December 24, 2017
Dear Parishioners of Divine Savior and our Cherished Visitors: A very important set of words appear near the end of today’s Gospel, namely, Mary’s statement “may it be done to me according to your word.” Mary is clearly stating that she is making herself fully available to God and is willing to do what God asked of her through the angel. Her part began when Jesus was conceived in her through the Holy Spirit. Truly, she was the handmaid of the Lord.

Mary put all of her trust in God. It is no wonder, then, that it would have been part of Jesus’ DNA to do likewise. No matter how Jesus was tempted or tempted, no matter the multiple ways people tried to trap Jesus, no matter how Jesus prayed that He could avoid the suffering and death that stared Him in the face, He put His trust fully in His heavenly Father.

It is no wonder that on this fourth and last Sunday of Advent we take the time to honor Mary’s trust and faith. However, we honor her best by imitating her. While we realize that God has given us talents and that we are to use them in gratitude to God, we want to keep in mind that it is God who always initiates everything. The more we reflect on the generosity of God the more likely our lives will be full of joy. This attitude, in turn, helps us to realize that, like Maria, we are greatly blessed and full of grace and that the Lord is with us. The more we ponder these truths, the more we will accept how sacred our lives are as well as the life of every person on the planet, and like Mary, become the bearers of the Real Presence of Jesus.

Like Mary, we might be greatly troubled by the amazing trust God has in us. We might be deeply concerned about whether we are God’s servants and reveal His Sacred Presence in the way that we think, talk, act, interact and love. Our personal and communal relationship with Jesus is likewise renewed as we celebrate Christmas.

MINISTRY TO THE HOMEBOUND
Our lay ministers would like to wish each and every one of you a very happy and peace-filled Christmas and also a Happy New Year! If you are interested in this ministry, you may contact Mary at mttharmyk@outlook.com for information.

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Faith Formation News

Catholics Returning Home
An Open Door for Returning Catholics

Were you raised Catholic but do not come or seldom come to church anymore? Are you a Catholic who now feels separated from the Church? Would you like to know more about the Catholic Church as it is today?

No matter how long you have been away and no matter the reason, we invite you to consider renewing your relationship with the Catholic Church.

Please join us for six informal sessions beginning Thursday January 11th, 7:15 – 8:30 p.m. The sessions will include sharing, and updates on the Church today. For additional information, contact Kathleen Hass at the church office, 989-7400.

Is God calling you? Interested in becoming a Catholic? Have you been here coming and want to know more about the Catholic faith? Never been baptized? Want to make your First Communion? Contact Sharon at the parish office, 989-7400 or sharon@divinesavior.com. She will explain the process called RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults), which provides a safe place for you to explore your spiritual desires using the scriptures and receiving support and guidance from the parish community.

TO ONE AND ALL, A CHRISTMAS WISH FOR GREAT JOY, DEEP PEACE AND HEARTS FULL OF LOVE

On behalf of the parish staff, I pray abundant blessings to all as we celebrate the wonderful feast of Christmas. God surely has a way of making it perfectly clear how much He loves us, namely, by having the second person of the Blessed Trinity join us by becoming one of us. How blessed we are that Jesus as true human being has shown us how to let God's love fill our hearts and how to make that love real as we in turn follow the example of Jesus in loving everyone we encounter.

As I ponder the sacred event that we celebrate, I am profoundly grateful to have the opportunity to lead all of us in prayer at any time but especially during this season when we use so many symbols to do our best to grasp something of the grandeur of God becoming utterly vulnerable by coming as a baby. Our world today is in great pain, and one very important posture to take is to sit quietly once in a while and reflect on the reality that we are all vulnerable in so many ways.

Let us allow God to embrace us just as a loving and caring parent will hold a baby. How important it is to hear the adult Jesus say to us that His Spirit lives within us and is always with us especially in times when we are hurting. While it is important to imagine God embracing us, it is equally important to embrace our pain, our hurt, our loneliness, and all other experiences that need healing. With utter gentleness and acceptance of these memories, we allow the breath of God to transform all of it into joy and peace. This empowers us to be present to one another as we are compassionately the presence of healing acceptance and love.

Many who read this are committed parishioners of Divine Savior, offering time, talent and treasure for the building up a community that focuses on Jesus' healing love. Others who read this are here visiting family and friends traveling from different areas for this feast.

Some are grieving or maybe questioning our faith. Perhaps we are angry at the church and know how vulnerable it is to step foot inside a Catholic Church. Some of us may have been told that we are not abiding by various commands of the church, perhaps because of our sexual orientation or relationship situations that others have judged and condemned. Divine Savior is a community firmly committed to doing our best to follow the wishes of Pope Francis; we do our best to welcome, to listen, and to help one another make connections and not throw rules into people's faces.

I hope that your experience celebrating Christmas at Divine Savior has been a meaningful experience. If something of this celebration prompts anyone to share situations of hurt or healing; if this celebration has raised the desire to learn more about the Catholic Church or Divine Savior more specifically, I invite you to contact our office and someone will contact you to see how we might walk with you. My email address is froman@divinesavior.com and the parish phone number is 916 989-7400.

Once again, a very Merry Christmas to all!

Fr. Roman Mueller, S.D.S.

Community Meal
Starting January 25, we will begin serving our Community Meal every Thursday evening! The goal of our service is to help improve the lives of those in our local community, our neighbors, by providing a warm welcome, a good meal and companionship. This meal is a wonderful outreach opportunity for our parish community, and we are inviting you to be a part of this most rewarding ministry. Volunteers will be needed for: set up in the dining room, food procurement, guest relations, helping in the kitchen, and clean up. Most volunteer opportunities occur on Thursdays between 5:30pm and we are currently in the process of forming regular weekly teams. Please give this a try, your heart will be warmed and your soul will be enriched! If you are interested in joining us, contact Julie at julierose9211@gmail.com or (916) 813-3106 for more details.

Moving on Fellowship
Meets Monday, January 8th at 10:30am for a no-host brunch at Annie’s Restaurant (Beech & Greenback). All members have lost a loved one, thus try to offer support, encouragement, prayer & practical help to the bereaved. For more information call Pat Biasotti, 530-307-2147.

Small Faith Groups – Looking for Homes and Facilitators to begin in Lent
Would you like to have an amazing Lent? Discussing a topic that will deepen your faith while meeting new people in the parish community is a wonderful way to make Lent meaningful. I’m looking for facilitators, who will select a book/video topic and can get a discussion started. Divine Savior supports you by providing an orientation, finding a meeting place, and having a Sign-Up Sunday, which is Feb. 3-4. Divine Savior recently acquired 300 DVD’s of famous authors and speakers. You are welcome to use our materials or provide your own. Length of commitment is usually 6 sessions followed by a parish potluck. Contact Sharon Latimer, 989-7400 or sharon@divinesavior.com.

Rosary Groups
You are invited to join us to pray the rosary at church.

Group Rosary Times: After 7:45am Mass at 8:45am Sunday by Mary’s statue; 7:00pm Thursday evenings, St. Cecilia room, and Daily after morning Mass.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK


During the Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [5-9, 14]

Tuesday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

Wednesday: Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1’a,2-8

Thursday: Jn 1:5 – 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7cd-9; Mt 2:13-18

Friday: Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

Saturday: Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128: 1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]