

# SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH



## YEARBOOK 2025

It is said that we can live without food and water for several days, but we cannot live without hope even for a day. BRING PEOPLE TO HOPE IN JESUS is the theme for the yearbook 2025. The theme is chosen in connection with the Jubilee year 2025: PILGRIMS OF HOPE. The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has announced that 2025 will be a jubilee Year, something which happens every 25 years. The theme he chose was Pilgrims of hope and it will be a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. Centered on the theme of hope, this is the 27th ordinary Jubilee in the history of the Catholic Church since Boniface VIII celebrated the first one in the earlier St. Peter's Basilica in the year 1300.

To understand the significance of the Jubilee and its seven-centuries-old tradition in the Catholic Church, it is necessary first to recall its biblical origins. The Christian Jubilee has its origins in the Jewish religious tradition. It is first recounted in the Book of Leviticus (25:10-14) that the law of Moses prescribed that every 50th year be observed as a Jubilee—that is, a year of rest for the land, liberation of the slaves and a general enfranchisement of the people aimed at restoring equality and reducing the distance between rich and poor. The Book of Deuteronomy (15:1-11) adds to this the cancellation of debts. This Jubilee institution was also taken up by the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:1-2), and Jesus made the words of the prophet his own at the beginning of his ministry when he presented himself as the fulfillment of “the year of the Lord's favor” (Lk 4:18-19).

The Catholic Jubilee tradition was started by Pope Boniface VIII in the year 1300, without explicit reference to its biblical roots, at a time when throughout Christendom there was not only great suffering, caused by wars and diseases such as the plague, but also a deep desire to return to a more holy way of living. Boniface VIII established the Jubilee Year by drawing on a tradition of “popular spirituality” that included pilgrimages and indulgences. Pope Francis declared the Jubilee Year 2025 that he promulgated on May 9, 2024.

## Message from Father Antony

For St. James parishioners I would like them to consider the jubilee year a year of thanksgiving to God for all the blessings they have received from Him. We can never thank God for His countless blessings. This is a year for us to recognize God as the giver of all that we have and come to thank Him with a renewed love and commitment. This is a year to admit that Jesus is our greatest hope and deepen our faith. As food is necessary for our body hope in Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life and finally to lead us to our own eternal life. The Mega Wedding Renewal on Sunday, August 24, will be the culmination of our jubilee celebration. I would like to invite as many couples as possible to renew their wedding commitment and thank God who united them through irrevocable covenant of love. Let each family choose a day to celebrate God's blessings.

As we are approaching the Annual Festival on August 16 & 17, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for your love and commitment to the parish. United we can do everything, and you have proved beyond doubt that unity is our strength. May God bless you abundantly!





SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



**FUN**

**34700 Fremont Blvd  
Fremont, CA 94555**

**7am - 730pm**

**GAMES**

*August 17 & 18, 2024*

*Raffle Drawing Will Be On  
Sunday, Aug 18 @ 7:00 PM*

**FESTIVAL**

**FOOD VENDORS**

Grand Prize - \$10,000  
Second Prize - \$3,000  
Third Prize - \$2,000

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**David Bustamante  
& Bobby Santos** featuring

**UNK Band**



**2024**

NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN \*Winner assumes all taxes and fees



# Festival 2024















Festival Mental  
Health Booth







## Prize Winners

\$10,000 Gael Huynh (pictured left)  
\$3,000 Jenn Menjivar-Corpuz  
\$2000 Kelly Do

## Baptisms August 2024



## Baptism August 2025



# Knights of Columbus August 2024



September  
2024

YOU ARE INVITED TO

14TH



அன்னை வேளாங்கண்ணி  
திருவிழா

Come join in our celebration of the pinnacle of Annai  
Velankanni! We happily invite you to celebrate this festival.

SATURDAY, 07 SEPTEMBER 2024 | 07.00PM - END

34700 Fremont Boulevard, Fremont, CA

OLV Festival Flag Hoisting is on 31<sup>st</sup> Aug 2024 Saturday 7PM



# Youth Bake Sale November 24









# Advent



**3rd Week  
of  
Advent.  
Lighting  
the  
Advent  
Wreath  
Candle**



Photos sent by Willie Lagos



# Lighting the Advent Candle during Simbang Gabi





# Christmas Eve Mass 2024







Saturday January 25, 2025  
: CIVIC CENTER PLAZA,  
SAN FRANCISCO



# Crab Feed 2025

Dear St. James Parish Family,

On behalf of St. James the Apostle Catholic Church, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who contributed to the tremendous success of our Annual Crab Feed Fest this past Saturday, February 22nd, at the Mother Teresa Center. Your dedication, generosity, and spirit of service truly made this event an unforgettable experience for our parish and our community.

A special thank you goes to our remarkable Chair, Lani, and her incredible Co-Chair, Gina. Their tireless energy, exceptional leadership, and unwavering commitment were the driving force behind the success of this event. Their ability to organize, inspire, and bring together so many wonderful volunteers was nothing short of inspiring. Lani and Gina, your hard work and passion are a true blessing to St. James, and we are deeply grateful for all that you do.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our beloved Pastor, Father Antony, for his outstanding leadership, guidance, and support. His vision and encouragement not only set the tone for the event but also uplift our entire parish community. Father Antony, your spiritual leadership continues to strengthen our faith and foster a deep sense of community at St. James.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers who contributed their time and talents. From setting up and decorating, to cooking, serving food, managing auctions, and cleaning up afterward—each of you played a vital role in making the Crab Feed Fest a joyous and smooth-running event. Your willingness to serve with joy and generosity is a testament to the strength and love within our parish community.

Lastly, thank you to all who attended, donated, and supported this event. Your participation and generosity help us continue the mission of St. James the Apostle Catholic Church, enriching our faith community and supporting our many ministries.

May God bless you all abundantly for your kindness and dedication. We look forward to many more



opportunities to come together, celebrate, and serve our community.

With heartfelt appreciation and blessings,

Jim Navarro  
Executive Chair, Fundraising Events,  
St. James the Apostle Catholic Church







## Crab Feed 2025







**St. James the Apostle  
Catholic Church-Fremont**

**Sunday April 13th 5:00 PM**

**By OLV Novena Ministry**

# **PASSION OF THE CHRIST**

**Live Performance**

**34700 Fremont Blvd, Fremont, CA 94555**





Stations of  
the Cross  
March 7  
Thank you,  
Altar Servers!

Photos from Willie Lagos



# Women of the Cross





# Easter Vigil







## Easter Vigil - April 19, 2025 Choir & Altar Servers





## The Divine Mercy Apostolate of St. James Catholic Church invites you to join us during Divine Mercy Novena, April 18 - April 27, 2025

April 18 – Good Friday	After the Good Friday Liturgy at 1:00PM, the Divine Mercy Novena begins
April 19– Holy Saturday	After the 8:30AM prayers
April 20 – Easter Sunday	After the 12:00PM Mass
April 21 – Monday	After the 8:30AM Mass
April 22 – Tuesday	After the 8:30AM Mass
April 23– Wednesday	After the 8:30AM Mass
April 24 – Thursday	After the 8:30AM Mass
April 25 – Friday	After the 8:30AM Mass
April 26 – Saturday	After the 8:30AM Mass followed by Exposition of Blessed Sacrament, Benediction and Reconciliation
April 27 – Sunday	<b>Divine Mercy Sunday Feast Day</b> at the 12:00noon Mass. Please Join Us!

***Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My Mercy...Faustina***



### **Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska The Humble Instrument**

Sister Faustina was a young, uneducated nun in a convent of the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland during the 1930s. She came from a poor family that struggled during the years of World War I. She had only three years of simple education, so hers were the humblest tasks in the convent, usually in the kitchen or garden. However, she received extraordinary revelations — or messages — from our Lord Jesus. Jesus asked Sr. Faustina to record these experiences, which she compiled into notebooks. These notebooks are known today as the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, and the words contained within are God's loving message of Divine Mercy.



Though the Divine Mercy message is not new to the teachings of the Church, Sr. Faustina's *Diary* sparked a great movement, and a strong and significant focus on the mercy of Christ. Saint John Paul II canonized Sr. Faustina in 2000 making her the "first saint of the new millennium." Speaking of Sr. Faustina and the importance of the message contained in her *Diary*, the Pope called her "the great apostle of Divine Mercy in our time."

