St. Catherine of Siena Parish follows Jesus by welcoming all, sharing our gifts & giving glory to God.
**PARISH & SCHOOL STAFF**

**Fr. Anthony Huong Le, Parochial Administrator**

- **Deacon Albert Dizon**: dcndadizon@yahoo.com  
  Saint Catherine Elementary School  
  925-228-4140

- **Deacon David Holland**: dcdnholland@yahoo.com  
  Pre-School Director  
  St. Catherine Pre-School  
  925-229-2255

- **Jessica Griswold, Principal**  
  jgriswold@csdo.org  
  925-228-4140

- **RCIA Parish Office**  
  stcathmtz@yahoo.com  
  Safe Environment Coordinator  
  925-228-0697

- **TBA Director of Music Ministry**  
  drcschacht@yahoo.com

- **Sylvia Lloren**, Bookkeeper

- **Secretary**

**CHURCH LOCATION**: 604 Mellus Street, Martinez, CA

**PARISH OFFICE AND MAILING ADDRESS**: 1125 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 94553-1720

**TELEPHONE / FAX**: 925-228-2230 / 925-228-1318

**PARISH WEBSITE**: www.stcatherinemartinez.com

**SUBMISSIONS**: bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com

**OFFICE HOURS**: Mon-Fri 8:30 AM-1PM & 2 PM-5 PM

**GRAMMAR SCHOOL**: 604 Mellus Street, Martinez, CA  
  TELEPHONE / FAX: 925-228-4140 / 925-228-0697

**SCHOOL WEBSITE**: http://school.stcatherinemartinez.com/

**PRE SCHOOL**: 1125 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA  
  TELEPHONE / FAX: 925-229-2255 / 925-229-2474

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT**: www.virtusonline.org

**BAPTISMS**: Registration is mandatory two months prior to Baptism. Parents & Godparents are required to attend a mandatory Baptism preparation class before reception of the Sacrament.

**MARRIAGES**: Arrangements and mandatory preparation need to be arranged at least eight months prior to the wedding.

**FUNERALS**: We recommend using Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services at 925-932-0900. A representative will contact the parish office to coordinate your arrangements.

**BULLETIN SUBMISSIONS**: To place an announcement in the bulletin, email request to: bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com. The deadline for requests is no later than noon on Fridays one week prior to the date of the bulletin in which the announcement is requested to appear.

**EARLY DEADLINES**: Closely watch early deadlines imposed by the publisher and plan ahead accordingly. Deadline for Sep 16 all items must be submitted by Fri, Sep 7 by noon. Please direct your inquiries to the email above. Thank you.

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**LITURGY SCHEDULE**

**SATURDAY**: 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM

**SUNDAY**: 7:00 AM  
  8:30 AM Children’s Liturgy of the Word  
  10:30 AM  
  12:30 PM Spanish

**WEEKDAYS**: 8:00 AM (Thursday is a Communion Service)

**HOLY DAYS**: 8:00 AM, 12:10 PM and 7:00 PM

**ADORATION**: Fridays from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM

**RECONCILIATION**: Saturdays from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

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**MINISTRIES/ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTS**

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<tr>
<th>Ministry / Organization</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Altar Servers</td>
<td>925-957-0437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Environment TBD</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingo</td>
<td>925-858-7330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic Youth Organization - CYO</td>
<td>925-817-9429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Liturgy of the Word</td>
<td>925-212-7645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>925-370-8143</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion</td>
<td>925-228-6460</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Formation - Religious Education (PreK-8th Grades)</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grief Ministry/Card Ministry</td>
<td>925-335-9395</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Society</td>
<td>925-229-2265</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Cruz</td>
<td>925-997-2432</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital/Sick/Homebound</td>
<td>925-228-4387</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ignite</td>
<td>925-787-8396</td>
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<td>Italian Catholic Federation - ICF</td>
<td>925-229-2265</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knights of Columbus - K of C</td>
<td>925-334-2429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loaves &amp; Fishes</td>
<td>925-348-2620</td>
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<td>Lectors</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legion of Mary</td>
<td>925-229-2265</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect Life</td>
<td>925-370-8143</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults - RCIA</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<td>Safe Environment for Children Project - SECP</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECP: No More Secrets - Survivor Outreach</td>
<td>925-372-6091</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Lorenzo Ruiz Community - SLRC</td>
<td>925-381-1835</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td>925-356-8822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spark (young adult group ages 18 years to 35 years)</td>
<td>925-228-1051</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ushers</td>
<td>925-228-2230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Ladies Institute - YLI</td>
<td>925-228-6262</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Group/Confirmation (High School 9 to 12 Grades)</td>
<td>925-890-6229</td>
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Before serving or continuing in your ministry, complete the Diocesan required Safe Environment for Children Project Training @ www.virtusonline.org. Thank you.
The sabbath was not for God but for man to give glory to see was He worked on the sabbath. They had forgotten with joy giving glory and thanks to God, and all they could a crippled man who could walk and jump up and down became possible through Jesus. A good thing happened to work on the sabbath. A miracle took place, the impossible because it happened on the sabbath, and you could not when it took place on the sabbath. Then they were outraged. It didn't matter the only time they acknowledged it was

