

Christmas, 2015

Dear Parishioners,

Grace and peace to you in the Christ Child.

In a Christmas song written by composer and song-writer Daniel L. Schutte we read:

*“Wake from your sleep a Savior is born  
God’s holy child gives light to this morn  
All our darkness to dispel  
Praise to our God whose glory we tell.”*

I still remember attending my first Christmas Midnight Mass. I was a sixth grader at the time. My mother came to my room gently shaking me out of my dreams and said: *“Milo”* (my childhood nickname) *“time to wake up for your first “Polnochka”, (Croatian term for the Midnight Mass)*. What I never told my mom is the fact that I just pretended to be asleep. The excitement and anticipation, added by the fact that I was also scheduled to be an altar server, was simply too great to let the sleep take over. Being late was not an option. So I made an *“executive”* decision to stay awake.

When our family stepped out into the dark and cold night we were greeted by the joyful peel of the bells from St. Mary’s Cathedral, our parish church. Not to be outdone, the bells from the Franciscan and Dominican convents joined in the uplifting harmony of sounds. By the time we entered the church I was overwhelmed by the feelings of peace and joy. Although I couldn’t explain it I definitely knew that something *“special”* was happening in and around me. I can safely say that, for the first time in my life I could literally sense the presence of the divine.

As I look forward to this year *“POLNOCHKA”* (my 32<sup>nd</sup> as a priest and 11<sup>th</sup> one here at St. Mary’s) I pray that all of us may continue to be touched and transformed by the presence of the Divine Child who came to set us free from our fears and anxieties and show us the path to eternal happiness.

I am profoundly grateful for everything you do for your church and for the many acts of kindness shown to me, Father Bill and St. Mary’s staff. God Bless You!!!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With love and prayers,

*Father Dan*