

**For The Bulletin of
February 5, 2017**



**THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN
WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

Before the days of well-stocked supermarket shelves, salt was an expensive and coveted commodity. It was the one thing that couldn't be grown or produced locally; it had to be bought. Salt does more than make foods tastier. It is a preservative, very necessary before the age of electricity, refrigerators, and freezers. It is an essential nutrient for the body. In times gone by, salt licks were natural deposits of salt where wild animals would instinctively gather and so salt licks became natural hunting grounds for humans.

Before the days of widespread electricity and the lightbulb, dispelling darkness was limited and limiting. Poor people who could not afford candles, oil for lamps, or even firewood for a fire would go to bed with sundown and darkness. For those who could afford oil for one lamp or a single candle, the light emitted was rather dim, adequate only to see large objects unless one was very close to the source of light.

Jesus uses salt and light, two things common and necessary for enhanced life, to describe the essential gifts discipleship brings to the world. Disciples are to be salt and light for others. In the gospel we hear today Jesus calls us to assess whether our discipleship has lost its potency because our salt has become flat and our light has become dim. The Good News is that no matter how bland or dim our discipleship, Jesus never throws us out, tramples us underfoot, or hides us. Here is the twist of the gospel: Jesus calls disciples to be "the salt of the earth" and the "light of the world," yet to be such, Christ must first be our salt and light. We need first to encounter Christ Who always remains with us, making it possible for us to mature in our discipleship.

We can be faithful disciples – salt that seasons others in Gospel living, and light that dispels the darkness of uncertainty and lack of clear direction – when, as the disciples in the gospel, we listen to Jesus and allow Him to guide us. To be fruitful disciples, the first relationship we must foster is with Jesus. This relationship ensures that we are not just any salt or any light, but that of Christ. Disciples do not act alone, but are always instruments in God's hand who, through God's power acting in them, do good for others. We are the salt licks attracting others to Christ; we are the light that makes clear for others the way to Jesus.

Living The Paschal Mystery

While the gospel uses metaphors to help us understand who we are as disciples of Jesus, this is not simply pretty language that may give us a poetic thrill but then be forgotten. The first reading makes

very concrete the gospel metaphors. We are vindicated when we act decisively as God acts: we are to feed the hungry, “shelter the oppressed and the homeless,” “clothe the naked,” remove oppression and refrain from malicious speech.” Practically speaking for us today, this might mean that we get involved in some of the parish ministries directed to social outreach; or we might tutor one of the schoolchildren. Maybe being Christ-salty or Christ-shining simply means that we take stock of our already too-busy days and reflect on what has value or meaning for the good of others and what has become habit to no real avail. Discipleship always involves ongoing discernment about how we are in relation to God and others. Anything short of being the best person we can be, as God’s instruments of salvation, is selling short being true to themselves.

Following last week’s Gospel of the Beatitudes, this is the second week of such a challenging Gospel and one that strikes at the heart of how we respond to Jesus, to the Gospel and the Gospel mandate.

- My discipleship is in need of “salt” when...Jesus has been salt for me when...
- Christ lights my way when...This makes a difference in my discipleship because...
- In my discipleship, I feel thrown out, trampled, hidden when... Christ comes to me in my darkness and...

The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Agnes J. Rien, the mother of Father Robert,

John, and Doug Rien. Today, had she lived, would have been her 98th birthday.

About Liturgy: The Use of Candles for Liturgy

The liturgical requirement for the use of candles at Liturgy simply states that at least two candles are to be on or near the Altar and even four or six may be used. The origin of lit candles was functional; before the time of electricity, candles were necessary even in daytime because the churches tended to be rather dark. Now candles are no longer functional but symbolic: they remind us of Christ the Light of the world; in the context of today’s gospel they also remind us that we ourselves are to be light that shines in the darkness.

One pastoral practice that has arisen is that many churches now have candles at the Ambo as well. This practice is no problem and underscores the importance of both the “table of the Word” and the “table of the Eucharist. Questionable symbolism arises, however, when four candles are being used (two at the Ambo and two at the Altar) and the two at the Ambo are extinguished at the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word and the two at the Altar are lighted, or when just two lit candles are used and they are carried from the Ambo to be placed in empty candle stands at the Altar. The problem with this practice is that we give the impression that one part is “over” and the next part “begins.” In terms of the chronology of the ritual, this is true because we humans live in space and time. However, in terms of the meaning of the rite, the Liturgy of the Word cannot be separated from the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and, indeed, neither are “finished” but continue into our

Christian living. Such a practice in Roman Catholic Liturgy is inappropriate.



