

The Bells of St. Mary's
The Church of the Immaculate Conception

Thirty first Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 3, 2019

From Fr. Anthony Columba Ekanem, MSP—Pastor

His Mercy Is Welcoming

The first two days of this month, we celebrated all our heroes in faith (those officially recognized as Saints on ALL SAINTS DAY) and also remembered all our loved ones who have gone before us on ALL SOULS' DAY. Honoring those whose lives have been holy and recalling all those we love whom we have lost in our journey of life, the Church invites us to pray especially for all the souls of the faithful departed throughout this month. For God, however, no one is truly lost; no one is dead. All are alive in God according to the Scripture, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him," (Luke 20:38).

Looking at the Book of Wisdom 11:22 - 12:2), it brings to mind a beautiful song in our Seasonal Missalette entitled, 'There's a Wideness in God's Mercy,' especially the second verse:

- "There is welcome for the sinner,
- And a promised grace made good;
- There is mercy with the Savior;
- There is healing in his blood.
- There is grace enough for thousands
- Of new worlds as great as this;"

In this reading, more than 12 times, the unknown Jewish author addresses God with a personal pronoun, 'you' in order to display his profound knowledge and skills, mainly how he instructs his Hellenistic audience on their traditions, belief, and their understanding of Scriptures. For me, this song beautifully suggests the theme for our reflection today looking at the divine nature of God and (His mercy) and the relationship of God with all of the creation.

The Book of Wisdom was likely written in the early century before Christ to a Jewish audience living in Alexandria, Egypt. The author begins by emphasizing God's grandeur, the universe itself as a mere grain in the balance or drop of the morning dew when compared to God. Yet God loves all that He has created, and overlooks people's sins so that they can repent. Immediately following this image of divine splendor and majesty, is a tenderly personal view of God. The Lord shows mercy on all, loves everything that He has created, preserves, and spares all things, simply because they belong to God. "You have mercy on all because you can do all things." As God warns and reminds them of their sins, they ought always to remember that God's mercy extends to all.

The Gospel (Luke 19: 1-10) gives us an example of God's compassion in the way Jesus seeks out the tax - collector, Zacchaeus, and calls him to repentance. At that time, tax- collectors were in the same category as thieves, murderers, and prostitutes. Furthermore, because they worked for the Romans, and they were regarded as traitors and treated as outcasts. We can understand today, why the good people of Jericho were offended when Jesus went to the house of Zacchaeus. And He said, "this man is a descendant of Abraham," and therefore he is entitled to the mercy of God as any other Israelite. And Jesus declared this to show once again His mission on earth to those around. "For the Son of Man has come to seek" out and save people like Zacchaeus.

Now, let us put ourselves in the shoes of Zacchaeus, the tax collector. He was so eager to see Jesus that he climbed a tree. Not only because he was short in stature but because the crowd was not just an ordinary crowd. But Zacchaeus did not care what the people would say nor think about his dignity when he ran to climb up the tree to see Jesus. For a wealthy man such as Zacchaeus to do that shows his sincere desire to see Jesus. Jesus' words and Zacchaeus' response are very profound, "come down quickly," then without any hesitation, "he came down quickly." This encounter in Luke's Gospel highlights an essential factor in Jesus' ministry. "To the other towns, also, I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God." (4:43). There are a divine necessity and purpose in Jesus' preaching and in visiting the house of Zacchaeus: And that is to bring the good news to all people.

When Zacchaeus joyfully receives Jesus into His house, he announces that he will give half his possessions to the poor and will repay four times over anything he has extorted. He expressed a sincere act of contrition that he was a sinner and his gratitude to God for saving him. Zacchaeus experienced the love of Jesus. This encounter must have been a wonderful experience for a man who, up to this, had suffered so much hatred. It is marvelous to feel that somebody has confidence in us, that we are not judged or condemned, but loved as we are.

To be loved in one's goodness is not a big deal. It's no more than one deserves. But to be welcome in one's deplorable situation means a whole lot. Zacchaeus felt the surprise of being accepted and appreciated by Jesus instead of being scolded or condemned. The important thing is that today, salvation has come to his house, fulfilling Jesus' mission of seeking and saving the lost. Touched by the kindness of Jesus, Zacchaeus saw the error of his ways and resolved to make a change. His conversion was a conversion to goodness. In this episode, we see Luke's concern for the proper use of wealth again. To some extent, we all need this kind of conversion as we journey along as stewards of God's gifts in this world.

As we draw nearer to the end of the Liturgical or calendar year, we pray for an increase in His abiding faith and vibrant love for one another because His mercy is a welcoming gift to us sinners.

- How do we feel when we want to go to Church for Eucharistic Adoration?
- How do we feel about going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- When has awareness of God's mercy changed our lives in a significant way?
- Do we allow people detect our yearning or response to God?
- How do we blossom in the eyes of the Lord?

Stewardship

*Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday, 10/27/19 our Offering was \$ 3,941.00

Last weeks collection for Church Property was \$986.00 Thank you for your generosity.

