

**SUNDAY MASSES**  
Saturday Vigil 4:15 pm  
Sunday 8:30 & 10:00 am

**MARRIAGE**  
Please call 6 months prior  
**BAPTISM**  
Please call for appointment  
**RECONCILIATION**  
Monday—Friday  
Following 8:30am Mass  
or call for appointment

**WEEKDAY MASSES**  
Monday—Friday  
8:30am

**PARISH OFFICE / MAILING ADDRESS**  
**HOURS—10:00AM TO 4:30PM**  
390 Missouri St, San Francisco, CA 94107  
Phone: 415.285.5272 [stteresasf.org](http://stteresasf.org)  
Email: [info@stteresasf.org](mailto:info@stteresasf.org)

**SECOND COLLECTIONS**  
**THIS WEEK** there is no second collection.  
**NEXT WEEK's** second collection  
benefits the St Teresa Conference of St  
Vincent de Paul. Donate here

**Help us decide where we are going!**  
Please take a moment to fill out the survey in this QR code. The survey will help us narrow down the most popular tasks listed by Mary McLeod in her report from last month and will build a road map for the parish to take action.

**Welcome to St. Teresa of Avila's Parish Community**  
We extend our hands and hearts in Christian fellowship to you here celebrating with us. Whether long-time residents or newly arrived in our parish, we thank God that you are with us. If you are not registered or have changes to your registration, please fill in the form below, or complete the form on our website.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ New Parishioner    ☐ New Address and/or phone    ☐ On-Line Giving

**MASS INTENTIONS**  
*As we celebrate Mass together we include in our prayers:*

**Saturday, December 20**  
4:15pm † [Leo Dal Porto](#)  
**Sunday, December 21**  
8:30am † [William Biniek](#)  
10:00am † [Giuseppe & Maria Molinari](#)  
**Monday, December 22**  
8:30am † [George Gabriel Muhek](#)  
**Tuesday, December 23**  
8:30am † [George Gabriel Muhek](#)  
**Wednesday, December 24**  
4:15pm † [Michael J. Romaich](#)  
9:00pm † [Allen Ip](#)  
**Thursday, December 25**  
8:30am † [Fr. Peter Sammon](#)  
10:00am † [Michael J. Romaich & Domingo Magohet](#)  
**Friday, December 26**  
8:30am † [Leo Dal Porto](#)  
**Saturday, December 27**  
4:15pm † [James J Burns, Jr.](#)  
**Sunday, December 28**  
8:30am † [George Gabriel Muhek](#)  
10:00am † [Bob Jacklevich](#)

As a giving option, the parish has just added Venmo. If you know what this is - great! If you don't, it's time to enter the 21st century :-)

**St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church**  
“Know that you too are a child of God, so allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.”  
– Saint Teresa of Avila  
**DECEMBER 21, 2025**  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**Merry Christmas!**  
A very Merry Christmas to you, the Parish of St Teresa of Avila. From the clergy, staff, and your fellows in the community we wish you the happiest of holidays, a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.  
This year we've done a great deal; faced adversity together, reached out to the community, and built a new foundation in our own home. The same home we welcome friends, neighbors, and family in every day. Look beside you, sitting in the pews of our chapel or seated beside you in your own home. This year we converted our little sanctuary on the hill into a loving family.  
God bless you St Teresa, and we wish you the happiest of holiday seasons this year.

Please join us in celebrating the Baptism of Mianna Lilyette Flores  

Child of Victoria Flores,  
Godchild of Victor Flaviani & Laura Flaviani. Mianna will be baptized by Rev. Michael Kwiecien, O. Carm this Sunday at 10 AM mass.

**A HUGE THANK YOU TO YOU, ST TERESA PARISH!**  
This has been a very busy Christmas at home and here at the Church, and we thank everyone who contributed to all we have accomplished in the past few weeks  
**CRAFT FAIRE**  
**Anarose Schelstrate**  
**Lynn Jacklevich**  
**GAUDETE BREAKFAST**  
**Dan Murphy**  
**Bob & Jan Paul**  
**Anarose Schelstrate**  
**Kathy Ryan**  
**ADVENT GIVING TREE**  
**Jeanne Burns**  
**Judi Daddio**  
**Lynn Jacklevich**  
And a special thanks to all those behind the scenes who helped us get here. Thank you!

**PASTOR**  
Rev. Gregory Houck, O.Carm.  
[pastor@stteresasf.org](mailto:pastor@stteresasf.org)  
**IN RESIDENCE**  
Rev. Brian Henden, O.Carm.  
[bhenden@carmelites.net](mailto:bhenden@carmelites.net)  
Rev. Michael Kwiecien, O.Carm.  
[mkwiecien@carmelites.net](mailto:mkwiecien@carmelites.net)  
**SOCIAL OUTREACH COORDINATOR**  
Bro. David Semmens, O.Carm.  
[brotherdave@stteresasf.org](mailto:brotherdave@stteresasf.org)  
**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**  
Laura Diaz-Flaviani, [lflaviani@pacbell.net](mailto:lflaviani@pacbell.net)  
**DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION**  
Anarose Schelstrate, [anarose@stteresasf.org](mailto:anarose@stteresasf.org)

## The Fourth Sunday of Advent and its focus on Joseph

In Advent the Gospels follow a particular pattern. On the First Sunday of Advent the Gospel speaks, not about the birth of Christ, but about the end of time and Christ's return in glory. Gospels for the Second and Third Sundays of Advent center on John the Baptist, and the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Advent serves as a prologue to the Christmas story.

