

ADVENT The Season of Joyful Anticipation



A Reflection from Fr. Joseph

As far as I can tell, today's Gospel is the only scene, in any of the Gospels, where two women speak to one another without an adult male being present. This alone should peak our curiosity. So, let's look at this Gospel scene more carefully.

The two women are Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. Both women are pregnant: Mary with Jesus and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. But it is really Elizabeth on which this scene centers. Earlier in the Gospel, the angel Gabriel told Mary that Elizabeth, who was advanced in age and unable to have children, was now pregnant and in her sixth month.

You can imagine, that under these circumstances, Elizabeth would have had many fears about her pregnancy. The worries of every mother were intensified in her case. Would her baby live? Would he be healthy? Would she be able to deliver him successfully? Indeed, it was probably in light of these fears that Mary set out, in haste, to be with her cousin during this difficult pregnancy.

All these details are important to understand when it comes to the central focus of this scene, which is a movement. It is the movement of John the Baptist in his mother's womb. It is a movement that only a mother can feel, and it is very likely that it was at Mary's visit that Elizabeth first felt her child move within her.

Now, only a mother can describe what it feels like to have life move within her. Only a mother can describe the joy in knowing that her baby is alive because she can feel that life moving in her very being. This visitation story, then, is a story of hope. It tells us that in uncertain and difficult circumstances, we can have reason to trust that things will turn out well because of small but certain movements of life within us.

We all have problems in our families and we often focus on them. We worry about our children, about our parents, about our spouse. But this Gospel tells us that amid these valid concerns, we should wait for and identify the movements of life. Who is the person in our family that always makes us smile? When have we been proud of what one of our children has accomplished?

We should not pass over these movements of life. We should treasure them, as a mother, who is pregnant, recognizes the movement of life within her and sees it as a sign that the promise of the future is coming to fulfillment. Stirrings of life in our family and in our world are God's way of reminding us that goodness is growing around us and within us. It is our role, then, to feel that goodness and nurture it until the day when God brings it to birth.



DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. Dec. 24th - 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12,16

Tue. Dec. 25th - Is. 52:7-10; Heb. 1:1-6; John 1:1-18

Wed. Dec. 26th - ST. STEPHEN, feast

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Mat. 10:17-22

Thurs. Dec. 27th - ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE, feast

1 John 1:1-4; John 20:2-8

Fri. Dec. 28th - THE HOLY INNOCENTS, feast

1 John 1:5-2:2; Mat. 2:13-18

Sat. Dec. 29th - 1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35

Sun. Dec. 30th - THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS

1 Sam 1:11, 20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52



ST. JUDE'S RAFFLE: CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS

- 1st Prize: \$3,000 - Ticket #A1274 - Marizel Adoptante

- 2nd Prize: \$1,000 - Ticket #A0777 - Estrella Halos

- 3rd Prize: \$ 500 - Ticket #C1075 - Cecile Matias

Thank you to all for your efforts and support. It was a successful fundraising event. Special thanks to Richelle Akol, Imelda Baterina, Cathy Ho and Polly Gumilao for all their time and hard work.



ALTAR SERVERS

Please check your schedules for the Christmas and New Year's Masses.

PROJECT ADVANCE

"Live gratefully, give generously"

Many thanks to all who gave to our annual Project Advance appeal. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and support. Please be reminded that the deadline to fulfill your pledges is Dec. 31st.

PARISH ENVELOPES FOR 2019

Have you picked-up your new sets of parish envelopes from the table at the front of the church? Anyone wishing envelopes for 2019 is asked to call the parish office.



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Sat. Dec. 22 nd	5 pm Mass for Henry Ho, R.I.P.
Sun. Dec. 23 rd	9 am Mass for parishioners 11 am Mass for Cristina Gauna Gomez, R.I.P. 5 pm Mass for the int. of Anna Corvera & fmly. 7 pm Mass for the int. Amador & Rita Castillo
Mon. Dec. 24 th	8 am Mass for Virginia Jotie, R.I.P. 5 pm Mass for Arcadio Bacatan & Tita Timbal 11 pm Mass for parishioners
Tue. Dec. 25 th	9 am Mass for Joseph & Choy Yet Sheung, R.I.P. 11 am Mass for the int. of C & L Staedler
Wed. Dec. 26 th	9 am Mass for Esther Baldasso, R.I.P. 7:30 pm Novena Mass Novena
Thur. Dec. 27 th	8:00 am Mass for Gus Huggan, R.I.P.
Fri. Dec. 28 th	8:00 am Mass for the int. of Vilma Cayabyab
Sat. Dec. 29 th	9:00 am Mass for Adelina Medeiros, R.I.P.

