

St. Stephen Parish

SaintStephenSF.org | 601 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco CA 94132 | Church 415 681-2444

StStephenSchoolSF.org | 401 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco 94132 | School 415 664-8331

Reconciliation: Saturday 3:30 p.m. or by appt. and 30 min. before each Sunday Mass

Weekday Mass: 8:00 a.m. Vigil Mass Saturday 4:30 p.m.

Sunday Mass 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.



FEBRUARY 12, 2023
SIXTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME

*"Amen, I say to you,
until heaven and earth pass away,
not the smallest letter or the
smallest part of a letter
will pass from the law."*

MATTHEW 5:18

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

"Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.

"Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven....

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.* But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

"You have heard that it was said, *You shall not commit adultery.* But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ..."

Matthew 5:20-34a

Encounter Jesus Christ. Love Jesus Christ. Live Jesus Christ.

February 12, 2023

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord! This refrain from today's Psalm 119, part of a group of psalms known as "wisdom poems," or "wisdom psalms," is a beatitude that incorporates the explicit message of the other three Scriptures today.

Psalm 119 is not directed to God, but pours from the psalmist in a kind of joyful recitation of truth – in statements of wisdom borne through the history and experiences of the Israelite people. It reflects not a discrete situation of an individual, but a corporate one: this psalm is for all people, past, present and future. It is also in the form of an instruction rather than a typical prayer, and expresses a love of divine law, here defined as "all that had been revealed by God and handed on by the prophets" (Notes on the psalm from *New Jerusalem Bible*). In fact, it has been said that the psalmist does not just talk about *doing* the law, but *loving* the law.

Having this slightly broader picture of the psalm helps us understand today's refrain as a way of summarizing one aspect of the good news of the Gospel – *Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!*

In the first reading, Sirach instructs the people of Israel to trust in God and keep his commandments – for they will be saved by doing so. *Before man are life and death, good and evil*, Sirach says, *whichever he chooses shall be given him*. Our salvation, and life itself, are certainly blessings from God. Choosing to follow the ways of the Lord leads to these blessings.

Saint Paul speaks not of law, per se, but of the wisdom of God: *predetermined before the ages for our glory*. That is, he speaks of God's plan for our salvation, known always to God himself but revealed to us only in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit. Jesus, of course, is that plan dwelling among us. He is wisdom incarnate, and the embodiment of the good, placed before us, of which Sirach speaks. He is the fulfillment of the divine law that God revealed to our ancestors, and that the prophets handed on.

Jesus, in the Gospel today, says to his disciples, *I have come not to abolish [the law] but to fulfill [it]*. In his subsequent expounding upon the existing laws and behaviors using the "You have heard it said, but I say," structure, he is not placing more restrictions on his followers, but adding to their freedom.

As the fullness of the law, he is the source – love – from which all other laws and behaviors derive any force or meaning. Therefore, for example, in love do we refrain, not just from killing, but from any behavior toward another that beats down, injures or destroys. By following the law, and by imitating him, we are more and more free to both continue in such habits, and to receive the blessings that come with it. For as Jesus says, *whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven*.

Thinking about "law" as a topic often sets people on edge – perhaps because our modern context is one of prohibition and punishment. But that is not God's law, which is given for our flourishing and *for our glory*. So as we prepare ourselves to receive Jesus, we give thanks for the divine law, and the freedom it gives us. This is *what God has prepared for those who love him*. Indeed, *Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!*

Our Saint of the Week - Saints Cyril and Methodius



Because their father was an officer in a part of Greece inhabited by many Slavs, these two Greek brothers ultimately became missionaries, teachers, and patrons of the Slavic peoples.

After a brilliant course of studies, Cyril (called Constantine until he became a monk shortly before his death) refused the governorship of a district such as his brother had accepted among the Slavic-speaking population. Cyril withdrew to a monastery where his brother Methodius had become a monk after some years in a governmental post.

A decisive change in their lives occurred when the Duke of Moravia asked the Eastern Emperor Michael for political independence from German rule and ecclesiastical autonomy (having their own clergy and liturgy). Cyril and Methodius undertook the missionary task.

