

From the Desk of Fr. Mark

Good day to all of you,

It's been nearly a week and I am still taking in last weekend's activities. Besides the usual ways in which God shows His nearness to us at Mass, Baptisms and Marriages, the string quartet and Live Nativity pushed last weekend over the edge for God encounters.

To a nearly full church (distancing taken into account) people gathered to have their hearts come alive with the melodies of stringed instruments. For some, including me, music opens an avenue to awesomeness. As notes came together to form beautiful songs, my heart was taken to higher places. It is something I can't explain, but when I encounter such movement, I know a sense of God is there.

The Live Nativity gave opportunities to see God's nearness that I couldn't have planned for. So many people came out of nowhere to make this event happen. It was great to see people work together and use their God given talents to put it all together. And then all kinds of excitement happened.

I want to share with you a few of those things which I am aware of that gave me a sense of awe and wonder. Our first scene was of angels. At one point, some angels flew across the street to sing carols to the neighbors. It was beautiful as a *Silent Night* became a teary night, as a gift of love was shared.

The shepherds then shared their gift of simplicity with passersby. Sheep, calves and goats were hugged and appreciated for softness and warmth. In a world that can seem hard and cold, the simplicity of an encounter with creation can show God's might.

The donkey stole the show for many, as a beast of burden lifted many up. Children and even some childlike adults (my sister-in-law) got to sit on the donkey named Honky the Donkey. Images of Mary seated on a donkey and even Our Lord sitting on a donkey during Holy Week came to my mind. Oftentimes in God's world, it is the smallest and weakest who are true instruments of God.

The actual Nativity scene was next. Many people stopped with their children to take pictures of the Holy family with their family. It was a quiet scene until the joy couldn't be held any longer and the characters burst into Christmas songs. Many times we hold the goodness of God in. The characters couldn't hold in that kind of joy that the birth of Jesus held in their hearts.

The Wise Men seemed like such a simple scene. Three men with gifts just standing there didn't seem like a very exciting tribute to the birth of our Savior. Maybe everything in our world doesn't need to be exciting. They saw and believed. To just sit in the wonder of God is something that many of us fail to do enough of. Maybe the Wise Men were tired from their long journey, but I think they were just in awe of the Newborn King.

St. Nicholas and friends handed out Christmas bags to children and adults, alike. They did an excellent job of bringing the joy of Christmas to so many. The cookies and candy were small tokens compared to the hearing of an authentic "Merry Christmas." With our wearing of masks for so long, it is so nice to hear that Christ is born, which makes it a Merry Christmas.

Our last station was a wagon of charity. Donations of all kinds came in for the taking care of those less fortunate in the area. The young people at this station did great to help fill the wagon to overflowing. Those donations are being taken to centers of distribution this morning as I write this. To reach out to others is a good way to remember how God reached out to us in love with His Son.

Those are just some of my perspectives of a wonderful Advent Day in Putnam County. Share some of yours with others. On Monday morning, our office received a phone call from a random drive-by person from a different county. As his family was driving by, they had to stop to see what all the commotion was. The man remarked that the Live Nativity was the best thing for his family to get them ready for the real meaning of Christmas.

I'd like to thank so many for all they did to make this weekend special. There were literally over a hundred people who came together to put this opportunity together. I can't mention everyone, but I would like to give a shout out to all the young people who brought their A game to make the Nativity come alive. God bless all our volunteers and all who came out to make this weekend of beautiful sights and sounds a reality.

Have a great week.

Fr. Mark

Mass Intentions & Schedule for the Week

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

8:00 AM Louis Verhoff (A)

8:50 AM Grade 3

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

8:00 AM Agnes Schulte

9:30 AM Grades 1 & 2

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

8:00 AM Grade 7

7:30 PM Norm, Dorothy, Ken & Jan Knott
Olivia Schnipke, Cleora & Bob Winkle

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

8:00 AM Special Intention

8:50 AM Grade 4

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19

4:30 PM Don Schnipke, John Phillips
L/D William Ellerbrock Family
Earl Kleman & Family
Ron, Ray & Dorothea Aversch
L/D Amos & Wilma Miller Family

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

8:00 AM Jim, Esther & Randy Siefker
Dorothy Miller
Monica & George Schmursal Family
L/D Carl & Mae Webken Family

11:00 AM Dick Langhals, Ron Kahle, Jr.
Don Holtkamp & Family
Bill & Alice Kahle

Last Week's Collection: 15,649.00



Our Condolences

The Funeral Mass for Alvin Horstman was held on Wednesday, December 9. Please include Alvin and his family in your prayers

Advent Reconciliation at St. Michael's PENANCE SERVICE THIS WEDNESDAY!

On Tuesday December 15, there will be an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance at 4:00 & 7:00 p.m. Since there were no services during Lent due to the pandemic, this would be an excellent way of preparing for the coming of the Lord at Christmas. Make ready the way of the Lord by making ready our hearts.