God. The crippled could walk. People were having demons driven out. The custom had arisen within Judaism that you had to purify yourself before you could do many things in everyday life including eating. For example, if you went to the market to buy food for the family to eat. It was necessary for you to purify yourself prior to preparing the food or eating. Because every one went to the market, therefore, sinners would also be there, and this made the market ritualistically un-clean. There were many other things that could become ritualistically un-clean merely by being close to something considered ritualistically unclean. While cleanliness is a good thing and certainly to be practiced, these laws of ritualistically un-clean brought it to a new level. So, what happened was that the man-made rules became so important that it overshadowed even Gods commandments. There were hundreds of these man-made rules and they were enforced without exception. Therefore, if you were hungry and needed to eat you had to wash. If it were not possible to wash you could not eat. If you were injured and were bleeding you were also ritualistically un-clean. If someone else was injured and was bleeding and you assisted them, then you and the injured person were unclean. In order for you to be accepted in the community you had to purify yourself for many days before you were allowed to enter the Temple. So, the rules themselves became more important than worshiping God. The rules were set, and even common sense or logic could not be used when interpreting the law.

Jesus knew the Pharisees and the scribes had been sent from Jerusalem in order to find fault with Him and His disciples and would use any of these man-made laws to undermine them. That is why He called them hypocrites. They were using man-made laws to try to undermine God. They were so fixated on the man-made laws they could not recognize Jesus was from God. Despite all the amazing things He was doing. They were seeing miracles with their own eyes. The blind could see. The deaf could hear. The crippled could walk. People were having demons driven out. It didn't matter the only time they acknowledged it was when it took place on the sabbath. Then they were outraged because it happened on the sabbath, and you could not work on the sabbath. A miracle took place, the impossible became possible through Jesus. A good thing happened to a crippled man who could walk and jump up and down with joy giving glory and thanks to God, and all they could see was He worked on the sabbath. They had forgotten the sabbath was not for God but for man to give glory to God.

In another part of the Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. A man traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers. He was beaten and left for dead. A priest was traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem and sees the poor man bleeding and lying in the road. He crosses to the other side of the road and does not help him because he will become ritualistically unclean. A Levite also comes along the road, sees the man and crosses to the other side because he too will be ritualistically unclean. A Samaritan comes along and sees the man and helps him by taking him to an inn until he was better. Jesus asked the Pharisees and scribes, “Who was a neighbor to the man who was robbed?”

They answered the one who showed him mercy.

This is the key: there must be mercy. Laws are very necessary, and we must have them in a society to keep us safe and to allow us freedom to live in this country. However, rules that are enforced whether civil or religious without mercy become scourges. The letter of the law rather than the intent of the law can become a way to diminish people rather than helping them. Any good law should help society and the people. Any law that diminishes people diminishes society and has no mercy. Terrible things can and have happened in societies when things are only judged whether it is legal or illegal.

