Archdiocesan Annual Appeal

Please continue to pray over your participation in the Annual Appeal, which is in progress. We do need, and hope for, the participation of each household, to make this a parish-wide success.

Our required tax is: $99,663.00. As of this date, we have received: $ 22,323.44 (Thank you!)

If you did not receive a donor brochure or would like another, these are available in the vestibule or call the office and we will gladly send you another.
April 2020

Passion (Palm) Sunday

From the Pastor,

Today is one of those unique days in the Church calendar when we hear two Gospel passages very different in tone and sentiment, and certainly in content. We begin the liturgy with a presentation of an enthusiastic and exuberant crowd as Jesus enters Jerusalem, the capital of David’s kingdom. Along the way he is regaled and hailed as Son of David; the prophet, from Nazareth; and the one who comes in the name of the Lord. He gets the red-carpet treatment: cloaks and cut branches from the trees strewn on the dusty road; cries of Hosanna piercing the air; the crowd swelling, their voices crying out in a mixture of scriptural quotations and messianic aspirations.

Then, as the Mass progresses – and somewhat all of a sudden – the mood changes: Our Gospel announces that the king has been degraded to the level of a common criminal. The victory confetti is replaced by whips, spitting, and choking dust. Jesus the prophet and Davidic Savior is now Jesus the criminal, the blasphemer, the rebel. The donkey that once carried him in triumph has disappeared, and on his own back he now carries the heavy and awkward cross. Cries of celebration have turned to calls for death; shouts of joy have given way to the sound of the lash; the parade has become an execution march.

It is enough to make our spiritual head spin. For in this yearly remembrance of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are well-reminded of the nature of our own temptations and sins. We can often find ourselves with Jesus for the easy part of the journey, but then vanish like the wind when the pressure rises and the threats of death fill the air. We examine how deep is our own loyalty to Christ in a world where faith is so easily mocked and the name of Christ so easily denigrated. We think about the times when we want to skip ahead to the empty tomb without first walking to Golgotha. As Jesus tells us, the human spirit can be very willing, but the flesh very weak. But there can be no resurrection without the cross; there can be no new life without first dying to oneself. There is no Easter without Good Friday.

Let us not be like the crowd: Fickle, inconsistent, swaying with the latest wind of popularity and fame, afraid to stand up for justice and truth – for the innocent one. But as we journey this Holy Week, let us keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. Let us take note of his patience, his total and unyielding dedication to doing the will of the Father fully and completely. Then let us take up our cross and follow him, so that having shared in his cross, we might share in his resurrection.

As we enter the holiest of weeks, even if it be in the confines of our own homes, let us pray for ourselves, our friends and family and in thanksgiving for the gift of this week that leads to the gift of eternal life for those who follow the Lord.

Blessings and good health to each of you. Father Tony LaTorre

LITURGY AND LIFE

- How are you willing to empty yourself to do what God desires?
- When have you found it hardest to seek God’s will over yours?
- What preparations will you make to participate in the liturgy during Holy Week?
Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday

The Church celebrates this sixth Sunday of Lent as both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. This is the time of year we stop to remember and relive the events which brought about our redemption and salvation. What we commemorate and relive during this week is not just Jesus’ dying and rising, but our own dying and rising in Him, which will result in our healing, reconciliation, and redemption. Attentive participation in the Holy Week liturgy will deepen our relationship with God, increase our Faith and strengthen our lives as disciples of Jesus. Today’s liturgy combines contrasting moments, one of glory, the other of suffering: the royal welcome of Jesus in Jerusalem and the drama of His trial, culminating in His crucifixion, death and burial.

Ask yourself . . .

1) Does Jesus weep over me? There is a Jewish saying, “Heaven rejoices over a repentant sinner and sheds tears over a non-repentant, hardhearted one.” Are we ready to imitate the prodigal son and return to God, our loving Father, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this last week of Lent and participate fully in the joy of Christ’s Resurrection?