Cyril's first work was to invent an alphabet, still used in some Eastern liturgies. His followers probably formed the Cyrillic alphabet. Together they translated the Gospels, the psalter, Paul's letters and the liturgical books into Slavonic, and composed a Slavonic liturgy, highly irregular then. That and their free use of the vernacular in preaching led to opposition from the German clergy. The bishop refused to consecrate Slavic bishops and priests, and Cyril was forced to appeal to Rome. On the visit to Rome, he and Methodius had the joy of seeing their new liturgy approved by Pope Adrian II. Cyril, long an invalid, died in Rome 50 days after taking the monastic habit.

Methodius continued mission work for 16 more years. He was papal legate for all the Slavic peoples, consecrated a bishop and then given an ancient see (now in the Czech Republic). When much of their former territory was removed from their jurisdiction, the Bavarian bishops retaliated with a violent storm of accusation against Methodius. As a result, Emperor Louis the German exiled Methodius for three years. Pope John VIII secured his release.

Because the Frankish clergy, still smarting, continued their accusations, Methodius had to go to Rome to defend himself against charges of heresy and uphold his use of the Slavonic liturgy. He was again vindicated. Cyril and Methodius are eminently fitted to guard the long-desired unity of East and West. In 1980, Pope John Paul II named them additional co-patrons of Europe.

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

Monday, Feb 13

8:00 a.m.

† **Sean McPolin**
(By: Liam Frost)

Tuesday, Feb 14

8:00 a.m.

† **Stefanie Snider**
(By: Debby Diaz)

Wednesday, Feb 15

8:00 a.m.

† **Maggie McDonald**
(By: Fely Boquieren)

Thursday, Feb 16

8:00 a.m.

† **Bill Frost**
(By: Liam Frost)

Friday, Feb 17

8:00 a.m.

† **Vivian Mullaney**
(By: Parish Staff)

Saturday, Feb 18

8:00 a.m.

Ita McCarron Sp. Int.
(By: Bosco)

Adonis Ysip Sp. Int.
(By: Mom & Dad)

Sunday, Feb 19

8:00 a.m.

† **Dennis O'Connor**
(By: Rose O'Connor)

† **Harry Over**
(By: Dorothy Over)

† **Belinda Austria**
(By: Rodil & Edna Rodis)

† **Zoltan Kraynik**
(By: John & Marilyn Lee)

TODAY'S READINGS



First Reading — God allows us to make choices, but we are not to choose injustice or sinfulness (*Sirach 15:15-20*).

Psalm — Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord! (*Psalm 119*).

Second Reading — God's wisdom is mysterious and hidden (*1 Corinthians 2:6-10*).

Gospel — Jesus has come not to abolish but to fulfill the law and the prophets (*Matthew 5:17-37 [20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37]*).

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time;**
World Marriage Day;
Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Tuesday: **Ss. Cyril and Methodius;**
Valentine's Day

Friday: **The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order**

Saturday: **Blessed Virgin Mary**

PRESIDENTIAL GARDENING

After I die, I want it said of me that I plucked a weed and planted a flower wherever I thought a flower would grow.
—Abraham Lincoln

STAY CONNECTED TO OUR PARISH COMMUNITY!

FOLLOW St Stephen Church on SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram : @SaintStephenParishSF

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2022 STATEMENT OF DONATIONS

For TAX Purposes

Donation Statements shall automatically be mailed to parishioners with donations of at least \$250 & above starting February 1st on the mailing address on record with the Parish Office.

For any questions/ clarifications on your 2022 Donation Statement for tax purposes, email the parish bookkeeper;

teresa@saintstephensf.org

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

ST STEPHEN CHURCH has made the decision to move to a more improved and updated database system catered to the needs of the parish!

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR PARISH REGISTRATION by going to <https://onrealm.org/saintstephensf>.

Watch out for more detailed information as we move to Realm. Brochures and posters shall be made available at the Vestibule for your guidance.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



February 12, 2023

What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him, this God has revealed to us through the Spirit.
- *1 Corinthians 2:9-10*

Sick Relatives & Friends

Please pray for the sick and homebound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick. May they know the healing touch of Jesus.

Debbie Nunes, Tony Devincenzi, Julie Burton, Nestor Plondaya, Marie Bachand, Francis Yiu, Edna Amora, Rodney Clark, Michelle Vicente, Michelle Weeks, Rev Bill McCain, Franz Tittiger, Carlota Plondaya, Robert Liam, Marino Tulao, Eden Finn, Edileide Jose Barbosa, Kenneth Fambrini, Larry Barbiere, Carol Dominguez, Marc Gutierrez, Catherine Scosseria, Gwendolyn Walsh, Joel Rivera, Jovita & Richard Thompson.



