



St. John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness
Anton Raphael Mengs (1728-1779)

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Perhaps this might come across as somewhat whimsical, but this week I thought it might be good to talk about Santa Claus. Why not?

I still remember the day when I was told that Santa “did not exist.” I was in 2nd or 3rd grade, and I was at my dad’s brother’s house for Christmas Eve with the cousins and Santa was expected to arrive; and just for us. I was thrilled to be invited to a “private” audience where Santa would come and meet each of us kids individually and to give us a present. One of my cousins, a year older than I, told me before the visit that it was all fake and that Santa was just our parents pretending to be him. I did not believe it and rejoiced to meet Santa, and he did seem to know me personally, and I did get a present hand picked by him...it was one of those hand held pin ball machines. It is not that I really ever wanted one, but I loved it and played with it because “Santa” gave it to me.

The next day I asked my mother about what my cousin had told me; about Santa not existing. My mom, to her credit, told me the truth in a very gentle way, but then she exhorted me to keep the secret for the sake of my sisters and not to “ruin” it for them. And I did.

There is a fair amount of back and forth about the issue of Santa and whether or not such a character should have a place in a Catholic household. And do you know what? The answer is “yes.” Absolutely “yes.”

Let’s start here; every culture without exception has some form of folklore, and that includes Catholic culture. Folklore is not intended to deceive but rather to reinforce certain core values of that particular culture and pass those values down from generation to generation. But even having said that, all folklore has some basis in the truth and the reality of things, otherwise it would lose its force. Even Greek mythology, for example, has some foundation in the truth of things, and it is for that reason, more or less, that it still resonates so clearly with us, even in our modern technological era. But back to Santa.

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Second Sunday
of Advent
6 December 2020

Sacred Heart, Ronan
Immaculate Conception, Polson
St. Joseph Mission, Charlo

Parish Office

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MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday
Immaculate Conception at 6:00 pm
Confessions are available at 5:00 pm

Sunday
Sacred Heart at 8:30 am
Immaculate Conception at 10:30 am

Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday
Immaculate Conception at 12:10 pm
Confessions each day at 11:30 and after the Wednesday Mass during a period of Eucharistic Adoration.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
Mass at Immaculate Conception at 12:10 pm
Consecration of the Parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary after the Mass.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Saturday, December 12th

Immaculate Conception

Mass at 7:00 am

Each year we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the manner of a *Rorate Coeli* Mass. These Masses are pre-dawn candlelit Masses celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Season of Advent. The name *Rorate Coeli* comes from the first two words of the entrance antiphon of these Masses and means *drop down heavens*. The full antiphon is as follows: *Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down the Just One (Is 45:8)*. The Mass itself will be celebrated in English but the service music will be in Latin taken from Pope Paul VI’s exhortation *Jubilare Deo* in which he instructed the people to learn and know how to sing the basic parts of the Mass in Latin. Music sheets will be provided.



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The mythological quasi-magical creature known as Santa has his basis in the real person of St. Nicholas (whose feast day we celebrate on December 6th). St. Nicholas was a bishop of the 4th century in the region of Armenia, and while not much is known of his personal life, he became renown for his charity and love for the poor, especially children. Through a variety of movements, this relatively unknown man took on the mythological persona of a saint who knew and loved the poor of Christ and gave them gifts.

The myth of "Santa" is the folklore of a man who came to embody the spirit of Christmas and the ultimate meaning of Christmas, charity, the love of God who so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten son. St. Nicholas is a real man who became the mythological embodiment of the spirit of Christmas that plays upon the youthful whimsy and playfulness of a child, and communicates a core Christian

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Food Pantry Necessities

Peanut butter is a constant need; as well as oats, flour and rice. As the holidays approach please consider contributing canned pumpkin, cranberries, gravy and desert mixes. And don't forget the stuffing mix ! Items may be left in a bin at the entrance of the church.

The Polson and Ronan Councils of the Knights of Columbus will be resuming their monthly meetings. The next meeting of the Polson Council will be **Thursday, December 10th at 6:00 pm.** They are also selling Christmas cards after the weekend Masses in the parish hall. Tootsie Rolls are also available for \$1 and the proceeds will go to support Helping Hands. The Ronan Council will meet on December 20th after the 8:30 am Mass at Sacred Heart.



Endow study group for women on Thursdays at 10:30 am. Please call Sheila LeBrun for more information at 406-208-5788.



That Man Is You!
Thursdays at 6:00 am. Meetings start with hot premium roast coffee and breakfast.

St. Ambrose
December 7th

No one heals himself by wounding another.



And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying."

If you have two shirts in your closet, one belongs to you and the other to the man with no shirt.

Prayer is the wing wherewith the soul flies to heaven, and meditation the eye wherewith we see God.

*When we speak about wisdom, we are speaking about Christ.
When we speak about virtue, we are speaking about Christ.
When we speak about justice, we are speaking about Christ.
When we speak about peace, we are speaking about Christ.
When we speak about truth and life and redemption, we are speaking about Christ.*

Liturgy Calendar & Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 5th

Vigil of the Second Sunday of Advent

The Repose of the Soul of Ruben Day rb Fr. Kevin

Sunday, December 6th

Second Sunday of Advent

The Repose of Fr. Driscoll/Intentions of the Parish Faithful

Tuesday, December 8th

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM

Intnetions of the Parish Faithful

Wednesday, December 9th

Advent Weekday

Debbie Jones rb Sheila Marquardt

Thursday, December 10th

Advent Weekday

NO MASS SCHEDULED TODAY

Friday, December 11th

Advent Weekday

The Repose of Leonard Dubuque rb Virginia Dubuque

Humbly asking for your prayers

Marcy Bishop, Mary Oullette, Maryalice Rouselle, The Clay Family, Virginia Rubel, Lou Marchello, Patricia Kelly, Glen Rogers, Liz Hipp, Michael Conrad, Neil Miskimins, Ellen Holland, Kevin Normandeau, Kaylee Martin, Dave Evertz, Steve Ducharme, Leonard & Gail Piedalue, Kate Shrider Olsen, Don Herbst, Bill Nash, Donna Jacobs, Derrie Edge, Madge Vert.

