

**For The Bulletin of
January 17, 2016**

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME

From Father Robert

No matter what is potentially inside gift-wrapped boxes, little children will invariably go for the biggest one. They want the largest piece of dessert. They want the prettiest doll. They want the heaviest baseball bat. They want the most French fries! From earliest childhood we have an innate sense that more is better, and we carry that into adulthood (“More is more!”). We shy away from scarcity and gravitate toward plenty. We avoid want and embrace having. We seek to have savings, reserves, supplies, extras, storage bins. Of course, we can go overboard on abundance. Yet, we all know that just enough isn't enough.

This Sunday's gospel is about “running out,” not having enough. It is about a bride and groom potentially being embarrassed on their most important day. It becomes about abundance signifying that all is well, that love and life abound. It becomes about Jesus' “hour.”

What is Jesus' “hour?” It is a time of the revelation of God's immense gift of abundance. In this gospel, not one jar of water became wine, but six. Not a little bit of wine, but over a hundred gallons. Not partially filled jars, but “to the brim!” Not inferior wine, but “good wine.” Not just one sign, but “the beginning of His signs.” More is yet to come. In the “more” is God's glory revealed. In the “more” is God's

abundance – a sign of the fullness of Life and love God offers us.

The Epiphany of Jesus' glory is a sign of the persistence of God's overtures of love to us, a love so immense that it is not measurable, not able to be contained, not ever exhausted. There are signs of God's abundant love – god's most lavish gift to us – all around us. What are the signs? Obvious miracles, yes, in Jesus' time. But many miracles are still happening today: the gift of life at the birth of a baby, the peace of reconciliation, the warmth of faithful love, the satisfaction of success, the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. God's glory is revealed in many signs of abundance. Abundance, ultimately is a sign of messianic times, of God's fullness of salvation offered to us. This is why Jesus came. In the abundance of Who He is, Jesus reveals the fullness of who we might become. God's glory is God's Presence. Yes, God's glory is revealed in many signs of abundance. Most full in Jesus Himself. Most full in us, the Body of Christ, as we come to deeper belief and continue His ministry.

Living the Paschal Mystery

Belief is directed to a *Who* rather than a *what*. Our own encounters with Jesus (in prayer, through others, in struggling with daily self-giving), are truly epiphanies of God's glory which also invite us to respond to abundance with belief. These epiphany signs might come in many ways – through others in a cry for help, in a lonely person's plea for companionship, in the spontaneous laughter of delight, in the beauty of nature. The challenge for us is to see these as revelations of God's glory, as epiphanies of God's love for us, and an opportunity to respond in belief.

Yes, these common, ordinary signs of God's abundance, love, and glory are all around us. By responding to other persons (recognizing them as revelations of God to us) we ourselves also become signs of God's abundance, God's fullness. We ourselves are the good wine kept until after Jesus' ascension when we take up Jesus' mission as disciples. Living the paschal mystery means that we empty ourselves in order to be filled with the goodness of God's glory.

Did God open your ears today? What did you hear? What difference will today's scriptures make in your life?

- God's abundance that surrounds me is...I notice this abundance best when...
- Jesus reveals His glory to me in...by...through...
- I reveal God's glory when...

About Liturgy: Eucharist's Epiphanies

Year C in the Lectionary cycle is the only one in which the three traditional themes of epiphany occur on three consecutive Sundays: epiphany to the magi, Jesus' baptism, and the sign at the wedding feast of Cana. Yet, each time we celebrate liturgy God manifests divine Self to us in a number of way. For example, in the Introductory Rites we are given an opportunity to be aware that God calls us into divine presence and asks us to be attentive to the times we have failed to respond to God in belief. In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us – sometimes in terms of promise and fulfillment, sometimes exhorting us to right living, sometimes assuring us with divine love, sometimes challenging us to change our ways – and in the epiphany of word invites a response of a renewed commitment to

follow Jesus as disciples. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist Christ becomes substantially present to us in the consecrated bread and wine and gives His very Body and Blood for our food and drink. This epiphany shows us God's tremendous love for us and God's desire for intimacy; it also shows forth our own dignity as we ourselves are and are becoming the very Body of Christ. In the Concluding Rite we are sent forth to be the epiphany of God's Presence in our everyday living.

The Sunday Eucharist is a most sublime epiphany of God. Moreover, through our being transformed by the ritual action, we ourselves are reminded over and over again to be the Presence of Christ in our world. God loves us so much as to send the Son to be our savior; God trusts us so much as to send us to be the manifestation of God's Presence.

About Liturgical Music

Just as vestments and environment relate to the liturgical season, so does service music. Service Music helps us enter into the character of each season and into the unfolding rhythms of the liturgical year.

The selection of seasonal service music begins by considering the liturgical year, both as a whole and in its individual seasons. Why does the church follow a liturgical year? What relationship exists between the unfolding seasons and solemnities of the liturgical year and the identity and mission of the church?

Why, in the midst of the busy commercialism of pre-Christmas, do we have the four Sundays of Advent? Why each year do we enter into the renewal period of Lent prior to the resurrection celebration of the weeks of Easter? What is the purpose of Ordinary Time

and what formative influence does it bear on our growth in Christian living?