FAMILY CONNECTION

God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings. The Sunday Connection provides useful background and activities to better understand the Sunday's Scripture readings, helping you to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:17-37

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them.

Background on the Gospel Reading

Matthew continues the Sermon on the Mount with a three part instruction by Jesus on the Way of Life in the kingdom of heaven. Today's reading is part one and deals with the Law. Part two deals with worship and religious practice and contains the Lord's Prayer. Part three deals with trusting God and deeds of loving service to our neighbor.

When Matthew speaks of "the Law and the prophets" he means the whole Scripture. When the Messiah brings the fullness of the kingdom none of scripture will be done away with. Instead it will be fulfilled. Matthew's Jesus does not overturn the Law of Moses, nor does he set his followers free from the Law. He requires his followers to go beyond the Law by doing more than the Law requires. The Law condemned murder. Jesus condemns anger. The Law condemned adultery. Jesus condemns even lustful looks. As Jewish Christians who had always been faithful to the Law Matthew's community need a way to understand the difference Jesus and the kingdom he brings have made. They affirmed that God had always been at work in history through "the Law and the prophets." But God's work goes beyond that to be embodied by the Messiah who reveals the definitive will of God. The written scriptures and their interpretation in tradition are surpassed by Jesus whose life and teaching are the definitive revelation of the will of God.



Volunteers Needed !

2023 WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM

St. Stephen's will provide another dinner for the SF Interfaith Winter Shelter program, on Saturday, February 18, 2023, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM at First Unitarian Universalist Society (1187 Franklin Street at Geary Blvd.).

We need food to serve 60 guests.

Please sign up in the church vestibule.

Our 20,000 Square Foot Parish Center Available to Rent for Special Occasions

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regarding the hourly rate available for our parishioners.

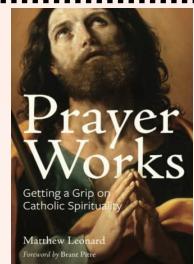


St Stephen's Book Club

February 2023

- Prayer Works: Getting a Grip on Catholic Spirituality

by Matthew Leonard



If you've never read a book on prayer, you've got the right one. And if you've read lots of books on prayer, you've still got the right one. Prayer Works is a unique blend of great storytelling, laugh-out-loud humor, and rock-solid instruction. Matthew Leonard has the rare gift of making deep topics easy to understand and digest.

Practical and inspirational, this book will set your heart on fire and teach you how to engage in a life of divine intimacy you never thought possible. Put simply, Prayer Works will radically transform your life.

Come join us as we meet in person on the second Saturday of the month in the parish office conference room. Contact Mary Molly at the parish office for details. Phone - 415 681-2444x4

CATHOLIC PRAYER CORNER

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Amen.



Keep the Lights On!

A mother and her small child once drove past the restored home of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield. It was night and the national shrine of the United States was brightly lit. "Look, mama," the child said excitedly, "Mr. Lincoln has left his lights on." The mother smiled. "Yes" she replied; "he left them on for the whole world to see."



Although Lincoln has been dead since 1865, he is still a tremendous inspiration to all people.

But in a much more true sense Christ, "God from God, Light from Light" remains and will remain to the end the shining beacon for all peoples of all times. Christ has shared his Light with us his disciples and asks us to be what we are: the light of the world.

EFFORTLESS

The only thing that comes to a person without effort is old age.

—Anonymous

The Sacrament of Confirmation

St. Stephen Parish congratulates the students who received the Sacrament of Confirmation with Archbishop Cordileone at the Saturday 4:30 p.m. Mass this weekend. We thank their families and teachers of St. Stephen School and St Stephen Faith Formation Program that helped prepare the students for this special sacrament marking their maturity in the Catholic Faith.