2) Am I a barren fig tree? God expects me to produce fruits of holiness, purity, justice, humility, obedience, charity, and forgiveness. Am I a barren fig tree? Or, worse, do I continue to produce bitter fruits of impurity, injustice, pride, hatred, jealousy and selfishness?

3) Will Jesus need to cleanse my heart with His whip? Jesus cannot tolerate the desecration of the temple of the Holy Spirit in me by my addiction to uncharitable, unjust and impure thoughts words and deeds; neither does He approve of my calculation of loss and gain in my relationship with God.

4) Do I welcome Jesus into my heart? Am I ready to surrender my life to Him during this Holy Week and welcome Him into all areas of my life as my Lord and Savior, singing “Hosanna”? Today, we receive palm branches at the Divine Liturgy. Let us take them to our homes and put them some place where we can always see them. Let the palms remind us that Christ is the King of our families, that Christ is the King of our hearts and that Christ is the only true answer to our quest for happiness and meaning in our lives. And if we do proclaim Christ as our King, let us try to make time for Him in our daily life; let us be reminded that He is the One with Whom we will be spending eternity. Let us be reminded further that our careers, our education, our finances, our homes, all of the basic material needs in our lives are only temporary. Let us prioritize and place Christ the King as the primary concern in our lives. It is only when we have done this that we will find true peace and happiness in our confused and complex world.

5) Are we ready to become like the humble donkey that carried Jesus? As we "carry Jesus" to the world, we can expect to receive the same welcome that Jesus received on Palm Sunday, but we must also expect to meet the same opposition, crosses and trials later. Like the donkey, we are called upon to carry Christ to a world that does not know Him. Let us always remember that a Christian without Christ is a contradiction in terms. Such a one betrays the Christian message. Hence, let us become transparent Christians during this Holy Week, enabling others to see in us Jesus’ universal love, unconditional forgiveness and sacrificial service.

6) Can we face these questions on Palm Sunday? Are we willing to follow Jesus, not just to Church but in our daily life? Are we willing to entrust ourselves to Him even when the future is frightening or confusing, believing God has a plan? Are we willing to serve Him until that day when His plan on earth is fulfilled? These are the questions of Palm Sunday. Let us take a fresh look at this familiar event. We might be surprised at what we see. It could change us forever.

Palm Sunday Humor

Little Johnny was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from Church with his mother. His father returned from Church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?" His father explained, "You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved palm branches to honor Him; so we got palm branches today." "Aw, shucks," grumbled Little Johnny. "The one Sunday I can't go to Church, and Jesus shows up!"

The king on a donkey! Some of you heard my story about the husband and the wife who had quarreled. It had been a pitched battle of wills, each digging heels in to preserve the position each had vehemently taken. Emotions had run high. As they were driving to attend a family wedding in a distant city, both were nursing hurt feelings in defensive silence. The angry tension between them was so thick you could cut it with a knife. But, then the silence was broken. Pointing to a donkey standing in a pasture out beside the road, the husband sarcastically asked, “Relative of yours?” The wife quickly replied, “By marriage!”
Our parishioners health is our top priority but coming together and worshiping the Lord is part of our mission and will keep our spiritual strength strong.

- At 9:30 am we will be going live from our St. Stephen Parish Facebook page.
- If you have a Facebook account please make sure to like St. Stephen Catholic Church. ([https://www.facebook.com/saintstephensf/](https://www.facebook.com/saintstephensf/))
- If you do not have a Facebook, either create a new account (free) or log-in with a friend or family member.
- When we go live it will show up on your news feed. Please make sure to click on the live feed and you will be part of our virtual community. (Your device needs to be connected to WIFI or an internet connection in order to stream the mass.)
- A donation button and or link will be added to the live stream this weekend or in the near future. If you are looking for a way to still help financially support your local parish please donate at your discretion.

We know this is new for our community but we are so excited to keep spreading the word of God. If there was ever a time we were in need of his guidance, it is now.

