

## For The Bulletin Of December 17, 2017



### *From Father Robert*

On this “Gaudete” (Rejoice) Sunday, other readings and the gospel acclamation may speak more directly to joy or glad tidings than the gospel, which gives us its version of the story of John the Baptist. Of course, he is often referred to as John the Baptist in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not in this gospel. Here he is clearly and simply called a “man” and when he is named, it is merely “John” without modifier. In this way, and in many others in this gospel, he is distinguished from Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel states clearly and unequivocally that John was not the light, but was sent from God to testify to the light. John admits that he is not the Messiah; he is not Elijah. In both Matthew and Mark, John is considered the Elijah figure, said to be so by Jesus Himself. In the Fourth Gospel, John is not even the prophet. His role is to cry out in the desert, “Make straight the way of the Lord.” Such a deflection away from any attention or claims to himself seems to reflect the interests of the

evangelist more than the historical situation of the time. Indeed, there are other clues in the Fourth Gospel and other New Testament writings that tell us that John continued to have a following years, perhaps decades, after his death. Today we recognize that John prepared the way for Jesus.

This first chapter of the Fourth Gospel reminded the early Christian community that John was merely a precursor, a forerunner, to Jesus the Messiah. We have heard these stories so often, and frequently from the synoptic point of view. When we read the Fourth Gospel on its own terms we see that John says he baptizes with water. We might expect him to say, “but the one coming after me baptizes with the Holy Spirit” as we hear in the synoptics. Instead, John says, “I baptize with water, but there is one among you whom you do not recognize.” There is nothing in this gospel about Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit. Instead, Jesus is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. Even the use of the term sin in the singular rather than the plural is deliberate. Rather than merely taking away individual sins, Jesus takes away the cosmic force of sin. The Fourth Gospel reflects a different but congruent theological thought world than the Synoptics. The differences in details may seem minute but they point to profound theological emphases.

Once John points the way to Jesus, once he testifies to the Lamb of God, John in effect disappears from the gospel (there are some minor passing references). His role is basically confined to chapter 1 of the Fourth Gospel, and it consists in testifying to Jesus.

### *Living The Paschal Mystery*

When we see how John gave testimony to Jesus we recognize him as a model for ourselves. John is not the center of attention. When he receives attention he deflects it to Jesus. John will not even claim the title of prophet. He is merely a pointer to Jesus. After accomplishing his role, John recedes into the background so that the One Who is already in their midst might be made more fully known.

Where do we find Jesus in our midst? Are we pointing to that reality, and testifying to it? Once having done so, do we then recede into the background?

- What signs can you point to of the Word of God's compassion in the midst of our parish?
- Who have been the "prophets" you have known in your life who "proclaimed" to you the reality of God's love and mercy?
- What images of light and darkness speak to you this Advent?
- As you read the opening verses of Isaiah 61, what do you sense the Spirit of God is "sending" you to do?



The Dark Pink Roses added to the arrangements of evergreens in the sanctuary this weekend are placed to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Fara Costanza** from her daughter, **Carole Miller**.

### *Focusing The Gospel*

Today's gospel is the Fourth Gospel's portrait of John's baptismal ministry. In a scene unique to the Fourth Gospel, a delegation of priest and Levites from the city confront John about his preaching and baptizing. John responds that he is not Elijah, the great prophet who was expected to return in the last days of time to announce the coming of the Messiah; John claims to be only the "voice of one crying out in the desert." But, John says, the Messiah they have waited for has already come and is "among you."

There is serenity about the portrait of John: there are no descriptions of wearing camel hair and eating locusts or wild honey; there are no ranting to repent or angry confrontations with official Jerusalem. The Baptist of the Fourth Gospel is a figure of peace and humility. John preaches that God has revealed Himself to His people through the incarnation of His Word, Jesus the Christ, and John has been called to testify (to witness) to this revelations as standing "among you whom you do not recognize."