At each liturgy last weekend, it was my privilege to present the Annual Pastoral and Financial Report for 2016. Much more than a listing of statistics and facts, it chronicles the life of our parish over the past year, how God has worked in and through us to build the Kingdom here in our midst. It details all those who have contributed their time, talent, and financial resources to support our programs, ministries, outreaches, and staffing. It gives an accounting of your Stewardship of Treasure, Income and Expenses for the past year as well as presenting the Budget for 2017. It indicates our goals and objectives for the year to come, and, in a certain way, helps to prepare us for the series of Town Hall Meetings that will take place next month. I hope you will read the report carefully and join us in thanking God for the many blessings that we have experienced in 2016. I want to express special gratitude to **Brian McCoy and our Office Staff** for creating, editing, and printing the Report. Several sets of “eyes” have proofed the report and we hope that we haven’t forgotten anything or anyone. If you didn’t receive your copy today, additional copies will be

available in the Parish Office as well as on the credenza at the back of the church.



Town Hall Meetings

Three Town Hall Meetings have been scheduled to allow the maximum number of registered parishioners to attend to receive the recommendations of the Going Concern Committee which has been hard at work for the last six months. The days and the times of the meetings are as follows:

This Wednesday, February 8th, at 9:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 12, 11:30 a.m., immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Liturgy. The Leadership of the parish (Pastoral Staff, Pastoral Council, and Finance Council) will be present for each Town Hall Meeting.

Please mark your calendars and plan to be present for one of these important meetings of our congregation.

Liturgical Morning of Enrichment

On Saturday morning, February 11th, we will gather with the liturgical ministers of St. Anne, Byron and St. Bonaventure, Concord for a Morning of Liturgical Enrichment. The day begins with hospitality at 8:30 a.m. followed by Sung Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m. Two areas will be addressed: The New Rite of Matrimony and the New Guidelines Regarding Cremation. Everyone present will have the opportunity to be present

for each workshop. The morning will conclude with a Rite of Renewal for Ministry. My thanks to **Anthony Arteaga, Director of Liturgy for St. Bonaventure, and Lisa Promani, Pastoral Associate from St. Anne,** for assisting me in planning. All are welcome and there is no fee/charge to attend.



Marriage, Divorce, and Re-Marriage In The Catholic Church

On Wednesday evening, February 15th, at 7:30 p.m., our parish will sponsor an Adult Faith Formation workshop on “Marriage, Divorce, and Re-Marriage in the Catholic Church.” This is a wonderful opportunity to learn how the church addresses this reality, the process of annulments, convalidation, etc. One out of every Catholic marriages ends in divorce and there is a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding regarding this subject. Please extend an invitation to anyone you are aware of who could benefit from this workshop. There is no charge to attend.



Adult Confirmation

Our candidates for Adult Confirmation will receive the sacrament at The Cathedral from the Bishop on Saturday, February 18th, at 10:00 a.m. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare to complete their initiation.



Lent begins this year on Wednesday, March 1, with Ash Wednesday. Our schedule of liturgies that day are as follows:

- 8:00 a.m.** Holy Eucharist with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes
- 12:00 Noon** Liturgy of the Word with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes
- 5:30 p.m.** Liturgy of the Word with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes
- 7:30 p.m.** Sung Evening Prayer with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes



January 28, 2017

Dear Pastors,

On Wednesday, the Administration announced two new executive actions relating to immigration and refugee policy. We knew more actions were planned, and we understood that what was coming could directly affect our agency and would harm the communities we serve, although we did not fully know the details. Still, the dramatic impact of the Executive Order signed last night has reverberated around the world and is not just affecting refugees, but also permanent residents with green cards who are out of the country, if they are from countries named in the order.

We want to assure you that while these orders may delay or alter some family arrivals, our program will continue. As you know, the need is enormous and global. Parish support of our refugee families is making a difference. We are grateful for your continued leadership and appeal to you for your continued prayers on behalf of children and families fleeing violence and persecution.

We stand with the immigrant, refugee, and migrant community. We oppose actions that promote fear and hostility towards people of all faiths and nationalities. We remain committed to our mission of welcoming the stranger through legal services, refugee resettlement, education, and community outreach. Toward this end, our legal team is resolved to continue filing applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) as long as the program exists.

Our country has welcomed people fleeing religious or political persecution, war, poverty or violence since its founding. The

spirit and tenacity of our shared immigrant ancestry has shaped and defined our nation. As a faith community, the Catholic Church is an immigrant church with a long history of embracing newcomers and caring for migrants.

We know the stories of persecution, violence, and oppression that drive people -- including children -- from their homelands seeking safe haven in the United States. Despite the rhetoric of fear, we believe that people of good will and conscience understand that for many this is a life or death situation, and choose to be on the side of life.

We will continue to provide our services and seek justice for immigrants, refugees and migrants.

As an experienced leader with a long history serving the immigrant, refugee, and migrant community in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, we join the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in supporting comprehensive and compassionate Congressional reform and repair of our broken immigration system. This includes providing a path to permanent legal status for youth eligible for the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

This is a time where our solidarity with one another becomes more important than ever. Most important, we stand together to Act Justly, Love Kindness, and Walk Humbly with God (Micah 6:6-8). We do so in service to the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized.

