

**For The Bulletin Of
November 11, 2018**



**THE 32ND SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME**

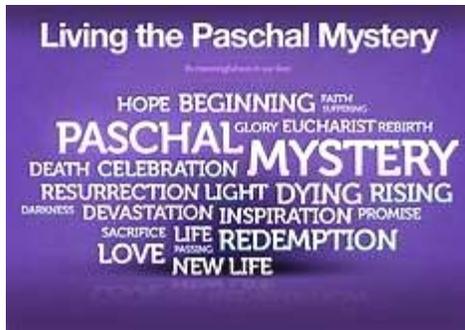
From Father Robert

Who are the four people you would like to have dinner with in heaven? Many of us might choose famous personalities from history. Others might choose long-lost relatives. Whomever we choose, these are people we really want to be with. We'd want to spend time with them and learn from their experiences. On the flip side, there are those who love going to dinner parties, being seen at dinner parties. They love to rub shoulders with the powerful, the movers and the shakers. They like their tickets to the cultural events, the opera, the symphony, baseball, and football games. This type of person who loves to be seen is a well-known character in literature. It seems even in Jesus' time these people were readily spotted. For Jesus, they become a target. Jesus is especially critical of this character type who also happens to be a religious leader who "devours the houses of widows." They pray for show, and enjoy the privileges that come with their office. Their condemnation will be severe. In many respects Jesus' critique of the religious authorities is echoed by Pope Francis' critique of religious authorities. Even

though we may not be religious authorities, the critique certainly applies to us as well. Is our going to church for show? Is it more cultural and societal than religious and spiritual?

In the second vignette in today's gospel Jesus criticizes the rich, who give large sums to make a show, and to attract attention to their giving. Even though their gifts were large, and undoubtedly made a difference, these people gave from their excess. It was pocket change, not the milk money. The poor widow, she whose house is being devoured by the religious authorities, gives everything she has. In other words, they who had much gave little of what they had. She who had little gave everything she had. What kind of givers are we? Do we give of ourselves or from our excess? Jesus' message is to give everything we have, without holding anything back. It's too easy to game the system, to make a show out of giving, to have our names on plaques or printed in newsletters. Today many charitable organizations and parishes even have giving clubs with various levels. And, of course, there is an entire industry that has been developed around giving and fundraising.

But Jesus is speaking of something more profound. Rather than the annual fundraising appeal that each of us participate in, or charitable contributions that are a hallmark of Christianity, we are summoned by Jesus to give our entire selves. Rather than write a check equivalent to a family dinner at a restaurant, Jesus wants us entirely, without reservation.



Living The Paschal Mystery

Our lives can be saturated with requests for giving, to the parish, Boy Scout fundraisers, Girl Scout cookies, band, sports teams, charitable causes, and more. These are all good deeds that are done from our sense of Christian charity. But there can be a temptation for some, especially religious leaders, to become enamored by the funds themselves and the kind of life they can provide. At that point hypocrisy can ensue, encouraging others to give without making a similar commitment ourselves. Christians in the early centuries of the church recognized this all too often and had a name for those who would use the name of Jesus to make a comfortable life for themselves: “Christ-monger.” We are probably familiar with the modern televangelist style Christ-monger. But rather than point the finger outward, it’s a good opportunity to examine ourselves and ask why we give, whether we give for pure charitable motives, or whether there might be some other hidden motives.

In the end, Jesus doesn’t want our money. He wants us. He wants a total personal commitment from each of us to be His follower. When that happens, we will not count the cost, which would be greater than any price we could pay, for we are His.

Within two weeks, the Liturgical Year of 2018 will come to a conclusion with the Feast of Christ the King. It is a good time for us individually and as a parish to reflect on the Year of Grace that this has been. How have I/we grown in the last year? How has the scriptures from the Gospel of Mark made a difference in my life? Have I grown in my discipleship? Do I understand more fully what it means to be a follower of Jesus? Has my commitment deepened?

- Have you ever met the “widow” of today’s gospel?
- What form has the “widow’s penny” taken in your own giving? When have you given from your “poverty” rather than your surplus?
- Have you ever been the recipient of someone’s “reckless” giving?
- Have you ever worked to obtain an honor or recognition that turned out to be less than satisfying?

