



From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Some decades ago, Mary was celebrated with great enthusiasm, and at times the emphasis may have been more on the Mother than in the divine Son. Today, some have gone to the opposite extreme, hardly ever, if ever, mentioning the name Mary at all, even discarding the Holy Rosary, so often favored by most Popes, and relegating Mary to a forgotten shelf. The liturgy set the path in the golden middle. Christ is and will always remain the focal-point of the Christian religion, but Mary is the Dawn of the Day that gives us Christ the Light; she is the Blossom that gives the world the Fruit which brings immortality and Life everlasting; she is the shortest and easiest means to approach the throne of her divine Son, for she is Mother and Queen. God made her such, not man. Who are we to deny her that God-given place in our religion.

This weekend's Gospel gives the climaxing fulfillment of a prophecy when it was announced to Mary that she is to be the Mother of David's son and heir: Christ the Lord. How simply, yet how nobly did the virgin answer the call of God. There was no fuss or fanfare. She paused to think over the matter, she asked a simple question, and when informed of the marvelous plan of God, gave herself up totally to the Spirit. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt within her. Truly, she is the highly favored daughter, the most blessed among women. The Lord himself is with Mary to bring about his plan hidden from all ages, yet embracing all nations and peoples. The Almighty has done great things for her and holy is his name. By placing her life at the disposal of the Spirit, her motherhood was raised to the highest possible level of dignity, and Mary becomes the Mother of God's own Son, the holy Mother of God. Humankind boasts of doing great deeds by himself but Mary's boast is to have let the Spirit of God do great things in her. She prefers to be his little handmaiden, the docile instrument of his mighty divine action. Therefore, the liturgy sings in the response: "Forever will I sing of the goodness of the Lord."

With the spotlight on Mary, the model for all God's children, we sing in the alleluia verse: "I am the servant of the Lord. May his will for me be done." Like Mary, the entire Church places herself at the disposal of the Spirit, so that he can work again his wonders in each member, and the Christ event take on a greater

splendor this Christmastide, when each one who lovingly submits to the advances of the Spirit in true compunction of heart and genuine love of God will have Christ reborn in his heart for the glory of the Father. Once the Spirit of God finds a heart docile and open to his plan, he does great things in that heart. Just as by a little paint brush in the hands of a Michelangelo or a Raphael, great and magnificent paintings come into existence, so in the heart of one that leaves itself willingly in the hands of the divine Spirit, Master Painter and Sculptor, wonderful things take place.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Mon. December 25 9:00AM
People of the Parish

Port Costa 11:00AM
People of the Parish

Tues. December 26 11:00AM
Thanksgiving Ed & Mae

Wed. December 27 11:00AM
Special Intentions

Thur. December 28 11:00AM
Special Intentions

Fri. December 29 11:00AM
Thanksgiving Lacsina Family

Sat. December 30 4:30PM
Thanksgiving

Sun. December 31 9AM, 4:30PM
People of the Parish

Port Costa 11:00AM
People of the Parish



Sunday Collection - December 17th

Table with 2 columns: Location and Amount. Rows include St. Rose, Crockett (\$1608), Flowers (\$499), St. Patrick Mission (\$205), and Flowers (\$66).

Thank you again to all who support our Parish!



During this final week of Advent, we rejoice in the endless love that God has for us, which is made apparent in the birth of his Son. We reflect on the good news of God's love brought to us from the angel Gabriel.

Office Closed

Next week, the office will be only be open Wednesday, December 27th. It will then be closed until January 4th.

St. Patrick Mission

After 125 years of service, we would hate to lose our beautiful St. Patrick Mission. Please consider taking one Sunday a month to partake in the 11:00AM Mass there instead of St. Rose, or if you are already a St. Patrick parishioner invite a new face. Also, if anyone would be so kind as to volunteer to help out with opening and church and filling in when Joe is unavailable, please let Father Leo know. Help us keep the legacy of this hidden gem alive.



Peace

In a time of the year where many of us are celebrating family and friends and the peace of the Christmas season, others around the world are not lucky enough to have these basic human needs, especially those in Israel and Gaza. Please read Bishop Barber's statement on what this means to us in the Oakland Diocese. You may follow the link below or simply access the Oakland Diocese website.



https://oakdiocese.org/news/bishop-michael-c-barber-sj-statement-on-war-in-israel-and-gaza



A joy-filled Christmas and a prosperous New Year be with you all!