Today, we continue to rely on St. Faustina as a constant reminder of the message to trust in Jesus' endless mercy, and to live life mercifully toward others. We also turn to her in prayer and request her intercession to our merciful Savior on our behalf. At the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, we include the following in our 3 o'clock prayers:

#### **Saint Faustina,**

you told us that your mission would continue after your death and that you would not forget us. Our Lord also granted you a great privilege, telling you to "distribute graces as you will, to whom you will, and when you will." Relying on this, we ask your intercession for the graces we need, especially for the intentions just mentioned. Help us, above all, to trust in Jesus as you did and thus to glorify His mercy every moment of our lives. **Amen**



# In Memoriam: Pope Francis





March 27, 2025

**Letter of Appreciation and Gratitude**

*Honoring the Our Lady of Compassion and Protection (OLCP) Prayer Group*

**Dear Cora and Tito Lorenzo,**  
**Dear Fr. Antony Vazhappily,**  
**Dear OLCP Members,**

On behalf of the St. James the Apostle parish community, I extend our deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation for your many years of devoted service, faith-filled leadership, and generous hearts.

To **Cora and Tito Lorenzo**, thank you for lovingly opening your home and hearts for so many years as hosts and stewards of the *Our Lady of Compassion and Protection (OLCP)* prayer ministry. Through your hospitality, OLCP became a sacred refuge for those seeking comfort, prayer, and community. Under your leadership, this ministry grew into a strong and faithful spiritual family, centered on Marian devotion and united in trust in the Lord's mercy.

Founded during a time of great need for spiritual healing and connection, OLCP became more than a weekly gathering—it became a movement of faith. Through rosaries, novenas, intercessions, and shared intentions, the group touched the lives of countless parishioners and friends, offering a beacon of compassion, hope, and unity.

I would also like to offer special recognition and thanks to **Rev. Fr. Antony Vazhappily**, Pastor of St. James the Apostle Catholic Church, who served as the **spiritual guide of OLCP**. Your pastoral support, sacramental presence, and guidance over the years helped nurture OLCP's mission and deeply enriched the spiritual lives of all its members. Your wisdom and dedication have been a constant source of inspiration to the group and to our wider parish family.

As the OLCP prayer ministry now comes to a close in its original form, I humbly and joyfully honor the **end of a sacred era**—a time marked by faithful perseverance, heartfelt intercessions, and the quiet strength of community prayer. Though the home-based gatherings may conclude, the spirit of OLCP lives on. **The ministry will continue as a prayerful organization within the St. James parish community**, remaining rooted in faith, fellowship, and devotion to our Blessed Mother.

I am especially grateful to **all the members of the OLCP prayer ministry** for your **collective and generous monetary gift** toward the construction of the new church. Your support is a



meaningful reflection of your commitment to our parish and the spirit of unity that OLCP has nurtured throughout the years.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to **Cora and Tito for your leadership in guiding the OLCP members** during their spiritual journeys. **Your gifts (both spiritual and monetary)** are beautiful testaments to your enduring faith and love for all who came into contact with you, your home, and family. It will help shape the spiritual home of future generations and will stand as a lasting legacy of your devotion.

**Fr. Antony**, we thank you once again for your instrumental role in the growth of our parish, especially for your work in securing generous donations and leading us forward with vision, faith, and compassion.

With profound gratitude and love, I thank each of you for your faithful witness, your generous spirits, and your enduring devotion. May God bless you abundantly for the light you have brought into our community.