It is answers to questions such as this that leads to a roster of service music in keeping with the different seasons of the liturgical year, a roster that can be followed year after year and draw us more deeply into our celebration of each season.

Welcome To Winter's Ordinary Time
Between the Christmas Season and Lent is the brief, 3 weeks and two days of Winter's Ordinary Time. It is a brief respite that allows us to collectively take a deep breath and step back from the joyful celebration of the Lord's birth and before we enter into the rigorous discipline of Lent. Its color is dark green; the environment is simplified; and the Service Music changes from that of the Christmas Season. Many parishioners find the environment to be stark compared to the beauty of the Christmas Season but without change, we wouldn't appreciate the difference in the seasons of the Liturgical Year and how the environment, the music, and the vestments support the particular focus of the season.

Retirement Celebration for Bev Iacona
Today we will celebrate the retirement of **Bev Iacona** who has been on the Pastoral Staff and served most recently as Financial Secretary. Bev is one of the Charter Members of the parish, its first Faith Formation Director, and has served in practically every ministry of the parish since its inception. We owe her great gratitude for the place she has held in developing our parish, its ministries, programs, and outreaches and serving in so many capacities. We will thank her for all her years of service during the

10:00 a.m. Eucharist followed by a reception in the parish hall. I hope you will join us for this wonderful opportunity to celebrate Bev and all she has done. She will continue to be involved in ministry in new ways as she transitions from being a member of the Pastoral Staff.

Annual Report and Presentation of the Budget for 2016

As required by Diocesan Statute, The Annual Report and Presentation of the Budget for 2016 will take place at each liturgy the weekend of January 30th and 31st. Hard copies of the report will be made available to all our parishioners. I hope you will plan to be with us that weekend as we reflect on 2015 and look ahead to 2016.

City of Antioch Neighborhood Clean-Up

Please mark your calendars to join me in the next City of Antioch Neighborhood Clean Up which is scheduled for Saturday, February 6th, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. This is a great way to involve yourself in creating civic pride, cleaning up our city one neighborhood at a time, and meet new friends. Please watch next week's bulletin for the flyer and map of the neighborhood in which we will be working.

Ash Wednesday and The Beginning of Lent

The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 10th. For the convenience of our parishioners, we have scheduled four liturgies that day:

8:00 a.m.- Holy Eucharist and the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

12:00 Noon - Liturgy of the Word,
Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

5:30 p.m. - Liturgy of the Word,
Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

7:30 p.m. - Sung Evening Prayer,
Blessing and Imposition of Ashes

The offering at each liturgy on Ash Wednesday is designated for our adopted parochial school of St. Peter Martyr in Pittsburg as a way for our parish to support Catholic School Education. Our goal of financial support for them in 2016 is once again \$10,000.

Please watch my Insert for more information regarding the three-fold discipline of Lent – Prayer, Fasting, and Alms-giving – as we get closer to the beginning of Lent. Other information regarding Adult Faith Formation opportunities and spiritual growth as well as Lenten Devotions will be published in both my Insert as well as the Bulletin.

Knights of Columbus Lenten Fish Fry

Once again this year our Knights of Columbus will be offering their signature Lenten Friday Fish Fry each Friday, beginning February 12th. Fish Frys will take place each Friday beginning at 4:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. and there will be “Take Out” as well as “Dining In.” For those who “Dine In” Bingo will be played and who knows what other exciting surprises await us! All proceeds benefit the charitable programs of the Knights of Columbus.

Dishes From The Open House At The Rectory

For those of you who brought dishes to the Rectory, they are washed and on the

stainless steel table in the church kitchen. Please come and claim them as soon as possible. Thank you!

Thank You

...to those who faithfully clean the church and parish hall each week: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Steve Rojek, Mercy Osborne, and Rose Salamanca.**

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

...to those who joined us on Monday to remove the Christmas Environment and install the environment for Winter's Ordinary Time: **Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Dave Simpson, Peter Degl'Innocenti, Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller, Pablo and Norma Villegas, Bobby Zabroski, Gail Burgarino, Nancy DiMaggio, Ralph Guerrero, Diane Sampson, Lorraine Lohmeier, Harlan Young, Dorothy O'Connor, Theresa Nelms, Tom and Stevie Catchings, and Patricia Britton.**

From Turner Elementary

Dear Fr. Robert and Parishioners,
Thank you so very much for your exceptionally generous donations to the families and students of Turner Elementary this Christmas. The parents who came were overwhelmed with the generosity. The holiday season is such a joyous time for so many of us; however, as you know, for many it is a very difficult time as well. Many of the families at Turner struggle to make ends meet on a regular basis and the holidays can add a great deal of stress. You all helped to relieve that for so many. Your love and generosity with the amazing gifts was heartfelt. I saw smiles and

tears and true joy in the faces of our Turner families. Thank you for your time and efforts; they were appreciated! I am honored that you chose to help Turner. Happy New Year and many blessings to you all.

Humbly,
Deborah Meylan
Principal, Turner Elementary School