

The Catholic Church of the
Immaculate Conception

2540 San Diego Avenue, San Diego, CA 92110 619 295-4141 FAX 619 295-4142
e-mail: parish@ic-sandiego.org Website: www.ic-sandiego.org

October 25, 2015

Rev. Richard L. Perozich, Pastor
parish@ic-sandiego.org 619-295-4141 x 11

Deacon Robert H. Fitzmorris
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Marsha Long, Music
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Parish Office Hours
Monday: Noon to 4:00 pm
Tuesday-Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Mass Schedule

Daily Mass: Monday - Saturday at 8:00 am
First Friday Mass & Devotion: 8:00 am

Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 5:15 P.M.
Sunday: 8:30 AM, 10:00AM, 11:30 AM. 5:15 P.M.

Holy Day Masses: 8 A.M., 7:00 P.M.

Penance: For daily Mass goes 7:30 AM, For Parish on Saturday: 4:30 to 5:00 P.M., and by appointment

Baptisms & RCIA: *By appointment only.* Please email Deacon Fitzmorris at rfitzmor@diocese-sdiego.org.

Weddings: By appointment only. Arrangements must be made at least **one year** in advance. Please contact the office

Funerals: *For arrangements, please call the parish office.*



History of Immaculate Conception Parish

It was here in Old Town that Father Junipero Serra celebrated his First Holy Mass in California on July 2, 1769, near the site of the present Immaculate Conception Church, and it was on the hill overlooking Old Town that he planted the cross which marked the site of the Mission and the Presidio.

In 1849, the first parish church was established in Old Town with the name of Immaculate Conception and was dedicated in 1858. It still stands and is known as the Old Adobe Chapel on Conde Street. The cornerstone to the present Immaculate Conception Church was laid in 1868 under the direction of Father Antonio Ubach. With the population swing toward the south, it was not until July 6, 1919, that the church was dedicated by Archbishop John J. Cantwell of Los Angeles.

WE PRAY — Pray the Rosary in October —

MASS INTENTIONS

| | | | |
|----|----------|--|----|
| 26 | 8 AM | <i>Weekday</i> †Mary Ann & Thomas Benedett | RP |
| 27 | 8 AM | <i>Weekday</i> Fred Levine, SI | RE |
| 28 | 8 AM | <i>Saints Simon and June</i> †Martin Morris | RP |
| 29 | 8 AM | <i>Weekday</i> †Ben Merfalen | RP |
| 30 | 8 AM | <i>Weekday</i> †David Martinez | RP |
| 31 | 8 AM | <i>Weekday, BVM</i> People of Immaculate Conception | RP |
| 01 | 5:15 PM | †Martin Morris | RP |
| | 8:30 AM | Terry Nygard, SI | RP |
| | 10:00 AM | Jimmy Orozco, SI | RE |
| | 11:30 AM | †William Kennedy | RE |
| | 5:15 PM | Elena Orozco, SI | RP |

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

October: Intentions of the Holy Father

Universal: That human trafficking, the modern form of slavery, may be eradicated.

Evangelization: That pastors of the Church, with profound love for their flocks, may accompany them and enliven their hope.

PRAY: SEMINARIANS IN THEOLOGY

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1st | Manuel Del Rio, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo |
| 4th | David Exner North American College Rome, |
| 4th | Brian Frice Mt. Angel Seminary OR |
| 2nd | Oscar Lopez, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo |
| 3rd | Nathan McWeeney Mt. Angel Seminary OR |
| 1st | Raymond Napuli, Mt. Angel Seminary OR |
| 1st | Michael O'Connor Mt. Angel Seminary OR |
| 2nd | Eric Tamayo North American College Rome |
| 4th | Corey Tufford North American College Rome, |
| 4th | Derek Twilliger Mt. Angel Seminary OR |
| 3rd | Billy Zondler, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR |

PRAY FOR OUR PRIESTS


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|----|---------------------------|
| 26 | Rev. Alfredo Heyrosa |
| 27 | Rev. Michael Higgins, TOR |
| 28 | Rev. Kilian Holland |
| 29 | Rev. Richard Hopkins |
| 30 | Rev. Edward Horning |
| 31 | Rev. John Howard, CJM |
| 01 | Pope Francis |

PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Monday: Rom 8:12-17; Ps 68:2-21; Lk 13:10-17
 Tuesday: Rom 8:18-25; Ps 26:1-6; Lk 13:18-21
 Wednesday: Eph 2:19-22; Ps 19:2-5; Lk 6:12-16
 Thursday: Rom 8:31-39; Ps 109:21-31; Lk 6:12-16
 Friday: Rom 9:1-5; Ps 147:12-20; Lk 14:1-6
 Saturday: Rom 11:1-29; Ps94:12-18; Lk 14:1-11

PRAY FOR HEALING

Jesus, we ask you to bring your peace and healing touch to those who are ill, afraid or worried. Amen

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Esther Fitch, Lydia Castillo Herrera Margaret Kelly, Patricia Kennedy, Dorothy Kleint, Deena Marchiano, Dena Mendoza, Jean Miller, Patricia O'Grady, Mary Jane Tiernan, Marguerite Vorst, Marie Whitman, Martha Zamudio, Carlos Amaya, Fred Levine, Mike Rodriguez, Lisa Becerra, Maguire Fitzpatrick, Tony Jenkins, Peter Nalwalker, Bob Witt, Frank Garay, Frances Garcia, |  | Socorro Pacheco, Linda Lee, Amparo Valenzuela, Robby Witt, Phyllis Altomare, Alicia Ambrose, Shirley Pearson, Diego Cárdenas. Inez Cerda Bull Rose McBrien Cosmo Busalacchi Maria Casanova, Steve Stone, Laura Castillo, Maria Esperanza Kramer Joan Busalacchi Georgiana Ottenheimer, Mark Brandon. Jeanne Pontius, Esther Salazar, Joane Anderson, Janet Meyers. |
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PRAY FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY

Jesus, protect all who serve our country.

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| Sgt. Ahmed John Alexander, Natalie Augustine, Major Jerry Bloomquist, Col. Mike Bodkin, Danny Carpenter, USMC, LTJG Joseph Colangelo, USN, Cpl. Samuel James Comer, Daniel Dinglebeck, USN, PFC, David Eley, USMC, Micah Emery, Sgt. Christopher Escalona, Capt. Pedro Esquivel, 1Lt. Cortez Fabia, Juan Carlos Galazza, SSGT. Vincent Charles Lucario, | Robert Clinton Long, MC2, Sgt. Adriana Matizel, Wendell Miculob, LTJG Joe F. Moralez, USN; LCPL Matthew A. Pena, Sgt. Richard Pierce, Sgt. William Paul Powers and Cinco, CPL Wilson Santiago; Alfred Tello, Ricky Thibeault, Tony Tulloss, PFC Travis Vliet; & 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. SCPO Desiree S. Hayes, USN |
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†PRAY FOR OUR DECEASED†

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace Amen.

| | |
|---|--|
| William Kennedy, Joan Schmittin, Robert McMahan, David Diaz, Margie Gautier, Patrick Piggot, Rodney Serrano, Concepción Garza, Richard Solís Moreno, Alvin Weaver, William Bethel, Lillian Sinclair, Olga Hritz, Imelda Hoeckelmann, Angelina Olivarez, Alice Perry, | Joseph Moreno, Louie Serrano, Gustavo Sosa, Floyd Watson, Iola Torre, Emilie Graham, Angela Cordova, Ramiro Moreno, Alexander Toczko, Jeannette Toczko, José Teofilo Solorio, Ray & Betty Jackson, Denise Cooney, Joanne Mangiameli, Edna Moore Isabela Asaro |
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LOVE WARNS

—by Michael Brown

FROM THE PASTOR

“Love wins.”

It was the name of Rob Bell’s poorly conceived book about hell and future judgment, and it was the content of President Obama’s tweet after the Supreme Court ruled to redefine marriage.

Love wins.

Understood rightly, it is gloriously true.

Love won on the cross, when God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world, repaying our evil deeds with the supreme act of sacrificial love.

Love wins every hour of every day, as that same divine love breaks hard hearts and melts cold hearts and transforms the worst of sinners into the best of saints.

Love will win in the end, as forever and ever, the Father’s family will enjoy His incredible goodness in a world without sin and suffering.

But love also warns. In fact, love that does not warn is not love at all.

The parent who doesn’t warn a chain-smoking child about the dangers of nicotine is not a loving parent.

The doctor who doesn’t warn a morbidly obese patient about the dangers of overeating is not a loving doctor.

The preacher who doesn’t warn his straying flock about the dangers of spiritual compromise is not a loving pastor.

Love warns, and it warns loudly and clearly – but that does not mean harshly or with an angry, self-righteous spirit.

Love warns with tears.

Love warns with brokenness.

Love warns with long-suffering.

