



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 5, 2012

*Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
Missions of Our Lady of the Valley in Fall River Mills
and Saint Stephen's in Bieber*

Mission Statement

We, the Catholic Church of Saint Francis, are a community of faith called by Baptism to center our lives in the sacraments and the Holy Eucharist. We gather together to mutually grow in our love for God and neighbor by studying the Word of God; by believing in the Faith and Traditions from the Apostles; by accepting the teachings of the Magisterium and by receiving and giving support, hope, faith and charity.

*Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís
Misiones de Nuestra Señora del Valle en Fall River Mills
y San Esteban en Bieber*

Nuestra Misión

Nosotros la Iglesia de San Francisco, somos una comunidad de Fe llamados por el Bautismo a centrar nuestra vida en los sacramentos y la Santa Eucarista. Nosotros nos reunimos para crecer mutuamente en nuestro amor a Dios y a nuestro semejante a través de estudiar la Palabra de Dios; a través de creer en la Fe y Tradición de los Apóstoles; a través de aceptar las enseñanzas del Magisterio y a través de recibir y dar Apoyo, Fe, Esperanza y Caridad.

Rev. Efrén F. García Flores, Pastor

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Mission Churches

Our Lady of the Valley 43434 Hwy. 299E Fall River Mills	St. Stephen Hwy. 299E Bieber
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Mass Schedule

Weekends

Saturday	4:00 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
Sunday	9:00 am	St. Francis
	11:00 am	Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
	1:00 pm	St. Stephen

Weekdays

Mon-Wed & Fri 9:00 am St. Francis
 (No Mass on Thursday)

Teen Mass

4th Sunday of the Month 5:00 pm Our Lady of the Valley

Adoration and Benediction

1st Friday	9:30 am	St. Francis
1st Saturday	4:00 pm	Our Lady of the Valley
1st Sunday	11:45 am	St. Stephen

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

2nd Saturday of the month at St. Francis
 from 12 Noon to 1 pm.
 3rd Saturday of the month at Our Lady of the Valley,
 3 PM to 4 PM.
 4th Sunday of the month at St. Stephen,
 2 PM to 3 PM.

Pray the Rosary

Sunday before Mass at St. Francis, 8:20 AM

Community Food Pantry

Serving the Fall River Mills Valley, food may be obtained by calling Peggy (336-5304).

St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank

Food is distributed on the last Friday of the month at St. Francis, Burney, 1-2 pm or call the parish for food anytime you are in need. Call Bob Gartner at 336-5145.

New Parishioners

Please register by completing the form at the church entrance. The registration form is also available on our website.

Religious Instruction for Children (CCD)

Please contact Sandy McCullar at 335-4219.

Becoming Catholic (RCIA)

Program of study for non-catholic adults leading to full membership in the church. Contact Urban & Gerry Faubion at 336-6710.

Youth Group

The Youth Group meets at St. Francis on Sunday evenings. Please contact Tom Weber at 604-8767 or Laurel Wanat at 336-6963.

Prayer Requests

Call Virginia Schneider 335-2935.

MINISTERS

February 4-5

February 11-12

St. Francis

Lectors: Tom Weber
 Barney Ward
 Eucharistic Ministers: Maria Madera
 Emilio Madera

John McCullar
 Mary Unterreiner
 Marion Ward
 Barney Ward

Our Lady of the Valley

Lectors: Jack Hayes
 Terese Hayes
 Eucharistic Ministers: Billie Brown
 Bob Chase

Alice Vervilos
 Linda Smith
 Terese Hayes
 Bob Chase

St. Stephen's

Lectors: Fran Hofmann
 Barbara Donohue
 Eucharistic Ministers: Tammy Mitchell
 Kevin Mitchell

Elizabeth Banner
 Fran Hofmann
 Jessica Moya
 Nestor Moya

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK

Sat	02/04	4:00 pm	Our Lady of the Valley	Laura Ribeiro †
Sun	02/05	9:00 am	St. Francis	Missa Pro Populo
Mon	02/06	9:00 am	St. Francis	All Souls

