

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

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

**January 2020**

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## **A Lord for All!**

“Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.” (Isaiah 60:6)

This is written at the conclusion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas, the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Epiphany, defined by the church, means “A sign of Divine power/the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles in the form of the Magi.” According to Webster’s Dictionary, it is “a moment of sudden revelation or insight.”

The New Year of the Church/ Beginning of a new Liturgical Cycle is always the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent. As was the case this year, I noted in a bulletin announcement how we now predominantly hear from St. Matthew’s Gospel, with some sprinkles of John and the others. And since we entered the Advent Season on



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more. May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

(10-11)The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts; the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute. All kings shall pay him homage, all nations shall serve him.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

(12-13)For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

Reading through this Psalm, we see how powerful the Epiphany is. The Lord, the Almighty, at the point of this writing, was almost solely the mono-theistic property of the Jewish People. They were His chosen people, He was their God. But, in this piece of scripture, we see how God was meant to be *more*. How, though chosen, the Jewish people knew better than to put limits on God. They were painfully aware of His mercy, with their (and later, our) history littered with bouts of straying-from and returning-to Him.

Every nation on earth will adore you! And not because they will be forced to – it will be as natural as a

December 1, I’ve tried to stress the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy each step of the way in God’s Incarnation in the form of Jesus Christ.

Some of the meat of that prophecy comes from the Responsorial Psalm from Psalm 72 that is used not only on the Feast Day, but during the “Octave” as well. In the church, an Octave is “the liturgical celebration of a feast for eight days- on the day itself and the seven following days.” This has Old Testament roots as well, and to date, only the Octaves of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi are still celebrated in the Polish National Catholic Church.

The Responsorial Psalm below is from the Feast Day of Epiphany, Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,10-11,12-13: some of the following days within the Octave add more verses from Psalm 72

**R. (cf. 11) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

(1-2) O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king’s son;  
He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

(7-8) Justice shall flower in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no

## Fr. Jason's Article (cont)

group of men who study the sky, noticing something new...and remembering that, once upon a time, they heard something of some religion that this would mean something big. The first part of the Epiphany, that sign of Divine Power, was that these men, clearly Gentile (non-Jewish), clearly from the East, clearly of a different background of anyone else in the area, *just knew* that this star was something that

they were supposed to pursue. Their knowledge of the skies and foreign texts clearly shows how God chose them as instruments of faith. Verse 10-11 pretty much gives everything away! The extent of where those wise men/magi/kings would come from, repeating that listed place from the opening scripture from Isaiah. The homage that would be paid, by full-grown, and powerful men.

For us, the Epiphany is beautiful in the history we can see: the Old Testament clues, the historical accounts of the Magi, the development of the celebration in a growing Christian Church. The church offers pastoral visitations to continue to bring Christ into the lives of the faithful, marked by the names of the Magi. May continued insight into the celebration offer a greater appreciation of the God we worship. *Fr. Jason*

## Advent Scenes

The time of preparation for the Feast of the Incarnation constitutes Advent. It is always the 4 Sundays (and portion of that 4th week) before December 25th, ranging from a bit over 3 weeks to 4 full weeks.

Our solemn Advent this past December included the blessing of the Advent Wreath, blessing of Oplatki, and weekly prayers and readings as each Advent Candle was lighted.



Also, an Advent-themed penitential service began one of our Sundays of worship. As we counted down to Christmas, we did so with prophecy and prayer.







## Love of God Sodality Christmas Party

The Love of God Sodality has taken on some new tasks and direction over the last few months, and the ladies came together to celebrate their togetherness.

On the evening of Tuesday, December 10,

Sodality members enjoyed a Christmas party, replete with games, prizes, and a catered dinner. The event was enjoyed by all in attendance...but lets get a peek at what fun they had. Until next time!



## YMSofR Potato Pancake Dinner

On Friday night, December 6th, the Feast Day of St. Nicholas, Branch #29 of the YMSofR here at St. Mary's sponsored its first Potato Pancake Dinner.

Though YMSofR in name, the entire parish had a hand in producing this event—tickets were taken by parish committee members; candles, peanuts, and t-shirts were being sold as a parish fundraiser, and the Mission Team had a bake sale going on as well. The event had a bit of a

hiccup, as our fearless leader and YMSofR President David Micka was calling the shots from a hospital bed in downtown Cleveland, but the event was a sure success for our branch.

