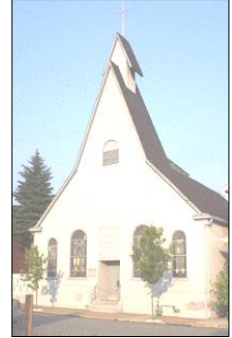


January 1, 2017: Sunday Before Theophany & Circumcision



St. Mary Catholic Church
(Romanian Byzantine Rite)
318 26th Street, McKeesport, PA 15132-7014
Telephone: 412-673-5552

Father Paul Voida
Father Matthew Elanjileth



Sunday Divine Liturgy (Mass):

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. (during Winter season)

Sunday: 11:00 a.m.

Sunday: 6:00 p.m.

Confessions:

half hour before all Liturgies

or by appointment

Parish **Website:** www.StMaryChurch.us

Obituaries: www.McKeesportObituaries.com

Our bulletins and audio recordings of some of Fr. Paul's homilies are available on the website.

Christ is Born! – Magnify Him!

Sunday before Theophany

Circumcision of our Lord// Feast of St. Basil the Great

January 1, 2017: New Year's Day

Sunday before Theophany: 2Timothy 4:5-8 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Circumcision and St. Basil: Col 2:8-12, Gospel: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52

Instead of “It is truly fitting that we should bless thee, who gavest birth to God,…” Pew book page 21.

In thee, O Woman full of grace,
All creation rejoices, the angelic hosts and the human race:
In thee, sanctified Temple, spiritual Paradise, thou Praise of virginity
God was incarnate and became man, He who is our God from all eternity.
For thy womb He has made His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens.
In thee, O Woman full of grace, all creation rejoices: glory to thee.

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Calendar of Liturgies and Intentions

Dec 31	Sat	1:00 p.m.	Funeral for Mary Jane Yanzetich
Dec 31	Sat	<u>4:00 p.m.</u>	<u>For our parishioners, friends and intentions</u>
Dec 31	Sat	<u>11:30 p.m.</u>	<u>Divine Liturgy New Years Eve and potluck</u> + Ruth and Ralph Smith (Ruth Ann)
Jan 1	Sun	11:00 a.m.	+ Margaret Greenawald (Patty and Paul Waronsky)
Jan 1	Sun	6:00 p.m.	+Mary Jane Yanzetich (Bernice Yanzetich)
Jan 2	Mon	7:00 p.m.	Vespers
Jan 4	Wed	10:00 a.m.	Divine Liturgy: + Margaret Kovac (Jasiewicz Trickett)
Jan 5	Thu	7:00 p.m.	Vespers and the Blessing of the Jordan Water HDO
Jan 6	Fri	10:00 a.m.	Divine Liturgy and the Blessing of the Jordan Water HDO +Elmer McElhinny (Connie and Andrew Chemsak)
Jan 7	Sat	4:00 p.m.	Joe Bokulic (Ann and Nick Pergantis)
Jan 8	Sun	11:00 a.m.	available
Jan 8	Sun	6:00 p.m.	available

Attendance: Christmas

Sat. Dec 24, 4:00 p.m. **47** 11:30 p.m. **10**, Sun Dec 25, 11:00 a.m. **24**
Total: **81**

Announcements: Christ is Born! Magnify Him in our hearts!

- Annual Donation Envelopes for 2017 are on the window sills. If you would like to **receive donation envelopes in 2017**, please fill out the Registration-Census form on the entrance tables. When we start 2017, please throw away any remaining 2016 envelopes (which were in the 800s) since the new series is also an 800 series and old envelopes may be credited to someone else.
- **House Blessing Sign up.** It is the Byzantine and older Roman tradition that the priest bless your house during the Christmas season and after Theophany. Fr Paul will bless all who requests their home be blessed. **Sign up sheets on a clip board are on the entrance table.** It is OK and traditional to have your home be blessed every year.
- **New Year's Eve Prayer party:** Fr. Paul will "pray across the midnight hour" with a "candlelit" **Divine Liturgy** starting at **11:30 p.m.** Dec. 31 **bring your own flashlight** followed by a potluck in the hall. What an appropriate way to usher in the new year!
- **2017 Byzantine Calendars** are on the entrance tables. Please take one.
- **Catholic Men's Fellowship continues:** Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017, 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. in downstairs hall.
- We offer our condolences to **Bernice** on the occasion of the "falling asleep in the Lord" of her wonderful mother **Mary Jane Yanzetich**. She graciously adopted our parish as her own and never ceased to be an example of joyfully living in the hope of her faith. May she rest in peace, sustained in the eternal loving memory of the Blessed Trinity.