Love warns.

That’s why Jesus wept in public as He warned Jerusalem about the terrible judgment that was at the door (Luke 19:41-45).

That’s why Jeremiah wept in secret when the nation refused to hear his warnings of impending disaster (Jeremiah 13:17). That’s why Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears” (Acts 20:29-31).

When is the last time we warned someone with tears? When is the last time we cared enough to weep for them in private?

May God break our hearts with the things that break His heart. May the Lord shatter our indifference.

In the words of the Book of Proverbs, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. . . . Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue” (Proverbs 27:5-6; 28:23).

We are not called to tickle people’s ears and make them feel good. We are called to speak the truth in love, to have hearts of compassion and backbones of steel, to emulate the true prophets not the false prophets, to do the right thing rather than the convenient thing.

Oh that God would deliver us from a crippling, compromising, man-pleasing mentality!

In your life or ministry, do you really want to be surrounded by a bunch of Yes-men who tell you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear? Do you really want to work with a bunch of carnal prophets who say, “All is well, all is well,” when nothing is well? (See Jeremiah 6:14.) Then do the same for others and save them from disaster and self-destruction by warning them when they are on the wrong path.

Paul’s final exhortation to Timothy rings as true today – if not even more true – than the day it was written: “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

As Richard Baxter said many years ago, “If their houses were on fire, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?”

That’s why the saintly Robert Murray M’Cheyne exclaimed, “Oh! If we had more love to you, we would tell you more about hell. They do not love you who do not warn you, poor hell-deserving sinners. Oh! Remember that love warns.”

It is true that love is patient and kind and is not irritable or rude (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

It is true that love does no harm to its neighbor (Romans 13:10).

And it is true that, rightly understood, love wins.

But love wins because love warns, and if we walk in true love for God and our neighbor, we will warn.

AROUND THE PARISH

CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS SATURDAY EVE OCT 31
 Please, set your clock 1 hour back so that you will arrive on time for Holy Mass.

02 NOV ... ALL SOULS DAY
 Immaculate Conception will once again set up a remembrance table for deceased loved ones. If you wish to include a photo (framed, if possible) in the display, please drop it off in the Parish Office between now and Oct. 23.
 We will also participate in Old Town's Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festivities and keep the church open until 9 p.m. on **November 1 and 2**. We need volunteers from 4 p.m. to closing to greet our visitors and to help maintain a prayerful atmosphere in the church proper. Please contact Elena Orozco or the parish office if you can volunteer.
 Traditional Latin Mass in the evening with procession to the cemetery. . . 6:30 PM

01 NOV ... NIGHT FEVER: LET'S EVANGELIZE!
 On Nov. 01, our parish will be wide open until 9 p.m., we will be inviting passers-by to come see, sit in contemplation, listen to music, and pray. Help is needed. Please call Michael Camacho at 619-565-8301.

10 NOV ... ST. JUNIPERO SERRA PRESENTATION
SAVE THE DATE: Mission San Diego de Alcalá is hosting an evening with Fr. Joe Chinnici who will make a presentation on Fr. Serra's life and work. Additional details will be published in the November 01 bulletin.

25 OCT ... FAMILY CATECHESIS
 Parents and children as well as all interested adults are welcome to attend Family Catechesis in the bride's room of the parish hall every other week. The program continues on Sunday, October 25, at 9:45, right after the 8:30 AM Mass. All children must be accompanied by their parents at each session.

Rite of Christian Initiation
 Each year on Holy Saturday during the Easter Vigil, thousands of people are baptized into the Catholic Church in the United States. Parishes welcome these new Catholics through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).
 If you are interested in becoming a baptized member of the Church, consider participating in the RCIA process.
 For information, please contact Fr. Richard at 619-295-4141, ext. 11, or email pastor@ic-sandiego.org.

2015 Baptism Schedule

November 9 Class
November 15 Baptisms
 (See ic-sandiego.org for more dates.)

29 OCT ... 2 PM Pacific time EWTN television
 — San Diego
 We invite you to watch our special traveling episodes which connects, faith, food, families, and our human family in a more powerful way.
 We will go on a mission, visiting the Missions of San Diego with Fr. Richard Perozich and then cook with some of our finest military members, CDR Darlak and Seaman Jimenez and Quinones.
Check local programing guide to verify date and time of this telecast via cable television.

