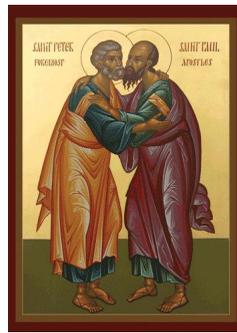




Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church



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TELEPHONE: 412-461-1712

CONFESSIONS: 30 MINUTES BEFORE LITURGY

Sunday, December 15, 2019

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SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES FOR THIS WEEK:

Sunday	12/15/19	11:00 A.M.	<i>Sunday of the Forefathers</i>	+Edward Thomas <i>By Rich & Debbie Queer and family</i>
Tuesday	12/17/19	06:30 P.M.	<i>Daniel Great Prophet</i>	+John & Anna Queer <i>By Ed & Rick Queer & Family</i>
Thursday	12/19/19		<i>Boniface Martyr</i>	No Liturgy
Sunday	12/22/19	11:00 A.M.	<i>Sunday before Christmas</i>	+for parents Helen & Joseph Petruska <i>By Mary & Dan Joscak</i>

SICK AND SHUT-INS *Please remember in your prayers our parishioners who are sick, homebound, hospitalized, living in nursing facilities, or need your prayers for their personal intentions:*



Andrew Cencarik, Don Downey, Phillip Fall, Anna D. Fialkovich, Mark Fialkovich, Benjamin Kaefer, Jr., John Kopay, Jr., Sylvia Kopay, Pauline Massa, Mary Anne Ference Mistick, Richard Paloscko, Nancy Pcolar, Bob Newton, Rebecca McCullough, Will McCullough Shirley Carmony Torbich, Marie Churley, Joanne Skinta and Those serving in the Armed Forces.

****If you have a family member in the hospital or other facilities, and would like us to remember them in prayer, contact Father Vitalii and we will be glad to publish their name in the bulletin – even if they are not a parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul Parish.**

DIVINE SERVICES ATTENDANCE

The attendance for Sunday, December 8, was: 35; For Tuesday, December 10, was 3; for Thursday, December 12, was: 1.

THE HOLY PROPHET DANIEL IS THE FOURTH OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS.



In the years following 600 B.C. Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the Temple built by Solomon was destroyed, and many of the Israelite people were led away into the Babylonian Captivity. Among the captives were also the illustrious youths Daniel, Ananias, Azarias and Misael.

The Lord granted them wisdom, and to Saint Daniel the gift of insight and the interpretation of dreams. The holy Prophet Daniel preserved his faith in the one God and trusted in His almighty help. He surpassed all the Chaldean astrologers and sorcerers in his wisdom, and was made a confidant to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Once, Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream which terrified him (Daniel 2:1-6). He summoned magicians, sorcerers, and Chaldeans before him to interpret the dream. When they asked him what he had dreamt, the king refused to tell them. He said, “If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.” The Babylonian wise men protested that no magician or sorcerer could be expected to do this. Only the gods could reveal the dream and its meaning, they told him.

The king ordered all the wise men of Babylon to be executed. When they sought Daniel and his companions to put them to death, Daniel asked that the king’s sentence not be carried out. He said that he could tell the king what he dreamt, for it had been revealed to him in a vision. Daniel was brought before the king and was able to reveal not only the content of the dream, but also its prophetic significance. After this, the king elevated Daniel to be ruler of the whole province of Babylon, and the chief of all the wise men.

During these times King Nebuchadnezzar ordered a huge statue to be made in his likeness. It was decreed that when people heard the sound of trumpets and other instruments, they should fall down and worship the golden idol. Because they refused to do this, the three holy youths Ananias, Azarias and Misael were cast into a fiery furnace. The flames shot out over the furnace forty-nine cubits, felling the Chaldeans standing about, but the holy youths walked in the midst of the flames, offering prayer and psalmody to the Lord (Daniel 3:26-90).

