

My Dear Parishioners,

Sometimes I wonder (and perhaps you do too) what it would have been like to live in another time and place. I sometimes imagine myself living in a time and place where life was simpler and less complicated. Was there ever such a time and place in history? I am not sure if there ever was. However I do know that today we live in a very complex world and the more complicated the world becomes the more we begin to **worry**. The more we **worry** the more **insecure** we become about the future. We are shocked when we discover that the systems we create to support us prove too fragile to bear the weight of our hopes. We awake to the knowledge that the future may no longer be taken for granted. That is why those who document our time call it the “**age of anxiety**.” We live in an age that is marked by disquiet and misgiving.

We all are aware of the **social anxiety** about whether or not we can control the nuclear force we have created; about the security of our economy; about terrorism and violence in our world; about the safety of our children in our schools and the standards of service and justice in our community. We are aware of **religious anxiety** about changes in the Church; about endless suffering in a world created by God; about the future of belief itself. We are aware of the **personal anxiety** that we feel time to time about how our lives are going; about our families, health and our jobs; about separation and loneliness and about a host of other things that we have no control over.

Today’s Scripture readings remind us that there is a vast difference between **concern** and **worrying**. **Concern** is the **mature response** of those who recognize their duty towards others as well as toward themselves. **Worry** is the troubled fretting of those who are filled with **uncertainties**. **Concern** can be fulfilling. **Worry** is painful. **Concern** is the flower that grows on the tree of responsibility while **worry** is the spoiled fruit of **anxiety**.

**Worried** people believe that they have to do everything by themselves. **Responsibility** is a heavy burden which they fret about because they doubt that they can carry such a weight by themselves. **Worried**

people often forget to ask for God’s help and they tend to lack trust in Him. They may have despaired of receiving any assistance from God so they believe that He will not take care of them. **Worried** people are like those Israelites whom the prophet Isaiah addresses in today’s first reading. Today’s reading summarizes the powerful drama that holds this entire prophetic book together.

In today’s passage we hear how the Israelites were in Babylonian exile far from their beloved homeland and the temple of Jerusalem which had been the center of their lives. The temple lay in ruins and the people felt their lives were devastated. They felt alone, unattached, and belonging to no one. They were deeply **anxious** and **afraid**, believing that God had abandoned and forgotten them. They lamented: “The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.” If their **fears** had been true they would indeed have had good cause for **worry**. But the prophet Isaiah addresses their **anxiety** assuring them that God is still and always will be with them. Isaiah addresses them in these **consoling** words: “Can a mother forget her infant, or be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will **never** forget you.” Isaiah emphasizes the unique bond between God and His people. God’s love is even greater and stronger than the love between mother and child. Human love can be limited by time and circumstances but God’s love for His people has no limits. So why should we **worry** since God’s song of consolation is addressed to all of us: “I will **never** forget you!”

St. Paul in today’s second reading is aware that the Corinthians have already decided as a human tribunal that he was not as eloquent or as clever as some of the other leaders. That doesn’t bother Paul as he has no need to **worry**. Paul is mindful of only having to answer to God. Paul knows and understands that God has entrusted him to carry out God’s plan of salvation. Paul knows that only Jesus at His final coming will pass judgment upon him.

Today’s Gospel portrays Jesus in the role of a **wisdom teacher** emphasizing how life in the world actually works, and what this implies for being a

**faithful** disciple. There is also an eschatological tone to Jesus' teaching. Everything is ultimately pointing to the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Real meaning to life **only** comes from this perspective.

Today's Gospel is a continuation of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount with its systematic unfolding and development of the central core of Jesus' teachings. Today's section of Jesus' sermon is aptly summed up in its introductory and concluding remarks: "No one can serve two masters" and "Seek first the kingdom of God." Today's passage bears on priorities and the need to keep them straight. If God and His law are first among our priorities everything will fall into place. There is no need to **worry**. If they are not, our lives will be out of kilter. Only then will we become **anxious** and open our lives to disaster.

Today's passage begins with a rather strong statement about service. Based on an ancient experience of slavery the principle is that a person cannot serve two masters. Such a servant will invariably choose one master over the other. There is no concession to a middle ground. This principle is then applied to Christianity: You cannot serve God and material possessions (wealth). The conclusion is that one cannot serve both; one or the other will be chosen and served. If wealth or material possessions become uppermost in our minds and hearts, other important aspects of our lives will suffer. When God does not come first in our lives then our lives will unwind and then we should **worry**.

