

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

Today is the Feast of The Baptism of the Lord. With this feast we come to the close of the Christmas season and a return to the Ordinary Time of the year with tomorrow's liturgy. During this holy season we recalled the birth of our Savior: God became one of us to save us from sin and death. Humanity and Divinity are united in the person of Jesus who is the Christ. We rejoice in the words of St John the Evangelist "*The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us.*" This "Word", (the Divine Word) Jesus Christ, is the perfect revelation of God. He perfectly reveals through his life and teachings God's desire for all to be saved. Today the Gospel of St. Matthew reveals and affirms the Divinity of Jesus as the Son of God as we read the story of His baptism: "*the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'*" As we move into the Ordinary Time of the year, we open our minds and hearts to listen to the Lord as he begins his public ministry that we may grow in our knowledge of, love for and a deeper faith in the Lord.

As we consider the Baptism of Jesus by John, we must also consider the Baptism we received. The baptism John preaches is a baptism of repentance and an invitation to prepare our hearts for the Lord. A crowd of people seeking repentance came to John. Jesus appears in the midst of the crowd. The baptism of Jesus is an acceptance of his mission to identify with sinners, in fact with all of humanity, for our salvation. The saving ministry of the Incarnation is again revealed as Jesus is united with sinful humanity so that humanity may be redeemed and united with Divinity. This is the Good News.

We must now consider our Baptism. Again, let us look at what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about baptism. It is good for us to review the Church's teaching in the catechism. This teaching on Baptism starts with paragraph 1213. "*Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole of Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons (and daughters) of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church, and made sharers in her mission: 'Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through the word.'*"

Baptism is the beginning of the saving mystery taking place in us. In the Incarnation, Jesus is united with humanity and thus the saving work of Christ has begun for humanity. In this gracious act on the part of God, we in turn respond in an act that expresses our desire to accept and to be united with Divinity. Baptism is our response, as well as the response of parents in the case of infants, to the Grace of God. In Christian Baptism we are welcomed and initiated into the Body of Christ. In Baptism we are reborn into new life in Christ in Baptism. Thus, Baptism is necessary for us because we are saved in and through Jesus Christ.

As members of the Body of Christ we are freed from Original sin and now have the means to be able to live our new life in Christ. We receive the *means* for living the Christian life to the fullest. Our new life is empowered by the *Grace* we receive in the Sacrament of Baptism. This Grace is always present to us. Grace precedes and inspires a life of holiness/discipleship. The presence of Grace in our lives is guaranteed by the Sacrament of Baptism.

However, here is the hard part; we must *cooperate* with Grace to bring forth the good it inspires. The Grace is guaranteed. The fruitfulness of Grace is not. Our cooperation is necessary. Human nature being what it is, we do not always appeal to and trust the Grace we received in this sacrament. For the most part, unless we are reminded, we hardly ever give a second thought about the Grace that is readily available to us. We forget and do not consider the Grace of God in our lives. When we fail in this manner, we are tempted to believe that we are capable of leading a good and holy life by our own efforts. We fail to believe that we need Grace or that Grace is necessary to overcome the trials and temptations we encounter in this life. In practice we tend to trust ourselves over God and His Grace.

One indication that we are hesitant to believe in the Grace of the Sacrament of Baptism is the experience of hopelessness in the face of so much evil in our world. We find that we are surrounded by crime, senseless acts of violence, evil, and sin. We see a great deal of immorality and sin and it seems insurmountable. We are so accustomed to seeing so much that we begin to think this sinful world is normal. When we examine our own conscience, we tend to believe that our own sinfulness is hardly worth mentioning. The greater sins are usually seen "out there". The world is in need of salvation. The sin we see in our world distracts us to the sinfulness in our own lives. Lack of an awareness of personal sin usually results in not seeing the need for God's grace. If there are no "real" sins, then there are no temptations that need to be overcome. Yet this is precisely where we need grace. Eventually we do not turn to God's Grace when we need it most. Thus, we can become more vulnerable to hopelessness and despair.

For the person who rarely gives a thought to living the Christian life as a response to the Grace of God we find it easy to thoughtlessly slip into seriously sinful patterns. Caught up in seriously sinful patterns a person may be tempted to believe that he or she is beyond the Grace of God; that their situation is hopeless. They may believe that they are beyond the mercy of God or that grace is not available to them. This is a case of the mistaken notion that Grace is earned by good behavior. Grace is viewed as a reward and not the means for good and holy living. Just the same, the truth is God never gets tired of offering His love, mercy and forgiveness first: grace.

