

**For The Bulletin Of  
24 January 2021**



**THE THIRD SUNDAY IN  
WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME**

*From Father Robert*

In the wilderness Jesus has withstood Satan's temptation, and, strengthened in spirit by this personal combat, He comes into Galilee, the "springtime" place of first preaching, first ministry, first calling of disciples. Yet there has also been a winter: the arrest and imprisonment of John the Baptist, which adds urgency to Jesus' first spoken words in Mark's gospel. The time of God's reigning presence is at hand, and this Good news of God demands a response. "Repent, and believe in the gospel" may have been repeated as an early Christian baptismal call to the catechumens (the Elect) as they descended into the Easter waters to rise up as God's new creation. At infant baptism our parents and our faith community made this response for us; the challenge is for us to say our own continuing adult "Yes" to this call and grow in our discipleship.

Urged on by His sense of mission, Jesus passes along the lakeside, the Sea of Galilee. He "saw" Peter and Andrew, with a seeing that penetrates to their deepest selves and their future potential as His disciples, whom, with all their successes and failures, He will make fishers of people to draw others into the kingdom. All that Simon and Andrew will become will be because of Jesus and, with contagious gospel urgency, "they abandoned their nets" – the source of their income – and follow Him. A little further on another two brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedee, are called while they are involved in their fishermen's task of mending nets. Once again, the call and response is immediate and the dispossession is radical when they follow Jesus. It is significant that the first disciples whom Jesus calls are people who must leave what is indicative of their success in a brotherly and family venture: boats, nets, hired servants, parents. They follow Jesus, not hoping for a better lifestyle, but urged by His words to an unconditional obedience to Him. From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus gathers a community around Himself in a relationship of "brotherliness" that the call of two sets of brothers may also suggest.

Whereas our consumer society has to package and market every commodity, every offer has to have a good sales pitch, even in some megachurches and by some TV evangelists, Mark's narrative of Jesus' call is stark and unadorned. Like any relationship, this is the "honeymoon" period (the terminology of Joel Marcus in *Mark 1-8* The Anchor Bible 27). Much of what they understand at this moment they will progressively forget, and compromises, obtuseness, status-seeking will replace following until, on the eve of Jesus' passion and death, the disciples leave everything to run away from Him (Mark 14:50-51). The

traditional prophetic calling accounts, such as that of Samuel or Elisha's call by Elijah (I Kings 19:19-21), are transformed because not it is Jesus Who calls. Jesus does not issue orders to His followers like a charismatic military leader (e.g. Judges 3:28; I Samuel 11:6-7); He offers no rallying call to a revolutionary war (I Maccabees 2:27-28), but He does make promises. Do we live as though we believe these promises? How constant, how radical are we in our following of Jesus to which we are invited by our baptism? How discerning of its demands are we in our contemporary society, and has Jesus priority in our lives? Do we continually try to launch out into a shared mission with Jesus that will transform us from day to day and draw other people into a relationship with Him, or do we cling to the safe and familiar?



Today's scriptures once again address discipleship both for the original disciples as well as ourselves today. What questions do these passages raise for you regarding your following of Jesus?

The responsorial psalm implores "Teach me Your ways, O Lord." Who have been the spiritual mentors and guides who have helped you learn the ways of God?

St. Paul tells the Corinthians, "The world in its present form is passing away." What are the greatest changes you see within the world at this moment? How are we called to respond to these changes as people of faith?

Jesus calls Simon and Andrew to follow Him and become "fishers of men." How does our parish live out this call?

In today's gospel the disciples are called in pairs and together they leave their livelihoods and families to follow Jesus. Who are your closest collaborators and partners in living out the Christian life?



### ***About Liturgy: Evangelization Through Welcoming***

As we continue exploring the ways that liturgy enters into welcoming and catechesis, we hear in the first reading this weekend about Jonah's testimony in Nineveh, a forerunner of Jesus' proclamation of the coming reign of God.

You remember Jonah, don't you? While we hear today of his successful preaching, Jonah was not always so keen on answering God's call affirmatively. Jonah did his best to run away from the Lord at first, only to be thrown into a stormy sea, swallowed by a whale, vomited up onto dry land, and called to a second time.

Even if our evangelization and welcome have been effective, those who may be sitting in our pews on Sunday, for the first time or for the first time in a long time, could still have significant reservations and doubts about their presence in church. They

might have feelings of unworthiness, they might feel like a “fish out of water,” and they could perhaps be second guessing why they even got out of bed that morning.

