

# 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.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 16, 2020

## Choosing a Better Way



Nick Vujicic was born without arms and legs. He was teased and bullied as a child, and first thought about killing himself when he was eight. He didn't know if he would get married, be independent, or if he had a purpose, so, at age ten, he tried to drown himself but stopped for his parents' sake.

Besides the constant support of his parents, a few key moments in his life gave him a new direction. When he was 15, he gave his life to Jesus after reading John 9, about the man born blind. Nick realized that if God had a plan for that man, which was to reveal the glory of God, then He had a plan for Nick too! When he was 17, his mother gave him an article to read of a severely disabled person who lived life with vigor, and this showed Nick that there was another way to live. That same year, a high school janitor said, "You're going to be a speaker," and this pointed him in the direction of helping others through public speaking.

The gift we want to focus on is that God gave Nick a different choice. We typically live believing that certain things will happen, that we have no other choice. But God gives us better options. [...].

The First Reading is from the book of Sirach, the Old Testament book of Jewish wisdom. Listen to the reading's emphasis on choice, that we're not forced to choose the bad path: "If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and they will save you. If you trust in God, you too shall live, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice" (15:15). We have freedom! We can follow God and do the right thing!

And not all choices are equally good. Some choices are good, some are evil, some are neutral: "The Lord has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, good and evil, and whichever

one chooses, that shall be given" (15:16-17).

Do you want a better life? Then start by choosing it. Do you want to be healed? Do it. One time, St. Thomas Aquinas' sister asked him, "What can I do to become a saint?" and he responded, "Will it" (Jordan Aumann, *Spiritual Theology*). This doesn't mean that we make ourselves saints, but growth always requires a choice. God will make our lives better, but waits for a choice on our part.

In John, chapter five, there's a man who's been paralyzed for 38 years, and who sits by the Bethzatha pool along with other paralyzed people. The text says, "When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?'" (Jn 5:6). That's interesting: Why does Jesus ask if the man wants to be healed? Of course he wants to be healed; that's why he's waiting to get into the pool with healing powers. But perhaps it's not that simple. The text says that Jesus recognized that the man had been 'there for a long time'—why? The man responds, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me" (5:7).

Is this man making excuses for not being healed? Dr. John Bergsma, a Scripture scholar, says, "You can get used to living with your illnesses... This man's illness is a sign of our sin... We get used to our sins... our dysfunctions, and sometimes we don't want to change" (*Looking Beyond*). We often have a mentality that says, "I don't have enough time. I have no other choice. I have to do it this way. There's no other way. I'm too old. It's too hard. Other people have more opportunities. I tried before and it didn't work." But God says, "Stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, good and evil, and whichever one chooses, that shall be given."

In this season *Life is a Gift*, one of God's greatest gifts to us is choice.

Two of our active parishioners once became pregnant before marriage. They feared rejection (or at least judgement) from the Church, and knew that abortion was a legal option, but chose to continue the pregnancy. When they met with me, I told them, "A baby is always good news. Certainly a sin has occurred, and you will both need to go to Confession (and live chastely), but your baby's a gift from God." Knowing they had my support, they continued to come to Mass here and discovered that the love of those who knew them never changed. They've been growing so beautifully over these years, and even counselled another unmarried pregnant couple.

In 2010, St. Paul's hospital received their first baby dropped off at a box called *Angel's Cradle*. Presumably the mother dropped off her two-day-old baby whom she couldn't take care of, putting the baby in a bassinet near the hospital's emergency entrance, and then an alarm alerted the nurses that a baby had arrived, and then the Ministry of Children found the child a home. *Angel's Cradle* was designed to give mothers another choice! No one gets arrested and

...continued inside

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### St. Anthony of Padua School

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### 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  
 1<sup>st</sup> 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 73<sup>rd</sup> 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, February 17	Ferial	Julieta Saclayan
Tuesday, February 18	Ferial	Kim Bing Chuang †
Wednesday, February 19	Ferial	Elizabeth Burke †
Thursday, February 20	Ferial	Lilliana Taylor †
Friday, February 21	Ferial	Thelma & Matthew Stewart
Saturday, February 22	<i>Feast</i> Chair of St. Peter	Francisco Coronel †

**Prayers for the Sick** At Holy Mass we remember the sick including:  
 Nita Carvajal, Nung Chum, Isobel Clancy, Elaine dos Remedios, Kathleen Francis, Feli Hempl, Yvonne Kharoubeh, Susan Panlican, Huguette Piché, Christina Sayo, Teresa Tche, Cynthia Wing.

### Ushers needed at Sunday Masses

The Hospitality Ministry would like to invite more parishioners to become part of our team. We have an immediate need for ushers at all Masses: Saturdays at 5:00 pm and Sundays at 8:00 am, 10:00 am and 12:00 pm. For more information please email Ron at [rsiy2009@gmail.com](mailto:rsiy2009@gmail.com).

