A PARISH OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 2021

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Advent Countdown

Over this past summer, I found myself often over-preparing for my Sunday homilies, often with a little too much historical background and scriptural cross-references that usually make for better articles than homilies. Contrary to my first 5 or 6 years preaching where I'd sit down on a Saturday night and write and research until I was finished, I have (thankfully) settled into having my words on paper by Friday afternoon or so, letting them marinate, allowing for some correcting on Sun-





day morning (trimming the fat) and then, of course, letting the Holy Spirit inspire as however it sees fit.

The Season of Advent is reflective of that whole process – there are some incredible in-depth things that (hopefully!) make a half-decent article but would be lost a bit in a homily.

The word "Advent" comes from a Latin root which means "coming" or "arrival." The season of Advent was developed by Western Catholics (where we have evolved from and remain) as a preparation for the nativity of our Messiah. The earliest reference was that a penitential season was to take place after the Feast of St. Martin (Nov. 11), giving it the title "St. Martin's Lent".

Historical writings from a church council that was held in Gaul (France) in the sixth

century refer to a six-week long penitential period before Christmas. And it was intense! Fasting was to take place on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Other pockets of Christianity show that this six week penitential period was modeled after the pre-existing structure of Lent. However...in places such as Spain, , Germany, and northern Italy, a five-Sunday Advent

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was used.

As with many decisions made by the Church, the passing of time fleshed some things out. Eventually, the influence of Rome over took much of the rest of the western church and four Sundays became the norm. The Advent Season still carried a heavy penitential character (as we are reminded the faithful would only receive the Body and Blood of Christ perhaps on Easter and Christmas), giving the two seasons defining names: - The Great Lent and the Little Lent. The titles not necessarily because of the length of days...but simply because the Resurrection of Christ is the crown of the entire church calendar!

But, where Advent once served as a more penitential period, its theology has been fleshed-out by many denominations, including ours — our "Ordo", or instructive calendar of the church, asks the clergy to wear blue first during Advent, and if unavailable, to wear violet/purple. This marks that the season is a prophetic one, focused on the Advent, or coming of the Christ. Our scripture throughout the season, often selected from the near entirety of the major and minor prophets, detail this preparatory aspect.

Advent has evolved, with the readings in our Lectionaries as well as the prayers and scripture of our Mass, to mark preparation for Christ in a double manner- first, in His Incarnation as

Fr. Jason's Article (con't)

the baby of Bethlehem, and second, His second coming at the end of time. Actually, this dual meaning brings together that longer 6-week season. The final 2 or 3 Sundays of Ordinary Time are known as the Eschatological Sundays, dealing with the end times – their theological character blends seamlessly into that portion of the Advent message.



Also involved in Advent is the ministry of the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, be it for one or more Sundays. Advent Wreaths are quite popular across the board, often detailing themes of "Hope, Peace, Joy, Love" or "Prophets, Faith, Shepherds, Angels", or "2nd Coming, John the Baptist, Joy, Holy Family."

At St. Mary's, we wear blue for most of the Advent Season – this comes from the church of Salisbury, England as well as an 8th Century Practice of the Mozarabic Rite of Christianity, centered in Spain and Portugal. I feel like we like them, as Polish National Catholics – not only did they deal with their own election and appointment of bishops, rather than seeking appointment from Rome, but they did so while in a predominant Muslim area - showing great courage and growth in the face of what was at times tumultuous opposition. The "sarum blue" color was more prevalent in the Methodist and Lutheran Churches for the last century or so before becoming the "first" Advent color of the PNCC.

The rose colored vestments and Advent Candle used on the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) is reflective of that same theme on the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) – here, the lightening of the vestments represents the traditional "lightening" of the penitential mood that was present during these Masses. Penances for Confession prior to these Masses often reflected that lightening!

And now, we enjoy Advent as it is — we prepare for the Lord spiritually in a society that has been celebrating His arrival since right after Halloween — it can be frustrating, but Paul wrote to the Romans to remind them of everything that is involved with this thinking: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. *Fr. Jason*

YMSofR Chili Cook-off

The annual YMSofR Chili Cook-off took place on Sunday, November 7 after the 10:30am Polish Mass.

9 Entrants provided their delicious homemade chili, with everyone in attendance tasting and ranking their

top 3. Our winners were: 1: the Bennets; 2: the Wisniewskis; 3: the Avondets.

The Browns even showed up, easily defeating the Bengals (for perhaps their next-to-last win of the year).

Winners of our football square pool, orchestrated by Ron Ference: Q1: Brady Soltysiak, Q2:Mike Wisniewski, Q3: Mike Wisniewski, Q4: Susan Boehnlein.







