

## DECEMBER 9 & 10, 2023 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*We begin the second week of Advent by lighting two candles. The second candle symbolizes God's continued love in Jesus present in all of us and calling us forth to transform the world with that love.*

**SEE+** In scripture, prophets are more concerned with their people's present experience than with our usual understanding of their foretelling the future. Of course, the future hope and understanding of God's revelation shapes their preaching, but it is more focused on their people's present needs and suffering. In our first reading, the prophet Isaiah tries to lift the flagging spirits of the people of Israel who are in exile in Babylon, feeling abandoned and longing to return home. It begins: "**Comfort, give comfort to my people.**" "**Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God.**"

The Gospel of Mark picks up these words and applies them to John the Baptist.

**"Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths."**

What is striking here is how Mark takes the words and images from Isaiah and applies them to what God is doing in his time to lift the flagging spirits of the people. The people in Babylonian exile were not returning home to the way things used to be. God called for a new road to be built that removed all the ruts and rubble that prevented smooth travel home. This road would bring comfort to those who had already suffered enough.

Mark's words too imply a restoration not to old ways but to something new. The gospel reveals God is reaching out to us not only by sending Jesus but also says clearly that Jesus "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In both cases, God is restoring people, but not back to an old way of life. God's restoration in Jesus and the Holy Spirit involves an embrace of our renewed dignity of God's unconditional love in everyone and a healing and deepening of our relationship with God and one another.

These words seem particularly poignant this Advent. The recent wars and divisions have certainly exposed many ruts and rubble in the ways we do things and some of their unequal and destructive consequences. In the face of these challenges, we need these words from scripture to lift our flagging spirits – and restore us to our true identity. We are challenged this Advent to be attentive to Isaiah and Mark's words and begin the work of healing and restoration of our world.

**DISCERN+** (We reflect on the Readings for this Second Sunday of Advent and the witness of others involved in restorative justice ministry as a way to listen to their challenge and discern ways they impact our lives and ministries. What are the ways the Scriptures and others' experiences, words, and stories help us understand what God is inviting us to do?)

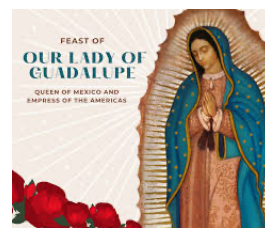
## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear parishioners,

Silence is essential in the spiritual life, and in our practice of prayer: both personal and communal. Thomas à Kempis, author of the spiritual classic *The Imitation of Christ*, teaches that "In silence and quietness the devout soul makes progress." The season of Advent is a perfect time for us to deepen our appreciation of silence, as we prepare to celebrate the Christmas mystery that took place on that silent and holy night in Bethlehem for our salvation. As a parish, I must say that this community is far better than many others in observing a prayerful silence in church. However, there is still room for improvement! As an insert in this Sunday's bulletin, I have included an excerpt from a pastoral letter written by a Benedictine monk who currently serves as the Bishop of Aberdeen in Scotland. It is my hope that his wonderful explanation of the importance of silence will be a welcome reflection for our community during this holy season.

God bless you,

Fr. Pacheco



### FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

OUR LADY'S FEAST WILL START WITH THE MAÑANITAS AT 5AM, FOLLOWED BY THE ROSARY. AFTER, WE WILL MEET AT THE PARISH HALL TO ENJOY SOME HOT CHOCOLATE AND PASTRIES. AND, THERE WILL BE A SPANISH MASS AT 6PM. ALL ARE INVITED!

*"Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything."*

**MAY OUR MOTHER'S MANTLE OF LOVE BRING BLESSINGS OF PEACE AND HARMONY TO FAMILIES IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITY.**



**EVERY THURSDAY @ 11:00AM,  
WE HAVE THE EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION OF  
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, FOLLOWED BY MASS AT 12:05PM.**

## THE HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

On December 9, 1531, in Mexico, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, a poor humble Aztec Indian who had recently converted to the Catholic faith. She asked him to go to the Bishop and tell him to build a church where she said "I will show and offer all of my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to my people." Juan Diego did as she asked, but the Bishop asked for a sign that this message was really from Our Lady.

Mary granted his request. On December 12, she showed Juan where the most beautiful Castilian roses were and told him to gather them. It was a miracle that the roses were there and in bloom because there was frost on the ground, and the ground was an infertile place where only cactus and thistles grew. After he gathered them, she helped arrange them in his tilma, or poncho, and told him to show them to the Bishop.

When he brought them to the Bishop, the Bishop was amazed at the roses, but was even more amazed at what began to happen to Juan Diego's tilma. Right before their very eyes, the image of Our Lady began to form on the cloth. The picture of Mary was beautiful and the Bishop fell to his knees. He had the church built at her request.

The tilma is still intact after 470 years. The colors have not faded and the cloth has not deteriorated. It has been on display in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe for all this time.

The manner in which Our Lady appeared on the tilma was very significant to the Aztec Indians. God had her dressed in a way that they would understand who she was. She was dressed in royal clothes that showed that she was very important, perhaps a queen. She also had the symbol of the cross at her neck which was the same symbol the Spaniards had on their ships and in the churches they built. She had a sash tied around her waist which meant that she was with child, for this was the way the Aztec women dressed when they were pregnant. And on her beautiful dress were all sorts of designs and flowers. But there was one flower on her dress that was very significant. It had only four petals. To the Aztecs, the four petal flower was the symbol for the true God, the God above all gods. This flower was located on her abdomen, right over the place where Jesus was growing inside of her. The Aztecs immediately understood that this was the mother of the true God!

This appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe was very important to the history of our continent. You see, the Aztec Indians and the Spaniards were on the brink of war. The Aztec Indians' culture and religion were very different from the Spaniards. They worshipped gods, to whom they would offer human sacrifices, often killing 50,000 people a year. The Spaniards, who were Catholic, were naturally disgusted by this. But they were cruel to the Aztecs too, treating them like animals and sometimes killing them for no reason. If a war had occurred, it would have been very brutal and the Spaniards and Christianity would have been totally wiped out.

Mary's appearance changed everything, however. It helped the Indians to embrace Christianity and it helped the Spaniards to treat the Indians with respect and as human beings. In the course of seven years, 6,000,000 Indians converted to the Catholic faith. This was the biggest conversion in the history of the Church! This is why Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the Americas. Juan Diego, the humble man to whom she appeared, was canonized in the summer of 2002.

### Help Support Our Parish Catholic School This Advent Season

The families of SJSDR Catholic School will be selling Christmas Mystery Packages after the Masses during Advent. Help support our parish school and the students' hard work by buying a gift for someone you love! Prices range from \$1-\$15. Have a blessed Advent!

## MASS INTENTIONS DECEMBER 9 - 15, 2023

Saturday (09)	5:00pm	Fred & Clara White † Thomas Galemba † William Seaholm, Sr. † Pedro Fernández Farías †
	6:30pm	Hermenegildo Salazar † Juan Bermudez † Felipe Chi † Guadalupe Sánchez Solís † Pedro Fernández Farías † Mauricio Escobedo † Victor Martín & Raquel Dzul † Gerardo Escobedo (healing)
Sunday (10)	8:00am	Antonio Jacinto (healing)
	10:00am	Missa pro populo
Monday (11)	—	NO MASS
Tuesday (12)	5:00am	Mañanitas and Rosary for Our Lady of Guadalupe
	6:00pm	Ezequiel, Rafael & Cynthia Cruz † Jonathan Sánchez (b-day) Lupita González (b-day)
Wednesday (13)	12:05pm	Antonio Jacinto (healing)
Thursday (14)	12:05pm	Toñita García †
Friday (15)	12:05pm	OPEN INTENTION

## WEEKLY COLLECTION

DECEMBER 2 & 3, 2023...\$2,340.00  
LIABILITY INSURANCE...\$781.00

**THIS WEEKEND OUR SECOND COLLECTION WILL BE FOR  
MAINTENANCE FUND  
NEXT WEEKEND OUR SECOND COLLECTION WILL BE FOR  
RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS**

You can help. "Religious are blessed to serve," says Dominican Father Bertrand Ebben, age 90. Please donate to the Retirement Fund for Religious next week. Your gift will provide essential care for nearly 25,000 senior sisters, brothers and religious order priests, who have dedicated their lives to serving others. Let us show our gratitude to these selfless individuals by giving generously.

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT & CHRISTIAN GENEROSITY!!**

### LET'S PRAY FOR ALL OUR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY

Jovany Baez, Justin Mertle, María de la Luz Ramírez, Rebeca Sánchez, José Araiza, Jr., Marina González, Alondra Jara, Sonia Jara, Matt Mills & Jared Schroeder.

### PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK PARISHIONERS

Bertha Valenzuela, Carole Shoptaw, Gina Pivrotto, Antonia Rentería, Angie Gómez, Judy Halren, Rose Cortez, Fidela Jara, Felix Santillán, Martha Sánchez, Gerardo Escobedo, Angie Freitas, Russel Bryant, Derrick Heater, Ann Gallagher, Brianna Lopez, Margaret Milliken, Gina Pivrotto, Nick Quin, Mary Servis, Matty Walker, Ofelia Ybarra.



IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE CHURCH, ON THE SOUTHERN  
WALL IS A BEAUTIFUL MEMORIAL TREE.  
ITS BRIGHT LEAVES REPRESENT PERMANENT MEMORIALS TO THE  
DEPARTED OF OUR PARISH. FOR THE SUM OF \$200.00, YOU CAN GIVE  
TO THE PARISH SECRETARY, THE CORRECT SPELLING AND DATES OF THE  
DEPARTED AND IN DUE TIME THE LEAF IS PRINTED AND ATTACHED TO  
THE TREE, AS A PERMANENT REMINDER OF A LOVED ONE WHO IS  
GONE.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 707-964-0229.



**WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU THAT:  
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish now provides  
“ParishSOFT Giving,” an online giving software!**

**To get started, you can go to [olgcinfb.org](http://olgcinfb.org).**

*From this link you will be allowed to manage your own account  
online, set up gifts on a schedule that you choose or a one-time  
donation, and can be set up with a credit card, debit card, checking  
or savings account!*

*If you have any questions, please contact  
the Parish Office at 964-0229.*

**TEMPORARY TUESDAY MASS TIME**

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, MASS WILL BE AT 5:30PM.



**ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

When a parishioner is homebound or hospitalized and would like Father Pacheco to pay them a visit to receive Holy Communion and/or Anointing of the Sick, please call the Parish Office at 707-964-0229 and after office hours, please call 707-813-4188.