

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

Noticing that today is December 8 our Catholic sense of things tells us that this should be the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. That would be correct. However, since this feast falls on Sunday, and that the Second Sunday of Advent is the priority, the feast will be celebrated tomorrow: Monday, December 9th. Although the obligation to attend mass has been lifted this year, we will celebrate the feast tomorrow at the regular 8:00 a.m. mass.

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent. As noted, this year we will be reading primarily from the Gospel of St. Matthew for the Sunday Liturgies. And again, it would be a good and holy practice to give an attentive reading of St. Matthew's Gospel as personal spiritual reading this year. Of the three synoptic gospels (Mt, Mk, and Lk) Matthew has the honor of being the more popular gospel for reading. Matthew is noted by its readability. Again, try to spend some time with Matthew throughout the year.

There is something wonderfully encouraging when we consider the Gospels for Spiritual Reading. The reading of Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, is the greatest foundation for a sound spiritual life. There are many benefits that are seen and unseen with the reading of the Scriptures. Spiritually speaking, we must remember that all scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is the same Holy Spirit that is the Soul of the Church. This is the same Holy Spirit we received in the Sacraments of Initiation. This is the same Holy Spirit that the priest calls down upon our gifts of bread and wine at the consecration of the mass. This is the same Holy Spirit that hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation. And most especially, this is the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the Blessed Virgin Mary resulting in the Word Incarnate. Like the Blessed Mother, we ask the Holy Spirit to "hover" over us as we read the Word of God realizing the Incarnation in us and becoming more Christ-like, the Body of Christ: The Church. This is the Holy Spirit we invoke when we prepare to prayerfully read the Sacred Scriptures.

When we read and pray with Sacred Scripture, we are profoundly united with Christ and His Church. Pressing it a little further we can say that when we pray with the Scriptures that the mystery of the Incarnation takes place within us as individuals and as the Church. This is another reason we can say that the Church is the Body of Christ in the world. As individuals and as Church, we desire to be faithful disciples growing in the likeness of Christ. The Scriptures, with the Sacraments (especially the Holy Eucharist), have the power to reconfigure our lives to be more like Christ. This is the power of the Holy Spirit. This power of the Holy Spirit more perfectly unites us Christ and His Church: His presence in the world. This is particularly evident when the Church prays with the Scriptures in the Liturgy of the Hours and at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Church is profoundly herself when she prays and lives the Word of God.

An interesting thing to note and to reflect upon from the very beginning of Matthew's Gospel is the name to be given to the child to be born. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, revealing that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and that he shall be named "*Emmanuel*" which means "*God is with us.*" This is revealed in the beginning of Matthew. At the conclusion of the Gospel we read in the last verses: "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" There

appears to be "bookends" in Matthew. "*God is with us*" and "*I am with you always.*" Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, is God with us: always with us.

We have also read during the final days of the last Liturgical year (the last Friday of the year's morning Gospel) words about the end of the ages. We read these words at the end of St. Luke; "*Heaven and earth will pass away but my word will not pass away.*" These words echo and fulfill similar words that we hear from the Prophet Isaiah: "*The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.*" (40:8) This is a wonderful consolation and encouragement. We are never alone when we have the Word of God (Jesus Christ) with us.

If we were to consider further the beginning of Scripture itself, from the Book of Genesis. We hear the words "...and God said, '*let there be light*'." God speaks (word) and creation takes place. The word of God spoken gives life and brings creation into being. The Word creates and gives life to all creation. There is creative, life-giving power in the Word of God. The pinnacle of God's creation is the human being created in the *Image and Likeness of God*. The ultimate spoken word is the perfect *Image and Likeness of God: The Word Made Flesh*. This is the eternal word that is always with us.

