

## REFLECTION



There comes a time in almost everyone's life when a person wonders whether all the hard work and all the commitments are worth anything. Are you really making any difference in the world? Have you done with your life what you had hoped? Are you missing out on opportunities that you may have passed by? That seems to be John the Baptist's frame of mind in today's Gospel. He is in prison, and his days are numbered. He had taken up a radical, prophetic lifestyle, fasting, praying, calling people to repentance, preparing the way and watching for the Coming One. Was he right?

John sends his disciples to ask Jesus, who points to all the signs that John's preaching was right on target. Through Jesus' ministry, to which John pointed, people who could not previously do so are now seeing, walking and hearing. Many are healed and restored to life. Poor people are heartened with good news. All the soil so carefully tilled and tended by John is bearing the long-awaited fruit. Was he expecting something else?

Jesus says to the crowds that John was "more than a prophet" and that there has been "none greater than John the Baptist." Presumably, this assurance is also conveyed to John, giving him heart to be able to quell the doubts and to endure patiently to the end.

Jesus then poses a forthright question to the crowds. Three times he asks why they went out to the desert and what they were expecting to see there. If they were looking for a prophet, not only have they seen the greatest of prophets, but they themselves are now called to exceed what John accomplished. How are the "least in the kingdom of heaven" supposed to surpass the greatest prophet? The readings today set forth attitudes that are essential for this.

The first reading invites us to be filled with joy and gladness, and to express this in singing and rejoicing, even when all seems desolate. The exiles had yet to see the concrete signs of restoration. Even before experiencing the anticipated healing and rebuilding, they were to enter into the ruined city singing for joy. This is not a naïve refusal to see things as they are, but an expression of hope that springs from a deep conviction that God's saving deeds in the past will be manifest in the present and future as well for those who have eyes to see. The very expectation that the parched wasteland will yield fragrant blooms begins to bring it into being.

While awaiting the fulfillment of our expectations and longings, the letter of James exhorts us to be patient. Using the example of a farmer, however, he makes clear that patience does not mean sitting back doing nothing. Like John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus, a farmer meticulously tills the soil, clears away the rocks and weeds, and carefully plants the seed. It takes both the hard work of the farmer and the gift of rain, over which one has no control, to produce the anticipated harvest. Patience is doing everything one can, while at the same time, relying utterly on the divine provider. The way to keep a firm heart in the waiting time, James says, is to refrain from complaining. Just as Jesus helped John's disciples to see the evidence of God's saving presence in their midst, so James urges us to look for the sprouts of hope that spring up even in the most parched desert. Expecting to see the desert bloom or roses in December, as did Juan Diego, whom we remember on this feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we keep hope alive with patient endurance even in the midst of suffering and doubt.

## ST. JOSEPH ADVENT PROJECTS



### Advent Gifts Due Back This Weekend

All Advent Project Gift Tag items needed for the poor, homeless and Vacaville Convalescent Rehab Center residents are due back this weekend, December 11/12. This is the last weekend to bring Advent stuffed animals, socks, girls and boys underwear and food items for the Food Locker to the Church entrance/Narthex. Please deposit items in or near the marked receptacles.

**Green Christmas Dinner Gift Envelopes should also be returned with your donation this weekend** to help feed the hungry of our community. Please place the green envelopes with your cash or check donation (checks made payable to St. Joseph's) in the Offertory collection baskets.

If you would like to help with the stuffed animal delivery/visit to Vacaville Convalescent Rehabilitation Center (VCRC) Monday, December 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30 a.m., we welcome and need your help. For more information, please call Dana Gregg @ 446-3868.

**The monthly Food Drive for St. Mary's Food Locker is this weekend.** Food items needed include: boxed cereals, individual packaged instant oatmeal, canned soups, canned chili and peanut butter.



### CRAB FEED NEWS -- Date: January 21, 2011

Tickets on sale now \$38, \$42 in 2011 **HELP WE NEED YOU!** \* We are looking for raffle, live and silent auction gifts. Donations can be taken to the Parish Office or dropped off at our table after all the masses. We are also looking help with donations, setup and running the auction for the dessert auction if you would like to help, please call Cathy Treece at 449-4423. Our next meeting is Thursday Dec 16, 7:pm Anyone interested in being apart of this is welcome to come. If you have any questions call Steve and Lynda Abeyta 447-837

**Christmas Eve, 4:00pm** will be the Children's Choir Mass. Practices will be Dec. 17 & 21 at 4:00pm in the church. Any interested children please contact the Music Director, Brian Sennello, at [bsennello@stjoseph-vacaville.org](mailto:bsennello@stjoseph-vacaville.org) or call the Office at 448-2354.

