



**ST. PETER & ST. PAUL
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**105 CLIFTON AVE
ANSONIA, CT 06401**

Rectory Phone 203-734-3895

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Very Rev. Archbishop Edward Canon Young, Pastor

December 20, 2020

Sunday before the Nativity of Christ – Sunday of the Holy Fathers,
the Holy Priest-Martyr Ignatius the God-bearer



Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world, pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10; 17-12; 32-40; Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25 Tone: Sheet

DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE

WEEKDAYS: MONDAY–FRIDAY 10:00AM

SATURDAY: Not Now! 4:00PM (Vigil Sunday-Eng.)

SUNDAY: 8:30 AM (Ukr.) & 10:00 AM (Eng.)

Confessions are heard before each Divine Liturgy:

Saturday 3:00PM to 3:30 PM

**Sunday 8:00AM to 8:30AM and
9:30AM until 10:00AM**

Religious Education – Saturday 10:00AM – 11:00AM

Call Alice O'Doy @203-734-3055 for more information.

Preservation – Please use the form in church vestibule, mail it to the church or bring it to Bob Jaskilka, Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

Address or Name Change/New Phone Number –

Please update your records. See Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. to update this info. Returned checks are subject to a **\$35.00 fee**.

Bulletin Notices – Notices for the bulletin must be in writing by Wednesday @6PM to be included in that week's bulletin.

Parish Council meets every 3rd Wednesday of every month @7:15pm in the church hall.

**Rectory Office Hours - Thursday 10AM – Noon
or by Appointment on other days**

******Please Note ******

Mass Offerings, Sorokousty

Mother's Day, Father's Day

**Checks must be made out to the Fr. Young
not the Church ! Thank You...**

Baptism Arrangement for baptism is to be made personally at the Parish Office. Please call rectory for an appointment.

Marriage – Arrangements for marriage are to be made at least **6 months prior** to the Wedding date. Please call rectory for an appointment.

Sick Calls – To arrange for Sacraments for the elderly and sick at home, please call Parish Office Fr. Young at 203-734-3895, **Please advise the rectory of any hospitalization.**

In your Estate planning – Remember Sts. Peter & Paul Church in your will.

Stewardship - "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10). All Catholics, should give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church

Special Share in the Eucharist *– Bread & Wine

offered for a week, month, or year. Donations: one week - \$20.00 Donors/intentions will be listed.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

Eternal Light *– offered to light for a week \$10.00.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

Virgin Mary's Lamp and Sacred Heart Lamp* also available for offering! Offered to light for a week is 10.00, each.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

All start on Monday to Sunday!

***Offering must be made when dates are reserved!**

A Welcome to St. Peter and St. Paul Parish to all who are worshipping with us today. If you are over twenty-one years of age and have not yet registered, have moved or will be moving, or have a new telephone number, **please fill out the form below**. Each household **must be registered** at St. Peter and St. Paul and every adult receives a set of stewardship envelopes. Registration also entails an annual dues to the parish. If a parishioner is not registered, it is difficult for church authorities to issue him or her a sponsor certificate, reference, or any other certification.

Name _____ Phone# _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Please come down to the Basement to be properly registered after or before liturgy)

A Prayer to Say before Holy Supper by the Father of the Family:

Troparion, Tone 4: Your Nativity, O Christ our God,* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world:* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness,* and to know that You, the Dawn from on the high.* Glory to You, O Lord. O God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, We bow our heads as we honor your presence at this table. We keep in mind that Jesus is the cause of our rejoicing in this season.




We will celebrate the arrival of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in a cave in Bethlehem. We thank you for each family member who has come to share this Holy Supper. We thank You for these traditional foods that has been provided for us to share at this meal. Lord, help us find and enjoy *all* of the blessings that you have placed in this Christmas Eve. Amen.

Christ Is Born! Let us Glorify Him! ХРИСТОС РАЖДАЄТЬСЯ! СЛАВИТЕ ЙОГО!