So, when Jesus called the Pharisees and scribes hypocrites He backs it up by quoting the prophet Isaiah and tells them, “You disregard God’s commandments but cling to human tradition.” Then He calls all the people who were there and tells them, “Nothing that enters you from the outside can defile you, but only what comes out from inside you will defile you.” He lists them as follows, “From within people comes evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly.” He continues, “All these things come from within us and they defile us.” That’s quite a list of evil things that are within us. It’s hard to look at this list and think Jesus was talking about me. But as I reflect on the list, I can certainly see some things I have done that are on the list and I am not proud of them. I suspect it is the same for many of us. I wonder if Jesus came back to our society today would He call us hypocrites. Sadly, I think He would do just that. When we look at and judge and disregard the weakest members of our society. Those who are marginalized, the poor, the sick, the elderly, the unborn, the immigrant, and justify their mistreatment because there is a law. Regardless of the circumstances of their lives, we are just like the Pharisees. Every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and has a God-given dignity that no law has the right to diminish. Jesus told us, “You must love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.” Are we doing that?

God Bless You
Deacon Dave Holland
**WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE**

Week-at-a-glance dates, times, and locations are taken from the website calendar: www.stcmtz.org. If further clarification is needed, please contact the parish office at 925 228-2230 extension 0. To host hospitality, email bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com

**SUNDAY, 9/2**
- 8:00 AM  † Hospitality—SvdP Hosts
- 10:30 AM  † Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish

**MONDAY, 9/3**
- St. Phoebe, pray for us
- Labor Day—Office Closed

**TUESDAY, 9/4**
- St. Rosalia, pray for us
- 5:00 PM  † Choir Workshop
- 6:00 PM  † Choir Rehearsal
- 7:00 PM  † YLI meeting

**WEDNESDAY, 9/5**
- St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us.
- 6:30 PM  † PC Legion of Mary Meeting
- 7:00 PM  † PC Baptism Preparation Class
- 7:30 PM  † Choir Rehearsal

**THURSDAY, 9/6**
- St. Eleutherius, pray for us.
- 7:00 PM  † CH Lectors Meeting
- 7:00 PM  † PC Baptism Preparation Class-Spanish

**FRIDAY, 9/7**
- St. Cloud, pray for us.
- 10:30 AM  † CH Grandparents’ Day Prayer Service
- 12:00 PM  † CH Adoration
- 5:00 PM  † CH Benediction

**SATURDAY, 9/8**
- St. Adrian, pray for us.
- 9:30 AM  † PCL SvdP Food Distribution
- 12:30 PM  † CH Quinceañera
- 3:00 PM  † CH Reconciliation
- 5:30 PM  † PH Quarterly Volunteer Reception

**SUNDAY, 9/9**
- 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
- 8:00 AM  † PH Hospitality—ICF Hosts
- 3:45 PM  † PCL Confirmation Preparation Class
- 6:00 PM  † PCL Youth Group Meeting

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**PARISH STEWARDSHIP**

**AUGUST 26, 2018**

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

- Sunday Collection  $5,688.00
- Assumption  $ 103.00
- Confirmation/Youth Group  $ 720.00

Thank you for your continued generosity!
REMEMBER ST. CATHERINE PARISH IN YOUR WILL & LIVING TRUST

**WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE**

**SATURDAY, 9/1**
- 4:30 Joe Gomes †

**SUNDAY, 9/2**
- 8:00 AM Ramona & Clemente Lejano †
- 10:30 AM Henrietta Coppi †

**MONDAY, 9/3**
- 8:00 AM Kirk & Brydie Kuykendall †

**TUESDAY, 9/4**
- 8:00 AM Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish
- Anniversary Blessings

**WEDNESDAY, 9/5**
- 8:00 AM Barbara Nicks †

**FRIDAY, 9/7**
- 8:00 AM Petrus & Hendrika DeGraef †

**SATURDAY, 9/8**
- 8:00 AM George Avila Jr. †
- 12:30 Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish

**SUNDAY, 9/9**
- 7:00 AM Ernest Fio †
- 12:30 Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish

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**CELEBRATE YOUR CATHOLIC MARRIAGE WITH US 2018**

Wedding Anniversary Celebration
SUN, OCT 21 @ 10:00 AM
Cathedral of Christ the Light & Reception
$25/anniversary couple & $10 each guest
www.oakdiocese.org/anniversary
Call Laura @ 510-267-8395

The Communications Committee has depleted its supply of faith sharing articles! Won’t you consider submitting one?

**HOW TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR FAITH SHARING:**
Consider sharing with us your faith journey, your walk with Our Lord. How has He worked in you for the good of others? Articles should be between 300-500 words, your own testimonial to your Catholic faith, and submitted with a portrait to FaithSharingSCS@gmail.com. By making a personal submission to the bulletin, you agree to having your words edited, printed, and shared by the Parish and Communications Committee and agree to a photo release of your image. Consider this, please.