PARISH CALENDAR

Sat	02/04	3:00 pm	First Saturday Adoration & Benediction, Our Lady of the Valley
		11:45 am	First Sunday Adoration & Benediction, St. Stephen's
Tue	02/07	9:30 am	St. Vincent de Paul Meeting, St. Francis
		7:00 pm	Knights of Columbus Meeting, Our Lady of the Valley
Sat	02/11	4:00 pm	Annual Catholic Appeal Collection, Our Lady of the Valley
Sun	02/12	All Masses	Annual Catholic Appeal Collection
		2:00 pm	Catholic Guild Meeting, St. Stephen's
Tue	02/14	7:00 pm	Women's Guild Meeting, St. Francis
Sat	02/18	9:30 am	Knights of Columbus Second & Third Degree Ceremonies, Our Lady of Mercy, Redding
Tue	02/21	4:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Vigil Mass, Our Lady of the Valley
Wed	02/22	9:00 am	Ash Wednesday Mass, St. Francis
		6:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Mass, St. Stephen
		8:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Mass, Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
Fri	02/24	12:00 Noon	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley
		5:30 pm	Stations of the Cross, St. Stephen's
		6:00 pm	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
			Stations of the Cross, St. Francis
Sun	02/26	5:00 pm	Teen Mass, Our Lady of the Valley
Fri	03/02	12:00 Noon	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley
		5:30 pm	Stations of the Cross, St. Stephen's
		6:00 pm	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
			Stations of the Cross, St. Francis
Tue	03/06	7:00 pm	Knights of Columbus Meeting, Our Lady of the Valley
Fri	03/09	12:00 Noon	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley
		5:30 pm	Stations of the Cross, St. Stephen's
		6:00 pm	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley (Spanish)
			Stations of the Cross, St. Francis
Tue	03/13	7:00 pm	St. Francis Women's Guild Meeting
Fri	03/16	12:00 Noon	Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Valley



HOMILY

Job 7:1-4, 6-7; 1 Cor. 9:16-19, 22-23; Mk. 1:29-39

I Do So willingly

Bottom line: We do not give time and money grudgingly; we are building the Body of Christ. With St. Paul we say, "I do so willingly...I have been entrusted with a stewardship."

Many years ago, in England, three men were pouring into a trough a mixture of water, sand, lime and other ingredients. A passer-by asked them what they were doing. The first said, "I am making mortar." The second, "I am laying bricks." But the third said, "I am building a cathedral." They were doing the same thing, but each looked at it differently. And what a difference that made!

We can see something similar in the way people relate to their parish, why they give. One person says, "Oh! All they do down there is ask for money." The second person replies, "Well, you have to pay the bills." But the third person says, "I am building the Body of Christ." The three are doing the same thing, but what a difference in their attitudes!

Today's Scripture readings reflect those differences. Poor Job says that life is nothing but drudgery: When I lie down at night, I toss and turn - and wonder when morning will come. But when I get up, I am tired and I ask how long until I can get back to bed!

For sure, most of us can identify with Job. But St. Paul takes a different approach. Few worked as hard as he did - or went through so many trials. Yet he says: "I do so willingly...I have been entrusted with a stewardship."

Today's Gospel presents a fascinating example of stewardship: St. Peter's mother-in-law. She was in bed, sick, when her son-in-law brought unexpected guests. One of them, Jesus, went to her bedside, took her hand - and she sat up. The fever subsided and, quote, "she waited on them."

Now, some think she would have preferred to stay in bed. That viewpoint, however, says more about us than it does about that wonderful woman. For people in ancient times, hospitality was their top value.* It was the glue that held their society together. For Peter's mother-in-law, hospitality was a sacred duty. But there is something more. The text says, "She waited on them." The word for "wait on them" is "diaconia" - the root of our word "deacon." Jesus had touched her and healed her. To be his "deaconess" would be pure joy, a beautiful honor.

When I was a seminarian, I remember an elderly priest saying, "Since this 'servant' concept came into the Church, I have taken a terrible beating." But he said it with a smile. To serve is hard work - and often, humbling - but being a servant of Christ is joy.