**With heartfelt appreciation,**

  
**Jim Navarro**

1st President, OLCP Ministry  
OLCP / St. James the Apostle Catholic Church

cc: **Rev. Fr. Antony Vazhappily**



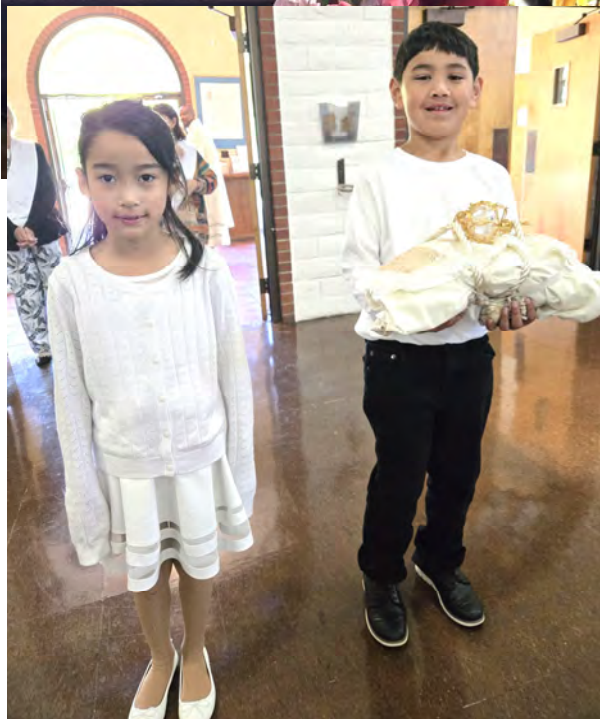


# First Communion May 12



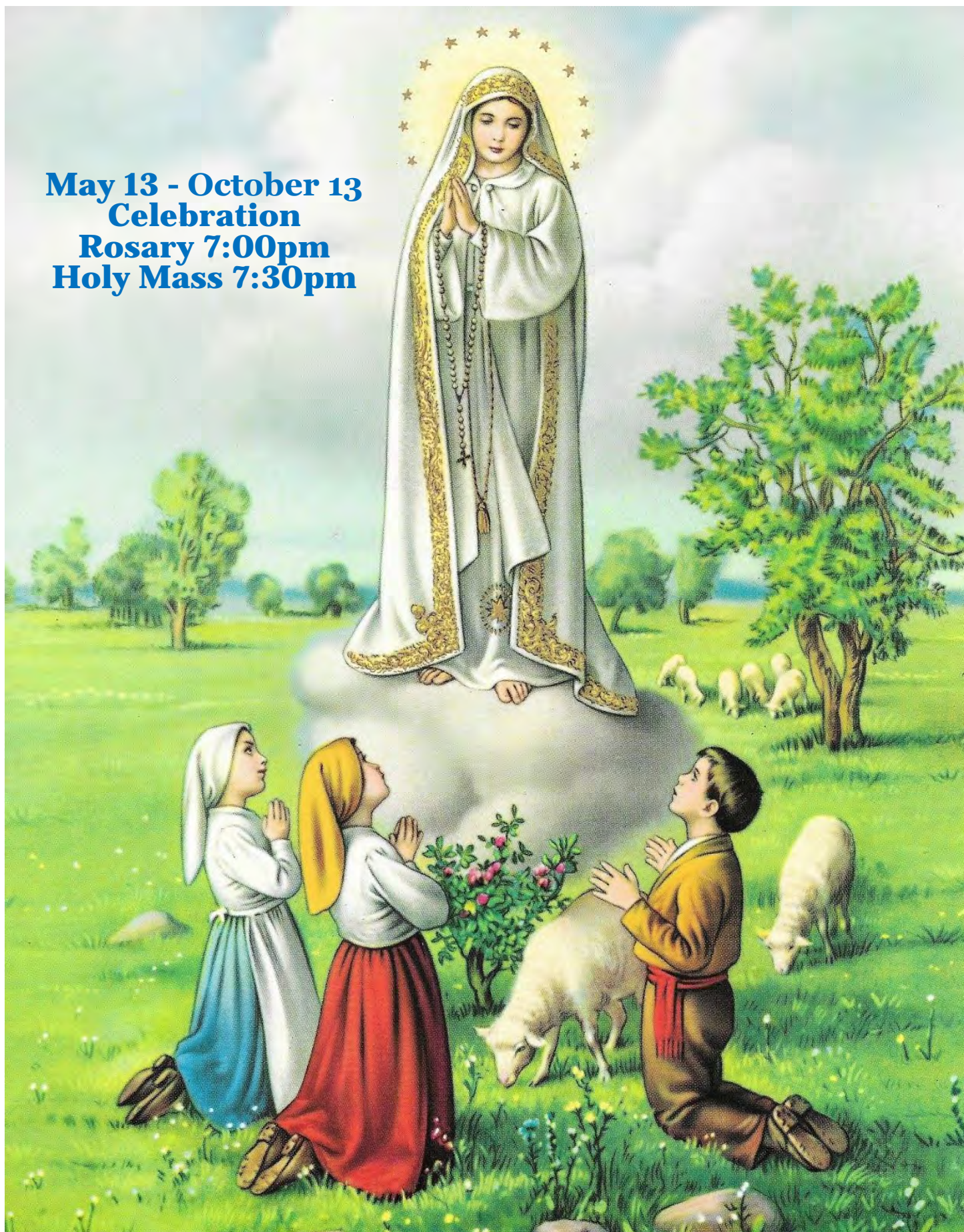


# Coronation of Mary May 4, 2025





**May 13 - October 13**  
**Celebration**  
**Rosary 7:00pm**  
**Holy Mass 7:30pm**













## Jubilee Pilgrimage to Italy 2025 – A Journey of Faith and Grace

By Jim Navarro

*Pilgrimage*

Dear Friends in Christ,

From April 28 to May 9, 2025, I was blessed to join fellow pilgrims on a sacred journey through Italy in celebration of the Jubilee Year. This unforgettable pilgrimage was organized by Adriatic Pilgrimages and prayerfully guided by **Fr. Antony Vazhappilly**, whose daily Masses and spiritual insights uplifted and united us all. His pastoral care made this a truly grace-filled experience.

Our experience was further enriched by our wonderful tour guide, **Lucia Puliti**, who brought Italy's sacred history to life with her expert storytelling and deep knowledge of every holy site we visited. Lucia was always right on with the history, the context, and the spiritual significance of each place, making every stop more meaningful.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to **Diego Roviello**, our skilled and courteous driver. Thanks to Diego's superb driving, we traveled safely and comfortably from point A to point B without a single hitch. Navigating Italy's roads and ancient cities is no small task, but Diego made it look effortless.

We began in **Turin**, where we visited the **Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice (Our Lady Help of Christians)** and venerated the tombs of **Saint John Bosco**, **Saint Mary Mazzarello**, and **Saint Dominic Savio**—each offering us a profound witness to holiness in action. We also viewed the replica of the **Shroud of Turin**, a deeply moving experience. Fr. Antony celebrated our first Mass there, setting the tone for our entire journey.

In **Collevalenza**, we visited the **Sanctuary of Merciful Love**, a center dedicated to Divine Mercy. After Mass, we continued to **Perugia**, our base for exploring the surrounding spiritual sites.

Our time in **Assisi** was a pilgrimage highlight. We visited the **Porziuncola**, the sacred chapel where **St. Francis** began his mission, and the **Chapel of the Transitus**, where he passed into eternal life. We prayed at the **Basilica of St. Clare** and celebrated Mass at the **Basilica of St. Francis**, where his tomb lies beneath beautifully frescoed ceilings. We also honored **Blessed Carlo Acutis**, the young tech-savvy evangelist, at **Santa Maria Maggiore**—a powerful moment, especially for younger pilgrims.

We traveled next to **Cascia**, the resting place of **St. Rita**, known for her perseverance and miracles in hopeless situations. Her incorrupt body was on display in the shrine, where we offered prayers of intercession. In **Loreto**, we visited the **Holy House of Nazareth**, miraculously transported according to tradition, and offered Mass in the presence of this sacred dwelling of the Holy Family.



Our visit to **Lanciano** brought us face-to-face with the **Eucharistic Miracle** of the 8th century—where the consecrated Host became real flesh and the wine real blood. It was a humbling moment of Eucharistic adoration. We then journeyed to **San Giovanni Rotondo**, home of **Saint Padre Pio**. We prayed at his tomb, saw his confessional and living quarters, and toured the **Home for the Relief of the Suffering**, the hospital he founded. We concluded the day at the **Grotto of St. Michael the Archangel**, a site of centuries-old devotion.

In **Rome**, we entered through the **Appian Way**. However, what we anticipated as a Papal Audience became something entirely different and deeply historic—**Pope Francis had passed away**, and we arrived during the **conclave**. The **Vatican was filled with cardinals** from around the world, gathered to discern the Church's next shepherd. Though solemn, the sense of unity and reverence was unforgettable.

While on our ride back to the hotel that evening, some of us noticed **white smoke rising from the Vatican chimney**—a sign that a new pope had been elected. An air of excitement swept over the bus as we realized we had witnessed a moment of Church history. The joy of knowing the **Cardinals had chosen a new shepherd** filled our hearts with hope and renewed faith. That evening, we learned that the newly elected pope was **Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost**—making history as the **first American to lead the Roman Catholic Church**. It was a profoundly moving moment to be in Rome during such a significant chapter in Church history.

We completed our pilgrimage by walking through **all four Holy Doors** of the Jubilee Year:

1. **St. Peter's Basilica** – enveloped in quiet reverence due to the Pope's passing.
2. **St. John Lateran** – the Pope's cathedral, where many pilgrims knelt to climb the **Holy Stairs**.
3. **St. Mary Major** – honoring Mary's protection throughout our journey. It was also a joy to be joined here by **Fr. Biju**, a long-time friend and spiritual guide, whose presence brought comfort and inspiration to many of us.
4. **St. Paul Outside the Walls** – where the tomb of the **Apostle Paul** inspires reflection on our mission as modern-day disciples.

**Fr. Antony's** Masses at these basilicas were spiritual milestones, filling us with gratitude and renewal.

During our journey, we also witnessed a deeply personal and spiritual moment. My wife, **Pam Navarro**, was struck powerfully by the **Holy Spirit**—an experience that physically overcame her, often referred to as being "slain in the Spirit." Several kind people rushed to assist her, thinking it was a medical emergency, but it was beyond the physical. It was clear to those present that it was a spiritual encounter, and the peace on her face spoke volumes. It was a humbling and sacred reminder that God moves in ways we do not always understand.

Of course, like any pilgrimage, there were a few humorous lessons along the way. One such moment came courtesy of our dear fellow pilgrim **Robert Brindle**, who somehow managed to



lose his **passport on the airplane** during our layover at Chicago O'Hare. For a few tense—and slightly hilarious—minutes, the group imagined Robert stranded in international limbo, living in Terminal 5 like a scene from a Tom Hanks movie. Thankfully, after some retracing (and maybe a few prayers), the passport was recovered safely on the floor, and Robert rejoined the group to much relief and plenty of good-natured teasing. One in particular? **Public restrooms in Italy often charge €0.50 to use.** So, one word of advice for future pilgrims: **go easy on the cappuccinos and bottled water unless you've got plenty of coins handy!** Consider it part of the discipline—both spiritual and bladder-related!

Each day began and ended with shared meals—breakfasts filled with joyful anticipation and dinners rich with laughter, reflection, and gratitude. Around the table, we bonded as a spiritual family, sharing our thoughts on the places we had visited and how the Lord was moving in each of our hearts.

These evenings often concluded with special **sharing sessions led by Fr. Antony**, who would invite each of us to reflect on the day's experiences. He gently encouraged us to open our hearts and speak about what moved us, challenged us, or inspired us. These sessions deepened our sense of purpose and helped us connect not just with the places we visited, but with one another as fellow pilgrims on the journey.

A special thank you to **Tessie Ricafort** and **Pam Navarro** for organizing our trip. Their dedication—through late-night accounting, last-minute adjustments, and tireless coordination—was instrumental in making this pilgrimage a reality.

Throughout this pilgrimage, we carried with us your intentions and prayers. This was not a vacation—it was a sacred calling. We traveled not as a tourist, but as a **pilgrim**, and we returned deeply enriched in faith, community, and love for our Church.

May this Jubilee Year inspire all of us at **St. James** to draw nearer to Christ and one another.

In Christ,  
**Jim Navarro**



# Team Green at the Intellectathon 2025 April 26, 2025





# Family Day May 31, 2025





# Confirmation

June 15, 2025

Father Lawrence D'Anjou presiding



## PATRIOTIC SIR KNIGHTS - JULY 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025



In a heartfelt expression of “spiritual patriotism,” the Bishop Begin Assembly #3546 of the Knights of Columbus gathered on July 4, 2025, for a special Independence Day Holy Mass at St. James the Apostle Church in Fremont, California.

