

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

Today we celebrate Gaudete Sunday: *Rejoice* Sunday. We rejoice that the Lord is near. In our anticipation we prepare ourselves for the coming of our God. This is the great joy of the Advent season and of our lives. Hopefully it is a joy for all people. Yet I sometimes wonder if anyone is taking this season and attitude seriously. I wonder if anyone is truly waiting in joyful expectation for the Lord. There is a great deal of hustle and bustle with the preparations for Christmas. With this fast pace comes the temptation for impatience, frustration and various manifestations of anger. These are all contrary to the faith filled expression of Joy. Despite all the demands and pressures, the Christian should be able to navigate this time with Joy, knowing that our salvation is near at hand. We cannot forsake the Joy of being followers of Jesus Christ. Joy is a manifestation of faith in the one who is greater than this entire world and who fulfills the deepest desire of the human heart: Our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation he brings to those who have faith in him. Joy is rooted in this faith. Joy, or our lack of it, needs to be contemplated during our Advent season.

Last week I encouraged the reading of the Gospel according to Matthew. As I set about this noble task, I found myself beginning with a smirk. It is the same old story, once we make the conscious effort to "read the Bible" we get hit with a section like we find at the beginning of St. Matthew: the dreaded genealogy. If there is anything that will stop us dead in our tracks, it's a genealogy. This usually causes many to abandon this noble venture. It is especially noted when anyone wants to start reading the Bible cover to cover it begins with Genesis. After reading a couple of interesting stories we find ourselves in the middle of a genealogy. (There are many other "dry" sections in the Scriptures along the way.) We usually do not find these very interesting. In fact, it is an easy excuse to abandon our attempt at reading the bible.

In the Liturgical Year there are two occasions when the Church uses the genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew. The first occurrence is on Tuesday, December 17, the first day in the octave leading up to Christmas. The second occasion is for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Eve most parishes opt out of reading this passage for the Vigil mass since, by itself, it bewilders those who have come to celebrate Christmas. Since parishioners usually attend only one liturgy for Christmas, they usually never notice a sequence in the gospels that takes place in the four progressive liturgies for Christmas. Hearing the genealogy of Jesus instead of the story of his birth at the Vigil mass would leave most people bewildered. The reading of the genealogy would begin to make some sense if the congregation also attended two further masses for Christmas. After the genealogy of Jesus at the Vigil there follows a progression of readings that are intended to cause an extended time for deeper meditation into the Mystery of the Incarnation. This is easily noted if one were to look at the progression of masses for the celebration of Christmas: The Vigil Mass, the Mass at Night, the Mass at Dawn and the Mass for Christmas day.

Considering this progression of liturgies, we are reminded that the Celebration of Christmas, along with Easter, is primarily a great religious moment in history. This Sacred Time is not a break or a vacation from the Liturgy, but rather a plunging deeper into the Sacred Mystery of the Incarnation in prayer and worship. Since Advent is a time for prayerful expectation and

preparation for Christmas, it would not make sense to shorten our prayer and worship on Christmas Day. To accentuate this, we have the various liturgies for Christmas so that the Church may plunge deeper into this great feast of our Salvation: The Birth of the Son of God. Christmas is first and foremost a Sacred Day. We don't need to be reminded of this point, but all too often the sacredness of this day gets overshadowed by the secular observance of the day. This is something to consider especially as we come to worship.

Getting back to the genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew, it is helpful to consult a biblical commentary to help our understanding and to gain insights. One thing that we can note from just reading through the genealogy is the name of King David. David is mentioned four times (significant) in the genealogy. Along with Jesus he is given a title. David is called "*the king*" and Jesus is called "*the Messiah*." David is first mentioned at the end of the first sequence of "*fourteen generations*", and Jesus is named at the end of the third sequence of "*fourteen generations*". In Hebrew letters are used for numerical values. In this case the name "David" has the numerical value of 14; (d+v+d equals 14). In this sense it is symbolic that he is named at the end of the first "*fourteen generations*". David then begins the second sequence of "*fourteen generations*" which leads up to the Babylonian Exile and the appearance of the end of the line of Davidic kings. At the end of the third "*fourteenth generation*" we find Jesus who, in Matthew, indicates that he is the "*thrice Davidic-Son of David*." Following along the three groupings of generations we have the establishment of David as King, the fall of the kingdom, and finally the restoration of the Covenant with David and the fulfillment of the Davidic kingdom. Pope Francis, in one of his weekday homilies during Advent said, "*When God restores his creation it is always better*". We get this sense of "*the better*" with the birth of Jesus, who is Son of David and Son of God. Looking at the history captured in the genealogy we see that something better is on the horizon. God has come to restore his creation.