The holy Prophet Daniel grieved deeply for his people, who then were undergoing righteous chastisement for a multitude of sins and offenses, for transgressing the laws of God, resulting in the grievous Babylonian Captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem: “My God, incline Thine ear and hearken; open Thine eyes and look upon our desolation and that of Thy city, in which Thy Name is spoken; for we do not make our supplication before Thee because of our own righteousness, but because of Thy great mercy” (Dan 9:18). Because of Daniel’s righteous life and his prayers for the people’s iniquity, the destiny of the nation of Israel and the fate of all the world was revealed to the holy prophet.

While interpreting the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, the holy, glorious Prophet Daniel spoke of a great and final kingdom, the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Dan 2:44). The prophetic vision about the seventy weeks (Dan 9:24-27) speaks about the signs of the First and the Second Comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is connected with those events (Daniel 12:1-12).

Saint Daniel interceded for his people before King Cyrus, who esteemed him highly, and who decreed freedom for the Israelite people. Daniel himself and his fellows Ananias, Azarias and Misael, all survived into old age, but died in captivity. According to the testimony of Saint Cyril of Alexandria (June 9), Saints Ananias, Azarias and Misael were beheaded on orders of the Persian emperor Chambyses.

Saint Daniel and the three holy youths are also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, and on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (Sunday before the Nativity).

JOAN SKINTA AT CARE CENTER

Woodhaven Care Ceeter, c/o Joan Skinta Room 226, 2400 McGinley Rd., Monroeville Pa 15146

2020 ENVELOPES

Please pick up your box of 2020 envelopes in the social hall. If you know someone who will be unable to pick up their 2020 envelopes, please take their box to them. If there is no box for you, please contact Father Vitalii.

THIS WEEK'S USHER TEAM - Team A

OUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH, DECEMBER, 8, 2019:

SUNDAY OFFERING	\$ 1342.00
CANDLES	15.00
MONTHLY	155.00
HOLY DAY	245.00
CHRISTMAS	5.00
HOLIDAY FLOWERS	30.00
ARCHDIOCESAN COLLECTION	5.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,797.00

CATHOLIC TEACHING

JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WAS BURIED.

The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the centre of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.

The Church remains faithful to the interpretation of "all the Scriptures" that Jesus gave both before and after his Passover: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Jesus' sufferings took their historical, concrete form from the fact that he was "rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes", who handed "him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified".

Faith can therefore try to examine the circumstances of Jesus' death, faithfully handed on by the Gospels and illuminated by other historical sources, the better to understand the meaning of the Redemption.

JESUS AND ISRAEL

From the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, certain Pharisees and partisans of Herod together with priests and scribes agreed together to destroy him. Because of certain acts of his expelling demons, forgiving sins, healing on the sabbath day, his novel interpretation of the precepts of the Law regarding purity, and his familiarity with tax collectors and public sinners--some ill-intentioned persons suspected Jesus of demonic possession. He is accused of blasphemy and false prophecy, religious crimes which the Law punished with death by stoning.

Many of Jesus' deeds and words constituted a "sign of contradiction", but more so for the religious authorities in Jerusalem, whom the Gospel according to John often calls simply "the Jews", than for the ordinary People of God. To be sure, Christ's relations with the Pharisees were not exclusively polemical. Some Pharisees warn him of the danger he was courting; Jesus praises some of them, like the scribe of Mark 12:34, and dines several times at their homes. Jesus endorses some of the teachings imparted by this religious elite of God's people: the resurrection of the dead, certain forms of piety (almsgiving, fasting and prayer), The custom of addressing God as Father, and the centrality of the commandment to love God and neighbour.

In the eyes of many in Israel, Jesus seems to be acting against essential institutions of the Chosen People: - submission to the whole of the Law in its written commandments and, for the Pharisees, in the interpretation of oral tradition; - the centrality of the Temple at Jerusalem as the holy place where God's presence dwells in a special way; - faith in the one God whose glory no man can share.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WAS BURIED.)

