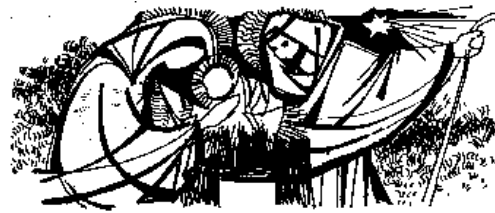




Rejoice! Christ is born today. Bring out your creche; put on the Christmas carols; invite your family and friends to celebrate - for the next twelve days. Just when the world puts away all the tinsel and declares Christmas is past, we are invited to celebrate. God has answered the world's death and despair with life. Share what God is doing for you. (See the article by Fr. Dale+ on the next page and share with anyone who could benefit.) Read the Christmas proclamation on the back page at any gathering to remind and be reminded of the miracle of Christ our Savior entering history as a baby. Thank God for his mighty presence.

Prayer Requests for This Week
December 25-31, 2016

- + **Bishop Eric** - Pray for strength and endurance
- **Other churches in our diocese** as they look for worship spaces
- **Fr. Carlos+** - Pray for health and strength
- **Fr. Dale+ and Deacon Anna** - Pray for grace, endurance and joy to continue their work
- **All of us, the parishioners of St. James** - Pray for each other as we reach out to others during this holiday season
- **Our Lady of Guadalupe** - Pray for Fr. Antonio +, his people and their holiday services
- **Those of us struggling with severe health problems**, especially Marguerite Walker and Luther; Danny Fahrenbacher and his family, Rita Nitschke and her family, Carole Miller and Bennie, Tyger Owens
- **Families and individuals experiencing life changing issues** - strength, wisdom, comfort from God; friendship and encouragement from us
- **Friends and family who are grieving** the death and/or loss of loved ones
- **All our young people & college students** home for the holidays - rest and joy, good fellowship
- **Chapter members** Pray for new candidates
- **God's vision for our church**, that we would be willing to embrace who God means us to be
- **Christians throughout the world**, suffering for their faith. Pray for those who have become refugees (Syria, Iraq), those who are besieged at home (Northern Nigeria, China, Iran)



Collect
for the
Week:
The

Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day
(Pray daily!)

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same

Ways to Help This Week

Don't forget! Cards for Danny & Tyger

If you haven't already done so, send a card with a note to: Tyger Owens, 4045 N. Fruit, #211, Fresno, CA 93726 and to Daniel Fahrenbacher, 4861 E. Pine, Fresno CA 93727

Continue to PRAY always.

In everything give THANKS.

Attend services faithfully.

Invite old St. James friends to Christmas services

Serve obediently where needed.

Consider serving on vestry

Give gladly.

Your pledge, if you haven't already made it

Join In, Sign Up, Tell Us!

Office contact 222-3721

Christians With Obsessive Compulsive Disorder - May you find yourself in Christ!

"The components of OCD may be divided into two main categories: obsessions and compulsions. Obsessive thoughts produce a compulsive response in the form of frequently performed actions or rituals. People with OCD perform rituals, such as repeatedly washing their hands, as a way of suppressing or responding to these obsessive thoughts. Unfortunately, the obsessive thought -- in this case, that one's hands are dirty -- is nearly impossible to get rid of, despite not being grounded in reality. Some rituals involve physical action while others only occur in the mind, such as counting stairs or the number of words a person says." <http://health.howstuffworks.com/mental-health/mental-disorders/obsessive-compulsive-disorder1.htm>.

There are various explanations for the origins of OCD including, genetic, cognitive, behavioral and biological. Treatments are generally a mixture based on the underlying assumptions of the causes. What can the Christian perspective offer to those who suffer from the debilitating condition of OCD? Let's take the worst case scenario as a possibility. Some may worry that they may have inadvertently and unknowingly harmed someone. What if you had made a mistake? There was no malice intended. God is quick to forgive our mistakes. Why not treat this possibility as an opportunity for a blanket confession to God. *"Dear Lord, please forgive me for the things I have done and the things I left undone. Forgive me of my known mistakes and those I don't know about.* God will quickly forgive you for the sake of His son Jesus Christ who has paid the price for all of the sins/mistakes that you have or ever will commit. This confession is a healthy replacement behavior that substitutes for the ineffective repetitive rituals (compulsions). The belief that we must be perfect makes Christ's death on the cross for our sake, ineffectual in our lives. Satan wants us to believe that we must be perfect because he knows that we can't. Christ was perfect so you don't have to be perfect too. As Christians, we are clothed in His riotousness. Confession is an admission that we are not perfect and interrupts the closed loop vicious cycle of obsessive thoughts followed by compulsive rituals. These rituals are unconsciously intended to pay the price (penance) or undo the guilt and anxiety of the obsessive thoughts. Confession leads to forgiveness and forgiveness absolves us of guilt. Do not overrule God by NOT allowing yourself to be

