

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

A MEMBER OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 2015

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Advent Preparation

You know what was nice this year? The week of 70 degree temperatures and sunny skies immediately following Halloween.

So, the first week of November felt like the last week of August. It was great, it was welcome, and it made local advertisers furrow their brows. They can't wait to push Christmas on us all right after Halloween. Poor Tom Turkey has lost his moment in the sun it seems: Thanksgiving is seen as a warm-up, a speed bump to the Main Event of Christmas.

On one hand, this bothers everyone. On the other hand, we all know this isn't going back to the good ol' days.

In the church setting, we gear up for Christmas in our own special way, with the season of Advent. There, we spend 4 Sundays lighting candles on the Advent Wreath and hear the messages of Hope, Love,



Joy, and Peace. It is a penitential season, and we here at St. Mary's take extra time during the 1st Sunday of Advent to do an extended examination of conscience and penance service.

It is a slow build, not unlike one of those candy-popping Advent calendars that run from December 1st to the 24th. It seems like it takes forever to get those little candies, but then *voila!* Its Christmas!

Advent began on the early side this year, meaning we get 26 days of the season. In 2017, since the 24th falls on a Sunday, we get but 3 full weeks of Advent over those 4 Sundays (including the 24th).

The church does this slow build-up the right way. Always right after Thanksgiving, allowing that nice segue from one season to the next. The idea of crowning Jesus as King on Christ the King Sunday the prior Sunday melds nicely with that resetting of the Liturgical Season and the themes of Advent.

But as much as we hear the words "wait" and "prepare" in church during Advent, we go home, turn on the

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TV, and get smothered with Christmas ads. It's tough!

I was lucky to attend college with a scholarship focused on my once-present athletic ability. I threw the javelin, of all things. The spear-chucking priest.

As the track season was building to the end of my sophomore year in the spring of 2002, I was enjoying a standout year, including setting the school record for the javelin throw. I had qualified for the New England Championships, with the top 8 getting an invite to the next level of competition.

I was ranked just outside those top 8 in New England, but was having a great few days of practice. I was far-exceeding what I had thrown in a meet (about 180 feet) and was tapping in the low-to-mid 190's. I was in the best shape of my life...but I was 19. Which meant I was stupid.

My practice area was near the University of Hartford's soccer field and a busily-walked area by students. Which meant girls were walking by. Which meant I had to let them see this shirtless future-priest throw this spear into the stratosphere over...and over...and over again.

In my...stupidity...and eagerness

Advent Preparation

to draw and keep a crowd, I threw out my arm. Two days before the meet and it was dead.

I didn't tell anyone and showed up for the meet. Though I know I was seeded in the middle of the pack somewhere, I can tell you exactly where I finished: dead stinking last.

That autumn, I blew out my shoulder in a softball game and my track career was over. I was lucky to live vicariously through my younger brother, who ended up much better than I, achieving All-American status a few years later, the highest honor for a collegiate athlete.

Over the next few weeks, we'll experience all the familiar Christmas specials. Radio stations changed their format to accommodate the season many weeks ago. Holiday parties at work will be followed with ugly sweater parties at friends and will be followed by parties with the family "before the season gets too hectic."

And like my poor 19-year old

arm in 2002, our anticipation and our joy of the season is gone by the time we actually get to Christmas.

Our challenge this year is to not over-prepare. Like I said: I really think the church does it correctly. A slow build, prophets calling for a Messiah, John the Baptist preaching as the greatest of them all...and then the Son of God, lying in manger.

However you prepare this year, leave enough energy so as not to be exhausted by 11 am on December 25th. Strive to be like those shepherds when you return from Mass- "Then the shepherds returned, glorifying God and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them." (Luke 2:20)

Fr. Jason



Operation Christmas Child

On Sunday, November 22, the School of Christian Living classes combined to put together boxes of donated goods to send to children in need for Christmas 2015.

Samaritan Purse's *Operation Christmas Child* has provided this avenue for a number of years now. And every year,

our numbers have increased, if ever so slightly.

This year, our grand total was 45 boxes filled— 45 Christmas's enhanced by our parishioners generosity, 45 boxes blessed and sent

out to the world. This is +2 from last year.

Thank you to all who participated in this most rewarding of opportunities for what is one of the very best charities in the world.



Various Announcements

Restoration Drive

The Parish Committee decided to extend our Restoration Drive through the end of 2015. Now that some of the fruits of the Drive's labor have been produced, we encourage anyone who was "on the fence" to please consider making a donation in the coming weeks.

New Liturgical Year

The First Sunday in Advent brings about many changes – different vestments, a wreath, a time to collect thoughts in a penitential season. It also brings about a "Liturgical New Year," that is, the readings are of a prophetic nature, the gospel begins in a new point of history (preparing for the coming of Christ), and the gospel is from (mainly) St.