About Liturgy: The Preparation of the Gifts

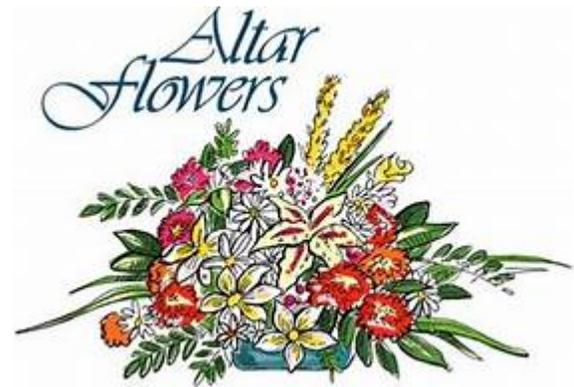
From the beginnings of the church, bread and wine have always been brought forward by the community in the celebration of the Eucharist. In these gatherings, members of the community simply placed bread and wine onto the table that served as the altar. As the church grew in number and the Eucharist came to be celebrated in public buildings, by the third century deacons assisted in gathering the gifts of the people, which included not only the bread and wine for the celebration of Eucharist, but also other goods such as food for the poor in the form of livestock, wheat, and grapes, as well as gifts to assist the work of the church,

such as candles and other crafted goods. However during the Middle Ages, as the practice of sharing in Communion by the faithful declined, this lavish procession of gifts also began to disappear. In place of presenting homemade bread and wine, unleavened hosts began to be used, and only enough wine for the clergy was needed as the cup was withheld from the community. As a result, a full procession of gifts fell out of use in favor of the priest and deacons placing the hosts and wine onto the altar themselves. The faithful's participation in this minimal preparation of gifts was reduced to a collection of money to be given to the poor and to fund the work of the church.

Vatican II restored the simple but significant procession of bread and wine coming from the members of the assembly. *The General Instruction to the Roman Missal* speaks of this restoration: "it is a praiseworthy practice for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful...Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as was once the case, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still keeps its spiritual efficacy and significance" (73).

Although it is secondary to the Liturgy of the Word that precedes it and the Liturgy of the Eucharist that follows it, we take great care with this procession of the gifts: the basket of food for the poor, the basket with our tithes and offerings, and the bread and wine. The meaning of this simple action is summarized in the words that accompany its reception by the presider at the altar. These are the "fruit of the earth" and the "fruit of the vine" that

God had first given to us. Now, transformed by the "work of our human hands," we give these earthly gifts back to God so that we might receive them again, transformed by the work of the Spirit into holy gifts for God's holy people. These gifts, along with the money that is collected, represent the sacrifice we have made and promise to make daily in our lives as a participation in the eternal sacrifice of Christ.



The Floral Arrangements at the Cross and the Ambo are placed to the Glory of God and in loving Memory of **Samuel and Agnes Rien**, the parents of Father Robert, his brothers, John and Doug, as they observe their anniversaries of death today and on November 13th.



Today and tomorrow, we celebrate Veterans' Day, remembering all those who have served in the armed forces in service to our country: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, National Guard, and

the Coast Guard. It is also important for us to remember that as we honor them and their service to be aware of the challenges many veterans face: posttraumatic stress disease, high suicide rates, addictions to alcohol and drugs and other hardships. Our city has the highest number of homeless veterans in Contra Costa County so we are very aware of how great the need is to care for them as well as to pray for them. Supporting “Stand Down On The Delta” is one way our parish, our Knights of Columbus continue to respond to meet this great need. Let us not forget them and all they have done in support of our country as well as their continuing need as a result of the trauma they have experienced.



Once again we invite to join us in one of our biggest outreaches each year by participating in our Annual Thanksgiving Food Baskets give-a-way. In today’s bulletin you will find the bright orange flyer listing the ingredients for a complete Thanksgiving Dinner to which our St. Vincent de Paul Society will add a turkey on the day of the give-a-way, Monday, November 19th. Our friends at Lucky have made it very easy with the wonderful display they have prepared right at the entrance to the store on Contra Loma. You can get each ingredient by walking around the display and picking out what you need to fill your box. It is also wonderful to provide

paper plates, napkins, and a festive paper tablecloth. I always include a Thanksgiving Card from us, extending best wishes and holiday greetings to the family who receives the basket I have prepared. **We ask you to bring your completed and decorated basket to any of the liturgies on the weekend of November 17th and 18th, the weekend before Thanksgiving** which is celebrated this year on Thursday, November 22nd.

