Prayer Against Coronavirus

Lord Jesus, our Divine Physician, we ask you to guard and protect us from Coronavirus COVID-19 and all serious illness.

For all that have died from it, have mercy, for those that are ill now, bring healing.

For those searching for a remedy, enlighten them; for medical caregivers helping the sick, strengthen and shield them.

For those working to contain the spread, grant them success; for those afraid, grant peace.

May your precious blood be our defense and salvation.

By your grace, may you turn the evil of disease into moments of consolation and hope.

May we always fear the contagion of sin more than any illness.

We abandon ourselves to your infinite mercy.

Amen.

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: $35,124.00 (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.
Fourth Sunday of Sunday

Sheep left unattended or corralled will wander off and get into trouble every single time. That is why the shepherd goes to such lengths to keep an eye on them. When left to our own devices, we, too, have this uncanny tendency to wander off and get into trouble of all kinds. When we allow the voices of temptation to drown out the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we are headed for trouble. Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves, and we need to heed his voice.

What an awesome event is described in today’s first reading. Peter speaks plainly to the crowd as to their culpability in the death of Jesus. Some were no doubt agitators in the crowd the day Jesus was condemned and crucified. Others stood by silently and let it all unfold. Let us not forget that 10 of the Apostles ran away! Only the youngest remained at the foot of the cross with Mary and several other women. But Peter told them to repent and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Those who accepted Peter’s message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. All the people repented for whatever role they may have played in Jesus’ death, and the community grew by 3,000. Truly a gracious and blessed day in the life of the Church. The heavens rejoiced at the sight of such a glorious event.

This was not the work of Peter, of course. This was the Lord working through Peter. Jesus Christ is the gate protecting the sheep from robbers and thieves – Jesus, who came so all might have life and have it more abundantly. The crowds in the first reading heard their shepherd’s voice in the words and actions of Peter. The Pharisees and others in the Gospel did not recognize their shepherd who was right in front of them.

Let us hear the Good Shepherd’s voice this day. Let us help others hear his voice through our words and actions this day as well. For his voice leads us to life. The Easter season is the perfect time to move from pain and suffering to glorious triumph in the risen Christ. May we always hear and heed the voice of the Shepherd.

During this “stay-at-home” time, this might be the perfect time through our actions and words to show those around us, who might be losing patience, to endure each day through this assistance we can offer. May you have a blessed and safe week – stay home and keep washing those hands! Father Anthony LaTorre

LITURGY AND LIFE

- When have you found comfort in the description of the Lord as a shepherd, always at your side?
- How has someone been a model of grace, during suffering?
- What do you need to do to set aside time to listen to God’s voice?

Examples of “Sheep” and “Shepherds”

(The Paratrooper) A paratrooper, who had recently resigned from the military was asked how many times he had jumped out of an airplane. He said, “None.” A friend of his asked, “What do you mean, ‘none’? I thought you were a paratrooper!” He said, “I was, but I never jumped. I was pushed several times ... but I never jumped.” The hired hand never jumps. He has to be pushed. Churches often have hired hands in them. Not our Church, of course! But other Churches are full of people who have to be pushed to do what they know they ought to do. Jesus did not have to be pushed.

(I Gave My Life for My Sheep) We applaud when a man or woman gives his or her life for another. Such instances do come along from time to time. Murfreesboro, Tennessee. May 28, 1989: “Former NFL football player Jerry Anderson,” read the newspaper account, “died Saturday after pulling two young boys out of a rain-swollen river about 40 miles southeast of Nashville. Witnesses said Anderson saw two boys, thought to be 11 or 12 years old, attempting to cross a dam spanning the river. One or both boys fell into the water. According to Officer Bill Todd, ‘Mr. Anderson jumped in the water and managed to get the little boys out, but witnesses said he went under two or three times and about the fourth time, he didn’t come back up.’” He gave his life to rescue two small boys.

(You Don’t Have to be a Man) . . . to perform such heroics. Many years ago, a woman carrying a baby through the hills of South Wales, England, was overtaken by a blizzard. Searchers found her later frozen to death in the snow. Amazed that she had on no outer garments, they searched further and found her baby. She had wrapped them around the child, who was still alive and well. He grew up to be David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain in World War I.
My dear parish family,

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe, in good health, and enduring these unsettling days of quarantine with faith and hope. This historic COVID pandemic has required us all to make enormous sacrifices to protect the health of our community. I hope you and your family are adjusting to these circumstances and that you are experiencing the comfort of God’s faithful presence every day.