Could God be calling you to be a priest or religious and announce the Good News to His People as John the Baptist did? If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, **contact Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych.**

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS



The **Byzantine Catholic Serra Club of Pittsburgh** is an organization that fosters and promotes priesthood and religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church. They also support Seminarians, Priests and Religious Sisters in their sacred ministry. The Byzantine Serra Club meets monthly. If you would like to join, call William Kress 412-761-1499 or email kb.kress@gmail.com

Join the Serrans in their work to ensure the future of our Church.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: 2ND BOOK OF CHRONICLES

Author: Unknown, Date Written: 517-400 BC, Date of Narrative: 970-538 BC



2 Chronicles continues the story of Israel begun in 1 Chronicles. It offers an interpretation of the history of Judah's kings from Solomon to Zedekiah. Significantly, the book does not narrate the history of the northern kingdom of Israel.

The book begins with the reign of Solomon and the building of the Temple (1-9). Solomon and his workmen construct the Temple out of the richest materials and they spend seven years on the project. The Chronicler highlights the dedication of the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant and all the Temple furnishings. At the dedication, the Lord sends fire from heaven and he fills the Temple with a cloud of glory. Solomon's reign is marked by fame, riches and wisdom. 2 Chronicles does not focus on Solomon's sins like 1 Kings does.

After Solomon's reign, the kingdom splits under Rehoboam (10). The line of kings in Judah goes back and forth between faithfulness and unfaithfulness to the covenant with the Lord. At one point, the line of David is almost completely wiped out by the evil Queen Athaliah, but a priest saves the young heir, Joash (22). Several kings are extremely wicked. For example, Jehoram murders all his brothers and he is even cursed by the prophet Elijah (21).

Again and again, the Chronicler directs our attention to the Temple. Solomon constructs it in response to David's orders. Asa, Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah repair it. Uzziah desecrates it by trying to offer incense (26). Manasseh sets up pagan idols in it (33). The Temple represents the whole covenant. It is the sign of the nation, the symbol of the Lord's relationship with his people. The Temple's final destruction by the Babylonians represents the collapse of the covenant.

Two kings stand out in the story of 2 Chronicles: Hezekiah and Josiah. Hezekiah tears down pagan places of worship (29-32). He rebuilds the Temple, offers sacrifices and reinstates the Passover feast. The prophet Isaiah assists and advises King Hezekiah. The two pray for Judah at the time of the Assyrian invasion and the Lord saves Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Hezekiah's pride causes him to die of illness. Josiah also destroys pagan places of worship, repairs the Temple and reinstates the Passover (34-35). Under his reign, the priests find the Book of the Law (probably Deuteronomy) in the Temple. The prophet Jeremiah advises King Josiah. Jeremiah prophesies that the people will be sent into exile for 70 years, which they are (36:21).

When the Babylonians take over the Assyrian empire, they proceed to conquer Judah during the reign of Jehoiachin (36). The king and many important persons are exiled to Babylon. The Babylonians place Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne of Judah. When he rebels against the empire, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the Temple and drag him into exile.

Yet 2 Chronicles ends on a hopeful note. Cyrus, king of Persia, takes over the Babylonian empire and decides to send the Jewish people back to Judah: the exile ends. Yet we are left wondering how the Lord will fulfill his promise to David of an everlasting dynasty. Only in Jesus, the Son of David, is the promise finally fulfilled.

GENERAL INFORMATION

For security reasons, during 11:00 AM Sunday Liturgy, **the back door will be locked at 11:15 AM.** Also, please remember during the Weekly Liturgy, the back door will be locked. Please park your car in front of the church.

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, person who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Vitalii is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Vitalii whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS (LUKE 14:16-24)

In our time of so many distractions and worries, it is easy to forget why Christ was born, why He came among us a helpless baby in a cave used for a barn with an animal's feeding trough for His crib. As St. Paul wrote, He appears so that we may appear with Him in glory. Both the first coming of His birth and the second coming of His return are so that we may share in His salvation. But to encounter Christ at either of His appearances is also to undergo a kind of judgment, for the truth about ourselves becomes evident when we enter into His presence. How we respond to Him reflects the state of our souls. The same is true of how we prepare to receive Him during this blessed season of Advent, of the Nativity Fast.

