



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 29 & BEYOND

Announcing Anew



As I sit at my laptop writing this weekly reflection on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, the Christian world celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation. This particular celebration, however, looks quite different today. Churches are closed and the faithful are not allowed to assemble to pay their homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary for having been chosen and accepted to be the bearer of the Light of the World, of the God incarnate that would start the process of putting our world “right side up”, so to speak.

The Annunciation refers to Archangel Gabriel’s visitation to Mary, a young Jewish woman betrothed to Joseph, of the House of David. What Gabriel announced to this young woman was unheard of. She was to conceive of the Holy Spirit--God’s Spirit itself!--and the child she would bear was none other than the Son of the Most High, whom she would call Jesus, because He would come to save the world. Mary had questions, of course (who wouldn’t?) but the Archangel reassured her by insisting that what was happening to her was planned by the Most High, and she gave Him her unconditional acceptance.

We are all familiar with the way the story goes right after this. Of Joseph’s plight in accepting her due to her apparent adulterous condition. Of her visitation to her cousin Elizabeth and how she exalts her faithfulness and the privilege of being the

chosen one. Of Mary's response to Elizabeth in that beautiful hymn which has come to be known as The Magnificat. Of the arduous journey to Bethlehem in her condition, and her giving birth to the Savior of the world in extremely unsuitable conditions...

But it all started with this Annunciation. When something unusual is announced we all startle and halt. It is like when we hear a fire alarm or the police siren on the road. Our mind is brought to a sudden halt and we pay close attention, even if we would rather not do it. Our routine is suddenly broken and we have to get ready for something totally different, sometimes even unheard of. What is announced may sound as something extremely good or extremely bad, but the fact is that from that moment on nothing is ever the same again.

These last weeks have been moments of annunciations. Things that were unheard of have been announced and, in spite of our not wanting to hear them, they have radically changed our lives. Unlike Mary's willing acceptance, our acceptance has been a forced one. Nobody likes to be told that a pandemic is killing people and that unless we stay away from one another, it cannot be contained. We Christians do not like to be told that we cannot come together to worship, not even to celebrate The Annunciation of our Lord's incarnation. But come to think of it, even though for centuries the Church has been celebrating this Annunciation, our world is, perhaps more than ever, upside down.

With the widespread use of social media due to the great technological advances, people are now more isolated than ever before. It is true that the world is more global because we can access information from everywhere at the wink of an eye. It is true that we can connect with practically anybody that has access to these technologies, but the sad truth is that, in general, people find it harder to connect physically and spiritually, to really be part of a community, to partake of their true joys and sufferings, of their innermost needs. The Church is called to be the body of Christ on earth, the foretaste of God's real community, but unfortunately, even within the Church, some people tend to gather in family groups only and keep a distance from one another. The real sense of communion is lost.

So, what is this new virus doing to our lives? Apart from the sad fact of killing people and disrupting people's economy, it is doing nothing but giving us an extreme picture of the physical and spiritual disconnectedness that our society already has.

We have been forced to stay physically apart from one another, not to visit one another, and to connect only via technology. Isn't that just more of what we already had? It is like a big bell ringing, announcing, saying to us: "this is an extreme version of the world you are so fond of; how do you like it now?"

It is not technology that has done this to us; it is the way we are using it. In times like these, technology can help us to keep connected, to show how much we care for one another, to pray and worship together in spite of all inconveniences. Families can be better connected now that they have to spend most of the time together. We can still grow spiritually in the midst of the pandemic. We can still react and come to realize how much we miss being with our coworkers, our classmates, our neighbors, our fellow parishioners. We can still realize the importance of real community in our lives. Then the Annunciation of the coming of our Savior to the world will have a renewed sense, and we, following on our Savior's footsteps, will also take active part in making this world "right side up".

Fr. Carlos Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Fifth Sunday in Lent:
Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 6:16-23 John 11:18-44

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Service video available at 9am at www.facebook.com/allsaintssandiego
7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

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

FRIDAY AA Meetings
8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY Palm Sunday

Service video available at 9am at www.facebook.com/allsaintssandiego
AA Meeting
7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego
www.allsaintschurch.org