



# *Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus*

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## *December 14, 2025 - Third Sunday of Advent (A)*

### *Jesus is the Reason for our Joy!*

**Isaiah 35:1-6A, 10; Psalm 146:6-7,8-9,9-10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11**

On this third Sunday of Advent, we shift our focus from anticipating our Lord's coming to reflecting on God's mysterious presence, who became human and dwelt among us. This Sunday is called "Gaudete Sunday," named after the first word of the Entrance Antiphon in Latin, which means "Rejoice!"

We all have mixed feelings and hopes about rejoicing, just as people in the past had mixed expectations about the coming of the Messiah. They shared a longing for God's redeeming action, but their expectations of how it would happen varied. Some envisioned a warrior king, a wonderful counselor, a liberator of Israel, or a vengeful messiah. Others hoped for a merciful God who would strengthen the faint and the weak, coming with vindication to save His people (see Is. 34; 63:1-6; Is. 35:3-4). Meanwhile, John the Baptist expected a decisive judgment from the Messiah. He believed that those who did not repent and produce fruits of righteousness would be like chaff, burned in unquenchable fire (cf. Matt. 3:11-12). While in prison, John expressed doubt because he had not yet seen. He sought confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah. We hear his question through his disciples: "Are you the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt. 11:3).

Our Lord's response points to John the Baptist, his followers, and all of us, encouraging us to reflect on Isaiah's prophecy about the signs of the Messiah's coming: "the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them" (Matt 11:4-5). Imagine a blind man who had never seen the world, suddenly witnessing the vibrant colors of a sunset for the first time, or a lame woman taking her first steps toward her loved ones. Jesus' reply subtly affirms that he is indeed the one who is to come. He demonstrates that God's redemptive work is shown through healing and the proclamation of good news among us.

While John expected the Messiah to deliver decisive judgment by punishing sinners, Jesus chose to overcome sin and save sinners through his death. It is worthwhile to pause and reflect on this paradox because the ultimate defeat, the crucifixion itself, becomes the doorway to victory and our salvation. This unexpected reversal invites us to marvel at the depth of God's love. We believe that God's saving actions are mediated through his Church, primarily through the Holy Sacraments. Furthermore, we trust that God desires to save and transform our lives not through condemnation but through mercy. Who wouldn't rejoice in such good news? However, rejoicing during tough times, like illness or loss, can be hard, but it is possible. Joy is a gift from Jesus, who promises to give rest to those burdened by life's struggles. This rest comes from His presence and the comfort of knowing He is with us. Joy isn't found in the absence of pain but in gratitude and contentment that come from trusting God. True believers don't ignore their pain; instead, they offer it to God. These struggles become part of the offerings we bring during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The passage from James deepens our understanding of joy by encouraging us to be patient and persistent, like a farmer waiting for the harvest, trusting in God's timing and providence (cf. James 5:7). It also emphasizes the importance of prayer. True joy comes from our willingness to pray. As someone once said, if you want to pray better, you must pray more often. If you don't pray, everything can disappoint you when things go wrong. However, if you do pray, things can still go wrong, but they won't disappoint you in the same way. Part of the joy comes from





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recognizing God's loving presence in our daily lives. When God entered our time and space, He did so from a distant place—in a manger—that was too isolated and unknown for even ordinary people to believe it could happen. In faith, we have the privilege and joy of witnessing the story of God's saving work, from Jesus's birth to His ultimate sacrifice on the cross—something people longed for or only dreamed of in the past. We have the joy and privilege of knowing that Jesus is the true God, who dwelt among us—fully human yet without sin and fully divine.

We also rejoice in knowing that Jesus continues His saving work through His Church, remaining with us tangibly and nourishing us constantly through the Holy Eucharist. As we partake in the Eucharist, we taste a preview of the ultimate joy awaiting us. This perfectly aligns with Gaudete's theme, reminding us to rejoice now even as we wait for the fullness of joy in Christ's final coming. Let our hearts echo 'Rejoice!' as we anticipate our complete joy.

Fr. Manny Hewe, Pastor



## PILGRIMS OF HOPE:

**JOY, It Is the Who, Not the What**

Someone once said that a person needs three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for. Yet, for believers, the deepest and most enduring joy comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ, which goes beyond these three elements. It is not what but who is my joy.