Those of us responsible for preparing and executing our parish’s public prayer can be mindful of many things in the liturgy to ensure we are welcoming to those who are joining us for the first time.

- Is there a greeting of the assembly from prior to the celebration of the liturgy? Is it delivered in a clear, pleasing, and joy-filled way?
- Are we thoughtful when we ask congregants to greet those around us? Are we careful to avoid singling out first-time visitors, who may feel uncomfortable having attention drawn to them?
- Is the music for liturgy clearly available in the worship leaflet? Is everything readily and obviously available that someone sitting in the pews for the first time would need to fully participate in the liturgy?
- More broadly, while there are many immutable texts of our liturgies, are we paying enough attention to the changeable ones: hymn texts, preaching, intercessions, and the like? Do our spoken and sung prayers of our own choosing leave room for mystery, for doubt, for questions?

To break open that last point just a bit more: one need only do an internet search for any recent Pew Research study about religion to learn that many people, both those who call themselves still faithful and those who have left their faith, struggle greatly with many aspects of that faith. Our ministry, like Jesus’, must be one that meets people

where they are and offers loving invitations to form deeper relationships with God and with the Christian community. To try to do ministry in any other way is inauthentic and may not be the love that God is and that God calls us to. Love can never force another person to a certain belief, a certain way of life, a certain holiness. Love is constant, love pursues, but ultimately love only offers, only invites: Come, enter into the mystery. Journey with me; let us meet God together.



***Annual Pastoral and Financial Report***  
Next weekend, the Annual Pastoral and Financial Report will be presented to the parish. It will be available on our website, on Facebook, and on Flocknote, as well as hard copies for those who come to the church for Walk-Up Communion. The report is an accounting of our ministry for 2020 as well as an accounting for our Stewardship of Treasure, the final Fourth Quarter Financial Report, the Yearly Financial Report (Budget Projections vs. Budget Actual) and the Proposed Budget for 2021. Most important of all, it is a reminder of how the Holy Spirit worked in and through us in every aspect of our parish life: sacramentally, educationally, and spiritually, outreaches, programs, and ministries. It also provides an opportunity for gratitude and

thanksgiving for all the blessings we as a parish have received and the challenges we faced in an unprecedented year marked by pandemic.



As announced last Sunday, today's Second Collection benefits the Ministry of our local St. Vincent de Paul Society which is a combined effort with our sister parish of Holy Rosary. Our financial support enables the members of SVDP to care for the least of our sisters and brothers with food, financial assistance for rent, utilities, clothing, and furniture. We also collaborate each year on the Thanksgiving Outreach/Baskets and the Christmas Baskets. There are many individuals and families struggling during this time of pandemic and our help is even more importantly needed. Thank you for what you will do to help SVDP continue their good ministry.



***Report From Werner Hoch***

Happy New Year to everyone! We are all hoping for a much better year than the last one. Since the Covid vaccine will be available soon for almost everyone, there is hope for humanity to overcome this awful pandemic. It will mean no more “sheltering in place,” the ability to dine out, being able to take a walk without fear of catching this awful virus from someone.

For now, we have to follow the health department's guidelines and observe social distancing. We are grateful the food bank decided to continue with the bi-weekly food distribution at our parish. This last Friday we were able to serve 30 needy families with needed food items. A special thanks to all the volunteers who showed up to help distribute all the different items that were on the truck this time. A special treat awaited those that came for the free food items. We gave out a bag of delicious grapes along with apples, carrots, oranges, onions and new potatoes. It is very rewarding to be able to supply various items that are possible for making dinner.

Many recipients thanked us for doing what we do and that alone makes volunteering such a rewarding experience. Again, many thanks to all our volunteers.

Werner 



Each year the week of January 18 – 25 is designated as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Gathering in person for services of prayer for Christian Unity is not possible this year because of the pandemic. However, it does not stop us from continuing to pray that the prayer of Jesus “that all may be one” may become a reality. I invite you to take some time today and tomorrow to pray for this great goal, that the Christian churches will continue our efforts towards healing and reconciliation among all Christian denominations.

**Growing in Unity: “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5a)**

**Scripture**

- **1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:21-23**, Is Christ divided?
- **John 17:20-23**, As you and I are one

**Meditation**

On the eve of his death, Jesus prayed for the unity of those the Father gave him: “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe.” Joined to him, as a branch is to the vine, we share the same sap that circulates among us and vitalizes us.

