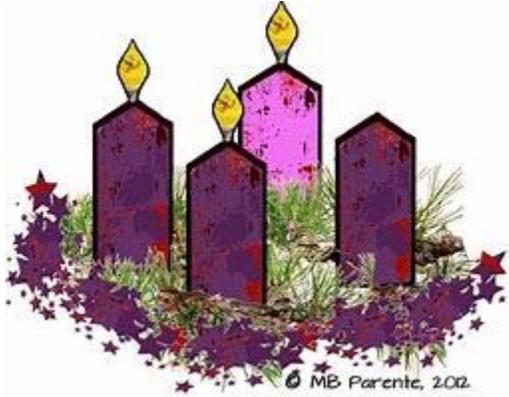


For The Bulletin Of December 16, 2018



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From Father Robert

We hear the preaching of John the Baptist today, the Third Sunday of Advent. We are moving toward the imminent coming of the Son of Man. John would have been a fine preacher of the fire and brimstone variety, motivating his audience to action. Three times different groups ask him: “What should we do?” And three times John has an answer founded in justice and mercy. Follow the rules; share with those who have not. This is fairly simple and straightforward advice. And because of it he was thought to be the Messiah.

We can almost feel the crowd’s anticipation and excitement. Here is someone who is preaching justice and mercy. By the crowd’s ready reception of this message we might imagine that justice and mercy were in short supply. Soldiers might have taken more than their due, as did the tax collectors. Mercy, giving another a cloak when you have two, seems to have been wanting. The reception of the message tells us something about the crowds, who likely were on the lower economic rungs of society.

Furthermore, John tells them that this is only the beginning. Another is coming. Rather than a message of peace, John tells them that the One to come bears a winnowing fan. Though today many might not be familiar with the term, a winnowing fan was a fork-like shovel. The winnower used the fan to throw wheat grains into the air. The heavy kernels would fall to the ground and the lighter chaff would be blown away, gathered up, and burned. John the Baptist used this vivid image to speak of what the “one who is to come” would do.

Being burned in an “unquenchable fire” seems a distant image from the “lilies of the field,” that Luke will narrate later in his gospel. This might cause us to wonder, were John’s expectations met? Perhaps in his fire-and-brimstone preaching he was hoping for a fiery judgment. And this could be the reason he sent messengers to Jesus later in the gospel asking Him, “Are You the One Who is to come, or should we look for another?” John’s own expectation of a Messiah who would bring judgment, wrath, and an “unquenchable fire” might not have been met by Jesus. John would not be the first to have dashed expectations and hopes, Jesus has another way. Still, John’s essential message of practicing justice and mercy are good ways to prepare for Christ’s coming.

Living The Paschal Mystery

John the Baptist’s simple message of justice and mercy has global ramifications in the modern world. Though it’s easy to glance backward and recognize the challenges faced by those in the ancient world, John’s message is for us too. There are those today who are cheated out of wages and or benefits by others who game the system. Many of us might even benefit (intentionally or not) from a system that encourages unjust practices when it comes to labor conditions

or wages and benefits. Those in the developed world have the equivalent of multiple cloaks while many throughout the world go without. While it might be rare for us to see outright pilfering of wages, more often we can encounter poor working conditions, a minimum wage that requires 120 hours of work each week to support a family, or cheap goods whose real costs are borne an ocean away. What are the values that guide our lives? How are we to live in preparation for the coming of the Son of Man? Justice and mercy are a sure foundation.

How is Advent going for you? Have you fully entered into this brief season of longing, hoping, expecting, and waiting? What have you done to make the most of this time of preparation?

- The prophet Zephaniah tells us “The Lord, your God, is in your midst.” How have you experienced God in your midst this past week?
- In today’s second reading, St. Paul exhorts us, “Have no anxiety at all.” What anxieties are you dealing with right now in your life? How might you give these anxieties over to God?
- In today’s gospel the people ask John the Baptist, “What should we do?” As you enter into the final nine days of Advent, what is one action you might take to serve Jesus’ mission of mercy and justice?
- This is “Gaudete Sunday,” a Sunday for joy even as we continue the season of Advent preparing our hearts and minds for Christmas. Are there Christmas preparations that are

causing you stress and worry? Can you trade them in or let go of them in order to allow room for more joy?



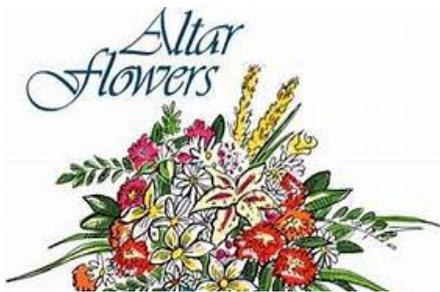
About Liturgy: No Sourpusses Allowed!