## Upcoming Homily Themes

February 22 & 23

*Judgemental + Gentle = Perfection*

\* NEW SEASON: *Loving the Liturgy*

February 29 & March 1

*An Opportunity to Grow*

March 7 & 8

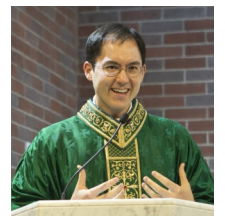
*Three Ways to Transcendence*

March 14 & 15

*Being on Time for Mass*

March 21 & 22

*Hitting the Wall: How to Deal with Suffering*



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## “Life is a Gift” Season

Monday, February 17  
(Family Day)  
**CCBR Open House**  
9:00 AM — 12:00 PM  
Church Hall



Thursday, February 27  
to Monday, March 2  
**40 Days for Life Prayer**  
Vigil  
7:00 AM—7:00 PM  
West 32nd Ave. & Willow St., Vancouver



For more information: [annieinva@yahoo.com](mailto:annieinva@yahoo.com) or  
call the Parish Office, 604.266.6131



The **Knights of Columbus** will host **FREE Pancake Breakfast on Name Tag Sunday weekend. Enjoy fellowship and a hearty breakfast** after all Masses on **Sunday, February 23** in the church hall. with parishioners and our visitors.



A NEW VOCATIONS INITIATIVE

## HUNDREDFOLD

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**Sexuality and Your Child Information Night**  
Feb 19, 2020  
Parish Hall



6:30-8:00 PM  
For parents of Elementary School Students



**Rachel’s Vineyard Weekend Retreats** offer a beautiful opportunity for healing to any woman or man who has struggled with the emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion. Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat focuses on God’s love and forgiveness in a nonjudgmental environment. Retreats are open to individuals of all denominations. Typically, retreats begin on Friday evening and conclude on Sunday afternoon. Registration includes lodging for two nights, meals and materials. For those needing financial assistance, sponsorship is available. In BC, Rachel’s Vineyard retreats are held in Kelowna and Vancouver. Rachel’s Vineyard strictly respects confidentiality and privacy. If you or someone you know is hurting, call today. For more information, please contact: Rachel’s Vineyard (Vancouver), 7879 Edmonds St., Burnaby, 604 525 0999.

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it’s anonymous.

In the horrible case of rape, are there other options? Here’s a video showing another choice: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=16&v=lv\\_lZww8CG8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=lv_lZww8CG8&feature=emb_logo)).

It’s interesting: Our culture and the media always talk about being pro-choice, but never give us alternatives other than abortion. They never promote crisis pregnancy centres, never tell stories about the choice of doing the right thing, and never show us ultrasounds so that we can make an informed choice. The only choice they show us is taking the easy way out, which causes more pain in the long run.

And here’s a video showing the beauty of adoption, that every child is wanted (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtT6Z5UCzKA>).

One of the hardest choices is the choice to forgive ourselves. A typical situation would be this: A man or woman is involved in an abortion, later goes to Confession, receives God’s forgiveness and love, but still can’t forgive themselves. This dynamic applies to all of us who have committed big sins in our past, whether it’s sex before marriage, other sexual sins and feeling shame, or whether we’ve hurt people like I did when I’ve hurt people in confession. There’s a part of us that hates ourselves, that says we should feel this badly as a punishment for our sins.

But this is all a lie. We should hate sin, not ourselves. If God has forgiven us, we should forgive ourselves. Does it correct the wrong we’ve done? It does no one any good to choose to

silently suffer and not forgive ourselves. God doesn’t want us to live in misery. He wants us to do penance, not live in misery.

One of our parishioners who had an abortion told me to tell you about *Rachel’s Vineyard*, a weekend retreat to find forgiveness and healing after abortion. It’s usually about a dozen people led through different sessions of prayer and reflection about their own experiences, God’s mercy, and unresolved emotions. Our parishioner said the retreat helped her to accept God’s mercy and forgive herself; it gave her the courage to try to prevent future abortions, as well as the courage to help other people heal.

Another vision is possible; God today is giving us another choice. There are two ideas that often motivate me to take the first step: **1) If someone we love were suffering like us, what would we want them to do?** If our best friend, our son or daughter, were in our shoes, would we want them to be healed? Would we want them to make the right choice? **2) Does our current path in life, for example, not forgiving ourselves—does this help anyone?** One of the most helpful truths for me was recognizing that obsessing in an unhealthy way on my sins didn’t praise God or help the people I love; it was saying: God can’t redeem me. “If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and they will save you.”

- excerpt from Fr. Justin’s homily, February 16, 2020

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