Participating in the Color Corps were the following Sir Knights (left to right): PFN Sydney Jacques, PFN Roger Wharton, SK Noel Limcolioc, HGC Arleigh Simon, HGC Manny Malibu, HGC Marty Jequinto, FN Rob Brindle, M. Mac Cabrera, M.F.D. Noel Panlilio, M. Ed Caron, HGC Flor Del Rosario, HGC Vic LaBue, PFN Romy Cabrera, PFN Arthur Lianes, PFN Tony Zaragoza, and PFN Manny Bernal.



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH AUGUST 2024



Marie Rapp is the one I have picked to be the parishioner of the month of August 2024. I am sure she is known to many parishioners of St. James for she has been very involved with many parish activities and particularly her vibrant leadership of the Divine Mercy Ministry is known to many in the parish. I am happy to admit that the Divine Mercy Ministry is one of the best ministries in our parish and her role in running is indispensable. She is an active parishioner who has manifested total commitment to serve the community in whatever way she can. As the leader of the group, she is active in promoting Divine Mercy devotion among the parishioners of St. James. A fairly large group, they regularly pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy at 3:00 in the afternoon. They are also actively involved in bringing Holy Communion to the homebound. Marie Rapp manifests a great sense of ownership and belonging to the parish. These are two qualities that I wish all my parishioners to have! But I must say that I am very optimistic as we are getting better and better day by day. Examples of parishioners like Marie can have an amazing impact on others. I have already begun to see more and more parishioners getting involved in our parish activities with love and commitment.

Marie shares her initial experience when she first came to St. James. "I vividly remember the very first time I entered the church of St. James in 2011. It was the day when the Divine Mercy was enthroned. I belonged to St. Anne's parish then. Inside the church, I was drawn to the beauty and the simplicity of the altar and my heart was drawn to the big brown crucifix of our Lord Jesus Christ at the center. I immediately sensed a piece of serenity and solitude. I was drawn to the Crucifix. I felt the presence of Jesus for a moment and said to myself, I will come back to this church!!!

After the Divine Mercy was established and after I became a parishioner myself, I started to meet and get to know the parishioners of St. James. I felt a warm welcome from everyone I met, and it seemed like one big family. Everybody seemed to know everybody on a personal level. I love Father Antony's enthusiasm, energy and dedication, and it echoed the vibrancy, energy and enthusiasm of the parishioners as well!! You feel a sense of belonging!"

Marie, further writes, "When times get hard, which we all experience, you can come here in this church, look at the cross of Jesus and surrender to Him all your problems and pour out your heart to HIM... bring Him all your worries and fears. You experience a great sense of peace and calm in His presence. I love coming to Holy Mass half an hour earlier so that I can focus my attention on our Lord and Savior, and I enjoy the peace, the quietness and tranquility of my surroundings. I have promoted my parish by inviting my friends and relatives to come and worship here at my beloved St. James. I applaud each parishioner's commitment, dedication, and devotion to St. James Parish. Let us build a new Church where love can dwell, and all can safely worship the Lord. Let us build our lives on hope and continue to dream the impossible and have a clear vision for our parish."

In every organization there is a policy of 20/80 that runs the organization. This means only 20% of its members do most of the work. St. James is not an exception, unfortunately. However, I must admit that the percentage is ever on the increase in our parish. We have a group of strong parishioners who have embraced their parish as their own business and responsibility. It is this small group that makes our parish amazing. Let me corroborate what I said by concrete examples. How do you explain one or two women who keep the restrooms and the church clean daily? Thus, they save what we would have been normally paid to a janitor. How do you explain a woman who comes before seven every morning and goes around the parking lot picking up garbage? How do you explain a well-dressed man in his tuxedo and with an engineering degree presently working as a vice president of his company, taking care of the garbage bins every Sunday? Probably he is one of the most educated garbage men in the world, and we are proud that he is one of us. How do you explain one of the parishioners single-handedly sweeping, cleaning and waxing the church and the crying room every first Friday for the First Friday Holy Mass and for the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for adoration? I can go on enumerating amazing things that some of our parishioners do. There are so many self-sacrificing parishioners who are so committed to serving the parish that I have no words to thank them enough. My prayer to them is that they should act like a leaven to influence others one by one.

I am happy to recognize Marie Rapp who leads by example. She has great impact on the members of the Divine Mercy, and they have formed a beautiful ministry and continue to do a lot of good for the parishioners. I take this opportunity to thank them for the rummage sale they organized two Sundays ago. They have always actively participated in the Annual Festival. Thank you, Marie Rapp, for all that you do for our parish and may you continue as leaven of change in St. James!



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH

## SEPTEMBER 2024



Probably very few parishioners know Alain Sese for he has a dual citizenship when it comes to being the parishioner of St. James. He is also an active member of St. Anne, Union City. But I can tell you that he has a heart for St. James as you will see as I talk about him. He leads the choir, Missionary Families of Christ. They sing for us at the noon Mass on the third Sunday of every month. He and his team also sing for the first Friday Mass at 7:00 P.M. The members of the choir lead the Rosary at 7:00 before the Mass at 7:30. During the administration of the sacrament of the sick after the Holy Communion, they sing "Praise and Worship." I would like to publicly recognize and acknowledge his ever-readiness to sing at St. James. He is always available to come and sing whenever I call him, and I must admit that sometimes I call him at the eleventh hour. He has never turned down my invitation to come and sing. On behalf of our parish, I

want to thank him as I am indebted to him and to his choir. When I express my love and gratitude to Alain, I include all the Missionary Families of Christ Choir members. Thank you so much. Special mention should be made of his wife Miette, and their two daughters Isabella, who plays the flute, and Angela who takes care of the PowerPoint. In short, the whole family is part of the choir. Alain has been involved with St. James for many years as he and his family are also part of the Sound of Light Choir headed by Dede Laksmana.

This is what Alain has to say about our parish:

"St. James presents itself as a very welcoming place to worship God. What makes it unique for me is the Pastor and the love and camaraderie that each parishioner brings together. Within the church, St James focuses on the altar and gives eminence to the crucified Christ and the perpetual presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Whenever I enter the church, I become at ease in God's temple. I have always admired Fr. Antony's passion for leading the faith community to not only be hearers of the word but also to be the hands and feet of Christ. St James parish has a special devotion to Mother Mary, honoring her yearly feast days. I especially love the Fatima celebrations Masses that happen every 13th of the month from May through October where 3 major things happen: Eucharistic celebration, Marian Procession, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. All Sunday and special liturgical celebrations such as Christmas and Easter bring out the best at St. James like in all Catholic churches. At St. James, Spirit-led priests, deacons, ministries, and parishioners make such celebrations meaningful, solemn, and vibrant."

To the question, "Do you recommend St. James to others?" he answered: For anyone trying to find a home parish, St. James might just be the one for you. There is a constancy of purpose and a missionary zeal. Talk to Fr. Antony who will guide and direct you. Many ministries can provide opportunities for growth in faith and service to fellow Christians."



I believe we should build Catholic parishes served by the parishioners. Catholic parishes offer numerous opportunities for parishioners to serve the Lord and the community. We are all differently gifted. Those who are interested in music should join the music ministry to be part of the church choir. What can I do for the betterment of my parish should be the question that every parishioner should ask. One should join where he or she will fit in the best. There are so many ministers in all parishes. Get involved with any of the ministries where you feel called by God to serve. Knights of Columbus may be the best place for men who will have plenty of opportunities to serve the parishioners in different activities. Others may fit in among the Eucharistic ministers and become Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the homebound besides serving as the Eucharistic ministers on Sundays. There may be others who will be at their best in proclaiming the Word of God as Lectors. We have two strong ministries of Divine Mercy and the Legion of Mary. If you are interested, you should talk to the members of these ministries. Different ministries are the best ornaments in any parish, and they provide you with wonderful opportunities to grow spiritually. They are the best help for you to get closer to God and the church. You should not be merely onlookers. Be involved and be engaged with parish activities. The more involved you are the better chances are there for you to become God-fearing and God-loving Catholics. Alain is a talented musician, and he uses his musical talents by singing for God. There is nothing better than singing praises to God! You have your own specific talents and you should find out where you can serve God and His people.

As I personally thank Alain and his family for their generosity in singing for us, I would like to invite all my parishioners to belong to one ministry or another. It is my ardent desire that you belong to at least one ministry. You are also welcome to become a member of more than one ministry. I need your active participation to make our parish more and more an amazing parish. The key to this is to become an amazing parishioner yourself first!

