



# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

## THIS SUNDAY December 17 & BEYOND

### “Whose glory are you promoting?”



In a parish such as All Saints, during the worship, while the priest is at the altar, or as some might call it “The Lord’s Table”, there are a few moments when it seems like the priest is saying something under his breath. In fact, these moments ARE under his breath as his own private devotions associated with that moment in worship. One of those moments comes after “setting the table” with wine and bread for the Holy Communion prayer. By the way, we call that prayer The Great Thanksgiving, or The Eucharistic Prayer. Eucharist is simply a greek word for thanksgiving, like Nike is a greek word for victory.

After setting the table with bread being passed to the priest, and then pouring wine and water into the cup from which we drink for Communion, it seems exactly the right thing to wash your hands. Just like if you are in the kitchen preparing a meal, you would wash your hands before getting ready to say “The Grace”, serve the food.

In this case, the washing of the priest’s hands takes place before saying the prayer over the bread and wine which will provide the means for the bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. As you can see, it is a holy moment. During this washing, the priest says a prayer of devotion and dedication to the work he will do on behalf of all those gathered. In the tradition in which All Saints has worshipped for so many years, we call these prayers of devotion and dedication the “secret” prayers of the priest.

I’ll share one of them with you (they are not so secret that no one can know what is being said, but they are secret in the sense they are said so quietly by the priest for the priest).

When I’m washing my hands after setting the altar, I pray, “Lord, I wash my hands as a sign that I am no greater and no less than any of those gathered here today in worship and ministry. With joy and awe, I humbly accept this calling to the altar, as a servant of your redeeming; and I ask that you would increase, and I would decrease.”

There is a more familiar prayer in the Anglo-Catholic tradition that prays essentially the same. But I was moved strongly at one moment in my life after hearing the words of John the baptizer who proclaimed his own humility, and his joy, in pointing to Jesus rather than to himself, and so I made it into by prayer of preparation for ministry at the Lord's table. It's in the Gospel reading for this Sunday, when in response to the jealous protection by his own disciples about Jesus becoming more visible than their master John, John said about himself, "The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

Is your life, in preparation for the coming of Jesus, more about Jesus than it is about you? Pray this prayer with me, regularly, and look for God's glory to be seen and known through you.

*Readings for this Sunday – Third Sunday of Advent*

[Isaiah 65:17-25](#), [Psalms 126](#), [1 Thessalonians 5:12-28](#), [John 3:23-30](#)

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

## CALENDAR

### SUNDAY:

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

9:30am Sharing Our Experience of Daily Prayer (Parish Hall)

10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue*—

*Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.*

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: 11:00am Sharing our Experiences of Daily Prayer (Parish Library)

Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

[www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)