Jesus said to his disciples: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?

No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

Luke 12:49 - 52

Our Mission Statement
We are a Catholic Community that is called by God to follow Jesus Christ. We believe that we are called to worship God together, to lead God’s people along the path of hope laid down by Jesus, to share his message through preaching, through the education and formation of our people, young and old, and through caring service and sensitive outreach to those in need.

Rev. Tony P. LaTorre - Pastor
Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

(Revelation 11:19a, 12:1-6a, 10ab; I Cor 15: 20-27; Luke 1: 39-56)

Although the Feast of the Assumption is NOT a holyday this year, it is important for us to recognize the Blessed Mother in our spiritual lives and honor her on this her most important feast day. Mass here at Saint Stephens’ will be at 8:00 a.m., please joins us in prayer.

The Feast of the Assumption is one of the most important feasts of our Lady. Catholics believe in the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven. We believe that when her earthly life was finished, Mary was taken up, body and soul, into Heavenly glory, where the Lord exalted her as Queen of Heaven. (CCC, # 966). The Assumption is the feast of Mary’s total liberation from death and decay, the consequences of original sin. It is also the remembrance of the day when the Church gave official recognition to the centuries-old belief of Christians about the Assumption of their Heavenly mother. In the Orthodox Church, the koimesis, or dormitio ("falling asleep"), of the Virgin began to be commemorated on August 15 in the 6th century. The observance gradually spread to the West, where it became known as the feast of the Assumption. By the 13th century, the belief had been accepted by most Catholic theologians, and it was a popular subject with Renaissance and Baroque painters. It was on November 1, 1950, that, through the Apostolic Constitution Munificentimus Deus, Pope Pius XII officially declared the Assumption as a Dogma of Catholic faith. On this important feast day, we try to answer two questions: 1) What is meant by "Assumption?" 2) Why do we believe in Mary’s Assumption into Heaven, despite the fact that there is no reference to it in the Bible? “Assumption” means that after her death, Mary was taken into Heaven, both body and soul, as a reward for her sacrificial cooperation in the Divine plan of Salvation. Quoting Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, “On this feast day, let us thank the Lord for the gift of the Mother, and let us pray to Mary to help us find the right path every day”.

Pope Pius XII based his declaration of the Assumption on both tradition and theology. The uninterrupted tradition in the Eastern Churches starting from the first century, the apocryphal first century book, Transitus Mariae, and the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, such as St. Gregory and St. John Damascene, supported and promoted the popular belief in the Assumption of Mary. There is a tomb at the foot of the Mt. of Olives where ancient tradition says that Mary was laid. But there is nothing inside. There are no relics, as with the other saints. This is acceptable negative evidence of Mary’s Assumption. Besides, credible apparitions of Mary, though not recorded in the New Testament, have been recorded from the 3rd century till today.

In his decree on the Dogma of the Assumption, Pope Pius XII gives four theological reasons to support this traditional belief.

#1: The degeneration or decay of the body after death is the result of original sin. However, since, through a special intervention of God, Mary was born without original sin, it is not proper that God would permit her body to degenerate in the tomb.

#2: Since Mary was given the fullness of grace, Heaven is the proper place for this sinless mother of Jesus.

#3: Mary was our co-redeemer, or fellow-redeemer, with Christ in a unique sense. Hence, her rightful place is with Christ our redeemer in heavenly glory. (The term co-redeemer or co-redemptrix means "cooperator with the Redeemer." This is what St. Paul meant when he said "We are God's co-workers!" I Cor. 3:9.). Hence, it is “fitting” that she should be given the full effects of the Redemption, the glorification of the soul and the body.

...continued
#4: In the Old Testament, we read that the prophet Elijah was taken into heaven in a fiery chariot. Thus, it appears natural and possible that the mother of Jesus would also be taken into Heaven.

Mary’s Assumption gives us the assurance and hope of our own resurrection and assumption into heaven on the day of our Last Judgment. It is a sign to us that someday, through God’s grace and our good life, we, too, will join the Blessed Mother in giving glory to God. It points the way for all followers of Christ who imitate Mary’s fidelity and obedience to God’s will.

Since Mary’s Assumption was a reward for her saintly life, this feast reminds us that we, too, must be pure and holy in body and soul, since our bodies will be glorified on the day of our resurrection. St. Paul tells us that our bodies are the temples of God because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. He also reminds us that our bodies are members (parts) of the Body of Christ.

This feast also gives us the message of total liberation. Jesus tells us in John 8: 34 that every one who sins is a slave of sin, and St. Paul reminds us (Gal. 5: 1), that, since Christ has set us free, we should be slaves of sin no more. Thus, the Assumption encourages us to work with God to be liberated from the bondage of evil: from impure, unjust and uncharitable thoughts and habits, and from the bonds of jealousy, envy and hatred.

Finally, it is always an inspiring thought in our moments of temptation and despair to remember that we have a powerful heavenly Mother, constantly interceding for us before her son, Jesus, in Heaven. The feast of Mary’s Assumption challenges us to imitate her self-sacrificing love, her indestructible faith and her perfect obedience.

