

© J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

Second Sunday of Advent

December 5, 2004

*The earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.
.....Isaiah 11:9*

Week at a Glance

Sunday, December 5th, Second Sunday in Advent
CHRISTMAS TREE SALES all week
TLTC coffee and donuts
Dismissal at 10:30 Mass
Children's Liturgy at 10:30am Mass
Religious Education, 9:15 -10:15am, school classroom
TLTC, 3pm, Rectory basement

Monday, December 6th

**St. Nicholas, bishop, noted for charity,
Patron of Russia, Greece, Sicily
and of children and sailors.**



Monday Night Football, 6:30 pm, Small hall
RCIA Inquiry, 7pm, Rel Ed.room

Tuesday: December 7th

**St. Ambrose, bishop, one of four great doctors of the
Church and composer of liturgical hymns.**

Remembrance of Pearl Harbor
Rosary Makers, 11am, kitchen

Wednesday: December 8th

**HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION: The
Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary, Masses at
8:30am, 6:30pm**



St. Vincent DePaul, 1pm, small hall
TLTC, 6:30pm. Rectory basement
Charismatic Prayer group, 7:30pm, small hall

Thursday: December 9th

**St. Juan Diego, hermit, known for his holiness and
the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe
on his cloak.**

Knights of Columbus meeting, 7pm, small hall

Friday, December 10th

International Human Rights Day

Saturday, December 11th

**St. Damasus I, pope, preserved papal archives, first
pope to speak of Rome as the "Apostolic See".**

Franciscans meeting, 9am, Sml. Hall
Lector training, 9am, church

Sunday, December 12th Third Sunday in Advent

Dismissal at 10:30 Mass
Religious Ed. Christmas party, small hall
Ladies Guild coffee and donuts

Looking for that perfect house?

Look first at the house for sale by your parish through Plum Tree Real Estate. Listed at \$275,000, this house has an extra deep lot in a beautiful setting. Its location is at 5500 Harrison Street and is listed by Lee Eubanks. You can reach her at 876 2300. Tell a friend!



News from Religious Education

Today in the Religious Education classes, the children will be completing their stockings for the Christmas food baskets and also preparing their ornaments for the Jesse Tree Celebration. Preparing these ornaments is a lesson in itself, since the children will be learning about the special significance and history of the Jesse Tree. Jesse, who was the father of David, was chosen by God to serve as the King of Israel. David, who was the first member of a new royal family which ruled over Israel for many years, was actually an ancestor of Jesus, as was Jesse, since Jesus, Himself, was born into this royal family. Therefore Jesse, David, and all the holy men and women of the Old Testament, who inspired the writings of St. Luke and St. Matthew, are the foundation of the spiritual background of Jesus. This family tree of Jesus has come to be called the Jesse Tree. On Sunday, December 12th, the Religious Education students will participate in a Jesse Tree Celebration, and the special symbols they make today, will remind them of Jesus' ancestral family and the Advent season.



Paula Priest Religious Education Coordinator

Teens Living Through Christ

The TLTC group will be offering, in the next few weeks, coffee baskets, chocolate baskets and tea baskets for the respective



lover in your life. These baskets will have themes to encompass every one's unique hobbies and interests. Please help support the pilgrimage to Germany in 2005 and in return get a wonderful gift for that coffee lover in your life. Watch for the TLTC table after Mass. . Peace and Joy!



Dirk Wohlau, Youth Ministry Coordinator

Foster Blankets

Mothers and Others will be collecting **small handmade blankets** for foster children after all Masses today (**December 4 & 5**).

They will then be delivered to Butte County Child Protective Services. CPS will give these blankets to kids of various ages who are being removed from their families and placed into foster care. Please help give some comfort to these children, by providing them with a blanket of their very own to carry with them to their new foster home.

Prayer for Vocations

Lord of the Harvest,
Your Word finds a home in our hearts,
calls us into community and
invites us to a generous service
to the human family.
Bless with courage and spirit your
priestly people, called to full
participation in the One Body of Christ.
May many choose to respond to public
service to your Call in Jesus' name.

Amen

His Eminence Joseph L. Cardinal Bernadin

St. Thomas More School News

They're back! Christmas trees that is. Our tree lot is open for business. Take some time following Mass and look at our selection. Our hours of operation are; Monday thru Friday, 5 - 9pm, and Saturday and Sunday, noon until 9pm. There will be someone available following the 8am Mass for those who attend this service. We are located behind the gate, next to the library. We have Douglas firs ranging in price from \$30 for 5/6ft. to \$45 for 7/8ft. We also have Noble firs which are priced at \$20 for 2/4ft, \$40 for 4/5ft, \$55 for 5/6ft, and \$70 for 6/7ft. These trees are all #1 Choice trees. Thank you for your continued support of your parish school.