*Bread and Wine Offering - In loving memory of +Andrew & +Josephine Dutkanych
by Deborah Lester*



12/19	Saturday		No Liturgy
12/20	Sunday	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Pro Populo (For All Parishioners)За Всix Парафіян +Stefan Gyba req. by Julia Gyba
12/21	Monday		No Liturgy
12/22	Tuesday	10:00 AM	+ Joseph Jenks
12/23	Wednesday	10:00AM	+ Fr. Francis M. Vivona req. by Fr. Young and family
12/24	Thursday Christmas Eve <i>is a day of Abstinence from Meat "PIST BEZ M'IASA "</i>	9:00AM 9:00PM 10:00PM	Christmas Eve Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great Grand Compline Service "Povecheriye" CHRISTMAS DAY LITURGY HolyDay Obligation Liturgy <i>Pro Populo (For All Parishioners Liturgy</i>
12/25	Friday <i>The Great Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ HolyDay Obligation</i>	10:00 AM	10:00 A.M. Christmas Day Liturgy Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всix Парафіян
12/26	Saturday	10:00 AM	Commemoration of the Mother of God +Stefan Pisarczyk & Ivan, Maria, Stefan, Tatiana, Wasyl, Oksenia & Stefan Zaniuk req. Luba Pisarczyk
12/27	Sunday	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Sunday after Christmas Memory of David, Joseph and James and Stephen the First Martyr Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всix Парафіян +Tekla Rzyk req. by Peter & Barbara Pysarchyk

ETERNAL LIGHT		<i>In loving memory of +Shirley Drake from Drake Family</i>		
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP		<i>In loving memory of +Andrew & +Josephine Dutkanych by Deborah Lester</i>		
SACRED HEART of JESUS LAMP		<i>In loving memory of +Andrew & +Josephine Dutkanych by Deborah Lester</i>		
Bread and Wine Offering Reserved Dates 1/04/21-1/10/21 1/11/21-1/17/21	Eternal Light Offering Reserved Dates 12/28/20-1/3/2021 1/4/21-1/10/21 1/11/21-1/17/21 3/8/21-3/14/21	BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 12/28/20-1/3/21 1/4/21-1/10/21 1/11/21-1/17/21 1/18/21-1/24/21 1/25/21-1/31/21 3/1/21-3/7/21	SACRED HEART OF JESUS LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 12/28/20-1/3/21 1/4/21-1/10/21 1/11/21-1/17/21	

2020 & Past Church Dues (Blue Book) (Kollekta)

During Lent & every Saturday & Sunday dues current & past will be collected in the church hall after the 4:00 PM Vigil and 8:30 AM & 10AM Sunday Liturgies.
 Please bring your dues book to the church hall dues will not be collected in the rectory
 Back on January 25, 2005 the Parish Council voted to increase the yearly dues to \$75.00 per member. This is the first increase since 1998. The number of upcoming projects that are needed to keep the church building in good repairs, such as painting, doors, walls, fixing the roof, warranted this increase.
Do not place dues in your weekly envelope offering !
 Please remember - this is not our church but YOUR church!
 Please fulfill your responsibility to your Church!!

******Notice ****** The Men's room is closed for renovation till further notice. Ladies bathroom will be used by everyone.

2020 BISHOPS APPEAL

7,000
6,500
6,000
5,500
5,000
4,500
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500

Prepared by R. Jaskille as of 12-13-2020

2020 STAMFORD CHARITIES DIOCESE APPEAL

The month of December continues the Stamford Diocese Charities Appeal for **2020**. This fund provides support for many programs in the Diocese as indicated in the Sower. Our offering reminds us that we are members of a greater body of the Church that operates beyond the barriers of our local parish and that each one of us has a role to play in the Church's mission of evangelization and sanctification. Please note: that at this time our seminary in Stamford is growing and needs your support.

You have received by mail your request for support.
Please help this fund as you have in the past.

Please do not send your donation to Stamford!!! Do not use Paypal !!!

There will be collectors to take your donation for 2020 in the church hall or mail it in to church !

Donations \$6,325.00 or 90.4% to go \$675.00 This week \$50.00.

JAN	&	STEFANIA	GEBUZA	\$50.00
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The 2020 Stamford Diocesan Charities Appeal form has been sent. Please make checks payable to: "The Byzantine Rite Diocese of Stamford" and send or bring your donation to the church.
 Cash is acceptable form for payment.

