

## For The Bulletin Of December 24, 2017



### THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

#### *From Father Robert*

For the Fourth and final Sunday of Advent we are brought back to the Gospel of Luke, and its beautiful story of the Annunciation. This story is markedly different from that in Matthew, where Joseph learns of Mary's pregnancy in a dream. In Luke, the angel Gabriel (which means "God is my strength") appears to Mary. Gabriel's greeting is repeated each time we pray the Hail Mary and so we are reminded of this scene. As anyone might be, Mary is "greatly troubled." How often does an angel bear greetings? Upon hearing the news Mary wonders how this can be. In fact, many people today wonder the same. A virgin birth? How was Jesus conceived? The response given to us is the same as that given to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Nothing is impossible for God. This is an act of God so that the child, Jesus, will rightly be called "the Son of God." His kingdom will last forever; He will be the Son of the Most High. Many church fathers spoke of how in that moment the entire plan of God hung in the balance, awaiting Mary's "yes." Human salvation, a free gift from God, depends upon human cooperation. In

other words, God's gift is not forced but available to be freely accepted. St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, "the angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God Who sent him. We, too, are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion." We then hear Mary's "Fiat," the Latin rendering of "let it be done." And again, according to the church fathers, all heaven rejoices.

Though we celebrated Annunciation on March 25<sup>th</sup>, precisely nine month prior to Christmas, we read this gospel now, during the Fourth Sunday of Advent, because the incarnation was, in a certain way, dependent upon Mary's response. Later theologians saw in her "yes" a counter to Genesis 3, so that Mary could be called the "new" Eve. Her response to God was not to step outside the circle of obedience, as we saw in Genesis 3, but to accept God's design and to cooperate. As the response in Genesis led ultimately to human sinfulness and death, Mary's response leads to grace and new life. Perhaps we are not too surprised to learn that of all the gospels it is Luke that has the most to say about women. In Luke's story of the birth of Jesus, Mary plays a central role, setting the stage for centuries of theological reflection.

#### *Living The Paschal Mystery*

It can sometimes be difficult to comprehend the human cooperation required for salvation. There can be a tremendous theological emphasis on the graciousness of the gift. Our salvation is not earned, but human cooperation is required. We have many opportunities through the day to say "fiat" or "let it be done." There are countless occasions of God's grace breaking into our daily life. When we cooperate with that grace,

extraordinary things happen. Though we are not receiving visits from angels with messages of a virgin birth, we do have opportunities to recognize the working of God in the world.

There are only a few hours left of this year's Advent Season, the shortest possible. After 12:00 Noon today, it becomes Christmas Eve. What has this Advent meant to you? Have you prepared adequately to welcome the Lord Jesus into the "stable" of your heart?

- When have your plans been "interrupted" or your perspective been changed by a moment of revelation?
- Have you ever encountered "Gabriel," the messenger of God, in an unexpected situation?
- In what ways can a family home be transformed into a "house" of God?
- How is Mary a model of discipleship?
- What have you learned from the poor, the troubled, the sick, and the desperate about the mystery of God's love this Advent?



### ***Building Project Update***

The signature and letter campaign for the new kitchen and parish hall expansion project has concluded. This donor approval step was required by the Diocese and office volunteers are compiling the results. After the first of the year, a report will be formally presented to the Diocese and we will request approval to proceed. This report will also be shared with our parish community.

### ***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.

### ***St. Ignatius of Antioch Supports Winter Nights Shelter***

The Winter Nights Rotating Family Shelter is a project of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. A warm and safe place to sleep is offered to homeless families.

Even though the parish is not scheduled to co-host with Pittsburg Community Presbyterian and Antioch First Congregational until later in the spring, St. Ignatius of Antioch parish is

supporting the shelter in other ways: thank you to **Sue & Rick Howell, Vicki & Brian McCoy, Ronda & Chris DeMay, Lorraine Lohmeier and Liz Canero** for providing weekly bath towel laundry service for the Oasis site in Pittsburg; to **Kenny Lane** for the hand-made winter scarves; to **Samantha Peralto** for the generous donations of warm blankets; to **Barbara Jackson** and Mobile Mall for donations of bath towels; to **Sandy Inouye** for the wonderful afghans: and to everyone who responded to the request for shelter supplies in the bulletin. For more information about the shelter, visit their website at <http://interfaithccc.org/winter-nights/>.



**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)*

**December 26<sup>th</sup>, The Feast of St. Stephen**  
*Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion, 8:00 a.m.*

**December 27<sup>th</sup>, The Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist**  
*Holy Eucharist, 8:00 a.m.*

**December 28<sup>th</sup>, The Feast of The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**  
*Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion, 8:00 a.m.*

**December 29<sup>th</sup>, The Fifth Day Within The Octave of Christmas**  
*Holy Eucharist, 8:00 a.m.*

**Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, The Feast of the Holy Family**  
*Vigil Eucharist, 4:00 p.m.*

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, The Feast of the Holy Family**  
*Holy Eucharist, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.*



**Monday, January 1, 2018**  
**The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, New Year's Day, The World Day of Prayer for Peace**  
*Holy Eucharist, 11:00 a.m.*



**Saturday, January 6, 2018**  
**4:00 p.m. The Vigil Eucharist**

**Sunday, January 7, 2018**  
**8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**  
**Holy Eucharist**

*The Conclusion of the Christmas Season*

***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. Last Wednesday, December 13th, a group of parishioners served a full dinner as part of the annual holiday party at the apartment complex. The menu consisted of roasted chicken with gravy, scalloped potatoes, and a melody of scrumptious roasted veggies including zucchini, cauliflower, carrots, broccoli, garlic, red onion and sweet red peppers. Dessert was a variety of home baked cookies. The real hit of the dinner was Catherine Vidaurri's vegetarian pumpkin soup prepared with some of the pumpkins that were part of our fall sanctuary environment. The soup earned rave reviews from everyone. Thank you to **Will Avitabile & Catherine Vidaurri, Lorraine Lohmeier and Vicki & Brian McCoy.**



On behalf of myself, The Pastoral Staff, The Pastoral Council, and The Finance Council, we wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for all the ways YOU have been gifts to us, for your prayers, support, and love.



...to the members of our Art & Environment Committee who have once again done such an amazing job of creating an environment which says "Christmas!": **Pablo and Norma Villegas, Tony and Claudia Gumina, Rich Confetti, Don Benson, Jose Palomino, Anne Peck, Lee Oliver, Peter Degl'Innocenti, Dave Simpson, Judi Heckendorn, Tom Catchings, Kathleen Maasberg, Janice Kegler, Harlan Young, Denise Moss, Maria Sparling, Patricia Britton, and Theresa Nelms.**

...to all our wonderful parishioners and friends who have donated so generously to provide for the Christmas Environment.

...to our faithful volunteers who do so much to help with the ministry of the parish: those who clean and prepare the church for worship each week: **Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, Jack Goncalves, Rose Salamanca, Mency Osborne, Heather Hatteroth, Emilia Freking, Cathy Romeo, and Tess Trinidad**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms: **Robert Goncalves, Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Maria Chandler, Patricia Britton, Harlan Young, Virginia Noack, Virgil Santos, Tess Trinidad, and Rose Salamanca.**

...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, 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: **Judy Quicho, Vangie Parrilla, Belen Farin, Kathy Augusta and Beth Enea.**

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