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
Fifth Sunday of Lent

Today’s Gospel reading is filled with scenes of human frailties. First, in Bethany, we encounter the suffering surrounding a dying man. Lazarus is ill, and his sisters Martha and Mary are concerned about him and send a message to their friend, Jesus. The Scripture does not say that they asked Jesus to come, or that they asked him to cure their brother. Scripture tells us only that the message said, *Master, the one you love is ill.*

Second, we see threats to human safety. When Jesus announces plans to go back to Judea, where they had recently been, his disciples question his intentions, for the Jews in Judea had tried to stone him. But Jesus explained that Lazarus had died, and that they must go.

Third, we see people mourning someone they loved. We see Martha and Mary lamenting the loss of their brother, and we see Jewish people from neighboring towns who have come to comfort the two sisters. We even see Jesus, true God and true Man, filled with emotion, weeping at the loss of his friend.

Finally, we see confusion and misunderstanding. The disciples do not fully understand Christ’s mission, and even Thomas’ bold comment, *Let us also go to die with him,* is well-meaning, if naïve. Jesus had also waited a few days before returning. He knows that this suffering will not end in death, but will simply be used for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. But Mary and Martha do not know this, and they bemoan his absence.

All of this human frailty – apparent in this story, and familiar to our own lives. But what changes all of it? Faith! Martha proclaims that she has come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world. The Apostles and others hear Jesus say that he is the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me even if he dies, will live. Jesus has faith that the Father will hear him, so he calls Lazarus to come out. Christ raises his friend from the dead. Those who were present come to believe in him, too.

All this human suffering was turned around because of faith. Faith convinces us of Christ’s victory over death. Faith in the Resurrection rests on faith in God who is God of the Living (CCC 993). Today’s Gospel is not just about Lazarus’ resurrection, it’s about ours. Likewise, all our human suffering, losses and doubts are reimagined in light of our faith in Christ. This profound faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and Paul reminds us that the Spirit lives in us. With him, we can overcome anything, even death itself. The tomb is empty. Our hearts are full.

May you remain safe and healthy as we round the corner toward this greatest day of all, Easter Sunday!

God bless each and every one of you! *Father Tony LaTorre*

**LITURGY AND LIFE**

* As Easter draws near, do you need to offer forgiveness to someone?
* How have you allowed our belief in eternal life to comfort you when a loved one has died?
* From what sin or fault would you like Christ to release you?

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**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal**

Please continue to pray over your participation in the Annual Appeal, which is in progress. We do need, and hope for, the participation of each household, to make this a parish-wide success.

Our required tax is: $99,663.00. As of this date, we have received: $15,015.44 (Thank you!)

If you did not receive a donor brochure or would like another, these are available in the vestibule or call the office and we will gladly send you another.
Our parishioners’ health is our top priority but coming together and worshiping the Lord is part of our mission and will keep our spiritual strength strong.
- At 9:30 am we will be going live from our St. Stephen Parish Facebook page.
- If you have a Facebook account please make sure to like St. Stephen Catholic Church. (https://www.facebook.com/saintstephensf/)
- If you do not have a Facebook, either create a new account (free) or log-in with a friend or family member.
- When we go live it will show up on your news feed. Please make sure to click on the live feed and you will be part of our virtual community. (Your device needs to be connected to WIFI or an internet connection in order to stream the mass.)
- A donation button and or link will be added to the live stream this weekend or in the near future. If you are looking for a way to still help financially support your local parish please donate at your discretion.

We know this is new for our community but we are so excited to keep spreading the word of God. If there was ever a time we were in need of his guidance, it is now.

For more information or questions please speak to Carol or Father Tony. They may be reached at 415.681.2444.

Ways and Means to Help and Support Our Church

As we go our daily life within the state and city-wide mandate of “Stay-at-Home” for the next few weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please remember that we continue to look forward to your regular weekly donations to sustain our church’s basic operation needs.

You may continue to do so through the following:
1) via your weekly envelope which can either be:
   A) Mailed to the Parish Office;
   B) Dropped off at our parish office/mailbox slot.
2) If at this time, you are strictly confined in your home, please consider setting up an online account through the parish website:
   www.saintstephensf.org by:
   A) click the $ Giving button
   B) click on Donation link
   C) Set up your account online
3) If neither of the above works for you, please give us a call at the office, and we will gladly pick up your donation envelope for the parish.
4) For our elderly parishioners who live alone, we also offer our services in making a grocery run for you once a week. Please make a listing of your grocery needs, call us at the office and we will arrange for our volunteer parishioners to do the errand for you.

For more information, please give us a call at 415-681-2444 between 9am to 3pm Mondays thru Fridays or check our website www.saintstephensf.org
2020 ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

The 2020 Annual Appeal is in progress. It is our hope that each household/parishioner will assist us by sharing their treasure as we move forward to reach our required tax of $99,663.00. Donor brochures were mailed home several weeks ago. If you didn’t receive one or would like another, they are available on the tables in the vestibule. As we all make-up the “Church,” it is important that we come together and work on reaching this goal. Know that no amount is too small and all gifts are received with great thanksgiving. Fr. Tony

Our current “outstanding” balance is: $84,647.56.

