

December 18, 2016 – Fourth Sunday of Advent – Cycle A

Good Morning! How are you? I'm glad. I don't feel blessed today but still I'm still blessed. Right before I sat there and came over here, I walked into the hallway and there's my big dog Mack munching on a piece of wood and I'm thinking what? So I'm going through the house because he had it destroyed and what's he do in the hallway there is a nice arm chair he pulled the arm off the chair and was eating it.....had me crazy. Chased him around....through him outside and now I say Mass.

So and also I was reflecting on this got to be the worst week. I hate the week of Christmas. Why? Because I'm a last minute person. So I'm going crazy, call my niece, texted messaged her yesterday, what do you want for Christmas? Tell me what you want for Christmas. She doesn't respond. My mother, I use to have Cheryl call my mother and say what you want for Christmas? I don't want anything. Ohhhhh! And then of course so you show up with nothing; it's get a great time. Right? You're going to show up with something. So that's the point. So the stress level gets to be ridiculous. I'm still, oh, forget it.

But this isn't what Christmas is about is it? But it can become that way. Because we get so caught up into the things that we forget that this is about Jesus. And it begins today with the gift that Jesus gives us not what we give Him. That's why we give presents at Christmas. Because Jesus started it. He gave us the greatest present. And it tells us in the gospel today that that which Jesus gives us is we'll hear about tomorrow when we do the things for the penance service. This is the exact gospel I will read tomorrow night and you will name him Jesus why? Because He will save His people from their sins. The whole reason Jesus was born was to save us from our sins. And boy do I need that. I need a savior from my sins. You need a savior for your sins. You know that's why we'll have a penance service tomorrow night. That's why I'll hear confessions as I normally would on Christmas Eve for regular Saturday too. So it will be from 3:00 – 4:00 on Christmas Eve. So we'll do that because that purpose of that is for Jesus to forgive us for our sins. Especially, that's why at every mass, every venial sin is taken care of. That's why I go crazy with people sometimes. Your venial sins are

taken care of this mass. Is that the teaching of the church? People think I make things up. Christ comes at every mass to forgive us our sins. So He gives us the greatest gift there is. Salvation. Forgiveness. And then we need to learn that to do that for Him and for others. So as we're preparing about what we're going to get people for gifts, you better be thinking about what you are going to give to Jesus this Christmas? Because it's His birthday. What are you going to give to Jesus this week?

And so I think that Paul gives us a little bit of a hint about what He wants. Makes it pretty explicit. In the very first verse of the second reading which said what? Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ or a slave of Christ Jesus. What does that mean? What Christ wants from us is we become His slaves. But don't get all excited about, oh, he's talking about slavery. I'm talking about a slavery of love. A chosen slavery. A servitude of love. Not a servitude where I got to serve and I just got to take care of this God, who you know I just have to serve Him, and do everything He wants. No. If that's your attitude don't do it. That's not what He wants. He wants a servitude of love. That when you fall in love with somebody you serve them because you want to. You have one desire to make them happy. Right? I'm I wrong here?

That's what we do. We want to make someone happy when we're in love with them. So we serve them. We take care of their needs. We put their needs in front of ours. And so this Christmas this is the kind of present that Christ wants. But He starts with it. He serves us. He saves us from our sins. He feeds us at the altar. He continues to give every moment of our life. There isn't a moment where Jesus doesn't give to us. And so especially at Christmas, we got to think, do I give to Him the way He gives to me? Do I become this person who exist to serve Jesus? And again, what that means is, that first of all, we exist to please Him. So it means that every day I seek Him in my prayer and I just say Jesus, what do you want of me?

I exist today Jesus to do whatever You want me to do. So that means of course in our day in and day out life, we must early in the morning ask Jesus what He wants before we tell Him what I want. Right? If I love Him just like I love anybody else on this earth I don't go start my conversation with them, listen, this is what I want you to do for me today. And then after I've done that, then I'll say, okay, what do you want me to do for you? Do we? I don't think we've have anything we have any kind of marriage here if that's the way things happen.

So we begin in love by saying Jesus I exist today to do what You want me to do. Tell me. And then you let Jesus tell you. And then you can tell Him what you want. Because He already knows what you want. And He wants us to ask, but especially, as we prepare for this Christmas, maybe you can sit there and ask Him this week, Jesus, what do you want for Christmas from me? Tell me. And again, that is what I tell my family all the time. What do you want for Christmas from me? Put it on your thing. I have that Amazon wish list. Put it on there and I will give you exactly what you want for Christmas. It makes is a much less stress filled holiday if they do it. So for Jesus ask Him. Jesus, what do you want from me this Christmas? And do whatever He asks. You got it? Get it? Gonna do it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.