Collections for Week ending: Dec 18 2016, Dec 25,

Sunday Offering:	564.00	1553.00
Energy Needs:		5.00
Christmas:	75.00	286.00
Loose Cash:	59.00	85.32

Loading Zone:

The space in front of the church to the alley should be left clear for the neighbors and so people may drop off their elderly relatives without blocking traffic

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Social	7.00	9.00
Christmas Flower Intentions:		28.00
Building fund (Lift)		
Subtotal (Parish):	705.00	1966.32
Candles Votives:	20.00	41.00
Sp Coll: For the Poor:	20.00	
Total:	745.00	2007.32

Thank you for your generous Christmas donations. Your consistent generosity is necessary for the continuing life of St. Mary's. Please remember St. Mary's in your will.

Your fervent and continuing prayers are requested for:, Rosemary Gerondites, Betty Goughenour, Courtney Duval, Catherine Yanotovich, Derek Drnevich, Fred Greco, Teresa Maglicco, Mary Regina, John Nicora, Don Gajdek, Agnes McClain, Fr. Chuck Baptiste, Branden Lischner, Alan Medved, Albert Lenox, Melissa Drnevich, Ann Priselac Falsone, Laurie DuVal, Thelma Kundman, Al Martino, Ethel Tretinik, Marci Danna, Mary Smith, Carol Gallagher, Jane Kerin, Fr. Ivan Mina, Michael Mina, Tiffany Carlross, Fr. Matthew Elanjileth, Larry Landman, Braylon and Roxanna Jordan, Jim Yablonsky, Florence Dunmore, Pete Sekerchak, Harper Stasko, Kathleen Gibbs, Tom Kiger, Mila Mina, Wes Howard, Pat O'Neil, Shirley Barnes, Daryl Tom, Dominic Pusateri, Fr. Jim Holland Fr. Ed Litavec, Dolly Nicora, Ava Nicole J., Gerry (Bubba) Fecik, Evangelina, Elmer and Pauline Fournier, Marie Race. Thaddeus Anderson.

Please let the office know if you have a loved one who needs our prayers.

Are you resisting happiness? (Christmas Homily notes)

Every icon in our church reveals some aspect of resisting (or not resisting) God. Even when we want to follow God, we can find our selves afraid of following Him. The nativity icon is full of images of resistance (or the opposite: resisting the resistance) to God.

Here we see Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes, almost glowing in the darkness of the cave. St. John says, "the Light shines on in the darkness, a darkness that did not overcome it." This is the theme of the Gospels. There is a battle between the Light of God which shines into us versus a darkness which does not understand the light or would want to overcome it. Each one of us, can experience the Light and the darkness. The darkness is experienced by us most often as resistance. If I were to say you should pray 10 minutes more a day, you would probably experience resistance, "who gives him the right to tell me...", "It's a good idea, but not today, I got more time tomorrow" Resistance is the number one tool of Satan to keep us from discovering our true happiness, and after having discovered what gives us true happiness, we are resistant to doing it again. The Shepherds when they were greeted by an angel could have stayed in the fields. They could have said, "Lets check this out tomorrow when the sun is out and the day a little warmer. Why travel in the darkness?" But they pushed through their resistance and went in search of Jesus. Do you think that when they saw baby Jesus, they were glad they went? The Magi who were astrologers saw a star which they understood meant a new king of the Jews had been born. They could have stayed home or sent a messenger with a congratulations gift, but instead they planned a trip and went to see Jesus for themselves. Maybe they spent several months planning this trip. I'm sure there were many excuses for them not to go. But they did not let their own resistance, stop them. Do you think that when they saw the child Jesus, they were happy that they did not let their own resistance stop them? Every one of us, in order to do good, and be the light, must push through our resistance. You did that in order to get here tonight. What stops you from spending more time with Jesus in prayer? Those of you who have a key to the church, what stops you from visiting St. Mary's to be alone with Jesus in the Tabernacle? What stops you from giving 100% of your life to Jesus? In a word, "resistance". Jesus is the light of the world and He wants us to spread this light to others. He said "nobody lights a light and puts it under a bushel basket. They put it on a stand, so that it can give light to everyone in the house." This is common sense. But resistance is not

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reasonable or sensible. Resistance doesn't want you to light your lamp. It doesn't want you to put your lamp on a stand. It wants you to hide your light under a basket. And it absolutely does not want you to let your light shine. But resistance wears a thousand masks. What stops you from letting your light shine? Fear, laziness, procrastination, selfishness, addiction, obsession, comparing yourself to others, allowing your critics to drain your energy and direct your life, an unwillingness to move beyond your comfort zone, self-doubt, gossip, negative relationships, worry, excuses and so many others.

Do you want to be happy? If we follow Christ and His teachings we will be truly happy and if we resist Christ we are resisting our own happiness. Why because Christ-God designed and created us to be happy with Him.

Pope Saint John Paul II said, "**Christ reveals man to himself.**" This is a scriptural idea, St. James said, "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like [Jas. 1:22-24]." James compares a person who does not obey God's word to a person who looks in a mirror and then forgets what he looks like.

