

Love Child

Some years ago I suddenly understood something of why God almighty had made the move of being born as an infant child.

It was when a dear friend and I visited the friend's niece in California. The niece was living with a man to whom she was not married, in a neighborhood that seemed quite OK even though it was just a few blocks from San Quentin Prison. The two were not sure they would ever get married or even stay together.

But they had a child.

The sadder part of this story is that their infant boy had suffered a difficult birth and had been deprived of oxygen during parts of it. He was a well-formed, beautiful newborn, except for one thing: he had severe brain damage and could do nothing whatsoever on his own, including breathe.

The young mother told us that they could easily have let him slip away in the birthing room. No reason to make the poor thing suffer. But she said they could not abandon him, could not just write off this tiny personality and "get on with" their own lives. They were struck with great love for the tender, fleeting, sweet soul that had issued from them.

So they began all the care it took to keep him alive. They named him, baptized him, and took him home. They set up a machine for him that drew in his air and let it out. Over his life of six months or so, one of the parents had to remain close enough to hear even the tiniest change of tone in the breathing. So they traded off: one would go out for a walk while the other lingered with the tiny little life. The other would shop and tend to necessities while the remaining one bore loving duty at home. As we spoke, I saw that they were calm, not terrified, not burdened. They knew death was on the way, no escaping it, but they loved the completely helpless child anyway.

There came over me the quiet understanding that I was in a holy place. I could feel it. Something was gently, quietly holding us all with an embrace that was not a grasping, but a loving caress, given for the sake of all of us. Other visitors had told the mother something similar: they felt a message coming back from the boy, a love emanating from him. A presence of God was softly, strongly in that home.

This infant's passage through life showed with mysterious clarity how love and human life are meant for each other. And that is when I saw it. Mary and Joseph had loved the Jesus child in the same way. They knew the glow of holiness that had come upon their tiny family. They knew that this sweet soul would show the world what love is.

That is the meaning of Christmas

The rest of the story? Well, the little spark of a child in California did die, after his short months. His parents did in fact get married, having learned to love each other in the midst of the care they gave and received. They have birthed a healthy baby girl since then. Clearly, their infant boy's tiny flicker of a life had made them able to love. Maybe you and I can feel the Christmas story the same way they did.

John Foley, SJ

The Nativity of the Lord December 25, 2022

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

856-7806

33 St. Stephens Road

PO Box 250

St. Stephens, WY 82524

Fr. Andrew Duncan.....Pastor
Sr. Monica Suhayda, CSJ.....Past. Asst./ Gift Shop 856-4330
Patti McMahon.....Director of Faith Formation

Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

332-9090

Sr. Teresa Frawley, OSF.....Past. Asst./Director of Faith Formation

St. Stephens

Friday: Adoration followed by benediction 3:45pm

Saturday: Sacrament of Reconciliation 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Sunday Masses: 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass at 7:15am

Wednesday & Friday: Mass at 5:00pm

1st Saturday: Adoration at 8:00am; Mass at 9:00am;

Anointing of the sick for anyone wishing to be anointed

St. Josephs, Ethete

Sunday Mass: 11:00 AM

Reconciliation 15 minutes before Mass

Blessed Sacrament, Ft. Washakie

Saturday Vigil Mass 4:30 PM

Reconciliation 15 minutes before Mass

Wednesday: 10:30 AM Communion Service @ Morning Star

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♦ Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house
♦ of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our
♦ faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you
♦ Welcome!
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The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings December 26th through January 1st:

- Mon: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6-8b, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22
- Tue: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
- Wed: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18
- Thur: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5-6; Lk 2:22-35
- Fri: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23
- Sat: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-12, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
- Sun: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

Sunday Ministry Schedule-St. Stephens

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| 12/25/22 | 1/1/23 |
| 9am Mass | 9am Mass |
| Lector: Tom Kasper | Lector: Jim Cunningham |
| 5pm Mass | 5pm Mass |
| Volunteer Needed | Volunteer Needed |

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| Parish Collection |
| 12/18 \$2450.74 |
| <i>"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7</i> |

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| Happenings: | St. Stephens Religious Ed/Baptism |
| 12/30: Feast of the Holy Family | Please call Patti at 856-7806 if you would like to have your child baptized. |

Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infant's cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in its radiance.



Be with us as we sing the ironies of Christmas, the incomprehensible comprehended, the poetry made hard fact, the helpless Babe who cracks the world asunder. We kneel before you shepherds, innkeepers, wisemen. Help us to rise bigger than we are. Amen.

Mass Intentions/Schedule this week

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| 12/24: 4:30pm Blessed Sacrament | +Gil Rau |
| 6:00pm St. Josephs | For the people |
| 12/25: Midnight St. Stephens | Niibe Prue for her 13th birthday |
| 9am St. Stephens | Brown Family |
| 11am St. Josephs | +Thomas Matthew Denego |
| 12/26: 9am St. Stephens | Families of those who donated poinsettias |
| 12/27: 7:15am St. Stephens | Everhart Family |
| 12/28: 5:00pm St. Stephens | Raly Family |
| 12/29: 7:15am St. Stephens | Karen Brown on her birthday |
| 12/30: 5:00pm St. Stephens | Holman Family |
| 12/31: 4:30pm Blessed Sacrament | +Gil Rau |
| 1/1: 9am St. Stephens | For the people |
| 11am St. Josephs | +Thomas Matthew Denego |
| 5pm St. Stephens | +Wayne Brown |

Feast of St. Stephen 12/26:
9am St. Stephens

Feast of the Holy Family:
5pm St. Stephens

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God 1/1:
Regular Sunday Mass Schedule

THANK YOU!
Thank you to all who helped clean and decorate!

Thank you to all who donated poinsettias for the altar! Your loved one will be remembered at the 9am Mass on 12/26.



Blessed Sacrament and St. Josephs

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| Thank you to all who helped during this Christmas season! | Religious Education First Communion and Confirmation classes are full. First Communion and Confirmation classes are after the 11am Mass. |
| Baptism Classes Please call Sister Teresa at 332-9090. | |