Christian joy is a gift! It is fundamentally different from worldly joy because it doesn't rely on material circumstances. This enduring gift is beautifully expressed through the lyrics of one of the Christmas carols, "Joy to the World" – "Joy to the world, the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing."

We rejoice not for fleeting moments but because of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Heaven entered our time and space to be with us, offering healing and everlasting friendship, which is the trustworthy source of our joy.

We understand that the opposite of joy is sadness or sorrow, which can come from various challenges such as problems, troubles, pain, separation, unfaithfulness, rumors, insults, and feelings of loneliness. While these difficulties are real and we face them, they will not last forever. By surrendering our burdens to Jesus, we can find strength during our trials. A person whose joy is rooted in Jesus does not worry about material possessions or external circumstances. True joy lives deep within our souls.

In the Holy Eucharist, we find the source of joy—Jesus Himself. It is essential to remember that the Holy Eucharist provides a glimpse of heaven's joy. Jesus desires to enter our hearts; let us humble ourselves and welcome Him. When the soul is pure and humble, joy follows like a constant shadow.

As Jesus assured his disciples, 'No one will take your joy away from you' (cf. Jn. 16:22). This joy, rooted in our relationship with Jesus, is not a fleeting emotion tied to our circumstances. It remains a constant presence, providing confidence and trust that no challenge can diminish His love and strength in our lives.

Fr. MAH.

## Parish Advent Retreat and Penance Service

**Theme: Pilgrims of Hope**

**Waiting: An Act of Hope**

**Speaker: Fr. Manny Hewe**

**Wednesday December 17, 2025**

**6:00 PM – Parish Retreat**

**7:00 PM – Penance Service**

**ALL ARE INVITED!**

**Bring family and friends**



**The OCIA will be taking a break during  
this Advent & Christmas season.**

**We will resume our faith formation  
sessions on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

**Thank you for all your support, and  
we ask that you keep our catechumen  
in your prayers as they continue  
their journey to be fully initiated in  
the Catholic faith.**



**For more information, please contact the parish office @ (808)521-1700.**



# Weekly Offering Report

## For December 1, 2025 - December 7, 2025



**SAINT THERESA SCHOOL**  
**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
 Office Phone: 808-536-4703



St.TheresaSchool@Beavers808

Sttheresaschool808

Website: [www.stshi.org](http://www.stshi.org)

### Weekly Collections Online Giving

SUNDAY Mass Offering	\$ 10,668.00	\$ 1,162.62
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\*\*\* Looking for convenient, safe and secure way of giving to our church? We have online giving feature in our website, just click on the link and go through the easy-to-follow steps to go about it. We also have a Giving Kiosk beside the statue of St. Damien. Please have a look at these methods for your church contributions. We thank you for your continued support in fulfilling the mission of the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa. \*\*\*

We will provide a complete report on the donations and updated expenses for the church fence and security project as soon as they are available. In the meantime, we would like to encourage you to reflect and pray to consider donating more towards the church fence and security project the construction of which is in progress. Please continue to pray with us for the completion of this important project for the safety and security of our church and school.

*Parish Savings with the Diocese as of October 31, 2025* **\$ 28,626.86**  
*Outstanding Parish Loan with the Diocese as of October 31, 2025* **FULLY PAID**  
*Outstanding PV Loan with the Diocese as of October 31, 2025* **\$ 286,799.02**

