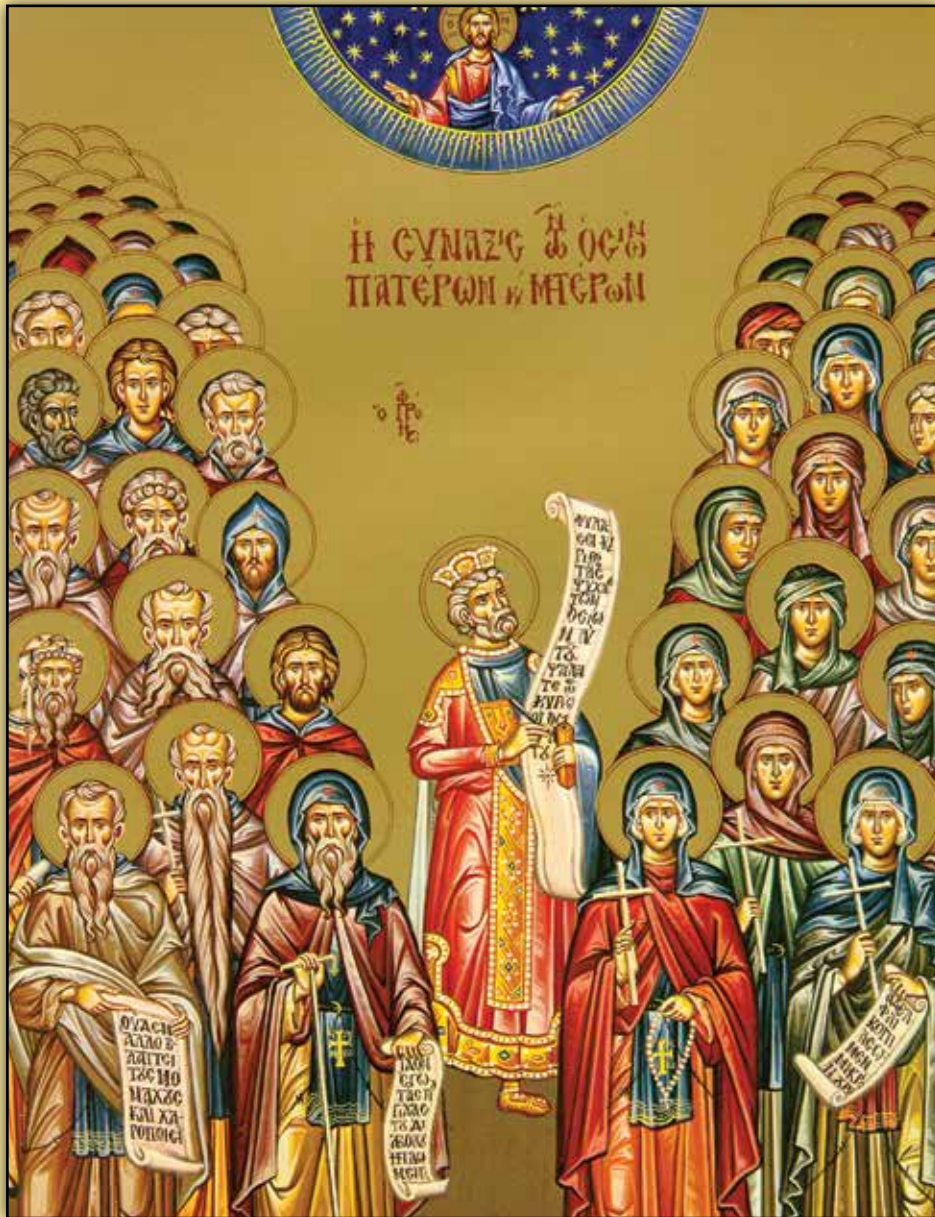


SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD



Icon of the Holy Ancestors

December 19, 2021: Sunday Before Christmas		
Epistle: Col. 3: 4-11		Gospel: Lk. 14: 16-24
Mon., Dec. 20	9:00	+ Christine Danylak (Leo Danylak)
Tues., Dec. 21	9:00	+ Debbie Altier (Shirley Jacobs)
Wed., Dec. 22	9:00	+ Nicholas Marcinko, Sr. (Andrea Novak & Family)
Thurs., Dec. 23	9:00	Special Intention
Fri., Dec. 24	Christmas Eve 10:00 pm For Vocations	
Sat., Dec. 25	Christmas: Birth of Our Lord 10:00 am For Christmas: For Our Parishioners 4:00 pm For Sunday: For Our Parishioners	
Sun., Dec. 26	10:00	+ Dorothy Chezik (Mary Ann & John Turko)



CHRIST IS BORN!
GLORIFY HIM!
ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЕТСЯ!
СЛАВИМО ЙОГО!