Among the many ways this crisis has had an impact on all of us, the suspension of public Masses is most difficult. I know how much you miss the opportunity to gather together as a parish family for worship, and especially to receive the Eucharist. But we know we will be together again in our beloved Saint Stephen Church, and God will, that day will come soon. In the meantime, we continue to live-stream Sunday Mass at 9:30 on our Facebook page. I hope you are praying a prayer of spiritual communion often, and that you are comforted by the constant presence of our Lord, even when you cannot receive him physically.

Many of you have called or emailed to ask how I’m doing, and said that you miss me. Well, I miss all of you also! I want you to know how grateful I am for your concern. I manage to keep busy. Several hours each morning in the parish office, keeping tabs on the budget, income, responding to mail – all that daily “stuff.” Managed to organize files that I have been wanting to do for several years, basically spring cleaning. After that, keeping the Rectory up-to-date. Not much to do there as I am the only one living there, except for Vito, of course! Always spend free time working on a quilt. Those kind of things make up my day. You also have asked about the well-being of our wonderful parish and school staff. I can assure you we’re all taking every precaution to protect our health, while at the same time, working hard to provide what pastoral care we can during this crisis. Of course, school is closed and will remain closed, but the teachers are working hard teaching via on-line. Mrs. Allen is working each day keeping everything “together.” Carol, our parish manager, is in the office each day keeping track of the parish business, the remainder of the staff is on limited hours these days because of the “temporary” reduction in hours.

It is my concern for our employees that prompts me to write to you. As you know, our operating budget relies on the revenue in our weekly offertory collection. Without that, we are falling short of our budget and this means we are at risk of being unable to pay our staff members. I’m asking everyone to either mail in your contribution for the month/week whichever you prefer. Or, if you prefer, to go our online giving page, Saintstephensf.org and sign up to being regular electronic donors to the parish. Doing this will ensure that we can get through this crisis now, but also will help us have a greater financial stability in the future. I can’t stress enough how important it is that you continue to support our parish if you can.

Of course, many people are being financially affected by the COVID crisis with lost jobs and declining business. We know that may affect your contribution. If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please know of my prayers that your situation will soon improve.

Attending to the pastoral needs is a great concern of mine. I know that this crisis is causing fear and anxiety, two things our Lord does not want us to experience. I urge you to go to your Bible and revisit those passages where God reminds us that, even in the midst of fear and turmoil, he is walking with us and holding us close to him.

Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God.

I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. (Is 41:10)

O Most High, when I am afraid, in you I place my trust. Psalm 56:4)

For God did not give us a spirit of fear but rather of power and love and self-control. (1 Tim 1:7)

Finally, I urge you to go online to see the many ways in which priests and others in ministry are trying to support you during this crisis. From live-streamed and taped Masses to virtual Scripture studies, encouraging social media posts to live-streamed rosaries, there are a variety of resources to help you stay connected with Jesus and his Church. You and your family can make this a meaningful time in your spiritual journey as, together, we wait to be reunited as a parish family.

Thank you for your prayers, your faithfulness, and your support. May the Lord bless and keep each of you and your loved ones during this challenging and historic time.

Father Tony LaTorre
**Good Shepherd/Sheep Thoughts . . . .**

**We need to be good shepherds and good leaders:** Everyone who is entrusted with the care of others is a shepherd. Hence, pastors, parents, teachers, doctors, nurses, government officials, and caregivers, among others, are all shepherds. We become good shepherds by loving those entrusted to us, praying for them, spending our time, talents and blessings for their welfare, and guarding them from physical and spiritual dangers. Parents must be especially careful of their duties toward their children, giving them good example and sound religious instruction. Above all, parents should pray for their children and, by living according to sound Christian moral principles, show their children how to do the same.

**We need to be good sheep in the fold of Jesus, the Good Shepherd:** Our local parish is our sheepfold, and our pastors are our shepherds. Jesus is the High Priest, the Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, the pastors are their helpers and the parishioners are the sheep. Hence, as the good sheep of the parish, parishioners are expected to a) Hear and follow the voice of our shepherds through their homilies, Bible classes, counseling and advice. b) Receive the spiritual food given by our pastors by regular participation in the Holy Mass, by frequenting the Sacraments and by participating in prayer services, renewal programs and missions as far as we are able to do so. c) Cooperate with our pastors by giving them positive suggestions for the welfare of the parish, by encouraging them in their duties, by offering them loving correcting and constructive criticism when they are found misbehaving or failing in their duties and, always, by praying for them. d) Participate actively in the work of various councils, ministries and parish associations.