The second section of today's Gospel addresses the issue of the providence of God. In a very realistic way, Jesus articulates a truth that we all know: we have little control over what goes on in our daily lives. Still we tend to spend a lot of energy and time **worrying** about the many things we cannot control. Such **worrying** only produces much **anxiety** in our lives. Jesus gives us words of **comfort**: "Do not be **anxious**. I am telling you not to **worry** about your life and what you are to eat, or about your body and how you are to cloth it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing."

The key for handling the issues in our lives is not simply to forget about them but rather the key

is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." From a faith perspective everything we need will flow from the kingdom of God and He will take care of us. However our faith in God does not mean that we are to be irresponsible and passive in how we live and care for ourselves and others. Faith in God means we should be **concerned** and **responsible** in addressing each day's issues, challenges and problems as they come. Part of our faith life is our belief that somehow God's providence will provide what we really need in our lives. We are not God and so we should not assume that somehow we will be able to manage and control all the aspects that affect our daily lives. We do what we can but we should not **worry** about the things that are beyond our grasp and control. If our priorities are correct then "seeking first the kingdom of God" means fulfilling our responsibilities and taking care of all entrusted to us to the best of our ability while always trusting in God above all else to provide for us whatever is essential. What is required for a good life is a strong faith in God's providence.

St. Padre Pio summarizes well today's Scripture message in saying that we should: "Pray, hope and not **worry**. **Worry** is useless. God is merciful and will hear our prayer." In other words at the end of the day our **worrying** will change nothing but our **trust** in God will change everything. Jesus reminds us that we add absolutely nothing to our life span by **worrying**. As His disciples Jesus challenges us to see beyond our real fears and seek our God who knows, values, and loves us. Jesus asks us to place our **anxieties** in the larger perspective of the kingdom and put them in God's care. If our heart is set first on the kingdom then everything that happens is seen in the light of the heart's priority. Nothing can alter God's love for us. That is why we should always pray: "protect us from all **anxiety** and **worry** as we wait in **joyful hope** for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." Have a blessed and **worry** free week.

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

**ASH WEDNESDAY-MARCH 1**

Masses will be celebrated at 7AM, 9AM, and 7PM. Ashes will only be distributed after the homily.

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

On Fridays during the Lenten Season we will pray the Children's Stations of the Cross at **2PM** and the traditional Stations at **7PM** in the Church. Come out and join us as we walk with Jesus to Calvary.



**THREE PILLARS OF LENT**

**PRAYER** turns us away from sin's rebellion and draws us into right relation with our Creator. The summit of Catholic prayer is the Mass, and a good Lenten practice is to attend daily Mass if possible. The Rosary, Scriptural reflection, Eucharistic Adoration and other forms of prayer also help us get the most out of Lent.

**FASTING** is a discipline designed to remove whatever threatens to become more important than God in our lives. Normally, fasting focuses on food, but it could also involve other activities like watching television or playing video games. According to Church regulations, those in good health are to observe the following practices during Lent unless for some serious reason they are unable to do so:

**Fast** – Catholics from age 18-59 are to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On a fast day, one limits oneself to one full meal and two smaller meals, with no snacking between meals.

**Abstinence** – Catholics of age 14 and older are to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent.

**ALMSGIVING** reestablishes the community dimension in our lives, reminding us that we are not here just for ourselves but are bonded in solidarity with others. Because of that solidarity, we have an obligation to one another, especially those in the greatest need. Participating in the disciplines of Lent is itself a sign of spiritual solidarity with other members of the Church.

**FRESH EXPRESSIONS**

Are Our Families the Problem or the Solution? **Join Bishop Gainer on March 16 & 17 at the Cardinal Keeler Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg**, for a conference on evangelization and family life with an ecumenical group called "Fresh Expressions." Christian churches of all denominations will gather to rethink their approach to evangelization, and to help reach people on the periphery. Monsignor Renzo Bonetti of the Amore Project in Italy will challenge those attending to view the family as our greatest resource for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. A host of other Catholic and Protestant thinkers, including Christopher West & Reverend Tory Baucum, will discuss how we can reimagine our ministry to families & youth while refreshing our own faith.

Call the Family Life office at 657-4804 or visit <http://freshexpressionsus.org/amorelaunch> for more info.

**FEAST OF SAINT PATRICK**

This year the Feast of Saint Patrick falls on a Lenten Friday. Since Saint Patrick is the principal patron of our diocese, I hereby grant a dispensation from Friday abstinence to all Catholics who reside in the diocese and all who are present within the Diocese on **March 17**.