St. Paul illustrates the joy of service. With no fanfare, he says that he is free - and few have greater inner freedom than Paul. Nevertheless, says Paul, I have become a slave to all. He knew that freedom is not license, doing whatever strikes a person's fancy. Real freedom means service, self-giving.

We are in an election season in the United States. Different candidates will be telling us they have the solution to our problems, but there is one word we are not likely to hear - the "S" word. The "S" word that we avoid is...sacrifice. As Christians, however, we cannot avoid that word; we have to embrace it. Jesus and St. Paul tell us that our time, our abilities, our financial resources do not belong to

us. They come from God - and he will require an accounting - a stewardship. For that reason, we do not give time and money grudgingly; we are building the Body of Christ. With St. Paul we say, "I do so willingly...I have been entrusted with a stewardship."

Es Mi Obligacion

Tema Básico: No damos tiempo y dinero con resentimiento; estamos construyendo el Cuerpo de Cristo. Con San Pablo decimos, "Es mi obligacion...se me ha confiado una mision."

Hace muchos años, en Inglaterra, tres hombres estaban poniendo en un barril una mezcla de agua, arena, cal y otros ingredientes. Un observador les pregunto que hacian. El primero dijo, "Estoy haciendo argamasa." El segundo, "Estoy colocando ladrillos." Pero el tercero dijo, "Estoy construyendo una catedral." Hacian la misma cosa, pero lo miraban diferente. Y que diferencia hizo!

Podemos ver algo semejante en la manera en que personas se relacionan con su parroquia, porque dan. Una persona dice, "Ay! La unica cosa que hacen es pedir dinero." El segundo replica, "Pues, hay que pagar las cuentas." Pero la tercera persona dice, "Estoy construyendo el Cuerpo de Cristo." Los tres estan haciendo la misma cosa, pero que diferencia en sus actitudes.

Las lecturas de hoy reflejan esas diferencias. Pobre Job dice que su vida es solamente trabajo pesado: Cuando me acuesto, no me duermo - y me pregunto cuando vendra el dia. Pero cuando me levanto, estoy cansado y me pregunto cuanto tiempo hasta poderme acostar.

Muchos se puedan identificar con Job. Pero San Pablo tiene otra forma de pensar. Pocas personas trabajaban tanto como el - o pasaban por tantas pruebas. Sin embargo, dice esto de su trabajo: "Es mi obligacion...se me ha confiado una mision."

El evangelio tiene un ejemplo fascinante de mision - o co-responsabilidad: la suegra de San Pedro. Estaba en cama, enferma, cuando su yerno trajo invitados inesperados. Uno de ellos, Jesus, fue a su cama, tomo la mano - y ella se sento. La fiebre se fue y, "se puso a servirles."

Algunos consideran que ella habria preferido quedarse en cama. Ese punto de vista dice mas de nosotros que de esa mujer maravillosa. Para la gente de tiempos antiguos, hospitalidad era su valor maximo.* Era el pegamento que unio su sociedad. Para la suegra de Pedro, hospitalidad habra sido un deber sagrado. Pero

hay algo mas. El texto dice, "se puso a servirles." La palabra "servir" es "diaconia" - raiz de nuestra palabra "diacono." Jesus le habia tocado y sanado. Ser su diaconisa habra sido pura alegria.

HEALING AFTER ABORTION RETREAT MARCH 2-4, 2012

Is someone you know suffering after an abortion, perhaps years after the choice? Please consider the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat weekend, **March 2-4**, in Auburn, sponsored by the Diocese of Sacramento. This unique and effective experience presents the mercy and compassion of God. The retreat is extremely helpful for those who struggle with feelings of shame, anger or grief and for those who have not forgiven themselves or others. Open to women, men, couples, and family members touched by abortion. The cost is \$175 per person. Financial assistance is available. For a registration packet or more information, contact Annette at (916) 733-0161 or write projectrachel@diocese-sacramento.org. Inquiries and participation are strictly confidential.