**HOW TO SUBMIT AN ENTRY FOR SAINTS AMONG US:**
Did you catch someone or group doing something good? Helping our neighbors in need? Acts of faith in and around our parish and school? Please let us know about it by emailing bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com and insert “Saints Among Us” in the subject line.

**HOW TO SUBMIT A QUESTION:**
Whether young or younger, do you have a question about the mechanics of the Mass, the traditions, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, or its teachings? Submit your questions to bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com and insert “Q&A” in the subject line.

**HOW TO SUBMIT A QUESTION:**
Whether young or younger, do you have a question about the mechanics of the Mass, the traditions, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, or its teachings? Submit your questions to bulletinsubmissions@gmail.com and insert “Q&A” in the subject line.

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**BECOME A DOCENT AT THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE LIGHT**
Docents are Volunteer Educators who guide groups through the Cathedral. They facilitate dialogue that help visitors experience the history, art, architecture and beauty of the Cathedral; as a volunteer docent, you’ll be a vital part of the Cathedral’s mission “to know Christ better and make Him better known.”

**APPLY ONLINE:**
cctlcathedral.org/get-involved/bearers-of-light

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**INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

**SAT 9/1**
- 4:30 Joe Gomes †

**SUN 9/2**
- 8:00 AM Ramona & Clemente Lejano †
- 10:30 AM Henrietta Coppi †

**MON 9/3**
- 8:00 AM Kirk & Brydie Kuykendall †

**TUE 9/4**
- 8:00 AM Int. Mary & Tom Cook
- Anniversary Blessings

**WED 9/5**
- 8:00 AM Barbara Nicks †

**FRI 9/7**
- 8:00 AM Petrus & Hendrika DeGraef †

**SAT 9/8**
- 8:00 AM George Avila Jr. †

**SUN 9/9**
- 7:00 AM Ernest Fio †
- 12:30 Int. St. Catherine of Siena Parish

Call the Parish Office for intentions.
On this Labor Day weekend, let’s remember our retired priests. Although they are officially retired, some of the 58 priests in that category are still “laboring in the vineyard” as chaplains, pastor emeriti, spiritual directors, and more. Next weekend, September 8 & 9, you will have the opportunity to contribute to the Diocesan Priest Retirement Benefit Trust. Prayerfully consider how you can match their generosity to the Church. Thank you.

**SCS FAITH FORMATION**

If you missed in-person registration, please contact the Parish Office. Forms are located on website.

For more details, please call the Parish Office or for

**CONFIRMATION & YOUTH GROUP**

Contact Paul Holland: pholland10@gmail.com or
Jenny Holland: jenniferdevita@gmail.com

Begins SUN, SEP 9 @ 3:45 PM in Parish Center Library

**RELIGIOUS ED—PreK through 8th Grades**

Contact Andrea Watkins: drestcath@yahoo.com

Begins WED, SEP 19 @ 6 PM in the Church.

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**ST. CATHERINE SCHOOL NEWS**

A Lumen Christi Academy School

**Junior High Retreat**

“What I learned about today’s theme of "Shining Christ’s Light," was that Jesus is our light. Jesus is our light that helps guide us through the darkness. This means He pulls us away from sin, and helps us to be faithful and loving in all we do. Jesus leads us through the darkness of sin and helps us follow in His footsteps. I can apply this by doing things that will bring light into other peoples lives. Or doing things that will inspire other people to do things that will bring light into other people’s lives. For example, I could donate to the food bank, or help the sick and needy. Others will see me doing these things and it will inspire them also do bring light to the world.”

—Jr. High Student

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**Italian Catholic Federation**

**Annual Family Polenta, Chicken & Sausage Dinner in Parish Hall**

SAT, OCT 20 @ 6 PM

Benefitting Seminary & Scholarship Funds, National Charity & St. Catherine Respect Life

$20=Adults 13yrs+  $8=children 6-12 yrs

FREE = Children 5 yrs and under

FOR INFO & TICKETS  Call 925-229-2665

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**“THE BIG LA BOCCE 2016!”**

Sat, September 22, 11 am to 3 pm

@ Martinez Bocce Federation Courts for this annual fundraiser in partnership with Loaves & Fishes to provide resources for the St. Vincent de Paul Free Dining Room

register at www.svdp-cc.org or b.hunt@svdp-cc.org

Includes light breakfast, lunch, beverages, silent auction, raffle & a minimum 3 games per team. Practice begins at 10:30 am

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**THANK YOU!** The YLI sends a big thank you to parishioners for their support of its bake sale. The proceeds of $450.50 will go to the YLI Golden Jubilee Burse for seminarian education in the Diocese. We hope you all enjoyed the sweets and treats. It was good to visit with you and look forward to next time.