Yours in the peace of Christ, Richard Priest, Principal

"Tavern on the Green"

Mercy High School is pleased to announce a \$10,000.00 cash raffle in conjunction with the Annual Mercy Auction. Tickets are \$100 each and only 300 will be sold. Winner need not be present to win. Auction will take place at the Bell Ballroom on the Chico State Campus on January 15. Live and silent auctions with fine food, music and dancing. For information contact Teri Dean at Mercy High at 527-8313, or Janet Grens in Chico at 893-8378

Daily Mass Intentions

December 4 - December 12, 2004

SAT 5:00pm Joyce Valason † and Intentions Breath of the Spirit Prayer group Members
SUN 8:00am Intentions Karen Phillip
10:30am People of St. Thomas More
5:00pm Anthony Sanfilippo †
MON 8:30am Steven Brown † and Intentions Dave Brown
TUE 8:30am Robert Sinclair †
WED 8:30am Fred Hills † and John Hazard † and Intentions of Jean Pergande
THU 8:30am Mary Agnes Watkins † and Intentions for Rita Durr
FRI 8:30am Tom Pezzi † and Lou Hubbert †
SAT 5:00pm Ignacia Estrada † Guy Saiani †
SUN 8:00am Fred Hills †
10:30am Jack Hockert †
5:00pm People of St. Thomas More

Collections for November 27th and 28th, 2004

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Saturday & Sunday collection | \$5,160.00 |
| Adopt a Student envelopes | \$ 889.00 |
| St. Vincent DePaul | \$ 80.00 |
| Food Baskets | \$ 520.00 |
| Christmas flowers | \$ 20.00 |
| Building Maintenance Fund | \$ 125.00 |
| Total Collections | \$6,794.00 |

Please pray for: Lyle Stephens, Tabitha Forcier, Jane Hazard, Helen Haug, Karen Mittag Cook, Anna Nicole Baker, Karen Squibb, Ethel Pettis, Mary Ellen Quinn, Frank Liska, Jr., Barbara Bohrer, Gail Norell, Cecilia Juhos, Theresa Browne, Raymond Arnold, William Posey, Derek O'Dell, Phil Stepp, Roy & Mary Hendricks, Ted Wilson, Mary Butler, John Hallett, Dottie Miley, Ernest Dejak, Nick & Ruth Wilds, Ed & Bev Lammerding, Lloyd & Jean Snyder, Mary Cole, John Nash, Patsy King, Lance Utterback, Debra Graham, Billie Ward, Travis Campos, Joseph Kavanaugh, Brian Rainey, Lucy Ihnat, Rochelle Coccellato, Lisa Williams, Ken McKinnon, Louise Wilcox, Jim Phillips, Jennifer Wood, Mary Van Buskirk, Joe Lilliard, C.J. McGehee, Clara Tovani, Maria Thompson, Leonard & Lillian Warych, Maria Massey, Colby Waters, Tom Durant, Mike Gonzales, Angel Sanchez, Fr. Steven Foppiano, Monica Semon, Bill Hayes, Kay March, Yolanda Hansen, Eleanor Uhlarik, Bill Smith, Rose Vera, Linda Boisse, Abbie Moriarty, Nancy Bird, Shirley Gasman, Emily McGlocklin, Michael Gilpatrick, Rick & Sheila Osborn, Jim Partain, Sue Gallo, Doug Campos, Bill D'Orazi, Amelia Clow-LaMar, Lotte Blum, Jake Morfin, Ray Martinez, Darcy Lawson, Jeremy Knox, Fred Stankoven, Bishop William K. Weigand, Barbara Brown, Dale Merrett

Please pray for the deceased: Geraldine Snyder

Catholic Singles Christmas Celebration



The monthly meeting of the Catholic Singles group of Butte and Glenn Counties and surrounding areas will be held on Friday evening, December 10th beginning with Mass at 6:30pm, following by a social and Christmas dinner. Father Simon Twomey, Pastor of Our Divine Savior Catholic Church will be the presider and homilist. Christmas carols will be sung. Donation is \$10 per person. All divorced, separated, widowed and never married are invited. Most of the attendees are in their thirties and up. Held at St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center Catholic Center, 346 Cherry Street in Chico. No reservations are necessary. Bring single friends. Call 342-5180 for more information.

