

BULLETIN – DECEMBER 11

Halfway through! The Church's sense of liturgical drama takes on a different hue, as the relative severity of both Advent and Lent is broken up at their midpoints. We temporarily lay aside the violet and don what is called "liturgical rose." Not only the vestments, but even our third Advent candle indicates that the rigors of this season of expectation and longing are moving us closer to their glorious conclusion in the joy of celebrating the First Coming of Christ in his Incarnation. We are also reminded that each day, we are drawing closer to the *Second* Coming of Christ at the end of time; and, of course, to his personal Coming for each one of us, the members of his Body and Bride, the Church.

Whether our liturgical vestments are a true rose or, as ours are, perhaps more of a hot pink, is a matter of judgment for those who do not suffer from color blindness. The point is, they are *different*, maybe even a bit jarring. And that is at it should be. "Take notice," the Scriptures and the Liturgy cry out, "the Lord is near!" In the midst of a season that is often overwhelming in its social obligations, we are reminded to sustain a spirit of joy. Else the whole enterprise will have been in vain, will it not? It's like impatiently and uncharitably teaching children that they must be patient and charitable.

Discrimination for the sake of justice? Sure, all the time. When the police get a call that a tall man in his 20's has just held up a bank and run west, will they bother to stop and frisk a little old lady pushing a shopping cart heading toward the bank from the east? Gee, probably not. Is that discrimination? Of course! So we have to be very careful about wholesale objections to "profiling" as though acting on gathered information is somehow unfair to people who bear some resemblance to a given description.

It used to annoy me no end to hear our Franciscan Sisters tell of their adventures in air travel to Pittsburgh and elsewhere after the advent of Homeland Security. These 80-something women in their modified un-burka-like habits would on almost every occasion be pulled aside and they and their luggage thoroughly searched by TSA officials, while they watched bearded men in turbans and robes pass right through as though they owned the place. (Of course, perhaps they did!!) Many times, exasperated citizens in line behind the Sisters would begin shouting at the examiners, "For cryin' out loud, can't you see they're Sisters? What about *those* guys?" And they would point to the Middle Eastern men smiling back mockingly as they passed unhindered through the security gates.

We discriminate every day. In deciding to make a purchase, we might discriminate based on how we've been treated at a particular store. We discriminate on the basis of price, perceived quality, size, color, and a host of other factors before we settle on something that seems right for us. Even animals discriminate. Now in her golden years, Coco will sometimes look at me after I've put something in her dish, with eyes that both question and accuse, "You expect *me* to eat *that*?" And when I take her for a walk, I use my own sense of discrimination: I pick up after her, but knowing full well that what she leaves behind is not shoe polish, to paraphrase an old proverb.

It should be no surprise, when accusations of discrimination or profiling are leveled, for investigation to reveal that the majority of traffic stops in a 3-block-square

area around Franklin and Eastern involve African American drivers. It would, on the other hand, be disturbing to find that a majority of traffic stops around Lake Michigan and Collindale involved African American drivers. If even *one* such traffic stop were made at the latter location, and the officer approached the car with gun drawn, saying, “You lost, boy?” *that* would be grounds for termination of employment. No agency that strives for professionalism in its public service would tolerate such behavior, let alone expect its citizens to put up with it. There is a right and a wrong place for and a right and wrong kind of discrimination.

Officers quickly become familiar with the homes and families in any area of a community who provide cause for repeated calls for service. Their response to those calls is based on need, not on discrimination. I have often challenged officers who have begun to perceive certain neighborhoods as troubled areas to drive through those same areas in the mid to late morning and note the people who are depending on the police to keep their neighborhoods secure. They’ll be out mowing their lawns, tending their flowers, painting, sweeping. They aren’t the ones you’ll see out on the streets at night, causing trouble. And rarely, in any neighborhood, will you encounter people who frequent a church or synagogue or most mosques being the ones causing trouble. We could make a good case for healthy discrimination there: people who’ve “got religion” are generally more capable of solving their own difficulties without having to resort to law enforcement to do it. You won’t see that on TV, where the screenwriters are eager to portray anyone with any sincere religious inclination as a kook.

Just so we’re clear on the concept: The so-called “Million Women’s March on Washington” planned for Saturday, January 21, 2017, the day after the presidential inauguration, has NOTHING to do with the Right to Life march which will take place on Sunday, January 22. In fact, quite the opposite. One of the downtown G.R. churches is organizing a bus trip for the January 21 date, but we should be clear that this has NOTHING to do with the annual pro-life rally in our nation’s capital.

Confirmation news! Our students who are planning to be confirmed will celebrate the sacrament on **Wednesday, May 10, 2017**, at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral with Bishop Walkowiak. Sincere thanks to our catechist, Mrs. Cathy Lindgren, for her fine and conscientious work in preparing our young people. Any parishioner who has been properly trained and would like to be involved in the liturgy that evening is welcome to call our parish office to sign up. Parents and relatives of the confirmands are especially welcome to volunteer. We shall need 5 altar servers, 2 readers, 10 extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and 10 greeter/ushers. We also need a volunteer chrisem bearer from among the confirmands.

If you are older than 8th grade, have not been confirmed, and are not in RCIA, we can arrange to prepare you for confirmation at the Cathedral with Bishop Walkowiak on **Wednesday, May 31, 2017, at 3 p.m.** Attendance at three sessions with your confirmation sponsor before that will be a requirement, but we must have you register with the parish office before January 15 if you wish to be confirmed. Remember, your sponsor must be an active, practicing Catholic. A godparent is preferred, but any confirmed Catholic other than a parent is also eligible. Start thinking now about a confirmation name, the name of a saint whom you wish to honor or emulate in your own

life. Remember that the Church is most eager that any Catholic being married should be confirmed before marriage, if at all possible. So, if you have a wedding coming up and either you or your Catholic fiancé is not yet confirmed, this is important for you. Please plan ahead. Call the parish office at 454-6000 to register, so we have a sufficient amount of materials available. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Accommodating the uncompromising is a sure formula to guarantee that those who do the compromising will never be accommodated.