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: $33,799.00 (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.
Today the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday. The central focus is our celebration of the resurrection of Christ and the floodgates of God’s mercy being opened upon us, and is based both on Scripture and the revelations of Saint Faustina Kowalska.

Peter says in today’s second reading, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.*

Saint John Paul II, in his canonization of Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska, instituted this day into the Church calendar. In his homily, he said:

“It is important then that we accept the whole message that comes to us from the word of God on this Second Sunday of Easter, which from now on throughout the Church will be called ‘Divine Mercy Sunday.’ In the various readings, the liturgy seems to indicate the path of mercy which, while re-establishing the relationship of each person with God, also creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings. Christ has taught us that ‘man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called ‘to practice mercy’ towards others: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy* (Mt 5:7)” (*Dives in misericordia*, n. 14).

That mercy is easily seen in the many healing miracles recalled in the Gospels. In each one, whether physical or spiritual, the power of Christ to renew, forgive, and heal bursts into the life of someone and, at times, even turns upside down the very laws of nature.

In today’s Gospel, that specific ministry of forgiveness and mercy is passed to the disciples, when Jesus says, *Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them.* This is Divine Mercy.

When Thomas, broken and distraught at the death of Jesus cannot, or will not, bring himself to accept the Resurrection, Jesus gently takes him from obstinate refusal to a moment of faith. He coaxes from Thomas one of the great confessions of faith: *My Lord and my God!* In that moment, Thomas is healed and changed – healed of his grief and pain, changed from doubt to belief. This is Divine Mercy.

Having experienced that same forgiveness and healing in their own lives, the disciples now become carriers of these gifts for all who will hear and respond to their preaching. For what they say about the risen Christ is no mere fantasy. They witnessed his death on the cross, and now they witness with their very eyes and with the touch of their hands that he is fully alive. Divine Mercy.

The need for those gifts of mercy and healing is as great today as it was in apostolic times, as Saint John Paul II noted. Without it, we are lost – still in our sins, unable to be reconciled with God. So as we continue to celebrate the Resurrection, let us each open our hearts to those gifts and then commit ourselves to be conduits of them to others. Divine Mercy.

As we continue, together, to celebration the great Easter gift, may you continue to be blessed with good health and safety and God’s blessings be with you all. *Father Tony LaTorre*

**Liturgy and Life**

- How does the way you live reflect your belief in Christ?
- Listen to Christ offering you peace. How are you affected?
- For what can you give thanks to God this week?
Let us accept God's invitation to celebrate and practice mercy.

One way the Church celebrates God's mercy throughout the year is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." So, we see that all of us are to be reconcilers and mediators, becoming channel to one another of the Risen Lord's peace and forgiveness. Finding time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is another good way to receive Divine Mercy. The Gospel command, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful," requires that we show mercy to our fellow human beings always and everywhere. We radiate God's mercy to others by our corporal and spiritual works of mercy, by our kind and supportive words, and our by our prayers for all our brothers and sisters.

Let us ask God for the Faith that culminates in self-surrender to Him and leads us to serve those we encounter with love.

Living Faith enables us to see the risen Lord in everyone and gives us the willingness to render to each one our loving service. It was this Faith in the Lord and obedience to His missionary command that prompted St. Thomas to travel to India to preach the Gospel among the Hindus, to establish seven Christian communities (known later as “St. Thomas Christians”), and eventually to suffer martyrdom. The Fathers of the Church prescribe the following traditional means to grow in the living and dynamic Faith of St. Thomas the Apostle. a) We must come to know Jesus personally and intimately by our daily and meditative reading of the Bible. b) We must strengthen our Faith by the power of the Holy Spirit through our personal and communal prayer. c) We must share in the Divine life of Jesus by frequenting the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) presents it this way: “If we pray, we will believe; if we believe, we will love; if we love, we will serve. Only then we put our love of God into action.”

We need to meet the challenge for a transparent Christian life -- I will not believe unless I see." This "seeing" is what others demand of us. They ask that we reflect Jesus, the risen Lord in our lives by our selfless love, unconditional forgiveness, and humble service. The integrity of our lives bears a fundamental witness to others who want to see the risen Lord alive and active, working in us. Christ’s mercy shines forth from us whenever we reach out to the poor, the needy and the marginalized, as St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) did. His mercy shines forth as we remain open to those who struggle in Faith, as did the Apostle Thomas in today’s Gospel. We should be able to appreciate the presence of Jesus, crucified and raised, in our own suffering and in the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, thus recognizing the glorified wounds of the risen Lord in the suffering of those around us.