25 OCT ... Quarters and Cans Sunday
 During our second collection this Sunday, all money collected will be used here at Immaculate Conception to assist our brothers and sisters who come to us in need. Your generous donations will continue to be used to help feed, and in some cases assist those who are in need of our help with rent and utilities. The parish also provides gas and grocery cards. Resource information is also available so people can access public and private agencies that can help with their needs.
 Food items collected will be taken by our volunteers to the Catholic Charities Food Resource Center. Please make sure these items are in non-breakable containers, unopened, and the dates have not expired. There is always a need for the following items:

- ◆ Canned goods including vegetables, fruit, chili, tuna fish, spam, chicken, beef, beans, soups, and spaghetti sauce;
- ◆ Peanut butter, jelly, and honey;
- ◆ Cereals, pasta, rice, and beans;
- ◆ Any paper goods such as toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates, cups, napkins, Kleenex tissues, baby wipes;
- ◆ Hygiene items such as shampoo, soaps, toothpaste, tooth brushes, dental floss, mouthwash, disposable razors, shaving cream, lotions and feminine products;
- ◆ Plastic, paper or reusable grocery bags for carrying the above.

Thank You

On behalf of the entire Quarter and Cans Committee and Father Richard we thank you for your continued support of these important programs as we try to follow Our Lord's command and put the Holy Gospel into action.

AROUND THE PARISH

Gifts of Treasure

With gratitude for the gifts we have received, parishioners and visitors made a joyful return to the Lord.

October 18, 2015

Total Collection: \$4,721.86
Envelopes: \$3416.27 Plate: \$1,305.59
Total contributing households: 90

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 5:15 Sat | \$ 421.84 |
| 8:30 Sun | \$1469.00 |
| 10:00 Sun | \$1477.52 |
| 11:30 Sun | \$ 591.00 |
| 5:15 Sun | \$ 429.50 |
| Mailed | \$ 333.00 |

EXPENSES
 October 12-16, 2015

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Ministry Supplies | \$75.69 |
| Music | \$500.00 |
| Payroll (incl. tax) | \$3004.16 |
| Payroll Service | \$46.45 |
| Pension | \$371.01 |
| Priest Pension | \$932.91 |
| Property Insurance | \$1152.67 |
| Workers Comp. | \$84.01 |

Total: \$6,166.90

World Mission Sunday
Special Collection: \$602.73

Serra Gifts...

**Street Level of
 Fr. Serra Hall
 619-297-3426**



Open 7 days a week
 Monday - Friday 9:30 -4:00
 Saturday 10:00 to 4:00
 Sunday 9:30 to 3:00

Serra Gifts offers a beautiful assortment of religious items for your home, for your family and friends.

Missalettes

As previously announced, beginning in Advent this November, the missalettes will no longer be in the pews because their cost is too high for our small parish.

Now available -- Living With Christ Missalettes for \$8.99 each. Youth missalettes (with color illustrations) available for \$16.99 each.

Advent candles and Christmas cards now in stock.

See our online catalog at:
<http://www.ic-sandiego.org/gift-shop>

**SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL:
 LUMEN GENTIUM**

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

... 28. For the sick and the sinners among the faithful, they exercise the ministry of alleviation and reconciliation and they present the needs and the prayers of the faithful to God the Father. Exercising within the limits of their authority the function of Christ as Shepherd and Head, they gather together God's family as a brotherhood all of one mind, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, to God the Father. In the midst of the flock they adore Him in spirit and in truth. Finally, they labor in word and doctrine, (183) believing what they have read and meditated upon in the law of God, teaching what they have believed, and putting in practice in their own lives what they have taught.

Priests, prudent cooperators with the Episcopal order, its aid and instrument, called to serve the people of God, constitute one priesthood with their bishop although bound by a diversity of duties. Associated with their bishop in a spirit of trust and generosity, they make him present in a certain sense in the individual local congregations, and take upon themselves, as far as they are able, his duties and the burden of his care, and discharge them with a daily interest. And as they sanctify and govern under the bishop's authority, that part of the Lord's flock entrusted to them they make the universal Church visible in their own locality and bring an efficacious assistance to the building up of the whole body of Christ. intent always upon the welfare of God's children, they must strive to lend their effort to the pastoral work of the whole diocese, and even of the entire Church.

**WELCOME TO IMMACULATE
 CONCEPTION!**

To register at the parish, please fill out the form below, and drop it in the basket or call the office at 295-4141.

