

# St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

**December 2016**

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## Turn back the Clock...

As I was preparing to write this article, I thought quite a bit about Christmas morning. I wanted to pinpoint my favorite Christmas...or my favorite Christmas memory.

I couldn't—like many people, my life is broken into various stages in various areas: kid, teen, adult, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio.

The most excited I ever got for a Santa-delivered gift was the original Nintendo Game Boy - green screen, four buttons, and playing Tetris until I saw those shapes in my sleep.

The least excited for a gift was when my brother Andrew and I had discovered a "secret section" of Santa's workshop in our garage in Connecticut—we played so much Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Foosball that early December that upon its special delivery to underneath our tree...it sat mostly idle, unless our friends were over.

Selfishly, for a long time, the "goodness" of Christmas was defined by "what I got for Christmas." Truly, my early memories of the day are defined by this. I suppose it was when I went away for college when



Christmas began to turn into something different. Part of my college experience was being away from my church as well as being away from The Church...but somehow growing closer to my Lord. The same thing would go on in my personal life, as I was hundreds of miles away from my wife to be, with the distance and time away only building affection.

Perhaps it was Christmas, 2000, when I viewed the day through the lens of an adult—I enjoyed watching my 9-year-old brother very much still entwined with the magic of the day all while looking forward to the meals, the time together, the joy of doing nothing with everyone.

On one hand, though college makes you do very adult things and you constantly straddle that line of kid v. adult while there, I truly remember that being an "adult moment". Man, I even stopped playing video games! (If Natalie could have a time machine, she may go back to capture *that* moment of no games!)

The question I want to ask is this—what will Christmas be for you this year? What makes it a "good" Christmas compared to a "bad" Christmas in your life? Is it what you get? Is it what you give? Is it the people around you? The meal? The job situation, or finances, or hours at work, or lack of sleep?

As humans, we can be very good at pinning the blame of some of the imperfec-

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tions of life onto something that doesn't deserve it at all. How many of us have a tough day at work and blow up at our families, the people we care about the most? It is *terrible*, but it happens.

Christmas is such a peaceful holiday. In our country, we are lucky that many stores are closed for the day. In many European countries, even the holiest of days have become even more secularized than in our nation of consumption!

Again, what makes Christmas good for you, personally? Is it hearing the Gospel of the Lord's birth? Is it seeing the church, lit faintly by candlelight with surrounding poinsettias? Is it the commercials on TV from the individual channels, wishing you a Merry Christmas (or, a happy holiday?) Or maybe it's something personal, or a smell, or an ornament from your own youth that looks juuuust right on Christmas morning. Maybe it's a combination of it all!

On the first Christmas, God came through with His promise of granting the world a Savior. 3/4 of the Bible is in preparation for that moment of Incarnation. Thousands of years of humanity lead up to that moment....God's favorite Christmas memory.

If there is any morale-boosting advice I can give, it is to take some time and really think about past Christmases. Think about them from various pockets of life: different ages, different homes, before spouse, after kids, when the cat knocked over the tree...When God gave us that 1st Gift, he knew there would be many great memories to follow.

*Fr. Jason*

## Craft Fair

Our Holiday Craft Fair took place on Saturday, November 5 from 10am-4pm. Mary Ann Kasperczyk was once again our point-person and coordinator for this event.

This was our third Craft fair in 12+ months. Due to our location and ease-of-access, there has been little problem

getting vendors to come and set up shop on our premises. Tablespace was sold out with a few vendors even on a waiting list.

Our Craft Fairs have become a (relatively) hassle-reduced fundraiser for our parish, as well as allowing for new people to enter our facilities, with a number stopping upstairs for a quick prayer.

and grab a hot dog and a soda...I mean, pop, for lunch.

Many continued thanks to Mary Ann Kasperczyk for her devotion to running this event and for securing the help she needs, the layout of the tables, and everything else in order to make these events a success. Bog Zaplac!

Please continue to support our Craft Fairs, even if it just to look at the items



## Operation Christmas Child

Every single year, the call seems to come earlier. Sure enough, we make an announcement...in October...that

start to dust our front yards, pushing us to finally fill those green-and-red boxes full for others.

We all like gifts, right? And since Christ commanded us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, St. Mary's makes sure to participate and prioritize our Operation Christmas Child shoebox collection every year.

This year, we met our previous year's number by putting together

44 boxes for various children around the world. I'm putting the 12 month in advance call for next year—I would love, as a parish, to break 50.

we will be collecting for a Christmas program...and the due date is in November.

And sure enough, each and every year, the collection is a slow go for a while. Who wants to go Christmas shopping when it is still Halloween time? But then those first snowflakes

Many thanks to Evonne Pryer for spearheading the collection once again. The boxes were blessed after Monday morning Mass on November 21 and brought to Royal Redeemer Lutheran Church in N. Royalton, our local drop-off spot.

## 1st Sunday of Advent

The Church Liturgical Calendar celebrated its New Year on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27.

Fr. Jason welcomed the season change by explaining the color of the vestments (blue), the theme of Hope, and the Blessing of the Advent Wreath as well as the lighting of our First Advent Candle.