This is the Grace that never abandons us. God never abandons us. In Baptism we receive this Grace. In Baptism we are welcomed into the Body of Christ. This union is Grace which beckons us to remain open to the ongoing life of holiness and the reconfiguration of our lives to Christ. We must believe in and trust the grace of God, especially in our distracted and busy lives. We cannot grow in holiness without God: His abiding presence called Grace.

One important point in the Catechism's teaching on Baptism is the statement that Baptism is the *door* to the sacramental life of the Church. This door opens our lives to the wellspring of Sacramental Grace found in the Church. The Sacraments of the Church are encounters with Christ that have the power to reconfigure our lives to Christ. Again, the abundance of God's Grace is always available to us through the Sacraments of the Church. We say that we are saved by the Sacraments of the Church. Our salvation is so important that every possible means is readily available to us in the Church and her Sacraments. This is saving grace.

We live in a world that is in need of salvation and we can experience powerlessness in the face of it. The world cannot save

us. Left to ourselves we cannot defeat sin. We need a Savior. The good news is that we have a Savior: Jesus Christ. This is why he became one with humanity so that humanity may become one with Divinity. This is the encounter we have in the Sacraments of the Church. The Sacraments or the Church are not forced upon us but are freely offered to us. Our free response to this gift from God is expressed first in Christian Baptism and followed by the continuous desire to live this response. The baptism given by John the Baptist did not have the power to forgive sin or to transform our lives. It acknowledged a desire to repent from sin. The Sacrament of Baptism, however, has the power to forgive and conquer sin: Original and Actual. It has been given the power to forgive sin by the One who was baptized in the Jordan: Jesus Christ. We believe that we have the necessary strength to live a life of holiness because we are united and fortified with the grace offered by Jesus Christ. We must learn to trust it and have the faith to live a life worthy of this awesome gift we have received.

Have a great week.
Fr. Ralko

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

Church Support

January 5, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$10610.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$6,721.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(139.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

All are invited to join us for breakfast Sunday, January 12th following the 8:15 and 10:45 a.m. Masses.



IT'S CHILI NIGHT! Join us Saturday, January 18th after the 5:15 p.m. Mass. Don't like chili? We have potato soup too! Donations are accepted for support of future dinners and parish events.

Desire to spend time with Christ every day? The Church is open for private prayer and adoration of Christ in the Tabernacle; weekdays, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. until noon and Saturdays from noon until after the 5:15 p.m. Mass.

PRE JORDAN

Pre Jordan will be held on **Tuesday, January 28 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Parish Office Building. The meeting is for parents, and godparents of infants and small children to be baptized. Please call Patty Boggs at 453- 0597 to register for the class.

Register Now at www.columbuscatholicwomen.com for the early bird price of \$40 per person for the **Columbus Catholic Women's Conference** on Sat., Feb. 15, 2020, from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Ohio Expo Center. Come rest in Jesus and join thousands of other women for inspiring speakers, Holy Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration, food, shopping, faith and fellowship! Invite a friend or family member to join you. In the words of St. Ignatius Loyola, "Laugh and grow strong!" Ticket includes breakfast and lunch. Need help registering? Call the parish office! Scholarships are available. A bus will be leaving for the conference from St. Nicholas Church parking lot at 6:15 a.m. on Saturday, February 15th. Call the (740) 453-0597, ext. 14 to reserve your seat. The bus has been sponsored and is free. However, you must purchase a conference ticket.

CALLING ALL MEN!!!! Attend the Catholic Men's Conference on February 22, 2020 at the Columbus Expo Center – Kasich Hall. Registration opens at 7:00 a.m. The event begins at 8:00 a.m. Join 3,500 men at the **2020 Men of God Conference** to hear from some of the most dynamic speakers around the country. Speakers include Bishop Robert Brennan, Jason Evert Founder of the Global Ministry, "Chastity Project" and Head Football Coach at University of Cincinnati, Luke Fickell. Contact Mike Musselman for more information (740) 452-9806, or 297-0154, or register online at CatholicMensMinistry.com. Transportation Assistance Available!