SOCL & Packing Party!

On Sunday, November 14, our weeks-long Operation: Christmas Child collection concluded. Many parishioners provided filled boxes and placed them upon St. Mary's Altar, while others gave a donation to help out the shipping costs.

Our Youth Group (along with help from the SOCL) has a tradition of filling a number of boxes on the last Sunday before all the boxes are collected. Ms. Evonne Pryer spent a portion of the previous week purchasing supplies for the kids to use in filling the boxes.

After 9am Sunday Mass, after cake and juice, the kids set off for their morning School of Christian Living. The younger boys enjoyed a substitute with Mrs. Cathy, while the older kids spent a portion of their lesson making Christmas Cards to go in the boxes.

After the cards were made, 41 boxes were filled with toys, labeled, and provided with cards from our kids. The following week, after a 9am weekday Mass, the boxes were blessed by Fr. Jason and Ms. Evonne delivered them to our drop off point.

God bless all who made sure that 41 children across the world would have something to open on Christmas morning!









1st Sunday of Advent

The First Sunday of Advent took place on Sunday, November 28, 2021, with the Liturgical Cycle changing to "Cycle C". This Sunday brought a few changes and adjustments that our people would take note of.

The first is the blessing of our Advent Wreath and the lighting of the first Advent Candle, the Hope Candle. Thanks to Mak for doing the reading that day.

The second change was the addition of the table in the back of church for our Advent Food Collection. Special thanks to Brady for creating, printing, and helping to hang the signs.

The third change was the addition of a place of enthronement for the Holy Gospel. Our parish is blessed to have a Deacon proclaiming the Gospel each Sunday as well as a Sanctuary that makes a place of display look natural as well as dignified. By doing so the Church shows its veneration toward God's Word and its belief that Christ is present and speaking in a special way during the liturgical proclamation of the sacred texts.











From the Parish Chair...

Time continues to fly by at an unbelievable pace! It's hard to believe we are coming to the end of 2021 when it just seems we were at the end of 2020! I looked back at the thoughts I shared with all of you at the end of last year and they included feelings of somewhat of a sense of relief that the year that brought us: that the Pandemic was over; that hopefully we were going to eventually get back to some kind of "normal" in 2021.

Although we have been able to gather with our families and friends and worship together in church, it's somewhat hard to say that this year was better than the last and that we are settling into a good normal. We continue to hear in the news TOO much political bickering, the stories of bad people doing bad things, not knowing what to believe and not believe, and most difficult is what hit us right here at home - the amount of our dear parishioners that have gone on to their eternal home. As these are all things that bring frustration and sadness, we have to continue to see and believe that God is right here with us laying out His plan and we must remain strong in faith and follow his path - Living a God-Filled Life! My go to verse again from last year... "No matter how steep the mountain - the Lord is going to climb it with you".

As we continue to be appreciative of the good things in our lives I want to take this time to thank everyone for the time and efforts that have been put into the life of our beautiful parish! This year we've enjoyed gathering together again for worship and for fellowship which included our normal coffee hour, our recent Chili Cook-Off (thank you YMSofR) and the upcoming zoo light outing (thank you Natalie). We are also continuing to work at getting fundraisers back in our plans. Again, thank you everyone and let us all thank God for His love and guidance!

Your Support

One of the fundraisers that will be wrapping up the end of this year and moving into next is the Pick-a-Number board. There will be a bit of a change



to its layout this time but will still be as fun and full of anticipation if you will be one of the lucky winners of a prize. The parish will be the ultimate winner with everyone supporting this effort. The board of numbers will be out starting Sunday December 12th and will run through January 30th or whenever the last number is

purchased. Thank you Steve for your effort in heading this project.

Important Reading

As you may have already read in the pages of the newsletter, the annual December parish



meeting is planned for Sunday, December 12 following 9:00 Mass. The plea is always out for our parish members to attend these important meetings! I'm asking again for you to make plans to attend on the 12th. The outcome of the items on the agenda are vital to the life of the parish and affects all of our parishioners. There will be voting of members to the board for 2022 as well as an important issue of our annual dues. Please remember your right and obligation as a PNCC member to take an active role in your parish. Thank you and see you on the 12th!

My Hope at Christmas

Hoping all of you will be sharing the Polish tradition on Christmas Eve, that of Midnight Mass or The Shepherds Mass (in Polish, Pasterka). This Mass is in honor of the shepherds who first heard the good tidings on the first Christmas. Let's fill our church this Christmas Eve night, to celebrate together the birth of Christ! Come early and listen to the selection of Christmas carols, known as Kolendy that will be sung by the choir at 11:30. Celebration of Mass begins at Midnight.

