For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.

Luke 2:11
December 25, 2016

The Nativity of the Lord

The light shines in the darkness, And the darkness has not overcome it. —John 1:5

THE GIFT OF GOD’S WORD

On this day of gifts and gift-giving, it seems appropriate that we take a moment to reflect on the great gift of God’s Word. Because it is creative, God’s Word always points to its author, always calls us to respond. Because it is powerful, God’s Word can link the sublime with the ridiculous, the transcendent with the immanent, the divine with the human. Because it is graceful, God’s Word establishes a relationship of deep intimacy between us and God.

At the heart of God’s Word lies a tantalizing tension between the mysterious and the mundane. In our liturgical celebration, this unresolved tension both reveals the meaning of life for us and calls us to respond, to act upon that meaning.

Once accepted and opened, the gift of God’s Word is a gift that keeps on giving and keeps on calling us to give in return. It dares us to be like the gift-giver and to become gifts for others, not only at Christmas, but at every moment of life.

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TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

An old joke asks, “What time is Midnight Mass?” The answer is not really obvious, since Christmas is unique in having several distinct celebrations. The readings and prayers vary greatly from hour to hour. The Vigil Mass hinges on the family heritage of Jesus and his origins. The concept of “midnight” predates clock time, and really has to do with a celebration in the hours of darkness. Years ago, it was not possible to receive Communion without fasting for a full day, so the late hour of this Mass made it possible for the people to receive. The first Mass after sunrise, the Mass at Dawn, was once known as “The Shepherds’ Mass,” and later Masses set aside stories of Jesus’ birth to focus on the key to the day’s celebration: John the Evangelist’s majestic theology of Christ’s identity as the Word made flesh, dwelling among us. One feast, four separate Masses. Only monasteries manage the whole round. Parishioners typically take just one entry round. Parishioners typically take just one entry point into the mystery. Yet there is much to savor and celebrate in the coming of Christ into the world. Christmas is not a day, but a season. You still have two weeks to send those Christmas cards before you’re officially late!

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Pastor’s Corner

Is Christmas Real? - Of all the stories we tell our children, from Santa to the tooth fairy and the Easter Bunny, is Christmas just another one of those nice fairy tales for children and the simple? After all, to an unbeliever the Christmas story is ludicrous. God came among us as a baby? With advances in science, we no longer need to hold on to ancient stories and superstitions. We understand that volcanoes and thunderstorms are not caused by an angry god. We’ve grown up. We’ve gone to the moon and no longer have to fear God. We can control our environment, heat up our homes, order food and a driver to pick us up, all at the push of a button. We can Skype our friends and have people “like” us from the other side of the world, and it can all be done from our little smart phones. For some, this is reality, and the Christmas story is absurd. Yet in spite of the advances in technology, in spite of the different apps that make life easier and more entertaining for us, we still yearn for something. St. Augustine stated that "our hearts are restless." We yearn for something more that physical and material things cannot provide. And even when we meet the right person and promise to each other love until eternity, yet no finite human being can satisfy the deepest hunger in our hearts and souls. We long for unconditional love, a love that human love can only approximate but never completely fulfill. And that’s where the Christmas story comes in. A God who is Spirit, entering into human time and space, becomes vulnerable in order to show us that He cares, hears our cries, sees our tears, and desires to be with us to comfort us and to offer us His embrace. To believe in Christmas requires an act of faith. Science may not be able to help our minds grasp this Truth, that God loves us and became one of us, but this is a story that our hearts can embrace. Science has its strengths and can be used to measure and prove physical realities. But spiritual realities like love, mercy, forgiveness, tenderness cannot be measured but are real and are eternal. So is Christmas just another fairy tale? Did God really become one of us to show us the vulnerability of His love for us? Our hearts say “yes,” we are precious, loved, cherished and forgiven even in spite of our arrogance. And the ultimate proof lies in the child Jesus, who grows up, extends His arms on the cross, dies, and conquers death for us all. Fact or fiction? What does your heart say? Are you precious beyond measure and loved in spite of your faults and imperfections? God says “Yes." And Emmanuel, God, is with us.

