



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."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY — December 24, 2023

"The Mystery That Is Now Disclosed"



God's incarnation appears to us Christians as one of the great mysteries of our faith. It is the great mystery of an infinite being—unconstrained by space or time, incomprehensible by the human mind—becoming a human being in the person of a vulnerable baby being born from a woman in the humblest of conditions, and ultimately giving Himself in loving sacrifice at the hands of unrighteous men, and suffering the cruelest form of death on a cross.

This is what theologians have called the *kenosis*, a Greek work meaning *emptying*. The idea is that in the act of incarnation God emptied Himself of His divine glory and came down to the level of humanity, being constrained by time and space, experiencing and suffering all that human beings suffer, and even dying in a brutally cruel way.

For many at the time of Jesus this was not only incomprehensible, but even blasphemous. To say that the divine could become human was not and is still not acceptable for the Jews (or the Muslims). In pagan religions there was the idea of the demigods, who were engendered by a divine being and a mortal human, but these were humans with some supernatural attributes, and were not seen as real incarnations of the divine.

But as great as this mystery of incarnation is, it does not seem to be the mystery that St. Paul refers to in his letter to the Romans, when he writes, “and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed,…”

This mystery that Paul says was kept secret for long ages and is now disclosed is closely linked to Jesus’ proclamation itself, according to him. What may St. Paul be referring to?

It seems obvious that to know this, we need to focus our attention first and foremost in what Jesus’ proclamation was mainly about.

What Jesus spoke about and what his deeds pointed to during his time on this planet has to do with giving Himself in loving care for all. He never spoke or did anything for personal gain, not even to obtain personal fame or recognition. The signs of God’s Kingdom that He gave when he healed or brought someone back to life, or fed hungry multitudes, were all driven by a pure loving intention, and were all life-restoring and life-giving acts.

This is what his followers heard and saw Him do. This is what He taught, and if He ever had harsh words for some, it was not out of hatred for any particular person or group of persons, but to show them how wrong and conducive to real death their way was, so that they could change their ways and be saved.

What Jesus taught His disciples and what He also teaches us today, through the things His true followers wrote for all generations to follow, is that His incarnation of God’s loving will is also the aim and goal of our own lives.

God emptied Himself once of His divinity to show humanity, in the person of Jesus Christ, what the Way of His unconditional love is. But Jesus was restored to His original glory—the one He had always had with the Father—once His mission on earth was fulfilled.

In the same way, we need to empty ourselves—not of the divine glory we do not possess, but of the misleading self-centeredness that part of our human nature leads us to—so we can stop believing that we can be our own gods, and also rule over others to satisfy our whims. By so doing, we will be opening our minds and hearts to Christ’s Way of Love in our own lives, and then we will become one in intention and will with the only true and abundant life: the love-giving life that never ends.

When we celebrate God's incarnation in a few days, let us be joyous, and grateful to God for His willingness to become Emmanuel—God with us, and let us also strive to make it possible that He may become incarnate in each of us—not literally like in the case of Mary, but in intention and will—so that ultimately one day He may become all in all, as has always been His desire from the beginning of creation.

Fr. Carlos

Readings for Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7 Titus 2:11-14 Psalm: 96:1-4, 11-12 Luke 2:1-20

CALENDAR

Note: We worship in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer at 10:00am are held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve The Nativity of Our Lord

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation Meets next on Sunday, January 14 at noon in the Rector's Office and the Library

8:30pm Musical Offering and Carols in All Saints' Church

9:00pm Christmas Eve Mass

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chapel

THURSDAY Spanish Class will recess for the remainder of the month of December and resume on Thursday, January 11.

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY December 31, 2023 The First Sunday after Christmas Day

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation Meets next on January 17 at noon in the Rector's Office and the Library

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally