

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

This Sunday we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent. We also return to the beginning of the three-year cycle (A) of readings for the Sunday Liturgy. This year we will read primarily from the Gospel of St. Matthew for the Sunday Liturgies with occasional passages from the Gospel of St. John during Lent. Considering this little bit of information, it may be a good suggestion to read the Gospel of St. Matthew as spiritual reading throughout the year. Whatever we can do to better prepare ourselves to participate in the Sunday Liturgy is well worth our time and effort. Again, I am reminded of the words of St. Jerome... "*Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.*" Let us welcome the Word in a meditative dialogue so that the *Word made Flesh* may reveal himself to us in a personal relationship.

Considering our Sunday Liturgies, the Mass, we are reminded that this is the most important event of our week as Catholic Christians. It truly is. It is not often that we consider our participation in the Sunday Liturgy as the most important event of our week. More times than not we rarely give Sunday Mass that priority. However, as Catholic Christians we must consider this and recall the reasons why attendance at Sunday Mass is the priority of our week. The Celebration of the Sunday Liturgy is our worship of the God who created us, redeemed us and continues to sanctify us. We celebrate what Jesus Christ has done for us and continues to do for us now: His self-sacrifice for our salvation. We participate in His eternal sacrifice that conquers sin and death. In the grand scheme of things this is the central mystery of our faith. This is the cause of our Christian Joy. Thus, we give praise and thanksgiving to God. Without Jesus Christ we are totally lost. Life would be pointless.

In our consideration we recall that God created us in His *image and likeness*. In this sinful world it is not always easy to perceive and live this reality. However, God in his great goodness has provided us with everything we need to realize His *image and likeness* in a sinful world. God provides us with the necessary grace. However, we need to cooperate with the grace of God: we need to make an effort to respond to this gift of grace. Thus, we can ask, what does it mean to grow in the *image and likeness* of God? Where do we find the answer to this question?

God provides everything we need to grow in His *image and likeness*. God has provided us with His Holy Word. We have "*The Law and the Prophets*" to guide us in this matter. However, as Christians we have the perfect guide for growing in the *image and likeness* of God. The *perfect image and likeness* of God is Jesus Christ. We only need to look to Jesus Christ for our sure guide in this matter.

There was a line from the Second Vatican Council that Pope, St. John Paul II used to quote that centers on this very point. "*Jesus Christ is the human face of God and the Divine face of Man.*" We look to Jesus who perfectly reveals God to us and reveals to us how we are to live in relationship with the Father: trusting the love and faithfulness of God.

Jesus Christ reveals for us the *image and likeness* of God. Jesus reveals the *Love and Faithfulness* of God. This faithful love is a selfless self-sacrificing love. Jesus reveals to us this selfless love throughout his life and most especially in his death and resurrection. Jesus calls us to take up our cross every day and follow him. We are to live in imitation of Christ and that means *faithful selfless love*. This is not easy: we always struggle with self-interest. It is not easy for the Christian to follow Christ

in a selfless way. We need grace. We also need practice.

On this very point, one complaint that is voiced about Sunday Mass is that "*I don't get anything out of it.*" This common response usually comes from our young adults and older. When there is an expected benefit at the heart of one's motive to attend Church, there is a narrowing of one's understanding of the movement of grace in one's life. Personal expected benefits smacks of self-centeredness. If this expectation is the motive, one closes oneself to other possibilities. A disappointed heart begins to harden and the selfless giving of oneself to God in worship lead to the path of greater self-centeredness. Worship of God is not about me. Worship of God is about God and where God leads me.

We have traditionally called the Mass the "Holy Sacrifice of the Mass". The Mass is the memorial of the eternal sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ made present. Jesus laid down his life in a selfless sacrifice for our salvation. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Jesus' sacrifice is made present in the Eucharist. We are the direct recipients of His sacrificial love when we receive His Body and Blood in the Eucharist at mass. This is the saving work of God.

If we come to Sunday Mass expecting to "*get*" something we miss the point. We come to Sunday Mass to "*give*" something; as Jesus gave himself. We give ourselves, in imitation of Christ, in our praise and thanksgiving to God. We do this as individuals and most especially as a community of faith. It is a selfless act as we make a sacrifice of our time. We offer our minds and hearts. We prayerfully give our lives to God. This is the selfless posture that we assume when we gather for the Sunday Liturgy. This is a very small gesture of selflessness that we put into practice. In a small way we are imitating Christ.

