Eucharist
Daily Mass
Monday-Thursday, 8:30 am
(Chapel)

Weekend Liturgies
Saturday 5:00 pm
Sunday 8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 am
Holy Days
8:30 am, 7:00 pm

Reconciliation
Saturday 4:00-4:30 pm
or by appointment

Baptism
Contact the Parish Office for
Sacramental Preparation and
Baptismal date.

Marriage
Contact the Parish Office
at least six months prior
to anticipated wedding date
for sacramental preparation.

Homebound, ill or Infirm
Contact the Parish Office if you,
need to receive communion
or Anointing of the Sick
at home or in the hospital.

Assisted listening devices
available

St. Perpetua School
Contact the school office for
enrollment (TK-8) and
After School Program.
Tours by appointment call
284-1640 or skozel@csdo.org

Second Sunday of Advent
A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low.

Isaiah 40:3-4

December 10, 2017

3454 Hamlin Road, Lafayette, CA 94549
Phone (925) 283-0272 Fax (925) 283-6534
www.stperpetua.org

Parish Office Hours
Monday—Friday
7:30 am—4:00 pm
Dear Friends,

John the Baptist was a talent scout. In his encounter with Jesus he recognized something unique and special and he told others about him as we hear in today’s gospel. It’s within each of us to recognize the good in others and affirm it. We can open worlds of possibilities by our encouragement, especially of youth. We can bring out the best in others by our affirmation. The following story is a good illustration:

Fleming was a poor Scottish farmer in the nineteenth century. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse cottage. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved. “I want to repay you,” said the nobleman. “You saved my son's life.” “No, I can't accept payment for what I did,” the Scottish farmer replied, waving away the offer.

At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family home. “Is that your son?” the nobleman asked. “Yes,” the farmer replied proudly. “I'll make you a deal. Let me take him and give him a good education. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll grow up to be a man you can be proud of.” And that's what he did.

In time, Farmer Fleming’s son graduated from St Mary's Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin. Years afterward, the nobleman's son was stricken with pneumonia. What saved him? Penicillin. The nobleman's name? Randolph Churchill. His son’s name? Sir Winston Churchill.

I recently listened to proud parents from our parish speak about the wonderful encouragement their son received at the high school he attended and how the young man’s teacher in visual arts, animation and character design saw the potential in him and nurtured it. That young man is now married and pursuing a successful and creative career in filmmaking at Warner Brothers and DreamWorks Animation. A little encouragement can go a long way. Follow John the Baptist’s example and recognize the divine light in another. Affirm and encourage that person to do great things in this world. Your encouragement can make all the difference in someone’s life.

Father John Kasper, OSFS
At this time of year, we see lots of advertising trying to get our attention and influence our shopping habits. How have these strategies influenced your shopping? These messages can have a powerful influence on us, especially as we get ready for Christmas. The Gospels we hear at Mass during Advent call us to pay attention to a different message as we prepare to welcome Christ into our hearts. In this Sunday’s Gospel, we hear about John the Baptist and his message to “prepare the way of the Lord.” What about John the Baptist might have caught people’s attention? What did John the Baptist want people to do? John the Baptist’s appearance and his message of repentance caught people’s attention. Then he told them the most important thing. What did he say? We know that he was talking about Jesus.

During Advent, we affirm John’s message by “prepare[ing] the way of the Lord” in our own lives. We look for ways in which we can be better followers of Jesus. In our words and actions, we hope to be like John the Baptist in leading others to Jesus. In what ways can we “prepare the way of the Lord” in the world today?

In Youth Ministry we explore ways to prepare our hearts for Jesus. This week Youth Ministry gathers four times:
♦ Sunday, December 10, Confirmation Candidates head out to St. Anthony’s to serve in the dining room.
♦ Sunday, December 10, Youth Group and Confirmation Candidates gather with all of Faith Formation for an afternoon Advent Prayer Service at either 4 or 6 pm.
♦ Thursday, December 14 Youth Group gathers for a look at Advent.

Teens, remember our prayer this Advent Season - In what way can I bring hope, love, joy, and peace to the world around me? Jesus, you are welcome into our lives, but sometimes it is hard to open the door. Please give me the strength to be open and welcoming, to see beyond the darkness, and to let the light into my own life. Amen. Questions? Send Gary and e-mail at gguerrero@stperpetua.org

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**Retirement Fund for Religious**

**Help religious communities.** “Your generous contribution helps us to care for our retired sisters and enables our younger sisters to continue in active ministry,” writes a religious sister. Your gift to today’s collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide medications, nursing care, and more for thousands of senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. It also helps ensure younger members can continue the good works of their elders!

**Capital Campaign Contributions and Year-End Giving Options**

With construction of the new Parish Community Center underway, completing Capital Campaign pledges is now a top priority. While many have already completed their initial pledges, others are making periodic payments, and a few have yet to contribute to the project – we want to remind everyone there is a great way to simultaneously contribute to the Capital Campaign AND receive income tax benefits.

**Gifts of Appreciated Securities in 2017 Can Benefit You and St. Perpetua**

With the year racing to a close, time is running short for anyone planning to make a year-end charitable contribution to the St. Perpetua Capital Campaign. With the stock market at record highs, investors with appreciated securities have enhanced giving opportunities. The full value of an appreciated security may be deductible for income tax purposes if given to St. Perpetua this year AND without reduction by any capital gains tax. This can truly leverage your gift and minimize your taxes. And remember - consult your own tax advisor on what makes the most financial sense for you.

