

## For The Bulletin Of November 29, 2015

### THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

#### *Welcome To A New Year Of Grace*

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus” (from “*Evangelium Gaudium*”). These powerful and uplifting words open the first apostolic exhortation issued by Francis, Bishop of Rome, “*Evangelium Gaudium*.” Written for us to inspire us to action, this six-chapter letter is filled with faith, hope, and love, but also challenge – its thoughts and themes have set the state for Francis’s papacy and stand to influence the Church for years to come.

For the Holy Father, the most compelling way to draw people into a relationship with Jesus is to vividly express the joy of knowing Him. No amount of personal promotion of the faith can match the attraction of seeing a disciple’s life animated and empowered by the joy that comes from knowing Jesus. Our faith is a relationship with Someone, nothing less than the anointed One of God!

What better season to immerse ourselves in the joy of meeting Jesus, our Messiah, than Advent! In this season, we stop and reflect upon, anticipate, and prepare for the miraculous moment when God became human, entering into the history of the world in a way that brought transformation and new life. Our liturgical practices – reverent and hopeful, reflective and anticipatory – help our communities recognize the wonder of God coming among us as a

vulnerable, cherished baby, a member, like each of us, of the human family.

Quoting the Scriptures, “*The Joy of the Gospel*” begins with an Advent fervor “Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth! Break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have compassion on His suffering ones.”

John the Baptist is the embodiment of this willingness to anticipate, receive, and proclaim the Messiah Who comes, and it is his story that will dominate the Messiah Who comes, and it is his story that will dominate the readings of the Advent Season. For John, nothing is more important than the task of exhorting those around him to prepare for the Lord. He speaks to us as a “voice one crying out in the desert,” reminding us that there is no task more pressing or, for that matter, more wonderful than proclaiming the coming of the One Who will offer Baptism in Spirit and in fire.

It would be tempting for us to relate to John and the sign and symbols of Advent as if they are locked in time, part of a long-ago, historic record. But Christian time is not time tied to calendars, clocks, planners, and apps. Christian time are moments in time in which God stands ready to do something new. With the turning of the cycle of every Liturgical Year, we bring ourselves to the symbols and stories of Advent with open hearts and readiness for something new to happen, to us and for the world around us.

The “O” Antiphons of Advent remind us to call out as we recognize what we are about to embrace: O Lord, O Key of David, O Root of Jesse, O Wisdom, O

Dayspring, O King of Nations, O God with Us! This is the God Whom Francis, Bishop of Rome invites us to meet anew, and to carry in witness to every life we touch. In our personal prayer and growth, we can reflect anew on their meaning and embrace the One they describe even more deeply.

### ***Reflecting On Today's Gospel***

One of the largest sections in bookstores features romance novels. Go to any e-book website and romance novels are a prominent category. Romance is a frequent theme of movies. Romance is all around us. And why not? Love is a beautiful thing! We human beings can hardly be emotionally and spiritually healthy without it. But with that kind of love do the various media bombard us? All too often, it is a very selfish love, a love that satisfies one person at the expense of others. Selfishness is diametrically opposed to what love is. Selfishness is diametrically opposed to what holiness is. At first glance the gospel for this Sunday does not seem to be about love – or about holiness. Yet, underneath Jesus' prediction of events at the end of time, He is telling us a special story – a love story.

At first reading, it seems as though the gospel is only about tribulations and calamities and fear. Yes, right now, today, tribulations, wars, natural disasters are a part of our lives. We can cringe in fear or “stand erect” in hope. Jesus tells us not to fear what calamities might do to us, but to be “vigilant” for His coming. He comes with redemption not only in glory at the end of time, but right now, today. And here is where the love story is endlessly told – in Jesus abiding Presence to us. We are redeemed – renewed and made whole in

our relationship with God – by God's altogether new act on behalf of humankind: our “redemption is at hand.” We are vigilant for Christ's coming not because of fear of the calamities that might assail us, but because our “redemption is at hand.” God's love story narrated to us through the Son Jesus is not about the kind of love we might read in romance novels, but is a holy love emanating from God's very being. Holy love is the opposite of selfish love. Holy love is possible when there is a right relationship between God and us, measured by our right relationship with each other. Holy love is the caring exchange between Person and person whose regard for the other is at the very center of the relationship. We are redeemed by God's holy love. We are “blameless in holiness” when we love as God loves us.