Forms of "baptism" were common in the Judaism of gospel times. But John's baptism was distinctive: his baptism at the Jordan was a rite of repentance and metanoia – a conversion of heart and spirit. John's ministry fulfilled the promise of Ezekiel: at the dawn of a

new age, the God of Israel would purify His people from their sins with clear water and instill in them a new heart and spirit.



You are invited to join our Filipino Community for the traditional nine day novena of liturgies leading up to Christmas, which began yesterday, December 16<sup>th</sup> and continues through the 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 a.m. each morning in the church, followed by a traditional Filipino Breakfast in our parish hall. The presider and homilist this year is **Fr. Ricky Pacoma** who is coming from the Philippines just for our parish! Ministries have been formed as well as sponsors for the breakfast each day. If you are interested in being a part of this wonderful cultural and spiritual event, please contact **Estrella Rusk, Financial Secretary**, in the Parish Office. While he is here, Fr. Ricky will also celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his parents, **Manny and Leony Pacoma**, who are members of our parish.



### *Christmas Environment*

Once again we invite you to be a part of a great tradition here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. Each year, parishioners contribute to the Christmas Environment Fund to provide the Christmas trees, garlands, wreathes, lights, poinsettias, and fabrics that are used to create an environment that says “Christmas!” for the entire Christmas Season. Donations may be made either in honor of/in memory of family, friends, loved ones. Please make sure to put the correct designation on the outside of your envelope. Christmas Flower envelopes are provided on the credenza at the back of the church, beneath the icon of St. Paul. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.



This year, The Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please note that there will be **only one liturgy next Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m.** that will conclude the Advent Season.

The liturgies of Christmas begin that afternoon as follows:

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

**4:00 p.m. Eucharist for Families with Children**

*Beloved Carols, the Children tell the Story of Christmas, Holy Eucharist; Cantors and Organ*

**9:00 p.m. The Solemn Eucharist of Christmas Night**

*Procession, The Choir and Cantors, Beloved Carols (No Incense)*

**Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

*The Liturgies of Christmas Day, Procession, Beloved Carols, The Choir and Cantors (No Incense)*

Thank  
you

...to our faithful parishioners who arrive very early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church for the weekend: **Carole Miller, Jack Goncalves, Mency Osborne, Steve Rojek, Angela Bueno, Rose Salamanca, and Emilia Freking.**

...to our faithful parishioners who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall each week: **Robert Goncalves, Virginia Noack, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

...to our wonderful volunteers who came in on Wednesday to help with the Christmas Letter mailer: **Bernice Campbell, Dave Costanza, Clem Bushman, Emilia Freking, Marguerite Bloomfield, Mena Macedo, Bobbie Ocang, Ruth Landry, Vangie Parrilla, Anne Peck, Nancy Newton and Judi Heckendorn.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** 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, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, 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, Harlan Young, Sofie Zimmerman, Alicia Perez, Yvette Young, Lorraine Lohmeier, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.**

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

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller, Dave Costanza, Vangie Parrilla, Vince and Kathy Augusta and Beth Enea.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during the weekend liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**



As many of you know, I am the First Chaplain in the history of East Contra Costa Fire Prevention District. We are a small department of only 33 persons, including administration. I am inviting our parishioners to become Prayer Partners of the firefighters, praying for them each day, for their safety, protection, and for God's love and mercy to surround them as they serve our sisters and brothers in far East County. Cards with their names, the stations they serve at, and their shift are available for you to take and then remember them in prayer each day. I would ask that you take one card with the name of one of our firefighters and then remember him before God each day. I also pray for the entire department each day but the tradition of being a "Prayer Partner" is long-standing and is a wonderful way to support them in their mission. Many thanks for your participation and prayerful support.