**We need to pray for good pastors and vocations,** The Church uses this theme of *World Day of Prayer for Vocations* to encourage vocations to the ministerial priesthood, the diaconate and the consecrated life. All Christians need to share in the responsibility of fostering these vocations: a) The faith community must continuously pray for vocations both in the Church and in their families. b) Since good priests, deacons and people embracing the consecrated life come from good Christian families, all Christian parents need to live their faith in Christ on a daily basis by leading exemplary lives as parents and by fostering good relationships with, and among, their children. c) Parents need to respect and encourage a child who shows an interest in becoming a priest or deacon or of entering upon a consecrated life. Parents need to encourage their children, including their teenagers and young adults, to participate actively in the children’s and youth activities in the parish, like Sunday school, children’s clubs, and youth associations. They also need to encourage and actively support them in becoming altar servants, gift-bearers, lectors and ministers of hospitality. On this *World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, let us begin, or continue, especially in these most stressful times in and for the Church, local and universal, to pray earnestly for continued conversion and perseverance in the Faith for our bishops, priests, deacons, those living a consecrated life, and all of the laity, for we are One Body and what one member suffers, all suffer.

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**“Follow My Voice”**

On September 11, 2001, the Pentagon was slammed by a hijacked airliner. People were trapped in the flaming building. A police officer ran inside and kept repeating in the darkness, "Follow my voice." Six people did. They owe their lives to that voice. We know whatever “Simon says” we do, because, Simon is the leader of that game. -- At some point in our lives, we all pick out leaders to follow, some good, some bad. Depending on whom we choose, we are led well or astray. Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice." But hearing Jesus’ voice is very difficult in the current environment of our lives. Each day hundreds of other "shepherds" are calling our names for our attention. They offer formulas for health, wealth and happiness. They offer formulas for solving problems, getting along in relationships, raising children, avoiding [trouble], becoming popular and getting ahead. (John Pichappily in *The Table of the Word*; quoted by Fr. Botelho).

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**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. *Fr. Tony*
Mass Intentions

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

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<th>Intention</th>
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<tr>
<td>+Bill Herbert</td>
<td>Ed &amp; Cecelia Prete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Dennis Ricio</td>
<td>Alaina Kyra</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Bill and Barbara Frost</td>
<td>Liam Frost</td>
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<td>+Guillermo Ramos</td>
<td>Adele Caunan</td>
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<td>+Aida Francisco</td>
<td>Vicky Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Lou Vagadori</td>
<td>Ed &amp; Cecelia Prete</td>
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<tr>
<td>+Mila Espina</td>
<td>Dorothy Over</td>
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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 $ Giving button
   b. Click on Donation link
   c. Set up your account online

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

Jokes of the Week

Modern shepherds: Four pastors, taking a short break from their heavy schedules, were on a park bench, chatting and enjoying an early spring day. “You know, since all of us are such good friends,” said one, “this might be a good time to discuss personal problems.” They all agreed. “Well, I would like to share with you the fact that I drink to excess,” said one. There was a gasp from the other three. Then another spoke up. “Since you were so honest, I’d like to say that my big problem is gambling. It’s terrible, I know, but I can’t quit. I’ve even been tempted to take money from the tithing contribution.” Another gasp was heard, and the third clergyman spoke up. “I’m really troubled, brothers, because I’m growing fond of a woman in my church — a married woman.” More gasps. But the fourth remained silent. After a few minutes the others coaxed him to open up. “The fact is,” he said, “I just don’t know how to tell you about my problem.” “It’s all right, brother. Your secret is safe with us,” said the others. “Well, it’s this way,” he said. “You see, I’m an incurable gossip monster. I wonder how I would not share these personal problems with my wife.”

“I guess you must be a sheep dog.” A pastor was teaching the 23rd Psalm in the Sunday school. He told the children about sheep, that they weren’t smart and needed lots of guidance, and that a shepherd’s job was to stay close to the sheep, protect them from wild animals and keep them from wandering off. He pointed to the little children in the room and said that they were the sheep and needed lots of guidance. Then the pastor put his hands out to the side, palms up in a dramatic gesture, and with raised eyebrows said to the children, “If you are the sheep, then who is the shepherd?” He was pretty sure that all the kids would point out to him as the shepherd. A silence of a few seconds followed. Then a young girl said, “Jesus! Jesus is the shepherd.” The young pastor, obviously caught by surprise, said to the little girl, “Well then, who am I?” The girl frowned thoughtfully and then said with a shrug, “I guess you must be a sheep dog.”