Do not use Paypal for your donation !

Since every parish in the diocese has been assessed a target for this campaign, **please do not sent your gift directly to Stamford.** Our parish needs to be properly credited to meet its goal of seven thousand dollars. We have met our goal over the last nine years and have not had to put any additional strain on our parish's treasury. While many of our regular contributors have fallen asleep in the Lord, it is even more essential that every parishioner consider such diocesan programs as vocations, religious education, evangelization, and stewardship worthy of personal charity. This Year 2020 because of Covid-19 we are beginning the Charities Appeal in September which is later than other years. Hopefully now by God's grace as Autumn approaches we all will be blessed with good health in our homes and our community.

2021 ENVELOPES

The envelopes for 2021 are in the church hall. Please pick them up; **they will not be mailed.** Any friends/relatives may also pick up their envelopes for delivery. Also, **2021 calendars are here – one per family as long as they last.** The calendars were generously donated by John Zaleski of Wakelee Memorial Funeral Home

Thank you and mnohaya lita!

Food Bank Donation - Donation of \$20.00 by Anna May Malinak
Food Bank Donation - Donation of \$100.00 by John & Helen Zanowiak
Food Bank Donation to Date - \$170.00

We are most grateful to those who donated food and monies for the Food pantry at Assumption Parish here in Ansonia assisted those in need during the Covid -19 pandemic. These acts of charity are shows the life of a parish family following Christ. God bless those who have given. Thank you!

**TWENTYNINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
 SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS

Epistle - Hebrews 11:9-10; 17-12; 32-40; ~ Gospel - Matthew 1:1-25 - Tone 4

Now that the great feast of the Nativity of Our Lord almost here, the Church directs our attention to the family tree of Jesus Christ. Today's gospel reading from St. Matthew is our Lord's genealogy, which traces the Savior's human ancestry back through many generations to Abraham. It shows that He has the correct heritage to be the Messiah, the Anointed One in Whom the ancient promises are fulfilled. The great saints of the Old Testament looked forward to the completion of their hope for the fullness of the blessing, which we have now received in Christ. As our epistle passage from Hebrews states of them, "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

As we prepare to celebrate our Lord's Nativity, we do well to consider our relationship to the many generations through whom God prepared for His Son to become the God-Man born in Bethlehem. If we know the stories of the people of the Old Testament, we should know that we have a lot in common with them. The Bible makes clear that they suffered from the same forms of pain and brokenness that people do today in their families, in social strife and war, and as exiles and refugees. They often fell short of what God required of them and committed idolatry by worshiping false gods, including their own desires for power and pleasure. Since King David served as a model for the Messiah, he figures prominently in the Lord's family tree. Remember, however, that he was guilty of adultery and murder, which the genealogy indicates by listing Bathsheeba as "the wife of Uriah." Like King David, many sinned greatly and repented greatly. Even the most righteous of them, however, did not experience the fulfillment of the human person in God's likeness, for it is only through the God-Man that we are able to become "partakers of the divine nature" by grace. He alone has healed every dimension of our humanity by becoming one of us.

The Old Testament presents our Lord's ancestors as unlikely people to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. For example, not long after God said that He would bless him as the father of a multitude, Abraham gave his wife Sarah away to Pharaoh, encouraging her to say that she was his sister (Gen. 12). Later, when they were impatient about their inability to conceive, Abraham fathered a child by Sarah's servant Hagar (Gen. 16). These were not the actions of people with perfect faith. When God called Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt in the Exodus, he made excuse after excuse to try to get out of it (Ex. 4). Even after their liberation, the Israelites worshipped a golden calf (Ex. 32) and wanted to go back to Egypt as they complained about the hardships of wandering in the desert (Exod. 16). That God remained faithful to His promises to the descendants of Abraham was a sign of His mercy, not that the people had earned or deserved any particular blessing. Today we remember that God worked across the generations from Abraham to the Virgin Mary and Joseph, her betrothed, to prepare for the birth of the New Adam. Our Lord's family heritage was certainly not comprised of perfect people. They experienced all the spiritual and moral brokenness common to humanity in our world of corruption.

