



Stronica Proboszcza

The Pastor's Page

December 30th, MMXVIII

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph/Sixth Day of the Ocyave of Christmas

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Month of the Divine Infancy

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Świętej Rodziny – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

When we celebrate this day's Christmas Feast of the Holy Family we are reminded that God created the human person to live in community. The most basic of all communities is the family yet there are other communities to which each one of us belong. These communities are always made better when the characteristics of family life are incorporated within them. Of course the most important facet of family life is unconditional love. Other important components are trust, understanding, patience and cooperation. It is my sincere hope & prayer that the characteristics of family life I have already mentioned will grow and blossom in our parish in the year 2019.

In our church there is a beautiful window depicting the Holy Family that you may want to take a good look at on this very Christmas oriented feastday. It is located on the Pope John Paul II (Superior) Avenue side of the church and is third from the vestibule. The window features Mary and Joseph looking lovingly on a pre-toddler aged Jesus standing on Mary's knee, who kneels on a pillow. St. Joseph holds his famous staff with a lily blooming at the top of it. The window was offered by the St. Joseph Society of the parish and is thus inscribed "Ofiarowała Bractwo św. Józefa."

Święta Boża Rodzicielka Maryja – Mary Mother of God

The title "Mother of God" is the Western church's equivalent of the ancient Eastern title Theotokos, which means "God-bearer." In 431, the Council of Ephesus sanctioned the title Theotokos for Mary as a way of declaring and protecting the divinity of Christ. The title declares the most important truth about Mary: She is the Mother of God.

When we celebrate this feast, we honor not only Mary but Jesus, true God and true man. We proclaim the glorious truth that in Mary's womb the Second Person of the Holy Trinity united Himself completely with our humanity. "Taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to death, He surrendered His body to death in place of all. Through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all were clothed with incorruption."

In Mary, we see the portrait of one who knew God's shining face upon her, filling her with grace. Looking upon her with love and showering her with divine blessings, God prepared her to

say “yes” to His plan that she bear His Son into this world. As Mary consented in faith, the Father gave her His peace, continually encouraging her to trust Him as she saw His plan unfold. How deeply she must have needed this peace, as she faced dangerous and frightening circumstances such as giving birth in a faraway city in a cave, or fleeing to Egypt in the dead of night. In each situation, Mary learned to trust more fully that God would bless her and keep her.

Because the Son of God took flesh in Mary’s womb, we too can share in these glorious blessings. We have been baptized into Christ; we have a share in His humanity. We are heirs of the blessings that God gave to Israel and in a particular way to Mary, the beloved Daughter of Zion.

Pierwszego Stycznia – Nowy Rok! January the First – New Year!

On New Year’s Day we say farewell to the old year and welcome the new. There are a lot of “farewells” in St. Luke’s infancy narrative, read at Masses during the Christmas season. Most of the scenes end in departure. After Zechariah receives the vision of the angel in the Temple, he *went home* with his wife Elizabeth. After Mary visits Elizabeth, she “*returned* to her home.” When the shepherds go to Bethlehem to visit the new-born King, they *return* to the fields. After Mary and Joseph bring their child to be presented in the Temple, *they returned* to their own town of Nazareth. In every departure we leave something behind, and move toward something new. And the Lord travels with us. Our prayers and meditations on this New Year’s Day could be well spent asking ourselves two questions: What do I want to leave behind? What do I want to be new in my life? We can take heart in the famous words of the great English writer Cardinal Newman: “*To be human is to change. To be perfect is to have changed often.*”

New Year’s Eve in Poland – Świętego Sylwestra – St. Sylvester’s Night

St. Sylvester’s Day comes on the last day of the year, December 31st. In Poland and many other countries, New Year’s Eve is called “Sylvester Night,” and people who celebrate it are “sylvesters.” It is a night for dances and gala balls. In Kraków an open air concert is held in the main square with between 150,000 and 200,000 people in attendance. It concludes with grand fireworks over the great Church of St. Mary, the Mariacki Kościół, located on the square. According to folklore, after the saintly Pope Sylvester died in 335 he was put in charge of the clock that runs the universe. He became known as Father Time. Remember friends! Each day brings us closer to the end of time and to the beginning of eternity!

As I Close the Door

Dear Lord, as I close the door on the old year,
I ponder the things I’ve done...
The things I’ve said and the joys I’ve had.
I wonder, have I lost or have I won?
I’ve thought of new friends I have made,
and the old ones, staunch and true...
The paths of the old year made easier, Lord,
because I have walked them with You.
I think of all the many times, when my
burdens were so heavy to bear,

and how my faith slipped away from me,
but somehow You were always there.
Now, I open the door to this New Year,
and carefully peep inside,
I wonder what it holds for me...
but I’ll throw the door open wide.
Whatever it brings to me and mine,
I’ll meet it with a heart so true...
I know that, Lord, what e’er it may be,
You’ll be there to carry me through.

