



Special Needs Inclusion Ministry Newsletter - July 2025

Welcome to the July Special Needs Inclusion Ministry Newsletter! Alameda Deanery's Special Needs Inclusion Ministry is an outreach ministry working to ensure that families and individuals with special needs experience welcome, support and spiritual nourishment within Alameda's Catholic parishes. Our group has provided awareness training sessions for those serving in liturgical ministry and organized sensory-friendly Masses, blessings, and events.



If you would like to be added to the confidential distribution list or if you are interested in attending our monthly get-togethers, please e-mail us at specialneeds@sibalameda.org. Also, please visit our website <https://sibalameda.org/special-needs> for more information and resources. (Feel free to join us even if you are not Catholic. If our community or resources can be of benefit to you, you belong!)

Blessings,
The Special Needs Inclusion Ministry



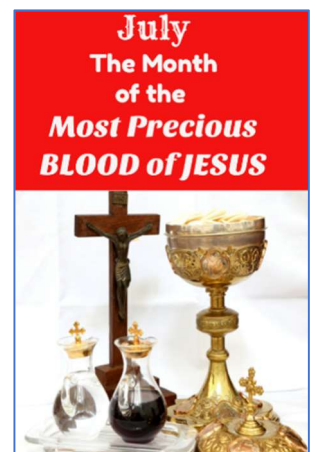
SENSORY-FRIENDLY MASS: Monthly sensory-friendly Masses are celebrated at Saint Barnabas (1427 6th St, Alameda). **Saint Barnabas** celebrates **sensory-friendly Masses on the third Saturday of each month, at the 4:30 pm (Vigil) Mass**, with quieter music (soft piano) and of course no incense. This month's Mass will be on **Saturday, July 19**. The August Mass will be on **Saturday, August 16**. Please feel free to invite friends. We look forward to seeing you there!

SPECIAL NEEDS INCLUSION MONTHLY MINISTRY MEETING: Please join us for discussion of how we in the Catholic community can better serve individuals with disabilities. Fellowship (including light refreshments) follows each meeting. Our ministry meetings are at **St. Barnabas**, across the street from the church, in **Room 3 of the Child Unique Montessori building (1400 6th St)**. This month, we are meeting on **Tuesday, July 22 at 6:30 PM**. Please contact us at specialneeds@sibalameda.org for more information.



Feast Days and Highlights of July:

The month of July is dedicated to honoring the Precious Blood of Christ. Through the shedding of His Blood, Jesus offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to reconcile humanity with God and to atone for sin. When we receive Communion at Mass, we also have the opportunity to receive the Precious Blood: Per the USCCB guidelines, *"The chalice is offered to the communicant with the words 'The Blood of Christ,' to which the communicant responds, 'Amen.' . . . It is the choice of the communicant, not the minister, to receive from the chalice. Only one form of communion is needed, because of "the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements, whole and entire—in each element of consecrated bread and wine."* If you choose to receive only the Body of Christ, you may bow reverently to the Precious Blood of Christ in the chalice before returning to your seat. There are also several ways to honor and reflect upon Jesus' offering, such as this prayer from The Divine Mercy website: ***O Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, we honor, worship and adore Thee. Heal the wounds our souls and wash away the sins of the whole world. O Precious Blood, have mercy. Amen.***



There are many notable Saints celebrated in July. Of special interest in the last half of July are the **Memorials of Saints Joachim and Anne** (parents of Mother Mary) on **July 26** and **Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus** on July 29. Although the names and lives of Jesus' maternal grandparents Joachim and Anne are not firmly



established (unlike the names of Jesus' Apostles), Mother Mary's parents were known to be exceptionally devout and firm in their faith. It was many years before they were able to become parents; however, they persevered in believing that God would answer their prayers for parenthood, and they actively worked to purify themselves. Just as the Blessed Virgin Mary can be seen as our spiritual mother, they can be seen as our spiritual grandparents. ***Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, pray for us!***

Jesus had strong friendships with and love for the siblings **Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus**. Perhaps it is also comforting to note that he wept with the two sisters as they mourned the death of Saint Lazarus—even knowing that he would bring their brother back to life. Jesus' deep friendship with this family through both their celebratory and challenging moments shows that he intimately understands our needs, afflictions and anguish. As we meditate upon the three siblings' memorial, may we, too, feel the comforting presence of Our Lord guiding us through and beyond our suffering!



FAMILY CRAFTS: To help with this month's dedication to the Precious Blood of Jesus, we have included a link to Just Another Day in Paradise, which includes craft ideas. The crafts link is: https://thetuckerbunch.typepad.com/just_another_day_in_parad/2009/07/the-precious-blood-of-jesus-craft.html



Other Prayer Opportunities:

SENSORY-FRIENDLY VENERATION IN THE BASILICA: Taizé is an Ecumenical, candle-lit service of prayer offered in simple chant, Scripture readings, silent worship, and veneration of the Cross. Brother Roger established the Taizé Community in 1940 in Taizé, France, as a witness to peace and reconciliation, for which our community gathers in prayer. All are welcome to our evening of Taizé prayers around the Cross held in the Basilica, 8 - 9 pm (4th Fridays of the month). Follow Taizé on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TaizeOnTheIsland>



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION and MONTHLY FAMILY HOLY HALF-HOUR: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is offered every Friday at St. Joseph Basilica from 1 to 7 pm. All are always welcome. On one Friday each month the time from 5:30 to 6:00 is specifically designated as a Family Holy Half-Hour to encourage participation by children. Simple activities are offered to help children engage: singing, reading, coloring. This could be an opportunity for those with special needs to experience this sacred and healing time with Jesus. Please contact Michelle King (michelleking234@gmail.com) for more information. Whether sitting or kneeling in prayer or meditation or celebrating with song, Eucharistic Adoration can bring us the gifts of calm and joy, trust and patience.



Resources Corner

RESOURCES LINKS:

<https://sjbalameda.org/special-needs> St. Joseph Basilica webpage with parish and deanery resources
<https://www.youtube.com/AutisticPriest> Talks by Fr. Matthew P. Schneider, LC, a Catholic priest with autism
<https://ascensionpress.com/pages/hands-of-grace-glossary> **Hands of Grace Video Glossary: Catholic Sacraments in American Sign Language** Glossary of 55 videos, teaches how to sign religious terms covered within the video. Father Séan Loomis finger-spells the words and then shows how to sign the sign
<https://summerkinard.com/> Orthodox Christian mother of autistic children writing about the practicalities of autistic and spiritual life
<https://catechistcafe.weebly.com/for--with-disabilities.html> A "Ministry For & With People of All Abilities", this is a catechist resource site that includes downloadable materials, trainings and videos