To all parishioners and friends of St. Mary's:

May the spirit of Peace, Love, and Joy that we share this holyday season live within all of us throughout the new year!

Merry Christmas -Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

elaine p. plostonka

New Year's Eve Service

On December 31, 2021, at 5:00pm we will be concluding our liturgical offerings for 2021 with the Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and Litany to the Blessed Sacrament augmented with a time of testimonials during the Sacrament of the Word of God. A little bit of explanation about testimonials.

A testimonial or an account of one's faith is any report we share about how our Catholic/Christian faith has been real in our lives. It may be an intense miracle story, or an account of an answered prayer, unexpected grace, and/or a blessing.

People are hungry to hear about the reality of God's work in the world. We also need to hear about the firsthand experiences of those who are walking with Christ. He, Jesus Christ, is alive and active in the world, and faith stories demonstrate how that is true. These accounts evangelize because they remind people of the reality of God in ordinary life.

Is this new to the Church? The largest part of the Bible consists of testimonials. From Adam and Eve to the patriarchs and prophets, coming to fulfillment in the Gospels and continuing with the adventures of the apostles—the Bible is one long, exciting, and thrilling account of the story of faith.

The story of God's love for His rebellious children continues in the history of the Church. For nearly 2,000 years since the beginning of the Church at Pentecost, we have been telling and re-telling the account of the people of God. Through the history of the Church and the lives of the saints, we have shared how God is at work in the world.

At our recent Western Diocese's Clergy Retreat and Conference our keynote speaker, the Right Reverend Bernard Nowicki, noted that one of the problems with the modern Church is that we have forgotten how to testify. We try very hard to catechize our children, but the Catholic faith is more than just memorizing statements about certain truths. The faith is more than simply

absorbing and adopting a set of rules it is first and foremost about a living and personal relationship with Christ the Lord. Through Bishop Nowicki's remarks the impetus for this New Year's Evening is appreciated. Let this be a time of remembering the Old Year with praise on our lips and with joy and hope for the New Year.

Giving an account of how

Christ has touched one's life does not
need be some great miracle or spiritual success story. It might be a simple
thanksgiving. I'm reminded of a friend,
who would breakdown when sharing
how thankful he was for his wife and
how Christ blessed him with her.

Talking publicly can be challenging: for many, our faith and our love of Christ is the most intimate part of our life. However, this is a great way to share our faith, our dependency on Christ and the many ways that He has and continues to bless us. I look forward to our New Year's Eve service, Friday at 5pm, and opening the floor to hear what Christ has done for the faithful of St. Mary's. To God be the glory.

Deacon Jim Ploskonka

Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's

December 5- Jack & Stella White (78th Anv.) of. by daughter Patty

December 12- Raymond J. Kovach Jr. of. by Cheryl Repko

December 19- Robert & Louise Cygan of. by Pam Chesar & Bob Cygan

December 26- Alphonse & Adele Blazer of. by the family

Please reach out to Fr. Jason to schedule Masses for 2022



In Remembrance

Our sister Janice Bielecki (September 17, 1952-Noveember 14, 2021) went home to be with her Lord this past month.

Janice had begun worshipping at St. Mary's while in the midst of a battle with cancer before the pandemic began. Though her battle kept her away from worship for most of the last two years, she occasionally popped in for our parking lot Masses, a Sunday Mass here or there, and a received the Sacrament of Anointing at a Mass for Health in the early autumn.

Her funeral service took place graveside on Monday, November 22 at Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland, officiated by Fr. Jason and with many family and friends gathered. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon her. Our brother Ronald Tiffe, age 79, passed away this past month as well. Beloved husband of the late Elaine C. (nee Rutkowski); loving father of Jeffery, Brian (Angela), Tricia Kraska, and his beloved dog, Oscar; dear brother of the following deceased: Robert, Betty Holzman, and Shirley Solanics. Ronald was a retired US steel worker before becoming the proud owner of Tiffe's Pizza for 17 years. He enjoyed driving his pride and joy which was a 1936 Ford Pickup Street Rod. He loved showing it off and being with his friends at the local car cruises, especially at the annual St. Mary's Dinner and a Car Show where he won many a trophy!

His funeral took place Saturday, November 20 with Mass at St. Mary's and burial at the Brooklyn Hts. Cemetery. Eternal Rest grant unto him, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon him.





Various Announcements

<u>ACME</u>—We are participating in the Acme "Community Cash Back" program. Please submit your receipts today!