The family tree of Jesus Christ in today's gospel reading certainly does not shy away from the scandalous truths about the people of the Old Testament. Matthew's account of the family tree prepares us for the kind of Savior we encounter in Jesus Christ. Even as His ancestors sinned, He came to show mercy upon those who had fallen short of fulfilling God's purposes for them.

Even as His family line included Gentiles, He makes all with faith in Him the heirs of the promise to Abraham. Even as He is a descendant of many whose lives were scandalous, He brought salvation to the world in a fashion that was shocking and offensive to the religious leaders of His day.

The Son of God was born "to raise the fallen image," which means to restore our beauty as living icons radiant with His holiness. No matter the present shape of our souls, the New Adam makes it possible for us to be fulfilled in His likeness, to become truly human as He always intended us to be. In Christ, we have all inherited by faith the fullness of the promise passed down for so many generations through the children of Abraham. The promise was not fulfilled in their lifetimes, however, "*God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*" So, you see, we are part of the family tree also. The line that began with Abraham and is fulfilled in Christ includes us. He is the vine and we are the branches.

As we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of our Savior, let us all receive Him into our hearts with humility, knowing that He came to save us who were lost. If you think that you do not deserve that

great blessing, then you are absolutely right. No one does. That is why the Savior was born. (*Excerpts of Fr. Philip LeMasters blogs*)



DECEMBER 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE - NO MEAT The final day of fasting before the feast of the Nativity is particularly strict, fasting and abstention from meat and dairy and foods that contain these ingredients is obligatory. Christmas Eve supper—Sviaty Vechir—consists of 12 meatless/dairy less dishes in some families, that traditionally symbolize the Twelve Apostles.

DECEMBER 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY - ХРИСТОС РОДИВСЯ! CHRIST IS BORN! Today we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior. Let us welcome Him into our life, for He has already brought us into His. The Feast of the Nativity of Christ is about God, the invisible, becoming visible, becoming incarnate and walking among us. Jesus is the “true light” (Jn 1:9), the “Light of the World” (Jn 8:12; 9:5; 12:46), and he was born during the night watch (Lk 2:8), at midnight, when it was pitch black outside, the time when the darkness was the deepest and most intense. On that first Christmas night, the light shined in the darkness (Jn 1:5a), the glory of the Lord shone (Lk 2:9), the darkness

has not overcome it (Jn 1:5b), and it enlightens everyone (Jn 1:9). God is with us! **Z namy Boh!**

DECEMBER 26 - SYNAXIS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - On the second day of Christ's Nativity, the Church unites its joy over the newborn Savior of the world with a fervent glorification of the Mother of God, the One through Whom salvation has come to us. The name of today's festival signifies the gathering of the faithful in order to praise and glorify the All-Holy Virgin, who gave birth to our Savior. This day is called the Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos. And throughout all the days of the celebration of Nativity, this joy is indivisible for us. In venerating the Lord, we venerate His Mother. Let us pray to the Mother of God to deliver us, first of all, from all the terrible danger that threatens our lives. Let us pray to Her, Who sees everything that happens to us.

CATECHISM - CHRIST OUR PASCHA - TODAY'S EPISTLE / GOSPEL LESSON :

HUMILITY: Page 66; Section 181;

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: Pages 71-72; Sections 190-196

Prot. N. 20/349 ENG

Page 1 of 4

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

**Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans,
God-loving Bishops, Very Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics,
Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters,
in Ukraine and throughout the world**

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor,
so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

2 Cor 8:9

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Beloved in Christ!

It is hard to believe how our life has changed from the final carol of last year to the first “*Boh Predvichnyj*” (God Pre-eternal) of this year’s Christmas Eve. Throughout 2020 we were, it would seem, transported into a different world—a world of fear and uncertainty before the unknown. Yet, in spite of the restrictions, challenges, and human losses we endured due to the coronavirus pandemic, together, as Church, in our families, parishes, communities, and countries, we did not cease to proclaim the good news of hope, love, and joy. And so, this year on the occasion of Christ’s Nativity, we are called in a special way to bear witness before others to the “good news of great joy that will be for all the people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11).

