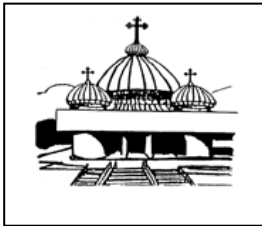


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St. Mary's Church Bulletin



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Pastor: Fr. Petro (Peter) Bodnar

DIVINE LITURGY:

SUNDAY: 9:00 a.m. (Ukrainian) **SUNDAY** 10:30 a.m. (English)

Confession: Before Divine Liturgies 9:00 am and 10:30 am on Sundays or anytime upon request.

Baptisms & Marriages: By prior arrangement (at least 1 year before the marriage date), through the parish office.

Visitations & Anointing of the Sick: Please notify the office if a member of your family is in need of a visit.

December 13, 2020

28th Sunday after Pentecost - Gregorian

Prayer Intentions Dec.13- Dec. 20

Saturday: 4:00 pm + Teodor Pawluch - Mr. & Mrs. A. Pawluch

Sunday: 9:00 am +Nestor Peczeniuk – Sonia Peczeniuk

10:30 am 40th Day Annie Onufryk

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. For Parishioners

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. Mykolaj Kozlowski (father) – Mr. & Mrs. Szaryj

10:30 a.m. Souls in purgatory – Barbara-Ann Spak

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

4:00 pm Christmas Divine Liturgy

Friday, December 25 Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

10:30 am Divine Liturgy – Special Intention & health of Jean Gaba – Barbara-Ann Spak

IMPORTANT NOTICE – Please be reminded that due to Covid 19 protocol, the church must be locked at the beginning of the service. Please, arrive at least 10 minutes before the service starts.

MASKS ARE NOW MANDATORY IN CHURCH.

E transfers are still accepted - Thank you to all who continually supported our parish during interesting times.

Help Needed for screening before Divine Liturgies. If you would like to volunteer, please send us an email or call the parish office. Thank You.

SUNDAY ENVELOPES AND WALL CALENDARS 2021: Sunday envelopes are ready for pick-up in the Church foyer. 2021 Wall calendars are also available. Please take only one per family, and make sure it is the one you prefer, Julian (red writing) or Gregorian (blue writing).

The Advent of the Word Getting Ready for the "Big Day"

Have you ever noticed how we live by seasons? Our calendars may break life up into weeks and months and years, but it's the seasons that really count for us.

And nothing seems to get more attention than sports seasons. Whether it's football, baseball, cricket, or soccer, all the seasons follow a general pattern. Initially, people get excited about their home team as the games begin. But as the season progresses, fans gradually turn their attention to the teams likely to win the championship, whether it is the Super Bowl, the World Series, or the World Cup.

In a similar way, the season of Advent is filled with activities, all of which lead up to one special time. From the very start of the season, special lights and decorations begin appearing around homes and shopping centers. Candles begin to light up windows, and specially decorated trees show up in homes and office buildings. Christmas cards start circulating in the mail, and gifts for loved ones are bought and wrapped in brightly colored paper.

That's how Advent begins, but as Christmas Day draws near, our focus changes. While the activities remain, and may even increase, our attention moves from a season toward that one special day. Maybe we are thinking about what it will be like to have a family gathering or to enjoy a special meal together. We may take some time out to count all of our blessings or look forward to Christmas Day itself as a time to give thanks.

A Season for Joy. While thoughts like these are good and even pleasing to the Lord, there is a deeper dimension both to the season of Advent and to Christmas Day that God wants us to experience. For these whole four weeks, even as we go about all our preparations, God wants to open our eyes to the glory of Jesus' birth. His desire is that on Christmas Day, above all the other joys of family gatherings and the giving of gifts, we will experience the joy that comes from knowing that God gave up his only Son not to condemn us but to bring us eternal life (John 3:16).

Logos, the Word. When John began his Gospel, he chose a unique word to describe Jesus. He called him the "Word of God," or, in Greek, the Logos of God, who was with God from the beginning and who had come into the world to bring us "grace and truth" (John 1:14). Calling Jesus the Word of God may seem strange to us, but to John's first readers, this term was filled with meaning.