Arianna Aguirre - St. Catherine of Siena
Mateo Aquino - St. Sebastian
Cullen Bird - St. Patrick
Michael Cinco - St. Anthony of Padua
Paloma Danfoura - St. Sophia of Rome
Neve Harlan - St. Rose of Lima
Thomas Landers - St. Christopher
Nina McGarry - St. Patrick
Alva O'Driscoll - St. Margaret of Antioch
Madeleine Pasquini - St. Kateri
Theresa Stecher - St. Bernadette
Colby Sy - St. Thomas

Michael Alves - St. Michael
Madison Avila - St. Teresa of Avila
Keira Cabuntala - St. Lucy
Siomha Concannon - St. Bridgid of Ireland
Katherine George - St. Martha of Bethany
Annabelle Hazard - St. Jerome
Isabella Mack - St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Nolan Ocampo - St. Dymphna
Brendan O'Sullivan - St. Joseph of Cupertino
Tekakwitha Matthew Rivera - St. Matthew
Anna Stecher - St. Joan of Arc
Joseph Tuvo - St. Rocco



OUR FASCINATING FAITH

. The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order. On February 17 we honor the seven founding saints of the Order of the Servants of the Virgin Mary. Bonfilius, Alexis, Manettus, Amideus, Hugh, Sostene and Buonagiunta were a group of merchants of Florence who, upon experiencing an apparition of the Blessed Virgin in 1233, renounced their businesses, left what was necessary for their families, and distributed the rest among the poor. They then dedicated themselves entirely to the veneration of the Virgin Mary, going to live on an Italian mountain, each assuming the life of a hermit—prayer, extreme fasting and penance. Sometime later, at the request of the pope's delegate, all but one were ordained priests. Brother Alexis, considering himself unworthy of the priesthood, decided to remain as a brother. They were all canonized in 1888. Their feast day, originally February 11, now falls on the 17th, the date of the death of the last of the seven founders. Brother Alexis died at the age of 110.

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JOIN OUR ST. STEPHEN CHOIR

Please consider joining our Stephen Choir! The only requirements are that you love to sing, and desire to learn music and vocal techniques (no experience is necessary). As a member you support our parishioners, enhance the Liturgy and form new friendships.

The choir sings mostly at the 9:30am Mass, and once per month at the 11:30am Mass. Contact our Choir Director Fredrick Schaefer at email: 1dognpony@gmail.com.

Stewardship: A Way of Life (January Report)

\$ 26,640.31	Sunday Collections (1/1,8,15,22,29)
\$ 9,774.00	Online Sunday Collections (1/1-31)
<u>\$ 10,985.00</u>	Donworth Hall January Rental Income
\$ 47,399.31	Total Income for January 2023

LESS:

<u>\$ 55,159.95</u>	Parish Maintenance for January
\$ 7,760.64	Over / UNDER

Please note that we were able to cover the negative income this month from the remaining balance of December's Windfall Income (Christmas Collection) of \$9,266.58. Income from Parish dinner still being calculated as of printing deadline.

Thank you for continuing to generously support your Parish !

THE SHIP OF THE CHURCH

The Church is like a great ship being pounded by the waves of life's different stresses. Our duty is not to abandon ship, but to keep her on her course.

—St. Boniface

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

It's still months away, but parish ministers, especially if they are involved in the catechumenate, have their eyes on Lent and the Easter Triduum. Until fairly recent times, the last few days before Easter were shaped by an awareness of the Passion, but the faithful were left to their own devices about how to engage with these mysteries. A thousand years ago, the Easter Vigil as a solemn and central moment of initiation had vanished. By the early 1950s it was a minor moment in parish life, celebrated on Holy Saturday morning, usually with only the priests and a handful of invited guests. Most people understood it as necessary only for blessing the paschal candle and preparing the Easter water. People who were children during World War II sometimes remember that the weekly noontime test of the air-raid sirens on Holy Saturday signaled the end of Lent.

Today, of course, we see Holy Saturday as entirely within the paschal fast, and hardly the time for children to be tearing through the plastic grass looking for jelly beans and chocolate eggs. These memories point to a total collapse of the once-central liturgies of the Christian year. This impoverishment of the liturgy was mostly an accident of history. The root cause was the loss of Lent as a time focused on the final formation of catechumens for the Easter sacraments. By 1880, scholars began to piece together a vision of what once had been, and slowly, at first in a handful of monasteries in Europe, pieces of the tradition were rediscovered and celebrated.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

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THE GLORY OF THE DIVINE WAY

Today's readings draw us into ageless, vibrant depths. Followers of God's law, we belong to ancient traditions. Children of God, we marvel at the freshness of creation. The Old Testament readings, from Sirach and the Psalms, celebrate the rich blessings we receive when we observe God's commands—not because we are slaves to the law, but because the law gives life in abundance. Saint Paul's Letter to the Corinthians confirms the glory of divine law, but warns that God's ways tend to be unpopular and misunderstood in this world. Paul speaks of the ancient wisdom of God, which is mysteriously both "hidden" and "revealed." God does not have secret codes that we earthly mortals cannot understand; in love, God reveals the glory of the divine way in Jesus. Saint Matthew's Gospel emphasizes the importance of living in God's law, enlivened by a deep and personal relationship with Jesus.

