

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

From the Pastor's Desk

Happy New Year! On behalf of Fr. Dreese, Deacon Pete and our parish staff, we wish you a happy and blessed New Year.

This bulletin serves two purposes since this weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God (Friday) and the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord (Sunday).

God in His great wisdom has put us here at this time and in this place. We can look at the variety of paths we have taken in our lives, the places we have lived, the schools we have attended, the people we have met, the jobs we worked and so on, what matters most is that we are here; in this place at this time. Coincidence? Maybe yes and maybe no. For some reason, out of God's great love for us we are here today. Individually and collectively we begin a new year and we forge ahead.

I had a curious thought while reading the Birth of Jesus according to St. Luke. Luke records *"a decree went up from Caesar Augustus that the entire world should be enrolled... And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, the city of Nazareth, to Judea to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem because he was of the house and lineage of David to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed, who was with child."* Caesar Augustus had an agenda. However, God also has an agenda. Just the same we are told that this public act unwittingly fulfills the promise of the prophets who indicate that that the messiah was to be born in the city of David.

The wonderful thing here is that Caesar Augustus had his agenda. Augustus set out to make calculations to determine his strength and to acquire taxes. It was an exercise to determine his political power. Yet God had another plan. This political ploy was a way to get Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. God's plan can work through worldly plans. Going about his business, Augustus unbeknownst played into the realization of the prophets. The historical influence of Rome in that region becomes part of God's plan.

Throughout history we have witnessed worldly powers going about their business and somehow God's salvific plan was being advanced at the same time. This goes back to Pharaoh and the Israelites. Pharaoh had his plans for running his kingdom and God's plan was working in them at the same time in forming His Chosen people. We see God's plan throughout the whole history of Israel. How do we know God's plan is at work through human history? The interesting fact in worldly terms is Israel should not exist. This small nation should have been long lost and forgotten in the annals of history. Many mighty nations have fallen and are forgotten such as the Babylonians and the Persians just to name a few. Israel is by far smaller, weaker and yet they remain. Israel and the Jewish people are still here, and the history of salvation planned by God continues to move through time.

If anything, this should give us hope. Our own history has been a rollercoaster. We have gone through great times of prosperity and times of great trials. Yet in all of this we cannot help but think that God's plan for our salvation is woven and working throughout history. God is working his Divine plan if you will, in and through all our human plans.

This past year has been trying for all of us. We started 2020 with great hopes and excitement. However, it has turned out to be a struggle. It has been an overwhelming struggle for so many. We have found ourselves adjusting to things we have never thought that we would face. With the pandemic and lockdown, we were put into a situation of great concern and worry. So far, we have lived in this tense situation for ten months so far. However, we have seen some incredible successes in dealing with this pandemic: the production of therapeutics and vaccines in record time. Things have happened so fast at times

that we find we are also confused. We have gone through a turbulent election year and it has been a strain on almost everyone.

We have also experienced the strain on our confidence in the news, politicians, healthcare officials, even some church leaders. At times we question whose word we can trust. It is all rather unnerving. However, in the midst of it all we can count on God's Divine plan for our salvation that is woven into the fabric of our current events. It may be very difficult to see but we are to have faith that all is in God's hands. Even when it just doesn't make a whole lot of sense to us, we need to turn to God's Word: Jesus Christ. The Word is always with us.

This reminds me of a bit of spiritual advice that may be very helpful. *"We never face our perils alone."* Our Blessed Lord is always with us. This has been true all the way back to the inconvenience of Caesar Augustus' decree for a world census and through the flight into Egypt because Herod wanted to kill the newborn king of the Jews. And it continues up to our present day. In fact, the whole of Sacred Scripture testifies to the fact of God's presence in history fully revealed in Jesus Christ. He is there during it; Jesus Christ is woven throughout the Scriptures. As we live in this world with its agendas, for good or ill, Jesus Christ is woven throughout it all. Thus, we must never forget that we never face our struggles alone.

So, we are here today. We have travelled all kinds of paths throughout the past year. And for some reason we are all here today because of Jesus Christ. We may think we have different reasons for being here, but God's Divine plan has brought us to this time and place. It is all a matter of how we look at it. I suggest that we look at things through the eyes of faith. Holding on to our faith we will not get swept away in worldly agendas but will be able to face all things with Jesus Christ. It's better that way.