Another Christmas is here. Let us reflect on the true meaning of this celebration. We will receive gifts, many will receive more than others. But we will receive one gift equally. That is the gift of the Incarnate God. Let us acknowledge this unique gift by participating in as many of the special Christmas Services as possible and remembering the real

reason for the season, and to pray for Peace on Earth!

May the Incarnate Christ, be with each and everyone of you during this holiday season and throughout the year 2022. My prayers for your continued health and happiness.

Christ is Born! -- Glorify Him!
Христос Рождается! Славимо Його!

Father Nestor

IT'S OKAY TO SAY "MERRY CHRISTMAS"



Every Christmas, anti-Christian groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Communist Party, various Islamic groups and Atheist groups sue some city for erecting a nativity scene on public property. Likewise, fearing they may be perceived as politically incorrect, a handful of retailers replace the word "Christmas" with "Holiday" in their marketing.

It may seem like a small issue, but these things are significant because they diminish the importance of the Christian foundations of our society.

Our ideas of justice, mercy,

liberty and love for our fellow man are deeply rooted in the Traditions of the Apostolic Church which includes the Bible, particularly in the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. That's why America has been a light among the nations in the world.

Like the angel who appeared to the shepherds saying: "I bring you good news of great joy," we Christians have a story to tell about the blessings of honoring the true God. Telling the story can start with simply not patronizing stores that use "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry

Christmas” and by reminding those who say “Happy Holidays” that “It’s

okay to say Merry Christmas.”

TREES AND POINSETTIAS

The Christmas tree tradition was started in Germany in the late 1400s. At that time a popular theatrical performance, the Paradise Play, depicted the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise and was represented by a fir tree hung with apples. Soon the tree was placed in the homes of Christians, who interpreted it as a symbol of the coming Savior. The apples were replaced with small white wafers representing the Holy Eucharist or Communion. Later the wafers were replaced by pieces of pastry cut into shapes of stars, angels, hearts, flowers and bells.

Pennsylvania Germans claim to have brought the Christmas tree custom to America. The first Christmas tree is recorded under the date December 20, 1821, in the diary of a Matthew Zahm of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The first known exhibition of a Christmas tree was held in York,

Pennsylvania, in 1830. Early trees were decorated with fruits, nuts, popcorn, toys and candles. Today more than 80 percent of American families buy and decorate a tree at Christmas.

The tradition of poinsettias in churches and homes at Christmas traces back to a village in Mexico. According to the legend, it was a custom for villagers to place gifts before the Nativity scene at the church on Christmas Eve. A small boy, too poor to give anything, knelt to pray in the snow outside. On the ground where he knelt, the legend says, a beautiful plant with scarlet leaves grew immediately.

The boy took it into the church and presented it as his gift to the Christ Child. Mexicans call the colorful plant Flor de la Nocha Buena (Flower of the Holy Night), and it is thought to resemble the Star of



Bethlehem. The poinsettia plant is named after Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States ambassador to Mexico and an accomplished

amateur botanist. He discovered the beautiful plant there in 1828 and brought it to the United States, where it was named in his honor.

COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

We all know family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or school friends, who are Catholic and no longer attend the Divine Liturgy. Christmas is a great time to invite them to come home to the Church. Think about it, pray about it, and invite someone to come to Church with you during the Christmas Season. There is always a chance that you will be rejected or your invitation will fall on deaf ears.



Just remember that Jesus experienced the same kind of reception and He did not give up. So if your invitation receives no response or a negative one, just wait a few weeks and ask again. In the meantime, pray for that person, but

don't give up on them no matter how long it takes. It is hard to persevere and it is hard to be rejected, but just be patient and kind and trust in the Lord.

CHRISTMAS STEWARDSHIP

During this Christmas season we think about giving and receiving gifts. But as Christians we are called to be stewards, and stewardship goes beyond just giving objects. It entails giving gifts of the heart, mind and soul, as well as our time, talent and treasure. This year let us help ourselves and our children and grand-

children to understand what it means to be wise stewards of Jesus and His Good News for the world. Google the word "Steward or stewardship" and come to understand what the word "steward" really means. Many times we use words in conversation but not know what they really mean. Part of being faithful followers of

Jesus means we continue to educate ourselves spiritually. In order to be good stewards, we must first have the message of hope and love and

faith to give, we can't give what we don't have. May God made man inspire us to grow in knowledge and faith!