**Lifeline** - Are the upcoming holidays giving you the blues? Often the joy of the holiday season is replaced with stress or sadness due to unrealistic expectations, financial or time limitations or family turmoil. The Lifeline Ministry is here to help you during difficult times. We offer confidential one-on-one meetings as a free service to parishioners & friends in the community. For more information, please call (707) 447-2354.

**ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE—Our Advent Penance Service will be held on Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Thank You to Gail Grimm** and her wonderful crew of volunteers who did such a beautiful job in cleaning and polishing our Church in preparation for our Christmas celebration. Thank You and God Bless You All!



**KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR NOTRE DAME SCHOOL:** Notre Dame School will accept applications for the 2011-2012 school year from January 4-31. These forms are available in the school office. Please bring a copy of the child's baptismal certificate, birth certificate, immunizations records and a letter from your parish. Notre Dame School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national/ethnic origin in admission policy or employment practices. For more information call the school office at 447-1460, office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



### Faith Formation:

FF Classes will be on Christmas break December 19th through January 2<sup>nd</sup>. All classes resume week of January 9<sup>th</sup>. Have a blessed Christmas!

**Congratulations to our parishioner Mr. Jeff Henry.** The Holy See has granted permission for Mr. Henry to be ordained to the priesthood this coming June. In late January or early February, Mr. Henry will be ordained a deacon here at St. Joseph's by Bishop Soto. He previously was an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church. Mr. Henry is married to Peg Henry and has one adult child. Let's give them our prayers and continuing support.



Please consider the purchase of a Christmas Poinsettia in memory of a loved one. These flowers will decorate our church during the Christmas season. Names of loved ones and donors will be acknowledged in a bulletin insert. The cost is \$20. Please cut out this box and return it to the Parish Office with the name and your payment.

### CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

In Memory Of: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon. Nm 24:2-7,15-17; Ps 25:4-9; Mt 21:23-27  
 Tues. Zep 3:1-2,9-13; Ps 34:2-3,6-7,17-18,19,23; Mt 21:28-32  
 Wed. Is 45:6-8,18,21-25; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 7:18-23  
 Thurs. Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2,4-6,11-13; Lk 7:24-30  
 Fri. Gn 49:2,8-10; Ps 72:3-4,7-8,17; Mt 1:1-17  
 Sat. Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1,12-13,18-19; Mt 1:18-25  
 Sun. Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Second Collection This Weekend** - Religious face rising costs. Data submitted to the National Religious Retirement Office reveals that the average annual cost of care for women and men religious age 70 and over has more than doubled since 1989. Current statistics put this figure at \$35,077 per person annually, with skilled care reaching nearly \$55,000. Your donation to the Retirement Fund for Religious provides critical support to religious institutes in meeting the escalating costs of elder care. Please pray for all religious and give generously to today's second collection. Go to [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org) for more information.



**Baptism Classes**—The baptismal class scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m. will be held on Wednesday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m. The change is to accommodate our Penance Service which will be held on Tuesday, December 14.



**RENT-A-SANTA**—The Knights of Columbus are again offering home, classroom, office visits, etc. by Santa Claus. For information or to schedule a visit, call Ken Gallagher at 446-7720. All proceeds go towards the Knights of Columbus charitable works.



**2011 Contribution Envelopes are available in the church Meeting Room. Please stop by after Mass and pick yours up.**

### QUESTION OF THE WEEK

**3rd Sunday of Advent - Week of December 12, 2010**

**Theme:** God's kingdom is close - it is Jesus.

**Question for Adults:** What is there in this promise from the Prophet Isaiah that gives you hope? How have you seen this promise fulfilled in Christ?



**Question for Children:** Why is Christmas such a time of happiness for people?

### MASS INTENTIONS

Mon. 12/13 - 7:00 AM -- Intentions of Kenny & Yukari Matsumiya  
 Tues. 12/14 - 7:00 AM ----- Intentions of the Siaki Family  
 Tues. 12/14 - 7:00 PM ----- Penance Service  
 Wed. 12/15 7:00 AM----- Auntie Belang, R.I.P.  
 Wed. 12/15 7:00 AM-----Robert Ballard, R.I.P.  
 Wed. 12/15 - 8:15 AM----- Victoria Gumataotao, R.I.P.  
 Thurs. 12/16 - 7:00 AM ----- Emanuel Valbuena, Jr., R.I.P.  
 Fri. 12/17 7:00 AM ----- Intentions of Keith Matsumiya  
 Sat. 12/18 - 8:15 AM ----- Josie Gomez, R.I.P.  
 Sat 12/18 - 5:00 PM -----Kathy Matsumiya-Perez, R.I.P.  
 Sun. 12/19 - 7:00 AM-----Members of the Parish  
 Sun. 12/19 - 8:30 AM----- Sick Members of the Parish  
 Sun. 12/19- 10:00 AM-----Peace  
 Sun. 12/19—12:00 PM ----- Vocations to the Priesthood