In imitation of Christ, St. Paul was inspired in writing to the Romans with the words... "*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*" Taking the words of St. Paul, we are encouraged in presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice. When we make the effort to present ourselves, sacrificing our time, hearts and minds to God, we make a spiritual sacrifice: we worship God in a manner appropriate to our state in life. Thus, we take the first steps as we begin to grow in faithful selfless love. We imitate Christ as we make an offering of our lives. Once we do this, ironically, we grow in the *image and likeness* of God. God is Love. God is pure gift, if you will. At mass we make our offering, our gift of self in worship. In a marvelous exchange we receive our Lord in Word and Sacrament, we give of ourselves in worship and which God receives and returns to us as the gift of salvation. If we are looking for something to "*get*" out of mass this is it: the greatest gift, we could ever ask for: salvation.

In the middle of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we offer our gifts. We offer bread and wine. We also offer ourselves as a response to God's Holy Word. As God receives our offering of bread and wine, God returns them to us as the Body and Blood of Christ. God transforms our gifts and returns them as so much more. When we offer ourselves as a sacrifice, God receives and returns our gift as so much more: God sanctifies and saves us. God in his goodness transforms our lives, our hearts, and our imperfect love. It is only with the grace of God that we are able to live in imitation of Christ and grow in God's *image and likeness*.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not a human invention. The Mass is given to us by Christ, through the Church, so that we

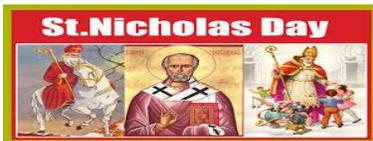
worship God in a way that is properly ordered. We worship God as God desires us to worship Him. God has his reasons. This is always for our benefit which is directed to our greater goodness: our salvation. Our attendance and participation in Mass is a small selfless act of love for God that directs our lives in the pattern of selfless faithful love. We celebrate the selfless sacrificial love of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and we pray that we may become that which we receive: The Body of Christ, his living presence in the world.

Our primary motive for Sunday Mass is to “give” of ourselves in worship to God. Ironically, we truly receive something more; our sanctification and the promise of salvation. The practice of selflessness begins in a very small and seemingly insignificant way. The starting point is the simple practice of giving of ourselves in worship without a personal agenda. As we begin this new liturgical year let us resolve to take that most important step of giving ourselves in worship of God at Mass.

Lastly, on another sacramental note, during the Advent Season there will be extra times for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The first of these times will be Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. Please check with the bulletin for these extra times during the Advent Season.

Have a good Advent.
Fr. Ralko

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



The December Parish Dinner to be held on Saturday, December 7th following the 5:15 p.m. Mass will be in honor of our Patron Saint, St. Nicholas, featuring traditional German foods. All are invited!

Friday, December 6th is the Feast Day of our Patron Saint, St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was the bishop of Myra in Turkey in the 4th Century. He is remembered for being kind and generous to the poor, to children and to those unjustly imprisoned. Legends tell that St. Nicholas gave anonymously; he did not seek praise but wanted good things to be done and the hearts of children to be delighted.

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

Grief Tip: During the holidays, do only as much as you are emotionally and physically comfortable doing. And, attend the St. Nicholas Grief Support Program on **Thursday, December 12th**. The topic of the day is “Getting Through the Holidays”. Meetings are at 1:00 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Office Meeting Room. The meetings are offered twice in one day to afford the maximum number of participants.

The K of C Club Room will be open on **Saturday, November 30** from 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. for all to enjoy watching the Ohio State vs. Michigan football game. Come out early, stay late and share the fun with your fellow Knights and friends.

POINSETTIA DELIVERY

We need people to deliver poinsettias and stay for a short visit to our homebound parishioners. If you are able to do so please go to Florafino’s Flower Market on **December 5, 6, 7 or 8**. They will give you the delivery address(es). Any help will be appreciated.

The 2019 Bishop Rosecrans Holiday Bazaar will be held **Saturday, December 7** from 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. at the high school.



The Daughters of Isabella seek to promote the welfare of the community in accordance with the teachings and rules of the Catholic Church through unity, friendship and charity.

