

Saint Anthony of Padua Parish

With the Eucharist at the centre, we are a community desiring to be saints, sent out to love like Jesus and proclaim Him in every circumstance.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2019

Overcoming Our Fear of Inviting Others

Let's look at the fear of St. Joseph in the Gospel and see how God overcomes it. It says, "The birth of Jesus the Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly" (Mt 1:18-19).

Our mother Mary and St. Joseph are 'betrothed,' not 'engaged.' Betrothal means they're legally married in Jewish culture, but not yet living under the same roof. St. Joseph discovers that she's pregnant and decides to divorce her quietly.

What's fascinating is that we don't know precisely why he decided to divorce. He knew she was pregnant, but what did he think? There are three theories in Catholic theology, all are supported by different saints. 1) *The Suspicion Theory*: According to St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom and the best saint ever, St. Justin, St. Joseph believed that Mary committed adultery. 2) *The Perplexity Theory* says he couldn't understand how this could happen and couldn't believe that Mary would be unfaithful. At a loss for an explanation, he simply planned to divorce her quietly. This is supported by St. Jerome. 3) *The Reverence Theory*: St. Joseph knew that Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and so felt completely unworthy to be her husband and the foster father of Jesus. St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas support this view (*The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: New Testament*).

These three kinds of fear resemble our own. Sometimes, we misunderstand what God's asking of us or misunderstand other people. Other times, we're simply perplexed. And sometimes we feel unworthy to do what God's asking us to do; perhaps we'll fail. "But just when he had resolved to do this, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not

be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins...' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the Angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife" (Mt 1:20-21,24).

The key reality here is that "God takes the initiative!" He always guides us in spite of our fears. He often overcomes them, or at least gives us courage to do His will. St. Joseph "is being asked to say 'yes' to what Mary already has said 'yes'" (Bertrand Buby, SM, *Mary of Galilee*). God will always point us ahead, but is waiting for a 'Yes' from us.

Pope Benedict says that "only someone [like St. Joseph] with a real sensitivity for God and his ways can receive God's message" in the form of a dream. And so we need to be sensitive to what God's asking of us. He's asking great things of us, things outside our comfort zone, and so "it demands extraordinarily courageous faith" (Jesus of Nazareth, Volume 3).

We can apply this to any of our fears. But let's apply this to a widespread fear among Catholics about talking about God and faith, and inviting people to a faith event like Alpha. We're now in our fourth homily about Alpha as Culture, and the virtue we want to consider is what's called being evangelistically positioned, which means sharing the good news we've received. Many of us are afraid we'll be rejected when we invite, that we won't be liked, that people will misunderstand us. [...]

The fruitfulness of Alpha reminds us that Christians should share the joy of knowing and loving Jesus. Jesus didn't just live His life and wait for people to come to Him. He had a mission, and went out to other people! All the popes for the past 50 years have been emphasizing that we have to go out, talk to people about the deepest questions in their hearts, and, when the time is right, speak to them

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Christmas 2019 Parish Schedule

Penitential Service

Sunday, December 22, 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve

Mass: Tuesday, December 24, 5:00 pm

Carols in the Church: 11:00 pm

Midnight Mass: 12:00 am

Christmas Day

Masses: Wednesday, December 25

8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm



New Year's Eve

Mass: Tuesday, December 31, 5:00 pm

Holy Hour & Gaudeamus: 11:00 pm

New Year's Day

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Masses: 10:00 am, 12:00 pm, 5:00 pm

Pastor: Fr. Justin Huang Blog: thejustmeasure.ca
Deacon: Andrew Kung deaconandrewrcav@gmail.com
Priest in Residence: Fr. Pierre Leblond plb.op272@gmail.com

Address: 8891 Montcalm St., Vancouver BC V6P 4R4
 Mailing Address: 1345 West 73rd Ave., Van., BC V6P 3E9
 Tel 604.266.6131
 Hours Tuesday—Friday
 9:00 am—12:00 noon
 1:00 pm—3:00 pm
 In case of emergencies,
 please call the office anytime.
 Web: stanthonysvan.com
 Email: office@stanthonysvancouver.org

St. Anthony of Padua School

Kindergarten to Grade 7
 1370 West 73rd Avenue,
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 Principal: Mr. Michael Perry
 Telephone: 604.261.4043
 Website: stanthonypaduaschool.ca
 School Email: office@stanthonypaduaschool.ca

Parish Registration

Our parish family warmly welcomes new parishioners.
 Please register by filling out a registration form located in the
 vestibule or the Parish Office. If you are registered and moving,
 please advise the parish office.

Sunday Masses

Saturday 5:00 pm
 Sunday 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm

Weekdays	Masses	Confessions
Monday	8:15 am	8:00 to 8:10 am
Tuesday	7:30 pm	
Wednesday & Thursday	8:15 am	8:00 to 8:10 am
Friday (school months)	8:00 am	7:45 to 7:55 am
Saturday	9:00 am	9:45 am

Confession

Saturday afternoon 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm
 1st Saturday each month 9:45 am to 1:00 pm;
 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm;
 7:00 pm to 9:45 pm

Eucharistic Adoration enter at 1365 West 73rd Avenue
 Daily: 6:00 am to Midnight

First Friday of each month: 8:45 am to 10:00 am in the church
 followed by **Benediction**.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA) Please call the parish office for more information on RCIA classes and other Sacraments.