JOB OPENING DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

The Diocese of Sacramento has an immediate opening for a full time Administrative Assistant/Office Manager for the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis. The ideal candidate is high energy, bilingual (good verbal and written skills in both English and Spanish), excellent on the computer (Office Suite), and good with volunteers. Some experience working in a Catholic parish or volunteering in a parish ministry is also a plus. Position is full time 35 hours per week, M-F 8:30am - 4:30pm at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 2110 Broadway in Sacramento. Interested can-

didates should email cover letter and resume to Kevin Staszkw:
kstaszkw@diocese-sacramento.org.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY RENEWAL OF VOWS

On Saturday, **February 25**, Bishop Jaime Soto will preside at a special 11:00 am Mass at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in which married couples may renew their wedding vows. An informal reception for couples and their families will follow. Special certificates will be given to couples celebrating milestone anniversaries (10, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 50+). If you are interested in attending this free event, please register (names and anniversary year) at www.SacWMD.com. For more information call the Dept. of Evangelization & Catechesis at (916) 733-0123.

DÍA MUNDIAL DEL MATRIMONIO- RENOVACIÓN DE VOTOS

Habrà una bendición especial para las parejas casadas y la oportunidad para renovar sus votos matrimoniales. La misa será celebrada a las 11:00 am el Sábado, 25 de Febrero del 2012 por el Obispo Jaime Soto en la Catedral del Santísimo Sacramento, ubicada en el 1017 11st. en Sacramento, CA. Después de misa habrá una recepción para las parejas y sus familias en el Salón Mercy ubicado dentro de la Catedral en donde se dará un certificado especial a las parejas que celebran un aniversario significativo (10, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 50+). Este evento es gratis y toda pareja interesada en asistir debe llamar al Departamento de Evangelización y Catequesis al Tel. (916) 733-0123 para registrar sus nombres y años de casados o en línea en la página www.SacWMD.com.

A CATHOLIC VIEW

**Freedom of Conscience
FATHER GEORGE RUTLER**

Our many fellow Catholics now enchained for the Faith of our Fathers in such places as China, Syria, and Egypt are, as Father Faber's hymn says, "in heart and conscience free." But what happens when a government tries to chain the conscience itself?

A few weeks ago, in a remarkably unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the attempt of the present Administration in *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC* to restrict religious freedom. Chief Justice Roberts wrote that the Administration's argument that the First Amendment does not guarantee the right of a religious organization to choose its leaders, was an "extreme" infringement of the free-exercise clause.

Undeterred, and menacingly on the cusp of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Department of Health and Human Services has issued an "interim final rule" which requires all private health plans, including those of Catholic hospitals and schools, to include coverage of prescription contraceptives, female sterilization procedures, and abortion counseling.

For a while, various Catholic leaders had hoped that they might reach an understanding with the Administration, and some even felt more at peace with the president's assurances. But "peace for our time" only lasts until Poland is invaded. Cardinal Mahony, whom no one would fault for intransigence, now says, "I cannot imagine a more direct and frontal attack on the freedom of conscience than this ruling today. This decision must be fought against with all the energies the Catholic Community can muster" Our own archbishop said, "In effect, the president is saying we have a year to figure out how to violate our consciences".

At the time of the last presidential election, some may have thought that I overstated things in finding parallels with the dystopian world described in Robert Hugh Benson's *Lord of the World*, in which Julian Felsenburgh makes eugenics "a sacred duty" Since our Lord did not humiliate the frightened apostles by saying "I told you so" when he rose from the dead, I shall not say "I told you so" to any who underestimated the plottings of social engineers whose audacity is only an audacity of despair.

Blessed John Henry Newman, in *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*, cited the prediction of an eighteenth-century Protestant bishop and scientist, Samuel Horsley:

WE PRAY FOR THE SICK

Marylou Sears
Bob Heisinger
Liz Paul
Bill Mitchell

Dear Jesus, Divine Physician and Healer of the sick, we turn to you in this time of illness. O dearest comforter of the troubled, alleviate our worry and sorrow with your gentle love, and grant us the grace and strength to accept this burden. Dear God, we place our worries in your hands. We place our sick under your care and humbly ask that you restore your servant to health again. Above all, grant us the grace to acknowledge your will and know that whatever you do, you do for the love of us. Amen.