Throughout the history of the Old Testament, there were those who ignored both the Law and the Prophets, who did not prepare and were not ready for the coming of the Messiah. That was also true at the time of the Savior's birth when the wicked Herod tried to kill Him. On this Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, we commemorate those who did prepare, all those in the Old Testament who foretold or prefigured the coming of Christ. The first coming of our Lord at His Incarnation did not simply occur one day as a random event, but was the fulfillment of God's plan to bring us into His divine life, which took many generations to fulfill. No one was forced to get ready for Him, and today we honor those who accepted the invitation to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. We want to use this season of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and reconciliation to become more like them.

That is difficult because we constantly face temptations to focus on other things. Like the guests invited to the great feast in today's gospel, we often think that we have more appealing things to do. They turned down the invitation because they had land to inspect, oxen to test, or family responsibilities. In other words, they were normal human beings with everyday obligations. So their places at the banquet were taken by the most unlikely guests: the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame. Strangers from the highways and hedges came to the celebration, but none of those who were originally invited bothered to show up.

The Lord often used the image of a great feast for the Kingdom of God and this parable reminds us that many of the Jews were not prepared to accept Him as the Messiah, while many disreputable people—such as tax collectors and others of low standing, even Gentiles—did receive Him. Whether they did so or not judged them in a sense, for it revealed the state of their souls.

Christmas, of course, is a banquet, a great feast. It is a celebration of our salvation in the God-Man Jesus Christ, Who in Himself united humanity with divinity, Who brings us from mortality to immortality. No matter whether we have observed the Nativity Fast so far, we all have the ability to use the next several days to prepare to enter more fully into the great glory of our salvation. Our preparation is not about legalism, but about opening ourselves to the healing mercy of Christ as we prepare to encounter Him at His birth. For how we receive Him will reveal the true state of our souls.

During these weeks of Advent, we may accept the invitation to the great banquet of the Lord by embracing these spiritual disciplines. As difficult as we probably find them to be and as bad as we are in doing them, they are powerful means of opening our souls to the glory that He has brought to the world through His appearance at Bethlehem. They are how we humble ourselves before Him, fighting our passions, resisting our temptations, and doing what we can to prepare to welcome Him at Christmas for our salvation. They are what Advent is all about.

Christmas will be here soon, and how we respond to the Lord as His birth will make clear the state of our souls. Will we be ready to welcome Christ into our lives at His birth? Will we be ready to accept the invitation to the feast? I certainly hope so, for the good news of Christmas is that in our Lord the fulfillment of all God's promises is extended to people like us. The good news is that, in the Babe of Bethlehem, even unlikely people like you and me are invited to take our place with the Holy Forefathers and Foremothers of Christ in the heavenly banquet and to shine with the light of heaven, to appear with Him in glory. That is why our Savior was born.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member, they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only by the pastor.

CHRISTMAS KIELBASA

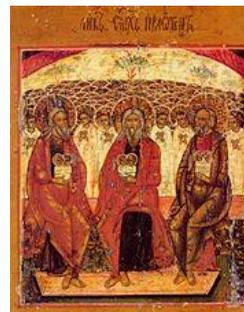


The Duquesne Men's club of Saints Peter and Paul is selling Christmas Kielbasa (\$5.00/Lb.). Order by December 15th. Delivery to the Church will be Sunday December 22nd. **The order sheet will be in the vestibule if you are interested.** Thank You.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Fr. Vitalii is accepting requests for 2020 Divine Liturgy's on a first come first serve basis. Please submit your requests in writing with the intention and date requested to St Peter and Paul attention with your offering and place on Sunday collection basket.

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers is the Sunday that falls between December 11-17, the second Sunday before the Nativity. The ancestors of Christ according to the flesh are remembered on this Sunday of the Nativity Fast.