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This Week's Humor



A Pastor is preaching on Loving Your Enemies. He expounds on the value of grace and forgiveness to all and how we are called to love our neighbors and our enemies as much as we love ourselves.

The congregation is roused to action and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The pastor asks them all "Will you go out into the world and love your enemies?"

Every hand in the congregation goes up except for one. The pastor sees that it is a little old lady in the front row. He asks the woman "Why can't you love your enemies?" The little old lady says "Pastor, I can honestly say I have no enemies!"

The pastor says "That's incredible, may I ask how old you are?" "96"

The pastor says "96 years old and no enemies? That's incredible. Would you mind sharing how you have achieved this? The little old lady totters to the front of the church, turns around to the congregation and says "I outlived them all."

Pancakes

A six-year-old said grace at family dinner one evening. "Dear God, thank You for the pancakes." When she concluded, her mother asked her why she thanked God for pancakes when they were having chicken-pot-pie. She smiled and said, "I thought I would check to see if He was paying attention."

A CHURCH ACCESSIBLE!

Saint Stephen Church is left open Monday through Saturday from after the morning Mass until 4:00 p.m. This gives you the opportunity to stop by and make a person/private visit with the Blessed Sacrament and to offer your prayers in a quiet, warm and comfortable atmosphere. So, when you are out for an afternoon walk or returning home from shopping or work -- feel free to stop by.



PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Michael Liliedahl

Pastor, ext. 1

Fr.Michael@SaintStephenSF.org

Fr. Cameron Faller

Priest in Residence, SFSU Chaplain

Fr. Michael Healy

Priest in Residence

Rev. Mr. Manuel "Olet" Abad

Permanent Deacon

deacon@SaintStephenSF.org

Sharon McCarthy Allen

Principal

Carol P Cagalingan

Parish Manager, ext. 3

carol@SaintStephenSF.org

Mary Molly Mullaney

Faith Formation Coordinator, ext. 4

faithformation@SaintStephenSF.org

Shay Ingelfinger

Event Center Coordinator, ext. 7

donworthevents@SaintStephenSF.org

Teresa Devincenzi

Bookkeeper, ext. 5

teresa@SaintStephenSF.org

Fredrick Schaefer

*Music/Choir Director, ext 8
or 415 342-4508*

1dognpony@gmail.com

Ed Prete

Bulletin Editor, ext. 6

e.prete@SaintStephenSF.org

ST STEPHEN PARISH 2022-2023

ORGANIZATION/MINISTRY CONTACT PERSON

- Altar Servers Giovanna Hrvatin
- Altar Society Joan Leehane
- Bridge Group Virginia Stefanelli
- Caritas Nellie Hizon
- Church Hospitality Mary Molly Mullaney
- Communion Ministers Mary Molly Mullaney
- Faith Formation Mary Molly Mullaney
- Fifty Plus Club Helga D'Arcy
- Finance Council Laura Birsinger
- Front Ofc Lead Volunteer Fely Boquiren
- Grief Support Clergy
- Head Sacristan Ed Quan
- Lectors Mary Molly Mullaney
- Liturgy Committee Fr. Michael Liliedahl
- Marriage Preparation Clergy
- Men's Club Martin Murphy
- Parish Council Vicky Francisco
- RCIA Mary Molly Mullaney
- St. Stephen Book Club Mary Molly Mullaney
- Ushers Jim Scheg
- Women's Guild Naomi Kelly

Parish Office Phone 415.681.2444

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 415-681-2444 or at www.saintstephensf.org

Name _____

Contact Phone _____

Email _____

Complete Mailing Address _____ City/Zip _____

Weekly Sunday envelopes , circle one: Yes No, but commit to participate thru Online Giving.

I am interested in assisting the Parish in an organization or ministry as (Please encircle your choice/s):

Acolyte/Altar Service, Altar Society, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Greeter/Usher, Hospitality after Mass/Special Events, Holy Communion Ministers to the Homebound, Music/Choir, Lector &/or Holy Communion Ministers, Parish Center Front Office Volunteer.

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