RECTORY AVAILABLE – The rectory is available for rental. It is a 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath 2 story bungalow and we want to offer it to parishioners and friends/family/acquaintances of parishioners first. Please speak to Fr. Jason, Elaine Ploskonka, or Steve Fesz with info.

<u>HEALING MASS</u> – We have reintroduced a Mass of Healing at St. Mary's that offers the Sacrament of Anointing to conclude Mass- our next Mass will be Wednesday, December 15 at 5pm.

BOARD MEETING – The Parish Committee meeting is Wed. Dec 8 at 5pm.

PARISH MEETING – Next Sunday, after Holy Mass, we will be holding our annual December Parish with its main intent the election of officers & parish committee (board) for the 2022 year. We also will be addressing an increase in parish dues, necessary in reaction to the inflation of the dollar the past 18 months. Please make it a point to attend this important and efficient

meeting that sets us up for this upcoming year.

NEW LITURGICAL CYCLE – The First Sunday in Advent brings about many changes – different vestments, a wreath, prophetic readings, and a season of preparation. It also brings about "Liturgical New Year: Cycle C" that is, the gospel begins in a new point of history (preparing for the coming of Christ), and is from St. Luke after hearing from mostly St. Mark this past year.

SCHEDULING MASSES See Fr. Jason to schedule Masses for the upcoming year.

FOOD MINISTRY UPDATE – continues on a weekly basis throughout December. We plan on serving ~3500 total meals in 2021!

<u>PTO NEWS</u> – The Christmas Party is back! It will take place on Sunday, December 19 and includes the annual basket raffle. Please plan on supporting the baskets beforehand and enjoying the party and a visit from Santa!

<u>FOOD COLLECTION</u> – During Advent, we will have a guided food collection. There will be a collection table placed in the

church, with non-perishable items needed to fill it! For Sunday, Dec. 12, the Third Sunday of Advent, please bring pre-packaged meals that can be opened without a can opener: spaghettios, ramen, canned soup, beef stew, etc.

WIGILIA/WILIA – The Mission Team will be sponsoring a take-home Wigilia/Wilia dinner for Christmas Eve, 2021. Not everyone has a family to be with, and not everyone has the time to cook. A meal featuring meatless homemade and church-made favorites will be available in single-serving and family portions. The meal will be prepared, but purchased cold – heating instructions for each item will be provided. See the inside-cover for details.

HOLIDAY KOLACZKI – Orders are being taken for Christmas Kolaczki- they will be available for pickup on Sunday, December 20 from 11am-1pm. Please see Susan Boehnlein or Patti Dotson

SOCK TREE- The Love of God Sodality is sponsoring a "sock tree" that is located in the back of the church, opposite the food collection. Please bring NEW socks that will be attached to the tree.

PNCC Future Directions Update



December 2021 - Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph

As we begin the Holy Season of Advent we focus on our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph and their willingness to say Yes to God's will as our Savior Jesus Christ entered into human history born as one of us.

<u>Click Here</u> to watch a short video message on our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph by Fr. Sr. Charles Zawistowski

Scriptures for Reflection

Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-23; Luke 2:1-7, 22-52

Reflection & Action Item:

The Holy Family of Nazareth is the chosen instrument by which the Savior entered into human history. The Blessed Mother and St. Joseph are the first group of disciples—indeed, the first domestic Church—for they heard and believed the Good News and then together responded in humble obedience to the will of the Father, even when things were not easy. They sacrificially put Jesus first and show us what we can become if we but do the same.

Their family life is the first, greatest and clearest example of the kind of cooperation that we too are called to give to God's grace as He seeks to make Jesus present in the world through us. Every day this month, recite the Daily

Family Prayer, asking the Blessed Mother of God and St. Joseph to pray for your family and all the families of the Church.

This month, schedule: Advent Retreat or Penitential Service

Song Recommendation: "Make Room" by Casting Crowns

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUFSxt7gkNw

Prayers for Families

God, our Heavenly Father, You have blessed each of us with the gift of family that through our family life we may learn to love and care for others. Open our eyes to recognize in all people the bonds of kinship. May we unselfishly serve them who with us have been made coheirs with Christ. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ. Amen.

Loving Father, we desire to live as Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in peace with You and with one another. By their intercession, may we be strengthened to live like the Holy Family and to face the challenges of life. This we ask through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

NCC Future Direction is on Facebook. Like us and follow our updates on Facebook too. If you know of parishioners or friends who are not a part of our monthly email updates - please have them email us at FutureDirection@pncc.org to become a part of this important effort for our Holy Church.

May God bless you; may our Lord calm the storms of life, may our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph intercede for us. Have a blessed Ad-

vent and joyous celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us respond to the Love of God through the Incarnation by sharing His Love in faithful witness and action.



PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., Chairman

Kolaczki for Christmas!

(we will also be selling kolaczki at Easter)



church-made, freshly baked packages of 24 kolaczki, 6 assorted flavors \$14

sold in packages of 2 dozen, assorted flavors

available baked or unbaked (we provide instructions)

~ pick-up Thursday, December 23rd between 2pm and 6:30pm ~

St. Mary's PNCC 5375 Broadview Rd, Parma 44134







Saturday, September 3rd, 2022 Briarwood Golf Course

2737 W. Edgerton Rd. Broadview Heights, OH 44045. Visit briarwoodgolf.net. Save the date. More details coming!

December Days of Note



December Birthdays

1	Nick Paulus
7	Michele Barry-Misiewicz
8	Dale Dotson, Sr.
8	Bill Zychowski
15	Ralph Zaun
17	David P. Micka
18	Ann Warzala
19	Ethan Long
20	Jessica Moritz
22	John Dankanich
24	Dale Dotson, Jr.
25	Katie Burger
	Eileen Matteson
27	Paul LeMessena
29	Halina Dreger



Jack Spilka

31

December Anniversaries

2	Chester & Ann Warzala
25	Ralph & June Zaun
28	Don & Marilyn Burger

Have we missed a birthday or anniversary? Just give us a shout so we can fix any errors that have been made :-)

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"The 4 Candles of Advent"

The candle of HOPE

Hope for the hopeless and hope for the lost. No matter the price, Christ has paid the cost Jesus has come and was willing to pay being born as a babe that first Christmas day.

Hope that's a certainty, hope that is sure. Though the earth is shaken we are secure. Trusting in Jesus and safe in His care. Knowing that He's with us and always there.

The candle of PEACE

Peace, all other peace transcending Peace eternal and never ending. Peace that passes all understanding Peace so calming and undemanding

Peace lovely peace floods into our soul Peace of healing making us whole Peace from God, peace from heaven. Peace, Jesus whispers, peace within.

The candle of JOY

The candle is burning, its flame so bright and joy floods the soul with pure delight. For the Light of Life has shone upon us bringing joy so wondrous and marvelous.

Joy unspeakable and full of glory as we remember the Christmas story. How The Almighty God had come to earth born as a baby by a virgin birth

The candle of LOVE

The candle of God's love burns ever bright, brightening up even the darkest night. It turns water into precious wine and these things of earth become divine.

For we're loved with an everlasting love coming from God and lifting us above this earthly plain to the heights of heaven where we rest in Him loved and forgiven.

By Roysten Allen



Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

Bill & Pat Glatzer Barbara Baranowski Bill Kastak Anna Dawidziuk George & Linda Makovicka John Spilka Johanna Markiewicz Mary Ann Loschelder Ralph & June Zaun Julie L. Marty Bengela Tom Putynski Polly Gajda Millie Dominik Kathleen Beres Joseph Bischoff David Micka Carol Hreha Chester & Ann Warzala Tom Petrie Patti Dotson Amy Dreger Elizabeth Starnawski Jack Spilka David Vaden Elaine Repede Wanda Clark Beth Chihill Michael Cosevin **Helen Cummings** Laina Dachtal Wendy Andrzejewski Jay Grabowsky Pam Chesar Cecelia Hall Caroline Kunes Linda Marks Thomas Lill John & Anne Nemetz Rhonda Smith Kenny Ploskonka Carol Boesch Joanie True Daniel Rinella Fr. Tom Sheha Tom Slomka Geri S. Ben Soltis Pam Tropiano Linda Vect Dennis and Sue Vect Marcus Vaughn, Jr. Bryson Dzuroff Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak Kelly B Jane Hunter **Dennis Thome** The Finnie Family Carlene Fliss Jim Fliss Jr. John Wisniewski Cathy Pieciak Nan Cramer Bp. John Mack Mike Pescitelli Bp. John Swantek Mary Cawley Richard & Edna Samelson Jim Giles Tammy Teubl Wanda Heffner Loretta Baldwin Donna Kidd Paulette Lilli Azriel G. Joseph Zubel Marilyn Girard Courtney Austin Stephanie Milla Shannon Alberino Jayden Pieciak Sophie Mae Jeremy Steinbrick Katie Stallbaum Marcia Klein Kim Penney Barbara B. Patrick Kmitt Michael McGivern **Daniel Morgan** Barb & Jim Lukas Renee Lukas Mike Matis Jeff Lukas Al Piniecki **Bob Kaczmarek** Mike Paulus

WE ALSO REMEMBER
ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
Bless them, O Lord.