Therefore, on this feast day of our heavenly Mother, let us offer ourselves on the altar and pray for her special care and loving protection in helping us lead a purer and holier life.

Have a blessed and merciful week and thanks for praying with us!

Father Tony

The Assumption, Body and Soul

The Feast of the Assumption also shows us that God values our bodies. They are not only important to him. They are sacred! There are two extremes of thought in regard to our bodies. One considers the body as our number one treasure. Ads and commercials usually feature people with exceptional looks. To be successful, accepted, and loved, they tell us, depends upon how we look. We are to watch our weight, keep in shape, and smell just right. If we don’t pamper our bodies and treat them royally, we’ll be social, business, and sexual flops. Nobody will want us around. As for the importance of our soul and our spiritual life? Forget it! They consider such things nonexistent and absurd. The other extreme of thought about the body is to look upon it as merely a machine for us to operate in this world. Its value is only its usefulness. To enhance it with cosmetics and perfume, to dress it up and make it look attractive, to diet, exercise, and look at it in the mirror - all that is not only a waste of time, but sinful. The soul and its spiritual condition are all that is important for us. We are to think of our body only when necessity requires. But God is telling us on this feast of the Assumption that to Him, both are important - our body and our soul. They are both to be valued, and they are to be given the attention and honor due them. (Fr. Tony)
Faith Formation

Our Faith Formation is looking for a couple volunteer teachers. Please contact Mary Molly Mullaney in the Parish Office if you are interested or want more info: call (415) 681-2444 x27 or email her at FaithFormation@SaintStephenSF.org.

St Stephen Events Calendar

Wednesday
7:30 p.m. On Eagle’s Wings/EC

Friday
7:30 p.m. G.A. Closed Meeting/EC

Sunday
7:00 p.m. Adult Volleyball/Gym

INFIRMED, ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND

The Sacrament of Communion is available to those unable to worship with us in church. Please let us know if you would like a visit from one of our Extraordinary Ministers of Communion or the Pastor to make a visit to your home. Also, one should seek the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, if one finds themselves physically, emotionally or advanced in years.

Also, if you find yourself in the hospital, either planned or not, please let the parish office know so that an appropriate visitation can be arranged by the pastor.

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Tuesday: St. Stephen of Hungary

Friday: St. John Eudes

Saturday: St. Bernard

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary

Time August 14, 2016

[Jesus] endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. — Hebrews 12:2

TODAY’S READINGS

First Reading — They took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern (Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10).
Psalm — Lord, come to my aid! (Psalm 40).
Second Reading — Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:1-4).
Gospel — I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing (Luke 12:49-53).

NO SURPRISES

We are told by all spiritual writers that one important point to bear in mind, as we seek to attain humility, is not to be surprised by our own faults and failures.

—François Fénelon, archbishop of Cambrai

Larry Barbiere, Marybeth Barrett, Ruth Cisek, Eden Finn, Carol Dominguez, Al Gragnani, Emma Hock, Emma Lew, Honora Lowe, Maria Matthews, Juan Pablo Grover-Paez, Shannon Raggio, Nenita Sangalang, Jovita & Richard Thompson, Dorothy Medlin, Albert Chris Magie, Patricia Sullivan, Ron Stewart and Robert Xavier.
Stewardship: A Way of Life

Stewardship Fiscal Year July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

Last week’s collections: 08/07/16 $9,254

Fiscal YTD

Church

Church Gifts & Donations

(incl Sunday Collections) $ 47,235

Church Operating Expenses $(44,499)

Net Church Income/(Loss) $ 2,736

Gym/Hall

School Family Gym Fee Income

(145 of 206 families paid: ’15-16) $ 14,500

Gym Operating Income $ 6,215

Net Gym/Hall Operating Expenses $(12,455)

Net Gym Income/(Loss) $ 8,260

Annual

2016 Donations: 125 donors $ 26,385

Appeal

2016 Assessment due: 12/31 $(87,387)

Overage/(Balance Due) $(61,002)

We thank our parishioners who return their gifts with a loving and generous increase to God

Second Collection

Thanks to your generosity last weekend we were able to add $1,645 to our Building Maintenance Fund. We are most grateful for your continued generosity.

HOSPITALITY MINISTERS for our 9:30 a.m. Mass

Today, Aug. 14 - Vicky Francisco
Sunday, Aug. 21 - Antonette Glynn
Sunday, Aug. 28 - St. Vincent de Paul

Religious Education for 1st to 8th Grade Students attending non-Catholic Schools

Faith Formation is a religious education program for non-Catholic school children from 1st to 8th grades. We prepare children for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The program begins in mid September and ends in May. We meet on Mondays from 4 to 5:15 pm at the parish office building. For registration, please contact our parish office at 415-681-2444.