**Over 70½ and want to minimize taxes by having your 2017 IRA Minimum Distribution paid directly to St. Perpetua?**

Are you older than 70½? Do you need to take a 2017 Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA before year end? Tired of paying a big chunk of that in taxes? Consider having some or all of it paid directly from your IRA to St. Perpetua before year end and the amount will be counted toward satisfying your 2017 Required Minimum Distribution AND will not be taxed to you. Consult with your own tax advisors to make sure this make sense for you, and contact the Parish Office or visit www.stperpetua.org for more information on how to make these year-end distributions. (Note: different rules will apply for SEP IRAs and Simple IRAs).
A Note about December 24, Christmas Eve
Due to the construction of our new Community Center, the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve liturgy this year will take place at Stanley Middle School Gymnasium. All other Masses will be held in the Church. We are grateful to the Stanley School Administration for allowing us to rent their space to accommodate the large 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve worshippers.

Second Sunday of Advent
When I hear about John the Baptist dunking Israelites in the Jordan I remember a tender moment with my friend Charles Onofrio, the great lion of God who went home to heaven last year. No one loved Jesus and the Church more than Chuck, and no one was more receptive to and educated about the reforms of Vatican II than this eloquent Catholic lawyer.

But the first time Chuck observed the catechumens preparing for baptism being led from the church after the homily he was outraged. “Well, I’m not standing for this. If they can’t stay for Communion then neither can I. I’m a greater sinner than any of them. How dare I stay when they are being asked to leave?”

It took a few words of kind explanation from the great Bishop George Evans to help Chuck understand that this was the new rite of initiation for converts to the faith. Their dismissal is not—good heavens! — because they are sinners and we aren’t. They are dismissed in front of us so they can go for catechesis together, and so we can pray for them every step of the way.

Chuck became the lead catechist in the parish, and must have prayed hundreds of new Catholics to the baptismal font over the next thirty-five years. But I think he secretly liked the style of that wild, locust-eating Baptist, who dragged his own people—not those converting to Judaism, but lifelong, faithful Jews— out into the desert and got them to admit that THEY were sinners and that THEY needed a baptism of repentance.

Advent is such a quiet, reflective season. Listen carefully. A voice is crying out in the wilderness.

Second Sunday of Advent
December 10, 2017
Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.

The Story and You.

TOGETHER WE PRAY FOR THE SICK
Marie Saroyan, Chris Fliflet, Elizabeth Cox, Jennifer Rosko, Giselle Contreras, Juanita Estrellas, Dennis Callahan, George Buonocore, Caroline Bancroft, Charlotte Cairney, Judy Russell, Karen Zapotowski, Orlando Portillo, Jenny and Norma Carosella, Alex McLin, Fabio Mendoza, Anne Lagache, Karl Smida, Bruce Wood, Pat McGinnis, Mary Beth Mettz, Steve Luna, Chris Bruzzzone, Thomas Bond, Betty Magnoli, Carol Farrell Raffa, Terry Osburn, Dylan Cazin, Peter Welch, Bryan Inderrieden, Chris Clogher and Irwin Mettler.
ADVENT EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Although our parish is not having a formal Penance Service this Advent Season, we are encouraged to prepare our hearts as well as our homes for Christmas. Use this Examination of Conscience in your personal prayer or as a Family Prayer experience before dinner one evening:

*Have I been a source of support to my family?*

Our families are God’s gift to us. No family is perfect; far from it. However, every family is the place where one learns how to live with others and how to love others. As we examine our hearts to see how welcoming we have been in our home, we can ask ourselves:

- Have I been forgiving and understanding to the members of my family?
- Do I speak to my family members in a respectful way, supporting them, encouraging them, and taking my share of household responsibilities?

(pause to reflect…. and seek the forgiveness of God and one another)

*Have I taken my friends for granted?*

Scripture says that “a faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure.” It also says that “an honest answer is the sign of true friendship.” We need friends to help us make it through each day. As we examine our hearts to see how welcoming we have been to our friends, we can ask ourselves:

- How honest have I been with my friends in sharing my feelings, my fears, my hopes and my dreams?
- Are my relationships mutual? Do I try to give as much as receive? Am I a good listener as well as a good talker?

(pause to reflect…. And seek the forgiveness of God and one another)

*Have I reached out to the stranger and the poor?*

We have been given so much in this life – material blessings, beautiful homes, education, opportunities to travel, financial security. So many in this world lack even the basic necessities of life. Our Christian faith calls us to be our brother’s and sister’s keeper. As we examine our hearts to see how welcoming we have been to the stranger and the poor, we can ask ourselves:

- What have I done in concrete and specific ways to reach out to those less fortunate than I am?
- Do I make room in my thoughts and in my heart for the poor and hungry, those without a home or a job? Or is my first concern always for my own needs and desires?
- What about the people around me who suffer? The student in school who feels like an outsider? The neighbor who has no family? The parishioner whom I see all the time but have never spoken to? Have I made room for them in my life?

(pause to reflect…. and seek the forgiveness of God and one another)

Prayer the Lord’s Prayer slowly and consciously, letting the words Jesus taught his disciples bring God’s forgiveness to you and make you a channel of mercy and peace to others.