

Pastor's Corner - December 11, 2011 - God is present in all

Last week I wrote about how God speaks to us not from somewhere outside of our experience but from within our joyful as well as painful experiences; yes, that **God even speaks to us within the wilderness of our lives**. Even when we try to banish God from our lives or try to avoid God, God always finds surprising ways to come back into our lives. If only we could recognize them, learn from them, discover in them the presence of God who calls forth, who challenges us to find deeper meaning in whatever happens to us.

Today's Scripture readings gives us the foundation for this truth: **God is the Ground of all Being**. Paul in the second reading, Letter to the **Romans 16:25-27**, will say that this gift of God is "the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, ...made known" in Jesus. By virtue of creation God is present all around us and in all. Even more amazing, **because of the Incarnation, because God decided to become one of us humans in Jesus, this same God is inside you and inside me, inside all**. In the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, fragments of which are preserved in one Coptic manuscript of the Nag Hammadi Library in Egypt, we find the following sayings of Jesus: "If those who lead you say to you, See the Kingdom of God is in the sky, then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, It is in the sea, then the fish will precede you. Rather the kingdom of God is inside of you and all around you. ... From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood and I am there. Lift the stone and you will find me there." **There is no place where God is not; there is no human heart in which God does not dwell, because God is the Ground of All Being**. That does not mean that we can equate God with the world or that we can say that the world is God: a pantheistic view. God is absolute and independent of the world. But God who is in all has chosen to take on flesh in Jesus and through the mission of Jesus has chosen to become fully involved, incarnate in **this** world of ours.

In that beautiful first reading of **2 Samuel 7:1-16** we find God in dialogue with David through Nathan the prophet. Humans cannot contain the presence of God in a temple just as they were not able to contain God in a tent, in the ark, and just they were not able to contain God's presence later in a cathedral, in a tabernacle or any other human construct. However, **God decided to be contained, to be incarnate and present in human flesh in Mary**. Mary's YES (remember the symbols hung by the children in the Jesse tree) made it possible for God in Jesus to become in the words of Karl Rahner (*The Content of Faith*) "a historical, unique and irrevocable self-communication of God; ...this communication is God himself as God is, in and for God...; to this climactic moment God has ordered the whole of history from its very inception; ...God's irrevocable presence in the world gives history its fundamental orientation."

Because of our human failings this fundamental orientation that God's presence offers in Christ is not always recognizable in ourselves, in our world and at times in our church. Mary is a model and example to us that we too should say yes to God in our lives (last Sunday the children hung signs in the Jesse tree: "I will say yes to the Lord at all times"). Our yes says that we too need to allow the divine presence in Christ to be the creative, transforming and challenging force by which we, our church and our world will be re-aculturated and re-oriented to God. Just as Mary freely and willingly became the holy and sacred place for God's presence, so is each one of us called to make room in our lives for God, for Jesus, for the Spirit. Like Mary, we can become the sacred spaces of which the world is in so much need. Because of Jesus, the Kingdom of God, the presence of God is inside you and all around you: "open your souls and I am there and you will find me; open your arms to embrace one another, lift up the poor and the lowly ... break and share the bread; read and reflect the word; you will find me ... I am there."

Shalom!

Fr. Rolf, OP

Saanich Peninsula Parish

A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN COVENANT WITH ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
Box 2116, Sidney, BC, V8L 3S6

Parish Office: 250-656-7433, email: ssparish@shaw.ca, fax 250-483-1597

Web site: www.spparish.com, Rectory: 250-652-1990

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:00 - 4:30 pm, or by appointment.

PASTOR: Father Rolf Hasenack, O.P. **PARISH COORDINATOR:** Gary Koett

PASTORAL COUNCIL: Paul Ledet, Jr. (Chair)



EUCCHARIST AT ST. ELIZABETH'S

10030 Third Street, Sidney
Saturdays at 5 pm, Sundays at 10:30 am.
Daily on Tuesdays (8:30 am), Wednesdays and
Thursdays (9 am), and First Fridays (9 am).

RECONCILIATION AT ST. ELIZABETH'S
Saturdays 4 - 4:30pm

EUCCHARIST AT

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION
7742 West Saanich Road, Saanichton
Sundays at 8:30 am

Last Friday at Saanich Peninsula Hospital at 11 am
Remaining Fridays at 9 am in a private home
(see "This Week in Our Parish" inside bulletin)



THE 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 18, 2011

2 Sam 7.1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 / Rom 16.25-27 / Lk 1.38

VISITING EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY

If you know of someone who is house-bound or in a nursing home/hospital and would like a visit from the Pastor or the Visitation Team, please call the office at 250-656-7433.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Let us be open
accepting individuals
sensitive to change
and willing to take
Courses untraditional,
unknown to us.
Let us live as
examples of God's love.*

NEW TO THE PARISH? WELCOME!

Please fill out the information below so we can get to know you. Pick up one of the blue information pamphlets next to the bulletins in the foyer so you can get to know us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Need Pre-Authorized Debit package? Yes ___ No ___

Need donation envelopes? Yes ___ No ___

IN OUR PARISH

COLLECTIONS:

December 4	\$ 3,273
December 11	\$ 4,391
Monthly Target:	Approx. \$ 23,000

We offer condolences to the family and pray for the repose of the soul of Cecile Bouchard (Funeral Mass on Tue. Dec. 27 at 11 am)

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT IN ADVENT

OPENNESS TO GOD: You are invited to experience moments of God's presence, scripture reflection, personal quiet in preparation for the celebration of "Emmanuel - God with us" on **Thu. Dec. 22** from 2 to 3:30 pm at St. Elizabeth's. For information call Cathy Kelsey at 250-652-2365 or Sister Donna MacIntyre at 250-656-0281.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias are gratefully accepted for our Christmas decorations **after Dec. 20**. Drop off at the church, or you may wish to make a money donation for their purchase in honour of someone special. This can be placed in the collection basket at any time (mark envelope "Christmas Flowers").

