

**For The Bulletin Of
November 22, 2015**

THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

From Father Robert

On this last Sunday of the Liturgical Year we honor the victory of Christ over suffering and death, over evil and infidelity, over this world and all its lures. In this conversation Pilate questions Jesus about His identity (“Are You the King of the Jews?”) and about why He is on trial. What unfolds is a conversation about two very different worlds: that of Pilate and the chief priests, in which fighting, falsehood, and obstinacy predominate and that of Jesus, in which life, truth, and openness prevail. Yes, Jesus is a King – but of a kingdom different from Herod’s. What He has done is reveal a kingdom that “does not belong to this world,” but it meant to transform it: from evil to goodness; from sinfulness to salvation; from death to life.

We clearly see that Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world. Christ’s kingdom is not a spatial place but an interior identity defined by our relationship to Christ the King. This Sunday we celebrate a King Whose Presence and power we have already experienced: Christ, Whose kingdom is not territory but virtue, not power but service, not wealth but grace. This King has loved us with His very life.

“My kingdom does not belong to this world.” Where is Jesus’ kingdom? It exists wherever people embody Jesus’ manner of acting and relating, wherever the Spirit of Jesus is the rule of life. We

enter into Jesus’ kingdom whenever we listen to His voice and proclaim Him “The Alpha and the Omega” of all that is. The Liturgical Year culminates with a summary statement of the identity of Jesus – “Christ the King.” As Christ, He is worthy of our worship. As King, He is deserving of our service. As we celebrate this enthronement of Christ in glory, we also look forward to His victory in us when we are “freed...from our sins,” and “made...into a kingdom.”

This solemnity invites us to renew our commitment to serve Jesus with all our hearts. It invites us to renew our self-giving stance as disciples who follow our King. In our self-giving we are transformed, and as we are transformed so is the world because He has made us into a kingdom. The surprise of this day is that we are God’s kingdom already. We already share in His victory for we are “freed from our sins.”

At the conclusion of the Liturgical Year we are invited by the liturgy once again to fall in love with our King Who has won for us eternal Life. “To Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.”

Living The Paschal Mystery

Self-giving service is a small price to pay for our share in this eternal glory. Living the paschal mystery means that we don’t count the cost, but always find strength, hope, encouragement in the glimpse of final victory that we are repeatedly given throughout the Liturgical Year. Living the paschal mystery means that we are ever faithful to the rhythm of dying and rising as it unfolds in our everyday prayer, work, and leisure. Living the paschal mystery means that we are “priests” for those

whom we meet – that we are the Body of Christ leading others to holier lives and happier commitment. If someone should then ask us, “What have you done?” our answer would come quickly and surely – we have served our King. We have loved our King. In doing so, we have shared in the greatest wealth possible – His kingdom where all is glory.

What reflections have today’s scriptures and this solemnity brought to our discipleship?

- I live in Pilate’s world when I...I live in Jesus’ kingdom when I...
- Who/what helps me listen to Jesus’ voice is...
- The truth of Jesus’ kingdom that transforms my world is...

About Liturgy: Celebration

Just as Lent opens onto Easter, if we have patiently worked our way through Ordinary Time – and, indeed, through the whole of this past Liturgical Year – when we come to this solemnity we are ready for a jubilant celebrant. The fruits of our labors will be consistent with the extent of our labors. If our Liturgical Year has been rather lackadaisical, then these high festivals probably won’t move us. We will depend on the environment and the music to carry us rather than on the inner strength that comes from watching ourselves be transformed ever more perfectly into the Body of Christ during this past year.

Liturgical celebration has little to do with “whoop-dee-do” and much to do with self-emptying. Our greatest joy and celebration come not from what we do but from the deep experience of what God has done in us. We need to be careful that we don’t cloud the real meaning of these high festival with

externals that actually keep us from the deepest and most satisfying feasting. Celebration is really the play between surrender and encounter in which we are transformed. Anything less than this gets in the way of our being God’s Presence, God’s reign in this redeemer world.

The Floral Arrangement at the Cross this weekend is placed to the Glory of God and in Honor of the Fifty-fifth Anniversary of Marriage of Tom and Annette Pisani. May God bless you with many more years of happiness and the best of health. Congratulations!

Thanksgiving Baskets

Today our parish once again responds to the needs of those less fortunate than we by bringing Thanksgiving Baskets which will provide a family the blessing of a Thanksgiving Dinner. Thank you to all of you who have responded so generously and lovingly. The baskets will be distributed tomorrow morning from our parish hall by the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society who will also add a fresh turkey to each basket.

Sung Evening Prayer For St. Cecilia, Patroness of Church Music

This afternoon at 3:00 p.m. we will gather together once again in the church for Sung Evening Prayer in honor of the Patroness of Church Music, St. Cecilia. Our parish is a member of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and all across the United States, parishes like ours are offering concerts, recitals, and services to honor St. Cecilia in what is known as “The St. Cecilia Sing.” We have much to be grateful for here at St. Ignatius of Antioch with regard to our Music Ministry: our Cantors, Choir, and

Don Pearson who directs it all with skill and artistry. Come join us as we sing to St. Cecilia and thank God for the gift of music in our parish. A reception follows in the parish hall.

Thanksgiving Day

This coming Thursday is our National Day of Thanksgiving. We will gather for Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. and this year the Thanksgiving Reflection is being given by **Kelly and Kristi Ouimet, parents of Molly, Patrick, and Matthew.** Music for the liturgy will be under the direction of **Don Pearson, Director of Music/Organist/Artist-in-Residence, our Cantors and Parish Choir.** Please be sure to bring your breads and wine to be blessed as a part of the liturgy. On behalf of the Pastoral Staff, the Pastoral Council, and the Finance Council, we wish a very Happy Thanksgiving and a day filled with great gratitude for all the blessings God has so abundantly placed in our lives.

Environment Help

The day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 27th, beginning at 9:00 a.m. we will make the transition in the environment from Fall to Advent. Many hands will be needed so if you are available and would like to see and participate in the ministry of the Art & Environment Committee, you are most welcome to join us. There will be coffee and breakfast pastries in the morning and, depending on how many volunteers show up, we hope to be finished by early afternoon.

St. Nicholas Dinner

The tickets for our annual St. Nicholas Festival Dinner have gone on sale. Last weekend, sales were “booming” and more than 50 tickets have already been

sold. This is always a “SOLD OUT” event so if you want to be there, please get your tickets right away. Members of the Social Events Committee are selling tickets after each liturgy once again today. Please visit their table in the Gathering Plaza. Tickets are \$30 per person and this is an adults only event.

Solemnity of the Immaculate

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tuesday, December 8th, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Liturgies that day will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and the Solemn Mass at 7:30 p.m. This is a Holy Day of Obligation.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

This year, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe falls on Saturday, December 12th. We will honor Mary under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a part of our **4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass.** Following the liturgy, the members of our Guadalupana Society will be once again offering a traditional dinner in our parish hall with guests invited to make a freewill offering.

Christmas Environment

You are invited to join the Art & Environment Committee in preparing the environment for Christmas beginning on Monday, December 14th and continuing on through Friday, December 18th. We will need help removing the Advent Environment and then installing the trees, wreathes, banners, garlands, and lights. We gather each morning beginning at 9:00 a.m. Coffee and breakfast pastries are made available as well as lunch each day. Remember that many hands make light work! We hope you will join us.

Simbang Gabi

Once again this year, we will join our Filipino sisters and brothers from the Deanery in a wonderful joint celebration which is being held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Brentwood. The Dawn Masses begin on Wednesday, December 16th and continue each day through December 24th at 5:00 a.m. Following each Mass a traditional Filipino Breakfast will be served in their parish hall. I will be presiding for one of the Simbang Gabi Masses on Thursday, December 17th.

Lessons and Carols for Christmas

One of the most beautiful liturgies of the Advent/Christmas Season is “Lessons and Carols for Christmas.” Nine scripture readings are interspersed with Carols of the season and choral anthems that tell the story of Christmas. The service begins at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 20th and will be followed by a reception in our parish hall. Last year, over 250 people attended and this year we expect even more. We are so blessed to have **Don and The Choir along with our Cantors** who will lead this beautiful service. I hope you will plan to be with us.