RCIA & ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Are you interested in finding out more about the Catholic faith? Know someone who might be? Come or invite them to join our parish program called RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult). The program is suitable to anyone who is interested in learning more about our faith, for Catholics who have not yet received the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion and for those who would like to deepen their faith, whether you were baptized or not. For more info call the parish office (604) 434-6700.



SCHOOL NEWS

Our school is now closed for the Christmas break. We wish all our staff, students and parents a safe and enjoyable Christmas Holiday. The school re-opens Monday, Jan. 7th.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

Dec. 24th - Children's Christmas Mass at 5 pm
Midnight Mass at 11 pm

Dec. 25th - Christmas Day Masses at 9 & 11 am only.
Dec. 26th - Mass at 9 am

Dec. 31st - Holy Hour at 11:00 pm with Benediction
Midnight Mass at 12 am followed by refreshments

Jan. 1st - New Year's Day Masses at 9 & 11 am only.



PLEASE NOTE: Our office is now closed for the Christmas holidays. We will re-open on Monday, Jan. 7th. We wish each and everyone of you peace, joy and happiness this Christmas Season. May the blessings of Christmas be with you throughout the New Year 2019.



A Christmas Message from Fr. Jun

Dear Parishioners,

"And the word was made flesh and He dwelt among us." What a beautiful Christmas gift we have received from God.

As we celebrate Christmas, we are thankful for the gift of faith, a gift of 'good news' that opens up for us the beautiful message of this holy season, that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to redeem us and to show us the way to the Father in heaven.

My hope is that, as we gather together in celebration, we can humble ourselves enough to truly worship the Holy Child in the manger and acknowledge him for who He truly is, and not what the world — or at times even us, in our human frailty and sin — want Him to be.

Christmas is about God coming to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. We were trapped in sin, so God sent a Saviour to deliver us. That's Christmas. It's not simply a story to admire; it's truth that transforms!

May you all have a merry and blessed Christmas.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

Stewardship Reflections

"For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke 1:44)

When you hear the Scripture readings and Gospel reading each Sunday, do you "leap for joy?" If not, don't blame the lecturer or priest, rather look inside yourself. Do you prepare for Mass each week or do you just show up and expect to be entertained? We are called to be active participants, not passive bystanders.

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Archbishop's Annual Mass for Life

Join us as we celebrate life on Friday, Dec. 28, at Holy Rosary Cathedral. Rosary begins at 11:30 a.m. & Mass is at 12:10 p.m.

A Christmas Message from Archbishop Miller

Christmas celebrations enable us to remember that God has not forgotten us and that he comes to us in our daily lives. He came among us 2,000 years ago, born in Bethlehem. But he also comes to be with us today in every situation of our life, the good times and the bad. He dwells among us; he lives with us and within us.

As we journey toward Christmas, the Church takes us by the hand and helps us to experience once again the joyful expectation of the Lord's coming to his people long ago, and to us today.

To read Archbishop Miller's complete Christmas message please visit:
<https://rcav.org/christmas2018>

Fiat: Women's Discernment Events – Snowshoe with the Sisters

Fiat, the women's vocation discernment group for the Archdiocese of Vancouver, is getting ready for another year of events. Please save the date for our upcoming snowshoeing event on Jan. 12. More details to come. Events are open to single, Catholic young women ages 18-35 who are open to discerning and responding to God's call in their life. Sign up now to receive emails of events throughout the year. E-mail womensvocations@rcav.org for more information

Winter Institute

The Winter Institute is a day dedicated to ministry training and faith formation courses. Join us Saturday, Jan. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Notre Dame Regional Secondary School, Vancouver. Registration is \$40 on or before Jan. 14. Course offerings for 2019: For course descriptions and registration, visit rcav.org/oc-winter-institute

Quo Vadis – Men's Discernment Events

Join us for a Discernment Evening with Fr. Nick Meisl - Hearing God's Call in the Bible on Wednesday, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's Parish, Vancouver. Open to single Catholic men ages 18+ who want to answer the question: What is God calling me to do with my life? Please register at least one week in advance by contacting the Vocations Office at vocations@rcav.org or call 604-443-325