

## For The Bulletin Of December 9, 2018



### *From Father Robert*

After his introductory material, including the infancy narratives in Chapters 1 and 2, Luke picks up the gospel story he inherited from Mark. That is, today's reading from Luke is based on the opening verses of the Gospel of Mark with important additions. Beginning with John the Baptist's preaching, Luke situates the Christ-event in a particular historical time and place, for, as he tells us in Acts 26:26, these things did not happen in a corner! And it is precisely because of Luke's desire to give us the historical details that scholars can be fairly confident of their dating. Luke cites both civil and religious leaders to situate the Christ-event in history. The Emperor Tiberius, who reigned from AD 14 to 36, succeeded Caesar Augustus, which means that the fifteenth year of Tiberius's reign could be anywhere from AD 27 to 29 depending upon how one counts the years. This is the most specific date given by Luke in this passage; the other figures named by Luke all fall within a wider range than that. For example, Pontius Pilate served from AD 26 to 36.

The historical details do much for the modern Christian (and ancient Christian for that matter) in demonstrating that

Jesus was a historical figure. The Christ-event is not a mere myth like so many other Greek and Roman tales. Jesus was a living, breathing human being Who lived in the Roman Empire in the province of Judea. These things did not happen in a corner!

Once the events are situated in their historical context, Luke continues the narrative with the story about John the Baptist, whose birth is recounted in the first chapter. There we hear the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth having a child even though Elizabeth is barren. It is Luke who essentially makes John a cousin of Jesus, a detail found nowhere else in the New Testament. The appellation of John as "son of Zechariah" (Luke 3:2) is a nod to the story in the first chapter.

These details alone – the historical setting and the familial relationship between John and Jesus – tell us we are dealing with a unique author who has his own theological insights to convey. Luke is a gifted storyteller, theologian, and evangelist. We do well to read his story carefully.



### *Living The Paschal Mystery*

Christians believe in the person of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus walked this earth, breathed the air, enjoyed the sunshine, had meaningful relationships, and ultimately suffered death at the hands of the state. His story

really happened: it is not a myth, make believe, or something we simply tell children so they will be nice to one another. Luke is an evangelist who gives us the details, which allow scholars to situate the life of Jesus in a historical context. The names of civil and religious leaders like Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, and others throughout the gospel are known by ancient pagan sources as well. They form something of an anchor or peg upon which to hang a timeline for Jesus and His ministry. In the language of another gospel, this is the story of the Word made flesh in a given time and place.

Jesus lived in a province ruled by Rome and was executed by that ruling power. Though put to death by the state He was raised up by God, giving us the paschal mystery (the Life, Death, and Resurrection). On this Second Sunday of Advent we pause to reflect on Jesus' historical circumstances and our own, knowing that death is not the end.

How are you doing with your Advent resolutions/decisions? It isn't too late to make them if you have not done so already. How are you making this Advent come alive for you in a way you have never done before?

- As we prepare the way for Jesus to be born anew into our hearts this Christmas, what are the valleys we are called to fill in? Which mountains within our lives (pride, greed, anger) must be made low?
- In his letter to the Philippians St. Paul writes, "and this is my prayer: that your love may

increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value." How might we fulfill that prayer within our own lives?

- Both John and Jesus experience a period of time in the desert before taking on their public ministry. Where might you cultivate desert places in your life where you go to be with God in solitude and prayer?
- As a parish how might we prepare to welcome with love and joy the people who will join our parish community for the celebration of Christmas?



### ***The Memorial Funeral Liturgy For Bernadette Cox***

You are cordially invited to attend the Memorial Funeral Liturgy for Bernadette Cox, the beloved wife of Tim Cox, our Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus, this coming Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. in the church, followed by a Reception in the parish hall. The Committal will take place at Holy Cross Cemetery that afternoon at 2:00 p.m.



You are invited to join the members of our Filipino Community in the annual celebration of Simbang Gabi, a nine day celebration of Liturgies in preparation for the Christmas Feast. The community will gather each morning at 5:00 a.m. from December 16<sup>th</sup> through Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>. Following each liturgy, a traditional breakfast will be served in the parish hall. Members of our Filipino Community have taken responsibility to provide volunteers for all the liturgical ministries: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Musicians, Choir, Cantors as well as Sponsors for the breakfast. At the invitation of **Amante and Gloria Asuncion, Fr. Francis** will be coming from Australia to preside and preach for each day's liturgy. All are welcome!