The mystery of Christmas is found in the joy of the coming of the Son of God into a world, full of affliction, pain, and suffering. He leaves heavenly glory in order to enter into the human frailty of all times, cultures, and people. Christ-God becomes not just a human being, but a poor human being, a person who suffers from the beginning of His earthly life. The Pre-eternal God enters into human history and experiences human hunger and cold, pain and sickness, adversity, and the indifference of society.

A homeless newborn God—what a strange contradiction, what wonder is this divine poverty! The Almighty God becomes poor in order to enrich us. The King of the Universe is placed “in a poor stable-cave, in a manger on hay” (from the carol, *Vozveselimsya vsi razom nyini*), in order to set a path for us to the heavenly abode. Gazing at this mystery St. Gregory the Theologian says: “The One who enriches became poor; for he took on the poverty of my flesh, in order that I may be enriched in His divinity” (*Oratio* 45, 9). The Lord has come, the One who with His wounds heals our wounds, our weakness, our affliction. And He remains from generation to generation our Emmanuel, which means “God is with us,” in our needs, pains, and sufferings. The presence of the incarnate God in human history and in our life is our constant and endless joy, both on Nativity Day, and all the days of our life.

In everyday life we sometimes use a word without thinking about its origin or meaning. Language evolves spontaneously and abruptly— we forget where the word came from and fail to grasp its depth. This is the case of the Ukrainian word *ubohyj*, which is used to describe a poor person. However, when we examine how this word is constructed, we understand that *u-Bohyj* (in God) is a person through whom the Lord comes to us, a person who is “in God,” that is, under the special care of the Almighty.

Christ teaches us that the materially poor and the poor in spirit, the humble, are happy, are blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven (see Lk 6:20). Only God is the last hope, support, and salvation for the poor. Their fate is always in God’s hands. And the Lord is especially sensitive to how we treat His poor, that is, the needy, downtrodden, homeless, hungry, lonely, widows, and orphans. Those who disregard the poor scorn their Creator. To wrong such persons is to commit a sin that calls to heaven for vengeance!

This year, in fact, the Synod of Bishops of our Church focused its attention on the face of poverty today. I encourage you to heed the Synodal pastoral letter, entitled “Only one thing will remain yours – that which you have given to the poor!” and examine it in the light of the star of Bethlehem, contemplating the face of the newborn Savior. The Divine Child is present in every destitute person who knocks on the door of our heart, as Joseph knocked on the doors of the inns in Bethlehem.

Then, the wise men from the East hurried to the town of David, in order to bring gifts to the King of the ages, who was born as a little child in a stable-cave—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Today, the infant Jesus is present in the sick, the frail, the homeless, and the neglected, who wait for someone to

help them, to bring them gifts – the gold of a compassionate word, the incense of brotherhood, and the myrrh of immediate assistance, necessary for life. Those who stretch out their hand to the poor become rich with God and become partakers in the eternal goodness of the Creator Himself.

We are celebrating Christmas in the midst of a worldwide situation of human anguish, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. We have not yet fully grasped or understood all the consequences and faces of this global misfortune. We do not know what changes await us in the sphere of economic, social-community, and church life... But we have already understood that the virus is not interested, neither in our place of residence, nor in our wealth or social status. All of us are equally in danger of infection, and a new threat of poverty hangs over all corners of the globe. All of us in the same way need the kind of help and strength that goes beyond human abilities and power. For this reason, Christ's Nativity is for us a ray of hope and joy in the midst of today's dark fear and confusion, and each one of us must be open to God's grace, which pours out on us without ceasing, even in the worst of times.

To celebrate Christmas in a time of pandemic is to enlighten those who dwell in darkness, as the prophet Isaiah foretold: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isaiah 9:2). If we are permitted to gather – with proper distancing, of course – may our eyes shine with a joy that is visible to all. Let us wear masks, when necessary, but let them not silence our traditional carols. Let us celebrate as we are able. Let us acclaim the birth of the Savior, however possible, so that even in this pandemic we might bear witness to the most important truth of human history – that we are not alone or abandoned, because "God is with us!"

