
St. Joseph of Cupertino

St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish
Cupertino, California
~~ Founded 1913 ~~

Flyer

November 2019



Introducing Father Mendie Nguyen

By Steve Hill

Our new parochial vicar, Father Mendie (full name: Joseph Mendie Nguyen), was born in Saigon, Vietnam, the third of five siblings. His parents operated a store in their home. The store was on the ground floor and the family lived above it.

He grew up during the Vietnam War, which created struggles for his family. Fr. Mendie was age 5 when the war ended in 1975. The Communists made life hard for families, especially those who worked for the Americans, as his father did. His father, Mai Ba Nguyen, was sent to a re-education camp after the war because of his work as a chaplain's assistant in the South Vietnamese Army.

In the 1980s, the family made serious attempts to flee the persecution and seek freedom and brighter opportunity. They tried to escape the country by boat twice between 1980 and 1987 but failed to be picked up at sea. They boarded fishing boats with others and floated in the South China Sea for days without rescue. They were forced to return to Vietnam. In 1981, however, one of his brothers and an uncle made it to the U.S. as boat people.

For over three months, his father was in a re-education camp and out of touch with his family. They did not know if he was alive or dead. Finally, they found that he lived in the middle of nowhere in the central Vietnam for six years. One day, an older looking man with gray hair appeared at their home with almost no belongings or money – it was his father.

When working on restoring the United States' diplomatic relation with Vietnam, POW Senator John McCain did not forget the human rights and democracy agenda in the country. He participated in the establishment of the *Humanitarian Operation*. It was a special deal with Hanoi in 1989 to allow the South Vietnamese officers and soldiers who could not escape Vietnam after the fall of Saigon and had undergone more than three years in the re-education camps to leave for the United States. By 1994, 34,000

service members of the old South's regime and their family members had arrived in America.

Mr. Nguyen and his family were among those who qualified for refugee status, enabling them to come to America.

They arrived in U.S. on November 13, 1991 and lived in Union City, CA. Later on, they were settled in Ft. Smith, AR until 1993, before moving to the Bay Area where Fr. Mendie, their other son and relatives lived.

Fr. Mendie worked a number of different jobs, including electronic assembly in Fremont, CA, food production, and machine operation in Ft. Smith, AR.

In 2006 he felt a calling from God, and he entered the seminary of the Divine Word Missionaries in Iowa as a religious missionary. In 2008 he felt the calling to be a parish priest. He entered the Diocese of San Jose, where he completed studies for the priesthood at St. Patrick Seminary and University in

Menlo Park. He earned the degrees of B.A. in Philosophy, Master of Divinity (M.Div.), and Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T.B.). Fr. Mendie's academic achievements reflect the Vietnamese culture of pursuing education.

Following his ordination on June 1, 2013, Father Mendie was assigned to St. Simon Parish in Los Altos, where he served for six years as parochial vicar. St. Joseph of Cupertino is his second assignment as a priest.

Fr. Mendie's complex and heartbreaking path from a child in Saigon to our parish offers us vivid insight to the deleterious effects of war. You might say he was lucky that his parents and all siblings eventually survived and settled in close proximity in America. He credits Senator McCain for the legislation that enabled his family to leave Vietnam and travel safely to our country.

His motto is taken from the book of Micah in the Old Testament (6:8): "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly."



St. Joseph of Cupertino Holy Name Society Still Rolling 67 Years Later

By Mike Krey

The annual parish carnival has many highlights, but surely they include the tasty Tri-Tip sandwiches. That's thanks to the St. Joseph of Cupertino Holy Name Society.

The parish has many fund-raisers, and surely one of the most successful is Saturday bingo. That's thanks to the St. Joseph HNS.

And while the parish is always festive at Christmas, surely one of the jolliest events is the visit from the chubby gent who resides at the North Pole. And even that is thanks to the St. Joseph HNS.

The Holy Name Society – also known as the St. Joseph of Cupertino Men's Club – has been a parish staple since 1952.

"The Holy Name Society has been one of the strongest pillars supporting our community," Pastor Father Greg Kimm said. "And by living their faith, the members have brought honor to the Name to which the Society is dedicated: the Holy Name of Jesus."

For 67 years, the St. Joseph HNS has raised well more than \$1 million for St. Joseph parish and school, while also providing a host of services for the parish community.

Often, the work is behind the scenes. While HNS has cooked the Tri-Tip sandwiches – not to mention the hamburgers, hot dogs and sausages -- for all 16 years of the latest incarnation of the parish carnival, this year the club went even further. With meat costs rising, the carnival committee had decided to skip the Tri-Tip this year. Unwilling to forgo that tasty tradition, the HNS stepped in and bought the meat itself.

Besides the carnival, the HNS members display their grill skill at the annual parish feast day, the end-of-school barbeque and the annual St. Patrick's Dinner. For years, HNS cooked and served the dinner associated with the San Jose Diocese priests' golf tournament. And the club has ably manned the bar at the school's annual auction fund-raiser and annual spaghetti dinner.

Besides hosting Santa's December visit to the school, where St. Nick or his elf hand out candy canes to the students (oh yes, HNS also gives holiday gifts of thanks to the priests, nuns, teachers and staff), the HNS has helped with Thanksgiving Day food baskets, the homeless men's shelter, local Habitat for

Humanity projects and many other ad hoc needs that pop up in the active St. Joseph of Cupertino community.

