Welcome to St. Teresa of Avila’s Parish Community

We extend our hands and hearts in Christian fellowship to you here celebrating with us. Whether long-time residents or newly arrived in our parish, we thank God that you are with us. If you are not registered or have changes to your registration, please fill in the form below, or complete the form on our website.

Name: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________  
Address: ___________________________ Zip: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________  
City: _______________  
□ New Parishioner  □ New Address and/or phone  □ Send Sunday envelopes  □ On-Line Giving

ST TERESA’S GREEN TEAM

Keep your pantry colorful and stock up with healthy, seasonal fruits and vegetables from your local farmers market. This month’s in-season produce: Apples, Artichokes, Asparagus, Berries, Bok choy, Brussel sprouts, Celery, Eggplant, Grapefruits, Jujubes, Nectarines, Okra, Pears, Pomegranates, Snap peas, Squash (summer squash, winter squash), and Tomatoes.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE GREEN TEAM?

Call in on Tuesday, September 10 at 6pm:
PHONE: 1-(712) 770-5505
Access Code: 738182

SAVE THE DATE

Gathering in the Plaza  
(Refreshments will be served)  
Saturday, September 21  
After 4:15pm Mass

We encourage all to come to this event, no matter which Mass you generally attend. Wouldn’t it be nice to meet some of your fellow parishioners in a social setting?

VASES AND BASKETS FOR THE TAKING!

We would like to re-purpose the many vases and baskets accumulated over the years. They will be available in the vestibule from September 14th through 22nd. There is no limit on the number you can take. You help the parish by clearing unused items and the environment by using them.

RELIgIOUS EDUCATION

Faith Formation classes will begin with a Family meeting next Sunday, September 15 at 9:00am. If you have not yet sent in your application (available in the vestibule), please send it to the Parish Office, or place it in the collection basket. If you wish to participate in the RCIA program this year, please see Fr. Kwicien.

Join us for Shadow Days at Mercy High School, Burlingame! For 8th Graders Starting September 11, 2019

Prospective students experience the Mercy Sisterhood firsthand by attending classes, meeting teachers, and much more! Our Shadow Days are filling quickly, so start your journey toward becoming a Mercy Girl now! See posted flyer for more information.

INVITATION TO JOIN THE CHURCH CHOIR

The St. Teresa 10:00am Choir is looking for new members. All who have sung in the choir in the past are welcome (and encouraged!) to join us. Those who have never been in the choir and have been interested in becoming a choir member are also encouraged to join. We will be starting up with weekly rehearsals at the beginning of September. No experience required. The choir meets on Monday (subject to change) evenings starting at 7:00 p.m. For further information, please contact: Laura Flaviani, Director of Music (415) 386-2722 or lflaviani@pacbell.net

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

We are in need of volunteers to serve as either Bread or Cup Ministers at all weekend Masses, but especially for the 8:30am Mass. All training will be provided at Mass. Below is a brief description of the duties:

Eucharistic Ministers are divided into Cup and Bread Ministers. You can volunteer for either or both.

Commitment:
- Bread Minister #1 arrives about 20 minutes ahead of Mass
- All other ministers report to Bread Minister #1 before Mass
- Greet the assembly as they leave Mass
- Help put away the cups, bowls etc.
- Find your replacement if you will not be at your assigned Mass

PASTOR
Rev. Michael A. Greenwell, O. Carm.  
pastor@stteresasf.org

PAROCHIAL VICAR
Rev. Michael Kwicien, O. Carm.  
mkwicien@stteresasf.org

PARISH SECRETARY
Stephani Sheehan, stephani@stteresasf.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
Laura Díaz-Flaviani, laura@stteresasf.org

DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION
Anarose Schelstrate, anarose@stteresasf.org

We Welcome You To
St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church
A Warm, Welcoming, Inclusive Faith Community
Served by the Carmelites

SEPTEMBER 8, 2019
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

1490 19TH STREET (CHURCH)  
LOCATED ON THE NE CORNER OF 19TH & CONNECTICUT STREETS

PASTOR
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pastor@stteresasf.org

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The Curious Letter from Paul to Philemon

Once every three years the second reading is taken from the letter of Paul to Philemon. This happens on the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C), and it is the only time that a reading from Philemon is heard on a Sunday. In today’s column I’d like to write about this letter because of its uniqueness in the New Testament corpus.

There are two things that set this letter apart. The first is that its length is only 25 verses, the second is that it is a letter written to an individual. Usually, Paul’s letters are written to a particular church or community (say, Corinth or Philippi). Often, theological, liturgical, or moral issues arise in the community which need to be addressed and resolved. The local church would write to Paul with their concerns, and Paul would write back to the community with his pastoral response. We don’t have the letters written by the communities to Paul, but we do have many of the letters he wrote back in response. Many of these letters were saved, eventually being incorporated into the Canon of Scripture.

The Letter to Philemon, however, involves a private matter between Paul and Philemon. The issue concerns Onesimus, a runaway slave who belongs to Philemon and who is now with Paul. It is not clear whether Onesimus is in service to Paul or is a co-worker with Paul; what is clear is that Onesimus has been baptized and become a Christian. Paul is obligated to send Onesimus back to Philemon, and it would be within his legal right for Philemon to punish his runaway slave. Paul, however suggests something different:

“I am sending him . . . back to you . . . .that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a brother, beloved especially to me, but even more so to you, as a man and in the Lord.”

Phlm 12, 15b, 16

In a not-too-subtle way Paul is suggesting that, because both Philemon and Onesimus are baptized, they are now brothers in Christ. Their relationship has changed. Essentially, Paul’s pleading to Philemon is not to free Onesimus from slavery but to treat this slave differently:

“...so if you regard me as a partner, welcome him as you would me. And if he has done you any injustice or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, write this in my own hand: I will pay.”

Phlm 17-19

Some commentators have suggested that, in the Letter to Philemon, Paul is taking a position against slavery, but such is not the case. In fact, well into the 19th century people used the Letter to Philemon to justify slavery. The fact is that Paul’s letter deals with an accepted institution in the world of antiquity, human slavery. Paul does not attack slavery because, in the first century, Christians had neither the numbers nor the power to undertake such a reform. What Paul does in the Letter to Philemon is to breathe into this letter the spirit of Christ and of equality within the Christian community.

In presenting Onesimus as a brother, Paul voices an idea revolutionary in his day. Paul’s Letter to Philemon raises the issue of what it means to be “baptized in Christ.” Eventually, this will help to break down the barriers of division “in the Lord.”

Michael Kwiecien, O. Carm.