Like St. Thomas, let us use our skepticism to help us grow in Faith. It is our genuine doubts about the doctrines of our religion that encourage us to study these doctrines more closely and thus to grow in our Faith. This will naturally lead us to a personal encounter with Jesus through our prayer, study of the Word of God, and frequenting of the Sacraments. However, we must never forget the fact that our Faith is not our own doing but is a gift from God. Hence, we need to augment our Faith every day by prayer so that we may join St. Thomas in his proclamation: “My Lord and my God.”

Let us have the courage of our Christian convictions to share our Faith as St. Thomas did, and to recognize the “nail marks.”

We are not to keep the gift of Faith locked in our hearts, but share it with our children, our families and our neighbors, always remembering the words of Pope St. John XXIII: “Every believer in this world must become a spark of Christ’s light.” “We all have scars from our own Good Fridays that remain long after our own experiences of resurrection. Our ‘nail marks’ remind us that all pain and grief, all ridicule and suffering, are transformed into healing and peace in the love of God that we experience from others and that we extend to them. The “nail marks” of Jesus are all around us in the lives of those walking their own Calvaries. Jesus calls us to be willing to place ourselves in the pain and struggle of others and bring the joy and peace of Easter into hearts, entombed in winter cold and darkness.” (Connections).

An Easter “Thank You”!

Although there are many parishioners who make our “regular” Sunday liturgies here well organized and meaningful, Holy Week and Easter take special care, time and effort. It is especially true this year as we take on the livestreaming of our Holy Week, Sunday liturgies and Masses from Saint Stephens. I offer my thanks to those special technical people who have done their best to “livestream” our liturgies to you as best they can so you may have a spiritual experience. Thank you! (Fr. Tony)

SACRAMENTS

These current weeks following Easter are the Weeks we had scheduled the celebration of First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation. Obviously, they have both been postponed. They both will be rescheduled, probably during the summer, as soon as the “stay-at-home” is lifted. I will keep you posted, well in advance.
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.

• Every Sunday, 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/)
• 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 at Parish Office 415.681.2444.

As we go our daily life within the state and city-wide mandate of “Stay-at-Home” for the next few weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please remember that we continue to look forward to your regular weekly donations to sustain our church’s basic operation needs.

You may continue to do so through the following:

1) via your weekly envelope which can either be:
   a. Mailed to the Parish Office;
   b. Dropped off at our parish office/mailbox slot.
2) If at this time, you are strictly confined in your home, please consider setting up an online account through the parish website: www.saintstephensf.org by:
   a. Click the S Giving button
   b. Click on Donation link
3) If neither of the above works for you, please give us a call at the office, and we will gladly pick up your donation envelope for the parish.
4) For our elderly parishioners who live alone, we also offer our services in making a grocery run for you once a week. Please make a listing of your grocery needs, call us at the office and we will arrange for our volunteer parishioners to do the errand for you.

For more information, please give us a call at 415-681-2444 between 9am to 3pm Mondays thru Fridays or check our website www.saintstephensf.org

My Sincere Gratitude

During these very difficult times of the pandemic, we are all living and adjusting to a different way of daily living. Many of you are working from home, your children are being taught via computers and are home, with you all day. Some, unfortunately have lost their employment – and I am so sorry for all of you. Hopefully, soon, we will “begin” to return to what was once our “normal lives. But I do want to offer my sincere appreciation to so many of you who have kept up with your weekly donations, either via mail, dropping it off, automatic banking, and the various ways that are made available to you to assist your parish. I know times are really tough, and they are for all of us. Unfortunately, our bills also keep coming in. Utilities, insurances, etc., and with you sharing your treasures - you assist us in keeping up with our main responsibilities – ministry, and the upkeep of our parish plant. Please, stay safe and healthy and look forward to when we can meet – face-to-face – again, soon I hope. (Fr. Tony).
Mass Intentions

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Gifted by</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Nicolas April 1, 2020  8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>The Stecher Family</td>
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<td>+Antonio Roque April 2, 2020  8.00 a.m.</td>
<td>Ruby and Ed Quan</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Tito Bingil April 3, 2020  8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>+Leonard Stefanelli April 6, 2020  8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Virginia Stefanelli</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Feliaberta Torres April 7, 2020  8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Laarni Guesto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Anaseto Caunan April 8, 2020  8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Adele Caunan</td>
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Living Stewardship Now

“Empty”

