



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

THIS SUNDAY March 8 & BEYOND

Being Born Anew From Above



In the conversation between Nicodemus, the master of Israel that visits Jesus in the night, and Jesus, the former is bewildered by Jesus' remark about the need to be born anew and from above in order to see God's Kingdom.

The word used by Jesus to describe this kind of rebirth can be used in the original language with both meanings: 'anew' and 'from above'. Nicodemus seems to understand (or pretends to understand) the first meaning, relating it to the physical aspect and thus making it look outrageous. Jesus is clearly referring to the second, in relation to the Spirit, but both meanings can be understood as being begotten as a totally new person by our Heavenly Father.

Nicodemus was probably annoyed because Jews were supposed to have already been regenerated, and being Abraham's descendants already assured them entrance to God's Kingdom, which was understood as a reward for being part of God's chosen people. That reward was especially assured to those like him who were faithful in fulfilling the Law.

Jesus shatters all this with his insistent remark about the need to be reborn from water and the Spirit; from purifying regeneration carried out by God's Holy Spirit, not by any person's will, as in the case of natural birth. His image of the wind blowing from and to any direction, without our knowing or controlling it, but with

obvious effects, to describe God's Spirit, is a clear indication that this process of total regeneration can only take place by the Spirit's initiative, by virtue of God's gracious love, and not by us.

The only thing we can and should do is look to Him who offers this gracious salvific regeneration to us. Just as those who looked to the brazen serpent lifted on the pole were saved from dying from the serpent's bites, those who looked to the uplifted Son of Man would have eternal life.

The uplifting of Jesus, He who is true man and true God in one person, can refer to the moment he was crucified and lifted on the cross. At that moment He gave Himself totally to save the world. It was the utmost demonstration of God's unconditional and undeserved love for the whole world. It also refers to glorification because there is no higher glory than this unmistakable proof of God's love.

Nicodemus probably left Jesus' place that night with a mixture of anger and bewilderment. But later in John's Gospel (Chapter 7) we find him attempting to defend Jesus. And at the end of this same Gospel we find him again, with Joseph of Arimathea, spending a huge sum of money in spices to anoint Jesus' body after His death.

The Spirit blows where it wishes, and with some of us its transformational regeneration may take time. But when we finally realize that there is nowhere to look for whole and eternal life but in Jesus, when we surrender our futile search for meaning elsewhere and look up to Him at last, then the regenerating breeze begins to blow in our lives, and we are eventually begotten anew by our Loving Father.

Fr, Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Second Sunday in Lent:

Genesis 12:1-8 Psalm 33:12-22 Romans 4:1-17 John 3:1-17

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **The Second Sunday in Lent**

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn High 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.

MONDAY 6:00pm Experience, Strength and Hope AA Group (Parish Hall)

TUESDAY: 11:00am Lenten Study (Library)

Noon Mass (St. Mary Chapel)

WEDNESDAY Noon NoonPrayer (St. Mary Chapel)

6:30pm Contemplative Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

THURSDAY Noon Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

FRIDAY Noon Noon Prayer (St. Mary Chapel)

12:30pm Way of the Cross Pilgrimage (Church)

1:00pm Potluck Luncheon (Flower Room)

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

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

SUNDAY **The Third Sunday in Lent**

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

AA Meeting

7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)