter, he had been crucified by the Roman soldiers after his own people turned him over to the Roman authorities. Lucy believed with her whole soul that this man had risen from the dead. Heaven had put a stamp on all he said and did. To give witness to her faith she had made a vow of virginity.

What a hubbub this caused among her pagan friends! The kindlier ones just thought her a little strange. To be pure before marriage was an ancient Roman ideal, rarely found but not to be condemned. To exclude marriage altogether, however, was too much. She must have something sinister to hide, the tongues wagged.

Lucy knew of the heroism of earlier virgin martyrs. She remained faithful to their example and to the example of the carpenter, whom she knew to be the Son of God. She is the patroness of eyesight.

December 14—St. John of the Cross
John is a saint because his life was a heroic effort to live up to his name: “of the Cross.” The folly of the cross came to full realization in time. “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34b) is the story of John’s life. The Paschal Mystery—through death to life—strongly marks John as reformer, mystic-poet, and theologian-priest.

Ordained a Carmelite priest in 1567 at age 25, John met Teresa of Avila and, like her, vowed himself to the primitive Rule of the Carmelites. As partner with Teresa and in his own right, John engaged in the work of reform, and came to experience the price of reform: increasing opposition, misunderstanding, persecution, imprisonment. He came to know the cross acutely—to experience the dying of Jesus—as he sat month after month in his dark, damp, narrow cell with only his God.

Yet, the paradox! In this dying of imprisonment John came to life, uttering poetry. In the darkness of the dungeon, John’s spirit came into the Light. There are many mystics, many poets; John is unique as mystic-poet, expressing in his prison-cross the ecstasy of mystical union with God in the Spiritual Canticle.

But as agony leads to ecstasy, so John had his Ascent to Mt. Carmel, as he named it in his prose masterpiece. As man-Christian-Carmelite, he experienced in himself this purifying ascent; as spiritual director, he sensed it in others; as psychologian-theologian, he described and analyzed it in his prose writings. His prose works are outstanding in underscoring the cost of discipleship, the path of union with God: rigorous discipline, abandonment, purification. Uniquely and strongly John underlines the gospel paradox: The cross leads to resurrection, agony to ecstasy, darkness to light, abandonment to possession, denial to self to union with God. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. John is truly “of the Cross.” He died at 49—a life short, but full.
PARISH RESOURCES

PARISH OFFICE
Rio Stefanus, Financial/Business Manager
Email: rio.stefanus@saintphilipparish.org
Carol Cagalingan, Parish Administrative Assistant
Email: carol.cagalingan@saintphilipparish.org
Sandy Kearney, Parish Pastoral/School Administrative Assistant
Email: sandy.kearney@saintphilipparish.org

MUSIC MINISTRY
Carlton White, Music Director

DEVOTIONS
Rosary - Monday - Saturday • After 8:00 a.m. Mass
Our Lady of Perpetual Help • Tuesday after 8:00 a.m. Mass

SCHOOL GRADES K-8
665 Elizabeth Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
Phone: (415) - 824-8467 • Fax: (415) 282-0121
Tony LesCallet, Principal
www.saintphilipschool.org
Email: info@saintphilipschool.org

PRE-SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE
(415) 282-0143 www.saintphilippreschool.org
Ms. Rachel Williams, Director
Email: Rachel.williams@saintphilipparish.org

PARISH OUTREACH
Baptismal Classes First Tuesday 7:00 p.m.
( Rectory)
Belfry Society
Adult Choir Tuesday 7:00 p.m. (Church)
Children Choir Tuesday 4:00 p.m. (Hall 1)
First Communion Instruction
Confirmation Instruction
Liturgy Committee
Men’s Club
Parish Council
Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
RCIA (Adult Faith Instruction) Sunday 9:15 (Resource Center)
Rosary Makers Second & Third Thursday, 11:30a.m., (Hall 3)
School Board
St. Vincent de Paul Jr.
Young at Heart (Senior Club) Second & Third Thursday,
11:30 a.m., (Hall 3)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
Please contact the rectory at (415) 282-0141
As a service to the community, we sponsor the following:
Monday A.A. Meeting (Men's) 7:00 p.m. Hall 3
Tuesday A.A. Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Hall 3
Wednesday Alanon 7:30 p.m. Hall 1
Saturday A.A. Meeting (Mixed) 8:30 p.m. Hall

PARISH REGISTRATION
Our parish is blessed and enriched by the presence of new parishioners.
We welcome all new families and individuals. If you are interested in joining the Saint Philip’s parish community, feel free to call our office at 415-282-0141 for a registration form, or go online at www.saintphilipparish.org
Our hope is that you will find our parish a supportive and healing place, a nurturing spiritual environment and a place to celebrate the sacraments as you and your families grow in your journey of faith.

Interested in our Parish School?
If you would like to arrange a school tour, please call our office at 415-824-8467.
Tours are conducted on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.
www.saintphilipschool.org

Who is an Active Parishioner?
• Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
• Registered in the Parish, receiving and using weekly envelopes, supporting the Parish according to the best of one’s ability.
• Volunteers and participates in Parish activities with time, talent, and resources as means permit.
• Trying to live the Catholic Faith as best they can with God’s help and the support of family and friends at home and in the Parish.