Each tradition seeks to lead us to the heart of our faith: communion with God, through Christ, in the Spirit. The more we live this communion, the more we are connected to other Christians and to all of humanity. Paul warns us against an attitude that had already threatened the unity of the first Christians: absolutizing one’s own tradition to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ.

Differences then become divisive instead of mutually enriching. Paul had a very broad vision: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” (1 Corinthians 3:22-23)

Christ’s will commit us to a path of unity and reconciliation. It also commits us to unite our prayer to his: “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe.” (John 17:21)

**Prayer**

Holy Spirit, vivifying fire and gentle breath, come and abide in us. Renew in us the passion for unity so that we may live in awareness of the bond that unites us in you. May all who have put on Christ at their Baptism unite and bear witness together to the hope that sustains them. Amen.



On Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, we received a notification from The Vatican that the experience of Ash Wednesday will be different this year due to the pandemic. I share with you the article from Catholic News Service as well as Bishop Barber:

The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people’s heads rather than using them to make a cross on people’s foreheads.



***Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,  
Pastoral Associate***

Jesus spent many years in Nazareth. When John was arrested he felt a movement, a shift within Him. “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand.” He calls on others who abandon their way of life to do something else. They leave what they know to follow something new and different. This time we are currently in is like that. We are called to leave what we know and follow something different. This is a hard task. We would rather remain in the familiar, have things “return to normal.” But the old “normal” is no more. As St. Paul says in Corinthians, “The world in its present form is passing away.”

On this journey we must take with us what we know to be true: God is always with us. He never deserts us. He asks us to be about truth and reconciliation, about building community. During the time of COVID, our lives have been reshaped. We have reexamined our need for power and wealth and fashioned those desires into giving to others, living with less ourselves and building relationships that matter.

How do these things affect our church community? We have heard stories about consolidations of parishes due to lack of priests and fading attendance. For those who are happy at St. Ignatius of Antioch, this may be frightening for it would mean big changes. I have been reading Fr. James Mallon's book entitled *Beyond Parish*. Here are some thoughts he proposes.

1. We have to think beyond maintenance to mission and develop a fundamentally outward posture. Are we blazing a trail or preserving the past? How can we reach people in today's (soon to be) post COVID

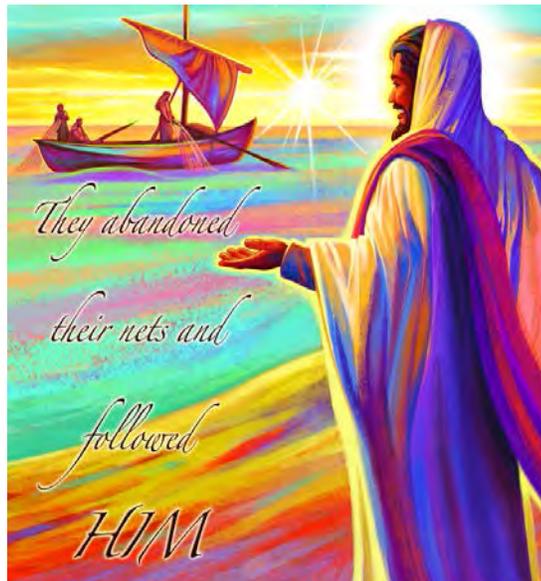
world? God knows we are in a world that is far from Christian in its actions. This means we will find ways to deal with violence, poverty, racism, etc. We will get our feet dirty and “smell like the sheep.” This focus will be our main activity and where we spend most of our time.

2. Many of our structures are based on reaching a world that no longer exists. We must examine the changes and thoughtfully work toward mission. We will need the courage to create a vision and follow it.
3. Our administrative structure should be one of amalgamation, that is, one that has a head shepherd and many clerical and non-clerical leaders focused on our mission to the world rather than just keeping things going. This takes leadership skills. People will have to be trained to work this way. The leaders will be focused on the question, “What will stop the decline from continuing in our midst?”

When Jesus called his disciples, he used an image that they were familiar with. “I will make you fishers of men (people).” They were familiar with throwing out the nets in places where they might find fish, and then pulling them in and sorting the catch. Where might we throw our nets, the message of the Gospel, and who is in charge of the “sorting?” We will have to think about these things for our future church community. It seems to me that there is no better time to build a hall and kitchen where we can bring these catches in and plan actions that will keep us focused on our MISSION to the world.