The Church of God on earth will be greatly reduced, as we may well imagine, in its apparent numbers, in the times of Antichrist, by the open desertion of the powers of the world. This desertion will begin in a professed indifference to any particular form of Christianity, under the pretence of universal toleration; which toleration will proceed from no true spirit of charity and forbearance, but from a design to undermine Christianity, by multiplying and encouraging sectaries. . . . For governments will pretend an indifference to all, and will give a protection in preference to none.

THIS IS OUR FAITH

Question: A literal reading of the Bible leads some christians to say that Mary was not perpetually a virgin. What does our Church teach?

Answer: Those who deny Mary's perpetual virginity most commonly refer to two texts:

Matthew 13:55-56: Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all of his sisters with us?

Matthew 1:24-25: And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn (Gk. prototokon) son: and he called his name Jesus. (Douay-Rheims).

A surface reading of these passages seems problematic. If Jesus had "brothers" and "sisters," would not Mary have had other children? If Jesus was Mary's "firstborn," would there not be at least a second-born? And if "he knew her not till," did he not then "know her" at some point? We'll begin with Matthew 13:55-56.

Oh, Brother!

First, we must understand that the term brother has a wide semantic range in Scripture. It can mean a uterine brother, an extended relative, or even a spiritual brother. In Genesis 13:8 and 14:12, we read of one example of brother being used to describe an extended relationship: Abraham and Lot. Though they were actually uncle and nephew, they called one another "brother." Moreover, in the New Testament, Jesus told us to call one another "brothers" in Matthew 23:8. The passage obviously does not mean to suggest that all Christians have the same physical mother.

Second, if we examine more closely the example of James, one of these four "brothers of the Lord" mentioned in Matthew 13:55, we discover him to be a cousin or some other relative of Jesus rather than a uterine brother. For example, Galatians 1:18-19 informs us: "Then after three years I [Paul] went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother."

Notice, the "James" of whom Paul was speaking was both a "brother of the Lord" and an "apostle." There are two apostles named James among the 12. The first James is revealed to be a "son of Zebedee." He most likely would not be the "James" referred to because according to Acts 12:1-2 he was martyred very early on. Even if it was him, his father was named Zebedee, not Joseph.

Paul more likely is referring to the second James who was an

apostle, according to Luke 6:15-16. This James is revealed to have a father named Alphaeus, not Joseph. Thus, James the apostle and Jesus were not uterine brothers. Easy enough. Some will argue, however, that this "James" was not an apostle or that he was not one of the original 12. Though this is a possibility—others in the New Testament, such as Barnabas in Acts 14, are referred to as "apostles" in a looser sense—the argument from Scripture is weak. When Paul wrote about going "up to Jerusalem" to see Peter, he was writing about an event that occurred many years earlier, shortly after he had converted. He was basically going up to the apostles to receive approval lest he "should be running or had run in vain." It would be more likely he would have here been speaking about "apostles" (proper), or "the twelve."

But for those inclined to argue the point, the Catechism of the Catholic Church uses another line of reasoning:

The Church has always understood these passages as not referring to other children of the Virgin Mary. In fact James and Joseph, "brothers of Jesus," are the sons of another Mary, a disciple of Christ, whom St. Matthew significantly calls "the other Mary." They are close relations of Jesus, according to an Old Testament expression. (CCC 500)

The Catechism here refers to the fact that 14 chapters after we find the "brothers" of the Lord listed as "James, Joseph, Simon and Judas," we find "James and Joseph" mentioned again, but this time their mother is revealed as being named Mary, but not Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We can conclude that "James and Joseph" are "brothers" of Jesus, but they are not uterine brothers.

But what about Matthew 1:24-25, and the claim Jesus was Mary's "firstborn son" and that Joseph "knew her not until" Christ was born? Does Matthew here teach that Mary had other children?