Luke after hearing from St. Mark for the past year.

Socks & Hygiene Kits

We are in need of travel-size toothpaste and toothbrushes. Please bring these & any travel-sized items to church. Socks are needed as well, as they will be distributed in the coming weeks. Please place items in the assigned boxes in the back corner of the church.

New Bible Study

A new Bible Study has kicked off at St. Mary's. The end of October also brought about the end of our study of St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. After, it was decided to have a Pre-Christmas Study that would focus on the Advent Season,

particularly on the themes of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

Pierogi

Due to the hectic schedule over the past several months the decision was made not to make pierogi. What remains in our stock is frozen cheese-apologies for any disappointment. Perla's on State and Russell is a suggested quality local business to buy your holiday pierogi.

Kielbasa

Kielbasa was made on December 5th. If you didn't place an order but need some, please see Chris Paulus. There *may* be a limited quantity left over.

Chili Cook-Off

For the first time in a number of years, the YMSofR hosted a chili cook-off.

The event took place after 11 am Mass on Sunday, November 15. There were 8 different pots of chili, which provided a nice variety. In fact, in addition to the old standby's, there was a venison chili, a vegetarian, and a white. All delicious!

The judges for the pots of chili included a Doctor, an altar boy, the YMSofR president, and more. While some judges debated the various spices and meat-to-bean ratio, the youngest decided that the chili with the spaghetti had to be the best because, you know, there's spaghetti!

There was more than enough to go around for those in attendance. Congratulations to Greg Hodor for 1st Prize with his tried-and-true recipe and to Michele Misiewicz-Barry for 2nd Prize for her white bean.

The group then watched the first half of the Steelers vs. Browns game and went home with full bellies but crushed souls.



Rummage Sale, Bake Sale, Soup Sale

Saturday, November 21st was an active morning and afternoon for our parish, as both auditoriums played host to parish-wide events.

In the downstairs parish hall, a rummage sale took place, the culmination of many months of collecting, sorting, cleaning, and preparation. Customers were lining up at the door a half-hour before the start time of 10am (it helped that it was a warm November day).

As people returned upstairs from the rummage sale, they encountered the fresh baked goods sale.. There, they could pick up something sweet to bridge that difficult gap from late morning until lunch in the early

afternoon.

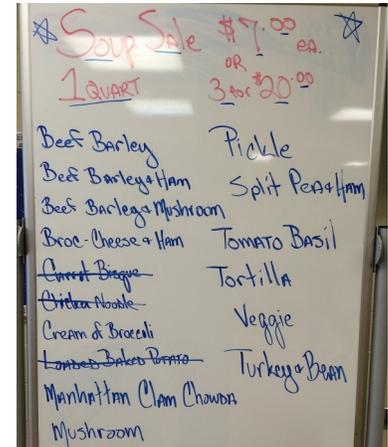
After chowing down on a cake or cookie, hot dogs were available from the YMSofR, with all the fixings. These sold rather quickly, especially to the Y members working the Soup Sale table.

The YMSofR held its first ever Soup Sale. Here, parishioners were asked to donate quarts of soup that then would be frozen and sold at \$7 per quart or 3 for \$20. With the variety and quality of soups present, everyone went home very, very happy.

Thank you to all who led this busy morning and afternoon at our parish, especially Jo Ann, who



did the lions share of work in preparing the rummage sale for the event, all who donated soups and baked goods, all who worked the event or supported it with their purchases or presence.



All Souls Day

During the month of November, the souls of the departed are remembered in prayer.

This time of recollection and remembrance begins with All Saint's Day, luckily occurring on a Sunday this year, providing preachers with a template to preach about "who gets to heaven" and "what does 'saint' mean."

Our prayers that afternoon of November 1st led us to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cemetery on W. 54th Street, where an All

Souls Service was held on a beautiful and temperate day.

All graves in the cemetery were blessed by the celebrant Rev. Greg Gronn and Rev. Jason Soltysiak. The weather was so nice, the five traditional stations were along the perimeter of the grounds, something that a soggy ground usually prevents.

Thank you to all who participated and who remembered their faithful departed loved ones.



A few thoughts from your parish chair

It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close! Our parish life was very busy this year. Many hours of hard work were put into activities that made it possible for several successful fundraisers; we enjoyed times of fellowship and fun; and we proudly celebrated our 100th Anniversary with parish family and friends from near and far! We sadly said goodbye to some of our parish family members and happily welcomed new ones into our lives. I would like to thank you for everything you gave to your parish this year from your time, talent, treasure, and heart! I also thank you for the support and trust you've given me as parish chair.

As we prepare for the joyous season of Christmas, may we stay strong in our faith and be always grateful for the blessings in our lives. Let us all keep in our prayers victims of the terrible tragedies that have occurred around the world as well as all those who are suffering in any way in their lives.