Christmas At St. Ignatius of Antioch

Our schedules of liturgies for Christmas are as follows:

Christmas Eve, December 24th

4:00 p.m. Family Mass – The Children tell the story of Christmas.

10:00 p.m. The Solemn Mass of Christmas Night – Procession, Incense, The Parish Choir, Carols and Organ.

Christmas Day, December 25th

9:00 a.m. The Mass of Christmas Dawn – Procession, Incense, The Parish Choir, Carols, and Organ.

11:00 a.m. The Mass of Christmas Day – Procession, Incense, The Parish Choir, Carols, and Organ.

Holy Family Sunday – Open House at the Rectory

I am inviting our parishioners to join me at the Rectory on Sunday afternoon, December 27th, for an Open House to celebrate Christmas together. Please bring your favorite appetizer, either cold or hot, to share and I will provide the “Christmas Cheer!” Because so many have come in the past, we are bringing in additional tents that will be decorated and heated along the back and side of the house. I am grateful to **Theresa Nelms, Rich Confetti, and Don Benson** who will help transform the house and tents into “Christmas!”

Epiphany

The Solemnity of the Epiphany falls on January 2nd and 3rd, 2016 and we are once again inviting parishioners to help us celebrate the feast by being “Star bearers” and taking on the roles of the Three Kings. A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board outside of the Sacristy on which you may sign up for one of our liturgies that weekend.

Saturday Vigil Liturgy Changes Time

Two weeks ago a number of parishioners from the Saturday Vigil Mass asked if it would be possible to move up the time of the Saturday Mass from 5:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. I brought it to the Saturday congregation and they “voted” unanimously to make the change. I am sorry that we did not address this issue

sooner so that it could have begun when it became darker earlier. Beginning Saturday, December 5th, our Vigil Mass will begin at 4:00 p.m. and Confessions will be heard from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. This Winter Schedule will continue until daylight savings time returns in the Spring.

Thank You

...to the Members of our Filipino Community who sold Lumpia and Pansit after the liturgies last Sunday. They raised \$634 which will benefit our Building Fund for the new parish hall. ...to those who came to clean and prepare the church and parish hall last Saturday morning: **Carole Miller, Reno Benasfre, Thelma Benasfre, Mency Osborne, Rose Salamanca, Angela Bueno, Jun Bajet, Tracy Wetzel, and Kelly Wetzel.**

...to those who continue to clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Gino Ramos, Geri Abaya, and Harlan Young.**

...to the members of our Knights of Columbus who continue to provide security in the parking lot on the weekends: **Don Benson, Dave Simpson, and Jose Perez.**

...to our wonderful reception committee who did such an outstanding job of preparing the reception following the concert "Heroic Music for Organ, Brass, and Timpani" last Friday evening: **Frances Rojek, Pam Silva, Susan Batterton, Carole Thornton, Debbie Grace, Rachelle Martin, Mary Anne Douville, Gino Ramos, Will Avitabile, and Catherine Vidaurri.**

Job Opportunity

Kim Leford from Embassy Suites in Walnut Creek contacted me last week

and let me know that they are looking to hire housekeepers. The hotel is BART accessible and there are benefits. If you are interested, please call Kim at 925-934-2500, Ext. 2134.

Deanery Planning Process

On Thursday evening, November 12th, representatives from each of the eight parishes in the Delta Deanery met at Our Lady, Queen of the World, for the next in the series of meetings to create a plan and recommendations to the Diocese for the future of our Deanery.

Representation from each parish includes the pastor and at least two lay leaders. Our representatives are **Brian McCoy and Will Avitabile.** Each member was asked to bring at least two needs that are seen in the area. The main purpose of the meeting was to gather the needs of the Deanery, narrow them down, and then turn the needs into broad range goals. As a result of our deliberations, the areas that were raised included the future of Catholic Education (strengthening and support for the two existing parochial schools; strengthening and support for Faith Formation; assessing the need for a future elementary school and possibly a high school), Immigration Services, Homelessness, and Poverty. The next planning meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 6, 2016 at St. Anne Parish, Byron.