

24 December 2017
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saint Anne

SEAL BEACH



The Virgin and Child with Saints Zacharias and John the Baptist, Lorenzo Lotto, 1546

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MASSES: SAT: 5:00 PM; SUN: 8:00, 10:00 AM, 12:00, 4:00 PM; DAILY: 9:00 AM

CONFESSIONS: Mon-Sat: 8:30AM; Sat: 4:00-4:45 PM

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CHRISTMAS AS A CHILD

I was reminiscing the other day about what Christmas was like when I was a small child. This was before my sister was even born. One particular Christmas morning I woke up in my bed and peaked out the window next to me and was certain I saw the backside of Santa rushing toward the backyard with a sack of toys over his shoulder. That was good news; there was always the chance, our parents reminded us, that if we had been naughty, Santa would skip our house and leave no presents. My brother and I had good reason to worry.

These were the days before Christmas eve Masses; the earliest Christmas Mass was at midnight. My brother and I would never last that late; so we went to the early Mass on Christmas day. As we marched out to the garage, my father held out his big, long overcoat to block our view of what might be under the tree. Mass was in Latin then and had little to offer youngsters; most of our time was devoted to trying to sit still and not kick the pew ahead of us. It seemed endless.

Then we were in the car returning home, exploding with anticipation. One year my mother suggested that we have our breakfast before we opened our presents but that was vetoed by everyone else including my Dad. She may have been kidding but it was no laughing matter to us. I went down the list in my head of the things I wanted to get, things that I thought I had hinted about subtly enough in the weeks preceding.

(Oh, I forgot to mention that on Christmas eve we were allowed to open one present: the one my grandmother got for us each year. It was always the same thing: pajamas. My brother and I did not consider pajamas a real present. Who cares what you wear when you sleep?)

I hardly now remember any of the toys I got for Christmas. There wasn't a one that captured my imagination, though I loved getting them. I do recall that the

pile of them, wrapped and ribboned, looked much larger than the pile of them once opened. I was always sorry for the moment when I opened my last gift. Yes, then I was ready to eat my breakfast.

My parents tried to teach us the meaning of Christmas in a way that our tiny minds could comprehend. They told us that Christmas was Jesus' birthday. I was going to ask, "Why then do we get the presents?" but thought better of it. My brother was of the opinion that if it was Jesus' birthday, Jesus ought to get a cake like everyone else on their birthday. My mother didn't have an answer for that so, from as far back as I can recall, Christmas dinner was finished by eating a slice of Jesus' birthday cake. (By the way, one of the ways we knew that Santa had come to our house was that on Christmas morning we saw that a slice of the cake

had been cut and eaten. Santa also polished off the milk we left out for him.)

I came to pity my poor father. Though I did not know it then, it was my father's duty, once we had gone to sleep, to assemble the gifts that required it, like a bike or a train set; like his son, he was not handy at such tasks. I can imagine my dad swearing, "Hells! Bells!" and my mother whispering, "Pat, shoosh! You'll wake up the kids."

People bemoan the commercialization of Christmas but, despite all that, the feast itself remains our most family-centric. As an adult, I could imagine a Christmas without presents but it wouldn't be Christmas if there weren't family and friends to share it with. On behalf of Fr. Ben, Fr. Bob and our parish staff, may your Christmas be blessed with whomever you celebrate it. That includes all you who are visiting. Especially you!

Msgr. Mike



WE GIVE WITH CHRISTMAS JOY

Our parish sponsored a community Advent Concert! With the acoustics in our intimate sanctuary, along with a superb trio of musicians & the vocals of Jessica Van Kip, the event was magical.



We help homeless in our area with food & bus passes. We also belong to the Seal Beach Homeless Coalition.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS GIVE

Our Knights collected non-perishable food (and money to buy fresh food) for local families in need. All items were sorted, boxed and distributed thanks to the generosity of our parishioners and Knights.



OUR MESSAGE

We hope our parish is a place for all to grow spiritually through our community of faith. St. Anne is an active parish offering many ministries in which parishioners are afforded the opportunity to participate in spiritual as well as social activities. We pray that you will be a disciple of Jesus Christ connecting with God, growing in faith and serving in love with us.

FROM OUR PRIESTS AND STAFF

Wishing you abundant blessings this Christmas and in 2018!



FAITH FORMATION GIVES

Our Faith Formation families filled a conference room with toys, clothing and other items for WeCare to give to local families in need.

YOUTH MINISTRY GIVES

Youth Ministry teens donated heaps of items for the homeless and sorted the items into boxes for delivery.



WOMEN'S GUILD GIVES



Women's Guild members brought gifts for a baby shower for Jesus. Hundreds of baby clothes, blankets and diapers were collected and given to Collette's Children's Home in Huntington Beach. "Little Books" with six minute reflections on Advent were distributed. A discussion followed on Mary's experience before Christ's birth.

9:00 AM MASS INTENTIONS

12/25 For the People
 12/26 †Susie Smith
 12/27 Sophia Gonzales
 12/28 †Shirley Lalley
 12/29 †Dennis Coit
 12/30 †Nancy Dworzak
 († Rest in God's love and peace)



PLEASE PRAY FOR

Fr. Bob Vidal, Katia Bergstrom, Juanita Kho, Brenda Malloy, Ed Palacol, Kathleen Kastner, Kathy Purcell, Aurora Lavadia, Mike Pendleton, Jerome Gendron, Julia Poirier, Jim & Julie Ferguson, Mary Maskell, Rosemary Hirsch, Mike Maloney, Merrill Butler, Steven Lang, Kay Lang, Linda Bolt, Bob Wagner, Greg Rousselo, Sylvia Bartolomucci, Alba Elrod, Bob Rattray

Around Our Diocese

TV MASS FOR THE HOMEBOUND

Is someone you love unable to join us at church during this holy time of Advent and Christmas? For the faithful at home or in healthcare settings, the TV Mass brings spiritual comfort and the blessings of joyful hope in our Savior. The TV mass does not fulfil the obligation for those who can get to church.

Christmas Day Mass—KDOC at 9:00 a.m.

Online Mass—www.HeartoftheNation.org

MARRIAGE HELP

Retrouvaille has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. For confidential information about, or to register for, the program beginning with a weekend on January 19-21, call 714-306-6469 or visit the web site at www.retrouvaille.org

PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Men interested in Diocesan Priesthood are invited to attend the next Priesthood Discernment evening on Wednesday, January 10th at 6:00 p.m. The purpose is to familiarize interested men with the life, prayer, and possible call to Priesthood in the Diocese of Orange. There is no commitment. The meeting will be held at the Diocese of Orange Pastoral Center, 1st floor, room ID on Christ Cathedral Campus. Questions? Call Rev. John Moneypenny at 714-282-3036 or email him at fr.jmoneypenny@rcbo.org.