

BULLETIN -- DECEMBER 10

HELP! wanted. The recent sudden death of our dear parishioner Pat Haggerty has left a void not only in our hearts, but also in some of the activities in which she played such an important role. This is a good time to invite others who might be looking in but are hesitant; and still others who might not be looking at all. In just the past four years, we've lost Alice Totoraitis, Delores Hickox, Shirley Kryger, Peter VerDuin, Charlene Norman, Esther Adomaitis, Ada Draugalis, and now Pat. All of these were very active in either the Clothing Center, the Good Grief Girls, or both. A few had been sidelined for a time by ill health, but we gratefully remember their generous service, in some cases well into their 80's and 90's. We have a few who are seasonal helpers, but (quite understandably) spend their winters in warmer, sunnier climates. Who can blame them?

But if you're reading this here and not down South, please ask yourself: do you have a really good excuse for NOT volunteering a couple hours of your time now and then to join some fellow parishioners in these works of charity? Our Clothing Center is open primarily on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Good Grief Girls are our funeral lunch service, but capable gentlemen should not be deterred by the name. The aprons fit both genders. Volunteers for this work of mercy usually need to be able to respond on a couple days' notice. But as an observing pastor, I must say that their fine work is anything but *funereal*. We have as *spirited* a group as you could ever work with, while they never fail to display a proper decorum suitable for the circumstances.

If you are already an extraordinary distributor of Communion, we certainly could use more help bringing the Eucharist to our homebound, whether on Sundays, First Fridays, or a time of the week more convenient to your own schedule.

To volunteer for these services, or for any others which are vital to parish life, please call the parish office at 454-6000. We are anxious to appreciate you even more than we already do!

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe (Feast: Tuesday, December 12): O Mother! Bright star of the first evangelization of the New World! Accompany us, we who seek to follow your Son in faith, hope, and love. Accompany us in his Catholic Church in our continental mission of the new evangelization. Guide us as, once again, we seek to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations of America!

O gentle Lady of Tepeyac, help us in our daily apostolate. In all the actions of our daily lives, may we carry your image of maternal tenderness to our brothers and sisters. May we bring your Divine Son to live in the hearts of all who hunger for God.

Help us to become the saints we are meant to be. Lead us so that we will always be instruments of God's designs, doing everything for the Lord's glory, until our world is filled with the light of Christ and the values of his Gospel. Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

Roll over, but don't play dead! Did you know that Congress retroactively reinstated the ability to make charitable gifts from your Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA)? Did you know that your parish or other favorite non-profit organizations may

qualify for these charitable rollovers? If you are 70½ or older, you can transfer as much as \$100,000 from your IRA directly to a non-profit entity without having to count any of the transfer as taxable income. This charitable rollover will also benefit you in that it would count toward your required minimum distribution for 2017.

The good news is that there still is time to take advantage of this opportunity for 2017. For those who take mandatory distributions in December, 2017, you can donate that money to the diocese or parish or organizations such as Holy Family Radio, and not have the distribution subject to tax. If you are considering making such a gift, please contact your accountant or financial adviser for further information on how you could benefit from making a charitable rollover to support the mission of your favorite charities.

The importance of St. John the Baptist. There have been many well-known figures throughout human history who made claims to have been sent by God, to be speaking on behalf of God, or even to actually *be* God. What makes Christ different from the Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tze, Muhammad, or any of the others? There were no pre-announcements about them. They simply appeared on the world scene and said, “Here I am, believe me.” Christ’s advent or arrival had been foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Even pagan literature has references to the expectation of a mighty savior. But St. John the Baptist plays the key role of precursor, literally “fore-runner,” of the Anointed One (*Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christ* in Greek) of God. Six months older than Jesus of Nazareth, John has a kinship with him both by blood and by vocation. Isaiah’s prophecy at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel, which we hear this Sunday, is about John more than about Christ himself, to whom the words are addressed: “Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.” Through fasting and prayer, John comes to understand that he is called to be “the voice crying in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord!’” And to God’s people he gives the assurance, “One mightier than I is coming after me!” Later on Jesus will tell Simon Peter about Peter’s own profession of faith, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.” Here is something similar.

John has no earthly reason to suppose that his cousin, who has spent years in obscurity as a village carpenter in Galilee, is to be the fulfillment of all prophecy and expectation. Yes, John leaped in his mother’s womb when the newly-conceived Christ came to visit, being carried in the womb of his mother, Mary. The Holy Spirit made that introduction before the birth of either of them, and they lived under the same roof in the wombs of their mothers for three months, until John was born and Mary returned to her home. We know nothing of their relationship until some 30 years later Jesus comes to the waters of the Jordan, where John is preaching and baptizing. John humbly says, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” (Matthew 3:14). And as soon as Jesus’ baptism takes place, the heavens are opened and John beholds the revelation of the Living God, Three in One: the Son is coming up out of the water (an action prefiguring his own resurrection), the Spirit descends on him like a dove, and the Father’s voice is heard saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!” No one else in human history has ever had an introduction so lengthy in centuries, so profound in content, and so divinely guaranteed! And as the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen has said, “Once the fulfillment of these prophecies did historically take

place in the person of Christ, not only did all prophecies cease in Israel, but there was discontinuance of sacrifices when the true Paschal Lamb was sacrificed” -- the true Paschal Lamb, we note, pointed out by St. John the Baptist in John 1:29: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” His words still echo in our churches as we are presented with the Body and Blood of the Anointed One. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Dave Ramsey’s definition of dumb: Buying things you don’t need with money you don’t have to impress people you don’t like.