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**Peace and Blessings,**

Mrs. Jessica Griswold

Follow us on Instagram and Twitter: @stcathmtz

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Welcome to St. Catherine School and Parish,

We are excited to start our new school year as we focus on our theme, “Shining Christ’s light.”


We are excited to promote the many wonderful things happening in our school and share them with all of you. Please keep our school families in your prayers this year.

---

*St. Margaret of Cortona Church & Parish*
The “Confessions” of Saint Augustine is considered one of the greatest Christian classics of all time. It is an extended poetic, passionate, intimate prayer that Augustine wrote as an autobiography sometime after his conversion, to confess his sins and proclaim God’s glory. Just as his first hearers were captivated by his powerful conversion story, so also have many millions been over the following sixteen centuries. His experience of God speaks to us across time with little need of transpositions.

This version of Augustine’s Confessions contains each “book,” or chapter, in the original Latin, followed by the same book translated into English by William Watts.

**This feature can be enjoyed through the SCS ACCESS:**
Go to Internet Explorer and click https://formed.org. Enter Code: XPTJK8 (case sensitive)

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**San Lorenzo Ruiz Community**

**9 Day-Novena & Fiesta**

**Begins**
- Day 1 Thursday SEP 20, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 2 Friday SEP 21, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 3 Saturday SEP 22, 6:00 pm Prayer Service
- Day 4 Sunday SEP 23, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 5 Monday SEP 24, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 6 Tuesday SEP 25, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 7 Wednesday SEP 26, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 8 Thursday SEP 27, 5:15 pm Prayer Service
- Day 9 Friday SEP 28, 5:15 pm Prayer Service

**Enjoy**

**Free**
continues: SAT, SEP 29, 4:30 PM Community Mass

**Followed By:** Light Dinner, Music, and Raffle

All are Welcome! Good Food! Good Company! Free!

If you have it, please wear your Filipino attire.

For more info call Esther Concepcion @ 925-381-1835

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**White Mass—Thanksgiving Mass for Healthcare Providers**

SAT. SEP. 29 @ 10 AM at the Cathedral

All who provide healthcare services, are encouraged to attend. Reception & mental health resources fair will follow.

**Blue Mass—Thanksgiving Mass for Public Servants**

SUN. OCT. 7 @ 10 AM at the Cathedral

All who provide public services are encouraged to attend especially first responders & law enforcement.

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**Martinez Home Tour**

Sat, Oct. 13 @ 10 AM to 4 PM

Explore eight beautiful homes & gardens plus St. Catherine Church & School!

Info: daddyroubal@gmail.com

and to purchase tickets:

www.martinezhometour.com

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**LET OUR ADORATION NEVER CEASE!**

“The Church and the world have a great need for the Eucharist. Jesus awaits us in this Sacrament of love. Let us take the time to celebrate and contemplate the fullness of our faith.” — Saint Pope John Paul II

Join Him, won’t you?

**Fridays in Church from Noon to 5pm**
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www.wlpmusic.com

Standing on the Rock CD by James Wahl
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for little ones, with 10 songs based on Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. This is a new music collection for preschool children and those who are in early grade school. $17.00 + S&H

Catholic Cruises and Tours
Come Sail Away on a 7-night Catholic Exotic Cruise starting as low as $1045 per couple. Daily Mass and Rosary offered. Deposit of only $350 per person will reserve your cabin. Space is limited. Thanks and God Bless, Brian or Sally, coordinators 860.399.1785

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372-9200
Melody Herder-Jimison, D.V.M.

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SUN, SEP 2, 2018: TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Law is good, love is better

It seemed like such a good idea at the time: carve the law of the nation in stone. We citizens of another land and millennia can appreciate how final the Ten Commandments must have felt—and yet how inadequate they turned out to be. We too have laws and rules, Declaration and Constitution, rights and amendments. But a community doesn’t emerge from stone or paper, from documents and words and promises. We may give lip service to high ideals, but only love leads to the common good. Do we really love our neighbor as ourselves?