NAME _____
 STREET _____
 CITY/ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

PARISH & COMMUNITY

Parish Calendar

October

- 25 Quarters and Cans Sunday
- 28 Choir Practice 5:30 p.m.
- 31-Nov. 1 Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive
- 31 Quilters - Cancelled for today

November

- 1 All Saints Day (Regular Saturday/Sunday Schedule)
 - Harp Meditation 2:00 p.m.
 - Vespers of the Feast of All Saints 3:00 p.m.
 - Night Fever 7:00 p.m.
 - Old Town Day of the Dead Festivities
 - Halloween Candy Collection
- 2 All Souls Day
 - I.C. Seniors Luncheon 11:00 a.m.
 - Harp Meditation 2:00 p.m.
 - Sung Requiem Mass for All Souls 6:30 p.m.
- 4 Choir Practice 5:30 p.m.

01 NOV -- 04 NOV ... Halloween Candy Collection For The Casa de los Pobres (House of the Poor)

The Sisters of the Casa save donated Halloween candy for the annual Christmas food distribution. Please consider asking your family and friends, if they would donate part of their wrapped Halloween candy for the poor children in Mexico to make their Christmas a little more festive. **Please put wrapped candy in bags and drop off on Nov. 1 in designated basket in the hall or bring it to the parish office by Wed., Nov. 4.**

For more information contact Cara Bandera of the Notre Dame Club at (858) 243-3926; carabandera@gmail.com or Caroline Kelner of the Casa de los Pobres at (858) 273-5545; carolinekelner10@gmail.com . Thank you!

“In a society without God, the human person becomes ‘nothing special,’ nothing sacred. The value of a human life is judged according to whether it is ‘productive’ or ‘efficient,’” he said. “Without God we don’t know who we are, or where we come from, or what we are here for.”
 — Archbishop José Gómez, LA

FROM MISERICORDIAE VULTUS - Pope Francis

BULL OF INDICTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

*FRANCIS
 BISHOP OF ROME SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF
 GOD TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER GRACE,
 MERCY, AND PEACE*

...7. To repeat continually “for his mercy endures forever,” as the psalm does, seems to break through the dimensions of space and time, inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love. It is as if to say that not only in history, but for all eternity man will always be under the merciful gaze of the Father. It is no accident that the people of Israel wanted to include this psalm – the “Great Hallel,” as it is called – in its most important liturgical feast days.

Before his Passion, Jesus prayed with this psalm of mercy. Matthew attests to this in his Gospel when he says that, “when they had sung a hymn” (26:30), Jesus and his disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. While he was instituting the Eucharist as an everlasting memorial of himself and his paschal sacrifice, he symbolically placed this supreme act of revelation in the light of his mercy.

29 MAR — 08 APR ... MERCY PILGRIMAGE

Poland-Prague-Vienna-Warsaw-Czestochowa-Krakow



- Buffet Breakfast Daily, 7 Dinners
- Sightseeing and Entrance Fees per Itinerary
- Private Deluxe Motor Coach
- Professional Tour Escort / Licensed Guides
- Czestochowa - Shrine of the Black Madonna
- Divine Mercy Feast Day Mass with His Eminence, Cardinal Dzwisz
- Visit the - Infant Jesus of Prague
- Mass Daily

Fr. Luke Jaurequi, Spiritual Director
 Dates: - March 29th to April 8th, 2016
 Cost: \$3159.00 Land & Air from San Diego
 (per person/ double occupancy)

Call Saint Rose of Lima or stop by the office for the itinerary (619) 427-0230.

To book the trip contact, or for more information:
 Best Catholic Pilgrimages 800-908-BEST (2378),
info@religious-travel.com.

**ARCHBISHOP GADECKI'S
SYNOD INTERVENTION:**

the church cannot bend to the will of man

English translation of the intervention made to the Ordinary Synod by Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, Metropolitan Archbishop of Poznan, President of the Polish Episcopal Conference.

October 13, 2015 (Voice of the Family) -

To begin with, I would like to stress that the following presentation does not express only my personal opinion but the opinion of the entire Polish Episcopal Conference.

1. There is no doubt that the Church of our times — in the spirit of mercy — has to help those who are divorced and “remarried” civilly to see (with prompt charity) that they are not separated from the Church but can — and indeed should — participate in her life insofar as they are baptized.

They ought to be exhorted to listen to the Word of God, to frequent the sacrifice of the Mass; to persevere in prayer; to increase their works of charity and initiatives of the community that favor justice; to educate their children in the Christian faith; to cultivate the spirit and the works of penance to so implore, day after day, the grace of God. May the Church demonstrate herself to be a merciful Mother that may sustain them in the Faith and in Hope.