Peace be with you,

Chuck Fernandez, CEO
Catholic Charities of the
East Bay

**USCCB COMMITTEE ON
MIGRATION CHAIR
STRONGLY OPPOSES
EXECUTIVE ORDER
BECAUSE IT HARMS
VULNERABLE REFUGEE
AND IMMIGRANT
FAMILIES**

January 27, 2017

WASHINGTON—President Donald J. Trump issued today an Executive Order addressing the U.S. refugee admissions program and migration to the United States, generally. The executive order virtually shuts down the refugee admissions program for 120 days, reduces the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States this year from 110,000 to 50,000 individuals, and indefinitely suspends the resettlement of Syrian refugees. In addition, it prioritizes religious minorities suffering from religious persecution, thereby deprioritizing all other persons fleeing persecution; calls for a temporary bar on admission to the United States from a number of countries of particular concern (all Muslim majority); and imposes a yet-to-be determined new vetting process for all persons seeking entry to the United States.

Regarding the Executive Order's halt and reduction of admissions, Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the Committee on Migration, stated:

"We strongly disagree with the Executive Order's halting refugee admissions. We believe that now more than ever, welcoming newcomers and refugees is an act of love and hope. We will continue to engage the new administration, as we have all

administrations for the duration of the current refugee program, now almost forty years. We will work vigorously to ensure that refugees are humanely welcomed in collaboration with Catholic Charities without sacrificing our security or our core values as Americans, and to ensure that families may be reunified with their loved ones."

Regarding the Executive Order's ban on Syrian refugees, the prioritization of religious minorities suffering from religious persecution, Bishop Vásquez added:

"The United States has long provided leadership in resettling refugees. We believe in assisting all those who are vulnerable and fleeing persecution, regardless of their religion. This includes Christians, as well as Yazidis and Shia Muslims from Syria, Rohingyas from Burma, and other religious minorities. However, we need to protect all our brothers and sisters of all faiths, including Muslims, who have lost family, home, and country. They are children of God and are entitled to be treated with human dignity. We believe that by helping to resettle the most vulnerable, we are living out our Christian faith as Jesus has challenged us to do."

Moving forward after the announcement, Bishop Vásquez concluded:

"Today, more than 65 million people around the world are forcibly displaced from their homes. Given this extraordinary level of suffering, the U.S. Catholic Bishops will redouble their support for, and efforts to protect, all who flee persecution and violence, as just one part of the perennial and global work of the Church in this area of concern."



...to our faithful volunteers who came early last Saturday morning to clean and prepare both the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Cathy Romeo, Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Steve Rojek, Carole Miller, Mency Osborne, and Rose Salamanca.**

...to our wonderful and faithful volunteers who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Steve Rojek, Virginia Noack, 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: **Jeannine Ford, Sofie Zimmerman, Melodye 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 Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Dave Costanza, Carole Miller and Judy Quicho.**

UNITED WE STAND



January 30, 2017

Dear Friends,

The Interfaith Peace Projects strongly condemns the Executive Order of President Trump restricting the free travel of Muslims and others based on their National Origin. Such a restriction runs contrary to human dignity and the legal precedents of more recent times. We urge Congress, the Courts and Advocacy Organizations to reject and protest all such Executive Orders.

We must resist any attempt to identify people of any given religion or National Origin with terrorism. Terrorists take advantage of this type of regressive legislation for it feeds into their propaganda that the United States and the West are engaged in a war against Islam. Presidents George W. Bush and Barak Obama have both objected to and refused to accept the

idea that the United States is engaged in a war against Islam.

The rhetoric and actions of President Trump will not make America safer from terrorists but will enable them with even more hostility and inaccurate information about our people and our culture.

The President's appeal to the tragic events of September 11, 2001 is illogical to say the least. While the Executive Order restricts refugees and native travelers from Iraq and Syria and other Countries, there are no restrictions on Saudi Arabia. The perpetrators of the September 11 atrocities originated in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, we are concerned about destructive effects this Executive Order has already had in the United States and the World. Even if this attempt to restrict the free migration of certain peoples based on National Origin is defeated, it has already fueled deep seated fears and prejudices against Islam in general and Muslims in particular. This cannot be allowed to stand.

The Executive Order runs contrary to everything The Interfaith Peace Project stands for and strives to achieve. Rather than reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes, we must foster mutual understanding and cooperation. Our religious principles can and do encourage Interfaith love, respect and justice.

We call upon the President to rescind his Orders and foster structures by which the damage can be undone and a fractured Nation can find peace and tranquility.

The Interfaith Peace Project stands in solidarity with immigrants, refugees and all those seeking a safe home. We stand in solidarity with our Muslim Brothers and Sisters. We urge you to do the same.

Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.
Interfaith Peace Center