PARISH GOAL: $99,663.00

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Anonymous
M/M Dale & Sharon Allen
M/M Michael Alves
M/M Roberto & Belriz Arguello
Ms. Nancy Buckley
M/M Sherwin Cabatic
M/M Ding Cabalingan Jr
Ms. Adelaida Caunan
M/M Douglas Cayabyab
M/M Graziano Cerchai
Ms. Piera Cheng Chaz &
Mr. Arthur Chui
Howard Chen
Helga D’Arcy & Matthew Quane
Ms. Debby Diaz
M/M Mark Dickson
Mr. Michael Duffy
Ms. Elena Duggan
M/David Dulany
Mr./M Ken Fambrini
M/M Gerard Fernandez
M/M Ryan Gille
M/M Marl & Stacy Gottas
Mrs. Diane Gragnani
M/M Roberto Guzman
Ms. Joanne Hayes-White
M/M Cris Houghton
Ms. Patricia Ignacio
Ms. Cynthia G. Kelly
M/M Douglas Kilroy
Rev Tony P LaTorre
M/M Michael Levy
M/M Lawrence Mazzola
Mr. Daniel McGarry &
Ms. Courtney Cassinelli
Ms. Gayle Montalbano
M/M Joseph Morello
Mr. Robert Reidy
Salesforce.com Foundation
Rev David Schunk
Ms. Lutzie E. Sotto
M/M Matthew Stecher
Ms. Virginia Stefanelli
M/M Peter Stephens
M/M George Vella
Ms. Patricia Woytek

Thank you!

Always Room for Humor, Even on Death

A dear old lady knew that she was about to die and hence asked her pastor to give her the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. After being anointed she said: “Soon I’ll be rocking in the bosom of Moses.” “No dear,” corrected the pastor, “the Bible says the bosom of Abraham.” She replied: “Father, at my age, you don’t care too much whose bosom it is!”

A funeral director called a man for further instructions about his mother-in-law’s body. “Do you want her embalmed, cremated or buried?” “All the three!” the man answered promptly. “Don’t take any chances.”

After an atheist died, a friend looked at him in the casket, shook his head, and remarked: “All dressed up and no place to go.”

A man was surprised to read the announcement of his death in the obituary column of the local newspaper. Ringing up his close friend, he enquired, “Did you see the announcement of my death in the paper this morning?” “Yes,” was the frightened answer in a shivering voice. “But where are you speaking from? Heaven or Hell?”

Alexander the Great once found his philosopher-friend Diogenes standing in a field, looking intently at a large pile of bones. Asked what he was doing, the old man turned to Alexander and replied, "I am searching for the bones of your father Philip, but I cannot distinguish them from the bones of the slaves." Alexander got the point: everyone is equal in death. From the greatest to the least, from the most beautiful to the most ordinary, death is the universal equalizer.

The pastor was visiting a terminally sick parishioner in the hospital. As he started consoling the patient the sick man said: “Don’t worry about where I am heading to, Father. I have friends in both places.”

Three friends were discussing death and one of them asked: "What would you like people to say about you at your wake service while your dead body in the coffin is visible to everyone?" The first of the friends said: "I would like them to say, he was a great humanitarian, who cared about his community." The second said: "He was a great husband and father, who was an example for many to follow," said another. The third friend said, "I would like them to say, "Look, he’s moving in the coffin!!"
Some Additional Thoughts for Today

“Roll away the stone, unbind him and let him go.” We often bind ourselves with chains of addiction to alcohol, drugs, sexual deviations, slander, gossip, envy, prejudices, hatred and uncontrollable anger and bury ourselves in the tombs of despair. Sometimes we are in the tomb of selfishness, filled with negative feelings such as worry, fear, resentment, hatred, and guilt. If we want Jesus to visit our dark dungeons of sin, despair and unhappiness, let us ask Jesus during this Holy Mass to bring the light and the power of His Holy Spirit into our private life and liberate us from our tombs. When we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus will call our name and command, "Come out"! This is good news for all of us, “Lazarus, come out!” This can be the beginning of a new life.

We need to be ready to welcome death anytime. We live in a world that is filled with death. We kill each other in acts of murder, abortion, euthanasia, execution, war and terrorist activities. We kill ourselves through suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, overwork, stress, bad eating habits, and physical neglect. The most important question is: am I ready to face my death? All of us know that we will surely die, but each of us foolishly thinks that he or she will not die any time in the near future. Let us be wise, well-prepared and ever ready to meet our Lord with a clear conscience when the time comes.

Please pray for the sick and homebound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick.

Zaida Ysip, Larry Teshara, Vaughn Jones, Leanna Mossi, Peter Dalton, Elena Amaya, Eden Finn, Edileide Jose Barbosa, Kenneth Fambrini, Larry Barbieri, Carol Dominguez, Marc Gutierrez, Kevin King, Marla Moso, Juan Pablo Grover-Paez, Betty Rodriguez, Joel Rivera, Joseph Tren, Anna M Thompson, Gwendolyn Walsh, Jovita & Richard Thompson, Please call the office to add or remove names

FORGIVING AN ENEMY

Who has not forgiven an enemy has not yet tasted one of the most sublime enjoyments of life.

—Johann Kaspar Lavater

FIVE FINGER PRAYER FOR LENT

Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a 'sweet duty.'

The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.

And lastly comes our little finger - the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, 'The least shall be the greatest among you.' Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.

Please pray for the sick and homebound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick.
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 _________________________________________________________________________________

Complete Address _________________________________________  City/Zip ___________________

Phone _________________________  Email _________________________________________________

I am interested in assisting with the Parish in the following way(s):
Weekly Sunday envelopes, circle one:  Yes  No, but commit to participate thru Online Giving