Last year, there were more than 200 beautiful baskets donated to needy families. Thank you for joining us in this outreach that brings so much joy and happiness to those who are not as fortunate as we. It is also a special blessing to receive all of the baskets provided by our adopted parochial school of St. Peter Martyr who last year contributed 50 baskets! In this way, we together become the hands and the heart of Jesus embracing those in need. Thank you for what you will do for our sisters and brothers this Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving Day Liturgy
 Each year, one of the most beautiful liturgies celebrated in our church takes place on Thanksgiving Day which this year is Thursday, November 22nd. **Eucharist is celebrated at 9:00 a.m.** with beautiful music under the direction of our Director of Music/Organist/Artist-

in Residence, **Don Pearson, along with the Parish Choir and Cantors.** The Thanksgiving Homily/Reflection will be given by one of our parishioners which has become one of our revered traditions here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. You are also invited to bring the bread and wine for your Thanksgiving Dinner to be blessed. Remember: the very word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving." We have much for which to be grateful and this liturgy is a wonderful opportunity to do just that.

Right-wing Anti-Francis Strategy Exposed – National Catholic Reporter, November 2 – 15, 2018

Cardinal Marc Ouellet's concise and sharply worded [refutation](#) of the now infamous Viganò letter is the very point needed to burst the bubble of fabulist concoctions spinning around the Catholic far right. Those theories, which wouldn't pass for bad fiction, are easily unveiled as clumsy attempts to discredit the Francis papacy.

Ouellet's out-of-the-ordinary pronouncement is fitting for these extraordinary times. Its very existence signals with some finality the end of the pretense of unity with which the hierarchy in recent decades attempted to mask deep divisions in its ranks.

It also bares as pretenders those who previously claimed the high ground of "orthodoxy" as defined, in their world, by unquestioning loyalty to the pope and the magisterium. In fact, their orthodoxy extended only so far as their agreement with prevailing papal tendencies.

Ouellet dissected the [letter](#) by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, former nuncio to the United States, who claimed a widespread cover-up of allegations

against former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. The letter was quickly found to be an ideologically loaded screed with claims that Ouellet termed "incredible and absurd" as well as "unjust and unjustified."

The letter had been fashioned with the help of several right-wing figures who attempted to make the case for Viganò apparently so they could, in turn, use the case with the authority of a former nuncio. The whole mess has backfired.

Ouellet, however, speaks with legitimate authority as the prefect of the Congregation for Bishops. He is able to build his case from actual documents held by his congregation.

Further, Francis, the pope who ultimately dethroned McCarrick, has ordered a thorough [investigation](#) of all of the steps along McCarrick's rise through the hierarchical ranks as rumors swirled everywhere about his inappropriate sexual behavior. Those alleging cover-up may regret the investigation, since McCarrick's rise came about through appointments made by Pope John Paul II, who sent him to head the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey, and then the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, and finally the Washington Archdiocese.

Discrediting Viganò is the easy part. Conducting a credible investigation will be more difficult, requiring a degree of transparency within the Vatican that is perhaps unprecedented. But the crisis requires unprecedented responses.

Quite apart from the investigation, Ouellet's intervention was valuable in dealing with other oddities of the moment. The most telling line in Ouellet's response is the one that directly

addresses Viganò groupies in the United States: "In response to your unjust and unjustified attack on the facts, dear Viganò, I conclude therefore that the accusation is a political frame job lacking a real foundation."

Viganò was able to rattle the church with his fanciful claims and gather around him some of the more eccentric expressions of Catholicism in the United States because of the leadership vacuum created by both the deeply compromising damage of the clergy sex abuse scandal and the lingering effects of John Paul II's episcopal appointments. It is known that the late and sainted pope valued loyalty far more than leadership in his bishops. In the United States, that meant a national conference that once wrestled with major cultural issues was reduced to much internal squabbling over minutiae.

Other beneficiaries of that vacuum were lay forces on the right wing of the church that figured out how to manipulate the Catholic narrative in this country by funding a host of new nonprofit organizations with narrow political and ideological ambitions. NCR has begun [cataloging the money and the messages](#) in stories documenting the funding and interwoven interests of such groups. A connecting thread among them is a version of the Gospel unabashedly at the service of Republican Party politics and unbridled capitalism.

One of the brashest operators among this relatively new breed of Catholic lay involvement is Napa Institute founder Timothy Busch. He is a successful and wealthy entrepreneur who, when he is not tending to his boutique winery, high-end resorts and investment business, is bouncing about the church as if it were

an arcade and he was in search of a favorite game. His current corner of choice in the arcade is the Catholic University of America, where his name is affixed to the business school and where he conducts [conferences](#) on how to dress up libertarian economics in a Catholic costume.

We have been reporting on and monitoring the activities of Busch for several years because he is among the most aggressive of that cast of U.S. Catholics whose primary ambition, it seems, is to convince the rest of us that the Christian Gospel was actually promulgated to justify the most extreme expressions of American-style capitalism.

It used to be that in pursuit of those ends, he drew his bona fides from hobnobbing with just about anyone in fine silk and fancy lace beneath a red or purple skullcap. His ecclesiology embraced a clericalism of the highest order. He was the kind of hierarchical toady who had the money to court the highly placed and treat them to his institute's [summer gatherings](#) in the California wine country for bouts of what he called "in-your-face Catholicism."

But at some point this year, he got the memo that bishops didn't necessarily hold the keys to the kingdom, especially not hierarchs like his organization's "independent contractor," Archbishop John Nienstedt. Napa took in Nienstedt after he [resigned](#) as archbishop of St. Paul-Minneapolis for mishandling abuse cases and amid an investigation into allegations that he had engaged in sexual misconduct. The Napa Institute only recently [cut ties](#) with Nienstedt.

Busch is not alone among those who, having virtually ignored the sex abuse crisis for more than 30 years, now seize on the mess as an opportunity to smear the current pope and to plant the church of their dreams. It is a church, ironically, that would return us to the high notions of ordination and clericalism that led to the scandal in the first place.

Busch's new cause — reform — is a scattershot effort of misappropriated language ("We are the church!" the newly minted revolutionary declares); a staggeringly inappropriate model (he'll have respect for clerics "to the extent they are compliant with normal business acumen and behavior"); wrapped in a juvenile tantrum vowing anarchy (he will end this scandal "regardless of what civil and canon law says"). And he is a civil lawyer. And, of course, he won't do anything of the sort.

What he will do is host, as he did [recently in Washington](#), a collection of the newly emboldened, and take as his lead the already discredited.

"Viganò has given us an agenda," declared Busch, "We need to follow those leads and push that forward."

One of the participants, Patrick Lencioni, founder of Amazing Parish, which provides consulting services for parishes, declared, "The moral authority of Pope Francis has been greatly tarnished and damaged, no doubt." Amazing arrogance, and God help the parishes that follow that lead.

Another, the equally unfiltered Bishop Robert Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin, one-upped Lencioni when he postulated that the problem today is that "there is

too much talk of love in the church and too little hatred of evil."

Morlino and a range of other speakers at Busch's reform conference are convinced that the sex abuse crisis is rooted in clerical homosexuality, which, in turn, justifies unleashing torrents of ugly and perfectly inane assertions about members of the LGBT community within the church and at large.

Of course, it is the widely held view of experts, some of whom conducted a survey paid for by the bishops, and the view as well of members of the clerical ranks with impressive psychological and medical training, that the root of the crisis is not gayness. It is, rather, an illness that was allowed to flourish in the church because of the deceit and cover-up of a clerical culture desperately in need of fundamental reform.

The leadership vacuum is sucking into itself realms of Catholic oddities and peculiarities that have accumulated over recent decades as the community lives through a fundamental transition. Old and unsustainable parochial structures and unrealistic expectations of the ordained and vowed state are fading. We have reached bedrock. At that level, the questions are no less essential than what it means today to be ordained and what it means to be Catholic.

The work ahead is too serious and critical to be left to the charlatans and religious carny barkers who have, all along, been a large part of the problem. We are glad to see that institutions such as [Georgetown University](#) and [Fordham University](#) are holding open discussions newly exploring ways of dealing with the scandal. We'll be reporting more on

those developments in the coming weeks.

The work ahead will require more than bluster and misappropriated slogans. It will require accessing the deepest levels of our sacramental tradition. It will require the imposition of unprecedented accountability from bishops. It will also require bishops with the will to confront the toughest questions about how the clerical culture arrived at this point.

*A version of this story appeared in the [Nov 2-15, 2018](#) print issue under the headline: *Right-wing anti-Francis strategy exposed.**



Heartfelt thanks to those who arrived early each Saturday morning to clean the church and parish hall: **Alfred Madoshi, Jun Bajet, Al Cosce, Mency Osborne, Jean Rogers, Rose Salamanca, and Carole Miller.**

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...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta and Sherry Webb.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who kept watch over our vehicles during the All Saints Day evening Liturgy: **Steve Rojek** and the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Dave Simpson.**