

Week Behind/ Week Ahead

To the Parishioners of Saint Joseph Parish

From V. Rev. Felipe Pulido

Date: December 25, 2021

Week Behind

Catholic Charities – The 2021 Christmas Collection for Catholic Charities was taken in our parish on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Thank you so much for your generous spirit. Your generosity will help Catholic Charities bring hope to life by embracing people, strengthening families, and empowering them to thrive. Thank you for your monetary gifts to support this ministry.

Visitors — On Wednesday, December 22, 2021, Father Richard Sedlacek visited our parish and celebrated Mass at Brookdale Canyon Lakes Retirement Home in Kennewick. He also anointed the Catholic residents, including long-time parishioner Robert De Lorenzo. I thank Father for his timely holiday visit and Peggy Mager for her faithful service to our parishioners who are homebound and in nursing homes.

Father Riccardo Keolker — Father Riccardo's Prayer and Pondering Points will be a little different because of all the celebrations coming so close together: they will cover from this Sunday to January 2, the Feast of the Epiphany. Also, there will be no separate PPPs for the first two weeks of January. Finally, there will be no streamed reflections on the Scriptures for upcoming Sundays on Wednesday, December 29, or on Wednesday, January 5.

We thank Father Riccardo who recently celebrated his 58th anniversary as a priest. We are grateful for his dedication and commitment to this virtual ministry. You will find the PPPs and videos on our Facebook page or our YouTube channel. Watching and learning from Father Riccardo's thoughtful and informative reflections, our experiences of liturgies are enhanced and enriched.

Christmas Decorations in the Big Church – Thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time and talents to the beautiful decoration of our church and to our Liliana Rangel for coordinating the efforts of the volunteers.

Week Ahead

A Reflection on Offertory Giving

I remember putting 5 pesos into the offering basket, the equivalent of 50 cents in US dollars. I had just turned nine years old. We lived really close to the church, so we always walked to Mass. I was so proud of that contribution and what it meant. For years I had watched my grandmother put money into the collection basket every Sunday. When I put money into the collection basket for the first time, I felt great! I was a part of the parish.

I've continued that practice ever since. Grandma passed away years ago and I became a priest, so the amount of my tithe has changed, but I still get nostalgic when I think of those days. It was a happy time. And it's pleasant to think of my parents and siblings, all dressed up and proper, heading off to Mass ready to return a portion of God's blessings back to Him as the collection basket passed by.

Things are different today. I don't think there many nine-year-olds tithing. People don't give in the same ways either. The economy has changed, and charitable habits have changed with it. Our parish income is more unpredictable these days. We have fewer consistent givers, but we're blessed with more givers who surprise us with large contributions when they have an especially good year.

Thank you for supporting our parish through all the changes life has thrown at us. As we rejoice in celebrating the birth of Christ this season, we are also closing the books on 2021. I invite you to reflect on the year and the ways in which God has blessed you and your family. If you've been blessed this year, I encourage you to make a meaningful contribution in support of our parish. Each December I get nervous about finances as we close out the year, and each December I feel the Lord chuckling at my lack of faith as he inspires people like you to give generously in our final month. And when you make your Christmas gift, I pray you find the same joy and sense of community that I felt when I dropped my first donation in the basket, so many years ago.

The Octave Day of Christmas-- Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God – We will close out the Christmas octave—the eight days following the birth of Christ—with a holy day honoring Mary as Mother of God on January 1, 2022. I am grateful to all those who work so hard to ensure beautiful and reverent celebrations of our liturgies. Special thanks to our music director Giovanni Liguori who always provides beautiful and appropriate music for our Masses and especially for all the extra liturgies of the Christmas season.

On the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, our lectionary gives us a reading from the Old Testament book of Numbers 6:22-27 which contains my favorite blessing. As we begin this New Year 2022 and as we celebrate the World Day of Peace, I want to send you a special blessing with this prayer: ***The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His face shine upon you and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!*** Happy New Year!

Gratefully in Christ,

Father Felipe Pulido