

making oneself equal to or greater than Him according to the whims we wrongly call freedom. If Jesus were born in a palace instead of a manger, the attitude of humility on our part could easily be replaced by arrogance. Fr. Stepan Semchuk, a pioneer priest in Canada, describes this theme in “A Christmas Prayer”: “In spite of our pride, we are not beyond hope / and although we are in no need of anyone / and have dangled over the jaws of hell / we still raise our hands to heaven.”

His insight is like that of Oscar Wilde, who had a death-bed conversion, and once said, “We’re all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.” In Semchuk’s poem, “We beseeched the stars above us / calling on God in heaven, – / look upon us, eternal Child / and on our world in need.” Just as the star of Bethlehem represents the child Jesus, in Ukrainian Christmas carols stars represent children. And at Christmas, the manger scene teaches us that a child will not ruin your life; a child will in fact save your life.

Openness to the gift of new life / Liberates us from idolatry / The humility of voluntary self-sacrifice / God’s first, ours in response / God is God / Our human flesh is his creation / Precious children of God / Beloved sons / Beautiful daughters / God the Word with our nature / As real a human / In life and death / As a mother in childbirth

Христос Раждається

Christ is born!

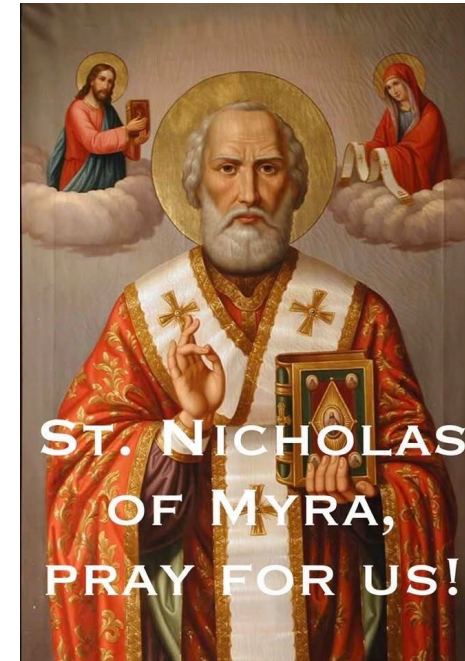
Let us glorify him!

Sunday, December 8, 2019

26th Sunday After Pentecost

Fr. Basil 306-540-5102

Fr. Jeffrey 306-560-8885



**WYNYARD Monday, December 9 5pm Feast of St. Anne
(Immaculate Conception of Mary) Feast Day**

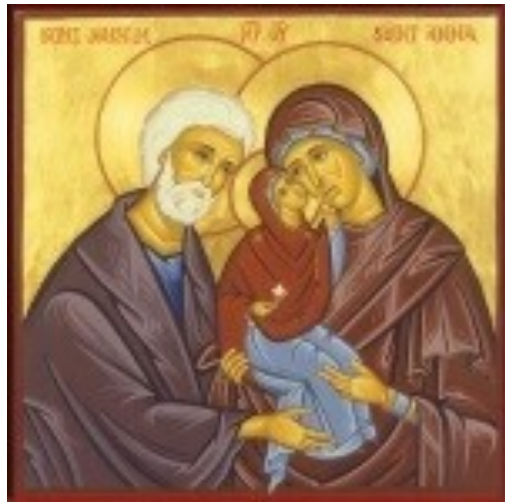
Friday, December 13 5 pm Divine Liturgy, intention of +Terry
Zulak, First anniversary after death

Sunday, December 15 at 9 am

WISHART December 22 at 9 am

Prayer on Feast of Immaculate Conception

Today the great mystery which has been announced from eternity, whose depth angels and human beings cannot gauge, appears in the arms of Anne Mary, the Maiden of God is prepared to be the dwelling of the King of Eternity, who will renew our human nature. Let us entreat her with a pure conscience and say Intercede for us with your Son and your God, that He may save our souls, for you are the intercessor.



The honourable couple Joachim and Anne have given birth to a lamb, who in turn will give birth in a manner beyond understanding to the Lamb of God who is to be sacrificed for all mankind. They offer to the Lord an unceasing and humble praise. Let us therefore glorify them with fervor and overflow with happiness at the birth of the one who was born of them...

Christmas Message (This week Fr Jeffrey's Christmas message, and in the weeks to come the messages from our Canadian Ukrainian Catholic bishops and Patriarch Sviatoslav)

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

“God eternal is born today.” – Ukrainian Christmas Carol

God's gift of his son is a freely offered sacrifice of love. God the Father of the Blessed Trinity is the first and greatest model of voluntary self-sacrifice in love. He offers this love to his Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and he does so for all eternity. This sacrifice continues through the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, one God.

“The Spirit unites the human family in bonds of self-giving love,” writes Fr. Frank Pavone, in *Pro-Life Reflections for Everyday*. Jesus follows the model of self-sacrifice he sees in his Father, and we have God in the flesh and God who is Spirit to protect, strengthen, and reward us in our own life of voluntary self-sacrifice.

A gift is either accepted or rejected. Mary shows the great life and freedom and liberty that is possible through her acceptance of God's gift in the person of Jesus Christ, to whom she gives his human flesh and blood. The angels who are loyal to God glorify God as a human infant, which has the effect, too, of acknowledging the great dignity of human beings among all of creation. In the carol, “Christ is born, God incarnate,” the angels see Jesus and “sing in honour of their God and creator.” Ukrainian Christmas carols in general are a genre of songs of praise and glory to God for the gift of creation, as I learned from Fr. Petro Bilaniuk, one of my seminary professors.

There is a humility in accepting a gift on the giver's terms, but an arrogance in demanding a renegotiation of the gift, making the recipient a competitor to the Giver, under the delusion of