forgiven because you believe you are unworthy. Christ makes us worthy. This is where trust is so important. I once offered to pray for a hospitalized individual for healing. She declined the offer because she felt that she didn't deserve healing.

Sometimes I cringe when I remember a past misdeed yet it may be a sin or mistake that I have already asked to be forgiven for. I even know in my heart that I have received forgiveness. Who do you think is reminding me? It is not God because He has forgiven and forgotten my sin (Hebrews 8:12). Satan is called "the accuser" and the Holy Spirit is called "the Comforter". Satan would love to keep us in bondage. Christ said, "The truth will make you free." "I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly" The answer is obvious. Take charge of these thoughts and in the name of Jesus, command them to depart. Also think about this every time you receive Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:20).

For those struggling with OCD, know that Christ wants us to live a life free from anxiety and guilt. His death, resurrection and Lordship in our lives provides the avenue of deliverance from this problem from which we cannot extricate ourselves on our own. May you find yourself in Christ.

O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen BCP832

*Do not fear,
for I am
with you.*
Isaiah 41:10

Last Bulletin Insert - For Now!

The purpose of this little insert was to draw us close to one another: encourage us to trust God and love each other in the face of very uncertain times.

Let us know what was helpful. What should have been included? What could you have done without?

jeanine@inreachtch.net

St. James Pilgrims on The WayPrayers from the Prayerbook



The Proclamation of Christmas

Some billions of years having passed since the creation of the world, when, in the beginning God created heaven and earth, Some thousands of years from the salvation of mankind when the family of Noah survived the flood, Nineteen centuries after the promise was given to Abraham, the father of our faith, Seventy generations after Moses brought the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, A thousand years from the anointing of David as King over the chosen people, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the vision of the Prophets—

In the course of secular history, in the one hundred and ninety-third Olympiad, Seven and one half centuries from the founding of the City of Rome, In the forty-second year of the reign of the Emperor Octavian Augustus, while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace, In this sixth and final age of human achievement -

Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, wishing to consecrate the whole world and all time by His blessed presence, conceived as man by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, after nine months of growth in the womb of His mother, was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah, and for our salvation became Man .

Now in our own time this marks the Nativity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, after the manner of all flesh.

Based on a traditional text from the Roman Martyrology

The Holy Days of Christmastide

If you would like to live in God-time during these twelve days, consider celebrating these major feast days. The prayerbook has special collects for each of these days. BCP, 237-8

the Feast of St. Stephen December 26

This day honors Stephen, the church's first chosen deacon, who also became the church's first martyr.

the Feast of St. John December 27

This apostle was one of the few apostles who lived a long life. When very old it is said upon being asked to speak in church,, he would say, simply, "My dear children, love one another."

Feast of the Holy Innocents December 28

A sad reminder that all was not well in that first Christmas. It is a day to give thanks for the children in our lives, whether in our own families or in the larger family of the Church. And it is a good day to revive the ancient custom of parents blessing their children at the end of the day.

In order to learn more and see simple ideas for celebrations during this time, go to the website Full Homely Divinity (<http://fullhomelydivinity.org/index.html>)

There you might note that one of the twelve days is the Feast of St. Thomas Becket on December 29. That famous badboy-archbishop became an enigma and then a saint as he championed the church's prerogatives over the King. Read T. S. Eliot's reconstruction of Becket's Christmas sermon to be reminded of God's power to save sinners and use them for his glory.

See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more... for the first things have passed away.
Rev 21:3a-4:b