Let us pray this week for the understanding and the courage to change. Let us listen to

the Voice of the Shepherd and imagine new ways of doing things. Let us each examine our talents and abilities to see where we can “throw a net.” Let us open our hearts to a world that surely needs the merciful message of Jesus in our time.



## January 2021 Opportunities for Involvement



**Ruby Slippers Virtual Gala:** This year, Hope Solutions will present our annual fundraising gala, [Ruby Slippers- There's No Place Like Home](#) in the comfort of your own home on Saturday, February 27th, 2021. Ruby Slippers will be virtual and live-streamed from the [Ruby Slippers Gala event page](#). FREE event registration at: <https://hopesolutions.ejoinme.org/RubySlippers2021>. There will be a live and silent auction with some fabulous items to bid on, and we hope to add even more! Support the silent auction by donating an item, package, or gift card; visit our sign-up list at <https://tinyurl.com/yynbd9uy>. If you have vacation homes, unused airline miles, luxury items or unique experiences that you are willing to donate to our auction, please contact Carrie Veurink, Manager of Development Outreach at [cveurink@hopesolutions.org](mailto:cveurink@hopesolutions.org) or call at (925) 542-5068.



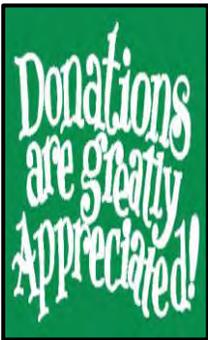
**Homework Club Support:** We are looking for compassionate individuals to help in our (now virtual) afterschool Homework Club that runs from August through June. You will provide academic and mentoring support to children from extremely low-income homes in grades K-12. Commitment is one day a week, either AM or PM, Monday through Thursday for the remaining of the school year. Adults and high school sophomores through seniors are encouraged to apply at [www.hopesolutions.org/volunteer](http://www.hopesolutions.org/volunteer).



**Volunteers to Pick Up and Deliver Furniture:** Transporting furniture to new residents throughout Contra Costa County is a great challenge during these times. A volunteer that can pick-up donated furniture and deliver them various households throughout Contra Costa County is needed. Deliveries will be PORCH DELIVERIES ONLY, no need to set up. If you are able to help, please contact Sandibel Arnold at [sarnold@hopesolutions.org](mailto:sarnold@hopesolutions.org).



**Furnishings:** Every month we have families and individuals moving into homes. We try our best to provide furnishings and household items for incoming residents. This month we are looking for furnishings as well as cleaning supplies, kitchen kits, bath towels, dishes, pots and pans, and silverware. We are in need of beds and bedding. This month we are in need of several full- and twin-size beds. Please note that mattresses and bedding must be new. If you are able to donate any of these items or would like more information, please contact Sandibel Arnold at [sarnold@hopesolutions.org](mailto:sarnold@hopesolutions.org). For a complete list of furnishings and items needed this month, please take a look at the attached Furnishing Request sheet [here](#).



**Seeking In-Kind Donations:**

- New Twin and Full size mattresses and bedding as well as frames and platforms
- \$25 gift cards to Grocery Outlet, FoodMaxx, or Walmart
- Menstrual products of all kinds
- Diapers size 1 through 6 and baby wipes for families in our program
- \$5 Starbucks and Jamba Juice gift cards for report card check-ins
- Welcome Kits for new families moving into permanent housing (laundry basket filled with cleaning supplies, small household items, and \$25 gift card to FoodMaxx or Grocery Outlet)
- Cleaning supplies for our multi-site clients (Comet, Windex, Simple Green, buckets, mops, etc.)

**Stay informed! Like us on Facebook [@hopesolutionsnonprofit](#)** Get all the latest news about Hope Solutions and the housing landscape in Contra Costa County. Read stories about our impact, and the many residents we serve together. Sign up for our mailing list here: <https://tinyurl.com/lgdp3gs>.



## Furnishings and Donations Request for January 2021

Hope Solutions provides new and lightly used household items and furniture for our incoming clients. Below is a list of items that we are requesting for the month of *January*. Please note that this list changes every month. We ask that all items are like new or gently used. Due to storage capacity, pick up, drop off, and delivery will be determined per item.