Eternal God, this joyful day

Eternal God, this joyful day is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. May that light illuminate our hearts and shine in our words and deeds. May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do. May we share the divine life of your son Jesus Christ, even as he humbled himself to share our humanity. Bless us and the feast that you have provided for us, let us be thankful for the true gift of Christmas, your Son. Amen.

May the spirit of Peace, Love, and Joy that we share this holyday season live within all of us throughout the new year!

Merry Christmas - Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

elaine p. ploskonka

Here's one story about the history of the candy cane...

To celebrate Christmas, a candy maker decided to make a candy that would include several symbols of the life of Jesus Christ, so he made the Christmas Candy Cane. He began with a stick of pure white, solid candy; white to symbolize the firm love Jesus has for all of us.



The candy maker made the candy in the shape of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus. Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker added red stripes. He used three small stripes to represent the nails that held Jesus on the cross and a large stripe to show the blood shed by Jesus, giving us the promise of eternal life. Then he added the wonderful flavor of peppermint which is a royal gift of spice. So perhaps the next time you look at this familiar Christmas decoration you will remember the candy maker and the real meaning behind the Christmas candy cane: The wondrous birth of Jesus and His great love for us all.

December Days of Note



December Birthdays

1	Nick Paulus
4	Matthew Adams
7	Michele Barry-Misiewicz
8	Dale Dotson, Sr.
11	Adolph Kasperczyk, Jr.
15	Ralph Zaun
18	Ann Warzala
19	Ethan Long
20	Jessica Moritz
21	Jan Sobolewski
22	John Dankanich
24	Dale Dotson, Jr.
25	Katie Burger Eileen Matteson
27	Paul LeMessena
29	Halina Dreger Mary Patla
31	Jack Spilka

December Anniversaries

2	Chester & Ann Warzala
25	Ralph & June Zaun
28	Don & Marilyn Burger



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"The Night Before Advent" Rusty Andrews

'Twas the night before Advent when all through the town, Not a creature was stirring, there wasn't a sound.

The stories were sent by the prophets of old, In hope for the Savior whose coming was told.

The inns all were full with the visitor trade, For Caesar decreed "There's a tax to be paid."

So Mary and Joseph had no where to lay But an innkeeper's barn and a bed made of hay.

The shepherds were tending their flocks on a hill. The country was silent, the night was so still, When up in the sky there arose such a light That the shepherds could hardly believe it was night.

A choir of angels sang songs of great joy For born in the town was a new baby boy.

"The Child is the Savior, there's no need to fear. The One that you've waited for finally is here!"

"Go to the city and see where he lay; In an innkeeper's barn on a bed made of hay.

Under the star that you see in the sky You'll find the new Babe with his mother nearby."

The shepherds went quickly to see the new birth; The hope of mankind, the Child of great worth.

The wise men came, too, from their country afar, Seeking the Child that was watched by the star.

To honor the Child that was born to be King the wise men had treasures and presents to bring.

And so, we give presents on each Christmas day Remembering the Child that was born in the hay.

Think of this story when sleigh bells you hear, When your thoughts turn to Santa and tiny reindeer.

The reason behind all this joy and good will is the Babe born to Mary, our hopes to fulfill.

And remember the phrase that's reserved for this day is more than a greeting or just something to say.

It means more because of the Son of the Light: "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Our Prayer List

Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

Marlane Oleniac	Barbara Baranowski
Bill & Joan Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
Craig & Judy Atherton	John Spilka
Louise Cygan	Alison Jambor
Mary Ann Loschelder	June Zaun
Marty Bengala	Amy Dreger

Please pray for our family and friends:

Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Colby Howard
Jay Grabowsky	Pam Chesar
Cecelia Hall	Caroline Kunes
Oliver Kuta	Thomas Lill
John & Anne Nemetz	Bea Miskow
Rose Neyman	Carol & Chuck Boesch
Joanie True	Daniel Rinella
Joanel Rollen	Veronica Babic
Fr. Tom Sheha	Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard
Gracie Pijor	Ben Soltesy
Don and Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Marcus Vaughn, Jr.
Bryson Dzuroff	Howard Dicken
Cherise Pacanovsky	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
Duda Family	Fr. Sr. John Kraus
Nan Cramer	Bp. Stanley Bilinski
Bp. John Mack	David Vaden
Bp. John Swantek	Jeannie Bartko Muran
Chuck Zaranski	Madilyn Perry
Elsa Vogl de Gomez	Wanda Heffner
Kim Blaha	John Clark Sr.
Rose S.	Geri S.
Robert Winlock	Veronica Babic
Chris Minch	Nancy Jablonowski
Jason Dreger	Tom Bowen

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

Shirley Paulus Gene Mora

Polly Gajda

WE ALSO REMEMBER

ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY

ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Bless them, O Lord.