Many thanks to our acolyte Mr. Damion for giving an inspiring reading in welcoming our first Candle.

## Kolachki Making

A group from the parish came together in November to make Kolachki for an upcoming Christmastime Bake Sale. See what fun they had!



## Various Announcements

### New Liturgical Cycle

The First Sunday in Advent brings much change – different vestments, a wreath, and a penitential season. It also brings about “Liturgical New Year: Cycle A” - the readings are of a prophetic nature, the gospel begins in a new point of history (preparing for the coming of Christ), and is from (mainly) St. Matthew.

### Choir Concert

St. Mary's choir will be participating in a concert at St. Barbara's Parish (1505 Denison Ave, Cleveland) on Sunday, December 18 at 7pm. All parishioners and friends are invited to attend as we offer our selections before the assembled.

### Early Bowling

To accommodate our choir mem-

bers, bowling will take place a half-hour earlier on Sunday, December 18. Bowlers, please be ready to roll at Red Circle by 3pm.

### Visitations

If you have a family member or know of a parishioner that can use a pastoral visit, please contact Fr. Jason. As the holidays approach, we want to make sure our parishioners are spiritually tended-to.

### Bible Study

Our current section of Bible Study is focused on prayer as well as taking scenes and ideas from the 2015 movie, *The War Room*. Please consider joining us! Our schedule of meeting will be: Dec. 14 and 21.

### Food Ministry

Our monthly Food Ministry was held Wed., December 7. Many thanks

to all who offered their time to serve the needs of our community. A total of 83 meals were served. This brings our 2016 total meals served at 955, just short of 80 per month. In January, we will serve meal number 5000(!) since the ministry began.

### National Park Lecture

Parishioner Gene Stepanik will be giving a lecture at 2pm on Sunday, December 11 regarding Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Please attend this informative and sure-to-be fun event at our parish.

### Winter Clothing Drive

The United YMSofR is calling for all parishes in the PNCC to have a winter clothing drive. Branch #29 would like to make sure we participate! Please see the flyers posted on the bulletin board in church about how we can help.

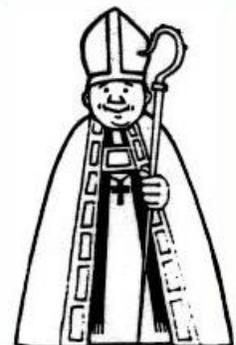
## Thanksgiving with Bishop

St. Mary's was blessed this past Thanksgiving to have our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Stanley M. Bilinski, present and offering to celebrate Holy Mass for the parish on Thanksgiving Day.

As Bishop's schedule places him in the area for this holiday, he gave Fr. Jason "The Day Off" to go play flag football and over-eat with his in-laws back in Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, real work was happening back in Parma as the Sacrifice of the Mass was offered and Bishop gave a homily that has since been quoted by parishioners numerous times since it was preached.

Many thanks to our former pastor for sharing his ministry with us.



*A note from your parish chair.....*

**Thank You**

This past Sunday the meeting to elect the upcoming year's new parish committee took place. Thank you for re-electing me to the position of chair. I am truly grateful for your support and confidence. I am excited to serve our parish for another year! I thank the members of the 2016 committee that dedicated their time and desire to serve the needs of the parish and I look forward to continuing that dedication with the 2017 committee, which includes a few new members. We had another amazing year and continue to be an example to many of our sister parishes throughout the PNCC. We continue our outreach through numerous events, fundraisers and community service endeavors. It is my hope that, with the work of all the members of our parish, we are able to grow our family, make a difference in the lives of those in need, and bring more people know God's love.

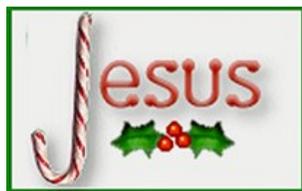
**2017 Offering Envelopes**

Our 2017 offering envelopes will be available on Sunday December 18th. Please pick them up in the fellowship hall. We are asking everyone to be supportive in 2017 of the Initial Offering of \$5.00. This helps defray the cost of the envelopes. Thank You.

Also please allow this to serve as one more reminder to be sure your 2016 financial obligations are met by December 25th. If you have any questions please contact Jo Ann Long or me.

**The Candy Cane**

A story about the history of the candy cane... To celebrate Christmas, a candy maker decided to make a candy that would include several symbols of the life of Jesus Christ, so he made the Christmas Candy Cane. He began with a stick of pure white, solid candy; white to symbolize the firm love Jesus has for all of us. The candy maker made the candy in the shape of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus. Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker added red stripes. He used three small stripes to represent the nails that held Jesus on the cross and a large stripe to show the blood shed by Jesus, giving us the promise of eternal life. Then he added the wonderful flavor of peppermint which is a royal gift of spice. So perhaps the next time you look at this familiar Christmas decoration



you will remember the candy maker and the real meaning behind the Christmas candy cane: The wondrous birth of Jesus and His great love for us all.