Fr. Antony



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH OCTOBER 2024



I would like to describe her as “the woman with a walker.” I am sure many of you have seen her coming to church using her walker and if you have seen her once you will not forget her smiling face because her smile is contagious! My first vivid memories of Beverly (Bev) were during our pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 2015 when she was still struggling to deal with the death of her husband. I will never forget a particular incident when after the wedding renewal in Cana we were all rushing to catch up with boat-ride in the sea of Galilee when we found Bev was missing. Witnessing the Renewal of wedding must have been very painful experience for her as she had just lost her loving husband recently. When she came out of the church she took a wrong



road to the bus. When we found her, she was crying like a child. I have always found in her the simplicity of a child!

Talking about her coming to our parish, she says that she joined the parish early 2014, when her husband had died, and her only daughter wanted her to move in with her in Union City. To put it in her own words she says, “I tried several parishes and then I went to St. James for a weekday Mass. I introduced myself to Fr. Antony and asked him if there was a bereavement group in the parish. Father introduced me to Joe and Sue Parrish. What impressed me about Father Antony was that when I went to Sunday Mass that week, he remembered my name. I said this was going to be my parish.”

I know she does not enjoy the best of health, and I am truly impressed with her determination to come for Mass several times a week and she is never absent for Sunday Mass. A woman of great faith, she is an inspiration to all her friends. She is an active member of the Legion of Mary and her best contributions to the group is her life and example. She comes to me with some questions every now and then concerning the Church and Faith and I love answering them. Like a child, she still is searching for the Lord, and she makes every effort to deepen her faith in Jesus. For me she is one of the best examples of piety and devotion to the Holy Eucharist and our Blessed mother Mary. If you carefully look around, you will find many unsung living saints among us. I strongly believe that heaven begins here on earth and our journey to heaven is a simple transition from here to the next which happens when God, our Creator, calls us to Himself. I have seen at least a few saints in St. James and others are in the process of making themselves saints. The parish is the best place where we can begin to work our way to sainthood! Jesus has given us the greatest assurance when He said, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:54-57). We are a chosen people who have the special privilege of eating His Body and drinking His Blood. It is very unfortunate that not all of us understand the significance of the Holy Mass. I consider Holy Mass as a ticket to heaven. If we receive Him with adequate preparation and devotion, we have the Key to eternal life!

I asked Bev what makes St. James very special to her. This was her response, “St. James is special to me because of the people! They are so warm and friendly! I really feel at home here!” My dear parishioners, you have a responsibility to make St. James a warm place. You have a responsibility to make your Parish a place where everyone one feels loved and welcomed. For this you need to go out of your way and reach out to people with an attitude of openness and love. Every parishioner should become an open door through which everyone can enter the parish with a great sense of belonging. You should have an open heart to receive everyone without looking at the differences of their colors or places of origin. We should receive everyone as brothers and sisters because God is our Father and in God, we are all brothers and sisters. We are made in God’s image and likeness! We should be open to everyone without any bias or prejudices. We welcome everyone and everyone is welcome to our parish is our motto. No one should go back from Sunday worship without feeling a sense of welcome. As Beverly said, everyone should feel ‘this is my parish’ and should feel a great connection. I call everyone of my parishioner to this mission of making our parish a warm place where everyone one feels loved and accepted.

Bev feels a great sense of belonging to our parish and that is what makes her so comfortable and committed to St. James. She is one of our parish volunteers who is so committed and dedicated to her work. At her age she could have easily chosen to stay at home. But she finds a great joy in helping her parish because she considers St. James as her spiritual home where she gets spiritually nourished and nurtured!

Bev, please accept my personal love and gratitude for all that you do for your parish. May you continue to be an inspiration and example to your parishioners. As I mentioned earlier, you are an inspiration to me. It is sincere and committed people like you who make our parish an amazing parish!

# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH NOVEMBER 2024



She is a woman of great faith and courage! I saw it as she watched her only daughter die. In her great faith she was able to say, "Let it be. Let the will of God be done." With great faith and courage, she watched her only daughter battling for life in Fremont's Washington Hospital.. Through it all, she was well-composed and calmly witnessed **the anointing of the sick** that I administered to Dorothy, her



beloved daughter. It is not easy for any mother to watch her son or daughter die. With great faith Lucille accepted the untimely death of her fifty-one-year-old daughter.

I have chosen Lucille as the parishioner of the month for November 2024. Music is her passion and she uses it

to praise and glorify the Lord. She has been playing piano for different Masses at St. James with her small group of choir members. Biologically she may be eighty-two, but she has the heart of a twenty-one-year-old when it comes to music. Her prayer is that she may be able to use her musical talent until the end of her life. Talking about her experiences in playing piano in our parish she says: "I started playing the piano for the Mother of Perpetual Help Novena in 2010. I use my musical talent as a gift from the Lord and I promised our Blessed Mother and the loving Lord that I will keep on serving them as long as I can. Lucille does not drive anymore and so she uses Uber often. But she has also some good friends who would pick her up and drop her back home most of the time. She is as sweet as she looks. I asked her what brought her to St. James. This is her answer. "I like the prayerful environment of St. James which helps me to concentrate and meditate during the 8.30 Mass. Timewise, 8.30 is a convenient time for me to go there for Mass. I love to pray the different Novenas throughout the year, and I find St. James the ideal place for me because different Novenas take an important place in the church. I love to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and it is so fulfilling for me to sit and spend an hour in adoration. I love to recite the Rosary before the Mass at 8.30 or after the Mass depending on how soon I get to the church. I feel we are a family at St. James. People are so welcoming and personal. I feel at home at St. James. I have always recommended Sr. James to others who are looking I personally would like to express my love and gratitude to Lucille Ubaldo for her love and generosity in playing the piano and forming her small choir to sing at different Masses. I greatly appreciate her commitment to her music. Even though she needs the help of a walking stick, she is so eager to come to play at St. James. She is very simple and quiet, and she is hardly seen by people. But I can assure

you that her music is loved by the parishioners who attend the Mass when she plays. As she has clearly stated, she plays only for the greater glory of God and His mother. My prayer for her is that she will live for a long time to use her musical talents for the greater glory of God and His Mother Mary. As she expressed earlier, she finds great joy and satisfaction in playing for the Lord. When we use our God-given talents for God's great glory, we are doing the right thing. I pray that God will bless Lucille with good health of body and mind so that she can continue to glorify her God! I was amazed to see her playing piano at the funeral Mass of her daughter. What an amazing woman! Every parish should offer opportunities for the parishioners to use their gifts and talents. A parish should belong to its parishioners, and they should contribute to the well running of it. This is what makes St. James totally a different parish! St. James offers numerous opportunities for its parishioners to serve their parish by offering their time, treasure and talents. Isn't it amazing that every department of our parish is run by committed and dedicated people who put their time, treasure and talent into the service of the parish. They happily volunteer to take care of the various needs of the parish because they feel their parish belongs to them. I wish and pray that this will become the model for every Catholic parish. Those who volunteer feel that they are called to give back to the church for all the spiritual benefits they have received. All their sacramental needs are taken care of by their parish. I must happily say that the good people who come to volunteer to take care of the different needs of the parish do so with a great sense of joy and commitment. I admire them and I pray for them every day.

I asked Lucille to speak about her musical background. "I started playing piano when I was 8 years old. Music is a gift from the Lord. There is peace and joy in music. It brings me closer to God. I feel a great sense of fulfillment in music, especially when I play for the Holy Mass for the Lord and His mother Mary.

Lucille, you are a God-given gift to St. James. Thank you for all that you do for us. I want you to know that you are greatly valued and appreciated. May God continue to bless you with good health of body and mind!



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH

## JANUARY 2025



Very quietly she goes around doing her job with total dedication and without any distractions. You may think that she is in perpetual meditation or contemplation. She is the first one to arrive almost every morning and opens the church at about 7:00am. She then goes around preparing the altar for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. She makes sure everything for the Mass is in the right place. She fills the altar candles with oil if needed. She makes sure all the lights are turned on and that the church is ready before the daily attendees arrive. She chooses the right readings for the daily Mass. She faithfully takes



part in the Rosary, sometimes leading it when needed. Thank you, Aleni Nate, for your love and commitment to serve our church. I love to see the way you prepare the altar for the Mass, and I truly appreciate your help.