One sign of the Son of Man's redeeming Presence is that we are growing in love. Despite appearances to the contrary (disaster and destruction generated both by natural forces and human choices), God's plan and purpose are directed toward redemption and life. We need to read the right signs – new life in the midst of seeming destruction, the glory of the Son of Man coming into the darkness, the love of Christ growing in our hearts. We need to be attentive to holy love. The vigilance to which Jesus calls is possible when we embrace His Presence with holy love.

### ***Living The Paschal Mystery***

Vigilance for the many ways Christ is present to us involves self-emptying for the sake of the other. This means that our focus is not on our own wants and needs, but on the Christ Who chooses to be intimately present to us. It means that

we are able to see the Christ Who dwells in the other. Holy love is the giving of self that brings us to “stand erect.” We stand tall and confident because we know that we are choosing to be in right relationship with others. We stand tall because Christ is present to help us grow in the holy love He came to reveal. We stand tall because we know our “redemption is at hand.” Love abounds! It is a beautiful thing!

As we begin this new Liturgical Year with the First Sunday of Advent, how have today’s scripture readings spoken to your life?

- I cringe in fear when...what helps me “stand erect” in hope is...
- The tribulations of my daily living are...These keep me from...
- What helps me love as Christ loves and grow in holiness is...

### ***About Liturgy: Advent and Redemption***

The future is in God’s hands and God will bring it to fulfillment. What we do know is the outcome (God comes with redemption) and how it is achieved (through intimacy with Jesus). Advent is a special liturgical season which begins with looking to the future, comes to a climax in looking to the past, and bears fruit in the present. Advent is a season when we bring to mind and celebrate the three comings of Christ and redemption.

Christ’s first coming (which we celebrate on Christmas) *fulfilled* the Old Testament prophecies that God’s Messiah would come to restore all things new. Christ’s birth as the incarnate Son fulfilled these promises. Jesus’ public ministry showed us how God’s new

reign would come about: by repenting and believing in the Gospel. His death and resurrection assured us that salvation is at hand, but it is only at Christ’s Second Coming that God’s glory and justice will be *fully* revealed. We find ourselves in an age straddling the first and second comings of Christ, at a time when we need to be *strengthened* now. The third coming of Christ is *right now*, when Christ comes, first and foremost, in sacraments but no less through each other. Our Advent vigilance and waiting does not just look back to the first coming or forward to the Second Coming. The first coming bears fruit and the Second Coming is not frightening to the extent that our vigilance and waiting is in the here and now, recognizing Christ in the many sacramental comings of our everyday lives, exchanging a holy love that makes us whole.

### ***About Liturgical Music: The Character of Music for Advent***

The General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM), No. 313 states “In Advent the organ and other musical instruments are used with a moderation that is consistent with the season’s character and does not anticipate the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord.” In other words, a certain restraint marks the music we use during this season. This restraint does not have the penitential character of Lent. Instead, its intent is to express a kind of “fasting” before the “feasting” that will enable us to enter more deeply into the waiting of Advent. Hymns expressing joy and expectation will be sung, but the music overall is characterized by a sense of holding back until the time for full celebration arrives.

### *Seasonal Service Music for Advent*

One of the functions of service music is to help us enter more consciously into the liturgical season we are celebrating. Our setting of the acclamations is once again the setting composed by Richard Proulx, “Veni Emmanuel” and is based on the ancient hymn tune “O come, O come, Emmanuel.” This musical setting draws us into joyful expectation without spilling over into the fuller exuberance of Christmas, and expresses quiet waiting without the penitential somberness of Lent. The “Glory To God” is omitted during Advent and will return at the first liturgy of Christmas.

### *The Initiation of Donald LaDue*

It is with great joy that we celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) with **Donald LaDue** during our 8:00 a.m. Eucharist this morning. Don’s wife, **Regina**, is his Sponsor and **Gloria Martin** and her son, **Jim**, are his godparents. We give thanks to God for the gift of Don’s life and rejoice that he joins us as an heir to everlasting life.

### *Antioch Neighborhood Cleanup*

Please see the flyer in today’s bulletin with all the information regarding the next Antioch Neighborhood Cleanup which takes place this coming Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Prewett Ranch Park. Details will be found on the leaflet.

### *Monthly Cemetery Mass*

This coming Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, is the next monthly Mass for Deceased at Holy Cross Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. I will be presiding for the liturgy this month which is held in the Chapel of the Resurrection Mausoleum.