Those who take advantage of this dispensation are urged to substitute another suitable form of personal penance, possibly choosing another day within the Second Week of Lent as a Day of Lenten abstinence. Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer  
Bishop of Harrisburg

**MARRIAGE ANNULMENTS**

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Harrisburg will be giving 2 presentations within the diocese concerning marriage, divorce and annulment according to Church teaching. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics, those divorced wish to marry Catholics, those parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and any others who may have a vested interest because of family or friends.

**March 13** – Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg 7 PM  
**March 14** – St. Joseph Parish York, 7 PM

No prior registration is required. For further information, please call 657-4804 ext. 304, or email: [tribunal@hbgiocese.org](mailto:tribunal@hbgiocese.org)

**MEN OF THE DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG**

Please save the date of **April 1** for the Diocesan Men's Conference at Bishop McDevitt High School, Harrisburg. Theme is: Fools for Christ: Men Called to Glorify God through His Catholic Church. Keynote Speaker is world-renowned Catholic author and speaker, Dr. Peter Kreeft from Boston. His keynote is *Seven Reasons Why Everyone Should be Catholic*. Bishop Ronald W. Gainer is Principal Celebrant and Homilist for Mass and will also be presenting two workshops on St. Thomas More as a Model for Conscience Formation. There are thirty+ workshop choices over three sessions, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Rosary and Benediction, more than 20 Priests available for Confession, plus good music, food, and fellowship. Last year we had 925 men who attended this event. This year we are hoping for 1,000 men. Registration materials are coming soon to your parish. Please join us, and invite a friend or three to come with you! Thank you!

**ENCOUNTER**

**Encounter: A Retreat Experience Especially Designed for College Aged Young Adults and Recent Graduates** will be held Saturday, **March 25** from 9:30 am until 4 pm at the Cardinal Keeler Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg. Lent is a perfect time to get away to refresh and renew ourselves while growing in relationship with our Lord and with other Young Adults. For more information contact your Catholic Campus Ministry/Newman Club or the Diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at: [oyyam@hbgdiocese.org](mailto:oyyam@hbgdiocese.org) or call 717-657-4804 ext. 327. [WWW.HBGDIOCESE.ORG/youngchurch](http://WWW.HBGDIOCESE.ORG/youngchurch)

**2017 DAILY LENTEN  
DEVOTIONS BOOK**

The Redemptorists have published a Daily Lenten Devotions Book for 2017 in English and Spanish. If you would like a copy, please see the display in the Church Narthex. Suggested donation for the book is two dollars. Thank you. Fr. John



**OMPH YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS**

Youth Ministry is happy to announce our plans to take 10 youth from this parish to Steubenville Youth Conference in July.

This 3 day weekend of Spirit-filled worship is life changing and such a priceless blessing each year. Unfortunately, the total trip cost per youth is NOT priceless. It runs around \$308 per youth. We humbly ask you to please consider supporting our youth with prayers and monetary gift at the **February 25- 26<sup>th</sup>** weekend. The youth will be at all Masses in the narthex to gratefully accept any contribution you can give. Thanks and God bless you for your sacrifice. Denise Ives 989-8900.

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, February 27**

7:00 † Robert Michalik  
9:00 † Walter Klumpp

**Tuesday, February 28**

7:00 † Dorothy Sheaffer  
9:00 † Stephen Griffis

**Wednesday, March 1, Ash Wednesday**

7:00 † Philip Cardin  
9:00 † Maria Camerino  
7:00 † Stephanie Mash

**Thursday, March 2**

7:00 † Regina Puschauer  
9:00 † George Givler

**Friday, March 3, St. Katherine Drexel, Virgin**

7:00 †  
9:00 †

**Saturday, March 4, St. Casimir**

9:00 †  
5:00 † James White

**Sunday, March 5, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

7:30 For the Parishioners  
9:00 † Philip Cardin  
11:00 † Vincent Rozario

**IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS**

We will be publishing the names of your dear loved ones who are seriously ill or injured. We will keep them in the bulletin for one month. After the period of one month their names will be removed. For example, names announced in the bulletin the third week of the month will be removed the third week of the following month. If at that time prayers are still needed, please feel free to contact the parish office, and we will be more than happy to re-publish your loved one's name.

February 5: Margie Willwerth, Anthony Tassa, John Griffis, Jean Givler Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Anna B., Karen & Frank Wank.