Celebrate the Canonization of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

August 27 – September 3 (Exhibit)
Sunday, September 4, 11:00 am (Mass)
St. Mary’s Cathedral,
1111 Gough St., San Francisco

Blessed Mother Teresa will be canonized in Rome on Sunday, September 4. The Archdiocese of San Francisco will celebrate with Mass at 11:00 am in the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, Archbishop Cordileone presiding. All are welcome to this Mass in gratitude for the gift of this new Saint.

An exhibit on the life of Blessed Teresa will take place in the Cathedral’s event center, St. Francis Hall, as follows:

- August 27-28: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
- August 29 – September 2: 3:00 – 5:30 pm
- September 3: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

RCIA Workshop for New and Returning Ministers

Saturday, August 20, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm
St. Mary’s Cathedral, Conference Center,

Priests, Deacons, Catechumen Teams, Catechumenate Coordinators/Directors, and those new to pastoral ministry are welcome to RCIA: The Basics. This workshop will explore the basic principles of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Newcomers to initiation ministry, as well as seasoned RCIA ministers, will discover or rediscover the originating vision for the RCIA articulated by the Second Vatican Council. Please contact Sr. Celeste for more info at 415-614-5652 or by email: ArbuckleC@SFArch.org
Our Altar Servers
Our special “thanks” to our student Altar Servers who faithfully continue to volunteer their time and talent to our parish. Our Altar Servers for **August 1 thru August 7** were:

— Weekday and Weekend Masses —
Charlotte Davey, Anthony Zevallos, Gina Zevallos, Claire Curry, Cooper Andersen, Marissa Onken, Mikel Villamayor, Vincent Francisco, Lauren Schneider, Evelyn Ongpin, Christopher Bautista, Emily Schmitt, Erin Scheg

Thank You!

Save the Date:
Annual Police/Fire Memorial Mass
Sunday, September 11, 10:30 am
St. Monica’s Church, 470 24th Ave., S.F.
The 69th Annual Police/Fire Memorial Mass will be held on Sunday, September 11 at St. Monica’s Church in San Francisco. All police and fire personnel and their families are invited to attend. Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone will celebrate the Mass, with Rev. John Greene preaching. Mass will be followed by a reception sponsored by San Francisco Fire Fighters Local 798 and the San Francisco Police Officers Association. Attendees will find ample parking on 23rd Avenue.

FEASTDAY HUMOR
Miss Holycheek, the Catholic Sunday school teacher, had just finished explaining the feast of the Assumption to her class. "Now," she said, "let all those children who want to go to heaven to see their Heavenly Mother raise their hands." All the children raised their hands except little Marie in the front row.

"Don't you want to go to Heaven, Marie?" asked Miss Holycheek. "I can't," said Marie tearfully. "My mother told me to come straight home after Sunday school.

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With deep gratitude and thanks
The San Francisco Interfaith Council Recognizes and Commends
St. Stephen’s Catholic Church
For extraordinary participation and service in the 2015/2016 San Francisco Interfaith Winter Shelter
June 9, 2016

G.L. Hodge Chair
Michael G. Pappas, M.Div. Executive Director
PASTORAL STAFF
Rev. Tony F. LaTorre
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fathertony@saintstephensf.org
Rev. Michael Strange, PSS
Retired - In Residence
Rev. Mr. Rory Desmond
Permanent Deacon
Rhonda Cruz-Smith
Coordinator of Music & Liturgy ext. 32
Mary Molly Mullaney
Faith Formation Coordinator ext.27
Mrs. Sharon McCarthy Allen
School Principal
Jim Cook
Parish Manager ext.23
Shay Ingelfinger
Event Center Coordinator ext.33
Jan Almeida
Bookkeeper ext.29

ST STEPHEN PARISH 2016-2017
ORGANIZATION/MINISTRY CONTACT PERSON
• Altar Servers Giovanna Hrvatin
• Altar Society Joan Leehane
• Bridge Group Helen Perlite
• Caritas Nellie Hizon
• Church Hospitality Mary Molly Mullaney
• Communion Ministers
• Faith Formation Mary Molly Mullaney
• Fifty Plus Club Helga D’Arcy
• Finance Council Laura Birsinger
• Grief Support Clergy
• Lectors
• Liturgy Committee
• Marriage Preparation Clergy
• Men’s Club John Bankovitch
• Music Rhonda Cruz-Smith
• Parish Council Vicky Francisco
• RCIA Mary Molly Mullaney
• St. Stephen Book Club Veronica Wong
• St. Vincent de Paul Julie O’Callaghan
• Ushers Bob Anthony
• Women’s Guild Daniela Franco & Maira Hallinan

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 ______________________________________ Address ___________________________________
City/Zip _____________________ Phone ________________________ Email _____________________
Our parishioners receive the Archdiocese weekly newspaper “Catholic San Francisco.” I am interested in assisting with the Parish in the following way(s):
• Acolyte/Altar Service
•Altar Society
•Children’s Liturgy of the Word Choir
•Greeter/Usher
•Hospitality after Mass/Special Events
•Holy Communion Ministers to the Home-bound
•Lector/Holy Communion Ministers
•Music/Choir