In Cycles B and C the Gospels for this Sunday are from Luke. Two years ago we read about the *Annunciation*, where the Angel Gabriel asked Mary whether she would be the Mother of God. Last year's Gospel was the *Visitation*, where Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist, visited her kinswoman, Mary. In cycles B and C the Gospel focuses on Mary, but this year – in Cycle A – Matthew's focus is on Joseph.

Most of us are at least tacitly familiar with the Christmas story surrounding Joseph. In today's Gospel, we learn that Mary is betrothed to Joseph. We also learn that, before they lived together, Mary was found to be with child. Joseph planned to divorce her quietly, but an angel appeared to him in a dream and explained how Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit. When Joseph awoke, he "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife into his home."

There are cultural dimensions to this story that, when examined, not only enrich our understanding, but turn it on its ear. The first concerns *betrothal*. Many of us assume that a *betrothal* is the same thing as an *engagement*; it is not. In today's Gospel, when Joseph learns of Mary's pregnancy, he does not plan to "break off the engagement" or "call off the wedding." Instead, Joseph plans "to divorce her quietly." Speaking of Mary and Joseph with language of divorce tells us that, in first century Judea, *betrothal* was something much more serious than what we, in the 21st century, would refer to as an *engagement*.

Another point worth noting is that, although Joseph and Mary are not yet married, Joseph is referred to as "husband" and Mary is spoken of as "wife."

- Joseph, *her husband*, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly (Mt: 1:19).
- [The angel appeared to him and said, ] Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary, *your wife*, into your home (Mt: 1:20).

The use of husband-wife language reinforces the seriousness of *betrothal* in first century Judea.

A third point to consider is that, in first century Judea, no one would have been shocked by Mary's pregnancy. Because Joseph and Mary were betrothed and were referred to as husband and wife, Mary's pregnancy would not have been considered unusual or out of the ordinary. However, it would be both shocking and scandalous should it emerge that Joseph was not the father. Should such an indiscretion come to light, Mary could be punished under Jewish law, perhaps even by being put to death.

In light of these cultural insights, what stands out in high relief is the faith of Jesus' parents, not only Mary's consent to be the Mother of God, but also Joseph's decision to take Mary into his home and accept the child as his own. And when we take a deeper look at this Sunday's Gospel, we discover that what is most extraordinary about Joseph's decision is that he made this act of faith based upon knowledge gained from a *dream*!

Michael Kwiecien, O. Carm

### Christmas Cookie Drop-Off Tuesday, December 23 | 4:00–6:30 PM Deliver to Martin De Porres House 225 Potrero Avenue.

Bring homemade cookies (any kind you love), and Martin De Porres will share them with guests during our Christmas Eve service. Please let them know how many cookies you plan to bring by sending a note to [martinsdropoff@gmail.com](mailto:martinsdropoff@gmail.com). If you'd like to lend a hand beyond baking, they're also doing a **prep afternoon after lunch on Tuesday, Dec 23** to get everything ready for Christmas Eve. They'd love help prepping the creamy mashed potatoes and other delicious sides that make Christmas at Martin's special. Please reach out to Brother Dave Semmens or George Biniek of the pastoral counsel with any questions.

### Advent of Lanterns

1. Whenever you see Saint Joseph he is carrying a lantern – on the road to Bethlehem, knocking on the door of the inns, or on the Flight into Egypt.
2. The emblem of the Presentation Sisters is the lantern (carried by their founder, Nano Nagle) with their motto: "bringing light into places of darkness, oppression, and need."
3. Based on our well-lit bell tower, the motto of this parish is "a light on the hill."

This all ties together in using a lantern as the symbol of this Advent. You'll see lanterns on the church pillars, and each week a new banner will be added to the rotunda with the themes of Advent.

**Week One:** Hope  
**Week Two:** Peace  
**Week Three:** Joy  
**Week Four:** Love

So our job as we enter this fourth week of Advent is "to bring **love** into places of darkness, oppression, and need."



ST TERESA'S GREEN TEAM  
[greenteam@stteresasf.org](mailto:greenteam@stteresasf.org)

### If You Do Need to Buy: Second-Hand, Local & Long-Lasting

Sometimes a gift is the right choice — but it doesn't have to be new. Second-hand and thrifted gifts are becoming more mainstream, and many items have plenty of life left in them. Surveys show strong public support for re-used, refurbished, or DIY gifts, especially when they're thoughtfully chosen.

Buying second-hand has several benefits:

- Less waste — extending the life of an item reduces pressure on manufacturing, shipping, and packaging.
- More value — used items often cost a fraction of the price while offering comparable quality.
- Unique finds — vintage, one-of-a-kind, or high-quality goods often live in thrift shops, consignment stores, and online resale platforms.

If you prefer new items, consider shopping small and local, where goods often have a smaller footprint and your purchase supports nearby makers or independent businesses.

Our Advent Giving Tree gifts were delivered to 'The Lantern' on Friday. These gifts will go to 29 families and 75 youngsters.



### CHRISTMAS MASSES

Our Christmas Mass Schedule this Year:

- 4:15 PM & 9:00 PM Christmas Eve
- 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM Christmas Day