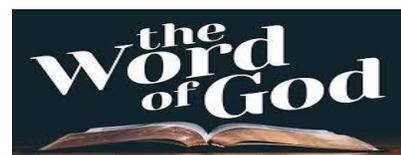
It is the human being who is not only called into being, but also the most capable of all creation to receive the Word of God and contemplate the Word. Unlike the rest of creation, there is something very important about our being created in the Image and Likeness of God that has a way of drawing us close to the Word of God. As rational creatures, human beings we have the ability to receive and contemplate words. We listen, think, articulate and express words. This ability reveals to us our ability to enter dialogue. The most important dialogue is our conversation with the Word of God. In all of creation the human being can welcome the Word of God, understand it and respond to it. This dialogue gives the Word of God the power to transform our lives: our faith response. Because we have Free Will, we can welcome the ongoing transformation of the Word of God. We are open to Christ like and desire to be more like him; growing in the Image and likeness of God. This is our calling from the very beginning to be the Image and Likeness of God. We have the perfect example in the person of Jesus Christ.

In our consideration we also know that the opposite is also true; we can close ourselves to the Word of God; discounting or denying its power to transform our lives. We do so at our own peril.

As we approach the Celebration of Christmas we grow in our appreciation of the Word of God as a tremendous gift freely offered to all who freely open their minds and hearts to receive it. This gift is no less than Jesus Christ for the life of the world: our salvation.

We have this great opportunity to better prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christmas. We can contemplate the Incarnation and share in this great mystery of our faith. We are assured that we will be drawn deeper into the mystery by the power of the Holy Spirit as we devoutly read the Sacred Scriptures, the Word of God.

Have a profitable Second Week of Advent.
Father Ralko



This week we pray Week II of the Liturgy of the hours.

*We pray for those who have died recently:
Joseph N. Malone*

Church Support

December 1, 2019	
OFFERTORY	\$13,600.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$9,711.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly surplus	\$2,851.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

All are invited to join us for breakfast Sunday, December 8th following the 8:15 and 10:45 a.m. Masses.

Grief Tip: During the holidays, do only as much as you are emotionally and physically comfortable doing. And, attend the St. Nicholas Grief Support Program on **Thursday, December 12th**. The topic of the day is "Getting Through the Holidays". Meetings are at 1:00 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Office Meeting Room. The meetings are offered twice in one day to afford the maximum number of participants.



The Daughters of Isabella seek to promote the welfare of the community in accordance with the teachings and rules of the Catholic Church through unity, friendship and charity. All women age 16 and up are welcome to join us.

The next meeting is **Tuesday, December 10** at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Nicholas Parish Office.



If you are interested in becoming a hospice volunteer, we would love to speak with you. Training can be customized to fit your schedule & location. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Tracy Rector at 453-1173 or rector@interim-health.com

RECENT BOOSTER MANIA WINNERS

\$25- Charlie Peterson, Trish Longstreth, Keenan Meyer, Brenda Dinan, Karen Lyon, Jared Echelberry & Aaron Monroe \$50- Sally Paul & Annette King

Bishop Rosecrans Athletic Boosters

It's time again to purchase your Booster Mania tickets for the upcoming year. \$25 each or three tickets for \$60, **January 1** is the first drawing. Tickets make a good gift. Questions contact Marvin Paul at 740-819-3429.

THE GIVING TREE

Every Advent we place a Giving Tree in the Church vestibule. It contains paper ornaments with gift items to be purchased for needy families. This year we will be giving the gifts to the Muskingum Valley Clinic for children, Heartbeats, Transitions, and our own homebound St. Nicholas Parishioners. Please pick an ornament, buy the requested item, wrap and securely fasten the ornament tag to the package. All packages must be returned to the church by **December 15th**. You are always so generous, and we thank you for helping others this holiday.