In “Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis quotes Pope John XXIII’s speech at the opening of Vatican II and his statement that we must disagree with “those prophets of doom” who see nothing hopeful in the world. Then Francis says, “One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, “sourpusses.” You have to love a pope that uses the word “sourpusses” in an official papal document! Earlier that year, in one of his intimate daily Eucharist homilies at the Vatican’s Casa Santa Marta, Francis said “We can’t proclaim Jesus with funeral faces” (May 31, 2013). And still again at an earlier homily, “Sometimes these sad-looking Christians’ faces have more in common with pickled peppers than the joy of having a beautiful life” (May 10, 2013).

I wonder if someone took a picture of our assembly at worship on Sunday, would the pope’s words ring true? Would you see sourpusses and pickled peppers in the congregation? I know I have at many of the liturgies I’ve either been present for or even for which I’ve presided...and if truth be told, there are times when I was probably one of those pickled peppers! When we get so focused on the details of doing the liturgy

and getting all just right, sometimes we can look like those kind of sad funeral faced Christians. We don't mean to, but oftentimes our faces don't match what we're trying to communicate, that is, glad tidings and good news.

Pope Francis's entire pontificate has been marked by joy. It is one of the four behaviors, the pope says, by which Christians will be known. (The other three are love, harmony and suffering.) The pope also says that the Spirit is the "author of joy, creator of joy" and this joy of the Spirit "gives us true Christian freedom" (May 31, 2013.) Today of all days, Gaudete "Rejoice" Sunday, we must keep the sourpusses and prophets of doom in ourselves at bay. As you enter into worship today pray to the Spirit to free you from any anxiety, worry or sadness that might dampen the good news you want to communicate through your words and actions. Your prayer might even be a simple refrain from today's second reading: "Rejoice in the Lord always! I shall say it again: rejoice!"



The Floral Arrangement at the Altar is placed to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Fara Costanza by her daughter, Carole Miller.



Beginning this morning at 5:00 a.m. the members of our Filipino Community began the nine day celebration of Eucharistic liturgies leading up to the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, Christmas. All members of the parish and friends are invited to be with them. We especially welcome Father Francis from the Philippines who is the Presider and Homilist for this year's observance. Special thanks to all those who have volunteered for all the various liturgical ministries that support the liturgy as well as those who have organized both the liturgies and the breakfasts that follow. The liturgies will continue each day, from today through December 24th.



Our Christmas Environment

We invite you to become a part of a wonderful Christmas tradition by supporting the creation of our Christmas Environment. The wreathes, garlands, Christmas Trees, panels of festive cloth at each of the Icons, the art work, the cascade of lights and stars, the fresh poinsettias, and all the lights would not be possible without your generosity. You may make a contribution to the Christmas Environment either In Honor Of/In Memory of a loved one. Envelopes were mailed in my Christmas Letter as well

as being available on the credenza. All contributions will be acknowledged in the bulletins of the Christmas Season. Thank you for helping us to create an environment that says “Christmas” for the entire Christmas Season.



Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24

4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist – *The Children tell the story of Christmas; Cantor and Organ.*

9:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist – *Procession, Incense, The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ.*

Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25

9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist – *Procession, The Parish Choir Cantors, and Organ*

The Feast of the Holy Family, Saturday December 29 and Sunday December 30

Saturday 4:00 p.m. Vigil Eucharist

Sunday 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist

New Year’s Eve, The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, December 31

4:00 p.m. Vigil Eucharist

New Year’s Day, The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, 2019

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist – *Procession, The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ*



The Feast of the Epiphany

Saturday, January 5, 2019, Vigil Eucharist, 4:00 p.m. *Procession of the Three Kings*

Sunday, January 6, 2019, 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. *Procession of the Three Kings*

We invite you to be a part of the liturgies of the Epiphany by signing up to be one of the Three Kings. Please see the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board outside the sacristy. Royal Garments will be provided!



Saturday, January 12, 2019, 4:00 p.m. Vigil Eucharist – *Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite*

Sunday, January 13, 2019

**8:00 and 10:00 a.m. – Renewal of
Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite**

Today's liturgies mark the conclusion of the Christmas Season.