Moreover, the HNS runs an annual golf tournament, with all proceeds going to deserving 8th grade graduates to help with their high school tuition.

Too much work for the poor guys, you say? Ahhh, no. The camaraderie and spirit of the group makes these activities more fun than work.

"We do a lot of good things for the parish, and guys join because they want to do their part and give back to the community," said Paul Anaya, longtime parishioner and current president of St. Joseph HNS. "But all our events include a healthy dose of socializing. We try to make it fun, and we succeed."

Members meet the first Wednesday of every month in the HNS room on campus. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m., but HNS members need not go hungry, as pizza and beverages are on tap starting around 6:30 p.m. The HNS also holds quarterly mass/breakfast events for members and their families and the club holds an annual Christmas dinner for members and guests.

A wall in the HNS room is adorned with the photos of 18 past presidents, starting with Berk Gilson. And that omits at least three photos, including current president Anaya and his predecessor, Drew Lavery. Besides Paul and Drew, current longtime HNS mainstays include Ralph Trentadue, John Caldwell, Dave Tonna, Mike Wilbanks, Sam Lewers, Dick Sherman, Tom Richter, Ed Denson and Sean Miller. Past presidents include Jim Kelly, Bob Arno, John Linney, Dave Davis and Tom Taylor. The late former club president Dick Caldwell ran bingo for decades, and a plaque in the Parish Hall commemorates his service.

The HNS room also displays photos of 25 Eagle Scouts. The HNS is the official sponsor of the local Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops. The scouts help the HNS with the St. Patrick's Dinner and more.

HNS always seeks new members. Understanding that life has become so busy, HNS asks that members help out at bingo only one Saturday a month. Otherwise, most activities are once a year.

New members can contact HNS through the parish or school offices, but men are encouraged to simply show up for a Wednesday meeting. There are no dues, members simply serve at will and offer whatever help they are able to give.



Paul Anaya, Dick Sherman & Drew Lavery



Sam and Melissa Lewers

Blessing of the Animals

By Mary Jo Sullivan-Worley

Annually, our parish invites members to bring their pets to a Blessing of the Animals on or near the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. On October 2, many dogs, cats, a hamster, and stuffed animals were blessed by Fr. Mendie Nguyen, in front of the school entrance.

Preschool through 8th grade students, parents, parishioners, pets, and stuffed animals, assembled and were greeted by St. Joseph of Cupertino School Principal Michael Lee. All were led in prayer by fifth grade teacher, Deborah Miller, and her students. Music Director, Kama Belloni, directed and led students in song. We were reminded the gifts of animals and our entire planet come from God and are given to our care.

Live pets went home with parents and parishioners following the blessing.



Fr. Mendie & Kama Belloni

New RCIA Cohort Formed

By Mary Jo Sullivan-Worley

A group of catechumens have been attending sessions to learn about Catholicism since early September. The RCIA Team requests prayers for the catechumens as they discern their faith journeys, and for the team members assisting them.

The Rite of Acceptance and Welcome will take place at the 9:30 a.m. Sunday mass, on November 17. At this time, a

poster will be placed in the vestibule of the church with team and catechumen photos.

Updates throughout the year will be forthcoming in the Newsletter and Bulletin. Referrals for the Catechumenate can still be made to Janice LaMotte at the Parish Office adulted@stjoscup.org.

Preparing for Jesus' Birthday

By Brother John M. Samaha, S.M.

What do you do – besides shopping – to prepare for Christmas? Anything that is really connected with appreciating the real meaning of Jesus' birthday? What does Advent mean for you? How can we prepare well for the arrival of Jesus at Christmas? Are you familiar with any practices or customs that help make Christmas truly Christ-centered? Remember that Jesus is the reason for the season. Here are some ideas to consider personally, with your family, and with friends and colleagues. Do something really connected with the meaning of Advent to make Christmas truly Christ-centered. Set priorities.

Daily Reading and Reflection

Set aside ten minutes or more daily to read and ponder the inspired Word of God in the daily mass readings or in other Old Testament and the New Testament stories that present the faith of the great characters, men and women, waiting in expectation for the coming of the promised Redeemer.

Receive Jesus in the Sacraments

Consider participating in Holy mass several times during the week, or daily if possible. Take advantage of the wonderful opportunity to receive in Holy Communion the Jesus who became human like us to redeem us. The penitential season of

Advent is also a special time to receive God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Participate in a parish communal penance celebration.

Play Kris Kringle

The spirit of caring and giving for another member of a family or group is another revered Advent custom. Each family member draws the name of another family member written on a slip of paper, for whom he or she will secretly play the role of Kris Kringle (Santa Claus), or Christkindl (the Christ Child). The person whose name was drawn is now in the special care of the Kris Kringle or Christkindl, who will perform acts of kindness for the person and perhaps offer a special gift at Christmas. On Christmas Eve each tries to guess who played Kris Kringle for them.

Advent Calendar

Keep an Advent Calendar to count down the days until Christmas. A door or window is opened every day of Advent to reveal some aspect of the season in an image or text. Such a calendar can be purchased at a religious bookstore, or another option would be simply to mark each day on an ordinary calendar.