For many Jews of John's day, the word logos was used to describe the wisdom of God. It was often used as a substitute for the Law of Moses, or for God's plan to choose Israel and set his people as a light to the Gentiles around them. For the Greeks, the logos was a kind of demi-god, or a bridge between the supreme, cosmic god and the world with all of its inhabitants.

So by using the word logos, John used a term that was familiar to Jews and Greeks, but he went far beyond the Jewish and Greek ideas. Jesus was more than the wisdom of God in human form. He was more than a mediating bridge between God and humanity. Jesus—the Word of God made flesh—is God himself, fully human and fully divine. He is the wisdom of God, and he is the mediator between heaven and earth. But he is all of this precisely because he is the eternal Son of God, equal to the Father. Just as John wanted to lift his readers up with the truth about who Jesus is and what he has come to do, God wants to lift us up as well. John's teaching about the Word of God tells us that the purity, wonder, and perfection of heaven—everything that the Son of God knew before he came to earth—is now available to those who believe. Because Jesus came to us, full of grace and truth, heaven has now come down to earth, and every one of us can touch heaven as we reach out to Jesus in faith and trust.

Too often, we allow our vision and our hopes to be limited to what we can see in this world. Rather than lifting our eyes up to heaven—as John sought to do for his readers—we define our lives according to our everyday responsibilities, challenges, and problems. Of course, we must pay attention to our duties and deal with the challenges of life. But if we restrict ourselves only to this dimension of life, we risk being contented, or anguished, by the way events play out in the world. But John is challenging us to look beyond this world and ask, "What lies behind it all?" and "Who governs it?"

Lift Up Your Eyes. It's a mistake to think that questions like these are too deep for us to ponder or too complex for us to find the answers. The glory of Advent and Christmas is that Jesus has come among us as the Word made flesh to give us the

answers we crave. Even today, the primary mission of the Holy Spirit is to unfold for us all of the things that Jesus taught when he walked the earth (John 14:26). And in that unfolding, we begin to see our lives, this world, and even heaven in a new and exciting way.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the living Word of God. This is what we are celebrating this season. And what's more, this is what we have the hope of experiencing when Christmas Day dawns. Jesus wants to give us a new vision for our lives, a vision that goes beyond what we tend to think about every day. He wants to take us into his world, the heavenly Jerusalem, and show the Father to us so that we can live a new life. And as he opens our eyes, he also wants to shower us with an abundant supply of gifts—double measures of his love, his mercy, and his power. All we have to do is open the door and let him in.

As Christmas Day draws closer, take the time to look to Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the Son of God. He was sent by the Father to save us and to reveal God's love to us. Don't miss out on this precious gift. Rather, take hold of it every day by carving out extra time for prayer. Try to go to Mass more frequently. Seek reconciliation with God through Confession. Whatever you do, be sure that you are fixing your eyes on Jesus and asking him to make himself known to you.

Life and Light for the World. John wrote that in Jesus "was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness" (John 1:4-5). This life, this light, is the most stable, steadfast, and reliable beacon in all of creation. It is constantly shining on us, offering us the power to heal us of all the memories that linger in the dark corners of our minds. It can cast out all of the fears and anxieties of life in this world and show us the path we should walk.

This light has the power to transform us and sanctify us into the very image of God, ambassadors of Christ in a world hungering for his word, his love, and his compassion. It can illuminate the darkness in our minds, guide our feet along the path of truth, and fill us with a peace that doesn't come and go with life's ups and downs. If we simply turn our faces toward this light, we will be filled with love for others and with a desire to honor God in everything we do.

Imagine what could happen if we all were to fix our eyes on Jesus in prayer. We would see the Holy Spirit multiplying our prayer and devotion, pouring out thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times the grace and gifts upon us and upon those we are praying for and ministering to. Imagine how many more people will be touched and transformed by Jesus, the Word of God who has become flesh for us—all because of our humble prayer and love for Jesus. [The Advent of the Word | The Word Among Us \(wau.org\)](http://wau.org)