

For The Bulletin of November 15, 2015

THE 33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

At this time when we are near the end of another Liturgical Year, the Lectionary includes gospels about the end times that call for us to look far into the future. These gospels inevitably paint a dark and dismal picture of calamity and doom, and so we often dismiss them. The apocalyptic (the word “apocalyptic” comes from the Greek which means to “uncover” or “reveal”) imagery of today’s gospel (“sun will be darkened,” “moon will not give its light,” “stars will be falling from the sky,” and “powers in the heavens will be shaken”) is no exception. We are tempted to ask, “When, Lord?” Jesus answer, “no one knows,” ought to bring us to pay more attention to the present. Now is an opportune time for the in-breaking of Christ. Now is what counts. The future is now.

We think of Jesus’ Second Coming as a future event. In fact, the darkening of the sun and moon and stars is already happening in the trials and tribulations that not only beset the first disciples, but also are part of our own lives. Jesus promises that all these things will happen. He further promises that He is “near, at the gates.” The gospel is about the ultimate victory over darkness that belongs to those who are faithful. That victory is now. The future is now.

What ought to startle us into sober reality is that we know the end will come. Like the gospel, Daniel’s vision

describes in the first reading “a time unsurpassed in distress.” Also like the gospel, his vision reveals the victory of those “written in the book” who are the elect, those who have been faithful. We have all the means at hand to face darkness and evil with confidence, assured that one day we “shall live forever.” The future holds no fear for us; rather than fear, we anticipate our future with joyful expectation, because the One we await is within and among us now. The future is now.

In previous gospel passages, Jesus’ teaching about future events dealt with His impending suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus predicted several times the coming end of His earthly life, which was not too far into the future. The disciples could not hear what Jesus was teaching; they could not envision a future such as Jesus predicted. In this gospel, too, He teaches about the future; however, this time His words deal with an unknown, distant future, with cosmic events, which His final coming in power to overcome darkness, and with His drawing the elect into the light of His final glory. Jesus uses the image of the greening of “the fig tree” when summer is near as a sign that “He is near.” Summer is a time of life, growth, and fruitfulness. Those who hear and heed His words as in the greening of their lives; they choose for themselves life, growth, fruitfulness. For them, the future is now.

Living The Paschal Mystery

Just as big calamities are not what the future is really about, neither are big deeds what our present is about. Our present is about doing the little things well, and we know how we “lead the many to justice”: by listening to Jesus’

words. Jesus has already given us all we need to have our names “written in the book.” We just need to live like He did: with compassion and understanding, wisdom and care, love and hope.

What impact have today’s scripture passages had on you?

- I think about the end of the world when...I ought to think about the end of the world when...
- The darkness that Jesus’ coming dispels in my life is...I need the Light to shine on...
- The words of Jesus that speak to me most clearly now are...They bring life to me in that...

About Liturgy: Parousia and Eschatology

“Parousia” is a technical theological term that refers to Jesus’ Second Coming. Today’s gospel only mentions the great cosmic events that will accompany His return. Additionally, when Christ comes at the end of time, there will be the general judgment and general resurrection. If this Second Coming would be all there is at the end times, then perhaps there could be reason for fear. However, the Parousia isn’t all there is – it ushers in the final age of fulfillment. This time of fulfillment is theologically referred to as the “eschatological times.” This strange term comes from two Greek words meaning the study of finality or end times. Eschatology, then, marks the point (not to be understood chronologically) in time when God’s reign will be finally and fully established.

It is easy to put these future events out of our heads, most of us (when we think of them at all, usually only on these last

Sundays of the Liturgical Year) think of the end times as way off in the future. Contrary, in the very early church they thought that Christ would return immediately and so they lived their lives in a most radical way – sharing all things in common, devoting themselves to prayer, etc. One of the challenges of these future events is that we, too, learn to live in the present as faithful disciples, making Christ’s saving Presence known in our world. We are to live in expectation, not in fear.

Thanksgiving Baskets

At each liturgy next weekend, you will have the opportunity to bring your Thanksgiving Baskets. Once again today, the bright organ flyer with all the ingredients has been placed in the bulletin while additional flyers are on the credenza. Thank you for what you are doing to help these needy sisters and brothers have a memorable Thanksgiving...because we cared enough to say “Yes!” The baskets will be distributed on Monday, November 23rd from our parish hall by members of our Knights of Columbus and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

St. Cecilia Sing

Next Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. we will gather to celebrate and remember St. Cecilia, the Patron Saint of Church music. Our parish is one of hundreds throughout the United States that belongs to the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and who will be offering similar services, concerts, and events to honor St. Cecilia. We will celebrate Sung Evening Prayer, led by our Parish Choir and Cantors. A reception will follow in the parish hall. I hope you will plan on attending.

