

January 1, 2017

# OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

## MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



### *Mary Hears The Word of God And Keeps It*

**With great hope and genuine pride, the Church begins this new year with a celebration of Mary, Mother of Jesus, proto-disciple and model of strength, grace and courage for all believers. Mary's history is inextricably bound to that of Jesus, and she is portrayed as such in Scripture – whenever she is mentioned, Mary is represented as an exemplary disciple, that is, one who hears the Word of God and keeps it.**

### MASS INTENTIONS



Saturday, January 7

4:30 p.m. Special Intention – In Thanksgiving:  
Rudy Patek Family

Sunday, January 18

8:00 a.m. Special Intention – Merlene Jurek

### Full, Conscious and Active Participation in the Liturgy



Next weekend is *The Epiphany of the Lord*. Prepare for the liturgy by reflecting on these passages from your Bible.

**First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6**

**Responsorial Psalm: 72**

**Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6**

**Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12**

Remember the sick in your prayers this week,  
especially Frances Anderle.

We pray for the repose of the soul of  
**Edwin Baca**  
and for the comfort of his loved ones.  
*May he rest in peace.*



### St. Mary's Restoration Endowment Fund Maintaining & Preserving Maticka Praha



We thank the following for their recent contributions:  
*Suzanne & Robert Markgraf Jr., Garden Ridge, TX - \$100*  
*Jonathan Vidola, San Antonio, TX - \$50*

To make a tax deductible donation towards *St. Mary's Restoration Endowment Fund Maintaining & Preserving Maticka Praha* contact Fr. Gabriel at 361-596-4674.

### 2017 Church Support Envelopes

As in the past offertory envelopes have been mailed to parishioners who use them or have expressed the wish to have them. If you have been overlooked and want to support the Church through the Sundays offertory envelope system, do please call the Church office. Many thanks for your continued support. Keep up the good work.

### ALTAR FLOWER BOOKINGS AVAILABLE

*January 7/8, 14/15, 21/22 & 28/ 29*



Do you want to donate flowers for the Altar? You could do this in memory of a loved one, on an anniversary or for any occasion. To sign up contact Kathleen Svatek (Altar Society President) or call the Parish Office.

### VOTIVE CANDLE INTENTIONS



The Catholic custom of lighting candles is rooted in Church teaching that Christ is the Light of the World. Candles serve as an outward sign of the light of faith burning in our hearts. They are our silent sentinels lifting up our prayer intentions to the Lord.

#### **Remember to pray for the following intentions:**

*For Peace*

*In Thanksgiving*

*For Elizah Sustr*

*For Our Relationship*

*For Health & Longevity*

*For the Healing of My Mother*

*For Reconciliation of Husband*

*Special Blessings for Blair Tousek*

*For the Recovery & Healing of My Mother*

*For Toni A. Rightmire & Clarkson Children*

*For Good Health & Healing Within My Family*

*For Job Security, Thanksgiving for All The Blessings*

*For Jose M. J. (To Change His Addictions, To Be A Good Man)*

– Votive Candle Intentions to be continued

## REFLECTION

The blessing found in Numbers may be one of the oldest pieces of poetry in the Bible. Although it is the priests who ultimately bless the people, it is Moses who receives the blessing from God and who delivers it to Aaron and his sons (vv.22-23). Each line invokes a personal action from God: to bless with good fortune and to keep from harm; to look favorably toward and to be gracious; to look upon and to grant peace – the blessings that make life worth living.

The mission of Christ to the world is the major focus of Paul's teaching in the second reading. The designated time refers to that time in history when God brought the messianic expectations to fulfillment by sending his Son into the world. Referring to Christ as God's Son establishes his divine nature; acknowledging that he was born of a woman establishes his human nature.

In today's Gospel, Mary is the focus, not the child. It is Mary who is described as holding all these things in her heart. She is the one who ponders the significance of these events.

By her willingness to hold all these things in her heart, Mary becomes to Christians an inspiration of contemplation and reflection. She inspires us to consider deeply the significance of events rather than to go blindly through life without meaning or direction. She inspires us to constant reflection on the truths of the faith that continues to be made real in life's experiences. She inspires us to fidelity to the practices of our faith, practices which are the disciplines of souls that lead the community to a clearer focus on God's presence in human affairs.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



January 3 – Denise Greive  
January 6 – Arthur Klekar  
January 7 – Betty Patalik

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



January 6 – Nancy & Thomas Petru

### 50<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace – January 1, 2017

Perhaps the best known Catholic contribution to responding to violent conflict is the just war tradition... Lesser known is our Catholic commitment to active non-violence and building a just peace. Seeking a just peace means preventing conflict by addressing its causes, building relationships, and facilitating healing and restoration. Pope Francis urges families, faith communities, government leaders, and the international community to practice non-violence and work to build a just peace.

## Happy New Year !

The first of January has many observances: We mark the conclusion to the octave of Christmas; it is New Year's Day; we celebrate the Day of Prayer for World Peace; and we observe the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

**Mary The God-bearer:** The Church today celebrates Mary as the Mother of God. She is called *Theotokos* (God-bearer), for "God sent his Son born of a woman." Because Mary found favor with God, his Son took the flesh of Mary – it is thanks to her that Jesus is *fully* human with flesh like ours, except for sin, and also fully divine. Mary is the ultimate symbol of the Christian, for what is a Christian if not one who bears Christ within our world and brings him to people?

**New Year's Day:** On New Year's Day we gather together and realize that our lives are made of days and nights, of seasons and years. We mark ends and we make beginnings and, in all, we praise God for the grace and mercy that fill our days.

**Prayer:** *Remember us, O God, from age to age be our comforter. You have given us the wonder of time, blessings in days and nights, seasons and years. Bless your children at the turning of the year and fill the months ahead with the bright hope that is ours in the coming of Christ. You are our God, living and reigning, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### The Christmas Season Events / Happy New Year!

We thank Liz Janak for putting up the Jesse Tree; Lori Janecka for coordinating the Christmas Social; Kathleen & Martin Svatek for putting up the outdoor manger scene; the Svateks and the Altar Society members for decorating the Church for Christmas; Pat Masek and the ladies who baked cookies for the homebound; Hostyn Hill Greenhouses and to all those who contributed to the Christmas Flower Fund for the purchase of the poinsettias; to the organists, songleaders and Christmas choirs; and all who worked behind the scenes to pull it all together. Thanks also to Marcus Jasek our faithful sacristan and to Georgie Cerny for taking care of the altar linens throughout the year. Lastly, I thank all my friends who remembered me with cards and gifts. I really do appreciate your thoughtfulness and kindness.

Like the groundhog, I go into hiding during the Winter. It is a time for me to reflect, pray, rest and visit my friends and family after Christmas. I pray that God continues to smile on you and keep you safe. While I am away, Mary Lou will hold the fort, taking care of the Pastoral office. Fr. Ramsey will help with the weekend Masses. Arrangements have been made with Fr. Dominic in case there is a funeral. Do please contact Mary Lou to make arrangements. It has been a hectic year but a good one.

Once again, it was a beautiful Christmas celebration. I very much appreciate what you do for the Church and for me personally.

Happy New Year and God bless,