Exodus 13:1-2 reveals something very important about the firstborn in Israel: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and beast, is mine.'"

The "firstborn" were not given the title because there was a "second-born." They were called "firstborn" at birth. Jesus being "firstborn" does not require that more siblings be born after him.

Until Then

Scripture's statement that Joseph "knew [Mary] not until she brought forth her firstborn" would not necessarily mean they did "know" each other after she brought forth Jesus. Until is often used in Scripture as part of an idiomatic expression similar to our own usage in English. I may say to you, "Until we meet again, God bless you." Does that necessarily mean after we meet again, God curse you? By no means. A phrase like this is used to emphasize what is being described before the until is fulfilled. It is not intended to say anything about the future beyond that point. Here are some biblical examples:

2 Samuel 6:23: And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to (until) the day of her death. (Does this mean she had children after she died?)

1 Timothy 4:13: Until I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. (Does this mean Timothy should stop teaching after Paul comes?)

1 Corinthians 15:25: For he (Christ) must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. (Does this mean Christ's reign will end? By no means! Luke 1:33 says, "he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.")

In recent years, some have argued that because Matthew 1:25 uses the Greek words heos hou for "until" whereas the texts I mentioned above from the New Testament use heos alone, there is a difference in meaning. The argument

goes that Heos hou indicates the action of the first clause does not continue. Thus, Mary and Joseph "not having come together" would have ended after Jesus was born.

The problems with this theory begin with the fact that no available scholarship concurs with it. In fact, the evidence proves the contrary. Heos hou and heos are used interchangeably and have the same meaning. Acts 25:21 should suffice to clear up the matter: "But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be held until (Gk. heos hou) I could send him to Caesar."

Does this text mean that Paul would not be held in custody after he was "sent" to Caesar? Not according to the biblical record. He would be held in custody while in transit (see Acts 27:1) and after he arrived in Rome for a time (see Acts 29:16). The action of the main clause did not cease with heos hou.

The Affirmative Argument

Now let's look at some reasons to believe in Mary's perpetual virginity. Among the many we could examine, we will briefly consider three:

1. In Luke 1:34, when Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Messiah, she asked the question, literally translated from the Greek, "How shall this be since I know not man?" This question makes no sense unless Mary had a vow of virginity.

When we consider that Mary and Joseph were already "espoused," according to verse 27 of this same chapter, we understand Mary and Joseph already have what would be akin to a ratified marriage in the New Covenant. They were married. That would mean Joseph would have had the right to the marriage bed. Normally, after the espousal the husband would go off and prepare a home for his new bride and then come and receive her into his home where the union would be consummated. This is precisely why Joseph intended to "divorce her quietly" (Mt 1:19) when he later discovered she was pregnant.

This background is significant because a newly married woman would not ask the question "How shall this be?" She would know—unless, of course, that woman had taken a vow of virginity. Mary believed the message, but wanted to know how this was going to be accomplished. This indicates she was not planning on the normal course of events for her future with Joseph.

2. In John 19:26, Jesus gave his Mother to the care of John even though by law the next eldest sibling would have the responsibility to care for her. It is unthinkable that Jesus would take his Mother away from his family in disobedience to the law.

Some claim Jesus did this because his brothers and sisters were not there. They had left him. Thus, Jesus committed his Mother to John, who was faithful and present at the foot of the cross. This claim betrays a very low and unbiblical Christology. As John tells us, Jesus "knew all men" (cf. Jn 2:25). If James were his uterine brother, Jesus would have known he would be faithful along with his "brother" Jude. The fact is Jesus had no brothers and sisters, so he had the responsibility, on a human level, to take care of his Mother.