Youth Choir Volunteers are Needed...

for the 3:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m. Christmas Masses. The number of youth choir members will be limited to the amount we can properly social distance in the choir loft. Masks will be required the entire time (even while singing). Students will be given a permission form to be signed by their parent/legal guardian. Only one practice will be required on Wednesday, December 23, at 3:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of church. If your child is interested, please return permission form by Wednesday, December 16. Thank you!

Parish Cookbooks are Here!

Jill will be in the church basement after the Masses this weekend so you can pick up your copy. At this time, we will only hand out the cookbooks which were preordered. We will let you know when the extras will be available for purchase.

Thank You

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Your generous gift of food and money to our pantry was amazing. It will feed many families. Our community is truly blessed by your thoughtful giving. We appreciate everything you have given us and the work you did to deliver it to us. Prayers for a Blessed and Healthy Christmas and New Year.

St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, Lima, Ohio

Update from the Cemetery Committee

The St. Michael Cemetery committee, along with Fr. Mark, will be in the process this spring to have continuous footers installed in the section west of the Stone Grotto. Some of these lots were already sold before this decision was made; so, we decided the footers on the lots already sold can be paid by contacting Ron Schulte (419-235-3169) or John Schulte (419-890-8851) OR when the lot is used, the cost will be included in the price of opening/closing of the grave at that time. A footer for two grave spaces will be \$500 and a footer for a single grave space will be \$250.

Kalida Kindergarten Registration 2021-22

Please use this link to register online. <https://forms.gle/oC3276TnLeeszTTKA>. A completed registration form with a copy of a certified birth certificate should be completed and returned before December 15.

Hot Cocoa Drive-Thru & Facebook Auction

Join The Meadows of Kalida for a free Hot Cocoa Drive-Thru on Sunday, December 13, from Noon - 2:00 p.m. Santa will be there to wave to the kids and they can drop their letter for Santa in the big red mailbox. There will be hot cocoa and cookies for all who take part. Also, join them for a Christmas décor silent auction on Facebook. All bids need to be placed by 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, the 13th. Bids need to be placed under each of the photos you wish to bid (in the comments under the photo). Proceeds benefit Putnam County Senior Center.

Call to Reserve Your Spot for Christmas Masses

Call 419-532-3474 by Thursday, December 17, to reserve your seat at the Christmas Masses. Please don't leave a message, but make sure to talk to a parish staff member. Thanks!

December 19 & 20

4:30: Matt Bockrath, Michelle Buss, Jerry Ellerbrock
LECTOR: Deb Schroeder

8:00: Norma Unverferth, Janice Foppe, Mary Siefker
LECTOR: Donna Schnipke

11:00: Regina Fischnich, Kyla Fortman, Lynda Fortman
LECTOR: Erin Kerner

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE CHRISTMAS MASSES

We are asking for 3 Eucharistic Ministers, 1 Lector and several Ushers at each of the Christmas Masses. Email stmich@bright.net or call 419-532-3474 to volunteer. The ushers are needed to help people find their assigned seats.

Christmas Eve

3:00: LECTOR:
4:30: Keith & AnnRea Fortman LECTOR:
6:00: LECTOR:
8:00: LECTOR: Shelly Burkhart
10:00: Greg & Jill Zeller, Mark Remlinger LECTOR: Greg

Christmas Day

8:00: LECTOR:
11:00: LECTOR:

High School CCD - December 16

Everyone has class at 7:00 p.m.

Schedule of Students at Mass This Week

Tuesday: Grade 6 at 8:00 a.m. and Grade 3 at 8:50 a.m.
Wednesday: Grade 5 at 8:00 a.m. & Grades 1 & 2 at 9:30 am
Thursday: Grade 7 at 8:00 a.m.
Friday: Grade 8 at 8:00 a.m. and Grade 4 at 8:50 a.m.

Recent Baptism

MARGARET LEIGH KAHLE

Child of Chris & Ashleigh (Hohenbrink) Kahle

Christmas Flower Intention Deadline: Dec. 20

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone for their thoughtful cards, window visits and, especially, prayers for our mom. What a great community we live in. *The Family of Mae Webken*

Nativity Canvases are Available

If you ordered your Nativity Canvas by the first deadline, they are available at the Parish Center. The second order of canvases should hopefully arrive this week. Check Facebook!

Socially Distanced Carolers!

Would you enjoy some Christmas Carolers? On Friday, December 18, from 3:45 - 4:45 p.m., the Challenge Club girls will be caroling throughout the village. They will remain outside and serenade you with their angelic Christmas voices. If you are up for a visit, please contact Mary Siefker at 419-532-2480 to get your name on the Nice List and we will be sure to stop by!!! Happy Advent!!!

Olive Wood Art will be Available for Purchase... in the church basement this weekend. The proceeds from this sale goes to help Christians in the Holy Land.