

**For The Bulletin Of
July 23, 2017**



**THE 16TH SUNDAY IN
SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

Earthly kingdoms are marked by geographic boundaries, the will of the ruler, and birthright. Today's gospel speaks of the "kingdom of heaven," of God's kingdom. This divine kingdom's geographic boundaries are all that is. God's will rules this kingdom and the kingdom is visible whenever God's will is done. The firstborn of this kingdom is the divine Son, but we are all heirs of this kingdom through our baptism.

"The kingdom of heaven is like..."
Whatever parable Jesus uses to teach about the kingdom of heaven, always at issue is growth, abundance, increase. While "the enemy" may try to thwart the kingdom, in the end God will prevail and "the righteous will shine like the sun." So, "the kingdom of heaven is like" those of us who hear and live the Good News Jesus teaches. We ourselves are "the kingdom of heaven" when we live according to God's ways, accepting the gracious will of God as the rule of our lives. We ourselves become the spaciousness of God's kingdom, making

visible the divine Presence and will to all those we touch with our own presence.

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven as we presently experience it with room for growth and maturation: there are weeds among the wheat, a bush is in growth, the dough is rising. The wheat, bush, dough are not finished products; it takes time and patience and confident assurance that the kingdom of heaven will become fully manifest in us: we will be a harvest, we will be a large bush, we will be a loaf of bread. The mystery of the kingdom, of course, is that while the end is guaranteed – life will come forth – all of us must live faithfully and work diligently if we wish to reap the fruits of following God's will – Life everlasting.

In the end, it is less important to understand God's kingdom with our minds than it is to live according to the values of the kingdom. The first reading lists some of these values for us: the children of the kingdom are to live like the Master of the kingdom – showing the kind of care, leniency, clemency, justice, and kindness that instill in others hope rather than despair, fecundity rather than barrenness, the desire to do good rather than evil. We can come confidently to the day of judgment by being good disciples of the Master. As we grow in our discipleship, it is patience and hope in the final outcome that sustains us so that in the end we will be counted among the "righteous who shine like the sun."

Living The Paschal Mystery

The impulse of the first parable is to pull the weeds. The impulse during our whole Christian living is to be impatient with ourselves as we grow in our discipleship, meeting challenges and

temptations along the way. Part of living the paschal mystery is to be patient with ourselves, especially when we have failed. The mercy, forgiveness, leniency, justice, and patience of God encourage repentance. Even our mistakes are ways that we have “ears...to hear” and learn better the ways of God. God’s final judgment comes at the “end of the age” when, hopefully, all of us have lived the ways of patience and faithfulness and have borne fruit. As we grow into being God’s kingdom, as we learn better to live our birthright, as we grasp more fully what God’s will is for us in our daily living and respond faithfully, we become more like the firstborn Son, more like worthy citizens of the “kingdom of heaven.”

What is your image of “the kingdom of heaven?” Is it the same as the one you had as a child? Or, has it developed as you have grown in the spiritual life?

- For me, “the kingdom of heaven” is like...because...
- The growth I treasure is...the abundance I experience is...the increase I seek is...
- I hear and live the Good News Jesus teaches about the kingdom when...by...

About Liturgy: Liturgical Catechesis Takes Patience

Like the seeds growing or the yeast leavening in the gospel, learning more about liturgy so we can celebrate it better takes time and patience. Sometimes too much change too quickly confuses us and we have a hard time entering wholeheartedly into liturgy. Sometimes we don’t have the patience to discipline ourselves to read bulletin inserts or buy and read a good book on

liturgy. Sometimes we don’t agree with what is being said or taught, and so we just don’t listen or we listen and then promptly forget what we’ve learned. The point is that something so important as liturgy requires constant learning, constant updating, and all this takes a great deal of time and patience!

One good exercise that each of us might undertake is to resolve once a month to learn something new about liturgy. This can be something so simple as coming to church a little early or staying a little longer afterward to read slowly and thoughtfully through the readings or one of the hymn texts. It might be something so challenging as signing up for a series of classes on the liturgy. The real trick to updating ourselves liturgically is not to bite off too much at a time, but to be patient with ourselves. Take one step at a time and it is amazing how fruitful this can be. The challenge is to take that first step.