In other words: God's revelation holds a mirror up to us that shows us what we are like. It reveals to us the truth about ourselves. Sometimes we do not like what we see. But even then, Christ reveals us to ourselves. So we can change and start to become the **best version of ourselves** that we can be. And, just like we ought to remember what a mirror reveals about us, so we ought to remember what God's word reveals about us—and put it into action.

So we can be happy

This leads to a final insight about God's word, and specifically the moral commandments we find in it. A lot of people today can think of Christian morality as "legalistic"—as glorifying rules for their own sake. But this is not the case. The purpose of God's moral law is not to impose rules for the sake of imposing rules. Its purpose is to make us happy.

The rules God gives us are for our good, because they are based on our human nature, and we *will* be happier if we act in accordance with our nature.

We may not always see that. For example, we can be like little children who don't want to take a nap. They may pout and protest and view naptime as an injustice—as a rule imposed for no reason.

But the truth is that they need that nap and will be happier in the long run if they take it.

In the same way, we will be happier in the long run if we accept that God's revelation and his law reveal to us the truth about ourselves—and if we put them into action.

Waters of Grace spread over the entire world

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River many good but invisible things happened. The waters were sanctified when the Word of God (Jesus) penetrated the waters with his human body. The Holy Spirit hovered over the waters as it did at the moment of creation (Genesis 1:2). God created the world good, a goodness that was disfigured by Adam's rebellion. The new Adam, Jesus Christ, re-sanctifies the waters and the world by this gesture of submitting himself as he is submersed into the waters. Christ is not purified by the water as we are in the Sacrament of Baptism, rather, Christ purifies the water and prepares them for our own purification by the waters of Baptism. Water, as "the deep," also has a negative association (i.e. drowning and death) in the Old Testament as a metaphor for trial, tribulation, suffering and sin (Ps 69:2-3, 15-16). The ancient Israelites thought the earth floated on water so "the deep" was also associated with *sheol*, the underworld (Greek: *hades*). By His **Baptism in the Jordan** at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus anticipates his **Descent into Hades** at the end of his earthly ministry. Jesus Christ by being submerged in the water, transforms them from a place of danger and death to a living river of eternal life (Jn 4:14; 7:37). God's love penetrates the entire cosmos.

The liturgical blessing of the water drives out any demons which attach themselves to it. The blessing prayers include an exorcism rite. The blessed water becomes a sacramental which can then be used to drive away demons and effect healing of illnesses. **The faithful are**

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encouraged to attend the services on the Feast of the Theophany-the Baptism of our Lord (Jan 5-6) and to bring this blessed water home, anoint themselves with the sign of the cross daily and especially when they are sick. Some use it in food or drink it. The priest will bless your homes which is also a type of exorcism of demons. Blessing you and your home also designates you as being set aside for God's holy purposes. In this way the blessing of Christ is extended throughout the world.

Join us for the Blessing of the Jordan Waters on Thursday, Jan 5, 7 p.m. Vespers or Friday January 6, at our 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy.

This feast day is a Holy Day of Obligation for all Byzantine Catholics.

Troparion of the Circumcision

Merciful Lord seated on high on a fiery throne together with your Eternal Father and your Divine Spirit: You condescended to be born on earth of your human Mother all pure; also, to be circumcised as a man on the eighth day. Glory to your most righteous will! Glory to your plan of redemption! Glory to your condescension, O Christ who alone are the lover of Mankind!

Troparion of the Sunday before the Baptism of our Lord

Make ready, Zabulon, and prepare Nephtali; and you, Jordan River, stop your flow and receive with a thrill of joy the Master coming to be baptized. And you, Adam, rejoice with the first Mother, Eve, and hide not as you did of old in paradise: for Christ at the sight of your nakedness has come forth to clothe you with the robe of innocence. Indeed, Christ has come forth to renew the whole creation.

Troparion of St. Basil

Your teaching has spread over the whole world, for it has accepted your words that gave a divine explanation of doctrine. You have made clear the nature of things and set a rule of life for men. Holy Father and Kingly Priest, intercede with Christ God that He may save our souls.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Kontakion of the Circumcision

The Lord of All endures Circumcision, thus circumcising the sins of all mortal men, for He is merciful. Today, he grants salvation to the world, while Basil, the Creator's High Priest, Christ's mystic and shining star, rejoices in heaven.

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion of the Sunday before Theophany

Today the Lord has appeared in the waters of the Jordan River, He has cried out to John, saying: "Be not dismayed at having to baptize Me: for I have indeed come to save Adam, the first to be created."

Responsorial Psalm/Prokimenon of the Circumcision (Tone 1)

Response: My mouth shall speak wisdom,
prudence shall be the utterance of my heart.

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St. Mary Church is a parish of the Romanian Catholic Diocese of Canton: 1123 44th St. NE, Canton OH 44714