### *St. Nicholas Festival Dinner*

This coming Saturday evening is our St. Nicholas Festival Dinner which begins following the Vigil Mass. Held in our parish hall, the hall is transformed into a winter wonderland by the beautifully sponsored and decorated tables by parishioners. Sparkling crystal glassware, gleaming flatware, tablecloths and centerpieces, and flickering candles add beauty and warmth to the evening. Our dinner will once again be created by our very own **Dave Costanza and his renowned Kitchen Crew**. The dinner also includes a Silent Auction and a Live Auction along with “Door” prizes. The evening builds to the arrival of St. Nicholas when guests ring bells which they have brought with them or which have been provided by their Table Host. The evening is a “SOLD OUT” event and all proceeds benefit the parish.

### *The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation. We are privileged to celebrate Holy Eucharist at 8:00 a.m., **5:30 p.m.**, and 7:30 p.m. The 7:30 p.m. Liturgy will be the Solemn Mass with procession, incense, the Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ.

### *CCISCO Night Walk Against Violence*

The next CCISCO Night Walk Against Violence takes place on Friday evening, December 11<sup>th</sup>, at 6:15 p.m. We will be meeting once again at Antioch Church Family, 55 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street and walking to the intersection of Cavallo Road and E. 18<sup>th</sup>. Please see the article in the bulletin by **Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate for Social Justice**.

### ***Breakfast With Santa***

On Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, our parish will sponsor its first-ever “Breakfast With Santa” for the children of our parish and community. Our thanks to **Kathleen Clarke** for arranging this wonderful holiday event. Please see today’s bulletin for all the details.

### ***Our Lady of Guadalupe***

Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We will honor Mary under this title as a part of our Vigil Mass at 4:00 p.m., followed by a traditional dinner in our parish hall. I am grateful to **Lidia Tarango, Coordinator of our Guadalupana Society** for all that she and they are doing to make this celebration possible.

### ***Christmas Environment Help***

Beginning Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, our Art & Environment Committee will begin the process of transforming the church from its Advent Environment to that of the Christmas Season. Many hands are needed to make this possible. We invite you to join us in this artistic endeavor and to experience how the environments are created. We begin each morning of that week at 9:00 a.m. Come and meet fellow parishioners and make new friends!

### ***Simbang Gabi***

Once again this year we will be joining our sisters and brothers from throughout the Deanery for the traditional Filipino observance of Simbang Gabi, nine days of Masses at 5:00 a.m. to prepare for Christmas. We will gather at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Brentwood, and each morning there will be a traditional Filipino breakfast served in their parish hall. I will be presiding on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, and the

priests of the Deanery will each take turns presiding and preaching. The Masses begin on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> and conclude on Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Lessons and Carols for Christmas***

One of the most beautiful services to help us prepare for the Christmas Feast is “Lessons and Carols for Christmas,” which takes place this year on Sunday afternoon, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., followed by a reception in the Spirit of the Season in our parish hall. Under the direction of our Director of Music/Organist/Artist-in-Residence, **Don Pearson, the Parish Choir and Cantors** will tell the story of Christmas by singing some of the most beautiful and beloved anthems of the Christmas Season. The Carols and anthems are interspersed with the scripture passages that tell the Christmas Story. There is no charge to attend, however, a free will offering will be received during the reception to help offset its costs. Please plan on being with us. Last year there were over 250 people present and we believe that there will be even more this year.

### ***Christmas At St. Ignatius of Antioch Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>***

**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 and Organ***

**Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**9:00 a.m. The Mass At Dawn –**  
*Procession, Incense, Cantors and*  
*Organ*

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

**December 26<sup>th</sup> – The Feast of the Holy**  
**Family**  
**Saturday Vigil 4:00 p.m.**

**December 27<sup>th</sup> – The Feast of the Holy**  
**Family**  
**8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**

**December 31<sup>st</sup> – Solemnity of Mary,**  
**Mother of God, New Year’s Eve**  
**Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m.**

**January 1, 2016 – Solemnity of Mary,**  
**Mother of God, New Year’s Day, the**  
**World Day of Prayer for Peace**  
**11:00 a.m. Solemn Mass of New**  
**Year’s Day – Procession, Incense, The**  
*Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ*

**January 2, 2016 – Solemnity of the**  
**Epiphany**  
**Vigil Mass 4:00 p.m.**

**January 3, 2016 – Solemnity of the**  
**Epiphany**  
**8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. – Procession,**  
*Incense, Procession of the Three Kings,*  
*The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ*

**January 9, 2016 – The Feast of the**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
**4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – Renewal of**  
*Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling*  
*Rite*

**January 10, 2016 – The Feast of the**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
**8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. – Procession,**  
*Renewal of Baptismal Promises and*  
*Sprinkling Rite – The Parish Choir,*  
*Cantors, and Organ*

### *The Christmas Environment*

You are invited to join in helping to make the Christmas Environment through your generous contributions to the Christmas Flower Fund. Your gifts provide the Christmas Trees, lights, garlands, wreaths, panels that grace the Icons, and Pointsettias possible. Your gifts may be made either In Honor of OR In Loving Memory of a loved one, family members, or friends. Please be sure to include the designation on the envelope with your gift. Flower Fund Envelopes are provided in our monthly envelope packet or may be found on the credenza or will be included in the Christmas Letter mailing. I thank you for what you will do to sustain the wonderful work of our Art & Environment Committee.