### ***Christmas Environment***

You are invited to become a part of a great tradition in our parish of providing the Christmas Environment. Each year our Art & Environment Committee prepares an appropriate and beautiful setting for the Christmas Feast. The wreathes, candles, garlands, lights, trees, panels of cloth at the Icons, the artwork, and the poinsettias all create an

environment that says “Christmas!” for the entire Christmas/Epiphany Season. Preparation of the Christmas environment begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> and continues each day of that week until the environment is completely installed. Envelopes to make your contribution to provide for the Christmas Environment have been placed in the monthly envelope pack as well as on the credenza and may be made either In Honor of or in Loving Memory of a loved one, family member, or friend. Thank you for your generous support that makes our Christmas Environment possible.

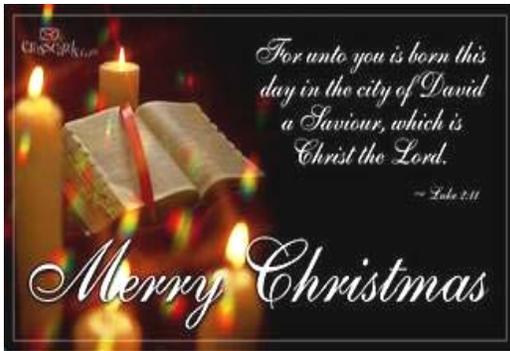


### ***Christmas Liturgies***

#### **Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve**

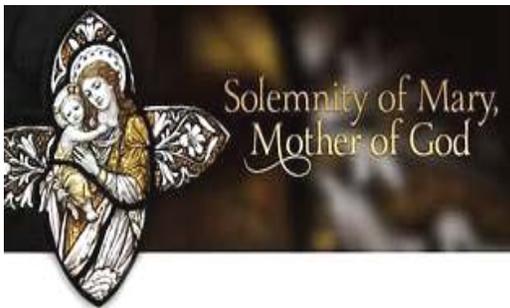
**4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist** – *Cantors and Organ, Beloved Carols, The Children Tell The Story of Christmas; Father Robert presides.*

**9:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist** – *The Parish Choir and Organ, Beloved Carols (No Incense), Father Robert and Father Moses*



**Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day, The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord**

**9:00 and 11:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist Procession, The Parish Choir and Cantors, Organ, (No Incense); Father Robert and Father Moses**



**Monday, December 31, 2018, 4:00 p.m., The Vigil Liturgy for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**  
*Organ and Cantor*

**Tuesday, January 1, 2019, The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**  
**11:00 a.m. Festive Holy Eucharist, Procession, Organ and Parish Choir**



We are deeply grateful to all those who volunteer in any way to help our parish community with its mission: to those who arrive very early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Rose Salamanca, Dora Pesapane, Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Jean Rogers, Emilia Freking, Al Cosce, and Carole Miller;** ...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Harlan Young, and Fr. Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** 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, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, 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, Rowena Cayaban, Sharon Cissell, Yvette Young, Harlan 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 (Lead), Carole Miller, Belen Farin, Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta and Sherry Webb.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who kept watch over our vehicles during the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Dave Simpson and Tony Gumina.**



### ***Knights of Columbus Firefighter of the Year Award***

On Tuesday, November 13th the St. Ignatius of Antioch Knights of Columbus presented their annual award and recognition to the Contra Costa Firefighter of the Year. The ceremony was held in the county supervisors' chambers.

Firefighter Captain Elia Alailima was presented an award by the county for his 30 years of total dedication and service to Contra Costa County. Along with this prestigious award, our very own Fire Chaplain and Brother Knight Fr. Robert and retired Contra Costa Fire District Battalion Chief and Brother Knight Don Benson presented a plaque to Captain Alailima from the Knights. In Fr. Robert's presentation, he noted the total commitment of Captain Elia's years of service. Fr. Robert also presented a

plaque to Fire Chief Jeff Carman for his dedication and service and appreciation from the religious community of East Contra Costa.

In attendance at this ceremony were Capt. Alailima's wife Carol, all the county supervisors and staff, along with a very large contingency of Contra Costa Firefighters, Knights of Columbus and spectators.