**CHURCH SUPPORT**

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
2-19-16	\$13,218.52	\$14,326.00	(\$1,107.48)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
2-19-16	\$472,379.64	\$487,084.00	(\$14,704.36)

**YEARLINGS**

Join us on **March 14**, at **Gus's Keystone Diner** at 11:30 Call Gloria for reservations 738-9098.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

The Words of the prophets were intended to bring comfort to the Jews who had been defeated in battle and then exiled from their homes. Captives of war, living in a foreign country far from their home and their Temple, they could have thought that God had abandoned them. But Isaiah's words rang out with comfort and assurance: "I am with you."

At the same time, this prophecy is meant for all of us. Just as the Israelites were in need of hope and encouragement, so are we. No matter what our lives look like right now, the Lord wants to tell us, "I will never forget you." We all know that our world has a mixture of good and bad, of joy and sorrow, of love and hatred. How wonderful it is to know that in the midst of all the ups and downs of life, we have one constant: almighty God loves us just as intensely as a mother loves her child. Pray for those refugees who are experiencing the same suffering in our time.

**SANCTUARY LAMP**



You may have the Sanctuary Lamp burn for a sick or deceased loved one for a donation of \$5 to defray the cost of the candles. This week the candle burns for Theresa Rozario.

**LEGION OF MARY NEWS**



I am yours, my Queen, my Mother, and all that I have is yours. Legion of Mary members, come renew your fealty to Blessed Mother. Saturday, **March 25**, at 2 PM at St. Anthony's Parish 503 E.

Orange St. Lancaster. Fr. Deo will speak. Reception to follow. Need a ride? Call Mary Leffler at 484-706-0627

**SECOND COLLECTION**

Next **Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>** the second collection will be for the Black and Indian Poor Missions.

Recognizing a need to call the faithful to support missionary work among African American and Native American Catholics, the U.S. Catholic bishops established this Catholic Church charity for the Catholic Missions in 1884 to administer a national collection—the first of its kind in the United States—to support missionary work.

Ever since the first Collection in 1884, the Commission has administered the yearly, national **Black and Indian Mission Collection**. The generosity of the good People of God allows the Commission to give helpful grants to dioceses across the country to operate schools, parishes, and other missionary services that build the Body of Christ in Native American, Alaska Native, and Black Catholic communities.

**DAILY MASS**



In the event of bad weather during the week, **if school is cancelled, know that Mass also is cancelled.**

If school is delayed, then we will only have a 9 o'clock Mass, but please use your judgment whether or not to attempt to attend.



**RESPECT LIFE**

**40 Days for Life Spring Campaign**

From March 1, Ash Wednesday, to April 9, at more than 340 locations around the world, 40 Days for Life will run vigils outside abortion clinics. 40 Days for Life is a focused pro-life campaign with a vision to access God's power through prayer, fasting, and peaceful vigil to end abortion. Prayer is at the center of 40 Days for Life. During each campaign, people of faith across the nation and world fall on their knees before the Lord, asking Him to hear our plea and heal our land.

Christ told us some demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting.

The two go hand in hand. Prayer keeps us rooted in the fact that it is our desire to carry out God's will. Fasting is a sacrifice that helps us reach beyond our own limitations with God's help.

Find the 40 Days for Life location nearest you, including Reading and

Harrisburg: <https://40daysforlife.com/browse-campaigns/>

Andrea Ostrowski

**SAVE THE DATE**

Calling all OMPH alumni! Join us **on Saturday, September 16**. All classes welcome to celebrate the schools **60th year!** For more info- find us on Facebook under OMPH reunion. Thank you! Lauren DePaul Caramenico.

**HAVE A HEART**

Have a Heart and Help OMPH School! Throughout the month of February, the OMPH School Giving Tree will be in the church narthex. This tree is adorned with hearts, representing classroom educational aids, materials, and wish list items from each classroom at OMPH School. If you would like to share your love with OMPH School, please: ♥ Select a heart from the tree ♥ Write a check payable to OMPH School for the amount indicated ♥ Place the tag you selected and your check in an envelope ♥ Turn in your donations at the OMPH school office. Thank you for your support of OMPH School and Catholic education!

**OMPH COMMUNITY MEALS**

OMPH will be hosting our first Community Meal of 2017. We are once again looking for volunteers to help. Our Community Meal Program provides free, freshly prepared and nutritious meals, to hungry residents of the Ephrata area. **This meal will be held on March 16, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 167 E. Main Street, Ephrata, PA.**

There is no special expertise required. Volunteer will have varied duties from helping to set up the dining area, serving meals to our guests and of course cleaning up after the meal. Our meal program serves anywhere from 120 to 180 people so we usually need around 25 volunteers. Without our volunteers it would be difficult if not impossible to accomplish our mission. Whether you have helped in the past or this is your first time we would love to have you join us for this worthwhile and rewarding experience.

