

For The Bulletin Of December 23, 2018



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From Father Robert

We are a day away from the Feast of Christmas as we bring this year's Season of Advent to a conclusion. This season is especially short and can make for a hectic, frenetic pace as we consider all that needs to happen before the holiday. Some are preparing their homes to receive guests and family from a distance, others are preparing meals, and many are doing both. Still others are setting out on their travels to see loved ones during these holy days. We are busy with many tasks.

We might imagine Mary and Elizabeth sharing these feelings in today's gospel from Luke. Mary visits her cousin and Elizabeth has certainly been preparing for her guest. The greeting is joyful and Luke tells us that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. For Luke the Holy Spirit is active not only in Jesus' ministry but before Jesus was born, in preparation for it. Recall that Mary conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit, and after Jesus is raised from the dead, Luke will recount how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the assembled

disciples at Pentecost as tongues of fire. Some have even said Luke's Acts of the Apostles would be better termed Acts of the Holy Spirit. So it is significant here that Elizabeth, too, is filled with the Holy Spirit. Not only that but essentially she proclaims the baby in Mary's womb to be "Lord." Here again Luke is displaying his theological insight that Jesus was not merely Lord at the moment of His baptism (as Mark might have it), but He could rightly be called Lord before He was even born. Even the baby John in Elizabeth's womb shares the joy.

The gospel passage calls to mind for us how important human relationships are. Amidst all the travel, preparation, meals, and general business, the bonds of human love bind us together. When we consider the holiday season with its pressing demands, let us recall the ultimate reason for our cares and concerns. We have in mind those we love and care for. May the relationships we celebrate this season, especially the relationships we have in Christ, inspire us to live in a meaningful way.



Living The Paschal Mystery

In this first chapter of Luke's gospel we learn that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke has a concern for women as we shall see in reading his gospel. Luke often gives women pride of place, or at least shows them with a

status equal to that of men. This story is an example of that. We hear virtually nothing about Zechariah, who has been struck speechless. Instead, this is an encounter between two women, each filled with the Holy Spirit, having a profound meeting and reflecting theologically on that.

Like these women, we are to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Whether it may be the miraculous birth of a child or the bringing forth of other new life, the Holy Spirit is as active today as in days past.

When the daily activities of life seem to overwhelm us, as they might at this time of year, it is good to pause and to reflect on the lives of these women who were open to God's activity in their lives.



About Liturgy

The gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Advent in each liturgical year focuses on Mary, the Mother of God. Today's passage from Luke gives us a Marian set of beatitudes: "Blessed are you among women; Blessed is the fruit of your womb; and Blessed are you who believed." What an overwhelming and

powerful way to be greeted – with blessing after blessing!

This visitation scene reminds us that greetings are opportunities for blessings and for recognizing the presence of Christ in one another. How appropriate then that in the days when we give our season's greetings that we take time to recognize these as more than just mere formality or holiday tradition.

First, in the liturgy we have the ritual greeting and response, "The Lord be with you"; "And with your spirit." Here Presider and assembly recognize the presence of Christ in one another and bless each other for the work that they are about to do. This dialogue occurs at five key moments of the celebration of the Eucharist: at the beginning, before the gospel proclamation, at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, just before Communion, and at the dismissal. Each of these moments requires focused attention and commitment from all the people of God whatever their role is in the body of Christ. This ritual dialogue does not serve as a nicety like "Good morning." Rather, they are words reminding us of the profound responsibility we each have in bearing Christ to the world. As Christians we are called to do this through our witness in communal prayer, proclamation of the good news, priestly offering of ourselves in union with Christ's sacrifice, working for peace, and finally, by bringing that peace to the ends of the earth.

Second, we can bring this blessing through the greetings we share each day, whether spoken, written, or silent. If we can make these few seconds moments of intentional connection and blessing, we, too, just might leap for joy.