All women age 16 and up are welcome to join us. The next meeting is **Tuesday, December 10** at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Nicholas Parish Office.

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.



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.**

A Letter to A Suffering Church – Bishop Barron’s third video is now available on the St. Nicholas webpage. The web page can be found at www.stnickparish.org.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

December 8, 2019 Second Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 7 @ 5:15 p.m.

Cantor: Ryan Teti

Lectors: Nichole Hannahs, Nancy Susa

Servers: Justin Ewart, Rex Hankinson

Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Dan Snider

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Judy Hamilton,
Charlotte Snider

Eucharistic Ministers: Alan Burns, Vicki Burns, Karen Robinson,
Don Susa

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

Cantor: Sr. Bernadette Selinsky

Lector: Rocky Rowe, Susan Thompson

Servers: Logan Pratt, Luke Pratt

Eucharistic Minister- Coord: Dan Sylvester

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Peggy Hill, Philip Kocoloski

Eucharistic Ministers: Scott Peterson, Paula Peterson, Susan Pratt,
Cheryl Sylvester

Sunday, December 8 @ 10:45 a.m.

Cantor: Janet Moses

Lectors: Stephanie Bridwell, Othello Reputan

Servers: Nicholas Bernath, Will Bernath

Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Claire Tiberio

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Carolyn Arnold,
Mary Mirgon

Eucharistic Ministers: Jocelyn Connell, Karen Hardman, Molly
Ritchey, Gerald Tiberio

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 2

8:00 a.m., Mass: *Mary Ann Baker, anniversary, Church*

2:00 p.m., Pray the Rosary, St. Nicholas Chapel, Parish Office

TUESDAY, December 3, St. Francis Xavier

8:00 a.m., Mass: *Tom Brown, Church*

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

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Confessions, Church

WEDNESDAY, December 4, St. John Damascene

8:10 a.m., School Mass: *Emma Barry, Church*

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

THURSDAY, December 5

NO MASS

FRIDAY, December 6, St. Nicholas

8:00 a.m., Mass: *Marilou Ehleiter, Church*

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Confessions,
Church

Eucharistic Adoration until 4:00 p.m., Church

Second Sunday of Advent

SATURDAY, December 7, St. Ambrose

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions,
Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: *Clara Shumate, birthday, Church*

SUNDAY, December 8

8:15 a.m., Mass: *St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church*

9:45 a.m.-11:00 a.m., Religious Education, Bishop Fenwick

10:45 a.m., Mass: *Mike Andrews, birthday, Church*
Dick Shawger, birthday, Church

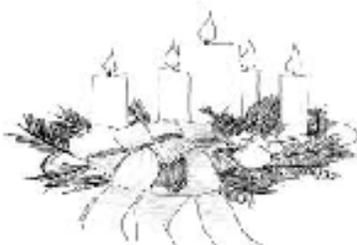
Readings for Week of December 2

Mon.	Is 4:2-6	Mt 8:5-11
Tues.	Is 11:1-10	Lk 10:21-24
Wed	Is 25:6-10a	Mt 15:29-37
Thurs.	Is 26:1-6	Mt 7:21, 24-27
Fri.	Is 29: 17-24	Mt 9:27-31
Sat.	Is 30:19-21, 23-26	Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8
Sun	Is 11:1-10	Mt 3:1-12

Parish Finances

Please Note: Parish Finances for the week of November 24th will not be published, due to publication deadlines. Thank you!

ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH ADVENT, CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE



First Sunday of Advent

November 30-December 1, 2019
5:15 p.m., 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Monday, December 9, 2019
8:00 a.m.

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7-8, 2019
5:15 p.m., 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent

December 15-16, 2019
5:15 p.m., 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21-22, 2019
5:15 p.m., 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Advent is a time to prepare for the Lord's coming. It is time to seek and receive the Lord's mercy and forgiveness. Please check the bulletin for times.

Vigil of Christmas (Christmas Eve)

Tuesday, December 24, 2019
5:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m.



The Nativity of our Lord

Wednesday, December 25, 2019
Christmas Day
9:00 a.m.



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

December 28-29, 2019
5:15 p.m., 8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Holy Day of Obligation
Vigil Mass Tuesday, December 31, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Holy Day Mass, New Year's Day, January 1, 2020
8:00 a.m.

