

**For The Bulletin of
December 10, 2017**



**THE SECOND SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**

From Father Robert

The church gives us the opening verses of Mark's gospel on the Second Sunday of Advent. As a lion, Mark pounces on his subject matter. A one-line intro is followed by a mishmash of Scripture quotes attributed to Isaiah. In actuality, Mark combines Malachi 3: 1a with Isaiah 40:3 and applies both to the enigmatic figure of John the Baptist. It's as though Mark doesn't have the time for precise details. He charges in. This is why Mark is often portrayed as a lion.

With John the Baptist's unkempt appearance and fiery, apocalyptic preaching, he gathered crowds of those acknowledging their sins and seeing forgiveness. In the first of perhaps many theological quandaries created by the presence of John the Baptist, he proclaimed a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The problem is created when Jesus comes forward to be baptized. Of course, for modern Christians (and even some ancient

Christians) the question naturally arises, why would Jesus need to be baptized as He is without sin? Such questions seem to be beyond the scope of Mark's quick narrative. They are left for others like Luke and Matthew to address, each in his own way. In the Gospel of John of course there is simply no baptism of Jesus at all, but only John the Baptist testifying to Jesus.

But in the Gospel of Mark, the first canonical gospel written, the reader is carried forward swiftly. John the Baptist proclaims, "One mightier than I is coming after me." This person will baptize with the Holy Spirit. In these short verses the stage is set for Jesus. Mark has no infancy narrative such as Matthew or Luke would have it. There is no dramatic, cosmic prologue attuned to the opening words of Genesis as the Gospel of John would have it. Instead, Mark charges in, immediately quoting Scripture before introducing John the Baptist. We readers are swept up in the story.

Perhaps, it is appropriate that we read these opening verses on the Second Sunday of Advent with our busy lives, shopping lists, and details to which we must attend. The gospel, and especially its opening, seems to lend itself to our frenetic pace. Still, there is the proclamation that something, someone, is coming. He is mightier than John the Baptist, mightier than our concerns for the season, mightier than our lists of things to get done. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and our lives will never be the same.

Living The Paschal Mystery

It's cliché now to talk about how busy the Christmas season is. Still, each year it approaches us as though we had no idea it was coming. Instead, the image of a pregnant mother is appropriate. Ready or not, the baby is coming! Those weeks or days immediately prior to the birth are spent "nesting," making last-minute preparations for the new life that will be in our midst. Once here, our lives are never the same. A child changes us.

The same is the case with Christmas. The infant child Jesus will change our worlds. Though we have had time to ponder the meaning of this birth, the knowledge that it is at least two weeks away can also give us comfort. We have many things to attend to before that day. As we go about our Christmas routines, checking off lists, ensuring we have purchased just the right gifts, delivering food and presents, we are reminded that this Child is coming. Ready or not.

How well are we making use of these Advent days? Have we spent time quietly reflecting, reading and praying over the daily scriptures? What questions does this Advent raise for you?

- Who are the "prophets" among us who proclaim the presence of God in our midst?
- How do we balance the gospel's seeming opposing messages of warning and hope?
- What are the wastelands of our community and society that we can transform into a "highway" for God's justice?
- How can we make the traditional and practical preparations for the coming Christmas holiday experiences of "grace?"



About Liturgy: Roaring Like A Lion

If you have looked closely at our Book of Gospels as well as the mosaics that grace the niches across the front of our church building, you will notice that they are decorated with four winged creatures. You'll find a human, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. These are traditional symbols of the four evangelists: Matthew (human), Mark (lion), Luke (bull), and John (eagle). The symbols refer to the four living creatures who surround the throne of God in Revelation 4: 6 – 7. Several early Christian writers assigned different pairings, but St. Jerome in the late fourth century gave us our current tradition. He did not provide specific reasons for the pairings, but some have connected each creature with how each gospel begins. Today's gospel from the beginning of Mark combines Isaiah's messenger "crying out in the desert" with John the Baptist proclaiming a message of repentance. This is why some will say that Mark is symbolized with the roaring of a lion. Matthew's gospel begins with the genealogy of Jesus, thus the human figure; Luke starts with Zechariah in the temple, where oxen or calves are sacrificed, thus the bull; and John's opening prologue of the Word coming

down from heaven reminds us of the soaring eagle high above.

These symbols are good mnemonics for remembering how each gospel begins, but perhaps there's a deeper meaning to these fantastical creatures. The living creatures around God's throne serve only one purpose: to constantly praise God night and day. The gospels are not history books about events in the past. They are the *living* Word that has but one message, that God is wildly in love with us. For those with faith to hear this message, the gospels cannot be entirely analyzed and explained simply by rational thought, because, like any relationship with a person we love, the gospels embody the irrational, beyond-what-we-can-image kind of love God has for us through the person of Jesus.

When we proclaim the gospels and listen to them with the ear of our heart with that kind of love in mind, we too might roar into the desert-places of our world the glad tidings that God is crazy in love with us.



***Brentwood Community Chorus
Christmas Concert Here This Friday,
December 15th***

Please mark your calendars for a wonderful Christmas Concert as the 85 voice Brentwood Community Chorus presents their annual Christmas Concert here this Friday, December 15th, 7:30 p.m. The program will feature classical as well as contemporary music of the

season. The concert will be followed by a festive reception in our parish hall. There is no charge to attend, however, there will be the opportunity for a free will donation. The concert will also include the use of instruments and handbells!



You are invited to join our Filipino Community for the traditional nine day novena of liturgies leading up to Christmas, beginning December 16th through the 24th at 5:00 a.m. each morning in the church, followed by a traditional Filipino Breakfast in our parish hall. The presider and homilist this year is **Fr. Ricky Pacoma** who is coming from the Philippines just for our parish! Ministries have been forming as well as sponsors for the breakfast each day. If you are interested in being a part of this wonderful cultural and spiritual event, please contact **Estrella Rusk, Financial Secretary**, in the Parish Office. While he is here, Fr. Ricky will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of his parents, **Manny and Leony Pacoma**, who are members of our parish.



Christmas Environment

Once again we invite you to be a part of a great tradition here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. Each year, parishioners contribute to the Christmas Environment Fund to provide the Christmas trees, garlands, wreaths, lights, poinsettias, and fabrics that are used to create an environment that says “Christmas!” for the entire Christmas Season. Donations may be made either in honor of/in memory of family, friends, loved ones. Please make sure to put the correct designation on the outside of your envelope. Christmas Flower envelopes are provided on the credenza at the back of the church, beneath the icon of St. Paul. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.



This year, The Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24th. Please note that there will be only one liturgy that morning at 10:00 a.m. The liturgies of Christmas begin that afternoon as follows:

Christmas Eve, December 24th 4:00 p.m. Eucharist for Families With Children

Beloved Carols, the Children tell the Story of Christmas, Holy Eucharist; Cantors and Organ

9:00 p.m. The Solemn Eucharist of Christmas Night

Procession, The Choir and Cantors, Beloved Carols (No Incense)

Christmas Day, December 25th

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

The Liturgies of Christmas Day, Procession, Beloved Carols, The Choir and Cantors (No Incense)

Thank
you

...to our dedicated volunteer parishioners who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church for the weekend and the coming week: **Carole Miller, Mency Osborne, Angela Bueno, Rose Salamanca, Heather Hatteroth, Steve Rojek, Jack Goncalves, Jun Bajet, and Emilia Freking.**

...to our faithful parishioners who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Virginia Noack and Harlan Young.**

...to **Heather Hatteroth** who joined me for last Saturday's monthly Antioch

Neighborhood Cleanup at Williamson Ranch, sponsored by our Antioch Police Department and the Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS).

...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:

Beth Enea, Melodye Costanza, Harlan Young, Sofie Zimmerman, Alicia Perez, Yvette Young, 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, Judy Quicho, Vangie Parrilla, Kathy Augusta and Beth Enea.**

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



Our St. Nicholas Festival Dinner Thank You

Once again, our Social Events Committee prepared and presented a stunning St. Nicholas Festival Dinner. The theme this year was “O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree” and tables were beautifully decorated in that theme. This event is always a sold out event and this year was no different. Guests were dressed in the spirit of the evening and the season, also adding a special atmosphere to the celebration. The evening began with guests being served appetizers and drinking champagne, wine, and beer, followed by a Winter Salad, Barbecued Tri Tip and Chicken Breast, Savory String Beans, Rice ala “Fara,” Bread and Butter, and a dessert created by **Catherine Vidaurri** consisting of a persimmon cake with olive oil drizzle/sour cream/pomegranate seeds/and walnuts. The Committee wishes to thank **Dave Costanza who donated the entire meal so that 100% of the proceeds would benefit the parish, Tomas Lucia, Carole Miller, Mark Costanza, Brian and Vicki McCoy, Al Cosce, Chad Curiel, Will Avitabile and Catherine Vidaurri;** the Table Hosts: **Samantha Peralto, Annette Pisani, Jeannine Ford, Jane Sharpe, Carmen Mayne, Cheryna Wright, Frances Rojek, MaryAnne Douville, Pam Confetti, Fran Barbanica, Sharon Simpson, Maryann**

Peddicord, Alicia Perez, Rachelle Martin, Monika Kauer, Marla Plurkowski, Melodye Costanza, Jan Degl'Innocenti, June Stuhldreier, and Ruth Beck; to the servers and helpers: **Emily Douville, Mary Ewing, MaryAnne Douville, Lorraine Lohmeier, Marla Plurkowski, Emily Plurkowski;** to the bartenders: **Marc Douville, Jose Palomino, and Clem Bushman;** to **Will Avitabile and Catherine Vidaurri** who donated the Guatemalan decaffeinated coffee; to **Brian and Vicki McCoy and Dave and Melodye Costanza** for donating the wine at each table; to the donors of the silent and live auction: **Reggie Desmond, Jane Sharpe, Carole Miller, Susan Batterton, Norma Villegas, Marla Plurkowski, Maryjo Mercurio, Bobbie Woodland, Rachelle Martin, Melodye and David Costanza, Dotty Graham, Jennifer Webster, and Pat Dunleavy;** and, finally, thank you to the Set Up Committee: the Knights of Columbus and **Rich Confetti;** Our Faithful Friends: **Faultless Cleaners, MaryAnne Douville for the table cloths;** the Members of the Social Events Committee and The Knights of Columbus; the Clean Up Committee and all those who stayed afterward to help with the clean up.

At the ringing of bells, **St. Nicholas** arrived and presided over the Silent and Live Auctions as well as the distribution of the door prizes. The story of his life in prose was read by **Bob Plurkowski** after St. Nicholas made his way to the front of the parish hall. This event marked the Twelfth Anniversary of my appointment as your Pastor. Thank you to all who made it so special.