Address for Bishop Weigand

Get well cards can be sent to the
Pastoral Center
Most Reverend Bishop William K. Weigand
2110 Broadway
Sacramento, CA 95818

Thank You for Wonderful Activities!

Auction

Thanks to volunteer Chairperson Alicia Vizenor, the parents, teachers, teens and school children; and the families who aided them to make the **auction another great success!** It seemed that all had a great time and we especially enjoyed the performance by the junior high to the song, *New York, New York*. While the pastor left at ten, he could hear the music going until nearly midnight.



Some of the highest priced oral auction items were the projects of the school children. Even the preschool kids, CDC, donated a work of their art. Patrick, our parish dog/greeter, made \$550 for two "Days with Patrick." The silent auction was also very successful. Overall the event raised almost \$19,000.00 to help subsidize the school.

Church

We cannot say enough about the way the Church looks. The liturgy committee and Guild did a great job with the Advent colors and symbols. The church looks beautiful. We also commend the Liturgy Committee for its planning and organization that helps to bring out the meaning of the Advent season. As always, the musicians have also done a great job.

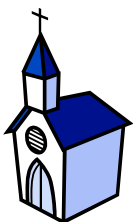


Table of Plenty

Mothers and Others, St. Vincent de Paul and the Knights of Columbus, together with those who helped and especially all of you who gave so generously, deserve applause for the success of this ministry. It is a wonderful reflection on our faith that we now provide weekly for 14 families and for Thanksgiving provided groceries for 130.



Thank you to all the volunteers who make our parish beautiful, friendly and effective. Thank you to those parishioners who participate and make these activities so successful.

The Giving Tree

We have increased the number of foster children on the giving tree this year. You are invited to pick a tag from the tree and buy a gift for the child listed. The gift should then be returned, gift wrapped and clearly marked. Please stay within the price range indicated. What a wonderful way to get into the Christmas Spirit, through charity for a child. If all tags for children are taken care of, the Church, School and CDC will list gifts they would like to receive.

Reaching Out

We will also have a special Reach Out account, second collection, on the weekend of December 11 and 12. From these funds we will supplement the food donated for the **Table of Plenty** and purchase gifts for the adopted families and for those families receiving special packages for Christmas. Any funds left will be carried over for helping the needy throughout the year. We hope you will find a way to be generous for the needy during this holiday season.

Spend New Year's Eve with Us

With the beautiful decorations from the auction, the addition of a dropping "Times Square Ball" and the band that proved so popular at the last Crab Feed, we are currently putting together a New Year's Bash! There will be a Mass at 6:30pm, followed by casino activities in the hall and then a dance into the New Year. A small silent auction and raffles will also occur. All proceeds will benefit the school **Adopt a Student Program**.



Finger foods will be served and transportation to and from will be made available for local residents. Tickets go on sale next weekend. We will also have a mass at 10:00 am on New Year's Day.

Special Prayers for Service Men and Women

We should all pray for those men and women who serve and put their lives in danger so that we may live in peace. We especially pray for fellow parishioners who serve. Brad Morris entered the navy early this year. Adam Aguilar visited us during a leave from the Air Force a few weeks ago and now Craig Gonzales has left for the army. May these young people be blessed and kept safe for return to their family and community.

Stop Smoking Classes to begin

Attention: Any one interested in a Smoking Cessation Class, there will be sign up after 8am and 10:30am Mass or call Linda Pirruccello @ 877-3608. This is an American Lung Association "Freedom from Smoking" Class offered free to our Parishioners and held at St. Thomas More. Start up date is Jan. 18th, every Tuesday from 1-3pm, for 8 sessions. This will be a great New Years and Lenten commitment for next year.

Prayer for Openness to God's Call

(Pope John Paul II)

Lord Jesus, once You called the first disciples in order to make them fishers of men. Continue to let resound today Your sweet invitation: "Come and Follow Me."

Grant to young men and women the grace of responding promptly to Your voice. Sustain our bishops, priests, and consecrated souls in their apostolic work. Give perseverance to our seminarians and to all those who are fulfilling the ideal of a life of total consecration to Your service.

Enkindle in our communities a missionary zeal. Send, Lord, workers into Your fields and do not let mankind be lost because of a lack of pastors, missionaries, and people dedicated to the cause of the Gospel.

Mary, Mother of the Church, Model of Vocations, help us say "Yes" to the Lord Who calls us to collaborate in the divine design of salvation.
Amen.