BLANKET DRIVE



Everyone loves a warm blanket on a cold night. The Good Samaritan Nurses Alumni are collecting clean blankets, new or gently used. We do this as a memorial to our nurses who have passed away. The collection will start on **December 1** and end on **December 31**. Place the blankets in the box provided in the lobby at Genesis. Blankets are given to Eastside Community Ministries for their clients. If you need more information call Carol Kohler 740-453-9123. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



will once again be ordered to adorn St. Nicholas Church in memory and in honor of our deceased loved ones. Please use the special envelope found in your contribution packet. If you do not receive envelopes, please use a plain envelope and include the name(s) of those to be remembered AND the donor's names **PRINTED CLEARLY**. Send your request to the Parish Office with the donation amount. **Names must be received by Monday, December 16th to be included in the Christmas bulletin.**

A Letter to A Suffering Church – Bishop Barron's third video is now available on the St. Nicholas webpage. The web page can be found at www.stnickparish.org.

CALENDARS AVAILABLE

We wish to thank Hillis, Combs & Nestor Funeral Home for our 2020 calendars. They are available at the entrances to the church.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SALE

The Muskingum Valley Right to Life is selling beautiful, religious Christmas cards. They are available in the back vestibule after all Sunday Masses this weekend. The cards are 10 for \$5.00. Please make checks payable to Muskingum Valley Right to Life. For more information call Corinne Musselman 452-9806.



The New Ministry Schedule is available for pick up in the Eucharistic Chapel.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

December 15, 2019 Second Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 14 @ 5:15 p.m.

Cantor: Jim Gable

Lectors: Mike LaPlante, Sylvia Norris

Servers: Justin Ewart, Rex Hankinson

Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Mike Musselman

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Margaret Kronenbitter,
Jim McKee

Eucharistic Ministers: Jon Calendine, Mary Calendine, Dottie
Durant, Paul Ritchey

Sunday, December 15 @ 8:15 a.m.

Cantor: Sandy Black

Lector: Diane Hoffer, Bill Sullivan

Servers: Mason Harmon, Nathan Hustey

Eucharistic Minister- Coord: Laurie Harmon

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Jeff Hustey, Angie Hustey

Eucharistic Ministers: Suzie Altier, Bill Altier, Tim Hoffer,
Joshua Wright

Sunday, December 15 @ 10:45 a.m.

Cantor: Sr. Bernadette Selinsky

Lectors: Keena Hansel, Maggie Wright

Servers: Thomas Bernath, Nicholas Bernath

Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Jennifer Bernett

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Linda Haswell,
John Haswell

Eucharistic Ministers: Jim Pottmeyer, Larry Taylor, Gerald
Tiberio, Claire Tiberio

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

PLEASE REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.

Please join us each Monday at the St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession for the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, December 9

8:00 a.m., Mass: Florence Schoeppner, Church

2:00 p.m., Pray the Rosary, St. Nicholas Chapel, Parish Office

6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Confessions, Church

TUESDAY, December 10

8:00 a.m., Mass: Russell Glaub, Church

9:30 a.m., Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Parish Office

WEDNESDAY, December 11

8:10 a.m., School Mass: Tom Brown, Church

7:00 p.m., R.C.I.A., Parish Office

THURSDAY, December 12

NO MASS

1:00 p.m., Grief Support Meeting, Parish Office

6:00 p.m., Grief support Meeting, Parish Office

FRIDAY, December 13

8:00 a.m., Mass: Patrick Lyon, Church

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Confessions, Church

Second Sunday of Advent

SATURDAY, December 14

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions,
Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Tom Nash, Church

SUNDAY, December 15

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, anniversary, Church

9:45 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Religious Education, Bishop Fenwick

10:45 a.m., Mass: Russell Dooley, anniversary, Church
Bob Cherrington, Church

Readings for Week of December 9

Mon.	Gn 3:9-15, 20	Lk 1:26-38
Tues.	Is 40:1-11	Mt 18:12-14
Wed	Is 40:25-31	Mt 11:28-30
Thurs.	Zec 2:14-17	Lk 1:26-38
Fri.	Is 48:17-19	Mt 25:1-13
Sat.	Sir 48:1-4, 9-11	Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Sun	Is 35:1-6a, 10	Mt 11:2-11