Today’s readings: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8; James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 (125). “What great nation has statutes and decrees that are as just as this whole law?”

MON, SEP 3, 2018: MEMORIAL OF GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH The law of love

The Pharisees criticized Jesus for letting His disciples pick grain on the sabbath to eat. The disciples were desperately hungry, or they would not have been breaking the sabbath rules. Jesus’ radical idea is that the sabbath is made for people, not the other way around. As Lord of the sabbath, Jesus recognizes that if religious observance hurts people, something’s wrong with our priorities. Religion can seem to focus on the do’s and don’ts, but rules are not ends in themselves. They serve to bring about love and justice, not give us opportunities to oppress or exclude one another. In his Book of Pastoral Rule, Pope Gregory, celebrated today, says, “The law of Christ is charity.” Try to keep the rules in perspective when you apply them to yourself or others.

Today’s readings: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Luke 4:16-30 (431). “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place.”

TUE, SEP 4, 2018: O little town of Capernaum

You’ve probably heard the saying, “All politics is local,” suggesting that people are mostly concerned about the quality of life in their neighborhood or town. The same might be said of religion. Though Christianity now counts more than 2 billion believers worldwide, it all began in Capernaum, a small fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Reportedly the home of the apostles Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, and the tax collector Matthew, Jesus selected this hamlet as the center of His public ministry after He left the mountainous town of Nazareth. Think of Capernaum as the mustard seed from which a great world religion sprung forth. And never underestimate the power of your own “small” life to bear great fruit as well.


THU, SEP 6, 2018: Reach beyond patience

In the confessional recently, a friend admitted she lacked gratitude. “I hate my life!” she told the priest. To her surprise he accepted her frank admission. “Some people suffer from poor health, others from a poverty of peace in their circumstances,” he observed. Then he advised her: “Pray for peace. Not for patience to simply bear your life, but peace to fully live it.” Many of us endure seasons when our days feel unfertile, our efforts seem purposeless. We lower the nets, again and again, and come up empty. In these hours, pray not for patience but for an enlivening peace.

Today’s readings: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Luke 5:1-11 (434). “We have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.”

FRI, SEP 7, 2018: Reserve judgment

Two very old titles for Jesus are King and Judge. His kingship over the universe is one of the “offices” or aspects of His divinity in which believers share, the other two being the priestly and prophetic. Jesus is also the ultimate judge of the world-only God can judge, and Christ is God revealed. Hand in hand with Jesus being the Judge is that the rest of us are not. The biblical message is clear: Judging others calls down God’s judgment on yourself. Another downside to judging is that it sets people over one another—“I’m better than you and so I can judge you”—when in fact all are equally subject to God. Leave the ruling and judging to God and get to work loving your neighbor.


SAT, SEP 8, 2018: FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Unbroken chain

Birthdays are great stopping-off points on life’s journey; they are days to look backward and forward. We marvel at the patterns of our lives that are visible only from a distance. We look ahead to the future with hope. On Mary’s birthday, we recall the extraordinary circumstances leading to her birth—an aging, barren couple, a surprise visit from an angel, a prayer answered—and we look forward with wonder at the life of the child who became the Mother of God. Scripture offers a long genealogy of Jesus—another reminder that life is an unbroken chain of births and deaths, deeds and consequences. Today ask yourself, “What might the action I’m contemplating set into motion? Will it be for good or ill?” and then act accordingly.

Today’s readings: Micah 5:1-4a or Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23 or 1:18-23 (636). “She will bear a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

SUN, SEP 9, 2018: TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Put on your kingdom glasses

It’s hard to see past appearances. Some creatures are just better looking, whether it’s a specimen of tree or flower, fish or bird, or human being. And the lovelier the view, the more it seduces us. The trouble with such distinctions is not in the eye of the beholder, of course, but rather in the heart. Do we value children according to a scale of cuteness or cleverness? Do we choose friends based on zip codes or celebrity? Do we give our attention to the person wearing trendy labels? Put on your kingdom glasses and reverse your instinctive attraction today.

Today’s readings: Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-5; Mark 7:31-37 (128). “Have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?”