

December 18, 2016

Sunday Before Christmas

From the Desk of the Pastor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Perhaps some of you may remember the late 1960's? Toward the end of that decade the space race reached a fever pitch as the USA sought to outduel the USSR, that evil empire, by being the first to reach the moon. Four days before the celebration of Jesus' birth in 1968, *Apollo 8* lifted off from Cape Kennedy carrying astronauts Frank Borman, Bill Anders, and Jim Lovell. On Christmas Eve, *Apollo 8* lost contact with earth as it went behind the moon. A billion people sat glued to their TV sets, waiting for the spaceship to reappear. As it emerged safely, its crew took turns reading a "Christmas greeting" to earth. The reading was the story of creation from the Book of Genesis. No one who watched that dramatic event will ever forget the "specialness" of that celebration of Jesus' birth.

Can I recall a "special" celebration of Jesus' birth from my own life? What made it special? Like most of you, what made Christmas special for me in childhood was the exhilarating thought of many, carefully wrapped presents appearing under a tree when I came downstairs on Christmas morning. I also liked Christmas morning because it was the one day out of the other 364 when my brother and me did not fight. One of the "special" things about Christmas was having our extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins gathering together to enjoy a delectable spread of foods. We kids could eat our fill of goodies without any disapproving stares from our elders. Added to this mix was the smell of fresh evergreen, the smell of fresh ink from new books (I'd always get a few volumes of the Audubon Society's field guide to birds, mammals or reptiles). The sounds! My extended family would gather around and sing Christmas carols, with kids having as much right to request a carol as the adults.

In 1992, at the age of 16, a new “specialness” entered into my Christmas experience. Inhaling crisp, cold Canadian winter air and walking amidst the falling stars of thousands of snowflakes I wandered into warm company at the Midnight Mass at my local Catholic parish and, walking up the aisle, I noticed a ceiling arrayed with hundreds of stars, my ears rushed with the sounds men and women singing, the pews were packed with young and old alike and all were worshipping this babe born in Bethlehem’s manger. This special moment was like a story from Genesis as I was being renewed from within. At last, I had found what made Christmas truly “special.”

Having the realization that “God became Man” is what allows the common man to carry the special day of Christmas within him wherever the winds of life drive him, or when family die, or when food is scarce, or when hearing is lost. Deprived of all these things, if I have in my heart the saving knowledge that God is among us then Christmas will never be a sentimental feeling drawing me back to my childhood and casting a damp spirit over the day because those memories can never be relived no matter how hard I try to recreate the trappings. Far from it! With faith and knowledge of His coming among us the “specialness” of Christmas will be present wherever I’m present, I will have become like a portable nativity scene carrying, as it were, the exuberant truth of Jesus birth wherever I go, even if it’s in a lost capsule on the far side of the moon!

What can you do in this last remaining week of the Nativity Fast to make our approaching feast of the Nativity a truly “special” occasion?

In Christ,

Jason, priest and sinner

New Things Happening at Holy Trinity:

- **Christmas Divine Liturgy Schedule:**

Confession: Fri. Dec. 23rd 12pm – 3pm, & 7pm – 8pm,
also on Sat. Dec. 24th 9am-Noon

Christmas Eve: Matins at 9am, Vigil Service at 4pm

Christmas Day: 10am Divine Liturgy

- **The Pastoral Christmas message of the Ukrainian Catholic Hierarchy of the USA** is available in the church vestibule, and your Pastoral Christmas message from Fr. Jason has been mailed to your home address.

- **The Christmas Wreath Winners** will be listed in next week's bulletin.

- **2017 Church Offering Envelopes for Adults and children** are available in the church vestibule. Please pick up your box. We apologize but there has been a production delay with our 2017 Calendars. As soon as we know they are here, we will make them available! Thank you for your patience!

- **Do you want “brownie points” with God?** How about visiting our shut-ins and those on our prayer list? With Christmas coming many people develop feelings of isolation and depression because they are alone. This is a time of year when a special effort needs to be made to help others, especially by starting at home with our own parishioners. Yet, the demands of Christmas time and the blessing of houses in the New Year take your parish priest's time away from visiting shut-ins. This weekly commitment will cover December and January. “What you do to the least of these.”