We also notice the mention of four women named in the genealogy. This is something that would not be done in Jewish genealogies. Nevertheless, Matthew mentions four women. Three of these women are of questionable moral character. One of these women was Ruth who was a good and virtuous woman. In the genealogy of Jesus there are sinners; women as well as many of the kings. These are all part of the family tree. The women mentioned are all Gentiles. They are welcomed and integrated into God's Chosen people; the House of Israel. Thus, we can say that not only were there sinners in Jesus' family tree, there was Gentile blood flowing in the royal line of David. It can be said that we see a foundation for the universal mission of Jesus' kingdom, who will bring salvation to Jews and Gentiles, saints and sinners alike.

This bloodline leads all the way down to Joseph. We can say that this is where the line stops. Matthew then tells us that Joseph is the "*husband of Mary*." He does not tell us that he is the father of Jesus. We also note that during the Eucharistic Prayer at mass we mention Blessed Joseph the "*spouse of Mary*", not father of Jesus. God is the father of Jesus. Matthew is telling us that Joseph supplies the connection with the line of David. Later, in a dream, Joseph is told by an Angel not to be afraid to welcome Mary (with child) into his home.

Lastly, we can look at the succession of the three groupings of "*fourteen generations*". We see the rise of King

David, the greatest king of Israel. It is to David that God promises in a covenant that *his kingdom will never end*. We then see in the second *fourteen generations* the line of kings, who were both good and corrupt, all the way to the fall of the kingdom and the Babylonian Exile. In the last *fourteen generations* we see the return to Jerusalem and a seemingly dead line of the House of David until the birth of Jesus. During this time Jerusalem was ruled by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and lastly the Romans of Jesus' day. Although ruled by foreign powers the genealogy continues. Then, suddenly, from the "*root of Jesse*" a shoot shall sprout, and a bud will blossom. That which seemed to be dead and gone new hope springs forth. The birth of Jesus Christ signifies New Life.

The genealogy of Jesus is rather long and tedious. But it is filled with the history of God's people. At first glance we can easily get lost and impatient with the whole genealogy thing. Nevertheless, God is working through human history and we need to be patient and watchful. For those who hang in there and "keep watch through the night" God will reveal many things, especially his desire and plan for the salvation of all people. This is the Good News of the Gospels revealing God's desire for all humanity to be gathered in His eternal kingdom. God comes to us and gathers us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

O come, O come Emmanuel. Come Lord Jesus.
Have a spiritually enriching third week of Advent.
Father Ralko

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

CALENDARS AVAILABLE

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



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

MESSIAH CONCERT: Treat yourself to an Advent experience and come to the "Messiah" concert on **Sunday, Dec. 15**, at 6:00 p.m. at Central Trinity United Methodist Church, 62 South 7th Street in Zanesville. This concert with live orchestra sings the entire story of our redemption from the Old Testament prophecies through the birth and passion and resurrection of Jesus. A free will offering will be taken up.

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.**

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.

COME, LORD JESUS - During Advent just before we sing the "alleluias" the last time before the Gospel, the cantor sings "Lord Jesus, Come." Feel free to join the cantor at that time instead of waiting for the alleluias. Once Christmas arrives, these words will be changed to "Lord Jesus Christ!" This change in words helps to alert us that it's a new season: first Advent with its cry of "Lord Jesus Come," then Christmas with its cry of "Lord Jesus Christ!"

Give Yourself the Gift of Time with Jesus and Your Sisters in Christ!