PROPERLY RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

When approaching to receive Holy Communion, do not be afraid to approach the Priest. Father's arms are only so long and when you stand too far away, it is difficult to distribute Holy Communion.

We also remind everyone to tilt your head back and open your mouth **WIDE**. Please keep your tongue in your mouth. Please do not bite down on the communion spoon. There is no need to say anything since the priest says the prayer. There is no need to say **AMEN** as is done in the Roman Catholic Church.

For those faithful who are a little

unsteady on your feet, please feel free to use the first pew in front of the icon of the Mother of God. We don't want anybody to get hurt. Father will come up and give you Communion.

Now finally, a little about the red Communion Cloth. Sometimes the Altar Servers hold it; sometimes Father holds it. When the Altar Servers hold, simply approach (i.e., come close to the Priest). If Father is holding it, simply lift it up to your chin. The purpose of the Communion Cloth is to help prevent accidents.

2021 PARISH DUES

With the end of 2021 quickly approaching, we offer this gentle reminder to make sure that your 2021 Parish Dues are paid. Also, we

remind our Parish Family Members that Parish Dues are now \$50.00 per adult per year. There is no increased planned for 2022.

CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE REMINDER

For those who ordered items from the Christmas Bake Sale, pick up is

Monday, December 20th between 207 River St.
3:00 and 7:00 at the Church Hall at

ANDREW'S PENCE

The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has decided to hold a collection, called Andrew's Pence, to support faithful of the UGCC abroad where there is no permanent ecclesiastical structure.

More than 100 years ago Ukrainians started to leave their native land in search of a better life, material welfare, and freedom.

Many settled on another continent, where church buildings of the UGCC are not everywhere, so that the faithful could not attend services in their native Church. Wishing to provide all faithful of the UGCC with spiritual care, the bishops call upon all to support the faithful of the UGCC abroad in prayer and financially, collecting the so-called Andrew's Pence.

2022 CHURCH CALENDARS

The 2022 Church Calendars are available in the Vestibule of the

Church. The Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

The annual Festival of Ukrainian Christmas Carols will be held on Sunday, January 16, 2022 at 3:00 pm at our Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. All

are invited to attend this annual celebration to praise our new-born King and our Lord Jesus Christ at this Christmas time.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...

The Collection Processing Team for the month of December 2021 is

Team #4: Ron Barkofsky and Joe Smagula.

Sunday Collection for Dec. 11 & 12, 2021: \$

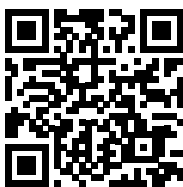
Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451 Fax: 570-489-6918

Web Site: stcyrils.weconnect.com

E-Mail: sscyrilandmethodius@comcast.net



Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

The Story of the Origin of Jesus Christ, Son of David, and the Rest of the Names

Matthew's genealogy is extraordinarily comprehensive in his theology of the roots of Jesus' story in the Old Testament. But that is only one part of the story of Jesus Christ. The story has a sequence as well; and the continuing sequence is what makes the genealogy "good news" for Matthew's audience and for us. Human being have been empowered to preserve, proclaim, and convey the salvation brought by Jesus Christ throughout history. The God who wrote the beginnings with crooked lines also writes the sequence with crooked lines, and some of those lines are our own lives and witness.

A God who did not hesitate to use the scheming as well as the noble, the impure as well as the pure, men to whom the world hearkened and women upon whom the world frowned – this God continues to work through the same melange. If it was a challenge to recognize in the last part of

Matthew's genealogy that totally unknown people were part of the story of Jesus Christ, it may be a greater challenge to recognize that the unknown characters of today are an essential part of the sequence. The proclamation of that genealogy in the Advent liturgy is designed to give us hope about our destiny and our importance.

By stressing the all-powerful grace of God, the genealogy presents its greatest challenge to those who will accept only an idealized Jesus Christ whose story they would write only with straight lines and whose portrait they would paint only in pastel colors. If we look at the whole story and the total picture, the Gospels teach us that Jesus' ministry was not thus; the history of the church teaches us that the sequence as not thus. God's grace can work even with people like us.

Father Raymond E. Brown, S.S.