** Update as of Oct 31, for Renew & Rebuild Amount Pledged \$420,984.30 Amount received \$216,131.50

Food Collection: Today, we will have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community. Thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Parish Family Directory:

Please see Dianne to make your appointment for your parish family photo for December 21 & 22 and January 4 & 5. This family photo is only for the use of the parish.

*Next week will have a second collection for our Church property Insurance. Thank you for your generosity.

NEED FOR A NEW BOILER

We are in need of a new Boiler for the Rectory. The one we have now is having some problems and it has been serving for about twenty years or more.

ATLAS WELDING & BOILER REPAIR COMPANY who maintains the Heating—system for us, are proposing we get a new one because the parts are now difficult to find or fix and are obsolete. A new one will cost about \$31,350 including labor.

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Wisdom 11: 22-12:2 p. 56

The Lord, who can do all things, spares all things. God's imperishable spirit is in all things, and the Lord God overlooks "people's sins that they may repent."

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145: 1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14, p. 57 I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Second Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1: 11-2:2 p. 57 The name of Christ is to be glorified in you and you in him.

Gospel: Luke 19: 1-10 p. 58 When Jesus passed through Jericho, Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree in order to see him. Jesus went home with Zacchaeus and blessed his house, for the "Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

Religious Education

November:

11/09/19 Religious Education Classes

11/16/19 Religious Education

11/23/19 Religious Education Classes ~ [Family Catechesis](#)

[Day Families and Children 9:30am to 1:00pm](#) Please bring your donation.

11/30/19 No Religious Education Classes - **Happy Thanksgiving**

National Vocation Awareness Week

This week, November 3 – 9, is National Vocation Awareness Week. It is annual week – long celebration of the Catholic Church in the U.S., dedicated to promote Vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and Consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayer and support for those who are considering one of these particular Vocations. Let us ask Our Lord for more dedicated holy priests, deacons and Consecrate men and women. May they be inspired by Jesus Christ, supported by our faith community and respond generously to God's gift of a Vocation.

Prayer for Vocations

Hail Mary, full of grace; all generations call you blessed.

Hail Mother of God; when asked by the angel to bear the Son of the Most High, filled with faith, you responded: "Let it be done unto me."

Holy Mother of Jesus, at the wedding feast at Cana, you prompted your Son to perform his first sign.

Be with us as we discern our life's work and guide us in the way we are called to follow in the footsteps of your Son.

Holy Mother of the Savior, at the foot of the cross you mourned the death of your only Son.

Bless and embrace the loving parents of all priests, deacons, brothers and sisters.

Holy Mother of the Good Shepherd, turn your motherly care to this nation.

Intercede for us to the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to the harvest in this land dedicated to your honor.

Queen of Peace, Mirror of Justice, Health of the Sick, inspire vocations in our time.

Let the word of your Son be made flesh anew in the lives of persons anxious to proclaim the good news of everlasting life. Amen.

PARISH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

Saturday, November 16, 2019

Have you made the necessary arrangements for our Parish celebration? Invite your family members and friends to come; book for a table for them to join us celebrate birthdays, Wedding anniversaries, and all that the good Lord has done for us. Let this be another way our Church of the Immaculate Conception of St Mary's is kicking off Thanksgiving Day spirit this year. It will be from 8:00 pm - 1:00 am in our Parish Hall.

Mass Intentions for the Week of November 2 - November 10 2019

Saturday, November 2, 2019: All Souls Day

12:05 pm - All Soul

5:00pm - All Soul

7:30pm - All Soul

Sunday, November 3, 2019:

7:30 am - For the Parishioners

9:00 am - For Parishioners

11:00 am - Celina Antao * Esther & Eduardo Rodrigues

Monday, November 4, 2019:

8:15am - Patrick Mangan (Living) * Carmel Mangan

12:05 pm - Padraic Gallagher (Living) * Winnie O'Flaherty

Tuesday November 5, 2019

8:15am - Maureen Smith + * Philomena Murphy

12:05pm - Fr. James Lloyd CSP (Living) * Tony Felicissimo

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm - Michael Dako + * Christine Dako Macharry

Thursday, November 7, 2019:

8:15 am - In Thanksgiving * Hannah Linus

12:05 pm - Fr. James Lloyd CSP (Living) * Tony Felicissimo

7:00 pm - Jesus & Carlota Ruiz + * Joaquin Ruiz e Hija

Friday, November 8, 2019:

8:15 am - In Thanksgiving * Francisco & Claudia Duggan & Family

12:05 pm - In Thanksgiving * Gertrudes Torres

Saturday, November 9, 2019:

12:05 pm - Agripino Chicano + * Violet Chicano

5:00pm - Anthony & Margaret Mary Felicissimo * Tony Felicissimo

7:30pm - Efren Garcia * Esposa Hijos y Nietos

Sunday, November 10, 2019:

7:30 am - For the Parishioners

9:00 am - Johnny Rios + *Melissa Carrion

11:00 am - Juvenil Antao * Esther & Eduardo Rodrigues

+Indicates deceased *Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.