

**For The Bulletin Of
December 4, 2016**

**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**



From Father Robert

In the gospels we first are introduced to John the Baptist as the aged Elizabeth and Zechariah's miracle baby boy. We read about his leaping for joy in Elizabeth's womb when Mary visits her cousin. Now in this gospel today we jump in time to the adult John, a seemingly odd character, for sure. He is a desert dweller wearing strange clothes and eating strange food. He is a fiery character with a challenging, revealing, and life-changing message. He is a charismatic prophet who attracts crowds to hear his message and instills in them the desire to acknowledge their sinfulness, repent, and be baptized by him. But not all are able to hear, respond, and repent.

The harshness of John the Baptist's preaching to some Pharisees and Sadducees in this Sunday's gospel – "You brood of vipers!" – is a scathing judgment. John's harsh language, unrelenting judgment, and uncompromising challenge demand a

wholehearted response: Repent! It is not good enough to claim "Abraham as our father." Repentance is a wholly personal choice, personal act, personal demand to change.

Repentance always changes one's life. Changing our lives is very concrete and visible. Our attitudes and behaviors noticeably change for the better when we choose to repent. Repentance at root means to change one's mind. Only then can one act according to God's plan, thus changing our lives. When each of us changes our mind – repents – by conforming our will to God's, then there will be "no more harm or ruin" but rather the peace and harmony described by the prophet, Isaiah.

Repentance brings not the poison of striking vipers but the "good fruit" of counsel, strength, knowledge, and delight in the Lord. Repentance brings the favorable judgment that not only invites us to the kingdom of heaven but *is* the peace and harmony portraying the already "at hand" of God's reign. The choice to repent has consequences beyond the immediate. To repent takes us beyond John's baptism of water which brings a new human way to live. To repent is to embrace Jesus' baptism "with the Holy Spirit and fire" which brings us to a new way to live in God.

John directs to everyone his strong warning to repent. Some "acknowledged their sins," and expressed their desire to live "in the kingdom of heaven" by submitting to John's baptism with water. The "Pharisees and Sadducees" resisted repentance, claiming their descent from Abraham was enough for them to belong to "the kingdom of heaven." John's challenge to repent elicits two responses.

Which response do we choose? Whether Jesus will gather us as wheat or burn us as chaff depends upon our choice.

Living The Paschal Mystery

We ought not to dismiss the Pharisees and Sadducees of the gospel too quickly. John's harsh judgment of them must bring us to look at what is within us that opposes God's ways. One good way to discover what within us needs to change is to *listen* to the judgments others are making about us. Whenever we hear negative things about ourselves we tend to be hurt and defensive, and this is quite natural. Perhaps the hurt would be eased if we remember such judgments may reveal to us ways we need to repent. Here is the paschal mystery reality of our lives: true, we *already* share in the new Life of Jesus' resurrection; at the same time, we have not *yet* rid ourselves of all that opposes God's way and for which we must repent.

What will be our response to today's scripture and homily?

- When I hear John's call to repentance, my first response is...
- When I choose not to repent, my life becomes... What helps me repent is...
- When Jesus judges me...

About Liturgy: Advent and Lent – Two Sides of the Same Coin?

The gospel for today sounds like it might also be a good gospel to use for Lent – Repent! Although we usually think of preparedness and expectation as describing what Advent is really all about – and this within a quiet joyfulness – we are also reminded that Advent begins by looking to the Second Coming

and the final judgment. The repentance of Advent is interpreted within this context; thus repentance is one way we prepare and expect.

The liturgical seasons don't unfold the mystery of salvation in any chronological or historical manner. The wholeness of the mystery is always incorporated in the various themes for each season of the Liturgical Year. There is a special convergence between the beginning of Advent and Lent because of the repentance motif. Repentance brings us face-to-face with the *not yet* of the mystery, that we are still sinful humanity in need of redemption. At the same time, both seasons also bring us to the gift of salvation: Advent, in that it opens onto the celebration of the Incarnation and the coming of our Savior into human history; Lent, in that it opens onto the celebration of Easter and the joyful new Life of the Risen Christ and of the baptized with Him.

Advent and Lent aren't the two sides of the coin – the dying and rising of the paschal mystery are. Advent and Lent each find themselves on both sides of the coin. Both seasons invite us to death and to resurrection, to self-emptying and to exaltation, to poverty of self and to fullness of Life.



Our Parish Retreat: A New Beginning

We welcome **Sr. Patricia Bruno, OP and Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP** to the parish this weekend as they begin our Advent Parish Retreat: “A New Beginning.” They are preaching at each liturgy this weekend as well as at the daily liturgies each morning, beginning tomorrow and concluding on Thursday. Each evening, at 7:30 p.m., they will offer a creative prayer experience that will make use of various symbols, music, the spoken Word, and reflection to help us enter more deeply into this Advent Season and how to continue the gift of mercy we experienced in last year’s Jubilee Year of Mercy. I hope you will join us each day at 8:00 a.m. and again in the evening at 7:30 p.m.



Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

This coming Thursday, December 8, 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. and again in the evening at 7:30 p.m. This is the last day of our Advent Parish Retreat and the homily will be given at both liturgies by

Sr. Patricia Bruno, OP and Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

This year our celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe will take place next Saturday evening, December 10th, as a part of our Saturday evening Vigil Liturgy at 4:00 p.m. Following the Liturgy, there will be a traditional Mexican dinner served in the parish hall for all attending. While there is no charge or tickets required, there will be a free will donation received at the time of dinner to help our Guadalupana Society with its expenses. We are very grateful to **Lidia Tarango, Coordinator for the Guadalupana Society**, for once again making our celebration possible.

Lessons and Carols

On Sunday afternoon, December 18th, our Choir and the Deanery Festival Choir will present Christmas Lessons and Carols, seven scripture passages that tell the story of Christmas and enhanced by organ, choral works, and carols sung by all to herald the Christmas Feast. You will not want to miss this beautiful musical celebration that will help us prepare for Christmas. This will be the second time the 70 Voice Deanery Festival Choir has performed, the first being at our Deanery Pilgrimage last August in the Cathedral. A reception in the spirit of the season will take place following the service in our parish hall. I hope you will plan to attend.

Our Christmas Environment

Each year, the environment of Christmas – its trees, poinsettias, wreathes, garlands, lights, and panels of festive cloth – is made possible by your generosity, contributions made either In Honor of or In Loving Memory of family members, friends and loved ones.

For those of us who receive envelopes in the mail, an envelope was in our packet already for last week. Additional envelopes are available on the Credenza beneath the Icon of St. Paul. Thank you for what you will do to help our Art & Environment Committee create a fitting environment that will say “Christmas” for its entire season. Your gifts will be acknowledged in one of the bulletins of the Christmas Season.



Christmas At St. Ignatius of Antioch
Christmas Eve, Saturday,
December 24, 2016, 4:00 p.m. The Children tell the story of Christmas (Organ, Cantors; Carols; *No Incense*)

10:00 p.m. Festive Celebration of Holy Eucharist for Christmas Night – The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ; The Blessing of the Christmas Trees and the Blessing of the Creche; Procession and Incense

Christmas Day, Sunday,
December 25, 2016

8:00 a.m. Festive Celebration of Holy Eucharist for Christmas Morning; Procession, Cantors and Organ, Carols (No Incense)

10:00 a.m. Festival Choral Eucharist for Christmas Day; The Parish Choir,

Cantors, and Organ; Procession and Incense

New Year’s Eve, Saturday,
December 31, 2016 – The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

4:00 p.m. Vigil Liturgy for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

New Year’s Day, Sunday,
January 1, 2017 – The Solemnity of Mary, New Year’s Day, The World Day of Prayer for Peace, The Octave Day of Christmas

8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Festive Celebrations of Holy Eucharist; Birthday Blessing at each liturgy; the Christmas Season continues.

Thank You

...to our wonderful Art & Environment Committee for creating the beautiful environment for the full four weeks of Advent: **Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Jose Palomino, Tom & Stevie Catchings, Pablo & Norma Villegas, Lee Oliver, Denise Moss, Cora Sandajan, Vangie Parrilla, Pat Kramer, and Patricia Britton.**

...to our parishioner volunteers who clean and care for our church and parish hall each week: **Jack Goncalves, Jun Bajet, Steve Rojek, Cathy Romeo, Carole Miller, Angela Bueno, and Mercy Osborne.**

...to those who care for and maintain the bathrooms in the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Virginia Noack, Steve Rojek, Gino Ramos, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl’Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to our **counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week: **Sofie Zimmerman, Melody Costanza, Harlan Young, Karen Oliver, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.**

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week’s donations: **Bob Carvalho and David Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller and Maya Valdez.**

Father Tom’s Book of Christmas Meditations

A book of Father Tom Bonacci’s Christmas Meditations has been published by “blurb.com, 580 California Street, San Francisco, CA. 94104, Suite 300” and is available for \$19.95 plus shipping and tax, bringing the total to \$24.75. This will make a wonderful Christmas gift.

Christmas Cards for Archbishop Brunett

Please do not forget to include **Archbishop Alexander Brunett** in your Christmas card list. His address is:
Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett
Archbishop Emeritus
Archdiocese of Seattle
710 9th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Get Well Cards For San Francisco Police Officer Kevin Downs

I invite you to join me in sending Get Well cards to San Francisco Police Officer Kevin Downs who was shot in the head and who has been released from the hospital and is recovering. Cards, good wishes, and remembrances of prayers may be sent to him as follows:

Officer Kevin Downs
c/o San Francisco Police Officers Association
800 Bryant St., Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

A Personal Christmas Request

Each year, many parishioners gift me with home-baked Christmas cookies, candy, pastries, breads, etc. as well as wonderful bottles of wine. Unfortunately, I am not able to enjoy these gifts of your love and appreciation as I have adopted a “No Sugar – No Grains” approach to my diet. While I appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity, I am no longer eating anything with processed sugar, no breads, no pasta, no rice, no potatoes, etc. and that includes no alcohol. Thank you for your support and understanding. Perhaps you would consider making a donation to our Antioch Police Activities League for Children, or any one of our local shelters, or Winter Nights Shelter, or any other worthy cause/charity.