All the great Fathers and Mothers and Prophets of the Old Testament, starting with Adam, Abraham, the Righteous Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, including Holy Prophet Elias and Daniel, and concluding with Holy Prophet Zechariah (Zachary), Joachim and Anna, Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist and The Theotokos. They lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, 22:18).

SCHEDULES FOR CHRISTMAS TIME

12/22/19	Sunday before Christmas	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
12/24/19	Christmas Eve	05:00 PM	Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy
12/25/19	Christmas Day	11:00 AM	Christmas Divine Liturgy
12/26/19	Synaxis of the Theotokos	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
12/27/19	Stephen Protomartyr	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
12/29/19	Sunday after Christmas	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy

TIME TO READ THE HOLY BIBLE

Old Testament

1 From Egypt Abram went up to the Negeb with his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot accompanied him. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. 3 From the Negeb he traveled by stages toward Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly stood, 4 the site where he had first built the altar; and there he invoked the LORD by name. 5 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, 6 so that the land could not support them if they stayed together; their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 There were quarrels between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and those of Lot's. (At this time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were occupying the land.) 8 So Abram said to Lot: "Let there be no strife between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are kinsmen. 9 Is not the whole land at your disposal? Please separate from me. If you prefer the left, I will go to the right; if you prefer the right, I will go to the left." 10 Lot looked about and saw how well watered the whole Jordan Plain was as far as Zoar, like the LORD'S own garden, or like Egypt. (This was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 Lot, therefore, chose for himself the whole Jordan Plain and set out eastward. Thus they separated from each other; 12 Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom. 13 Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked in the sins they committed against the LORD. 14 After Lot had left, the LORD said to Abram: "Look about you, and from where you are, gaze to the north and south, east and west; 15 all the land that you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. 16 I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth; if anyone could count the dust of the earth, your descendants too might be counted. 17 Set forth and walk about in the land, through its length and breadth, for to you I will give it." 18 Abram moved his tents and went on to settle near the terebinth of Mamre, which is at Hebron. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Book of Genesis 13:1-18

New Testament

1 On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. 3 And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, 6 and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. 7 Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. 8 But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. 9 Whoever has ears ought to hear." 10 The disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. 12 To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because 'they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.' 14 Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: 'You shall indeed hear but not understand you shall indeed look but never see. 15 Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them.' 16 "But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. 17 Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. 18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. 20 The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. 21 But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some

tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. 22 The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. 23 But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold." 24 He proposed another parable to them. 9 "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds 10 all through the wheat, and then went off. 26 When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. 27 The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' 28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let them grow together until harvest; 11 then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"" 31 He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'" 33 He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." 34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, 35 to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation (of the world)." 36 Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." 37 He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, 38 the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 40 Just as weeds are collected and burned (up) with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. 42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear. 44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. 46 When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. 48 When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. 49 Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. 51 "Do you understand all these things?" They answered, "Yes." 52 And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old." 53 When Jesus finished these parables, he went away from there. 54 He came to his native place and taught the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? 55 Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? 56 Are not his sisters all with us? Where did this man get all this?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house." 58 And he did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith. "

The Gospel According to Matthew 13:1-58

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS



Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas Carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced round stone circles. The Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year, usually taking place around 22nd of December. The word Carol actually means dance or a song of praise and joy! Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived.

Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones. In 129, a Roman Bishop said that a song called "Angel's Hymn" should be sung at a Christmas service in Rome. Another famous early Christmas Hymn was written in 760, by Comas of Jerusalem, for the Greek Orthodox Church. Soon after this many composers all over Europe started to write 'Christmas carols'. However, not many people liked them as they were all written and sung in Latin, a language that the normal people couldn't understand. By the time of the Middle Ages (the 1200s), most people had lost interest in celebrating Christmas altogether.

This was changed by St. Francis of Assisi when, in 1223, he started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the plays sang songs or 'canticles' that told the story during the plays. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but normally they were all in a language that the people watching the play could understand and join in! The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany and other European countries.