News from the Parish Health Ministry

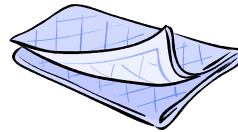
General Safety according to the American Heart Association

- Place a sticker with emergency telephone numbers near the telephone.
- Install smoke detectors on the ceiling of hallway outside of sleeping areas and on each floor at the head of stairs.
- Test alarm monthly and replace batteries twice a year.
- Make sure that there are 2 unobstructed emergency exits from the home, childcare center, classroom, or other facility where children are likely to be present.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan.
- Ensure that a working fire extinguisher is on the premises.

In order to facilitate health and spiritual well being the Parish Health Ministry will continue safety next week. Look forward to Blood Pressure checks and Vial of life distribution this Sunday after the am and 10:30am Masses in the Hall.

Reading for the Week

Monday: Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-26
Tuesday: Is 40:1-11; Mt 18:12-14
Wednesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
Thursday: Is 41:13-20; Mt 11:11-15
Friday: Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19
Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Sunday: Is 35:1-6a, 10; Ps 146; Jas 5:7-10; Mt 11:2-11



Blanket Collection

Mothers and Others will be collecting **small handmade blankets** for foster children after all masses the weekend of **December 4th & 5th**. They will then be delivered to Butte County Child Protective Services. CPS will give these blankets to kids of various ages who are being removed from their families and placed into foster care. Please help give some comfort to these children, by providing them with a blanket of their very own to carry with them to their new foster home.

"Table of Plenty" Food Ministry

Our parish food ministry has been expanding lately. Currently, we are providing supplemental food to **14 families, consisting of 28 children, 21 adults, and 3 seniors**. Your donations make it possible for St. Thomas More to reach out to these 52 people during their time of need, demonstrating God's love and compassion. Thank you for your continued generosity as we begin assisting more families through this ministry.

At this time Table of Plenty could especially use the following donations: **cereal, kids' snacks, toiletry items, and dish soap**. Any non-perishable items that you'd like to leave in the basket in the vestibule would be greatly appreciated.

For information regarding the Table of Plenty ministry, call **Stephanie Gregorio at 876-0968**.

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink...I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me."
Matthew 25:35, 40*

Christmas Food Baskets

This year our parish will be giving out **up to 150 food "baskets" to Ridge families** for Christmas. These bags will contain everything needed for a traditional Christmas dinner. Each family will also receive a turkey. Additionally, Christmas presents will be included for the children of these families.

A second collection will be taken at all masses the weekend of Dec. 11th & 12th to fund this project. Your donations will allow us to purchase turkeys and all the trimmings for a Christmas dinner, as well as the children's gifts.

If you prefer to donate actual food items, **stuffing, olives, canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, and gravy** would all be helpful.

Applications for the Christmas food baskets are available in the church office lobby. If you or someone you know could use help with a Christmas dinner, please come in and fill out an application no later than Tuesday, December 14th. The food baskets will be given out on Monday, December 20th.

Building the Kingdom includes your Monetary Contributions

Where Contributions Go

Contrary to what some believe, the Vatican does not have an abundance of treasures and wealth to use throughout the world. In fact the Church is, financially, a bottom up organization. The people contribute to the parish, the parish to the diocese and the diocese to the world church. In the Diocese of Sacramento, each parish contributes 18 percent of regular (first) collections to the diocese with assessments based on the previous year's collections.

We should note here that the diocese provides many services for parishes, including financial oversight and assistance in various areas of ministry. It is also responsible for the training of priests. In fact, vocations are the largest of all items on the diocesan budget. One priest can cost the diocese over \$150,000 to train and prepare for service to a parish. The diocese must also pay an assessment to the Vatican for the world wide work and governance of the Church.

Responsibilities of the Church

Each of these levels of the Church includes explicit responsibilities to each other and to their communities. Together they make up the Kingdom of God on earth, led by the Vicar of Christ (the agent of Christ), the Pope who holds the position once held by Saint Peter; in union with the bishops who are the spiritual descendents or the Apostles.

The pastor works in place of the bishop and draws his authority from that bishop who appoints him to head a parish. Other priests of a parish, called Parochial Vicars, draw their authority from the pastor. All are oriented towards serving the needs of the laity who remain the most important body of the Church and the ultimate aim and source of its efforts.

Each pastor owes his obedience to the bishop but is also given explicit responsibilities in canon law to protect the viability of a parish. Financially, a bishop may or may not require financial safeguards by a pastor but by Canon law, the law that applies to the entire world Church, the pastor always remains responsible for the financial health as well as the spiritual

health of the parish. All of this starts with you, the People of God, who not only work at the various ministries but who contribute to the financial needs of the Church.