Today let us bring to Bethlehem as our gift for the newborn Savior our own poverty and the wounds of humanity today, and let us ask Him for the richness of Divine wisdom in order to overcome this disease, for the fullness of divine strength in order to deal with its effects on society, on the life and health of every person. Above all, let us ask for the richness of His love, which alone can restore this distressed world of ours, and grant it hope, security, and joy. Solidarity with and closeness to those in need, participation in their pain and anxiety, rather than escape from the suffering that hangs over us all today – this will grant us the possibility to be merry and truly celebrate Christmas this year. Therefore, let us hurry to the creche where our Savior rests in a manger, and together with the shepherds and wise men let us sing:

The pre-eternal God has been born!
Today he came from the heavens,
To save all his people,
And has comforted all!

Dear Brother and Sisters! In spite of our poverty and frailty, today we are rich in the joy and love of our newborn Savior. With Christ's Nativity, I sincerely greet you all: from Kyiv to London, from Buenos Aires to Melbourne, from Winnipeg to Zelenyj Klyn – those who are celebrating today in their family circle and those who are keeping distance from their loved ones to protect them from danger, those who are able to attend church services for the Feast, and those who at home join in community prayer through social media. I especially greet all medical workers who, in spite of real danger to themselves and their families, tirelessly and with great sacrifice give of their time and talents for the health of others. I embrace those who suffer physical and spiritual wounds. I send a word of comfort to those who this year lost family members and friends, and for whom it is particularly painful to approach the festive table this Christmas eve. I unite myself in prayer with those who fearlessly stand on the frontlines and defend our country and people, risking their lives not only before the threat of

the insidious sniper's bullet, but also before the microscopic virus-enemy that has come upon us and inflicts on us added suffering and distress. May the all-merciful Lord, who in His infinite love has visited our poverty, fill the heart of each and every one of us, Dear Brothers and Sisters, with His peace, His grace and hope!

From the bottom of my heart, I wish all of you the authentic joy of the children of God, a tasty kutia, a cheerful celebration of Christ's Nativity, and a happy, peaceful, and blessed New Year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

Given in Kyiv

at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ,
on the day of the all-praiseworthy Apostle Andrew the First-called
the 13th of December (30th of November) in the 2020th Year of our Lord

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE USA TO OUR CLERGY, RELIGIOUS, SEMINARIANS AND BELOVED FAITHFUL

Christ is born!

"...all at once with the angel there appeared a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'" (Luke 2:13-14)

This was the joyous proclamation of the angels at the most significant event in human history to that point: the birth of the Messiah, the Son of God, in a stable in Bethlehem.

This intrusion of God into the world of men was something that was totally unexpected; it caught everyone off guard. In fact, we can say that, in sending His Son to us, God interrupted the normal course of events in the lives of many people. In the Gospel narrative, we see this clearly in those most closely associated with the Nativity of Christ.

Mary and Joseph were a typical young couple of the time, betrothed to each other in anticipation of a formal marriage that would take place sometime in the future. That is, until the angel of the Lord appeared to them both, leaving their plans in shambles.

The shepherds were settling in for a long, uneventful night tending their sheep. That is, until the angels suddenly filled the sky and sent them hurrying in search of a poor stable.

The Magi were esteemed and established scholars in far-off Persia. That is, until a mysterious star compelled them to make a long and arduous journey to Palestine.

And Herod sat contentedly on his throne in Jerusalem. That is, until the Magi brought him the astonishing news of the birth of a would be pretender to his throne that shook him to his core. Indeed, the news of Jesus' birth not only interrupted the lives of these people, it totally upended them.

It is more important for us, however, to observe how God's interruption changed these people, for better or worse.

We see that Mary and Joseph did not fall into anger or despair at the predicament they found themselves in. Rather, they embraced it in obedience, the news brought by the Archangel Gabriel, as the will of God for them. "Let it be done according to your word" said Mary to Gabriel, while Joseph "did what the angel of the Lord told him to do".

The shepherds were rewarded for their sleepless night with the honor of being first to worship the Son of God in the flesh.

The Magi were privileged with being the first to bring gifts to the newborn King. Only King Herod did not embrace God's intrusion into his life as a blessing, unleashing rather, a violent wave of terror and bloodshed upon the innocent infants of Bethlehem.

