

## TIDINGS

OF HOLY NAME of JESUS NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARISH

A Monthly Newsletter of Information and Events

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### The Skeptical Bible Reader - XIX

Last month's newsletter article discussed Easter and completed the story of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Obviously, however, the story of Jesus continues. That story is carried forward by the inspiration and presence of the Holy Spirit among believers. And a key group among those first believers was the apostles.

It would be neat and tidy if we could say that Jesus' twelve disciples (students) during His lifetime then became Jesus' twelve apostles after the resurrection, but the Bible does not allow for this correlation of terms. When we read Bible commentaries, there is often reference made to "the Twelve." This phrase refers to the closest followers of Jesus, but does not get caught up in the names controversy or the ambiguity of the term apostle.

First the names: Please take a look at Mark 3:14-19; Matthew 10:2-4; and Luke 6:13-16. There is no such listing in John for whom the apostles as a group are not a concern. The three lists all begin with Peter, but Matthew singles out Peter as "first." Matthew is also the only Evangelist who has Jesus say at Caesarea Philippi of Peter: "... on this rock I will build my church." (16:18) This is a teaching that is only important to Matthew's Jewish-Christian community. Paul at Galatians 2:7-8 states matter-of-factly that he is the apostle to the Gentiles while Peter is the apostle to the Jewish-Christians. In this same context, Paul notes the tension between these two groups. Peter's group is the traditionalist one that hopes to hang-on to the Jewish traditions as Christianity forms. As such he would be a hero to Matthew's church, to a church that proclaims uniquely in the voice of Jesus that the Law will always be in place (cf. Matthew 5:17-20). Thus, the elevation of Peter's status is a minority opinion in the church of the biblical period, and was an opinion held by the Jewish-Christian part of the church, a tradition that would fade away as Christianity shed its acceptance of

the Law as more and more Gentiles accepted the faith.

There is also the problem of Thaddeus and Judas the son of James. Thaddeus is mentioned in two of the three lists and Judas in one. They are not the same person. Most of the names of the Twelve are remembered, but the tail end, the less significant of them, became lost to history, and that being within only 50 years. This may indicate that the number of apostles, specifically twelve of them, was far more important than who all of the twelve were. Again, this is of special importance to Matthew and his Jewish-Christian readership. The Matthean Jesus promises: "... you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (19:28) Twelve is significant. It represents the fullness of the Old Testament people of God and now the fullness of the New Testament people of God.

This also indicates one of the discrepancies that led scholars to distinguish the Twelve from apostles. The Twelve is a closed group. This is why Judas is replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:26), but when James is executed his position is not filled. Judas' betrayal of Jesus removed him from among the Twelve and so he had to be replaced to keep the number intact, but James retains his status even after death and so he is not replaced. The Twelve take on an eschatological importance that cannot be extended to any other.

The name-confusion and Matthew's unique theology of the twelve thrones indicates that this office was of much more importance to the Jewish-Christians than to the rest of the church. This makes sense of the fact that the first chapters of Acts are filled with references that they remained in place in Jerusalem, and it is even stated: "... a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered" (8:1) Next month we can speak about apostles in a wider context than the Twelve.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
MONTH OF JULY**

- July 1, 2017 – Confession for the youth of the parish at 10:30am.
- July 2<sup>nd</sup> – Early summer Mass recited at 7:45am; Sunday Mass celebrated at 9:00am. YMSofR Men’s Club outing to see the Hartford Yard Goats play at 6:35pm.
- July 4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day Mass at 8:00am.
- July 7<sup>th</sup> – Monthly visitations to the sick and the shut-in of the parish.
- July 9<sup>th</sup> – Diocesan worship service at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, NH beginning at 3:30pm.
- July 10<sup>th</sup> – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall from 7 – 8:00pm.
- July 12<sup>th</sup> – Fr. Calvo will be away on vacation and will return on the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- July 16<sup>th</sup> – Summer outdoor Mass at 9:00am, weather permitting.
- July 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fr. Calvo will be performing a wedding in Scranton, PA and will return on the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Mass will be celebrated by Fr. Adam Czarnecki at 11:00am.
- July 25<sup>th</sup> – Bible study group will meet in the parish hall from 7 – 8:00pm.

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**NEW MEMBERS**

On behalf of the parish, I welcome Ted and Wanda Pawlikowski to Holy Name. If you know of anyone looking for a parish, invite them with you to our church.

**SPECIAL SUMMER MASSES**

During each summer month, we plan one early Mass that is recited and a bit quicker and cooler. The early summer Mass will take place on July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:45am. The regular, sung Mass will be celebrated that same day at 9:00am.