## **Advent offers chance to rediscover tradition, free from ideologues**

Dec 4, 2018

by NCR Editorial Staff

Through the mists of two millennia the large patterns become the scholars' certainties. Jesus as "the centerpiece binding together Israel and the church" is clear in our time as one contemplates the infant narratives.

The image is Fr. Raymond Brown's in his magnificent *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Clear, too, are the "bridges," as Brown puts it, constructed by the Evangelist Luke, one tying the figures representing Israel in the narrative to the infant and the corresponding bridge, which "the Jesus of the Gospels comes across ... to instruct the Twelve and prepare them for the coming Spirit."

In such certainties — our connections to ancient traditions as well as to the fathomless future — lies our solace and comfort. In a year and on the heels of several decades that we in the Catholic community have just experienced, however, such certainty, which maintains in the long view, is all but

overwhelmed in the circumstance of the moment.

Leave the standard images of the crib to our children. Adults in the Catholic community this year might ponder the crib as a memorial to all the innocents in our era and within our church, whose souls have been shattered by the violence of sexual abuse, whose families have been forever shaken and altered by the revelations of cover-up. The clarity of the long view has been clouded for us. We stand, wayfarers, wondering which next steps to take and how to avoid further danger.

### **A steady hand**

Three recently published essays by Jewish writers might provide a steady hand as many of us reel under the weight of betrayal and scandal, and wonder just what it means, in this moment in the 21st century, to be Catholic.

It is fascinating that, while not romanticizing the church or its historic and present sins, members of a community so long despised by Catholics also see in us wonderfully redemptive and redeeming characteristics. Menachem Wecker's appreciation of the beauty of our art and architecture and the transcendent qualities of our symbols and rituals draws close to our understanding of the Incarnation and the importance of our sacramental life.

Julia Lieblich, in a complex story of deep personal connection as well as pain, described the powerful allure of our personal pieties and the comfort found through the unshakeable faith her "family" had in Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Rabbi James Rudin has met up close the principal actors who have dominated the stage in the contemporary Catholic drama. He has known, too, many of the layers that are sometimes hidden in the weave of the larger community. And he comes away with profound admiration for women religious and for the church's long social justice tradition. He pleads that the church not lose its commitment to that tradition.

Claiming no scientific weight to this limited "survey" — a request to outsiders profoundly invested in their own tradition to give their informed impressions of ours — it is fascinating nonetheless to discover what about us they consider appealing.

The beauty of our art and traditions; the power of our devotions; the strength of our ministries and, especially, of the women who convey the heart of the Gospel into all corners of the world.

What they see and appreciate had nothing to do with what some in the Catholic community spend so much time and energy fighting about — an obsession with abortion, contraception, the divorced and remarried and resistance to accepting LGBT Catholics as fully functioning, without qualification, members.

One suspects that their view of us is not uncommon, that our "identity" as a community of the people of God has little to do with hierarchy-fueled fights that feed a base that enjoys the conflict.

### **Our Catholic identity**

Too many of us have tacitly conceded that our identity is, indeed, wrapped up in that tick list of "hot button" issues that generates so much of what passes in the

wider culture as the Catholic conversation.

We have been wittingly or otherwise persuaded that such a list, which trivializes weighty issues, constitutes a comprehensive definition of "orthodox" Catholicism. "Orthodox" has about it a ring of ancient authenticity. But the orthodoxy of the current era is anything but ancient. It is a construct of rigorists, largely developed in a U.S. context that narrows the richness of Catholic tradition to the equivalent of conservative political talking points. Those points, providing the bona fides of "orthodoxy," relieve the adherents of responsibility for the remainder — nay, the major portion — of authentic Catholic teaching. The bulk of the teaching is given refuge and partitioned off as a matter of "prudential judgment."

It is faux orthodoxy and has little to do with authentic tradition. It is grounded in a need for certainty that becomes its own obstacle to faith. We are far more than a punch list of political talking points.

### **Season of expectation**

This season of expectation, of wonder at the possibility of God with and among us, is a perfect time to sink into that authentic tradition and to contemplate where we've gone off track. How did we get to this point of aberration where the clergy culture itself has become the church's greatest scandal, and our identity as a people of God could be so crimped and co-opted by religious ideologues?

Those two aberrant strains originate from the same stock. "[O]f all the doctrines of the church Christology is the one most used to suppress and

exclude women," writes theologian Sr. Elizabeth Johnson in *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. "At its root the difficulty lies in the fact that Christology in its story, symbol and doctrine has been assimilated to the patriarchal world view, with the result that its liberating dynamic has been twisted into justification for domination."