Each dinner featured 3 gigantic pancakes and a cup of church-made Manhattan Clam Chowder. Only a few of the hungriest visitors were able to finish the delicious meal—many of the ice cream novelties went unclaimed, as everyone was stuffed! And since our very own Accordi-

on Bill was playing for those in attendance, no one left for the entire 2-hour dinner!

Congrats to the YMSofR on a nice dinner and to many successes ahead.





## Christmas at St. Mary's

Christmas at St. Mary's was a wonderful occurrence, as usual. Our first Christmas Mass was held at the turn of the clock from the 24th to the 25th, with the first candles in the pews being lighted at Midnight.

Our Midnight Mass was a High Holy Mass, featuring procession with lighted candles, the blessing of the manger and lighting of the Christ Candle, and incensation of the Altar, the Gospel, and the Gifts of God: the offering of bread and wine as well as His

faithful in attendance at Mass.

Our second Christmas Mass was at 10am, featuring sleepy-eyed clergy, an organist on double duty, and even a few who chose to worship once again.

This year was the first that the parish's clergy trio were able to wear their matching vestments.

As Deacon Jim was ordained Deacon in November, Fr. Jason, Fr. Greg, and the Deacon were able to wear the

matching Christmas Vestments. They depict the Nativity Scene on the front side, while the back design is of the moment of the Epiphany, with the Magi presenting their gifts to the Lord.

Many people noticed the vestments, and although "cute" perhaps wasn't the targeted look (as was oft-mentioned), these rugged men who matched did enjoy honoring their Lord in an appropriate way.





## SOCL Christmas Program & PTO Party

On Sunday, December 22, after celebrating Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent, the parish was treated to a performance of the SOCL students, put together by our dedicated teachers, Mrs. Amy Dreger and Mrs. Susan Boehnlein.

The parish traversed to the basement hall to enjoy this short play, practiced and rehearsed during the month of December. Then, as a tremendous surprise, Jolly ol' St. Nick showed up to Parma 3 days early, treating the children in attendance to a variety of gifts.

And speaking of gifts...as we've grown ac-

customed-to and spoiled-by, the PTO, led by Debbie Moritz and Marge O'Connor, hosted the entire parish for their annual Christmas Party and Basket Raffle.

The gifts were tremendous and plentiful, and the food, from bagels to donuts to juice to coffee to everything in-between was a Christmas treat. God bless all who were involved in making this a special day in the parish life of St. Mary's.



## Parish Potluck

Our parish of St. Mary's has grown quite accustomed to our potluck luncheons, usually around Christmas, Easter, and in the autumn.

Our Christmastime potluck was held on Sunday, December 29, the PNCC Solemnity of Humble Shepherds. We only had one Mass at 10am that morning, with parishioners supplying a luncheon afterward.

As is parish custom, the pastor and the parish chairperson broke bread with each person coming up to the smorgasbord, breaking the blessed oplatek and wishing the best to everyone.



## A Note from the Chair

### Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all of you reading the pages of this newsletter. I wish you God's blessings in 2020!



I would like to express my appreciation to all our parishioners and friends that helped make this past year at St. Mary's another wonderful one. Whether you worshipped regularly at Masses and services, volunteered your time or talent, joined our St. Mary's family, participated in fundraisers, offered additional financial support, or all of the above, you were all part of the success of 2019 and I thank you! As we enter another year may we all make it a priority to keep our parish growing in spirit, love, and prosperity.

### Reminders

Our Annual Parish Meeting takes place on Sunday, January 26th after 9:00 a.m. Mass. **Remember there is only one Mass at 9:00 a.m. that day!** Please understand the importance of our meetings and appreciate your privilege as a member in good standing to voice your opinion and vote on necessary items that will be taking us through 2020. **A reminder to all parish organization heads, your 2019 activity reports and audited financial reports are due by Sunday, January 12th.**



January 26th (annually, the last Sunday of January) is also recognized in the PNCC as Music Scholarship Sunday. Through the continued generosity of the faithful and careful financial management by the National United Choirs the music scholarship program continues to thrive. Scholarships offer financial assistance to those interested in serving the ministry through music. Parishioners of all ages throughout our Church submit applications which demonstrate their talents, whether instrumental or vocal. Anyone currently enrolled in classes, or who may be interested in beginning their studies, is encouraged to apply! Please see Chris Paulus or Deacon Jim for details on obtaining an application.

