

Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church

(Saint Mary's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church, Inc.)

On the Corner of East 15th Street and Second Avenue

Father Edward G. Cimbala, MAOL, D.Min. ~ Pastor

Boris Derow ~ Music Director/Cantor

Parish Office

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November 10, 2024

25th Sunday After Pentecost

November 17, 2024

26th Sunday After Pentecost

LITURGICAL SERVICES

Sunday, November 10

10:00 AM

25th Sunday After Pentecost

+John Malast

+Kevin Guiteras

by Debbie Sank

Panachida +Helena Hlinkova

(40th Day)

By Miroslav and Anna Hlinka
and Family

Festal Anointing for the Feast
of St. Michael

Friday, November 15

**Phillip's Fast In Preparation
for Christmas Begins**

Sunday, November 17

10:00 AM

26th Sunday After Pentecost

+Philip Chillak

by Margie and Elenor Ruschak

Thursday, November 21

6:30 PM

Entrance of the Theotokos

For the Parish Families
of St. Mary's and Holy Cross

Sunday, November 24

10:00 AM

27th Sunday After Pentecost

+Mary Ann Hogstrom

With Panachida

By John G. Rossiello

Festal Anointing for the Feast
Of the Entrance of the
Mother of God

Sunday, December 1

10:00 AM

25th Sunday After Pentecost

+John Ruschak

by Elenor Ruschak

Thursday, December 5

6:30 PM

Vigil of St. Nicholas

+Betty Terryberry

by Mary Galus

Sunday, December 8

10:00 AM

29th Sunday After Pentecost

Maternity of Holy Anna

For the Parish Families
of St. Mary's and Holy Cross
Festal Anointing for the Feasts
of St. Nicholas
and the Maternity of Anna

Wednesday, December 11

6:30 PM

Emmanuel Moleben

Followed

by Fasting Soup Meal

Sunday, December 15

10:00 AM

Sunday of the Forefathers

+Stephen Hutnick

by +Theresa and Steve Hutnik

Church Decorating

Wednesday, December 18

6:30 PM

Emmanuel Moleben

Followed

by Fasting Soup Meal

WELCOME VISITORS

**“MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLES.” - Isaiah 56: 7**

If you are a visitor to St. Mary's, we want you to know how deeply we appreciate your presence. Whether you have come from another part of the country, from across the world, or simply from another parish, we are grateful for your interest in our church. We warmly welcome you and hope you find our worship true and reverent. We consider you part of our family and would be more than honored by your presence in our spiritual home. For more information about becoming a parishioner, please see Fr. Ed.

St. Nicholas Party

A Special Celebration for the Child in All of Us!

Sunday, December 8

Join us for an afternoon of fellowship, good food, gift raffle, dancing, visits with St. Nicholas and lots of great fun!!!

Dancing to the Music of Pajtaši

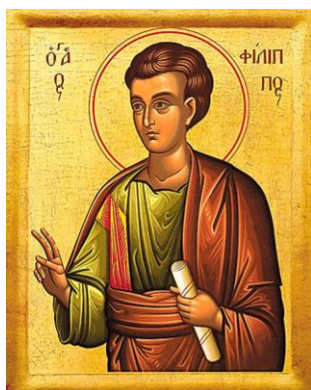
Mark Your Calendars

Ticket Purchase Deadline is December 1.

Tickets are Now on Sale!



*Sunday, December 15, following the coffee social.
Volunteers needed. Many hands make things move
quickly. Who would like to be the coordinator?*



The Nativity Fast: Philip's Fast

*One of the lesser-known fasting cycles occurs in Eastern Catholic churches. It begins on November 15 and ends on **Christmas Eve**.*

Many people recognize Advent as the approach of Christmas. Advent is the title given to the four weeks prior to Christmas in the Latin rite of the Catholic church. But there is another tradition called the Nativity Fast. The Nativity Fast is a spiritual practice followed in Eastern Christian churches.

- It is a time set aside to prepare for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ spiritually.
- The emphasis is reflecting on the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- The Nativity Fast starts earlier than Advent. It begins the day after the feast of St. Philip on the Eastern Catholic liturgical calendar on November 15. This is how the fast became known by another title: Philip's Fast. Either title is used.
- The fast period is a full 40 days, corresponding to the full 40 days of the Great Lent fast.

There is a bit of a difference between the Nativity Fast and the Lenten Fast. The Lenten fast is a very solemn, mandatory fasting period with specific practices of abstinence from food and participation in Lenten services. During Lent, the dominant theme is penitential and sorrowful.

The Nativity Fast anticipates a joyful event. It may be described as an expectant fast in the wonder and mystery of the coming of Our Savior. Yet, it is a time of reserved joy in which practices of fasting and almsgiving are still encouraged. Abstinence or fasting is suggested as a spiritual discipline, as an invitation and a response. It is our "yes" to being open to welcoming Christ.

- During the Nativity fast, the faithful may choose to abstain beyond what is normally required in the Byzantine Catholic church.
- The practice of almsgiving (providing and helping the poor) is advocated as equally important as the discipline of fasting.

