

# St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

*St. Francis de Sales*



## Meanderings...

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BY REV. ROY ROBERTS

### To engage or not to engage...that is the question

**THE** first Sunday of Advent is one of my favorite times of the year, especially in our Parish. The Church ushers in a time of dreams and hopes for a better world, the Advent Scriptures are rife with wonderful imagery and poetry, and everyone is filled with expectation and anticipation.

We started our new liturgical year with a great retreat preparing us for Advent and Christmas, dispelling all the baggage and mythologies and giving a more balanced understanding of what Christmas is truly about. Many people were surprised at how little the Church actually deals with a preoccupation concerning the historical birth of Jesus, and truly focuses more intently on the arrival of Christ at the end of time.

This past weekend, my brother was here and celebrated a couple of the Sunday morning masses which made it a bit more relaxing. And of course, the highlight for me is the offering of a loaf of bread to each family. The idea of being united as a Parish family while each family gathers around their table at home for dinner is so powerfully Eucharistic. The Men of St. Francis who organize the bread basket, ordered 1,000 loaves of bread, and there were only about 30 left over.

One of the benefits of having someone else preside at Mass, is the opportunity to be at the back and watch the circus that goes on in our foyer, who comes mega late and who leaves mega early. One of the most disheartening things was watching people who couldn't be bothered to even come and receive a loaf of bread.

I try to figure out why they would be so reluctant to engage. Is it a rejection of our Parish? Or is coming to Mass no more than another anonymous, impersonal journey to the shopping centre or the mall?

And now that I am ranting, the number of people who return to the pew after communion and undo the whole meaning of being made one with Christ in the Eucharist and retreat into their own individual world oblivious to the symbolism and intent in the sharing of the one bread and one cup will be in for a shock in the up-coming reforms of the liturgy. The mind of the Church is that the community stand in unity and in community.

When it comes right down to it, this desire not to engage or participate except in the most peripheral of ways, strikes a blow to, and is diametrically opposed to an authentic expression of the Eucharist.

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