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As I searched for what I wanted to share with you this month I found a story that truly tells all.....

### *A BABY'S HUG*

We were the only family with a child in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking.

Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, "Hi." He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment. I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map. We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. "Hi there, baby; Hi there, big boy. I see a, buster," the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks, "What do we do?" Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi." Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby.

Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo."

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. "Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik," I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep



## A Note From the Chair (Continued)

him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's "pick-me-up" position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man's. Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time. I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, "You take care of this baby". Somehow I managed, "I will," from a throat that contained a stone. He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, "God

bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift." I said nothing more than a muttered thanks.

With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me." I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not. I felt it was God asking, "Are you willing to share your son for a moment?" when He shared His for all eternity. The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children."

*elaine a. ploskonka*

## Various Announcements

### FOOD MINISTRY

Thank you to all who participated in January's Food Ministry. Though it was a week later than usual, people really enjoyed a hot bowl of soup and a grilled ham & cheese.

### HYGIENE KITS

We are always looking for items to collect. We are in need of travel-size toothpaste and toothbrushes. Please bring these and other travel-sized items to church. They will be collected throughout the month of January, with a packing party to be announced.

### PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting takes place Sunday, Jan. 26 after 9am Mass. There is only one Holy Mass this day.

### SCHEDULING MASSES

Please see Fr. Jason to schedule Masses for your loved ones in 2020. Some dates have been filled, so if

there is a date you normally keep, please make sure to inform Fr. Jason in person, via email, or by phone. Thanks!

### CLOTHING DRIVE

The National United YMSofR once again is holding a clothing drive across the entirety of the PNCC. Parishes will collect all sorts of new and previously-loved clothing and tabulate what was collected at the end of the drive. Clothing will be donated locally.

### MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

Information for scholarships from the National United Choirs is available by seeing the forms posted on the bulletin board or by talking to Chris Paulus or Deacon Ploskonka.

### STILL?

Our Christmas celebration hasn't ended yet, as we highlight our liturgy with Christmas Hymns for the entirety of the 40 days of the Christ-

mas Season. Though the world has moved on, the Church continues with joy the celebration of the Savior's birth.

### EPIPHANY BLESSINGS

Pastoral visits have begun – As a reminder, these visits are done in the name of the 3 Magi, with the home (and pets) blessed by the visiting pastor. Visits can be scheduled with Fr. Jason and can be as quick as 5 minutes or you can put on the coffee and converse for a while. Please reach out to him if interested.

### CHECK YOUR MAILBOXES!

Please make sure to check your parish mail slots for Christmas Cards that you may not have picked up yet.

### PARISH ENVELOPES

For the 2020 year have been made available – please see the box in the Fellowship Hall where we have just a few left.

### FEBRUARY 2

The Solemnity of the Presentation of the Lord takes place, with the blessing of candles as well as, (a day early), of throats.

**PNCC Future Directions Update**

# DISCIPLESHIP

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2020 PNCC



January 1, 2020

Dear Bishops, Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, Deacons and Faithful of our Holy Church,

**HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND BLESSED NEW YEAR!**

DISCIPLESHIP 2020 will present monthly messages focused on the lives and messages of the disciples of Jesus. Each month will present a short video, a scripture passage, and questions for reflection – all related to the particular disciple.

**JANUARY 2020 – ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Please take a moment and watch this 90 second video on John the Baptist by Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich Jr., Pastor of Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, MA – if you cannot click through, please search PNCC Future Directions on Youtube



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC3f928yp4A&feature=youtu.be>

**Scripture for Reflection**

Matthew 3:1–17; John 1:15–36; 3:22–30



## PNCC Future Directions Update (continued)

### Questions for Reflection:

John the Baptist called others to repent and prepare for the Lord Jesus.

How can you, as a disciple, help others take their relationship with our Lord more seriously?

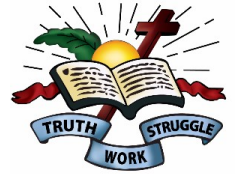
Name a few important "discipleship qualities" that John the Baptist demonstrates?