Even though Aleni is considerably new to the parish, she has made St. James her home where she feels at home. She embraced the parish with a great sense of belonging and ownership. She sees the parish as her responsibility and her love and commitment to serve the church comes from these feelings of belonging and ownership. It is only when every parishioner feels a sense of responsibility towards the parish that a parish can become a special parish. It is unfortunate that not every parishioner thinks this way. For them, their parish should come to help them when they need help. They do not want to know how their parish is functioning. They do not want to get involved in finding out what the different needs of their parish are. For many of them, Sunday attendance is not the priority, but they come when there is nothing else to do. Let me ask you how many of my parishioners consider Sunday worship as their number one priority and will never miss Sunday attendance of the Holy Mass. A family that comes to church every Sunday understands their need for thanksgiving to God for all His blessings. The Eucharist is the best of all prayers and there is no better spiritual experience than a well-attended Mass. After Jesus had cured ten lepers and only a Samaritan returned to thank Him, Jesus asked him where the other nine

were. I am sure every Sunday Jesus must be asking those who attended Mass the same question, where are the other members of the parish? He would further say, "I had blessed many more than the ones who are in the church. Do they have no time for me?" If you become truly grateful to God and recognize all His blessings you and your families have received, you will never miss attending the Holy Eucharist because the Eucharist is the greatest expression of your love and gratitude to God.

You can read below what Aleni writes about her experiences of being a parishioner of St. James. You can easily feel the warmth of her love for the parish. Thank you Aleni for your inspiring presence in the parish.

"My experience at St. James Church spans over a decade, a journey driven by my desire for a faith community that deeply nurtures spiritual growth and strengthens moral character. I sought a church where the Mass is celebrated with reverence and a profound focus on Jesus Christ, coupled with a consistent devotion to the Blessed Mother, expressed through novenas and the recitation of the Rosary. St. James has provided this and more.

What resonates most deeply with me are the practical and insightful homilies. They aren't merely theological discussions; they offer relevant guidance for navigating the challenges and complexities of daily life, providing a roadmap for personal growth and problem-solving. The active participation of the pastor in the novenas and Rosary devotions is deeply appreciated, fostering a genuine sense of shared faith. His approachable nature, coupled with his transparent and straightforward leadership, builds trust and strengthens the bonds within the parish.

Beyond the spiritual aspects, I've been consistently impressed by the pastor's compassionate care for parishioners, particularly those who are sick or facing end-of-life situations. His willingness to sacrifice for his flock is evident in his dedicated ministry. Furthermore, the church thrives on the dedication of its volunteers, whose tireless efforts maintain the church's beauty and efficiency, ensuring a welcoming atmosphere. The well-managed office adds to this sense of order and organization. Beyond the physical upkeep, the community spirit is remarkable; parishioners consistently demonstrate a willingness to support each other, offering help and extending compassion to those in need. This mutual support creates a truly welcoming and inclusive environment."

eFather Antony

# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2025



Father John Morgan was the founder of St. James parish, and the parish came into existence on April 9, 1972. Father John began the parish in a modest way by conducting Sunday Masses at Patterson School auditorium and weekday Masses in private houses. Our present church, which was eventually to be used as a community hall, was blessed and dedicated by the first bishop of Oakland diocese, Bishop Begin, on May 9, 1976. Fr. John Morgan continued as Pastor until his retirement in 1993. Most of our

original members have already died and have gone to their eternal reward. I am happy to present to you Nancy Tiong, as the Parishioner of the Month of February 2025.

Nancy joined the parish in 1979, and she has been a very committed and faithful parishioner for 46 years. She was very regular in coming to church for Sunday Mass and she diligently supported the parish. Age has caught up with her and she is not able to attend Sunday Mass as she would have liked to. I have always admired her simplicity and genuine love for her parish. She does not live very far from the church, and she made it a point of walking to the church on Sundays. Today she has all the good will to walk to the church, but her feet have become weak, and they refuse to follow her wishes.

I asked Nancy what special qualities that she found among the parishioners of St. James. She answered by saying that the parishioners are very kind, gentle and helpful. There is a homey climate in the parish which makes it very welcoming. I would like to add one or two points here. I am happy our parish is welcoming, but I am not sure if every parishioner is welcoming. There may be many Catholics who have abandoned the church and their Sunday attendance of Mass. Do you go out of your way to welcome them? Do you encourage them to come and attend Sunday Mass? You never know that some of them may be just waiting for someone to invite them. They may be shy to come back as they must be wondering what others would be thinking of them. They are our brothers and sisters and we have a responsibility for bringing them back. For me, a welcoming parish is when all her members make it a point to look for the lost sheep and encourage them to come back. Of course, we should be friendly and warm in dealing with the people in the church, which creates a spirit of welcome. But we should not stop at that. You should make a list of people whom you do not see coming to the church on Sundays anymore. You could inquire about them by giving them a phone call. Dorothy Tiong considers St. James parish as a family. To the parishioners St. James should be a family away from their families.



Until recently Nancy was actively involved with Vincent De Paul. She has been a member of it for a long time. She proudly remembers how happy she was helping poor people who needed food, gas or other utilities. Helping the poor was one of her most rewarding parish activities.

I must congratulate her for her unflinching effort and determination to make a pilgrimage to the Vatican recently. I was very concerned and even a little worried that she should travel at her age. May she continue to be an inspiration to others! On a personal note, you will always have my love and prayers. Please do not hesitate to call me if I can be of some help!

In closing I would like to thank Nancy personally for her dedicated service to St. James. I know she is not able to be involved as she did in the past. Please keep St. James in your prayers.



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH MARCH 2025



One of the things that I had to do during my first years of being the pastor here was to choose a SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR OF THE PARISH as required by the diocese. I approached Anna



Mique with my humble request to fill that position. Anna willingly accepted the job and ever since she has been taking care of this very important need in the parish. She meticulously took care of this responsibility and made sure that every volunteer in our parish had their required training and kept records with a great sense of love and responsibility. I would like to recognize her service to the parish by making her the parishioner of the month for March.

There are a few silent workers in our parish who go out of their way to make our parish an amazing parish. They are behind the curtain doing an amazing job for the parish. They do it for the Lord without seeking any human recognition. Her two children were Altar servers for many years into their college days.

I would like to summarize all the blessings of our parish in the fact that the different volunteers run the parish in an efficient way! St. James is abundantly blessed by so many volunteers who consider their parish as their home and take care of the various needs of their parish. It is unheard of for a parish to not have paid staff. Their commitment is so praiseworthy. It is only because of dedication and commitment to serving the Lord that we could even think of building a new and permanent church. The thought of building a new church would never have crossed my mind without these generous people who serve the parish as volunteers. Thank you, Anna Mique, because you are one of them. You are an asset to St. James! I am proud of you!

Anna has shared her thoughts on her parish of which she has been a committed member for many years. Here is what she has to say: "We moved to Fremont with Albert and Lilibeth with the kids in May 2005

from Union City. We continued to attend St.

Anne's Church in Union City for a year or two before we started attending St. James the Apostle. We didn't go at first because we heard some stories that didn't really appeal to us. Then we started attending in 2007 when we heard there's a new priest and that was you, Father Antony. Since then, the whole family attends St. James - that includes Albert, Lilibeth and their children, Lilibeth's mom, my mom, me and my children. And we've been parishioners of St. James since then.

The first thing that attracted our family was the parish priest. We really like you, Father, and the homilies you give really are very clear and easy to understand how to apply to our daily lives. Of course, the jokes are superb too. What keeps us going and volunteering is the community itself. Not too small and not too big of a community. The fact that you come to know everyone in the parish is amazing as well as all the work you do for the parish. 'Little Drops of Water make an Ocean' stuck with me. Little things count! And of course, the biggest of them all are your efforts to build the Mother Theresa Center as well as the new church.

There is no perfect place to be, but I have settled myself with St. James the Apostle because this is the closest place for me to perfection. I always know that we do all these things not for anyone else but for God! Though I volunteer in the background, I'm starting to help more by participating in the Choir as well as the Eucharistic Minister (soon!). I will definitely recommend St. James to everyone. I bring my visitors to attend Mass with me in St. James and I always receive very good feedback especially for our Parish Priest, Father Antony. They are very impressed with the homilies. I also share with my friends the work in the parish to build the new church. I reach out to them for help with the raffle tickets year after year and they were very generous to help every single time. I'm planning to invite them all once the church is finally built. Hoping that we can have it soon - I can't wait to see the new church that everyone worked hard for, especially you, Father Antony. Without your vision, I don't think the parish would be where we are today. There will always be challenges but with God's help, we're going to reach our goals!"