Normal practice is that Byzantine Catholics are required to abstain from meat without exception on all Fridays unless designated on the liturgical calendar. During the Nativity fast, the faithful may choose to abstain from meat on other days, such as Mondays and/or Wednesdays, or perhaps abstain from other foods or fast on more days. This is a voluntary fast in terms of the level of fasting chosen by each person.

What is important is that we do not become anxious and focused on fasting rules. We cannot equate the formalities of practice with what may really matter to God: what is in our hearts. We must guard against extremes of scrupulosity lest we develop Pharisaical attitudes in which we consider ourselves more worthy than those who do less. We turn to Scripture for the wisdom in all that God teaches and values. The four Gospels and Epistles have much to offer for reflection during this time.

As with any fast, a God-directed focus is the virtue behind the discipline. Fasting or abstaining is a powerful deliberate act when “supercharged” with other formative practices. Renewing our minds and opening our hearts can lead us to a closer personal relationship with God. During the Nativity fast, we can be both other-directed (in service) and inner-directed (contemplative). Examples are almsgiving, acts of charity, going to confession (the Sacrament of Reconciliation), engaging in Bible or religious groups, replacing time spent passively in secular pursuits with reading Scripture or spiritual books and articles, watching Catholic homilies and lectures readily available online, journaling, and of course prayer.

Any practice that brings us closer to our relationship with God is a good thing. When we abstain or fast (from food or activities), God knows our hearts and recognizes our efforts.

God loves us no matter how weak in our failings we are when we seek His mercy.

The Nativity fast calls us to be quietly joyful and reservedly expectant as well. It is a perfect time for contemplation. It is a time to prepare, not in an overwhelmingly secular manner.

This is a time for us to ponder and give a little more thought to events unfolding: the role of Mary's obedience to the will of God and the anticipation of the birth of Jesus. We can contemplate God's great love for us by humbly assuming human nature – the greater plan through which each of us is offered a share in eternal life.

The Nativity Fast is about the mystery of the Incarnation of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and its relevance to our personal redemption and salvation. God's plan began long ago, as we read in Old Testament Scripture the hopes and promises of a Messiah as foretold by the prophets.

In the New Testament, we see again many examples of waiting and hopeful expectation, of disciplined patience expressed by Jesus himself, and even exasperation over human misunderstanding of his message to others. Jesus emphatically reminds his own apostles and disciples of the importance of prayer and fasting. He teaches that these are the means to affect change, whether in self or others.

Jesus is very patient, and we must also be patient in waiting. Hopeful expectation requires slowing down and accepting the wait. Keeping the intent of the Nativity fast can help us stay on track as Christians during a time when everything is moving in a frenzy. We can use our time and resources in ways different from what the culture wants us to do.

The paradoxical challenge during the Nativity fast is really a balance between two worlds, heaven and earth. God became human so we could become more like God (attributes of all Jesus calls us to be). The Nativity Fast is a purposeful and disciplined time to advance our personal assimilation of the plan of salvation in our own lives. We can look to Mary and Joseph as role models in obeying God's will.

Yet, an ever-growing and modern-day dilemma for all Christians is reserving time amid the busyness of shopping, decorating, and gathering with others to reflect on what God wants for us. And that is a call to holiness. Often, though, we find ourselves tempted and sidetracked towards more of what we want that is apart from God. Noise and distractions pull us in these other directions. This is the background static we habitually turn towards to avoid what we fear — changes in being open to all that a personal relationship with God may require. What God offers and asks from us in return is very different than what the culture we live in wants us to believe and offers. During this time of the Nativity fast, we can see how our Blessed Virgin Mary and Joseph responded in total faith to accept their call and to stay the course, a journey they did not know of in advance.

It is necessary to consciously choose to see beyond what the world identifies as worthy and important and instead see with spiritual eyes.

The world may glorify a manufactured joy at this time of year, a joy without substance, but we can hold to our Christian beliefs amid the secular disparity. We can follow tradition. We can celebrate the Glory of Our Lord at the exact time for celebration, beginning with our Christmas Vigil.

Our joy becomes the “joy of the Gospel” — the kind expressed by the early disciples of Christ — a joy that is continued in our present age, in our discipleship as Christians now. In doing so, we affirmatively acknowledge that Christ’s birth, celebrated on Christmas Day, is just the beginning. The Nativity of Jesus Christ is not merely a one-day event forgotten and thrown away with all the wrappings the day after, but a revelation leading to the greatest gift of all. One that God gifts to all who accept his Truth.

Let us prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus, the true Light of the World.



Poinsettia for St. Mary's

For the upcoming Festal Season of the Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Season, you will have the opportunity this year to honor

or remember loved ones by purchasing a poinsettia to be placed in our Holy Church. If you wish to participate, please fill out this form. After completing the form, you can put it in the offering basket or return it to the parish office. Remember to indicate “in memory of” or “in honor of.” Please PRINT your name and the name of the person(s) you are remembering as you wish the names to appear in our parish bulletin. *The deadline to make your commemoration is Sunday, December 15th.*

\$25.00 - 6.5” Pot with Single Poinsettia (24 available)

\$50.00 – 8.5” Pot with Multiple Poinsettias (8 available)

Name	In Honor Of	In Memory Of	Amount
	Total	Enclosed	\$

Your Name	
Phone #	