

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

From the Pastor's Desk

Today we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We are now entering the last few days before we celebrate Christmas. It appears that we are approaching Christmas with less excitement this year. There is no doubt that there is a tension in the air. However, we are trying to make things as normal as possible as we go about the last details of our preparations for Christmas. It is true that we are missing many of the pre-Christmas gatherings that are wonderfully characteristic of these final days. Yet in the same way we do find ourselves in the ongoing penitential season of Advent which is a joyful anticipation of the coming of the Lord. As we approach Christmas many are disappointed at the prospect of not being able to be together with family and friends. Some have humbly accepted the present times and have made efforts to the adjustment in order to celebrate the season as best as possible: small, intimate family celebrations. These too can lend themselves to the Joy of the Season. In the meantime, let us engage the last few days of Advent and patiently transition into this holy and festive Christmas Season. This year let us make an effort to make this a truly spiritual time as we welcome our Lord into our lives and family.

Today we light the fourth candle of the Advent Wreath: more candlelight that dispels the darkness of our world. It is an insightful reflection to note that darkness cannot extinguish light. Light cannot be overcome by darkness. Darkness cannot grow in greater darkness to extinguish light. However, light no matter the intensity always dispels darkness. Light is so hopeful. Light is encouraging.

One of the beautiful dimensions of the Christmas Season is the display of light. Light always catches our eye. We are drawn to the light. Light is an important natural symbol for us during this holy season. For us it symbolizes the presence of God.

Looking to the Scriptures... as we read from the beginning of the Book of Genesis, *light* is the first "creature" that God creates. *"In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth for a formless wasteland and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."* Genesis 1: 1-3. As you know by now, the beginning of the book of Genesis has a special place in my mind and heart: I refer to it often. The more I reflect upon Genesis the more the Word of God opens and continues to reveal more about God and his creation. One of my favorite insights comes from the very first verses, something we rarely notice until further reflection: we discover the Holy Trinity is present from the very beginning. It is not often that we consider that the Triune God is mysteriously present at creation. We have God who *creates*: The Father. We have God *"Says,"* the spoken Word of God: The Son. And we have the *"mighty wind,"* hovering over the chaos: The Holy Spirit. The Triune God creates all things *ex nihil* (out of nothing) and overcomes chaos: nothingness; darkness. The first act of creation is to bring order out of chaos (nothing) by creating *Light*. God is this illuminating, revealing light.

Reflecting further, we look to the beginning of the Gospel of St. John which is read on Christmas day. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* John 1:1-5. *"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."* John 1:14. Jesus is the Word of God through whom all things

were created. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh and the *Light* of the world. St. John is presenting to us a new creation, paralleling Genesis. And this "Word of God" is the *Light* and dwells among us.

A New Creation is taking place: The Kingdom of God. The purpose for this *Light* is to shed some light on God and His saving plan leading us to the Kingdom of God: heaven. Thus, our salvation is in and through the revealing and illuminating Word of God: Jesus Christ. This light is not overcome by darkness of evil. If it were possible for light to be overcome by darkness, then it would not be the true light. (Note Well: all earthly lights eventually burn out: even the sun: but not the true *Light*. Also, all worldly lights may very well be false gods: just a thought.) In other words, if it were possible for the darkness of sin to overcome this *Light* then the Word of God would not be the true *Light*. The Incarnate Lord would not be God or pressed further, there would not be an Incarnate Word of God. Jesus Christ would not be Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ would not be the *Light of the World*. Thank God we know differently.

The Magi followed a star: a light. They were drawn by a "natural" light and eventually found *The Light*: our Blessed Lord. Also, in the Gospel of St. Luke we hear that the Glory of God shone around the shepherds as they were watching their sheep. Angels, messengers of God, proclaimed words that illuminated the shepherds with Glad Tidings of Great Joy of our Savior's birth. The Glory of God shown about them; *Light* was everywhere. Like the Magi and the Shepherds, we are amazed by and drawn to the *Light*. The *Light* is for all: royalty and lowly alike. Caught up in these wonderful events we find that deep down within our hearts we desire this *Light*; we desire God. We know that we were not intended to live in darkness. Whether we are consciously aware of it or not, we love the *Light*.

As we look around, we know we live in a darkened world: Our world that has been darkened by sin. This is our doing. There are so many serious problems and troubles here and abroad. The darkness weighs down upon us. Too many people are living in despair. We are overshadowed by sin and death. We do not find hope in this darkness. We are reminded of the Good News that the Holy Spirit at the time of creation hovered over the darkness of the abyss and God spoke! We are also reminded when the Archangel appeared to Mary at the Annunciation, he announced that the Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary and the Word of God would be conceived in her. Jesus Christ, the Word Made Flesh, the Light of the World is the definitive answer to the darkness of the abyss. Jesus Christ dispels all darkness. Jesus Christ brings order out of chaos. Jesus Christ is the answer to the chaos we make by our sins. He is the answer to the deep, dark problems of our lives and our world. Christ is our Light. As Christians we are blessed to live in *the Light of Christ* and place our confidence in that *Light* that appeared in the darkness over two-thousand years ago. That same *Light* remains with us today. May that *Light* dispel all darkness from your hearts, our homes and our world and fill all creation with the Warmth, Joy and Hope of God's Loving Presence.