I think we can all agree that we would like to see 2020 in the rearview mirror. I am not one for wishing time away, but good-bye 2020. We have hopes for a better year ahead. That is a good thing about New Year's Day: we have hope for better times. We do not know what is in store for us in the future but let us proceed with our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the things that we do as we approach the end of a year is to look back on the events that had occurred. This is something that we see when we watch many of the news shows during this time of year. There are many people who had passed away over the last 12 months. We have lost members of our families and friends. We have seen a number of public figures and celebrities pass away. Some of those deaths seemed like they happened a long time ago and some it seems just like yesterday: All in the course of one year. There were numerous important news events over the last year, and again some seemed like they happened long ago, and some seem like they happened only yesterday. Our memories are sharp at times and at other times they seem to be dulled by the passage of time. Just the same we pause and consider all that has happened over the past year, give thanks for much, pray an act of contrition for some other things. We offer a prayer of petition in our need and intercession on the behalf of others. We also pray for a greater openness to the Grace of God to draw us closer to Him in Faith, Hope and Love; now and throughout the New Year.

Addressing Sunday's feast of the Epiphany we should say a word or two. The word Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning "manifestation." This feast celebrates the manifestation of our Lord as King and Savior to all the nations. He is the newborn King of the Jews who is acknowledged the Magi, or the three Kings. As they come from foreign countries, pagan

territory, they acknowledge the Child Jesus as the newborn King of the Jews. Worldly figures are acknowledging a worldly figure. Little do they know they are acknowledging the Son of God: Jesus Christ the Universal King for all peoples in all places and in all times. As the three Magi followed a natural light, they found the Eternal Light, the source of all light. This light is a person who enlightens all people with a light that dispels all darkness. This I would say is another example of God's plan woven through the agenda of this world.

Again, Have a Blessed and Happy New Year.
Fr. Ralko

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

Church Support

December 20, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$13,064.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$9,175.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly surplus	\$2,315.00

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 one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid.” C.S. Lewis
The next Grief Support Meeting is Tuesday, January 12th. The topic is “The Grief Recovery Method”. This program is offered twice in one day, at 1:00 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. and is held in the Parish Office. The event is free; however, we do request advance registration for planning purposes. Please RSVP to (740) 453-5097, ext. 14.

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.



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!

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.

Catholic Men's Conference: Called to Be Saints - February 27, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. This year's Columbus Catholic Men's Conference will be both virtual/online and in-person. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, this year's event will be small group gatherings at various parishes throughout the diocese along with live streaming on the Catholic Men's Ministry website, Facebook and YouTube. Speakers include Devin Schadt, Chris Stefanick, Fr. Donald Calloway, and Bishop Robert Brennan. To register go to www.catholicmensministry.com.

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! If you don't find what you're are looking for, try New Beginnings Book Store located at 1204 Brandywine Blvd Ste A, a locally owned Christian book/gift store.

“. they fell down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh...”
- Matthew 2:11

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



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, January 4, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

8:00 a.m., Mass: Sandy Young, Church

2:00 p.m., Rosary: Parish Office

TUESDAY, January 5, St. John Neumann

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

WEDNESDAY, January 6, St. André Bessette

9:00 a.m., School Mass: Clara Shumate, Church

THURSDAY, January 7, St. Raymond of Penyafort

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, January 8

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

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

SATURDAY, January 9

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

5:15 p.m., Mass: Eileen Gaab, Church

SUNDAY, January 10

8:15 a.m., Mass: Albert Crock, Church

9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office

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

Readings for Week of January 4

Mon.	1 Jn 3:22-4:6	Mt 4:12-17, 23-25
Tues.	1 Jn 4:7-10	Mk 6:34-44
Wed	1 Jn 4:11-18	Mk 6:45-52
Thurs.	1 Jn 4:19-5:4	Lk 4:14-22a
Fri.	1 Jn 5:5-13	Lk 5:12-16
Sat.	1 Jn 5:14-21	Jn 3:22-30
Sun	Is 42:1-4, 6-7	Mk 1:7-11

Cantor Schedule

December 31
6:00 p.m. Ryan Teti

January 1
9:00 a.m. Sr. Bernadette

January 2 & 3
5:15 p.m. Sandy Black
8:15 a.m. Kerby Staker
10:45 a.m. Laura DeCoy