3. Mary is depicted as the spouse of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. In Luke 1:34, when Mary asks the angel how she will conceive a

Stewardship Report							
31 Weeks of the Fiscal YTD through January 29, 2012							
	This Yr Compared to Budget				This Yr. vs. Last Yr.		
	Collections	Budget	Over (Under)	%	Collections	Over (Under)	%
St. Francis	31,670.50	32,253.93	(583.43)	(1.8)	31,621.50	49.00	0.2
OLV Sat.	11,049.00	10,085.76	963.24	9.6	9,888.00	1,161.00	11.7
OLV Sun.	5,612.00	5,974.14	(362.14)	(6.1)	5,857.00	(245.00)	(4.2)
St. Stephen's	<u>9,555.00</u>	<u>10,398.90</u>	<u>(843.90)</u>	(8.1)	<u>10,195.00</u>	<u>(640.00)</u>	(6.3)
	57,886.50	58,712.73	(826.23)	(1.4)	57,561.50	325.00	0.6

child, the angel responds: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

This is nuptial language hearkening back to Ruth 3:8, where Ruth said to Boaz "spread your skirt over me" when she revealed to him his duty to marry her according to the law of Deuteronomy 25. When Mary became pregnant, Joseph would have been required to divorce her because she would then belong to another (see Dt 24:1-4; Jer 3:1). But when Joseph found out that "the other" was the Holy Spirit, the idea of his having conjugal relations with Mary was not a consideration.

Mary's Protector

An obvious question remains: Why did St. Joseph then "take [Mary] his wife" according to Matthew 1:24 if she belonged to the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is Mary's spouse, but Joseph was her spouse and protector on this earth for at least two obvious reasons. First, as Matthew points out in his genealogy in chapter 1, Joseph was in line to be a successor of David as King of Israel. Thus, if Jesus was to be the true "son of David" and king of Israel (see 2 Sm 7:14, Heb 1:5, Rv 19:16, 22:16), he needed to be the son of Joseph. As the only son of Joseph, even though adopted, he would have been in line for the throne.

Also, in a culture that did not take too kindly to espoused women getting pregnant by someone other than their spouse, Mary would have been in mortal danger. So Joseph became Mary's earthly spouse and protector as well as the protector of the child Jesus.

Tim Staples, Director of Apologetics, Catholic Answers



COLLECTION IN PARISHES FEB. 11-12

Annual Catholic Appeal supports social services, seminarians and Catholic education in diocese

Approximately 100,000 Catholic households in the diocese have received advance notice of the 2012 Annual Catholic Appeal through a brochure and envelope sent to them by The Catholic Foundation of the Diocese of Sacramento. The weekend for the Annual Catholic Appeal collection in parishes is Feb. 11-12.

"I would like to express my gratitude for your heartfelt and continued response to those who come to the doors of our parishes, schools and social service organizations looking for hope and a hand up," says Bishop Jaime Soto in a letter to donors.

Generous contributions to last year's appeal from more than 21,000 donor households totaled more than \$3.2 million. Contributions helped social service programs assist the ever-growing numbers of those overwhelmed with challenges to provide basic necessities for their families; helped families apply for tuition assistance so their children could have a Catholic education; helped seminarians devote themselves fully to their studies as they prepare to serve as our priests; and assisted parishes to provide for a wide array of local community needs.

At Masses throughout the diocese on the appeal commitment weekend, parishioners will view a DVD (in English and Spanish -- see link below or on logo above to view video) featuring Bishop Soto and other parish and charities' leaders, as well as some of the people who are helped by programs that the Annual Catholic Appeal partially supports. The appeal will help fund more than 20 different charitable organizations, which operate more than 100 different social service programs.

Twenty-five percent of gross receipts will be returned to the 104 parishes in the diocese for their local social service ministries. Fifty percent of the net proceeds will go to social service programs. The remaining 25 percent will support seminarians' education and the diocesan needs-based assistance fund for families desiring a Catholic school education for their children but cannot afford it.

In response to the needs of the diocesan community, Bishop Soto asks that all parishioners participate in the Annual Catholic Appeal. Donors may make a one-time gift or a pledge to be billed monthly over nine months, or charge the gift to their credit card. They can also authorize an automatic payment from their checking or savings account. For more information about the Annual Catholic Appeal, call (916) 733-0266 or visit the link:

http://www.tcfsc.org/annual_appeal/english_video

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