2. The Church, nevertheless, in the teaching regarding the admission of the divorced and civilly “remarried” to Holy Communion cannot bend to the will of man but to the will of Christ. Therefore, the Church cannot let herself be conditioned neither by sentiments of false compassion for people nor by false models of thought, even if they are diffused in the context in which she finds herself.

The admission to Holy Communion of those who continue to cohabit *more uxorio* without a sacramental bond would be in contrast with the Tradition of the Church. Already the documents of the very first synods of Elvira, Arles, Neocesarea (which took place between 304 and 319) reaffirm the doctrine of the Church not to admit to Eucharistic Communion the divorced and “remarried.”

3. The fundamental reason is that “their state and their condition of life objectively contradict that bond of love between Christ and the Church that is signified and actuated in the Eucharist.” (*Familiaris consortio* 84)

The Eucharist is the sacrament of the baptized that are in *gratia sacramentalis*. The admission to Holy Communion of persons who are divorced and civilly “remarried,” i.e. of persons that are not in sacramental grace, could cause much damage not only for that which pertains to the pastoral care of families but also for the doctrine of the Church regarding sanctifying grace.

In fact, such an admission would open the door to all the persons who are in mortal sin to receive Holy Communion; in consequence this would cancel the Sacrament of Penance and would debase the importance of living in sanctifying grace.

Finally, it needs to be reaffirmed that the Church cannot accept the so-called law of graduality or the gradual path. As Pope Francis reminded us, those of us gathered here do not want and do not have any power to change the doctrine of the Church.

THE FALSE Gnostic GOSPELS VS THE GOSPEL

How do you know the gnostic writings provide us with a less historically accurate depiction of Jesus than the Gospels?”

... The Gnostic “gospels” aren’t gospels in the sense Christians use the word. They lack historical narrative, concrete details, historical figures, believable people, and details about social and religious life. The Jesus they describe has hardly any interest in the material realm. After all, the primary goal of Gnosticism, which came to maturation in the second century, was to escape the physical world. The Gnostic Jesus talked endlessly (and often nonsensically), but wouldn’t get his hands dirty.

Compare that with [the] Gospel reading, the story of Jesus healing the deaf mute, which is unique to the Gospel of Mark. It is a masterful and pithy account, filled with theological and spiritual riches. Jesus and the disciples were spending time in Gentile territory, circling north and then east before traveling south to the district of Decapolis, which is east of the Jordan River and south of the Sea of Galilee. During his previous visit to the region, Jesus had freed a man from demonic possession by sending the unclean spirits into a herd of swine (Mk. 5:1-20). Word of his return had apparently spread, and he was asked to heal a man who was both deaf and mute.

The primary source for Mark’s Gospel was Peter, and the detailed description of the healing indicates the head apostle was profoundly moved by what he witnessed. There are seven specific actions described by Jesus: he took the man away from the crowd, touched his finger to the man’s ears, spit, touched the man’s tongue, looked to heaven, groaned, and said, “Be opened!”

In many ancient cultures, saliva was believed to possess healing properties. What is perhaps more striking for the modern reader is the intimate physicality of the action, as when a mother uses her saliva to rub dirt from her child’s cheek. The healing was not the work of a dispassionate doctor, but of the Lover of Mankind, the healer of body and soul. The Son, in becoming man, did not reluctantly put on flesh and blood, but was truly Incarnate, embracing humanity fully, completely, wholly. “That power which may not be handled came down and clothed itself in members that may be touched,” wrote Ephrem the Syrian, the great fourth-century theologian, “that the desperate may draw near to him, that in touching his humanity they may discern his divinity.”

Whereas the Gnostic Christ fled the material realm and ultimately failed to meet man where he lives, the real Christ—the Creator of all things seen and unseen—entered into time and history, experiencing the heat, the hunger, the sorrow, the weariness, and the pain.

But this miracle, like all of Jesus’ healings, was about far more than relief from physical ailments and illness. It was a sign that the Kingdom was established, that streams of living water had been loosed in the desert, and that the poor were being offered the riches of faith and everlasting life. Jesus embraced all of humanity—Jew and Gentile, healthy and ill, hearing and deaf, speaking and mute—because each of us needs to be touched and transformed by his hands and his word.

So, one reason (out of many) the Gospels are far more believable than the Gnostic writings is they describe real people in the real world meeting a Man who really heals both body and soul.

(This "Opening the Word" column originally appeared in the September 6, 2009, issue of Our Sunday Visitor newspaper.)