Anna Mique, on behalf of St. James, please accept my sincerest love and gratitude! You are truly a blessing to our parish!

# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH APRIL 2025



For April 2025, I have chosen a couple, Andrea and Romy Bautista, as the parishioners of the month. I can see in them a sense of belonging to the parish which is very clear from their generous contributions. Whenever we need donations for different functions like the Annual Crab feed, the first names that the organizers will consider are these two names. They are always very generous and never once turned down



our requests. Both are deeply devoted to their parish, and they recognize their responsibility to the well running of the parish. They love their parish not in an abstract way but in a concrete way and that is why they become very generous by making generous donations whenever they are asked.

The reason why I share this story or similar stories is because by reading these stories others may be inspired to follow these examples. I consider this one of the best marketing strategies. You may have the best products but if you do not have good marketing plans you will not sell your products however good they may be. According to me, parishioners should be marketing agents promoting their parish by inviting more and more people to the parish. If you love your parish, you should speak about it among your friends or relatives. As an example, if you have discovered a new restaurant and you like the food, I am sure you will talk about it with your friends and invite some of them to go with you to the same restaurant later. Or if you like a particular product, you will certainly speak about it among others and most likely you will encourage them to like the same product. The best marketing is from word of mouth. Even your parish needs marketing skills. Your parish will depend on how you promote it. Good stories of the parish will invite people to come and join the parish. Have you ever talked to others about your parish and invited them to join you in worshipping God? On a practical point, have you ever brought a new member to the parish? For many Catholics, their parish is a place where they come and go. They don't want to get attached to it for fear of getting more and more involved with the parish activities. They are happy to come and attend Mass, and as soon as the Mass is over, they are gone. What about you? Are you well connected with your parish by being involved in one or two of the parish ministries? How much of your time, treasure, and talent do you contribute to your parish? Do you feel a sense of pride to belong to St. James? At a deeper level, do you feel you are making an adequate contribution to your parish? Or can you improve a little because you now understand your parish is your responsibility?

I have known Andrea and Romy for many years and I have always been impressed with their love and generosity. When it comes to giving to the church, they are very generous, and Andrea once told me that the more she gives the more she receives. I can vouch for it

as this is also my experience. The more I give, the more I receive. Unfortunately, there aren't many Catholics who believe this. They are yet to experience the joy of giving. I am sure the story of this couple will inspire them and change their style of giving. This is something one must experience. And once you experience it, there will be no turning back and you will become a cheerful giver! Only those who are cheerful givers will enter heaven for heaven belongs to happy people who had Jesus as their Treasure. They clearly understood the difference between serving two masters, God and mammon; they chose God. Not an easy choice as you will be under tremendous pressure to choose Mammon instead. Happy are those who have chosen God and persevere in serving Him until the end!

Talking about how long they have been parishioners of St. James, they told me that they have been attending St. James since 2007. One of their friends had invited them to attend the Mass on a Wednesday morning when the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help is conducted. They had grown up with this devotion back in the Philippines and they were happy to continue with it. Talking about her first experience at St. James, Andrea shared her first experience of smelling roses in the church, and to her surprise there were no roses in the church. A big Marian devotee, she thought this was our Lady's way of inviting her to the church. She talks about how she grew up in love and devotion to Mary, our mother. She admires the prayerful atmosphere of the parish which helped her to grow and develop a deep spirituality. The asset of the parish, according to them, is the friendly and welcoming spirit of parishioners which makes Andrea the visitors feel welcome and acceptable. Andrea and Romy attend almost every daily Mass. They admitted that they have been amazingly blessed ever since they began to attend St. James parish. A sincere joy was visible as they talked about their experiences of the parishioners ever since they became parishioners. Recently Andrea joined one of the choirs and increased her commitment to the church. When asked if they would recommend newcomers, she introduced me to one of her nurse friends with whom she had worked a long time by saying, "We always bring new members to our parish." They had brought this friend to attend a Friday morning Mass. Her friend told me that she was very happy she came and added that she was attending Holy Mass after a long time. Thank you, Romy and Andrea! Please continue to support St. James in whatever way you can because St. James needs dedicated and committed people like you!



# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH MAY 2025



I would like to express my love and gratitude to Tina and Doming Christobal by choosing them as the parishioners of the month of May 2025. They have been long-time parishioners of St. James and their support to the parish should not go unnoticed. Their commitment to the parish is very inspirational to others and they manifest a great sense of commitment to the parish. I see them as true parishioners of St. James by their commitment to serve and contribute to the parish. They manifest a great sense of belonging to the parish. They consider St. James as their responsibility, and they will not shy away when there is a need to step up and help with the various needs of the parish. I admire and appreciate their generosity, which speaks loud and clear of their great sense of ownership.

My dream for St. James is that every parishioner begins to consider their parish as their responsibility and each family should contribute to the wellbeing of the parish according to their means. Each family should decide, considering their monthly income, how much they are able to contribute to their parish on a weekly basis. I am not talking here about equal sharing but equal sacrifice. What do I mean by this? A wealthy family may be able to contribute more than a retired person with limited income. Even though their amount will vary, the sacrifice they make is equal. Jesus commended the widow's giving by saying that she had given more than others who had put the money into the treasury from their plentifulness. While the widow in her want had put in all that she had. She gave everything not knowing where she would get her next meal from. To put it simply, this widow trusted in the providence of God and believed that she would be doubly blessed by God who loves a cheerful giver.



Every Catholic should be able to put all his or her trust in the Lord and believe in the providence of God that they will lack nothing. Every parish is the mother to the parishioners, and every parishioner is a child of the mother Church. It is in their respective parishes that they are spiritually nourished and sustained. They receive the Sacraments in their parishes of which the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist nourishes them.. Your parish is your spiritual family, and the members are your brothers and sisters. Do not be afraid of getting involved with your parish, your spiritual family and the more involved you are, the closer you are to God. Get involved with one or two ministries of the parish and this way you can serve the church in a closer and personal way. No parishioner should be an onlooker or a stranger to the parish. You can discover some of the best friends in your parish. Make your parish a spiritual home where your spiritual needs are taken care of. From my observations, I can tell you that those who are attentive to their parishes and are involved with the different parish activities are specially blessed by God and their children grow up spiritually. They recognize their need for God and prayer in their lives.

One of the good characteristics of every parishioner is openness to everyone. A parish consists of different people from different places and ethnicities. They will be people of different colors and languages.

Therefore, it is very important that the parishioners treat and accept one another without any prejudices and accept everyone

with love and respect. Openness to one another is the key to the successful running of every parish. Do not encourage divisions or groupism. Be open to everyone and there is always something new to learn from everyone. Every effort should be made to make new friends from different backgrounds or ethnicities. Your life is going to be enriched by the experiences you share with one another. I have come across people who develop lifelong friends in the parish communities. True and genuine friends enrich our life. They are priceless and we should cultivate them diligently. Our families are the domestic churches, and every member should have the habit of attending Sunday Mass without fail.

Attendance of Sunday Mass should be a top priority, and every family should be Eucharistic-centered. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many families. Many in our families have stopped attending Sunday Mass and more and more are losing their faith in God and the Church. Many of our Catholics have become nominal Catholics and attend Holy Mass only on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. Without pointing a finger at them, we must do whatever we can to bring them back to the Church. They are our responsibility. We cannot escape by saying, "I am not my brother's keeper." Remember the story of God asking Cain where his brother was. Cain's response was, "Am I my brother's keeper?" I would like to spread the message that I am my brother's and sister's keeper. With this intention before the final prayer of the Holy Mass at St. James, we pray for the families and especially for those who have abandoned the church. Prayer is powerful and when we pray through the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary our prayers will be doubly efficacious. Wherever it is possible, let us reach out to our brothers and sisters and gently invite them to the church. I personally think that there are many who are waiting for someone to invite them. Some of them who have been away from the Church may be shy to return. Tina and Doming, please accept my love and gratitude for all that you do for St. James. May God continue to bless you!

# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH JUNE 2025



Have you heard of the saying, "A man of many parts?" If you haven't, you've heard it now. A man of many parts is a person who is skilled or talented in many different areas or activities. It implies that they are not limited to one particular talent or profession, but rather have a wide range of abilities. I am choosing one like him to be the Parishioner of the Month for June 2025.

He was involved with making Christmas cribs during the last two years. But this year, he had made a big improvement on the first one he had made last year, and many parishioners had showered him with generous compliments on it. But not many would have known who was behind it. It was none other than the one described as the man of many parts. What is praiseworthy about him is that he does it so quietly that no one notices his invisible hands. He truly believes in the words of Jesus, who said, "Let not your right hand know what your left is doing." What Jesus meant by this saying is do not do things for the praise of men but for the glory of God, who sees what you do in secret and will reward you. In the middle of the winter this February, our heater in the church broke down, and people began to feel cold in the church. I asked him if he could take care of it. Without hesitation, he started working on it. It was not as easy as he had probably anticipated. Finally, he was able to diagnose the problem, and he needed new parts, which he ordered himself. As soon as he had both furnaces working to great joy and satisfaction of the Daily Mass attendees. I like his patience and perseverance. He is not the type of person who will easily give up. Probably the words "give up" are not in his dictionary. He had spent a good amount of time on this work, and I am grateful to him for saving a good amount of money for the parish by taking care of the repairs himself. Two weeks ago, the garbage disposal in my rectory kitchen stopped working, and as usual, I approached the man of many parts. He got it fixed in two days. It looked to me as if there was nothing that he could not do. We wanted a new carrier for the Fatima statue for the Marian procession starting this year on May 13. The statue we had used for more than ten years needed a replacement and a new carrier. Once again, we had it replaced with a new one, and you have already guessed who did it. He is truly a man of many parts. He is a well-known photographer and videographer in the town and probably might have covered some of your family functions like baptisms, marriages, anniversaries, or funerals. He has excelled in this profession for more than thirty years. He has been helping with the Knights of Columbus for many years as their Media assistant. An engineer by profession, photography has been his passion. He is blessed with many natural skills that he can put his hand to anything.



Even though he has not been a parishioner for many years, he has made his presence felt as he readily gets involved with many repairs in the parish. As expected, a parish will have many breaks and leaks to take care of, and our parish is blessed to have someone who considers his parish his responsibility and is totally committed to doing whatever he is called. I know I have kept you in suspense, and you are eager to know who this man of many parts is. Some of you have already guessed his name. He is Jess Gomez, who is very quiet in nature and has a very simple demeanor. He had covered with his videography the GANAP performance on May 10. His recording of the Passion of Christ, organized by the Vailankanni group, was of outstanding quality. You will remember him using his spotlights during the Stations of the Cross on Fridays last Lent. It definitely created a special prayerful ambience in the church. I must admit that many wonderful parishioners are totally committed to the church. They are selfless and committed to doing whatever they can and doing it without seeking laurels. This is the strength of any parish. This is the trademark of St. James. Personally, I am so blessed with many generous and honest workers in the parish who continue to serve the church because they feel a great sense of responsibility towards their parish. This is my clarion call to one and all of St. James parishioners: You should consider St. James as your parish, and you are called by God to find your path to eternity through your parish. Your parish takes care of your spiritual needs by offering you the Sacraments. In return, you must create a family atmosphere where everyone feels a great sense of belonging and ownership. In all my writings, I emphasize the importance of creating among the parishioners a sense of ownership and belonging. The stronger your commitment, the better the running of the parish. One of the best ways we can get more and more parishioners is by helping them to change their attitude. Many are still thinking the parish does not belong to them but to the priest. I am afraid some of them are still thinking that I am getting financial help from the diocese. How I wish this were true. On the other hand, we give 12% of all our income to the diocese every year. This year, our contribution to the Diocese of Oakland is \$ 60,051.35. Every parish is required to make this contribution according to its income. Like our parish, the diocese has overhead expenses, and we should support the bishop and his different ministries.

It is parishioners like Jess Gomez who are the true blessings to the parish. Thank you, Jess, for all that you do for St. James! If every parishioner were to understand their responsibility and joyfully make their share of contribution to the parish by sharing their treasure, time, and talents, the parish will become truly a community of believers. However, I must be optimistic and say that we are slowly getting there. It will take time. In the meantime, let us thank God for the gift of our parish and let us pray that we will become more and more united in the name of Jesus and His mother Mary, who are at the center of our parish. Thank you, parishioners! Let us pray especially for those members of our parish who have abandoned their parish after COVID. I hope they will get this message.

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# PARISHIONER OF THE MONTH JULY 2025



I can hear many whispering in my ears saying, "She should have been the parishioner of the month a long time ago." I cannot agree less. Sheila Remolar Reduta has been an exemplary parishioner who has contributed a yeoman's service to St. James for many years. She is one of the esteemed parishioners who made St. James her spiritual home. She has served the parish in many ways and whatever she does, she does it in her unique style of total love and commitment. She has been taking care of our CCD program for the longest time. Working in full



collaboration with other teachers, she has brought in many new ideas and activities. Under her leadership, the children would pray the Rosary at the grotto every time they have class. I am always inspired to see the children praying the Rosary. "Catch them young" is the policy. Children must be taught the prayers when they are young. They will never forget them when they are old. The children understand the importance of devotion to the Holy Rosary and they make the Rosary an important weapon in their spiritual life. As Fremont got increasingly expensive, she relocated to Oakley, but I requested her to continue to look after the CCD children and she accepted. With the help of other dedicated teachers, she still supervises the program.

As one of the valuable Executive members, Sheila takes care of its communication and shares the information with the parishioners through emails or through parish websites. She helps her husband, Ericson, who is our Webmaster and takes care of our Facebook. I am particularly grateful to both for doing this job for St. James. As I have always said, a parish is as good as its members. If the members of the parishes are committed and dedicated and each one plays his or her role in running the parish with a great sense of responsibility and commitment, that parish will flourish and will grow in every sense of the word.

All the members of the parish should be involved with different ministries of the parish. We have a wonderful example in Sheila who will not hesitate to make any sacrifice to make St. James her business. I say this because it is very disappointing to see so many of our registered parishioners who are still not making any effort to make their parish their business. I will not give up on them and I will pray for them that they will begin to see their parish their responsibility. Nothing is impossible with God! The following are her answers to my questions.

When did you join the parish, St. James? And what attracted you?

I joined the parish in 2007 when Father Antony became the pastor. The first sermon that I listened to when Father Antony became the pastor of St. James was the reason I decided to become a parishioner. I was already going to St. James at the time when Father Paul Cleu was still the pastor. However, I did not feel a sense of belonging then. So, I started going to other churches in the area in the hope of finding one that I can call my "parish home." However, one Sunday, I didn't make it in time for the Mass in Holy Spirit so I decided to attend the Mass at St. James instead. To my surprise, the priest was not Father Cleu anymore. It was Father Antony. And that was the first time I experienced listening to every word in a sermon. It was such a powerful emotional experience. It was different, grounded, and it pierced through the heart and was full of conviction. That was the day I found my "parish home" in St. James and it was the day I decided to become a volunteer for the Faith Formation ministry.

What makes St. James an amazing parish? What makes St. James amazing is its ability to live up to its mantra: "Open Mind, Open Heart and Open Door." This parish is powered by dedicated, hardworking, committed, and selfless volunteers who give their time, talent and treasure freely and cheerfully. When you join the parish, you are not only joining a congregation. You are joining a family. Whether you're a long-time parishioner or just visiting, St. James is a place where you feel welcomed, appreciated and valued. And I believe it has a lot to do with having a good leader who leads by example, one who inspires and never gives up on the community and its aspirations. We are blessed to have a pastor like Father Antony who dreams big, leads with vision and wisdom, and never tires of encouraging people to serve, minister and care for the parish, especially its future leaders - the youth. The St. James community is strong, resilient, grounded, compassionate and faithful because we have a good shepherd who deeply cares. I am grateful to be a part of this community and will always cherish St. James as my "parish-home."

Will you recommend St. James to others to come and join the parish? Absolutely! St. James is a place where you can thrive in your faith, build friendships and relationships, share your talents through different ministries, engage in many fun activities that serve a good cause, and be a part of something big which is the building of our permanent church.

Thank you, Sheila, for your inspiring words and continuous support. Please continue to help your parish in whatever way you can. "Yes, united we can build."



# Credits

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