Join the respect life groups at St. Francis DeSales, Blessed Sacrament, and St. Edwards with partner Greater Columbus Right to Life for a special showing of "Unplanned" for the Licking County Community. There is no cost to attend. RSVP's are not required but will assist us with planning (and popcorn!)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18TH at 7:00 p.m.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

JOHNSON HALL

40 GRANVILLE STREET

NEWARK, OH 43055

First Communion Students and their parents are reminded to attend the January 26th meeting to be held at 12:00 noon in the Parish Social Hall (Church basement).

The Catholic Foundation's Applications for Scholarships will open on January 31 and close March 2. Since 2007, The Catholic Foundation has awarded over \$825,000 in scholarships empowering over 150 young people to continue their academic and vocational studies. For more information and to apply, please visit www.catholic-foundation.org/scholarships. If you have any questions about our scholarship process please feel free to contact Dan Kurth, VP of Grants, at 614-443-8893 or dkurth@catholic-foundation.org.

The Parish Office Chapel is open on Wednesdays for private prayer from 12:00 p.m. through 7:00 p.m. The Rosary will be recited at 6:00 p.m.

Hospice Volunteers Needed- Interim Healthcare is looking for volunteers who can offer companionship, share talents/hobbies, offer spiritual support, Veteran support or office help. Call Tracy at (740) 453-1173 to learn more!

And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is the beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

ATTENTION ALL ALTAR SERVERS, LECTORS, AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION, PLEASE SEND YOUR MASS PREFERENCES FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15TH. SPECIAL MASSES INCLUDE: ASH WEDNESDAY – 7:00 P.M. MASS.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

January 19, 2020 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday, January 18 @ 5:15 p.m.

Cantor: Jim Gable

Lectors: Nichole Hannahs, Sylvia Norris

Servers: Justin Ewart, Mason Harmon

Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Don Susa

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Mary Calendine,

Jon Calendine

Eucharistic Ministers: Vicki Burns, Alan Burns, Judy Hamilton,

Margaret Kronenbitter

Sunday, January 19 @ 8:15 a.m.

Cantor: Janet Moses

Lector: Diane Hoffer, Rocky Rowe

Servers: Ajay Paynter, Charles Peterson

Eucharistic Minister- Coord: Tim Hoffer

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Jeff Hustey, Angie Hustey

Eucharistic Ministers: Peggy Hill, Philip Kocoloski,

Paula Peterson, Scott Peterson

Sunday, January 19 @ 10:45 a.m.

Cantor: Kerby Staker

Lectors: Keena Hansel, Maggie Wright

Servers: Will Bernath, Rex Hankinson

Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Gerald Tiberio

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Carolyn Arnold,

Claire Tiberio

Eucharistic Ministers: Brenda Lepi, Karen Hardman,

Linda Haswell, John Haswell

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.

Praying the Rosary will resume in the St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel at 2:00 p.m. sometime in February. The exact date will be published in the bulletin.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, January 13, St. Hilary

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

TUESDAY, January 14

8:00 a.m., Mass: Sally Fleer, Church

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

WEDNESDAY, January 15

8:10 a.m., School Mass: Tony Maniaci, anniversary, Church

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

THURSDAY, January 16

NO MASS

FRIDAY, January 17, St. Anthony Abbot

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

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, January 18

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: Shirley Cooperrider, anniversary, Church

SUNDAY, January 19

8:15 a.m., Mass: Wayne Dozer, Church

9:15 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Religious Education, Bishop Fenwick

10:45 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

Readings for Week of January 13

Mon.	1 Sm 1:1-8	Mk 1:14-20
Tues.	1 Sm 1:9-20	Mk 1:21-28
Wed	1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20	Mk 1:29-39
Thurs.	1 Sm 4:1-11	Mk 1:40-45
Fri.	1 Sm 8: 4-7	Mk 2:1-12
Sat.	1 Sm 9:1-4	Mk 2:13-17
Sun	Is 49:3, 5-6	Jn 1:29-34

RECENT BOOSTER MANIA WINNERS: \$25- Mark Hill, Roger Hogue, Linda Bader, Deanna Kinsel, Joe Nash, Terry Paul \$50- Dave Weidig, Mary Ann Nash, John Biedenbach

The book **Letter to a Suffering Church: A Bishop Speaks on the Sexual Abuse Crisis** by Bishop Robert Barron available for free. The books can be found near the doors of the church. Bishop Barron also recorded a series of videos that correspond with the book. The videos can be found on our website: stnickparish.org.



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