That's a sophisticated way of saying that our God, our religious practices, our doctrines have all been imagined and constructed over centuries by celibate men in a secretive culture shaped "according to the model of the patriarchal household and then to the model of the empire."

The infrastructure of the empire, in our case, is crumbling. The sense of security and certainty we once may have felt in that form of hierarchy and the all-male images of God is as vaporous as the eternal rule of a first-century Herod.

If only we were able to crawl through the millennial mist and into the scene, and cough on the dust of travel, and wonder how to comfort the aches and insecurity of a first-century pregnancy. If we had to deal with the doubts and fears of a father who, we are told, is tugged between the skeptical glances of his culture and his dreamed instructions from on high, perhaps we could find an alternative comfort and security for our own time. It is in the confusion and uncertainty and paradoxes of that event, long before the community understood the Christ in that Jesus moment, that we might take our comfort today.



*From Marla Plurkowski...*

A big thank you to all the parishioners who came and celebrated St. Nicholas Day with us last Saturday night. It was a wonderful evening honoring this very special saint!

The delicious dinner was prepared by **Dave Costazna and his wonderful crew of Brian and Vicki McCoy, Carole Miller, Tomas Lucia, Mark Costanza, Chad Curiel, Catherine Vidaurri, Will Avitabile and Al Cosce.** Guests enjoyed a wonderful winter salad, tri tip steak, delicious chicken, Fara's green beans, rice pilaf and cherry topped cheesecake!

The theme of the evening was "The Stockings Were Hung" and the table hostesses were very creative and made their tables so beautiful and unique! Thank you to the table hostesses: **Annette Pisani, Jeannine Ford, Kathy Augusta, Jane Sharpe, Carmen Mayne, Anna Tellez, Frances Rojek, Maryann Peddicord, Alicia Perez, MaryAnne Douville, Pam Confetti, Fran Barbanica, Sharon Simpson, Rachelle Martin, Melodye Costanza, Reggia Desmond, June Stuhlreyer, Kathleen Clarke and Marla Plurkowski.** The hall was transformed into a beautiful dining room!

A very special thank you to the helpers and servers who did a great job. Thank

you to **Emily Douville, Mary Ewing, Lesley Eubanks, Emily Plurkowski, Gaby Rivas, Lorraine Lohmeier and MaryAnne Douville.** And a big thank you to our hard working bartenders who kept the guests very happy! Thank you to **Clem Bushman, Marc Douville and Steve Rojek.**

The evening was filled with a fun musical stocking game, a 50/50 raffle, silent auction, a lightening stocking auction, live auction and special door prizes. All of this was possible because of the generous donations from **Kathleen Clarke, June Stuhlreyer, Carole Miller, Clem Bushman, Melodye Costanza, Jerry Britton, Rachelle Martin, Reggia Desmond, Jane Sharpe, Barbara Jackson, Robert & Alicia Solano, Marla Plurkowski, Olivia & Marty Yongue, Pat Mattern, Zulmira Silveira, Steve & Frances Rojek and Catherine Vidaurri.** Many guests went home with some very special Christmas gifts!!

Thank you to **Chip Sharpe** who shared his talent by singing a special song, "What Saint is This?" that introduced the story of St. Nicholas to the guests. Also thank you to **Jim Peddicord** who shared his audio equipment with us. And, of course, a huge thank you to **Father Robert...AKA... St. Nicholas** who brought to life for us this wonderful loving saint. He also made the evening so much fun, especially the live auction!

This event takes a lot of volunteers helping in so many ways. Thank you to **Rich Confetti, David Simpson, Bob Plurkowski, Don Benson, Clem Bushman** who set up the hall and to **Diane Hack, Lorraine Lohmeier, Chip Sharpe, Jane Sharpe, Marla**

**Plurkowski, Emily Douville, Bobbie Woodland and Pat Britton for decorating. Thank you to Susan Batterton** for designing and printing the flyers and tickets.

The St. Ignatius of Antioch Social Events Committee along with the Knights of Columbus would like to again say THANK YOU to those who attended and supported our St. Nicholas Dinner. This year was our 13<sup>th</sup> annual St. Nicholas dinner and it continues to be a fun-filled evening with a very special theme of love and giving.