For those individuals who are unable to volunteer some of their time but still want to help out, monetary donations are always welcome for the "OMPH Community Meals". If you are interested in volunteering or want more information please email Tara Montgomery at [jazzcat9@ptd.net](mailto:jazzcat9@ptd.net) or contact Pat or Georgia Hogan at 738-0825.



**Religious Education Corner:**

**Beginning This Week, Over The Next Six Weeks, We Will Give A Brief Explanation Of Each Of Corporal And Spiritual Works Of Mercy During The Lenten Season Which Begins On Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> With Ash Wednesday.**

**This Week's Corporal Work of Mercy**

**Feed The Hungry:**

Donate to the Food Bank and/or other food drives.  
Volunteer to help at the Food Bank.  
Try not to be wasteful with the food you have.

**This Week's Spiritual Work of Mercy**

**Counsel The Doubtful**

Let your life be rooted in Christ so that advice that you may offer may be rooted in Christ.  
Let your actions show your love of Christ.  
Help a relative or friend who is struggling with his/her beliefs.

**Our RE Class Schedule For The Remainder Of February And The Month Of March Is As Follows:**

**Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes Resume  
Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes Resume**

**Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session  
Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session  
Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session  
Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session  
Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Kelly Lawrence**

OMPH School Development Department is excited

**Mister**

to announce that we are having a Mister Car Wash Fundraiser! OMPH School receives 50% profit from every



pass we sell so please spread the word to friends, relatives, neighbors, and co-workers. The funds raised from this event will go toward purchasing additional iPads. The student who sells the most passes wins two **Ride All Day Passes** to Knoebels! Passes never expire and are valid nationwide. Washes may be upgraded (see location for a details.) Passes may be purchased in the school office through March 15.

**OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION  
FOR 2017-18**

WE ARE ENROLLING! Registration is now open to all parish families for Preschool through Grade 8 for the 2017-2018 school year. The Preschool program, for children who are 3 and 4 years old by September 1st, provides

developmentally appropriate activities in a Catholic environment and offers an after-care program. Our full day Kindergarten program, for children who are 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, provides daily Religion class along with skill development in Language Arts and Math and special classes in computer, library, physical education, art, and music. Students in grades 1 through 8 experience an education noted for academic excellence in an environment which reinforces our Catholic identity. An on-site after school program is also available.

Come see why so many families choose OMPH Catholic School for their children! Personal tours can be scheduled by calling the Development Office at 717-738-2414. Financial aid is available to qualifying families through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment. The deadline to apply for financial aid is April 1<sup>st</sup>!

To learn more about our school, please visit our website at [www.omph.org](http://www.omph.org) or call the school office at 738-2414 for further information. Find us on Facebook at OMPH Ephrata!

**ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTS**



Our **FIRST EVER** Designer Bag Bingo!!!! **Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup>** from 1-4pm. Doors will open at 12 noon \$20 per ticket includes 20 BINGO games! Win Designer Bags – Michael Kors, COACH, Kate Spade, Thirty-One and MORE! Food/Drink will be available for purchase! **Tickets will be for sale after all masses in April**, but for more information contact, Kerry Pepper at [Kbpepper99@gmail.com](mailto:Kbpepper99@gmail.com) 721-6766.

**SAVE THE DATE**



Cold weather getting you down! **Our Mother of Perpetual Help School** is hosting its **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Golf Tournament** on **Wednesday, May 10**, at Honeybrook Golf Club, 1422 Cambridge Road, Honey Brook, Pennsylvania. The cost for the Tournament is \$90 and includes greens fee, cart, range balls, contests, prizes, Thank You gift, light breakfast, lunch, beverages and the **satisfaction of knowing that you helped OMPH School** while having fun!

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY**

The Knights of Columbus invite you to join us for our annual St. Patrick's Day Party on Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> in the Bernadine Center. Doors open at 6:00 pm and there will be live, authentic Irish music by The Mashed Potato Heads from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Cost for the event is \$15 and includes beverages and light snacks. This is a 21 and over event. For tickets or more information contact Brian Heisler by email (preferred) at [jenbri363@gmail.com](mailto:jenbri363@gmail.com) or by phone at 717-954-2310.