The earliest carol, like this, was written in 1410. Sadly only a very small fragment of it still exists. The carol was about Mary and Jesus meeting different people in Bethlehem. Most Carols from this time and the Elizabethan period are untrue stories, very loosely based on the Christmas story, about the holy family and were seen as entertaining rather than religious songs. They were usually sung in homes rather than in churches! Traveling singers or Minstrels started singing these carols and the words were changed for the local people wherever they were traveling. One carols that changed like this is 'I Saw Three Ships'.

When the Puritans came to power in England in 1640s, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols remained mainly unsung until Victorian times, when two men called William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from villages in England.

Before carol singing in public became popular, there were sometimes official carol singers called 'Waits'. These were bands of people led by important local leaders (such as council leaders) who had the only power in the towns and villages to take money from the public (if others did this, they were sometimes charged as beggars!). They were called 'Waits' because they only sang on Christmas Eve (This was sometimes known as 'watchnight' or 'waitnight' because of the shepherds were watching their sheep when the angels appeared to them.), when the Christmas celebrations began.

Also, at this time, many orchestras and choirs were being set up in the cities of England and people wanted Christmas songs to sing, so carols once again became popular. Many new carols, such as 'Good King Wenceslas', were also written in the Victorian period.

New carols services were created and became popular, as did the custom of singing carols in the streets. Both of these customs are still popular today! One of the most popular types of Carols services are Carols by Candlelight services. At this service, the church is only lit by candlelight and it feels very Christmassy! Carols by Candlelight services are held in countries all over the world.

The most famous type of Carol Service might be a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, where carols and Bible readings tell the Christmas Story.



SIGN OF THE CROSS



Also found on the altar table is a small hand cross used for blessing and for veneration by the faithful. The sign of the cross is used throughout the church building: on the holy vessels, stands, tables, and vestments.

The cross is the central symbol for Christians, not only as the instrument of the world's salvation by the crucified Christ, but also as the constant witness to the fact—that men cannot be Christians unless they live with the cross as the very content of their lives in this world. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mk 8.34).

For these reasons Christians place upon themselves the sign of the cross. The Orthodox place their first two fingers and thumb together to form a sign of the Triune God and cross themselves from the head to the breast and from shoulder to shoulder, right to left. This unique and all-embracing symbol shows that the cross is the inspiration, power and indeed the very content of our lives as Christians; and that man's mind, heart and strength must be given to the love of God and man.

Sunday of Forefathers

Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled.
For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner
Luke 14: 24

A R M M Q C L N J G B X M U M M Y N S A
O A Z G Z Y Y X K A Q J J E A C L E L U
D P E O K D T J A S S O B S G H N D W S
G I J U J T L C F I L L E D Q I N K B X
K Y H T M E T C V F V R Z J F M C A E V
X T X R U L I Z W P N P C H M F O D B B
X J L Q D L Y O L T A N F M A O E R G N
B Z H M I U B C G F T F Z L R G Y J O G
Z O X A N O P H L M C G G H W G L P E B
G Z L Y N O R J H Z C O M E U Q C S I Z
K R B J E K N T D W E G Y D Y A H P N D
Q H B H R N X M M P X H Y G Z K I N Y S
W D K O J C N W I N V I T E D M T D R G
X O N M N H T A S T E Z K R U E A X F H
Q N H E J B C H U K W L B O W N H S R K
O Q S Z S C G V W T F I V W M O X T F P
P O U Z I Y H I G H W A Y S A N W U M Q
V V S G W O N M O J P E O P L E W L M J
I F D U U U E B U O M A K E I X N M S T
G K E P P W D E F R N H Y F I N N T L P

GO	OUT	HIGHWAYS
HEDGEROWS	MAKE	PEOPLE
COME	HOME	MAY
FILLED	TELL	YOU
NONE	MEN	INVITED
TASTE	DINNER	