I do want to affirm and thank all those who have come to understand and embrace the celebration of the liturgy here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. It makes a huge difference when *everyone* participates, sings, and responds accordingly, listens intently, and enters into the liturgy *from the beginning to its conclusion*. So many visitors have commented to me as they leave our liturgies that they are overwhelmed by the singing and the participation of the assembly – you need to know that that is not the norm in most parishes. Other comments include how warm, friendly, welcoming, and loving our worshipping community is, as well as how beautiful the environment is. We have much for which to be grateful. We have taken much care with what we do and how we

do it because liturgy is transformative – it has the power to change lives. Your full and complete engagement is a witness to those around you and you set a wonderful example by the way you enter into worship, inspiring those around you to do the same. Our worship is meant to be one experience of “the kingdom of heaven” even now.



The French Boys Choir Concert

You will not want to miss the historic French Boys Choir Concert today at 7:30 p.m. in the church. This is the first time in East Contra Costa County as well as in our parish that an event like this is taking place. There are no tickets and the admission is free. The Choir will sing both sacred and secular music in a variety of languages. Following the concert, there will be a gala reception in the parish hall under the direction of **Will Avitabile, Catherine Vidaurri, and the Members of our Pastoral Council.** A free will offering will be received to help offset expenses for this event. I hope you will plan to join us.

Annual Backpack Outreach Project

In support of Catholic education, St. Ignatius of Antioch is sponsoring our 9th Annual Backpack and School Supplies Drive for our adopted school, St. Peter Martyr. The teachers have prepared lists of supplies that each

student needs to begin the new school year. **Please see the insert in this week’s bulletin.** You’re invited to select a grade, purchase a new backpack, and fill it with the supplies listed. Donations of individual supply items included in the lists below such as packages of #2 pencils, wide-ruled binder paper, folders (bottom-pocket type), 12” rulers, paper towels, etc. are also welcome. Please bring your donations to the weekend liturgies on August 5-6.



The Annual Training Seminar of the International Conference of Police Chaplains

On Sunday morning, July 9th, I flew to Norfolk, Virginia to participate in the Annual Training Seminar of the ICPC. It was held at the Sheraton Waterside Hotel in Norfolk. Classes were held from Monday morning, July 10th from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Friday, July 14th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. There were 500 Law Enforcement Chaplains present along with wives of chaplains as well as their children.

The classes I took to enrich my competency and professionalism as a Police Chaplain for both our Antioch Police Department as well as the East Bay Regional Park District (Black Diamond Mines to Big Break Park in Oakley), included: **Understanding the Chaplain’s Role in Critical Incident Management; Ministering to Officers**

of the Islamic Faith; A Three Part Class on Debriefing for Chaplains; Ancient Solutions to Modern Law Enforcement Challenges; 21st Century Chaplaincy; The Role of Chaplains in Mass Civil Disturbances; Stalking and Digital Violence; Disaster Spiritual and Emotional Care; Welcoming Women in Chaplaincy; Active Shooter Presentation by the FBI; Reshaping The Narrative; and Serving the City and Community Policing.

In addition to the classes, there was an Opening Ceremony in which participants from all over the world were welcomed, the Annual Memorial Service for all police officers killed in the Line of Duty since last year, and the Annual Awards Banquet at which Chaplains are recognized and awarded for academic achievement. This was the moment when I was recognized for having achieved *Master Chaplain* status.

I have been attending the ICPC Annual and Regional Training Seminars since 2007 and have borne the financial responsibility myself for registration, airfare, hotel, meals and incidentals. My commitment to Law Enforcement Chaplaincy and especially to our Antioch Police Department is one of my highest priorities and is well worth the investment in the education necessary to do the best job possible in serving our officers. I also want to thank you, the members of our parish, for your support and prayers for me and all Chaplains. Without your support, I would not be able to be available to do this important and critical ministry. Next year's Annual Training Seminar will take place in Lexington, Kentucky the second week of July, 2018.



...to our wonderful volunteer parishioners who arrive very early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the sanctuary and parish hall for the weekend: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Hearther Hatteroth, Jack Goncalves, Cathy Romeo, Mency Osborne, Emilia Freking, Steve Rojek, and Carole Miller.**

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who have taken responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the bathrooms for the church and parish hall: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, 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:

Sofie Zimmerman, Harlan Young, Melodye Costanza, Yvette 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, Carole Miller, Dave Costanza, Judy Quicho and Belen Farin.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during weekend liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**