Auld Lang Syne

"Old Long Since"

The New Year's Eve song "Auld Lang Syne" is actually a poem that was written by the well known Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1788. It was later set to a traditional folk song and eventually became a popular way of welcoming in the New Year by being sung at Midnight on New Year's Eve. The title is literally translated from the Scottish as "old long since," which would be better understood in modern times as "long, long ago" or "days gone by," or "old time."

The song begins by asking the question, "Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind? Should old acquaintance be forgot and auld lang syne(days gone by)?" It is a rhetorical question and the answer is obviously "no!" At this moment, when the old year is now gone, we should not forget about all that has occurred during that last year, nor about all the years before. We are also called to remember long standing friendships. But rather by toasting them (we'll take a cup of kindness yet), we hopefully look toward the New Year and the future.

This song has been around for quite some time. The Scots were of course the first to sing it, but its popularity spread throughout the British Isles to the English, the Welsh and the Irish. And by way of the great immigration of the nineteenth century to the United States became popular here. It can be found in documentation from as early as 1896. By 1910 it is documented as being sung in London on New Year's Eve. Guy Lombardo first used it in 1929. Interestingly it has also been used in various cultures on the occasions of funerals, graduations, coronations, inaugurations, weddings and at farewells and endings.

Actually the song is tied to the midnight custom of all joining hands to form a great circle around the dance floor as the song begins. Then as the last verse begins all cross their arms across their breast so their right hand reaches out to their neighbor and vice versa. When the song ends all rush to the middle of the dance floor while holding hands. Then when stepping back to re-form the circle all turn under their arms to end facing outward still joined together. This is symbolic of turning from the old year and facing outward toward the New Year.

Thursday, January 3rd – Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus

The entire month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name. From apostolic times, the church has professed that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Through the particular efforts of St. Bernadine of Siena, devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus was promoted through the inscription of the monogram of the Holy Name (IHS) and the addition of the name Jesus to the Hail Mary. IHS are the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek. In 1597, Pope Sixtus V encouraged the pious invocation, "Praised be Jesus Christ!"

A Christian begins the day, as with all traditional prayers and activities, with the Sign of the Cross, dedicating the day to the glory of God and calling on Christ's grace. The Divine Praises originated as a reparation for blasphemy and profanity. Likewise, the confraternity of men called the Holy Name Society is dedicated to discouraging profanity, blasphemy, perjury, and all improper language. They promise not to use God's name in making promises, not to use profanity, not to blaspheme, not to swear and not to curse. Further whenever the holy name of Jesus is pronounced the venerable custom is to bow one's head. Blessed be God's Holy name!

Please remember we are collecting food for those in need all year long. You may place your donations in the basket located in the main vestibule of the church.

"Jesus said, I was hungry and you gave me to eat."

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Christmas is not a day but a season! It lasts from Christmas Day until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In the year 567 the church council of Tours called the thirteen days between December 25th and January 6th a festival season. Up until that time the only other joyful church season was the fifty days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost.

Almost everyone knows the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas." In England they begin counting the twelve days on December 26th, making January 6th the twelfth day. The stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve is the center point. In most of Europe they begin counting the twelve days on December 25th. That makes January 6th the thirteenth day. Either way, we have a "baker's dozen" of days for announcing the good news of the birth of Christ.

There is a Ukrainian Christmas carol that speaks of "the three feasts of guests," Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Epiphany. These solemnities are the high points of the holy Twelve Days.

Christmas is meant for hospitality, gift giving and caroling. We set this time aside to relax and be merry after weeks of preparation. We do only the work that is absolutely needed so that we can enjoy these festival days with our families and friends, and so that we can make sure that everyone is able to take part.

The old Polish Proverb says that "a guest in the home is Christ in the home." Maybe the most important Christmas customs are to invite guests and to be a guest.

FIRST FRIDAY, JANUARY 4TH,

A DAY OF SPECIAL DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Once again, all are offered the spiritual opportunity to grow in holiness by attending Mass and receiving Holy Communion at 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM or 7:00 PM on the First Friday of the month. This monthly day is set aside by the Church to publicly practice devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Eucharistic exposition and adoration takes place from 8:30 AM until 10:00 AM and then again from 5:00 PM until 6:30 PM when Benediction takes place.

Have you ever taken advantage of this opportunity in our parish? Does there always seem to be something else more important to do in the evening on First Friday? Please think again! Reconsider your priorities! Some day in the next life EVERYTHING that seemed so important in this life will have no value at all UNLESS it leads us to God!



*Watch your thoughts, they become words,
watch your words, they become actions,
watch your actions, they become habits,
watch your habits, they become character,
watch your character, it becomes your destiny.*

