



From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Most of us remember when people used to wait until after Thanksgiving to get ready for Christmas. Now the stores start preparing right after Halloween or earlier. It's interesting that 1500 years ago, people in France started preparing for Christmas on November 11 (the feast of St. Martin). They weren't busy shopping, but they prepared by fasting three days a week. A century later, Christians were fasting every day from November 11 until Christmas. This was known as "St. Martins Lent." The practice spread. As far as we know, this may have been the beginning of Advent. Many still remember, I'm sure, that Advent was a time to do penance or give up things to prepare for Jesus' birth. Often, we went to confession during that time to prepare ourselves spiritually. Our world is so different. The aspect of spiritual preparation has slipped into the background, while we busy ourselves with so many other projects that we "have" to finish by December 25. I wonder if those who are trying to get Christ out of Christmas are winning, because in our world today, if Christ plays any part at all in our preparations for his birth, it is only a minor part.

I don't want to sound like "Bah! Humbug!" Joy at Christ's birth is certainly an appropriate emotion at this time. And trying to act kindly to one another and showing greater appreciation for those, we love is always in season. But commercialism and materialism have, in so many instances, caused us to shift our focus away from the spiritual side of what we are celebrating.

The real, spiritual meaning of Christ's birth comes only through prayer and reflection. Fasting, as Christians did centuries ago, probably wouldn't do most of us too much harm. Fasting doesn't always involve food. We could fast from smoking, gambling, entertainment, criticizing, keeping busy that we seldom have time for prayer. Let's not forget the big picture: Christ came down to us for only one reason, to bring us new life, to lift us up to Himself. It would be a shame to miss the opportunity Advent offers us to enrich ourselves spiritually and to open ourselves more fully to God's love. There is an important reason for us to take Advent seriously: being ready to meet Christ when he comes again to call us from this life to Himself. Will we be ready? St. Paul said: "it is the hour now to wake from sleep." And Jesus tells us "Stay Awake."

Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, St. Paul tells us. When Christmas comes are we going to celebrate God's love in Jesus' birth or are we just going to celebrate that it's all over? What do we do the next few weeks will answer that.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Table with 3 columns: Day, Date, Time. Rows include Tues. December 2 (11:00AM), Wed. December 3 (11:00AM), Thur. December 4 (9:00AM), Fri. December 5 (11:00AM), Sat. December 6 (4:30PM), and Sun. December 7 (9:00AM and 11:00AM).



Sunday Collection - November 23rd

Table with 2 columns: Location, Amount. Rows: St. Rose, Crockett (\$1253), Guadalupe (\$322), St. Patrick Mission (\$275), Guadalupe (\$103).

Thank you again to all who support our Parish! We know how generous you have been in the changing times!

***In able to meet our 2025 budgets, we would like to remind parishioners that we will need a minimum of \$2,100 for Sunday plate collections at St. Rose every weekend, and \$250 every Sunday at St. Patrick Mission. **

Food Bank

You may have noticed the food barrel in the vestibule from Contra Costa Food Bank. Our parish council agreed that in our renewed effort to reach out to our community, this was one of the ways we wanted to help. The food collection will be an ongoing project throughout the year. Right now, this is the suggested list for holiday donations:

- Macaroni noodles, Mashed potato flakes, Gravy mix (powdered), Canned sweet potatoes, Canned pumpkin, Cream of mushroom soup, Cranberry sauce, Stuffing mix, Scalloped potato (boxed), Pinto beans (dry), Masa, Cornbread mix, Cornhusks, Flour, Cooking oil, Cinnamon (ground), Chicken stock

For more suggested foods check out the Contra Costa Food Bank website for more suggestions: www.foodbankccs.org/fooddrive

Guadalupe Celebration

On Sunday, December 14th, we will be having our celebration for the Virgin de Guadalupe. Before Mass we invite everyone to participate in the beautiful procession led by the mariachi. After Mass, everyone is welcomed to a fellowship down in the hall. Our Guadalupe group has worked hard to raise money for the event, and are only asking parishioners to help out by bringing a dish to share down in the hall. It can be whatever you would like: dessert, side dish, etc.



Second Special Collection

This weekend's collection is our last collection for St. Vincent de Paul for this year. These donations help serve the communities of Crockett, Rodeo, Torme and Port Costa. This collection may help provide a holiday meal at Christmas, and warm clothes and food as we officially head into winter. Thank you for your help in serving those in our community.



Holly Day Coalition Serving those in need in our community. Holiday Toy and Food Drive. Nov. 15 - Dec. 15. Canned goods such as: Corn, Green beans and Cranberry Sauce, Box of Mash Potatoes, Jar of gravy, Box of Macaroni and cheese, Jiffy cornbread mix, Bag of marshmallows, Bag or Box of Stuffing. Toys for children 16 years and under - \$20 Gift cards. Drop Off Locations: Aimee Henry, Phillips 66, 1380 San Pablo Ave, Rodeo...