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.

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.

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

Assisted listening devices
available

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

Parish Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
Dear Friends,

So many of our beloved Christmas carols focus on the place of Jesus’ birth – Bethlehem. It is a holy site to Christians around the world. The city also is significant to Jews because it is the burial place of the matriarch Rachel and the birthplace of King David. Samuel anointed David king in Bethlehem and David was a descendant of Ruth and Boaz, who were married in Bethlehem.

Today Bethlehem has a population of approximately 36,000 people, with the Muslims holding a majority. In Hebrew, the town is Bet Lehem ("House of Bread") and, in Arabic, it is Bet Lahm ("House of Meat"). For centuries, Christian pilgrims have made the roughly two hour walk from Jerusalem to Manger Square.

Manger Square is the focus of activity of Christmas celebrations not once, but three times a year. In addition to the traditional Western celebration which begins on December 24, the Greek Orthodox mark their Christmas on January 6 and the Armenian observance is on January 19. The Church of the Nativity was built in the 4th century by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine.

The Altar of the Nativity sits below a silver and gold chandelier. Stairways on either side of the main altar lead to a grotto. A fourteen-point silver star embedded in white marble indicates the birthplace of Christ. An inscription reads, Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est ("Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary"). The candle that hangs over the embedded star illuminates a point on the earth where, tradition says, God took the initiative to make humanity more human. While we remember Jesus’ birth with lights and tinsel, with bells and incense, with parties and ornaments we should never forget the political impact of it, the psychological demands of it, the spiritual implications of it. Each year Christmas changes in meaning as we move through life growing more and more aware of its real significance for us.

As Sr. Joan Chittister, Benedictine author and spiritual guide writes: We were born. Jesus was born. What Jesus did to survive life, to bear life, to create life, to become life, we can do as well. Or better: What we do to survive life, to bear life, to create life, to become life, Jesus did before us. Our struggles are not new. Our questions are not senseless. Our burdens are not unbearable.

Christmas, the remembrance of the birth of Jesus, is not a remembrance at all. It is an awareness that grows in us from day to day all our lives. Christmas, the consciousness of eternal Life among us, is not one day of the year to mark with celebration. It is a way of life that marks the way we can live every day – with a deepening awareness that God dwells among us and that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus makes each day a source of grace and an opportunity to make today better than yesterday because on a day just like today, Christ shared our life and shares it now.

Merry Christmas!
Father John Kasper, OSFS
The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph were obedient to God’s will and desired to make him the center of their lives. Like them, we are called to make our lives radically open to God and to prepare a place for him in our own hearts. We are called to live out that which Jesus taught us in the Gospels. His presence in our lives will change the way we treat others and treat ourselves. His presence transforms us. In Youth Ministry at St. Perpetua we work with teens to meet the challenge to live a Gospel focused life. Youth Ministry gatherings return in early January.

Gary

The Annual Ruby Slippers Fundraiser needs your help!
Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) will hold its annual Ruby Slippers fundraiser February 8th and the St. Perpetua Community has always been very generous donating items for the Silent Auction. We are looking for donations of gift cards to restaurants and stores. You can call Wendy Levich at the church office if you would like to donate an item for the silent auction. Thank you for helping CCIH provide housing and services to over 1400 homeless and struggling families and individuals.

The Story and You...

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Well, we are full-tilt back in Matthew’s gospel, and we’ll stay here, except for three Sundays of the Christmas season, three Sundays in Lent, and most of the Sundays of Easter, right up to the Feast of Christ the King next November. That’s thirty-eight weeks of the gospel that begins with Advent and Christmas stories painted in charcoal and grey, and written in the gloomy key of B-flat minor.

That’s a dramatic change from the gospel we just completed, which begins with Luke’s Advent and Christmas stories using a palette of bright primary colors of reds, yellows and blues, and sung, I imagine, in A major. Luke loves to tell stories about Mary, and he knows far more about her than any of the other gospel writers. But it’s only Matthew who tells us about St. Joseph. He’s the only one, for example, who knows what Joseph was thinking when his betrothed “was found with child,” a child certainly not his.

He was going to divorce her quietly, even though Moses had said that when a man had relations with another man’s wife—which is how “betrothed” was understood—both the woman and man should be stoned (Lev. 20:10). But Joseph wasn’t going to do that, and this was BEFORE the angel came to him and announced that Mary’s child was conceived by the Holy Spirit! He was willing to go against Moses himself in order to do the merciful thing.

And there it is. That’s the glorious aria of Matthew’s gospel. Over and over, we will learn that mercy outbids justice every time. Go and learn the meaning of mercy, says Jesus.