Pastor’s vacation: It’s been said that every pastor ought to have six weeks of vacation each year, because if he is a really good shepherd, he deserves it; and if he is not a very good shepherd, his congregation deserves it.

Ways and Means to Help and Support Our Church

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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, click on Donation link. When you participate, your gift will be securely transferred directly into the parish.
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: $ 64,539.00.

PARISH GOAL: $99,663.00

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<td>8</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>$ 65,864.00</td>
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Anonymous (Various)
M/M Manuel Abad
M/M Dale & Sharon Allen
Mr. Kevin Allen
M/M Michael Alves
Mrs. Dorothy Arata
M/R Roberto Arguello
Ms. Sheila Asfaha
Mr. Clemence Blondo
M/M John Bruno
Ms. Nancy Buckley
M/M Sherwin Cabatic
M/Ding Cagalingan Jr.
M/M Carlos Cajilig Jr.
M/M Peter Cardozo
M/M Gerald Carillo
Ms. Adelaida Caunan
M/M Douglas Cayabyab
M/M Graziano Cerchai
Piera Cheng Chaz &
Arthur Chui
M/M Howard Chen
M/M Marcellus Chow
M/M Ronan Concanon
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 Fernandez
M/M Robert Franco
M/M Liam Frost
M/M Joseph Gandolfo
Ms. Elinor Gatto
M/M Ryan Gille
Ms. Avelina A. Gomez
M/M Mark Gottas
Mrs. Diane Gragnani
M/R Roberta Guzman
M/M James 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
Mr. Robert Kensic
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
Ms. Diane Linehan
M/M James Martin
M/M Lawrence Mazzola
Daniel McGarry &
Courtney Cassinelli
Ms. Gayle Montalbano
M/M Joseph Morello
Mr. Michael O’Connor
Ms. Rose O’Connor
Ms. Myrna Orais
Ms. Anne O’Shea
M/M Meyelyn Patricio
Mr. Robert Reidy
Ms. Jan Reilly
Mr. Domenico Renteria
M/M cris Rillo
M/M John Ritchie
M/M rich Roventi
M/M Daniel M. Salvemini
M/M Emmanuel Santos
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
Ms. Nancy Tam
Ms. Wendy Uthman

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 _______________________________________

Weekly Sunday envelopes, circle one: Yes No, but commit to participate thru Online Giving.
I am interested in assisting with the Parish in an organization or ministry.

Living Stewardship Now
“Shepherding”

If you’ve never lived on a farm, it is easy to have a rather romantic image of a shepherd. A shepherd’s duties, however, demand much more than holding a beautifully carved staff and calmly watching the flock. The shepherd must ensure a supply of fresh grass and hay in the winter, assist births, treat illnesses, and guard the sheep from attacks by predators. The shepherd must keep the flock together, build and take down temporary shelters, remove manure from holding pens, and move the sheep to new pastures when necessary. Scorched by the sun or chilled by bitter cold, the shepherd can never leave the sheep untended without risking injury to the flock. Sheep were first domesticated around ten thousand years ago in the Middle East. They continue to provide human communities with wool, meat, and milk today. Among Jewish people in ancient times, wealth was measured in terms of livestock: sheep, goats, and cattle. Sheep—especially lambs—were the favored animal of sacrifice to God. It is no wonder, then, that the scriptures are woven through and through with references to sheep and shepherds, culminating in the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, who cares for even the least of his flock, and as the Lamb sacrificed for our sins. In our Church today, some of us are irritated by the thought of ourselves as sheep and disappointed in or even angry with those who are our appointed shepherds, namely our bishops, priests, and deacons. Here are two things to consider: How much better would we be as Jesus’ “little flock” if we stuck together and followed the Good Shepherd, and how much stronger would our clergy shepherds be if we not only showed our support for their efforts, but also helped them to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in the flock that they guide?

The TV is My Shepherd, I Shall Not Want

It makes me to lie down on the sofa.
It leads me away from the Faith,
It destroys my soul.

Even though I walk in the shadow of Christian responsibilities,
There will be no interruption, for the TV is with me.
Its cable and remote control, they comfort me.

And anoints my head with secular humanism and consumerism.
Surely ignorance and laziness Shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of wretchedness watching TV forever.

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.

Our warmest welcome to all who celebrate with us!

An Invitation to Join Fr. Tony’s Celebration of the Eucharist
LIVE Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

On this Good Shepherd Sunday and the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the Church reminds us of our call to become good shepherds of God’s flock and good sheep of His parishes and invites us pray for vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and the consecrated life.
AD PAGE

Only send 300 copies