



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY December 29 & BEYOND

Christmas Is a Gift Exchange



Gift exchange has become very popular for Christmas and other celebrations, especially in work places, schools or other institutions with a great number of people, where it is practically impossible to buy gifts for each person. So the solution is that each person buys a valuable gift for a specific person, who is kept a secret. It is usually known as Secret

Santa, and the good thing is that every person is assured a gift. It was a well devised solution, perhaps even a commendable one, but God knows better.

No matter how valuable a gift we receive from someone may be—and some gifts are really valuable, not only for their material worth but for what they mean in terms of human relationships—none of them can equal the gifts that God is constantly pouring abundantly upon our lives: the gift of life itself, the gift of wisdom, the gift of His unconditional love manifested to us in the love of our fellow human beings and even other creatures of the animal kingdom.

But there is one special gift that God has given us that is unrivaled: the gift of Himself. How did God manage to give Himself to us? He devised a special plan. He made himself man. He was incarnated by the power of His Spirit in a very special human womb, that of the blessed Virgin Mary, and left the realm of timelessness and omnipresence in order to live a human life, in a given time, at a given place. This gift is none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is perfect man and perfect God in one person, the eternal Son of God.

During Christmas we celebrate this unique gift. But though we may believe that gift exchange is a recent invention, it turns out that God Himself had thought of this a long time ago. Not that He actually needs something in exchange for His most precious gift, but we need to take part in His gift exchange if we are to take part in His salvific plan.

So we received the undeserved blessing of His presence with us, in human shape, so we could get to know God's unconditional love as something close to us, something really human and tangible. But if the Christmas gift remains only as a wonderful memory in the distant past, what are we to gain from it?

This is where we, as followers of Jesus Christ, enter the scene. If Mary offered the gift of her human womb then in exchange for the great blessing of incarnating God, today we need to offer our humanity to keep on incarnating Christ in our lives. So the gift we offer God is the gift of ourselves. He needs each and every one of us. He needs our uniqueness to carry on His plan of salvation for the whole world. Each of us has a mission to accomplish, no matter how small we may perceive it, but it becomes indispensable in the big plan.

So let us not refuse to take part in this gift exchange. It is devised by our Creator and He will never disappoint us. He will return the gift of ourselves multiplied to us, by such a figure as no one could even think of. It is certainly the best gift exchange ever. The Christmas exchange.

Fr, Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 61:1-6, 9 Psalm 147:13-21 Galatians 3:23-25, 4:4-7 John 1:1-18

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The First Sunday after Christmas

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

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

TUESDAY:

Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

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

SATURDAY **The Societies of Mary Day of Devotion**
11:00am Rosary (St. Mary Chapel)
11:30am Mass (St. Mary Chapel)
Noon Potluck Lunch (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY **The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ**
8:00am Low Mass (Church)
10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)
 AA Meeting
7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)