Also during the summer we try to head outdoors once a month to gather for Mass in the shade of our beautiful maple trees. Our outdoor Mass, weather permitting of course, is scheduled for July 16<sup>th</sup>. Chairs from the hall will be set up, but you are



more than welcome to bring your own lawn chairs from home if they are more comfortable. I thank the members of the YMSofR Men’s Club for their help with set up and take down for these outdoor Masses.

I would also like to mention that if families are traveling during the summer it is one thing, but if you are at home on Sundays, please make every effort to not take a vacation from church.

**INDEPENDENCE DAY MASS**

Independence Day held a special place in the hearts of the founding generation of our church. Most all of them were immigrants who had sought safety, opportunity and freedom here in the United States. With deliberate intention, the founders of our first parish held off on the blessing of their church building until July 4, 1897. So often the church looks for a specifically religiously significant occasion on which to perform her special rites. Our organizers, however, saw the promises and opportunities of this nation as blessings from God. They realized that only in a country with an enshrined freedom of religion could they have started an independent, progressive Catholic church of the people, thus the blessing on Independence Day.

Such freedoms were not taken for granted by people who once knew life where such basic rights could only be imagined. Our church gathered in 1921 for the Fourth General Synod. This was the first Synod following both World War I and the Polish Soviet War that had ended only two months prior to the opening gavel. After seven years of catastrophic warfare, Poland was the most destroyed country in Europe.

When Bp. Hodur convened the Synod, he spoke of our church as the “free” church. The new banner of our church was blessed and Bp. Elect Leon Grochowski explained that the sun represented freedom and justice. Hodur preached against tyrants who ruled over people and passive subjects who allowed themselves to be exploited. Bp. Elect Gawrychowski spoke of our church as “one,



holy, democratic church.” Freedom and democracy helped define our spiritual revolution.

This is why it is our responsibility to protect our Catholic democracy. The freedoms to think, to speak and to act creatively are an essential part of our religious heritage. This is why I cringe when I hear our own people refer to us as only *Catholic*. There would have been no reason for our church to emerge if we were or are only Catholic. We are National Catholics, with National referring to “of the people.” And this is why we are called to Mass on Independence Day so that we can thank God for the blessings of freedom in a free church.

#### **CATHEDRAL OF THE PINES**

The diocese will gather once again for our annual worship service at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, New Hampshire. This is a beautiful and inspiring spot where God’s majestic creation is the highlight of our act of worship. It would be hard to not look out over the tree filled valley and up at the grandeur of Mount Monadnock and not feel the awesomeness of the Creator. For those who will be attending from Holy Name it is just over an hour’s drive, and the drive itself is quite pleasant. The worship begins at 3:30pm. A meal of barbecued chicken is available for those who may be interested. It will be served at a local restaurant in Rindge. More information as to the cost will be printed in the Weekly Bulletin as it is made available.



#### **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Our Bible study group meets throughout the summer. The parish hall is relatively cool and dry. We meet for only a couple of hours a month, but while we read and discuss each verse, it is the method that is most important. We read the inspired text with a critical eye. This is not *critical* as derogatory, but as analytical. We include the reality of the author’s input, conscious and unconscious, in the text. We compare what we are reading with what we have encountered in other biblical writings. And we try to fathom how the text may relate

to us today. If you would like to join us for this type of Bible study AND discussion, I encourage you to spend a little bit of your extra summer leisure time with us.

We need to be familiar with the Bible or else we are dependent upon the interpretations of others that may not be sound, accurate or inspiring. I am sometimes amazed at what some commentators hear in the words of the Bible, and I do not mean in a good way. But how do you choose, for example, between how I interpret the text and how someone else does? We read it for ourselves.

I share with you a passage from John that we are reading in Bible study at present. The Johannine Jesus says, ““You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life ... But I know that you do not have the love of God in you.”” (5:39, 42) What I hear is a warning against only paying attention to the words themselves and not to the higher reading of studying the meaning of the words through the prism of God’s love. Bible study is not only memorizing text. It is trying to hear what our loving God is still saying.

#### **IN MY ABSENCE**

Fr. Calvo will be on vacation in Maine from July 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>. During that time, Fr. Czarnecki from our sister parish in Northampton will be covering for me in case of emergency. He can be reached by calling 413-584-0133. I will also be away on the weekend of July 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. I have been asked to perform the marriage of the daughter of one of my acolytes from the time when I was an Assistant Priest at the Cathedral in Scranton. This means that I will not be here on Sunday morning. Fr. Czarnecki will celebrate the Mass for us, but because of his own Mass in Northampton he will not be able to be at Holy Name until 11AM. Please make a note of this change of times for this particular Sunday.



**If someone you know needs a hospital visit, please notify the rectory.**