### Second Collections:

December 13-14 for the Retirement Fund for Religious

*Mahalo for your generosity.*

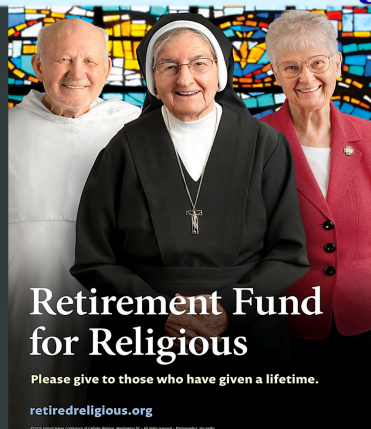


### SCHOOL OFFICE STAFF AND FACULTY MEMBERS

- Principal/Music 1-8 - Conception (Bernie) Gora
- Vice Principal/Math 8 & Discovery - Lauren Ramirez-Asaeda
- Executive Administrative Assistant/LA 6 - Faith Leasiolagi
- Admission Clerk/Office Assistant - Stephanie Lou Odayog
- Dean of Discipline/Athletic Director/4 & 5 Health/Art - Francine Caetano-Fontanilla
- Preschool Director/Teacher - Magdalena Collins
- PK-8 PE & MS Health - Jayven Bumanglag
- Preschool Aide - Elaine Jane Gonzalez
- Kindergarten Aide & Resource Teacher - Lenie Macadangdang
- Kindergarten Teacher - Leilani Tanaka
- PK, Kindergarten Religion & Liturgy Coordinator - Sr. Ana Fua Dela Cruz, SPC
- 1st Grade - Marvin Macadangdang
- 2nd Grade/Sacramental Prep - Faith Afu
- Creative Music K-3 - Johnelle Silva
- 3rd Grade Teacher - Sibel Mestanova
- 4th Grade Teacher - Laura Gabriel
- 5th Grade Teacher - Taiena Finau
- Middle School Social Studies & Math 6 - Alyssa Yabes
- 7 & 8 Language Arts/7 & 8 Home Economics - Dr. Frances Wong
- Middle School Religion - Shaun Agtarap
- Math 7 - Christian Raquepo
- Middle School Japanese/7 & 8 Arts/ Marketing - Tiani Quon
- MS Science - Peter Park
- Permanent Sub - Bernadette Lopez
- Maintenance - Edwin Kaaihue
- Custodian - Romeo John Cabarrubias



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Offering this weekend



### Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

[retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org)

(Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>)

Donations to the  
Retirement Fund for  
Religious provide housing,  
medical assistance, and  
essential support for  
thousands of aging  
religious.

## Mahalo for your generosity!

### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday  
from 8:00 am - 4:30 pm  
(Closed during Lunch break from 12:00 - 1:00 pm)

Saturdays  
from 8:30 am - 12:00 pm  
Sundays  
from 7:30 am - 11:30 am

### MASS SCHEDULES

#### Sunday Mass

6:30 am, 8:30 am, 10:30 am & 6:00 pm

**Saturday Vigil:** 5:00 pm

#### Daily Mass

Mon – Thurs: 6:30 am

Fri – Sat: 8:00 am

#### Vietnamese Mass (VHM)

Daily Mass:

Mon. Tues. & Thur. at 5:30 pm

Saturday Vigil at 7:00 pm

Sundays at 3:30 pm

#### Holy Hour/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and Confession

Wednesdays

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena at 6:00 pm

Holy Hour/Benediction & Confessions at 6:15 pm

(First Wednesdays of the month with Bishop)

### PASTORAL TEAM & PARISH STAFF

#### Fr. Manuel Hewe

Pastor

#### Sr. Mercedita Estrella, SPC

Dir. of R.E. & Pastoral Associate

#### Tyra Lamb

Safe Environment Liaison

#### Pinky Mendoza

Office Coordinator

#### Jennifer Asuncion

Office Secretary

#### Francis Leasiolagi

Deacon

#### Jonathan Lam

VHM Deacon

#### Ray Lamb

Deacon

#### Roy Matsuo

Retired Deacon

#### Marlowe Sabater

Deacon

#### Fr. Anthony Tran

VHM Chaplain

#### Bernie Gora

Director of Music

#### Ryan and Ashley Agcaoili

Coordinators of Youth Ministry

#### Grace Young

Communications Coordinator

#### Samy Ratum

Facilities Custodian

#### Noraliza Tapecc

On-Call Church Custodian

#### Felipe Tan

Accountant

#### Joan Mabag

Custodian

"How lovely is Your  
dwelling place, O  
Lord God of Hosts."  
*Psalms 84:1*



## Daily Mass Readings

[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

**December 15, 2025**

***Monday of the Third Week of Advent***

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew  
21:23-27

**December 16, 2025**

***Tuesday of the Third Week of Advent***

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew  
21:28-32

**December 17, 2025**

***Wednesday of the Third Week of  
Advent***

Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17

**December 18, 2025**

***Thursday of the Third Week of Advent***

Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25

**December 19, 2025**

***Friday of the Third Week of Advent***

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25

**December 20, 2025**

***Saturday of the Third Week of Advent***

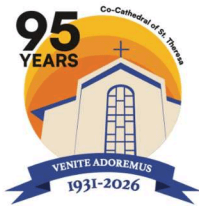
Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38