Weekday Masses & Intentions

Monday, December 23	Ferial	Raffaele Salvino
Tuesday, December 24	Ferial	—
Wednesday, December 25	<i>Solemnity of Christmas</i> Nativity of the Lord	—
Thursday, December 26	<i>Feast</i> St. Stephen, Martyr	Thelma Chan
Friday, December 27	<i>Feast</i> St. John, Apostle	Terrence Scully †
Saturday, December 28	<i>Feast</i> Holy Innocents	Frank Kim Sing †

Prayers for the Sick At Holy Mass we remember the sick including: Nita Carvajal, Nung Chum, Isobel Clancy, Nick De Vos, Tamara Dixon, Elaine dos Remedios, Kathleen Francis, Feli Hempl, Cecile Hernandez, Yvonne Kharoubeh, Molly Loui-Ying, Susan Panlican, Huguette Piché, Barney Rousseau, Therese Rozario, Christina Sayo, Teresa Tche, Cynthia Wing.

The Hospitality Ministry would like to invite more parishioners to become part of our team. There is a need for volunteers as **Ushers, Greeters** and **Welcome Booth ministers** at all Masses: Saturdays at 5:00 pm and Sundays at 8:00 am, 10:00am and 12:00pm. We would also welcome people who would be willing to act as “spares” when the regularly scheduled greeters are not available. For more information please email Ron at rsiy2009@gmail.com.

Upcoming Homily Themes

December 24 & 25
A Chance for Reconciliation

December 28 & 29
Preacher: Fr. Pierre Leblond

December 31 & January 1:
Preacher: Fr. Pierre Leblond

January 4 & 5
The Best Time of Year to Grow

January 11 & 12
How to Realize You're Special

January 18 & 19
How to Have Spiritual Friends



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alpha starts January 9, 2020
Thursdays, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Email: alpha@stanthonyvan.com
www.stanthonyvan.com

Who will you invite?

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Alpha

The Catholic Women's League of Canada

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Protect our children, families and marriages. Speak up for stringent **Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornography Websites**. The CWL members have distributed postcards which will be mailed to the federal government. NOTE: If you didn't get a chance to sign a postcard last weekend, please see any CWL member at this Sunday's Pancake Breakfast.

Theology Week Info Session

On **Tuesday, January 14, from 6:15 pm - 7:15 pm**, Dr Lynda Robitaille from St. Mark's College will lead an info session about a week-long program called *Foundation of the Catholic Faith* from **July 20th to July 24th, 2020** at St. Mark's College located at the UBC campus. This program offers an opportunity to learn a variety of central elements in the Catholic tradition, as well as the practices of theological reflection and discernment. Fr. Nick Meisl, Dr. Nick Olkovich, and Deacon Hilmar Pabel will be the course instructors. For more information, please contact Sara Ho at the Parish Office: saraho.sapv@gmail.com.

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about God the Father and Jesus. This is part of what it means to be Christian. [...]

Now let's focus on loving invitations. We Catholics are afraid of inviting because we don't know how to do it. But, just like we said last year: "1) Invite people the way we'd like to be invited. If we were to get invited to a friend's church, we'd want it to be done out of love, not to be sold something, but because a friend truly cares about us. We need to be there for people! We wouldn't want any pressure. So don't force anyone. It should be warm, caring, and sincere. 2) Be the best version of yourself. We all have unique ways of loving people, so be natural. Be joyful and virtuous, because that's a powerful witness. 3) Tell them what it's about." Alpha's a place where anyone from any background can explore faith, ask questions and share their point of view. And always offer to go with them. [...]

This year, we're doing something different. Rather than focusing on inviting to Christmas Mass, which of course we can still do, we're focused on inviting them to Alpha on January 9, because Church leaders have realized that Alpha is more accessible for people: It's more relaxed, there's food, an opportunity to engage,

Karake Open Mic Night with our Church Choirs! Friday, December 27, 6:30 pm — 9:00 pm.

We'll provide the food. You provide the entertainment! For more information contact our Director of Music,

Christopher Susanto, christopher.sapv@gmail.com.



Join the **Knights of Columbus** for



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and the videos are brilliant. Of course, Mass is more important than Alpha, but Mass alone doesn't lead to conversion because most people aren't in a state to receive its graces. [...]

This is specifically what I'm asking all of us to do this Christmas: **Invite the people for whom we've been praying for the past three weeks to Alpha**. It's three weeks before January 9, and we're going to look for the time to ask them lovingly. Once we've invited them, **check off their names on our cards**, bring them back to Mass, **put them in the collection basket** and **count how many invitations** we've made. [...] We're not focused on how many people say 'Yes'—that's the Holy Spirit's business. We're focused on if we loved our neighbour enough to share with them.

This is a holy time of year, when Christians around the world are preparing to celebrate our Saviour's birth, and Jesus is already working in everyone's heart. God's taking away our fear of rejection, and I myself feel more confident. I keep on thinking about those names I wrote down, and that 46% of Canadians want a closer relationship with God. If we follow St. Joseph's attitude, everything will work out.


- Excerpt from Fr. Justin's homily, December 22, 2019.

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