Dearly beloved in Christ! Each of our lives is filled with interruptions, inconveniences, and unexpected intrusions. Though these are unexpected, they are not random, meaningless events. In fact, these interruptions are divinely placed by God in our path for a reason. Like Herod, we do not always react as we should when these interruptions occur. So, God uses these interruptions to teach us patience and transform us into better and more Christ-like Christians. The small frustrations, the little interruptions in our life, in reality present opportunities for us to rely on God, to obey Him and to embrace His will for us.

A contemporary spiritual writer puts it this way: "You and I don't live in a series of big dramatic moments. We don't run from one big decision to the next. Rather, we all live in an endless series of little every day moments that shape our life. And the struggles that emerge from these little moments when things don't go our way, when our plans fail and our life is interrupted, reveal the character of our heart."

Perhaps, we can view the pandemic that is spreading throughout the world at the present time as one of these unexpected and unwanted intrusions into our life. It has certainly interrupted our celebration of Our Lord's Nativity in a dramatic fashion. Because of it, our ability to travel and visit friends and family with the joy of Christmas has been greatly restricted. Caroling concerts and Christmas plays have been cancelled. Even worse, our ability to come together in our parish churches to worship Christ in His Nativity in the divine services is diminished as well. Perhaps we have ourselves been sickened with the virus or have lost friends or family to it. And because of this we have become embittered, sad and depressed. When will it finally end?

Dear brothers and sisters! Instead of falling into despair, let us resolve to look upon this interruption in our life through the eyes of faith and as a God-given opportunity to grow in grace, in spiritual peace, and in love for each other. At this time when most of us are more homebound, let us devote more time to personal and family prayer, spiritual reading and meditation upon the miracle of Christ's Incarnation and His coming to us as a helpless baby. And let us be true neighbors and stretch our helping hands and hearts to those in our communities who are suffering both spiritually and physically during these difficult days.

And remember that with the Birth of Christ all fear and doubt are conquered, all darkness and chill are banished, leaving only the light, warmth and love of the newborn Emmanuel – God With Us!

May the blessing of the newborn Christ be with all of you!

Christ is Born! – Glorify Him!

+Borys Gudziak, Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians

Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM (author), Eparch of Stamford

+Benedict Aleksyichuk, Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+Bohdan J. Danylo, Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

+Andriy Rabyi, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia

Christmas 2020

Christ Is Born! Let us Glorify Him! Christ Comes Down from Heaven! Let Us Go Out To Meet Him! Christ Lives on Earth! Let us Exalt in Joy!

Father Edward and Father Stefan pray that He who was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Christ our God, Bless each and every one in our Parish Community through His Blessed Gifts of Heavenly Peace and God's Mercy!

Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year to All!

Бажаємо усім нашим Парафіянам Веселих Свят та Щасливого Нового Року!

Нехай наші серця горять любовю та надією в Милостивого Вифлеємського ДИТЯТКА, які народжується задля нашого спасіння і благає нас бути свідками Його Миру й Благоволення! **Благослови нас, О Божий Сину!**



Schedule of Christmas Season 2020 -2021 Divine Services, Ansonia, CT

Thursday, December 31, 2020 New Year's Eve Feast of Saint Melanie

4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy for the Feast and Liturgy of Saint Basil Celebrated

Friday, January 1, 2021- Feast of the Circumcision & Feast of Saint Basil

10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil Celebrated

Saturday, January 2, 2021 Saturday before Theophany

10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

Sunday, January 3, 2021 Sunday before Theophany

8:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy

10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

Tuesday 5 January 2021 The Vigil of Theophany No Meat Permitted "PIST BEZ M'IASA"

6:00 P.M. Divine Liturgy of St Basil and the Greater Blessing of Water

Monday, January 6, 2021 Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord. Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ Holy Day Obligation Fast Free

10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy and the Greater Blessing of Water

7:00 P.M. Divine Liturgy
Saturday, January 9, 2021 Saturday after Theophany
 9:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy
Sunday, January 10, 2021 Sunday after Theophany
 8:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy
 10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy



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