

For The Bulletin Of December 11, 2016



From Father Robert

Today's gospel could well be the original "show and tell" time! The state of Missouri has the slogan, "The Show-Me-State" on their license plates. We contend that a "picture is worth a thousand words." Sometimes believing is hard to come by. To move forward we need to see concrete evidence for ourselves. We want to see or hear, taste or feel the evidence. We want to be shown. When John the Baptist sends his disciples to inquire if Jesus is "the one Who is to come," Jesus is very concrete about His response. He does not ask John and his disciples to believe only because He says so, but points to the concrete good works that He does. Jesus is a Messiah not according to their reckoning. He is not a Messiah Who comes in power and glory, but One Who comes with care and compassion, with mercy and forgiveness, with good news proclaimed to everyone. The Messiah's identity is revealed not as the people expected Him to be, but according to God's plan for those who wish to be in "the kingdom of heaven."

In reality, three identities are revealed in the gospel: First, John seeks to know if Jesus is "the one who is to come." Jesus

does not respond with a simple yes, but invites John and his disciples to discover His identity by hearing and seeing His good works. Then Jesus reveals who John is. Even "more than a prophet," he is the messenger of the Messiah. He is the one who diverts attention from himself to prepare his hearers to accept a Messiah revealed not by power and wealth but by self-giving regard for others. Finally, Jesus reveals who we are. We, "the least in the kingdom of heaven," are greater than John. How can this be?

The crowds went out in the desert to see a prophet and Jesus assures them they saw even more and extols John's greatness. Now here is the real shock of the gospel: as great as John is, as privileged as he is to be the messenger of the Messiah, we who follow Jesus – even the very least of us – are still greater than John! *We* are those who inherit "the kingdom of heaven," provided we take up Jesus' tender and merciful servant ministry and continue to bring sight and healing to those in need and proclaim the Good News to all those *we* meet. Now it is to be our work to announce to others that the Messiah is among us, within us.

Let us see John for who he really was – the humble messenger pointing to the Messiah. Let us see Jesus for Who He really is – the Messiah-King Whose power is in His being the self-giving, tender, merciful Servant. Let us see ourselves for who we really are – God's beloved people, who when we minister as Jesus did, are even greater than John. Yes, seeing is believing – but only when we see and hear evidence of God's in-breaking. Only when our own way of living is concrete evidence that the

Messiah comes, that “the kingdom of heaven” is upon us.

Living The Paschal Mystery

Advent is a time for joyfully seeking the comings of the Messiah. Advent is a time to increase our own self-knowledge as those who continue Jesus’ saving ministry. Just as Jesus pointed to His good works to reveal His identity as the Messiah, so must we live so that our own good works witness to who we are: those baptized into Christ’s saving mystery and who share in His identity. We are the Body of Christ. Like Jesus, we are to reach out to those blinded by their own selfishness, lamed by their own indifference, diseased by their own callousness, deafened by their own conceit, deadened by their own selfishness. To be humble as was John the Baptist, we must always remember that it is not what *we* do, but what Christ accomplishes in and through us. We are to be Christ’s messengers, pointing to *His* good works.

About Liturgy: Veneration of the Altar and the Presence/Coming of the Messiah

When the gathering procession reaches the sanctuary space and the ministers made their reverence of the Altar, the Presider approaches the Altar and kisses it. We are occupied with the singing of the Processional Hymn so we probably don’t pay too much attention to this profound gesture. Yet, it is fraught with meaning.

This gesture dates at least to the Fourth Century and probably has its origins in ancient culture; often families would kiss the table before a meal began as a kind of greeting. Thus, one interpretation of the veneration of the

Altar by a kiss is that the Presider is greeting Christ Who is present among the assembly. In ancient times this gesture of kissing the Altar by the Presider was directly linked to the exchange of the kiss of peace among the faithful.

At its dedication the Altar was anointed with Sacred Chrism and thus became a symbol of Christ’s Presence in the assembly. We begin liturgy, then, with a gesture that reminds us of Christ, and we are at the same time reminded that we are the Body of Christ, now gathered around the Head Who is present. Christ’s Presence is a poignant reminder of who we are – members of His Body. It is also a reminder of how we are to live – doing His works. Our works are to “kiss” others with Christ’s Presence and goodness.

The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Robert Sampson from the Sampson Family.



Advent Cocktail Party This Afternoon

At 4:00 p.m. this afternoon, parishioners will gather at the beautifully decorated home of **Joe and Theresa Nelms** for an Advent Cocktail Party. The invitations were first offered at the Parish Gala Dinner in October. We are grateful to the Nelms’ for their generosity in

opening their home as all proceeds from this event benefit the parish.



Lessons and Carols

On Sunday afternoon, December 18th, our 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. 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, wreaths, 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 at the end of November. 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. Eucharist - 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.

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.



Thank You

...to our wonderful parishioner volunteers who clean and maintain our church and parish hall each week: **Steve Rojek, Emilia Freking, Angela Bueno, Mency Osborne, Rose Salamanca, and Carole Miller.**

...to our volunteer parishioners who clean, maintain, and keep the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall in such great condition: **Robert Goncalves,**

Mary Ewing, Harlan Young, Patricia Britton, and Virginia Noack.

...to our Knights of Columbus **Jose Palomino and Jose Perez** who provided security for the Visitation and Vigil for **Rose Malifitano's** services last Sunday afternoon and evening and to **Tom and Stevie Catchings** who provided security for her Funeral Liturgy; and to **Don Benson** who used the power blower to clean the main entrance and the parking lot before the Funeral Liturgy on Monday morning.

...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, 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 Ester.**

From St. Vincent de Paul

Dear Father Robert and Members of St. Ignatius of Antioch Parish,
Thank you so much for the beautiful boxes of food donated for Thanksgiving. These boxes and baskets, together with

turkeys from our St. Vincent de Paul Society, contributed to a wonderful dinner for many needy families (217 boxes/baskets). May God bless you for your hard work and generosity.

Gratefully, The St. Vincent de Paul Council at Holy Rosary Parish.



Simbang Gabi

Once again our parish will join the **Deanery Celebration of Simbang Gabi**, a novena of nine days of liturgies in preparation for the Christmas Feast, sponsored by our Filipino Community. We will join the parishes of our Deanery at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Brentwood. Beginning December 16th, the liturgies will be celebrated through Saturday, December 24th at 5:00 a.m. each morning. **I will be presiding and preaching on Thursday, December 22nd and members of our Filipino Ministry will share in the ministry of the liturgy** and the traditional Filipino Breakfast that follows in their parish hall.