Furniture	Household/Kitchen Items	Bathroom Items
4 Full Size Beds	5 Sets of Cleaning Supplies	5 Shower Curtains
4 Bedding Sets-Full Size	5 Sets of Pots and Pans	5 Sets of Hand Towels
8 Pillows	5 Sets of Dishes	5 Sets of Washcloths
3 Dresser	5 Sets of Glasses	5 Sets of Bath Towels
4 Lamp	5 Sets of Silverware	3 Bathroom Rugs
2 Twin Size Beds	5 Wastebaskets	
1 Bookshelf/Entertainment Center	5 Boxes of Trashbags	
2 End Tables	5 Buckets and Mops	
1 Dining Table and Chairs	5 Brooms and Dustpans	
1 Coffee Table	5 Stepstools	
1 Small Sofa/Loveseat	5 Laundry Baskets	
2 Dressers	3 Toasters	
2 Queen Size Blankets	1 Set of Lightbulbs	
	2 Coffee Makers	
	2 Vacuums	

*If you would like to donate any of the items above, please contact Sandibel Arnold at [sarnold@hopesolutions.org](mailto:sarnold@hopesolutions.org). For furniture donations, please send a picture of items to [sarnold@hopesolutions.org](mailto:sarnold@hopesolutions.org) or to 925-788-3676. Please include location and if you are able to deliver or would need pick up.*

### **We do not accept the following donations (including but not limited to):**

- Used bedding
- Used pillows
- Used mattresses
- Used towels of any kind
- Non-working items
- Broken or badly worn items
- Stuffed animals
- Used car seats

Used Toys



## COVID PROGRAM

[www.shelterinc.org/renthelp](http://www.shelterinc.org/renthelp)

The new COVID program serves community members affected by the COVID-19 virus.

### Available Assistance

- Payment of past due rent
- Payment of current month's rent
- Payment of future month's rent
- Payment of utilities (PG&E, garbage, water)



#### COVID PROGRAM

- Participants affected by COVID-19
- Able to prove how they are being affected by COVID-19 virus
- No need to prove self-sufficiency
- Not able to pay past, present, and/or future rent

[www.shelterinc.org/renthelp](http://www.shelterinc.org/renthelp)



More Info and to apply

A SHELTER, Inc. case manager will analyze the impacts affecting the household's income. Funding decisions will be based on individual needs and funding availability.

[www.shelterinc.org/renthelp](http://www.shelterinc.org/renthelp)

INSPIRING PEOPLE • CHANGING LIVES • ENDING HOMELESSNESS

# Diocese of Oakland



**Are you being called?**

## **Diaconate Formation Information Meetings**

"By ordination, particularly and officially committed to service, the deacon is to inspire, promote and help coordinate the service that the whole Church must undertake in imitation of Christ. He has a special responsibility to identify to the Church those who are in need and particularly those who are without power of voice at the margins of our society. Among such people, the deacon is to speak about Christ and to offer them the Church's varied assistance. But in the Church, he is also to speak about the needy, to articulate their needs, and to inspire and mobilize the whole community's response. He thus becomes a representative figure in whom the Church reaches out to the needy and the needy challenge the Church." (*National Conference of Catholic Bishops: Permanent Deacons in the United States – Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry – 1984 Revision, par 37*)

### **Candidate Qualifications**

- Practicing Catholic for 10 years or more.
- Must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and be validly married by the Church, if applicable.
- At least 33 years of age but not older than 60 years of age at the time of application.
- Good physical and mental health.
- Gainfully employed or otherwise financially secure.
- Sufficient time to devote to the formation program.
- Demonstrates leadership ability and calling to the social justice ministry of the Church.
- If married, both oral and written support, endorsement and consent of his wife and family. His wife should be willing to participate in the formation process.
- A commitment to celibacy is required of non-married candidates, as well as widowers.

#### **Tuesdays 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Tuesday January 19, 2021

Tuesday January 26, 2021

#### **Saturdays 11:00 AM - Noon**

Saturday January 16, 2021

Saturday January 23, 2021

Saturday January 30, 2021

**ZOOM meeting Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8745798692>

Phone Connection: 1 408 638 0968 Meeting ID: 874 579 8692#

**Wives are encouraged to attend**

For additional information contact, Diocesan Office of Clergy Services  
Cielo Barroso-Branco, 510-267-8356      CBarroso@oakdiocese.org