For more information or questions please speak to Carol or Father Tony. They may be reached at 415.681.2444.

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**Mass Intentions**

The following “private” Masses were offered to fulfill Mass requests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Gifted by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mila Ubungen</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Parish Staff/Front Desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Nenita Sangalang</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Elvie Ysip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adele Caunan</td>
<td>March 20</td>
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<td>+Teresita Abad</td>
<td>March 21</td>
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<td>Rosary Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Adoracion Santiago</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Olivia Santiago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griselda MacDonald</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Fely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+James Martin</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Marie Schmitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Maria Castillo</td>
<td>March 26</td>
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<td>Adele Caunan</td>
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<td>+Pat Ahern</td>
<td>March 27</td>
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<td>Anna Sozzi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mila Ubungen</td>
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<td>+Angelo Devincenzi</td>
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<td>Tony &amp; Teresa Devincenzi</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Alene Meyers</td>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Prayer Group</td>
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St Stephen Church provides **Online Giving** -- a convenient and safe way to make a one-time or recurring donation. Getting started is easy.

Visit [www.saintstephensf.org](http://www.saintstephensf.org), click on Donation link.

When you participate, your gift will be securely transferred directly into the parish.
Holy Week Schedule
(Live Streaming from Saint Stephen Facebook Page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Thursday</td>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Friday</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Vigil</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Sunday</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Sunday</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
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Living Stewardship Now
“Both/And”

On the whole, we don’t think too highly of donkeys. Nevertheless, these animals have served humans for the last six thousand years, as pack animals or for people transport, and for all kinds of heavy agricultural work. Donkeys work very hard but they have a reputation for being stubborn and unintelligent. In ancient Israel a person riding on a donkey indicated wealth and status in much the same way luxury cars might do today. Ordinary people went everywhere on foot. Horses at that time were used solely for war, and only powerful kings such as Solomon could afford them. Jesus is described as riding on a young donkey into Jerusalem, which would have been appropriate for him as a descendant of the royal House of David. The crowd, if only temporarily, acknowledged Jesus as king, probably hoping he would start a violent revolt and overthrow their Roman conquerors. In later times, this same account of the Messiah riding on a donkey came to have the opposite emphasis, indicating Jesus’ simple, sober way of life, avoidance of luxury and status, and his perfect humility. The truth is that Jesus is both. He is the one who took “the form of a slave . . . humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death,” and also the one whom “God greatly exalted” in kingly glory (Philippians 2:7, 8, 9). As we walk through this week, following Jesus to Calvary and beyond, we know that his suffering mirrors our own, but we also know that we are the sons and daughters of the heavenly king who has ransomed us from death and sin. Take time this week to walk with Jesus in prayer until you stand in your heart at the foot of the cross, where you can say like the centurion, “Truly, this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54).

Participate, at home, (via livestream), with family members or friends in as many of the Holy Week liturgies as possible.

For Your Consideration . . . .

On another note, in case you were unaware, I have kept our parish church open daily from 9:00 to 4:00 for those who wish to drop by for private prayer. I am very encouraged to find so many who do drop by to sit with the Blessed Sacrament, pray the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary simply sit in silence. Yes, I am very much encouraged by how our parish family continues to live our faith and celebrate the Holy Spirit during this unique time. Also, I hope you have been able to participate in our livestream Masses each week – I have received many positive responses.

COVID-19 has posed many challenges to our parish, including offertory funds lost due to the suspension of Mass. Your offertory gifts support salaries of parish staff members, programs and ministries, maintenance of our buildings and grounds, and many other vital components of our parish life.

I ask you to please continue to financially support our parish during this time. You can give through our parish website (Saintstephensf.org), by mailing in your donations, to the parish office or rectory, or by stopping by and dropping it in at the office.

If possible, please consider giving an amount that equals your regular offertory contribution. It will be an inspiration to me, as your Pastor, to know that I can depend on receiving your continued offertory support. All gifts, regardless of amount, are greatly appreciated and very beneficial.