Give yourself the gift of the **Columbus Catholic Women's Conference** on Sat., Feb. 15, 2020 at the Ohio Expo Center. Come to pray, learn and rest with your sisters in Christ from around the diocese. Register now for early bird pricing at www.columbuscatholicwomen.com. Don't miss this day of amazing grace! Ticket includes breakfast and lunch. Need help registering? Call the parish office! Scholarships are available. A bus will be leaving St. Nicholas Church parking lot at 6:15 a.m. on February 15th. Call (740) 453-0597, ext. 14 to reserve your seat. The bus has been sponsored and is free. However, you must purchase your ticket.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, seeks a fulltime Parish Office Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant responsible for maintaining an accurate record of the parish's business transactions, managing banking activities, and supporting the day-to-day administrative operations of the parish office. The successful candidate will have coursework in accounting and a minimum of two years relevant bookkeeping experience in an office setting with proficiency in QuickBooks and Microsoft Office Suite. Other requirements include strong communications and interpersonal skills, ability to maintain confidentiality, document management, and collaboration. Knowledge and understanding of Catholic teaching and ability to apply it to parish policies and practices is preferred. Compensation is commensurate with candidate's education and experience. Employment offer is contingent on the successful passing of the mandatory background screening and completion of the Virtus "Protecting God's Children" course. Deadline: until filled; applications requested by 12/20/19. Send resume with cover letter to parish@saintthomaszanesville.org

"You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand." JAMES 5:8

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

December 22, 2019 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 21 @ 5:15 p.m.

Lectors: Tom J. Pitcock, Adelaide Pitcock
Servers: Justin Ewart, Mason Harmon
Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Charlotte Snider
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Karen Robinson, Dan Snider
Eucharistic Ministers: Judy Hamilton, Laurie Harmon,
Molly Ritchey, Paul Ritchey

Sunday, December 22 @ 8:15 a.m.

Lector: Patti Logan, Susan Thompson
Servers: Caiden Hogue, Charles Peterson
Eucharistic Minister- Coord: Cheryl Sylvester
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Theresa Hogue, Marvin Paul
Eucharistic Ministers: Peggy Hill, Philip Kocoloski,
Dan Sylvester, Joshua Wright

Sunday, December 22 @ 10:45 a.m.

Lectors: Stephanie Bridwell, Wendy Hart
Servers: Nathan Hart, Justin Hart
Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Karen Hardman
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: John Haswell, Linda Haswell
Eucharistic Ministers: Tim Hoffer, Ashley Jones, Erin Roush,
Larry Taylor

Vigil of Christmas- December 24, 2019

Tuesday, December 24 @ 5:00 p.m.

Lectors: Othello Repuyan, Nancy Susa
Servers: Logan Pratt, Luke Pratt
Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Sandy Black
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Diana Dunn, Scott Peterson
Eucharistic Ministers: Karen Hardman, Paula Peterson, Susan Pratt, Don Susa

Tuesday, December 24 @ 10:00 p.m.

Lectors: Bernard Budde, Maggie Wright
Servers: Nathan Hustey, Ajay Paynter
Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Alan Burns
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Angie Hustey, Jeff Hustey
Eucharistic Ministers: Vicki Burns, Jon Calendine, Mary Calendine, Joshua Wright

December 25, 2019 The Nativity of Our Lord

Wednesday, December 25 @ 9:00 a.m.

Lectors: Stephanie Bridwell, Keena Hansel
Servers: Nicholas Bernath, Will Bernath
Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Gerald Tiberio
Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Theresa Hogue
Eucharistic Ministers: Kevin Jones, Larry Taylor, Claire Tiberio,
Marvin Paul

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, December 16

8:00 a.m., Mass: Daniel J. Paul, Church
2:00 p.m., Pray the Rosary, St. Nicholas Chapel, Parish Office

TUESDAY, December 17

8:00 a.m., Mass: Tom Nash, Church
9:30 a.m., Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Parish Office
6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, December 18

8:10 a.m., School Mass: Ray Weisent, Church
7:00 p.m., R.C.I.A., Parish Office

THURSDAY, December 19

NO MASS

FRIDAY, December 20

8:00 a.m., Mass: Ray Andrews, birthday, Church
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent

SATURDAY, December 21, St. Peter Canisus

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: Camillus Sullivan, birthday, Church

SUNDAY, December 22

8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, anniversary, Church
10:45 a.m., Mass: Kathy Shawger, anniversary, Church
L/D Members of the Floss & Sullivan families, Church

Readings for Week of December 16

Mon.	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a	Mt 21:23-27
Tues.	Gn 49:2, 8-10	Mt 1:1-17
Wed	Jer 23:5-8	Mt 1:18-25
Thurs.	Jgs 13:2-7, 24- 25a	Lk 1:5-25
Fri.	Is 7:10-14	Lk 1:26-38
Sat.	Sg 2:8-14	Lk 1:39-45
Sun	Is 7:10-14	Mt 1:18-24

Church Support

December 8, 2019	
OFFERTORY	\$6,805.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$2,916.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(3,944.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

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