Marian Prayers At Eucharist

In some places and parishes it has become a practice to insert the Hail, Mary as a prayer of the assembly during the celebration of Holy Eucharist. Often this happens as a conclusion to the Universal Prayer or perhaps after receiving Holy Communion. **This practice, however, does not align with any rubrics from the Roman Missal. The Eucharist is always Christological in that our prayer reflects on our salvation in Christ.** Even when the scripture passages or the liturgical feast emphasize Mary the Mother of God, our praise is always centered on Christ. We might use Mary’s own words, as in, for example, the *Magnificat*, **but the focus always remains on God.**



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 18th 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.

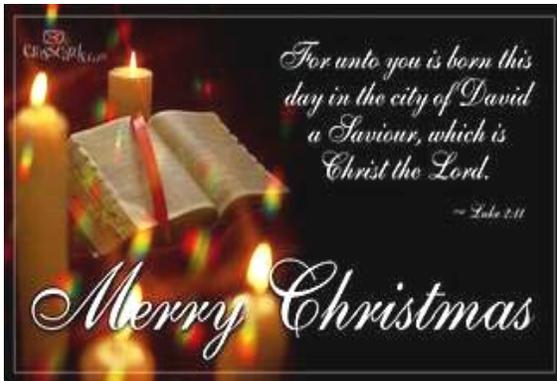


Christmas Liturgies

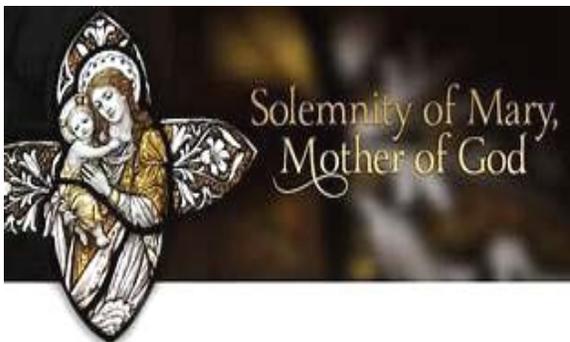
**Monday, December 24th,
Christmas Eve**

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 25th,
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**



Our parish is very blessed with many parishioners who volunteer to help with the various aspects of ministry, programs, and outreach. A part of volunteering is caring for our building and grounds. We are grateful to those who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Al Cosce, Alfred Madoshi, Carole Miller, and Rose Salamanca.**

...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 our Environment Committee volunteers who did an absolutely beautiful job changing the environment to Christmas this week: **Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Tony & Claudia Gumina, Anne Peck, Janice Kegler, Pat Kramer, Judi Heckendorn, Tom & Stevie Catchings, Lorraine Lohmeier, 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, Bev Iacona and Lorraine Lohmeier.

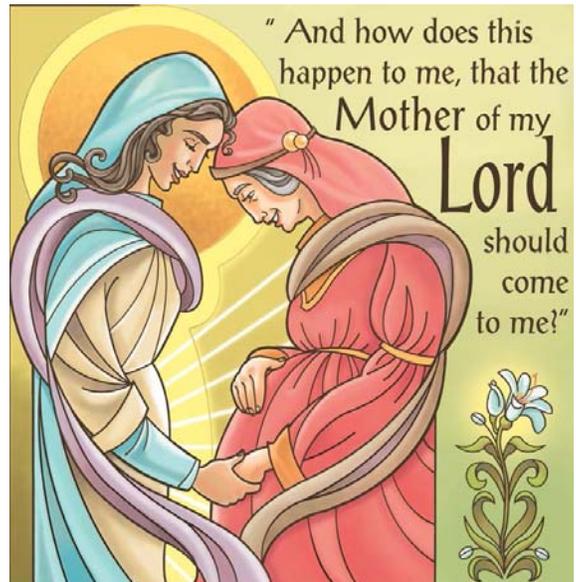
...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Carole Miller, Vangie Parrilla, Belen Farin, Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta, Sherry Webb and Deanna Ribeiro.**

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

to you, your family, loved ones, and friends a very holy and happy Christmas Season and the very best of good wishes, health, and happiness in the New Year to come.

Thank you for your support, presence, participation, prayers, and love for us, for the parish, for God. We are grateful for the wondrous Gift of You and all the ways in which you birth Christ and make Him present in our lives.



On behalf of myself, Fr. George Griener, SJ, Fr. Richard Mangini, The Pastoral Staff, The Pastoral Council, and The Finance Council, we wish to extend