- **Save the Dates: May 26 to June 16, 2017** for volunteering in Ukraine with the Sisters of St. Basil in their ministry to Ukraine's needy. The sisters & seminarians collaborate with the volunteers to teach children English and to visit orphanages & psychiatric institutions. For an application, and additional information contact Sr. Ann Laszok OSBM at srannl@aol.com or 412-260-1607.

Michael Haritan, photographer, produced a *Wonderful* video of the trip last year. Go to: <https://youtu.be/qr4YjE5H-TM> and enjoy!



Prayer List: Make a point of praying for everyone on the prayer list. If you don't have a prayer list, contact the office and we'll send you one. **Keep in your prayers:** Anastasia Chruszcz, Stephanya Borszcz, Pauline Danesky, Alice Haritan, Luba and Peter Hlutkowsky, Daniel Holowaty, John Maslany, Helen Novak, Joe Popivchak, Mary Simek, Tillie Volanski, Donald Schultz, Dr. Justine Perhosky, James Holdcroft, Rich Hurey, Theodore Hritzko, John Yenchik, Frances Ingram and John Mosur.

Spiritually Adopt a Priest Program. Our priests are indispensable. They give their lives to their saving mission of Christ and His church. It is our duty to pray for our priests. And so we are officially starting our "Adopt a Priest Program." We will send interested parishioners a prayer card with the specific name of a priest, bishop or seminarian for whom to pray. And each year thereafter, at the beginning of our church year, September 1st, we will send a different priest to include in your prayers. **To participate, please e-mail your name and address to: spirituallyadoptapriest@gmail.com.** Indicate your preference for an English or Ukrainian prayer card. Thank you for interceding on behalf of our priests.

ПРОГРАМА ДУХОВНОЇ ПІДТРИМКИ СВЯЩЕНИКІВ
Наші священики незамінні. Вони присвятили своє життя для спасительної місії Христа і Його Церкви. Наш обов'язок молитися за наших священиків. І тому ми офіційно починаємо програму духовної підтримки священиків. Ми направимо зацікавленим парафіянам молитовну картку з ім'ям певного священика, єпископа або семінариста, за кого слід молитися. Щороку на початку нашого церковного року, 1 вересня, ми будемо посилати Вам ім'я іншого священика, щоб додати його до Ваших молитов. **Для участі надішліть будь-ласка своє ім'я та адресу на електронну пошту: spirituallyadoptapriest@gmail.com.** Складаємо щиру подяку від імені наших священиків за Вашу турботу.

Christmas Caroling at Holy Trinity parishioner's homes by our Youth Group will take place on **Friday, December 30th** (predominately English) 6pm-10pm and on **Friday, January 6th** (predominately Ukrainian) 6pm - 10pm. ***Please call the rectory if you would like the carolers to come to your home!*** 412-279-4652. The Christmas Caroling is a big fundraiser for our Youth Group, so any donations are gratefully accepted.



Christmas Day Open House and Dinner will take place at Church of the Atonement (618 Washington Ave, Carnegie) on **Sunday, Dec. 25th** from 1-3pm. Local delivery for Shut-ins. Please your delivery order now by calling 412-276-0366. Accepting orders until Wed., Dec. 21st. No charge for dinner or local delivery. If you are alone or looking for fellowship, join us. Have fun! We welcome everyone!

Hospice Volunteers Needed-at Anova Hospice Palliative Care (17 McKean Ave. Charleroi, 15022 for patients that live in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland counties. Volunteers visit with patients to chat, or play cards and you choose the times you volunteer. For more information, call 724-483-3812 or mmagisketreadwell@anovahomehealth.com.

Do you need Estate Planning, Last Will and Testament, Living Will? If so, consider giving John Sembrat a call. His number is: 412-260-8605

The Church was a Mother to you in Life, providing for your Spiritual Needs: Please Remember the Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma in your Last Will and Testament. The wording to do this is as follows: “I give and bequeath to the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of St. Josaphat in Parma, located in Parma, Ohio, ___% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$ ____].”