From the priests and staff at St. Anne’s, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fr. Dan
December 25 to December 31, 2016

Sunday, December 25—Christmas
12:00 Midnight
Parishioners of Saint Anne Fr. Nascimento
7:30 William Kvaternick and Mary Zuppe (D) Bishop Walsh
9:00 Parishioners of Saint Anne Bishop Walsh
10:30 Aniceto L. Lucas and Mary & Natalie Fioranelli (D) Fr. Nascimento
Noon Ilisa Chan (D) Fr. Zhai, SVD

Monday, December 26
8:45 intention, Jesusa Morales and John and Marian Fox (D) Fr. Nascimento

Tuesday, December 27
6:30 Joseph Wong Shing Shu (D) Fr. Nascimento
8:45 Douglas & Meredith Gallion (D) Fr. Nascimento

Wednesday, December 28
6:30 Parishioners of Saint Anne Fr. Zhai, SVD
8:45 Bernise Sabin (D) Fr. Zhai, SVD

Thursday, December 29
6:30 Tino and Rebecca Negrete (D) Fr. Zhai, SVD
8:45 Anthony Leung Wai Man (D) Fr. Zhai, SVD

Friday, December 30
6:30 healing, Terry Davies Fr. Zhai, SVD
8:45 Joseph Wong Shing Shu (D) Fr. Zhai, SVD

Saturday, December 31
8:45 Confraternity of Saint Anne Fr. Nascimento
5 p.m.
One Percenters of Saint Anne Fr. Nascimento

In observation of the Christmas and New Year holidays, the Rectory office will be closed this week on Monday, Dec. 26 and on Friday, Dec. 30.

Only one Mass will be celebrated on Monday, Dec. 26—at 8:45am.

Christmas Message from Archbishop Cordileone

Brothers and Sisters,

My best wishes to all in the archdiocese for a happy and holy Christmas. I thank God for the gatherings of families, reconnections of friendships, generosity to the less fortunate, and actions filled with love in this holy season. Persist in loving your families, loving your neighbor, and loving your Church! This Christmas be sure to spend a few minutes kneeling in silent prayer before the crèche in your parish church, in thanksgiving. May God bless your celebrations and grant us all a joyous and peaceful new year.

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco
Christmas 2016

Archbishop Emeritus John R. Quinn became quite ill while in Rome last month and remains in the hospital in Rome with complications from his emergency surgery. His excellent medical team is actively engaged in his care, and he has a priest from California with him daily along with other personal support. Your prayers for his recovery and comfort have been welcomed. He continues to express his gratitude for your ongoing support. Please keep him in prayer. The archbishop emeritus, 87, was Archbishop of San Francisco from 1977-1995.

Are You Looking for Your Offertory Envelopes for 2017? In past years, in order to save on postage, in December we have put all the new year’s offertory envelopes on tables in the vestibule for you to pick up when you come to Mass. But as you may have noticed, quite a number of people never picked up their envelopes, either because they had moved out of the parish or because they preferred not to have them anymore. So this year they will be mailed to you every month. This is an option that we think will ultimately save us money. First of all, it is not that expensive. Secondly, we will learn if the person is no longer in the parish or no longer wishes to receive envelopes. This will enable us to keep from ordering more envelopes than are needed and to maintain a more accurate list of active parishioners and so save us on other mailings.

Last Week’s Collection
1st Collection, December 17, 18—$3,425.00
Property and Insurance Fund—$998.00

This Week’s Second Collection
St. Vincent de Paul
Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2016—$49,671 (91%) Assessment—$54,292

Thank You All for Your Generosity!
For On-line giving, visit: www.stanne-sf.org

13th Annual Walk for Life in San Francisco
Saturday, January 21, 2017
9:30 am: Walk for Life Mass with Archbishop Cordileone at St. Mary’s Cathedral
10:45 am: Rally at Civic Center Plaza. There the Archbishop will announce this year’s recipient of the Saint Gianna Molla Award for Pro-life Heroism.
1:30 pm: The walk from Civic Center Plaza to Justin Herman Plaza at the foot of Market Street begins.

The Walk for Life Committee says: “The Mission is to change the perceptions of a society that thinks abortion is an answer, because abortion does violence to women and to their children....”
ST. ANNE STAFF

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ST. ANNE REGULAR SCHEDULE

Sunday Mass
Sat., 5pm; Sun: 7:30, 9, 10:30am & 12pm (Chinese)

Daily Mass
Mon - Fri: 6:30am & 8:45am
Sat: 8:45am (Devotion to St. Anne)

Holy Days of Obligation
6:30am, 8:45am, 12 noon & 6pm

Exposition of Blessed Sacrament
1st Friday following 8:45am Mass until 10am

Reconciliation: Sat., 4 - 4:55pm or by appointment

Baptism: 2nd Saturday @ 12:30pm
Preparation Class: 3rd Saturday @ 10am in Rectory

Office Hours: Mon - Fri: 9am - 4:30pm
St. Anne Mission Statement

We, the people of Saint Anne, envision a Christ-centered community, enriched by the gifts of a diverse heritage. We remember the past and are open to the future; living out the Gospel values with enthusiasm, joy and celebration under the protection of Saint Anne.

We commit ourselves to sharing the mission belonging to all followers of Christ: caring for one another and reaching out to those in need.

We commit ourselves to revitalizing our parish community; to participating meaningfully in the celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, to developing a strong sense of stewardship; and to regularly evaluating our work and ministries.