**December 21, 2025**

***Fourth Sunday of Advent***

Isaiah 7:10-14; Romans 1:1-7;  
Matthew 1:18-24





## Christmas Preparation: Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance



St. John Chrysostom, the great Doctor of the Church, speaks about the beauty of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is an important part of our spiritual preparation. He said, "Even if you do not confess, God is not ignorant of the deed since he knew it before it was committed. Why, then, do you not speak of it? Does the transgression become heavier by the confession? No, it becomes lighter and less troublesome."

He encourages us to confess not that we should be punished but that we should be forgiven; not that God may learn our sin, but that we may understand what favor He grants. God wants us to grasp the greatness of His grace so that we can praise Him fully; that we may be slower to sin and quicker to virtue. Because if we do not recognize the enormity of our need, we will fail to comprehend the vastness of God's grace.

Penance is a gift of God's boundless mercy. It frees us from our sins and inspires us to show the same compassion and forgiveness to those who hurt us. We are empowered to be forgiving. We gain a deeper understanding of the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: "It is in pardoning that we are pardoned."

Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is God's gift to us, allowing us to be forgiven for any sin committed after Baptism. In confession, we have the chance to repent and regain the grace of friendship with God. It is a sacred moment when we humbly present ourselves before Him and honestly admit our sins, especially mortal sins. Through absolution, we are reconciled to both God and the Church. The Sacrament reminds us that we cannot live without God. "In him, we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

**PREPARATION:** Before going to confession, take some time to get ready. Begin with prayer and reflect on your life since your last confession. How have you—in your thoughts, words,, and actions—failed to follow Christ's commandments to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37, 39)?

***(The Examination of Conscience is adapted from Appendix III of the Rite of Penance.)***

The Lord says, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34)

1. Have I truly loved my neighbors? Or do I use them for my own ends, or do I do to them what I wouldn't want done to me?
2. In my family life, have I shown proper respect toward my parents? Have I been careful to give my children a Christian upbringing? Have I been faithful to my spouse?
3. Do I share my possessions with those less fortunate? Do I do my best to help victims of oppression, misfortune, and poverty?
4. Does my life reflect the mission I received at confirmation? Do I participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and engage in my parish life?
5. Am I truly concerned about the well-being and prosperity of the human community I belong to, or do I spend my life only caring for myself? Do I do my best to contribute to justice, morality, harmony, and love in human interactions?



## SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

**GREETING:** The priest will greet you; he might say a brief blessing or read a Scripture passage.

**THE SIGN OF THE CROSS:** Together, you and the priest will make the Sign of the Cross. You may then begin your confession with these or similar words: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been [give days, months, or years] since my last confession."

**CONFESSION:** Confess all your sins to the priest. If you are unsure what to say, ask the priest for help. When you are finished, conclude with these or similar words: "I am sorry for these and all my sins."

**PENANCE:** The priest will suggest an act of penance. This might include prayer, a work of mercy, or an act of charity. He may also give advice on how to live a better Christian life.

**ACT OF CONTRITION:** After the priest has given you your penance, pray an Act of Contrition, expressing remorse for your sins and resolving to avoid sinning in the future. A suggested Act of Contrition is:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.  
(Rite of Penance, no. 45)

A Traditional version

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

**ABSOLUTION:** The priest will extend his hands over your head and pronounce the words of absolution. You respond, "Amen."

God, the Father of mercies,  
through the death and resurrection of his Son  
has reconciled the world to himself  
and **poured out the Holy Spirit** among us for the forgiveness of sins;  
through the ministry of the Church, may God **grant** you pardon and peace,  
and I absolve you from your sins  
in the name of the Father, + and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**PRAISE:** The priest will usually praise the mercy of God and will invite you to do the same. For example, the priest may say, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good." And your response would be, "His mercy endures forever" (Rite of Penance, no. 47).

**DISMISSAL:** The priest will conclude the Sacrament, often saying, "Go in peace."