***Transition At Holy Rosary Parish***

This past week, The Bishop announced that after 154 years of service to Holy Rosary Parish here in Antioch, the Dominicans are withdrawing. The reason for this transition is that their numbers are diminishing and they need to make sure that they are able to ensure the stability of their Order. During the next months, the Diocese will be

working with them to make the transition as smooth as possible. Please join me in praying for Fr. Roberto Corral, the Pastor, their staff, and parishioners as they go through this major event in their parish's life. We are a "daughter" parish, created from Holy Rosary in 1979 and many of our parishioners were members there before becoming members of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Join me in thanking God for the great contribution they have made to East County, Antioch, and beyond in building God's kingdom in our midst. As decisions are made about who will succeed the Dominican priests, I will keep you informed.



Prayer around  
the  
Advent Wreath

***From Frances Rojek, Pastoral Associate for Formation and Administration: Advent Prayer Retreat***

On Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> **Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP and Sr. Patricia Bruno, OP** gifted the parish with an Advent Evening of Prayer. It was a wonderful respite from the hustle and bustle of the world's view of the season. Our children in Faith Formation played a very important part in making this evening prayerful and holy.

Greeting parishioners enthusiastically were **Giada and Italo Bastida, Dezire Jackson, Jesus and Jose Moreno, Stephen Sievers, Juan Patrick Sison and James White**. A warm welcome was delivered by **Haley Garret and**

**Edward Salas-Garcia, Isabella White,** led the procession and lit the first candle of the Advent Wreath. **Vincent Garcia** carried the Book of the Gospels and **Chigozie Nzerem** blessed our presider, homilist and **Francis Garcia** who delivered a meaningful reflection on the season of Advent. Our Artist in Residence and Music Director **Don Pearson** with **Maryann Peddicord** and **Alicia Perez** lead the assembly in song. We closed the service with a Candle Blessing by our Candle Angels **Giada, Jose, Jesus and Dezire** and continued with a celebration in the Parish Hall with Hot Chocolate and cookies. It was an evening filled with blessings and gratitude.

## *Tribute*

A few weeks ago, I visited **Mary Kendrick**, one of our parishioners who was living at Quail Lodge. Mary came to us a few years ago, shortly after her husband had died. She had not been to church for many years and went on line to find the closest Catholic Church to where she lived, which was Summerset down the street from our church because at the time, she lived just off of Putnam.

She walked here one Sunday and the moment she entered the sanctuary, she said she felt at home and it was a very powerful and emotional experience for her. Shortly after meeting her, she invited me to preside for the Committal of her husband's cremated remains at Holy Cross Cemetery. Mary registered and was soon attending and participating

in our Daily Eucharist. She went to everything she could and helped out in any way possible.

Recently, she discovered that she has cancer from which she will not recover. After a surgery, she was not able to attend daily liturgy any longer and also needed personal assistance. God answered that prayer in **Lorraine Lohmeier** who literally moved in with Mary to care for her post-surgery. Thank you, Lorraine, for such a great gift of love and care.

As Mary's condition deteriorated, her son made arrangements for his mom to move into a facility in Denver near where he and his family live. There, she would be able to receive the care she will need as she prepares to go home to God. When I visited her at Quail Lodge and brought Holy Communion as well as the Sacrament of Anointing, she wanted me to share with all of you how much the parish meant to her and how grateful she has been for all of us, for our beautiful liturgies, the music, the preaching, the warmth, hospitality, and especially the love that she received that made these last years of her life so fulfilling and meaningful.

It was difficult for her to leave us, to leave California and go to Denver. Her tears flowed freely as she talked about preparing to go home to God but she wanted me and all of us to know that she isn't afraid to die and knows that God is waiting for her and that she has never been stronger in the faith. And so, on behalf of all of us, Thank YOU, Mary, for being with us, for all you did, for the gift of your faith and support, for your participation, and for leaving a legacy of love in the parish. This is the Gift that

makes our parish unique and which has drawn so many people to us. After Mary has fallen asleep in the Lord, her body will be cremated and the cremated remains will be brought back to Holy Cross Cemetery where her urn will be placed with that of her husband.

Please join me in praying for Mary that these days will be filled with much peace and confidence that God has indeed prepared a place for her with Him in heaven. She will soon know the victory of Jesus over death and the grave – her faith will be rewarded.

