

Homly Notes for Sunday, June 24, 2018

The Nativity (Birth) of John the Baptist and the

Beginning of five weeks of Pro-life emphasis anticipating the fiftieth anniversary of "Humanae Vitae"

Readings: Isa 49:1-6, Ps 139:1-15, Acts 13:22-26; Luke 1:57-66, 80.

1. Introduction: Bishop Strickland has asked us to initiate a four week preparation for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of "Humanae Vitae" (On Human Life) by Pope Paul VI. This documented the value of human life and the intrinsic evil of artificial contraception. Today we can see that every element in the Pope's reasoning was correct, the consequences of allowing artificial contraception we exactly correct, and that studying again this document in our time is a very important activity. Our Bishop has asked us to study elements of that Encyclical each Sunday leading up to its July 25th, 50th anniversary. For this we also have a new edition of the Encyclical with commentary which I will be ordering for us to read and discuss,

"Pope Paul VI, On Human Life; Revisiting the most controversial and prescient encyclical of the modern age."

Because this weekend is our Parish Birthday celebration and we have a bilingual Mass, I will not share most of the Bishop's words until next week, but we can begin the subject, which is very much related to our being established as a parish with an educational emphasis.

Lessons from the Scripture readings: Note the emphasis on God's initiative before birth!

2. The second song of the suffering servant, Isaiah. This is a Messianic prophecy. Note how God had a purpose in mind while the child was still in the womb. It can also mean that God has a plan for each of us before we were even conceived.

"from my mother's womb he gave me my name" (Isa 49:1b)

(Zechariah was told by the angel to name the baby, "John".

The Blessed Virgin Mary was told by the angel Gabriel to name the baby, "Jesus."

Concerning Jeremiah, the Lord said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

Before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

3. Today's Responsorial Psalm says:

Truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made; wonderful are your works.

4. The Second Reading directs our response to the pro-life message: John heralded Jesus's coming by preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. How about 60 million abortions (murders) approved legally in our country!

5. The Gospel Reading describes the birth and circumcision of John. His name is a short form in Hebrew for "God is gracious."

6. How does this pro-life emphasis fit in with our "Birthday of our Parish" celebration? Our Bishop has called for this Diocese to be a "teaching diocese." We are becoming leading-edge parish in the area of education, education in several different areas.

- a. We are being watched for our “stewardship.” Your priest is known for this. Look at all the teachings and posters we have about guiding us to be biblically responsible stewards.
- b. That stewardship has been modelled for the Diocese in the Capital Fund Campaign. St. Boniface, the parish with the smallest original goal among the pilot parishes has been outstanding. Currently, we are at about 350% of goal! Thank you so much for your faithfulness.
- c. We have become a model in the Diocese for promoting the “teaching” that our Bishop wants. In several ways.
- d. First, we are a model for implementing Fr. Mark Hamlet’s model for financing Catholic education for our poorest families. We will probably be helping to support five to seven children at T. K. Gorman.
- e. Second, we are one of the very first parishes to model the expansion of the Niños de Promesa, Pre Kinder 3 and 4 program, something that the Diocese would like to see in all of its principal parishes.
- f. Third, we are planning with the Diocese to offer “assisted home schooling” on site, cutting the cost of Catholic education in half.
- g. Fourth, we are designing our classrooms to be commercial school ready if there be an opportunity in the future to expand St Gregory.
- h. Fifth, because of your support and generosity we may well be building additional Christian Education and multipurpose space for next year.
- i. Committee Support for Education: Anna Hodges has designed a brilliant support system for our children in public and parochial schools including mentoring, tutoring, motivational events, assistance in obtaining scholarship and more. See the flyer on her plan in the Hall.
- j. Acquisition of FORMED on-line resources, the Augustine Institute resource set, and the Matthew Kelly books. We are a center for adult education resources, plus using the newly developing resources of the St. Philip Institute.

7. This describes how our little parish is engaging in the task of proclaiming the Gospel. It is a good time to be a Catholic and to be here at St. Boniface. In the coming four weeks we will be engaging in elements of Pro-Life education.

8. A personal question for this week: How can you contribute to the growth of our little parish to help it be most effective in being a caring and teaching center of faith?

14. Question from last week.

1. You are talking to a friend about this homily dealing with God the Father. Your friend’s mom is divorced and there is no father in the home and the natural father was very abusive. Your friend says, “It is not helpful to talk about God as Father to someone whose father was such a disaster. This will just turn them off to God. How would you answer them?”

Where does one find a description of good fatherhood? We find it in the Bible and in our Tradition. Children who have had abusive or absent fathers are not helped by avoiding the subject. They need education and formation in how to be or how to encourage godly fatherhood.