**Christmas Oplatek**

A polish tradition, still popular in many families, is the breaking of blessed Oplatek (the Christmas wafer) before dinner on Christmas Eve (Wigilia). The white wafers, similar to a Communion host, are shared with every person. During that time, good wishes are expressed to each other. It is said that along with being the most emotional time of the holiday for a Polish family, it is also the most sacred night of the year. The pink wafer is shared with the animals who, according to Polish tradition, because they were first to greet the Baby Jesus, speak at midnight. If you need Oplatek for your Christmas Eve please see Chris Paulus.



**What do you call a bunch of grandmasters of chess bragging about their games in a hotel lobby? ...Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer. Ha Ha Ha (or maybe it should be Ho Ho Ho)!**



**Merry Christmas ~ Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia**

*To all parishioners and friends of St. Mary's, I wish the Christmas Spirit of Love, Joy, and Peace to be with you and your families now and throughout the coming year! Please celebrate the birth of Christ with your St. Mary's family ~ Let's Fill The Church! Everyone is welcome to join us at 11:30 p.m. on December 24<sup>th</sup> to listen to a selection of Christmas music performed by the choir followed by Midnight Mass or join us a 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day.*



*claire p. pluskanka*

## December Days of Note



### December Birthdays

- 1 Nick Paulus
- 4 Matthew Adams
- 7 Michele Barry-Misiewicz
- 8 Dale Dotson, Sr.
- 11 Adolph Kasperczyk, Jr.
- 15 Ralph Zaun
- 17 David P. Micka
- 18 Ann Warzala
- 19 Ethan Long
- 20 Jessica Moritz
- 21 Jan Sobolewski
- 22 John Dankanich
- 24 Dale Dotson, Jr.
- 25 Katie Burger  
Eileen Matteson
- 27 Paul LeMessena
- 29 Halina Dreger  
Mary Patla
- 31 Jack Spilka



### December Anniversaries

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

### "Joke Section"

It was the Sunday after Christmas and Father John was looking at the nativity scene prior to packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene.

Immediately, Father John took out his cell phone to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus.

Father John walked up to Harry and said, 'Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?' Harry replied honestly, 'I took him from the church, Father John.'

'And why did you take him?' With a sheepish smile, Harry said, 'Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give him a ride around the block in it.'

## The Story of St. Nicholas

Once there was a little boy who lived by the shore of the sea.

He watched the ships go sailing by all wrapped in mystery.

"What do you carry, where do you go?" he said as he saw them there.

I hope you bring many good things to girls and boys everywhere."

Nicholas was the little boy's name, in case you'd like to know.

He loved surprising others with gifts and seeing their faces glow.

Then he would hide and no one would know the one who loved them, who loved them so.

Once a father had grown so poor as to sell his daughters three.

Three nights to his window Nicholas came with gold to keep them free.

Nicholas went to church one day and all the people stood:

"You have a heart like God's," they said, "A heart that is so good.

Will you be our bishop And lead us as God would?"

When Nicholas died God welcomed him to heaven's great applause:

"Well done, well done, good Nicholas, for serving well my cause."

Now every Christmas Nicholas comes with gifts for girls and boys.

You know his name as Nicholas, But it's also Santa Claus.

O Good St. Nicholas, children's friend, friend of girls and boys, through the clouds come again, and fill your bag with toys.

Give me too a giving heart, for loving others too,

I want to know how good it is to give good gifts like you.

*Victor Hoagland, C.P.*

## Our Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

Marlane Oleniacz	Barbara Baranowski
Bill & Joan Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
Craig & Judy Atherton	John Spilka
Tom Petrie	Mary Ann Loschelder
Ralph & June Zaun	Len Pryer
Marty Bengala	Amy Dreger
Floyd & Elaine Rzonca	Frank Dominik
John Kasperczyk	Chester & Helen Budney
Chester & Ann Warzala	Hilda Grabowski
Louise Cygan	Pat Glatzer

Please pray for our family and friends:

Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Gayle Green
Jay Grabowsky	Pam Chesar
Cecelia Hall	Caroline Kunes
Mark & Kim Andreas	Thomas Lill
John & Anne Nemetz	Bea Miskow
Rose Neyman	Carol & Chuck Boesch
Joanie True	Daniel Rinella
Joanel Rollen	Mike Szydowski
Fr. Tom Sheha	Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard
Gracie Pijor	Ben Soltesy
Don and Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Marcus Vaughn, Jr.
Bryson Dzurhoff	Howard Dicken
Cherise Pacanovsky	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
Duda Family	Fr. Sr. John Kraus
Nan Cramer	Bp. Stanley Bilinski
Bp. John Mack	David Vaden
Bp. John Swantek	Jeannie Bartko Muran
Johanna Markiewicz	Edna Samelson
Elsa Vogl de Gomez	Wanda Heffner
Kim Blaha	John Clark Sr.
Abby Sobolewski	Geri S.
Robert Winlock	Colleen Howard
John Clark	Nancy Jablonowski
Jason Dreger	George Pofok
Stephanie Milla	Rich Dombrowski
Muffie B.	Dan Colwell
Shannon Alberino	Bp. Thomas Gnat
Donna Micka	

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

Shirley Paulus	Gene Mora
Polly Gajda	
WE ALSO REMEMBER	
ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY	
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN	
Bless them, O Lord.	