MESSAGE FROM APPEAL TEAM

As of Dec. 14th, 131 people have given a total of **\$40,280** - 83% of our goal. We thank you. We ask the remaining Parishioners to please consider making a commitment. The Appeal closes on December 31. Call the Parish Office if you require a donation form. You can leave the completed form at the office, put it in the collection basket on Sunday, or mail it to the Diocesan Office. Thank you for your consideration - Fr. Rolf, Derek, Freddie, Jim, Linda, Mark and Norm.

2012 DONATION ENVELOPES

Please pick up your 2012 donation envelopes in the foyer. Over 100 boxes have not been picked up yet! If you would like to start using envelopes, please call the office at 250-656-7433.

THIS WEEK IN THE PARISH

MONDAY, DEC. 19

8:30am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
9:00am Eucharistic Adoration

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 21

9:00am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
7:00pm El Shaddai Celebration

THURSDAY, DEC. 22

9:00am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
2:00pm Openness To God (see bulletin)

FRIDAY, DEC. 23

9:00am Mass at the home of Jack & Frances Chaproniere (250-652-3948)

SATURDAY, DEC. 24

6:30pm Mass at St. Elizabeth's
8:30pm Mass at Our Lady of Assumption
10:30pm Mass at St. Elizabeth's

SUNDAY, DEC. 25

10:30am Mass at St. Elizabeth's
2:00pm El Shaddai Fellowship, followed by
3:30pm Mass at St. Elizabeth's

ASSISTANCE NEEDED

We will be setting up the Christmas trees on Wed. Dec. 21 at 9:45 am at St. Elizabeth's. Some assistance would be greatly appreciated! If you can help, please call the office at 250-656-7433, or email ssparish@shaw.ca.

TOILETRY KITS

There is an ongoing need for these supplies. Joe Rigby has taken some to St. John the Divine who runs an "In From the Rain" program, and they were thrilled. He has also given some to prisoners on their release. Deodorant is the item we are usually short of, so if you have any Shoppers Drug Mart points that would be a good way to spend them !!!

THANK YOU FROM STEPHANIE

Thank you to everyone who recently sent good wishes and especially prayers to my family and myself. God Bless You! Stephanie Schroeder

PARISH GROUPS' CHRISTMAS BREAK

The following groups are taking a well deserved Christmas break, and will resume their regular activities in 2012 on the dates listed:

- **Friendly Hours:** Thu. Jan. 5 at 11:30 am
- **Prayer Group:** Thu. Jan. 5 at 2 pm
- **Religious Education:** Sun. Jan. 8 at 9:45 am
- **Faith Reflection Group:** Mon. Jan. 9 at 1 pm
- **Memory Plus:** Mon. Jan. 9 at 1 pm
- **Taiji Qigong:** Thu. Jan. 11 at 10 am
- **Knights of Columbus:** Tue. Jan. 17, 7:30 pm

For the latest schedule, please check the online Parish Calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/sppcal>.

CONSIDER PRE-APPROVED DONATIONS !

You are encouraged to donate to our parish through the use of a pre-approved donation (PAD) rather than the weekly envelopes. Information packages are available from the parish office. If you have any questions, or if you would like to increase your PAD donation, please call the parish office at 250-656-7433.

IN OUR DIOCESE

"THE CHURCH" - PART II: JAN. 9 +

Mondays, Jan. 9 to Feb. 13 at Holy Cross, 4049 Gordon Head Rd. Includes a review of Vatican II, a discussion of the notion of collegiality, an overview of significant Catholic social teaching, and the role of Mary in the Church. Presented by Dr. L. McKeown. For more info see poster in the foyer. To register call 250-477-5321.

GENERAL

"JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE" SERIES: JAN. 10 to FEB. 7 OR FEB. 1 to 29

"The Emergence of Universe, Earth, Life and Humans", with Gertie Jocksch, SC DMin. A series of interviews in conjunction with the "Journey of the Universe" film. Each session includes reflection and dialogue. Tuesdays, Jan. 10 to Feb. 7, 10 am - noon at Friends Meeting House, 1831 Fern St, OR Wednesdays, Feb 1 to 29, 7 - 9 pm at First Metropolitan United Church, 932 Balmoral Rd. See poster in foyer for topics. \$70 for all 5 sessions (drop in \$15). Please register by Jan 3, 2012.

2011 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, Dec. 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

6:30 pm - Mass at St. Elizabeth's
8:30 pm - Mass at O.L. of Assumption
10:30 pm - Mass at St. Elizabeth's
Carols: 30 minutes before each mass

SUNDAY, Dec. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

No 8:30 am Mass
10:30 am - Mass at St. Elizabeth's
2:00 pm - El Shaddai Fellowship at St. Elizabeth's, followed by
3:30 pm Mass

TUESDAY, Dec. 27

No 8:30 am Mass, and
No 9:00 am Eucharistic Adoration
11:00 am - Funeral Mass for
Cecile Bouchard

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 28

9:00 am - Service of the Word -
No 9:00 am Mass at St. Elizabeth's

THURSDAY, Dec. 29

9:00 am - Mass at St. Elizabeth's

FRIDAY, Dec. 30

11:00 am - Mass at Saanich Peninsula
Hospital

SATURDAY, Dec. 31

5:00 pm - Mass at St. Elizabeth's

SUNDAY, Jan. 1, 2012 NEW YEARS DAY

8:30 am - Mass at O. L. of Assumption
10:30 am - Mass at St. Elizabeth's