

**For The Bulletin Of
May 13, 2018**



From Father Robert

Many people associate snake charmers with Asia, in particular India and its surrounding region. The snake seems to be hypnotized by the music played by its handler. Crowds gather around, amazed at such a thing. How can this poisonous reptile be made so seemingly docile? The snake charmers are special, perhaps magical!

In today's gospel we hear an odd-sounding statement about those who are baptized; they will be able to pick up snakes, drink poison without being harmed, and heal the sick by laying hands on them. Aside from a few fundamentalist churches, virtually no Christians take this passage literally. And even those churches who handle snakes and practice faith healings do not drink poison. What are we to make of this? Though it might be easier to gloss over this strange verse, it will likely be in our minds as we hear it at today's liturgy. The notes in the New American Bible make clear that Mark's gospel ended at Chapter 16, verse 8. But it seems that some copyists did not like the ending to be one where all the disciples run away because they were afraid. And so we have a multiplicity of endings attested to by different manuscripts.

What we refer to as Mark 16:9-20 is one such ending, and it is certainly considered canonical, inspired, and authoritative, but it was not part of the "original" gospel. It was written by a later author, probably someone who wanted to address certain issues in their community.

Among other things, Mark 16:9-20 answers the question of the Gentile mission, or why there are so many Gentiles in a movement that was initially Jewish. The answer is that Jesus gave them the command, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." In a sense, this is Mark's version of Matthew's more elegant Great Commandment. The Mark gospel passage, and the gospel itself, concludes with an echo of 1 Timothy 3:16 and Luke 24:15, namely that Jesus was "taken up" into heaven. This episode answers the question, where is Jesus now? He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God.

And between this version of the great commission and the "taking up" into heaven we have the verse about snake handling, drinking poison, and healing the sick. This corresponds well to a story in Acts 28:3-9 about Paul spending the winter in Malta. There he was bitten by a snake but suffered no ill effects, and he healed their sick by laying hands on them. So this later ending to Mark's gospel seems to allude to this other New Testament story. And it is for this reason too that scholars believe the addition to Mark's gospel is late. More than anything else, the gospel today tells us that Jesus is with God in heaven. There is really nothing magical about that at all.



Living The Paschal Mystery

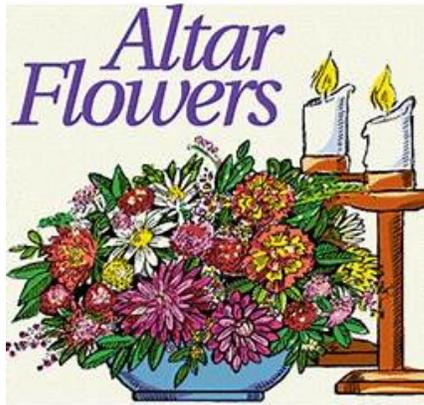
Some Bible stories can appear odd to modern readers. We have to remind ourselves that these vignettes were written about two thousand years ago by people who lived in the ancient world. Signs and wonders for them can sometimes seem like “magic” or “snake handling” today. For example, for one to claim today that one drank poison with no ill effect, or handled snakes without suffering harm, would more likely demonstrate one’s strangeness rather than one’s Christian identity. It can be challenging to discern theological meaning from some of the Bible’s stories. And yet, we are to do just that. We do not read the bible literally but we read it as thinking Christians, with the guidance of the church, our community of fellow believers. To assist us with this endeavor, the church provides us with translations of the Bible that include extensive notes. Part of our living the paschal mystery is to encounter the Scriptures as thinking adults. And we are grateful to have so many resources for us in today’s age for that very task.

As we come to these final days and weeks of the Easter Season, and especially today’s feast of the

Ascension, what questions does today’s liturgy and scriptures raise for you?

- Most of us are neither teachers nor preachers. So how do we fulfill Jesus’ commission to be His “witnesses” in our own “Jerusalem?”
- What emotions and feelings do you imagine the disciples experienced as they walked down the mountain and returned to Jerusalem?
- Who are Jesus’ “apostles” to the small, hidden places on earth?
- In Mark’s gospel, Jesus says that these “signs will accompany those who believe”: driving out demons, speaking new languages, picking up serpents with their hands, not being harmed by drinking “any deadly thing,” healing the sick. How do we figuratively experience these “signs?”





The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed to the Glory of God and **In Loving Memory of Fara Costanza by her daughter, Carole Miller**, and in loving memory of all the deceased mothers of our parish.

The Mary Project

Each year on Mother's Day, our parish responds to an invitation to support Birthright of Brentwood by contributing new or gently used baby items. Our bulletin has listed the items needed and each year, your response has been amazing. I trust it will be no less this year. I am deeply grateful to and on behalf of all of us wish to thank Kathleen Clarke for spearheading this project for many years. Thank you to all who respond so generously and to Mary and her family who transport all the donated items to Birthright of Brentwood.



Happy Mother's Day

Today we honor all mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, adoptive mothers, step mothers, those who have been like mothers to us, those unable to become mothers, mothers who have lost children, and mothers separated from us by distance, division, or death. A special blessing from our Book of Blessings will be given to all mothers at the conclusion of each liturgy this weekend. We also are making a donation to the Expansion Fund in your honor.



Pentecost

Next weekend, May 19-20, is the Feast of Pentecost and the conclusion of the Easter Season. I invite you to wear RED to enhance the environment and the spirit of our celebrations.

WE VOLUNTEERS

How blessed our parish is to have so many wonderful, dedicated volunteers who help in so many, varied ways. Our thanks to those who come early every Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Angela Bueno, Jun Bajet, Carole Miller, Mency Osborne, Al Cosce, Emilia Freking, Rose Salamanca, and Steve Rojek.**

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

...to **Mary Anne Douville** and **Faultless Cleaners** for all the dry cleaning, sewing and miscellaneous other tasks that are completed by her for the parish.

...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, Melodye Costanza, Harlan Young, Alicia Perez, Sharon

Cissell, Yvette Young, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza, Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during the weekend liturgies: **Don Benson, Mark Webster and Jose Perez.**



An Opportunity For Spiritual Direction

Dear Father Robert, I'm Virginia Johnson and you know me through the Police Department as the Crime Analyst there. You also knew my husband, Rick Johnson, who was a PD chaplain with you before he passed in 2010.

The reason I am writing is because I am currently in a Spiritual Direction Internship Program through the Bread of Life Ministries in Sacramento.

As a part of our internship, I am supposed to work with two directors once a month over the next year and a half. **Of course, as an intern, there will be no charge.**

If you know of anyone in your parish who might be interested in Spiritual Direction (and is willing to have a

director who is learning as an intern),
please let me know.

My personal email is:

rvjjohn@comcast.net

My cell phone is: 925-726-9379

If you would like me to send you more
information about the particular program
I am in, I will be happy to do so.

Also, here is a link to the Spiritual
Direction Program on the Bread of Life
website. http://breadoflife.org/our_spiritual_direction_internship0.aspx

Thank you so much!

Virginia