Vital Stats for Sunday Dec 11th: \$1,436 was offered in the collection with another \$144 for candles, \$40 for Utilities, \$237 for the Eparchy, \$227 Conception of St. Anne, \$44 Special Offering, \$40 St. Andrew’s Pence Collection, and \$38 for the Natalia Protynyak in Ukraine Fund, all for a grand total of \$2,206. The Pyrohi Project was inadvertently left out of last week’s bulletin. The amount for Dec. 1st & 2nd had a “net amount” of \$ 2,294 and the amount for Dec. 8th & 9th had a “net amount” of \$3,059. Many blessings to all of our contributors whose sacrificial giving is known by God.

Lector Schedule:

- Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Vigil at 4pm – Carols & Readings
Zac Sudiak, Sandy Krivonyak, Alex Konecky Jr., Keith Reabe, Nick Spak, Angela Honchar, Mike Spak, & Mary Reabe Epistle Reader: Helen Zaletski
- Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day at **10:00am** – Serhiy Chovnyk (Ukrainian);
Sophia Charron (English)

What’s happening in our parish this week....

Sat. 12/17	<i>The holy prophet Daniel & Ananiah, Azariah, & Mishael</i>	
4:00pm	Divine Liturgy for the people of the parish	JC
also Divine Liturgy to mark the 2 nd anniversary of the late Dennis Daniels requested by his wife Jean & Family	IS
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Sun 12/18	<i>The holy martyr Sebastian and his companions</i>	
8:30am	Divine Liturgy to mark the 15 th anniversary of the late Margaret Lendl requested by Arlene Esterburg	IS

11:00am Divine Liturgy for the repose of George & Catherine
Mishtal requested by Stephen P. Zaletski IS

....also Divine Liturgy for the repose of Bishop Seminack
requested by Eleanor Patross JC

Mon. *The holy martyr Boniface*
12/19 The pastor's day off

Tues. *The holy priest-martyr Ignatius, bishop of Antioch*
12/20

8:00am Divine Liturgy for the repose of William & Jean Moskal
requested by Bishop Robert Moskal JC

Wed. *The holy martyr Juliana of Nicomedia*
12/21

8:00am Divine Liturgy for the repose of Theophil "Ted" Konecky
requested by Romana Dyhdalo JC

Thurs. *The holy great martyr Ananstasia*
12/22

8:00am Divine Liturgy for the repose of Julia Maksin & Poor Souls
requested by Conrad & Margie Kulik JC

Fri. *The holy ten martyrs of Crete*
12/23

12pm **Royal Hours, then Confessions until 3pm, and again at 7pm-8pm**

Sat. **Christmas Eve Vigil, with Carols & Readings**
12/24

9:00am Matins and Confessions until Noon

4:00pm Divine Liturgy to mark the 2nd anniversary of
Catherine Sudiak requested by Zac Sudiak & Family JC

....also Divine Liturgy for the repose of Msgr. Russel
Danylchuck requested by the Daniels Family IS



Sun
12/25

Christmas-Birth of Our Lord, God and Savior



10:00am Divine Liturgy for the people

JC

....also Divine Liturgy for the repose of Joseph & Gina
Greco requested by daughter Angela Honchar

IS

Mon.
12/26

Synaxis of Theotokos, Commemoration of David, Joseph & James

9:00am Divine Liturgy for the health & birthday of Martha Charron
requested by the Charron Family

JC

Tues.
12/27

The holy apostle & first martyr archdeacon Stephen

9:00am Divine Liturgy for the repose of Theophil “Ted” Konecky
requested by Dr. Justine Perhosky

JC



December BIRTHDAYS

Peter Colaizzi

Oleg Mykhayliv

Pat Johnson

Jennifer Styran

Walter Kalyn

Terry Styran

Yuriy Pavlyshyn

David Moss

Helen Moskal

Kathy Sembrat

Russ Zorey

Steve Neczypir

Martha Charron

Matthew Klim

Euphemia Medwig

Fun Fact:

More than a millennium after Jesus' birth, St. Francis of Assisi received permission from Pope Honorius III to stage the first nativity in an Italian cave. Present were an ox and an ass. By the Late Middle Ages, nativity scenes could be seen throughout Europe.