

Weekly Update from Fr. John Allison 1-25-18

Dear members and friends of our parish family,

This past Sunday we came together following Eucharist to conduct the business of the parish and celebrate our shared ministry together as the Body of Christ. In addition to offering our thanks to outgoing vestry members, Gail Leland and Mary McEnroe, Church of Our Father elected the following parishioners to vestry: Jane Adams, Barbara Craighead, Andrea Horner, Larry Johnston, Tony Sousa (Junior Warden), and James Kitler (Treasurer). Additionally, the congregation voted to accept Mike Bullard, Larry Johnston, and Sue Olson as delegates to the 2018 Diocesan Convention and to the 2019 special convention to elect our new bishop. I offer my congratulations and thanks to all who have committed their time and talents to these very important ministries in the life of our parish.

On this upcoming Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany our Gospel reading from Mark (1:21-28) continues the story of Jesus' unfolding ministry following his calling of the first four disciples, Simon, Andrew, James and John. Jesus and his disciples have travelled to Capernaum where he goes to teach in the local synagogue on the Sabbath. At this early point in his ministry the people are astounded at Jesus' teaching, and we are told that he "taught as one having authority and not as the scribes." This observation is key to our understanding of who Jesus is and in this season of Epiphany we can understand this episode as a further revelation of Jesus identity as the Messiah. Jesus' authority is further manifested by an encounter with a man who is possessed by an unclean spirit, what we may understand as a demon. This demon recognizes Jesus, calling him the Holy One of God, before Jesus rebukes it and commands it to depart. It is through these events that Jesus' identity begins to be revealed and that his fame begins to spread through the region of Galilee. In this season of Epiphany, I ask you to consider how Jesus' unfolding manifestation as the Messiah will be essential to our understanding of his later Crucifixion and Resurrection. Our reading from Deuteronomy (18:15-20) offers some insight in its telling of the story of Moses' farewell address and Israel's need for a prophet to mediate between them and God. The early followers of Jesus saw such promise in Jesus and that expectation likely influences much of how Jesus' identity is understood by the masses that follow him.

On Wednesday at our 8am Eucharist we will celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (transferred from February 2). Alternatively known as Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation takes place forty days after December 25 and marks the end of the period of seclusion that a Jewish woman observed following the birth of a child. Our Gospel for the day (Luke 2:22-40) tells the story of Mary and Joseph bringing the baby Jesus to the temple to offer a sacrifice. At the temple they are greeted by the aged Simeon who recognizes the baby Jesus as the Christ and proclaims what has become known as the Song of Simeon, or the Nuns Dimitis, which is regulatory offered during our service of Evening Prayer. This feast has special significance for me as it marks the anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I hope to see you there.

Faithfully,

John+