We will emerge from this situation even stronger as a faith community, and we pray for the day that we can again share the Holy Mass, together, in church, as a family.

On behalf of our parish staff and all who benefit from your ongoing generosity, I thank you for your consideration of this request and for all you do for your parish family.

Sincerely yours, in the Peace of the Risen Christ,
Reverend Tony P. LaTorre, Pastor
The 2020 Annual Appeal is in progress. It is our hope that each household/parishioner will assist us by sharing their treasure as we move forward to reach our required tax of $99,663.00. Donor brochures were mailed home several weeks ago. If you didn’t receive one or would like another, they are available on the tables in the vestibule. As we all make-up the “Church,” it is important that we come together and work on reaching this goal. Know that no amount is too small and all gifts are received with great thanksgiving. Fr. Tony

Our current “outstanding” balance is: $77,340.56.

PARISH GOAL: $99,663.00

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Amount Received</th>
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<th>BALANCE DUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>6 (as of March 25)</td>
<td>$7,307</td>
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<td>$77,340.56</td>
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<td>5 (as of March 17)</td>
<td>$850.00</td>
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<td>$84,647.56</td>
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Anonymous (Various)
M/M Dale & Sharon Allen
M/M Michael Alves
Mrs. Dorothy Arata
M/M Roberto & Berliz Arguello
Mr. Clemence Blando
M/M John Bruno
Ms. Nancy Buckley
M/M Sherwin Cabatic
M/M Ding Cagalingan Jr
M/M Carlos Cajilig Jr.
M/M Peter Cardozo
M/M Douglas Cayabyab
Ms. Adelaida Caunan
M/M Graziano Cerchai
Ms. Piera Cheng Chaz &
Mr. Arthur Chui
M/M Howard Chen
M/M Marcellus Chow
M/M Arturo Cuevas-Arenas
Mr. Joseph D’Aura
Ms. Debby Diaz
M/M Mark Dickson
Mr. Michael Duffy
Ms. Elena Duggan
M/M David Dulany
M/M Kenneth Fambrini
M/M Gerard Fernandez
Ms. Elinor Gatto
M/M Ryan Gille
Ms. Avelina A. Gomez
M/M Mark & Stacy Gottas
Mrs. Diane Gragnani
M/M Roberto Guzman
M/M James Hargarten
M/M Sean Harrington
M/M Lawrence Hayes
Ms. Joanne Hayes-White
M/M Thomas Hazard
Ms. Joan Holsten
M/M Cris Houghton
Ms. Patricia Ignacio
Ms. Cynthia G. Kelly
M/M Douglas Kilroy
Rev. Tony P. LaTorre
M/M Jim Landers
Mr. Paul Laveroni
M/M Dianne Leehane
M/M Michael Levy
M/M James Martin
M/M Lawrence Mazzola
Mr. Daniel McGarry &
Ms. Courtney Cassinelli
Ms. Gayle Montalbano
M/M Joseph Morello
Mr. Michael O’Connor
Ms. Myrna Orais
Ms. Anne O’Shea
M/M Matthew Quane
Mr. Robert Reidy
M/M John Ritchie
M/M Daniel M. Salvemini
Rev. David Schunk
Ms. Lutzie E. Sotto
M/M Matthew Stecher
Ms. Virginia Stefanelli
M/M Peter Stephens
M/M George Vella
Mrs. Maria Xavier
Ms. Patricia Woytek
M/M Reynaldo Ysip

Thank you!
Our warmest welcome to all who celebrate with us.

You can sign up or update your information by completing this form & placing it in the collection basket, by mailing it to the Parish Office, by phone at 681-2444 or online at www.saintstephensf.org

Name _________________________________________________________________________________
Complete Address _________________________________________  City/Zip ___________________
Phone _________________________  Email _________________________________________________

I am interested in assisting with the Parish in the following way(s):
Weekly Sunday envelopes, circle one: Yes  No, but commit to participate thru Online Giving