How grateful we are to all those who offer themselves in service to the parish in so many ways: ...to those who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean the church and parish hall: **Jun Bajet, Al Cosce, Alfred Madoshi, Jean Rogers, Angela Bueno, and Carole Miller**; to those volunteers who helped this week with the Christmas Letter mailer, a huge thank you: **Bernice Campbell, Carol Fanfa, Clem Bushman, Marguerite Bloomfield, Mena Macedo, Bobbie Ocang, Vangie Parrilla, Geri Chiechi and Carole Miller.**

...to our Environment Committee volunteers who came in to make some additions to our Advent environment this week: **Tom & Stevie Catchings, Tony & Claudia Gumina, Rich Confetti and Don Benson.**

...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:

Melodye Costanza, Rowena Cayaban, Alicia Perez, 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, 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, Jose Perez and Steve Rojek.**

*Christmas Greetings From
Father Tom Bonacci, CP*

Dear Friends,

I was walking down the street in the City on a beautiful Fall day. The Sun was shining almost as if it was smiling; the cool breeze was a blessing. People were caught up in the hustle and bustle of another busy work day. I was between jobs taking advantage of a few free hours I had to explore some bookstores and savor some coffee in the nearby cafes. It was one of those perfect days with the best yet to come.

Suddenly, I heard what I thought sounded like music. Someone was singing at the top of their lungs. I dashed across the street to take in the music. There she was, an elderly

woman, bellowing out some more than familiar tunes. She was smiling away and swaying in the breeze. She was no professional. She sang with gusto in a profoundly off-key way. A crowd started to gather and, to my surprise, everyone started singing with her. Inspired by her generosity, her off-key way of singing became something beautiful to hear. This was one of those days that got better with every passing moment.

I turned to continue my journey to an old bookstore when, to my astonishment, I saw a man dancing to the singing. I suppose his dancing would not be so remarkable except for the fact he had one leg. There he was with his crutch dancing up a storm as some people clapped and joined in what was now turning into a festival. I am mesmerized by people who have the courage to do what they do when life seems so cruel and hard. A singing homeless lady and a one-legged dancer teamed up with one another to bring joy and peace to some weary people on a street corner for no other reason than they could.

I hope you remember you can always be a gift to others whenever you so desire. On sunny days or in gloomy times, give the gift of yourself no matter how off-key you might think you are. Never let your supposed short-comings or handicaps keep you from giving you to others. We need the gift of you. We need the gift of one another.

In this Season when we remember the Angels who sang and danced over the birth of a homeless child, may you come singing and dancing into the lives of others. Announce the glad tidings of great joy that can only come from the treasure chest of your heart. The greatest gift you will ever give is the gift of you. For all the times you

blessed others with the gift of you, thanks. For all the time you blessed me, bless you.

Peacefully,

Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.

Parish Hosts Holiday Dinner at Los Medanos Village

Los Medanos Village is a 71 unit affordable housing unit in Pittsburg. Contra Costa Interfaith Housing provides case management and coordinates a highly successful after school homework program for the children. **Pat Kramer** of our parish is a long-time volunteer in this program.

On Wednesday, December 5th, a group of parishioners purchased, prepared and served a delicious meal as part of the apartment's annual holiday party. The menu included a fresh green salad with fresh blueberries, tomatoes, beets, and mozzarella bits for toppings, barbecued tri-tip, scalloped potatoes, roasted vegetables (including broccoli and green beans from the parish garden), delicious homemade butternut squash soup and wonderful homemade chocolate chip cookies and apple crisp for dessert. Sparkling apple cider rounded out the dinner.

In addition to the dinner, gift raffles, a fast paced bingo session and a children's craft activity highlighted the festivities.

A Letter of Thanks from Contra Costa Interfaith Housing

Thank you to everyone for a wonderful Holiday Party at the Los Medanos Village Apartments!

The food was absolutely delicious—thank you to St. Ignatius of Antioch Church for cooking a fabulous feast (Brian, Catherine, Will, Vicki and Lorraine.) The tri-tip, potatoes, pumpkin soup and vegetable

dishes were amazing and the desserts were perfect. Those chocolate chip cookies were gone in no time--never enough cookies, right? I personally loved the apple crisp. Everyone went home with a full and happy tummy. EVERYONE at CCIH is honoured by the support and love we receive from St. Ignatius of Antioch. Thank you for helping us stabilize families in the East County area.

Thank you to an amazing group of students from Pittsburg High School--you were amazing with the children and you can serve hot apple cider with the best of them! Thank you for your flexibility and your willingness to roll up your sleeves to help where needed!

Thank you to RCD and Olivia King for sponsoring the wonderful raffle and BINGO prizes!

Lastly, thank you to the wonderful residents of Los Medanos Village. You are a lovely community to serve. We wish you a wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Gloria Bertolozzi
Volunteer and Outreach Manager
Contra Costa Interfaith Housing