Have a Great Fourth Week of Advent.

Fr. Ralko

Note Well: The last opportunity for individual confessions will be Mon. (12/21): 5:00-6:00 p.m., Tues. (12/22) 11:00 a.m.-Noon and 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Wed. (12/23) 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Secondly; be mindful of our schedule for Christmas Masses. Christmas Eve masses will be at 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. The Mass on Christmas Morning is at 9:00 am. It is difficult during these days to estimate the number of people who plan on attending our Christmas masses. It is requested that the same protocols we have been

observing during the last ten months continue to be observed. Remember that we gather to pray in praise and thanksgiving for the gift of God in our midst: Jesus Christ. We ask his blessings and protection as we begin this Holy Season of Christmas.

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

Church Support

December 13, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$7,727.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$3,838.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(3,022.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program for men and women who experienced the trauma of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home. It is a safe place to learn how alcoholism and other family dysfunction affected the past, how it influences the present, and how to heal the wounds for a better future. Meetings are held in the Saint Nicholas Church Social Hall (Church Basement). **MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THURSDAYS at 7:00 p.m.** Please use the Silliman Street door. Meetings are expected to last no more than one hour, and masks are required. Contact James Sullivan for more Information at (740) 670 -2959. **NO MEETING DECEMBER 24TH.**

Youth Ministry News!

Catalyst Nights – Students grades 7-12 are invited to a Catalyst Night at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the activity center on Sunday, January 24th at 6:00 p.m. The evening is led by the National Evangelization Team (NET), college age missionaries. The night includes dinner, presentations, games, skits, prayer, friends and fun. This is a joint, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas youth event and all teens grades 7-12 regardless of affiliation are invited. Parents are welcome!

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, they make a good gift. Questions: Contact Marvin Paul at 740-819-3429.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

*Fr. Ralko and the Staff of St. Nicholas
pray God blesses each of you
and wishes all a Blessed Christmas.*



The Parish office will close at noon on Christmas Eve and will be closed Friday, December 25 and Monday, December 28. It will reopen Tuesday, December 29.

SAVE THE DATE
april 17th

Columbus Catholic Young Adult Conference 2021

When: Saturday April 17th, 2021
Doors Open at 8:30am

Where: St. John Neumann Catholic Church
Sunbury, Ohio

Registration Opens December 6th:

Follow us on Instagram to be notified when Registration goes live!

Connect with Us!

Website: www.ccyac.org

Email: info@ccyac.org

Instagram: [@ccyacohio](https://www.instagram.com/ccyacohio)

Twitter: [@ccyacohio](https://twitter.com/ccyacohio)

www.facebook.com/colscatholicyoungadultconf/

“To empower young adults to transform their communities through their identity in Christ”

Contact Patty Boggs at 453-0597 for more information.



“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” – Luke 1:28

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CALENDARS AVAILABLE

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

BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND PRAYER CARDS! Looking for a good read? A variety of good books are available in the vestibule (back of the church), including children's books. The suggested donation is \$2.00 per book and proceeds are used to purchase additional books. Free copies of the "National Catholic Register", a Catholic newspaper that covers today's hot topics, are available on the front pews in the church and in the vestibule. Also, prayer cards and pamphlets on a variety of topics are available in the vestibule. These are also free. Take some for yourself and take some to share!

The Book of Intentions - Praying for each other's intentions is an essential part of parish life. The Book of Intentions can be found in the vestibule (back of the church between the doors, under the statue of "Our Lady of Fatima"). If you would like the parish to pray for your intentions, please write the intention in a sentence or two in the book. The intentions will not be read aloud, but will be referenced during the "Prayer of the Faithful" at each Mass.

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when something prevents you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

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 21, St. Peter Canisius

8:00 a.m., Mass: Ray Andrews, Church
2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office
5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

TUESDAY, December 22

9:00 a.m., Mass: Jeff Armbrust, Church
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, December 23, St. John of Kanty

9:00 a.m., Mass: Lewis Blake, Church
6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

THURSDAY, December 24

Parish Office closing at noon
6:00 p.m., Mass: Shirley Knox and Irene Dillon, Church
9:00 p.m., Mass: John Hohman, Church

FRIDAY, December 25, THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Parish Office closed
9:00 a.m., Mass: Langdon Thomas, Church

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

SATURDAY, December 26, St. Stephen

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: Bill and Brian Sullivan, Church

SUNDAY, December 27

8:15 a.m., Mass: Jane Durant, Church
10:45 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

Readings for Week of December 21

Mon.	Sq 2:8-14	Lk 1:39-45
Tues.	1 Sm 1:24-28	Lk 1:46-56
Wed	Mai 3:1-4, 23-24	Lk 1:57-66
Thurs.	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16	Lk 1:67-79
Fri.	Is 9:1-6	Lk 2:1-14
Sat.	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59	Mt 10:17-22
Sun	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14	Lk 2:22-40

Cantor Schedule

December 24 & 25	December 26 & 27
6:00 p.m. Ryan Teti	5:15 p.m. Laura DeCoy
9:00 p.m. Kevin McCarthy	8:15 a.m. Sandy Black
9:00 a.m. Janet Moses	10:45 a.m. Kerby Staker