Please help to keep the list current by contacting the Parish Office. Also, out of respect for a person's privacy, please make sure that all individuals wish to be publicly identified.

Grace be to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for you all; Making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 1:2

The Holy Father's prayer intention for December

For a Life of Prayer: We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

Please pray for our seminarians!
Dillon Armstrong, Tyler Frohlich, Matthew Christians, Kyle Tannehill and Kaleb Mitchell, Riley Helgoe, Brett Rotz, John Cooney



Continued.

message in a manner that children can understand. It is almost like a game.

There are two key elements of the myth that really do need to be fleshed out. The first is that this Santa is an omniscient (all-knowing being) who loves the innocence of a child-like heart, and his generosity is an expression of the gratuitous and generous love of God; the second is that Santa rewards the behavior of those who are good. In other words, there is a person other than ourselves, who determines whether or not our behavior is "naughty or nice." It is this point that stands against the sin of Adam and Eve who stretched forth their hands to grasp the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in order to "be like gods" and determine for themselves what is right or wrong.

Children are innocent and their hearts are pure which makes them ripe for fantasy and whimsy and the folklore of magical creatures that makes part of their young life and formation something of a game. But keep in mind that it is the substance of the folklore that is the point, not the game as an end in itself. The Coca-Cola Santa that many of us have come to reject is rightfully rejected and should be despised as being the antithesis of the spirit of Christmas that we would want to communicate to our children. Christmas is not about greed and avarice and the desire to possess and accumulate. Quite the opposite. The spirit of Christmas and the myth and the folklore of Santa is meant to communicate the self-giving generous love of God, our Father and our Creator; and that at the end of the day is the ultimate point.

The myth of Santa is a game that plays upon the innocence of your children's hearts and forms them in the fundamental truths of our Christian faith; charity, objective morality and self-sacrifice. In the folklore of Santa children should learn the significance of the gift of Jesus Christ from God the Father, the giver of all good gifts, and the law giver who cares so much for us that he has revealed his commandments so that those who love him may obey them with gratitude and receive the hope of an eternal reward.

Here are the brass tacks. Catholicism without folklore and legend can come across as harsh and dogmatic and rigorously intellectual; and Catholicism without dogma can easily become a religion of superstition when it gives itself over to fancy, the very thing many people wish to avoid by rejecting folklore. To bridge the gap, to achieve the golden mean, Catholics demand the foundation of solid doctrine, but have no problem using the innocence of a childlike imagination to elaborate myths and folklore to teach those truths and pass them down from one generation to the next. J.R.R. Tolkien has shown us in the *Lord of the Rings* that fantasy, magical creatures and the world of make believe is not inimical to the Catholic faith, but can teach and reinforce it when it is grounded in the truth of things and communicates that truth with innocence and imagination.

God bless,
Fr. Kevin Christofferson



All Sunday homilies are available on YouTube and can be found by searching the full name *Fr. Kevin Christofferson*.

ROSARY GROUP

St. Joseph Hospital Chapel

Monday at 6:00 pm
Friday at 9:00 am



DIVINE MERCY RADIO
90.7 FM



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St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot
Homily on the Advent of Christ

In the first coming he (Jesus) was seen on earth, dwelling among men; he himself testifies that they saw him and hated him. In the final coming all flesh will see the salvation of our God, and they will look on him whom they pierced. The intermediate coming is a hidden one; in it only the elect see the Lord within their own selves, and they are saved. In his first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in this middle coming he comes in spirit and in power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty.

In case someone should think that what we say about this middle coming is sheer invention, listen to what our Lord himself says: *If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.* There is another passage of Scripture which reads: *He who fears God will do good,* but something further has been said about the one who loves, that is, that he will keep God's word. Where is God's word to be kept? Obviously in the heart, as the prophet says: *I have hidden your words in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.*

Keep God's word in this way. Let it enter into your very being, let it take possession of your desires and your whole way of life. Feed on goodness, and your soul will delight in its richness. Remember to eat your bread, or your heart will wither away. Fill your soul with richness and strength.

Because this coming lies between the other two, it is like a road on which we travel from the first coming to the last. In the first, Christ was our redemption; in the last, he will appear as our life; in this middle coming, he is our rest and consolation.

If you keep the word of God in this way, it will also keep you. The Son with the Father will come to you. The great Prophet who will build the new Jerusalem will come, the one who makes all things new. This coming will fulfill what is written: *As we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly man.* Just as Adam's sin spread through all mankind and took hold of all, so Christ, who created and redeemed all, will glorify all, once he takes possession of all.



Sacred Heart/St. Joseph \$4,920 of \$11,200 (44%)
Immaculate Conception \$13,920 of \$29,900 (47%)

Parish Offertory Progress Report
Fiscal Year beginning July 1st

Immaculate Conception
\$58,754 of \$170,000 (35%)
Sacred Heart/St. Joseph
\$17,358 of \$44,500 (39%)



Thank you for your generosity!