Organization

The entire world is divided into various dioceses and each diocese is divided into various parishes, each responsible for the Church, the People of God, within that territory. Our parish is part of the Diocese of Sacramento. This diocese stretches from the Napa hills to the Nevada border and from the county line past Galt to the Oregon border. It is under the leadership of Bishop William Weigend who is assisted by Auxiliary Bishop Richard Garcia.

Our parish includes both Paradise and Magalia and extends from the very top of the ridge down to the bottom of Skyway. It shares a border with St. Thomas the Apostle of Oroville near the area of Highways 70 and 49 and goes to the end of Butte County to the north.

The Diocese of Sacramento has a long history of good finances with proper safeguards that today include a laity run finance board and annual audited reports. It, in turn, requires that parishes report finances annually, that sums over \$30,000 are kept in deposit at the diocese and that large expenditures receive diocesan approval. A change of pastor also brings on a full financial audit and parishes are required to follow certain money handling practices.

Recently the diocese converted all parishes to a common accounting program to help in overseeing financial operations. These safeguards are put in place to ensure that parishioner contributions are not abused or lost, but it is seldom that the diocese will interfere with how a parish spends its money unless there is clearly an abuse at hand.



Types of Collections

Building Fund, Maintenance Fund, Adopt a Student and Religious Education collections are kept 100% in the parish, so long as they are properly used for the stated objective. The funds that run the parish, pay salaries, support

priests, pay the bills and finance our various ministries come from the regular Sunday first collection. Special diocesan collections are entirely for the stated purpose although the collection for the support of priests does reduce the parish assessment. The diocese itself is then accessed by the Vatican for support of the world church. The 18 percent shared by the parish with the diocese is from the regular collections only.

Handling Your Contributions

Our diocese is one of the best run in the country with very few scandals, no large settlements made to avoid lawsuits and no extreme law suits pending. It is consistently within budget and adjusts costs when needed to match expected income. It has a large perpetual endowment fund but returns recently have been very low due to falling interest rates. The diocese reacted with large layoffs in diocesan offices.

The diocese also is careful with deposited parish funds, maintains audited investments for them and consistently returns to each parish reasonable income from safe investments of their funds. Often these are used to make loans to other parishes for construction projects. We can feel very secure in how our diocese handles finances.

Parish Financial Oversight

Our parish has a Parish Advisory Board to help the pastor in running the parish and which reviews the annual budget and financial reports. We also have a Finance Committee to aid the pastor with their expertise and ensure that funds are properly used and accounted for. These laity led and staffed oversight boards are in addition to the controls imposed by the diocese.

At St. Thomas More we annually publish both the financial statement for the previous year and the budget for the coming year. More detailed reports are available to registered parishioners at request. We follow all diocesan financial regulations including the use of rotating counting committees. Collections of funds are always in the view of at least two people until secured and during the count. It takes two people to open our safe, one from

staff and one volunteer. Even the pastor cannot open the safe by himself.

Financial Transparency

Over the last year and a half we have also taken on a policy of transparency in that all transactions are open to question and all plans for large spending are made known before hand. We also commit ourselves to always using funds in the way intended by the donor. For instance, over the last year and a half we went back and made sure funds donated for certain classes were indeed spent for the class so designated. Accounting line items are maintained for special collections or donations until properly spent. Periodically we print sample expenditures for your information.

All of these safeguards are provided so that you can be sure that funds donated to the Church are well spent. All contributions are applied only to those needs directly tied to the people of the parish or which fall in line with our Catholic faith and help to build the Kingdom of God. Their effectiveness is then multiplied by the time, talent and dedication of religious, staff and lay volunteers who are highly motivated and committed to our faith.

Stewardship Message Second Sunday of Advent

We must be good stewards of God's gifts to us, receiving them gratefully and cultivating them with care, lest we be the ones about whom John the Baptist speaks today, cautioning us, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

Saint Thomas More Parish
2nd Annual Family Christmas Carnival
Sunday, December 19th



School and CDC Pageant - 1pm
Carnival - 2pm

Visit with Santa, hot dogs, goodies, prizes, cake walk,
bounce house, games

Ecumenical Mass - 5pm

Regular Mass but with more explanations as to
what is going on during the Mass
for non-Catholic families.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Penance Service at Saint Thomas More
Wednesday, December 15th at 3:30 and 7pm