### *Christmas At The Rectory*

You are invited to join me at the Rectory on Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, for an afternoon/evening of fellowship, great food, and Christmas “cheer!” The Rectory will be open from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and I ask that you bring your favorite appetizer (hot or cold) to share and I will provide the “cheer!” The house will be decorated once again by **Theresa Nelms, Rich Confetti, and Don Benson**. Because of the numbers who attend, we will also have tents across the back and side of the house that will also be decorated and heated. This is a wonderful way for us to be together and to continue celebrating God’s wondrous gift of the Word made

Flesh in Jesus. I hope you will plan to join us.

### ***Thanksgiving Basket Outreach***

Early last Monday morning, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, our Knights of Columbus moved all of the Thanksgiving Baskets from the church to the parish hall for distribution. They could hardly wait for me to arrive for the Daily Eucharist to share with me that over **200 Baskets/Boxes** were contributed this year, **51** of which were contributed by the children and families of our adopted parochial school of **St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg**, and **9** from the children and families of our **CYO athletic program**. Many thanks to **Don and Brenda Brooks** for coordinating CYO's participation. Our heartfelt thanks to our parishioners who responded so generously this year to the need of so many families in our area. The boxes were distributed by the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society from Holy Rosary Parish along with our Knights of Columbus, **Bill Barbanica, Rich Confetti, Jose Palomino, Steve Rojek, Bob Plurkowski, Dave Simpson, Tony Burgarino, Chip Sharpe, Bobby Zabroski, Bob Carvalho, Shawn Dunleavy, Kelly Ouimet, Dave Costanza, Pablo Villegas and his grandchildren, Delaney and Drake Sparling**, who added a fresh turkey to each box.

### ***The Giving Tree***

Please be sure to take an ornament from this year's Giving Tree in the narthex as you either enter or leave liturgy. Gifts are to be purchased and returned to the church **unwrapped** with the ornament tag taped to the top of the gift no later than December 13<sup>th</sup>, the Third Sunday of Advent.

We then invite you to once again create an ornament for the tree with the photograph of you and your family in the center of the ornament. Your Family Ornament may be placed on the tree as of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20<sup>th</sup> and all through the Christmas Season. Be a part of this new tradition and extend warmest Christmas greetings to your fellow parishioners.

### ***Thank You***

...to all those who prepared the wonderful reception following the St. Cecilia Concert last Sunday afternoon: **Carole Miller, Alicia Perez, Jeanne Riley, Frances Rojek, Maryann Peddicord, Mary Ann Douville, Sofie Zimmerman, Rowena Cayaban, Terri McNesby, Gino Ramos, Lorraine Lohmeier, and Doreen Manalac.**

...to our **Parish Choir and Don Pearson** for the beautiful liturgy of Sung Evening Prayer to celebrate the Feast of St. Cecilia and its national observance as Members of the National Associate of Pastoral Musicians.

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who clean and prepare the church each Saturday morning: **Jun Bajet, Carole Miller, Tracy Wetzel, Kelly Wetzel, Angela Bueno, and Mency Osborne.**

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who clean and maintain the bathrooms in the church and parish hall each week: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Gino Ramos, Geri Abaya, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Irene Hippe and the Retired Employees of the Bank of America** who made a generous contribution to help purchase items needed for our Thanksgiving Basket outreach.

***CCISCO Prop. 47 Assistance***

Opportunities for Families in East  
County Workshop and Clinic - Tuesday,  
December 8th, 2015 at 6:30 pm at  
Antioch Church Family 55 E. 18th St.  
Antioch, CA

- Attorneys will be on site to review prior convictions and see if they qualify to be reduced to a misdemeanor under Prop 47 or even expunged from your record,
- Information will be provided about how to take advantage of the new Traffic Amnesty program to drastically reduce your traffic fines and lift the hold on your license, and
- Service providers will assist families in working to keep their homes and to find housing stability.
- A light dinner will be provided.

Please contact CCISCO Organizer  
**Yuritzzy Gomez** for more information at  
925-322-9070.