Thanksgiving Day

We will celebrate our national day of Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 26th with Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. Each year a parishioner is invited to give the reflection/homily and this year that honor has fallen to **Kelly and Kristi Ouimet, proud parents of Molly, Patrick, and Matthew**. You are also invited to continue a wonderful tradition by bringing your wine and breads/rolls to be blessed at the conclusion of the liturgy. Tables will be set up across the front of the church to receive your bread and wine. Music for the liturgy will be under the direction of our very own **Don Pearson, Director of Music/Organist/Artist-in-Residence** along with the Parish Choir and Cantors. I hope you will plan to be with us. Remember: Eucharist means Thanksgiving.

Environment Help

You are invited to join the Art & Environment Committee in transforming the environment from Fall to Advent. We will gather on Friday morning, November 27th, beginning at 9:00 a.m., immediately following the Friday morning Eucharist. Many hands will be needed to store everything away and then create the new environment for Advent and the beginning of the new Liturgical Year. Coffee and breakfast pastries are available and if necessary, we also provide lunch. If you are available, I hope you will plan to join us.

St. Nicholas Festival Dinner

This year's St. Nicholas Festival Dinner will be held on Saturday evening, December 5th, at 6:30 p.m. in our parish hall. This is always a **SOLD OUT** event so it will be important for you to get your tickets as soon as possible.

Parishioners "sponsor" tables which are decorated in the spirit of the evening with flatware, place settings, tablecloths, and center pieces. Appetizers and Dinner are prepared by our very own **Dave Costanza and His Kitchen Crew**. There will be a silent auction and raffle. You are invited to bring bells which when rung, will summon St. Nicholas to appear. Please see the bulletin for all the details and ticket information.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This year the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on Tuesday, December 8th with **three Masses at 8:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.** This is a Holy Day of Obligation which honors Our Lady as Patroness of the Americas. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe this year falls on Saturday, December 12th. We will honor Mary under her title as Our Lady of Guadalupe during our Saturday evening Vigil Mass which will be celebrated at **4:00 p.m.** **Please note the change in time for our Vigil Mass on Saturday.** Following the liturgy, there will be a dinner reception in the parish hall, **FREE OF CHARGE**, as the gift of our Guadalupana Society.

Christmas Lessons and Carols

On Sunday afternoon, December 21st, we will gather for a wonderful service of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Under the direction of **Don Pearson**, the Parish Choir will sing some of the most beautiful music of the season to help us prepare for the Christmas feast. Seven lessons are proclaimed that celebrate the

Word made Flesh, the Nativity of the Lord. A wonderful reception will follow in the parish hall. Last year, more than 250 people attended and we believe that the church will be full this year because of how beautiful this service was. The time is

Vigil Mass Time Changes

Beginning Saturday, December 5, and continuing until the return of Daylight Savings Time, our Vigil Mass will begin at **4:00 p.m.** Many of our senior/elderly members have asked for an earlier time due to the dark and the cold. At our Vigil Mass last Saturday evening, I brought this to the congregation and they enthusiastically voted to change the time. As a result, the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) will be offered from 2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Please do whatever necessary to remind yourselves of the new time beginning December 5th.

Congratulations Joe Nelms!

Last Saturday evening, our very own **Joe Nelms** was inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame of Mt. Diablo High School. Joe was recognized for the following: Lettered 3 years in Varsity Basketball, 2 years in Baseball and Football; 1983 2nd Team All League Baseball, 1982 1st All League Football; Second Team All Eastbay Senior Year; 1983 Captain of the Varsity Basketball Team, Senior Year; Played Football 1 year at DVC and Lettered Three Years at University of California/Berkeley; All Pac 10 Senior Year at Cal; Drafted 11 Round by the Chicago Bears; Drafted Junior Year by the KC Royals; Drafted Senior Year by the KC Royals; Drafted 11th Round by the Chicago Bears. Congratulations,

Joe, on this great honor! We are very proud of you!

Thank You

...to **Sharon Wetzel, Tracy Wetzel, and Kelly Wetzel** who joined me for last Saturday's Monthly Antioch Neighborhood Cleanup at Jacobsen Park.

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who came early last Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and hall for the weekend and this past week: **Carole Miller, Steve Rojek, Reno and Thelma Benasfre, Mency Osborne, Jun Bajet, Rose Salamanca, and Angela Bueno.**

...to those who came early last Saturday morning to clean the bathrooms as well as those who came throughout the week to maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, and Harlan Young.**

...to our Volunteer Receptionists: **Yvette Young, Mary Ng, Harlan Young, Karen Oliver, Barbara Jackson, and Rowena Cayaban.**

...to our faithful Knights of Columbus who provide parking lot security each week: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek, Jose Palomino, and Jose Perez.**

...to all of you who supported our Faith Formation Bake Sale last weekend.

...to all our parishioners who filled out the Commitment Form for last Sunday's Commitment Weekend/Stewardship Sunday observance.

...to all of our Veterans who came forward at each liturgy to receive the Veteran's Blessing.