Maybe he learned that at home, from Joseph.

How will you show mercy to someone in your life this Advent?
Kathy McGovern ©2019 www.thestoryandyou.com

St. Perpetua School Annual Fund
2019 marks our 13th Annual Fund, and 100% of your donations will go directly to support tuition assistance at St. Perpetua School. For the 2019-2020 school year, St. Perpetua has already granted assistance to students totaling $95,000. I am so fortunate and blessed to be able to share that because of your generosity, every family seeking financial support has been granted the assistance needed to provide their children with our Catholic school experience.

Members of our school and church community (families, parishioners, friends, and alumni) should have received a letter and brochure by mail about our Annual Fund. Additional brochures are available in the back of the church. Your support is vital to our ability to continue offering financial assistance to our qualifying families seeking a quality Catholic education for their children. A sincere thank you for your pledge of funds or support. Blessings, Karen Goodshaw
Fair Trade Holiday Gift Guide

The holidays are time to be in harmony with the world around us. They’re also the perfect time to slow down and consider the people behind our gifts and groceries. When you give a fair trade gift this holiday season, you’re actually giving twice—once to the loved one you’re shopping for, and also to the producers behind it. Get a head start on your holiday shopping! Fair Trade USA has ethical gifts for everyone on your list, from the adventurer to the homebody. PLUS ideas for gifts under $25 - Come and check out the gifts at https://www.fairtradedecertified.org/shopping-guides/holidaymc_cid=f9b0032412&mce_cid=5d6b84a600 (short link: shorturl.at/dimlY)

Community Center Wishlist

Check out the St. Perpetua Giving Tree in the foyer. We have put together a wish list for items still needed for the Community Center and you can help by selecting a tag with a giving amount on it or you can fill in your own amount.

You can send the tag back with a check or fill out the back with a credit card number and return it to the office. We would like to purchase the needed items at the first of the year and with your help we can make this happen.

The Community Center is being used everyday and by every group in the parish. The addition of the wish list items will help it function better than ever.

We greatly appreciate how kind and supportive you all are.

Fr. John and Staff

Coming Up this Week at St. Perpetua
December 22 - December 29

Sunday, December 22
9:30 am Children’s Liturgy of the Word, St. Francis Rm
11:30 am Teen/Family Mass
6:45 pm Centering Prayer, Chapel

Monday, December 23
4:00 pm Children’s Liturgy, Grand Hall
6:30 pm Teen/Youth Liturgy, Church
9:30 pm Caroling, Church
10:00 pm Night time Liturgy, Church

Tuesday, December 24
Christmas Eve
4:00 pm Children’s Liturgy, Grand Hall
6:30 pm Teen/Youth Liturgy, Church
9:30 pm Caroling, Church

Wednesday, December 25
Christmas Day
9:30 am Mass, Church
11:30 am Mass, Church

Sunday, December 29
9:30 am Children’s Liturgy of the Word, St. Francis Rm
11:30 am Teen/Family Mass

Important Please Read

We have heard from several parishes, the email/text gift card scam is underway again. As we have shared before, it is a national scam. You can google “priest scam gift cards” and see how wide spread it is.

The email/text would appear to be from Fr. John asking for your help in purchasing a gift card or sending money. He would never email or text you asking you for any monetary help.

Together we pray for the sick
Chris Bruzzone, Dylan Cazin, Arelene Fannin, Jimmy Fulton, Tish Reardon, Joseph Farrell, Rich Delaney, Marie Gidre, Tim Hennessy, Bridget Teranen, Vincent Bicomong, Jan Krismon Sunga, Barbara Worsham & Manuel Luna.

Mass Intentions
December 21, 2019 - December 29, 2019

Saturday 5:00 pm Louise Silvano ◊
Sunday 8:00 am For the Community
9:30 am Todd Brekke ◊
Monday 8:30 am Dennis Kearney ◊
Sunday 8:00 am For the Community
9:30 am Al Roensch ◊
Christmas Mass Schedule 2019

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24th

4:00 p.m. Children’s Liturgy in the Grand Hall
6:30 p.m. Family/Youth Liturgy at St. Perpetua Church
10:00 p.m. Night Time Liturgy (Preceded by Caroling at 9:30 p.m.)
at St. Perpetua Church

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25th

9:30 & 11:30 a.m. at St. Perpetua Church

Feast of the Holy Family

Saturday, December 28

5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29

8:00, 9:30, & 11:30 a.m.

Feast of Mary, Mother of God

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

9:30 a.m. chapel

Feast of the Epiphany

Saturday, January 4, 2020

5:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 5, 2020

8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.