Andrew was born with mild Down syndrome. He loved to go to religion class after Mass on Sunday. Nine other children there learned, laughed, and played together. Andrew was not really part of the group. He did not choose to be different; he just was, and his classmates mostly ignored him. On the first Sunday after Easter his teacher arrived with ten plastic eggs. She gave one to each child and they all went outside to find symbols of new life to put into their eggs. They ran around the church grounds in the spring sunshine and brought their treasures back inside. The children gathered around and the teacher opened the first egg: it held a beautiful flower, and they “ooh-ed” and “aah-ed.” She opened another and there was a little butterfly. In the third egg they saw a fresh green leaf. The fourth egg had nothing inside. The children, as eight-year-olds will, said, “That’s stupid! Somebody didn’t do it right.” The teacher felt a tug on her shirt and looked down. “It’s mine,” Andrew said. The children cried, “You never ever do things right, Andrew. There’s nothing there!” “I did so do it right!” said Andrew. “The tomb is empty!” There was sudden silence. From that time on, Andrew became a part of the group. He was set free from the tomb of his difference. Andrew died last summer of an infection that most children could have quickly shrugged off. At his funeral Mass, nine eight-year-old children, together with their teacher, marched up to the altar, not with flowers to cover over the stark reality of death, but with an empty egg—an empty, old, discarded pantyhose egg—and placed it on the altar steps. The tomb is empty!

Take time to serve someone with physical, emotional, or learning challenges.

Teach an adult to read, take someone wheelchair bound out for a ride, record books for the blind, give parents of a disabled child a “time-out.”

This Week’s Humor

Traffic cop’s mercy: A priest was forced by a police officer to pull over for speeding. As the officer was about to write the ticket, the priest said to him, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” The police officer handed the priest the ticket, and said, “Go, and sin no more.”

Photographer’s mercy: The story is told of a politician who, after receiving the proofs of a picture, was very angry with the photographer. He stormed back to the man’s studio and screamed at him: “This picture does not do me justice!” The photographer replied, “Sir, with a face like yours, what you need is mercy, not justice!”

"Law v Mercy" In Reader’s Digest, Jim Williams of Montana, writes: “I was driving too fast late one night when I saw the flashing lights of a police car in my rearview mirror. As I pulled over and rolled down my window of my station wagon, I tried to dream up an excuse for my haste. But when the patrolman reached the car, he said nothing. Instead, he merely shined his flashlight in my face, then on my seven-month-old in his car seat, then on our three other children, who were asleep, and lastly on the two dogs in the very back of the car. Returning the beam of light to my face, he then uttered the only words of the encounter. ‘Son,’ he said, ‘you can’t afford a ticket. Slow down.’ And with that, he returned to his car and drove away.” Sometimes mercy triumphs over law. So it is for sinners who call out to Jesus.”

Please pray for the sick and home-bound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick. May they know the healing touch of Jesus.

Melody & Robert Liam, Zaida Ysip, Larry Teshara, Vaughn Jones, Leanna Mossi, Peter Dalton, Elena Amaya, Eden Finn, Edileide Jose Barbosa, Kenneth Fambrini, Larry Barbieri, Carol Dominguez, Marc Gutierrezes, Kevin King, Marla Moso, Juan Pablo Grover-Paez, Betty Rodriguez, Joel Rivera, Joseph Tren, Anna M Thompson, Gwendolyn Walsh, Jovita & Richard Thompson
2020 ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

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: $65,864.00.

PARISH GOAL: $99,663.00

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Amount Received</th>
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Anonymous (Various)
M/M Manuel Abad
M/M Dale & Sharon Allen
M/M Michael Alves
Mrs. Dorothy Arata
M/M Roberto Arguello
Mr. Clemence Blondo
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 Gerald Carillo
M/M Douglas Cayabyab
Ms. Adelaida R Caunan
M/M Graziano Cerchaj
Ms. Piera Cheng Chaz &
Mr. Arthur Chui
M/M Howard Chen
M/M Marcellus Chow
M/M Arturo Cuevas-Arenas
Helga D’Arcy &
Matthew Quane
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 Fernadnez
M/M Liam Frost
Ms. Elinor Gatto
M/M Ryan Gille
Ms. Avelina A. Gomez
M/M Mark Gottas
Mrs. Diane Gragnani
M/M Roberto Guzman
M/M James P Hargarten
M/M Sean Harrington
M/M Lawrence Hayes
Mrs. Patricia Hayes
Ms. Joanne Hayes-White
M/M Thomas Hazard
Ms. Joan Holsten
M/M Cris Houghton
M/M Claudio Hrvatin
Ms. Patricia Ignacio
Ms. Cynthia G. Kelly
M/M Douglas Kilroy
Mrs. Beatriz Lacson
Rev. Tony P. LaTorre
M/M Jim Landers
Mr. Paul Laveroni
M/M Daniel 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
Mr. Robert Reidy
M/M John Ritchie
M/M Daniel M. Salvemini
Donovan Schneider &
Deborah Lobo
Rev. David Schunk
Mr. Kevin Sequeira
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.
AD PAGE

Only send 200 copies