Which one would you personally like to better emulate?

How can you begin to practically do so in your daily life?

PNCC Future Direction is also 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](mailto:FutureDirection@pncc.org) to become a part of this important effort for our Holy Church. Wishing you a blessed New Year 2020 and strengthening of our Discipleship

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
**PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee**



### **We continue to implement the five themes the Synod determined for our future direction:**

Growth and Membership  
Increase Spirituality  
Lifelong Learning  
Sacred Vocations  
Community Involvement and Presence

### **Action Plan for Discipleship: 2020**

Develop and strengthen Discipleship throughout 2020  
Parish Assessment  
Special Masses  
Continue the Business Free Zone  
Continue and Strengthen Social Media Presence  
Adult Continuing Education  
Two Days of Spiritual Retreat  
Complete Six Community Service Projects

John the Baptist  
Prepares  
the Way



## January Days of Note

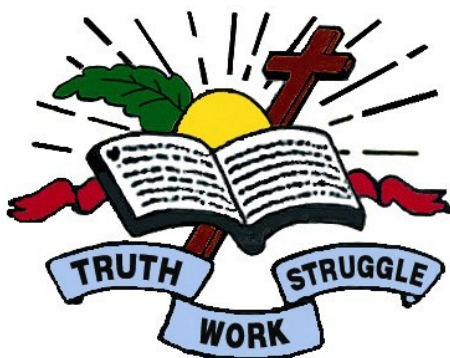
### January Birthdays

- 1 Barbara Wisniewski
- 6 Katie Repede
- 7 Pattie Dotson  
Natalie Soltysiak
- 12 John Kasperczyk
- 14 Josie Matis
- 22 John Kobalka  
Tom Kugler
- 23 Pete Moritz



### January Anniversaries

- 7 Andre & Audrey Spanjol
- 24 Mike & Barb Wisniewski



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## Magi

Now as at all times  
I can see in the mind's eye,  
In their stiff, painted clothes,  
the pale unsatisfied ones  
Appear and disappear  
in the blue depths of the sky  
With all their ancient faces  
like rain-beaten stones,  
And all their helms of silver  
hovering side by side,  
And all their eyes still fixed,  
hoping to find once more,  
Being by  
Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,  
The uncontrollable mystery  
on the bestial floor.

By W.B. Yeats



## Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

Bill & Pat Glatzer	Barbara Baranowski
Bill & Joan Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
Craig Atherton	John Spilka
Johanna Markiewicz	Mary Ann Loschelder
Ralph & June Zaun	Len Pryer
Marty Bengela	Tom Putynski
Polly Gajda	Millie Dominik
Kathleen Beres	Louise Cygan
Helen Budney	David Micka
Chester & Ann Warzala	Tom Petrie
Amy Dreger	Patti Dotson
Elizabeth Starnawski	Jack Spilka
Elaine Repede	John Radon
Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Sharon Seitz
Jay Grabowsky	Pam Chesar
Cecelia Hall	Caroline Kunes
Linda Marks	Thomas Lill
John & Anne Nemetz	Rhonda Smith
Rose Neyman	Carol Boesch
Joanie True	Daniel Rinella
Fr. Tom Sheha	Tom Slomka
Geris S.	Ben Soltesy
Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Marcus Vaughn, Jr.
Bryson Dzuoroff	Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak
Cherise Pacanovsky	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
John Michalczyk	Cathy Pieciak
Nan Cramer	Rose Petrosky
Bp. John Mack	David Vaden
Bp. John Swantek	Mary Cawley
Richard & Edna Samelson	Jim Giles
Wanda Heffner	Loretta Baldwin
Donna Kidd	Paulette Lilli
Muffie B.	Azriel G.
Marilyn Girard	Courtney Austin
Stephanie Milla	Rich Dombrowski
Shannon Alberino	Jayden Pieciak
Jeremy Steinbrick	Katie Stallbaum
Marcia Klein	Barb Lucas
George & Linda Makovicka	Julie L.
Kelly B	Julie R.
Michael McGivern	Sylvia Kowalski
Daniel Morgan	Emma Freshwater
Kim Penney	Tammy Teubl
Baby Layla	Carol Hreha
Barbara B.	Anthony Grad

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