

My Dear Parishioners:

Before he discovered his ability as an artist the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh had studied for ministry in the Church. Van Gogh longed to dedicate himself to helping other people. After a short spell in England as a lay preacher and teacher he studied theology and then trained to be an evangelist in Brussels. He failed to be recommended and left to do missionary work among the poor in a mining town. This experience gave him what he called “a free course at the University of Despair.”

Vincent Van Gogh gave away the few possessions he had in order to share in the “life of the poor.” Only when he became penniless and experienced rejection did he discover his true calling as an artist. Van Gogh decided that his mission would be to bring consolation to people through his art. As he wrote to his younger brother Theo: “What I want to aim at is this: I want to do drawings which touch people. I want to progress so far that people will say of my work: he feels deeply, he feels tenderly. What am I in most people’s eyes? A **nonentity**; somebody who has no position in society and never will have. Very well then, I should want my work to show what is in the heart of such a **nobody**. This is my ambition which in spite of everything is founded less on anger than on love.”

Van Gogh created over 700 drawings and 800 oil paintings. Only one of his works was sold during his lifetime. His incapacity to overcome his loneliness and despair led him to commit suicide. Only after his tragic death was his work truly appreciated. He succeeded in his ambition to show the world what was in the heart of such a **nobody**. Through his art Vincent Van Gogh has ministered to untold numbers of people throughout the world.

In our Scripture readings for today we hear of God’s **preference** for the **nobodies** of this world. The prophet Zephaniah speaks of the humble and lowly; those who find refuge and shelter in the Lord. St. Paul warns the Christians at Corinth not to become puffed up with their own wisdom since God has a habit of choosing what is weak and foolish by human standards and uses “those who are **nothing** at all to show up those who have everything.” St. Matthew gives to us Jesus’ great jewel- **The Beatitudes** which celebrate the **nobodies** whose lives illumine the truth of the Gospel.

Today’s first reading is from the Book of the prophet Zephaniah. The prophet Zephaniah preached in the kingdom of Judah around 630 B.C. The paganism of King Manasseh’s reign had left its mark on the nation, especially upon the nobility. Zephaniah as God’s agent had to confront the proud and complacent nobility. To motivate his resistant audience Zephaniah warned them that God would wreak havoc on Judah and the other nations (“Day of the

Lord”). The outcome would be a purified people who would renew their allegiance to God.

At the same time, however, in today’s passage Zephaniah points out that there was a core of people (the humble and lowly) who remained faithful to God. Their devotion to God’s ways and their commitment to Him were commendable and should be imitated. In return, God will preserve them as a worthy remnant from the hardships to come. Their noble and spiritual character is just what God was always looking for in His Chosen People.

Today’s second reading is from Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. For Paul, the Corinthians had attempted to replace Jesus’ Gospel values with false human worldly values. Paul believes that the criteria of fallen humanity usurped the upsetting demands of the Gospel. Paul points out that the majority of the Corinthian community had no great claims to noble birth or prestige. By the world’s standards they were considered unimportant **nonentities**. However by spiritual standards they have Jesus and therefore they **are** all-important. What should be noted is that in His paradoxical way God chooses those with the most unlikely credentials. The Gospel, therefore, is the only true wisdom for only existence in Jesus can achieve what justice and redemption really entail. To be with Jesus is to be removed from the impoverishing standards of the world and admitted to the enriching views of God.

Today’s Gospel presents the beginning of Matthew’s version of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Up until this point in his Gospel Matthew has told us that Jesus went about teaching and preaching and people were spellbound by what He had to say. Aside from “Repent and reform your lives” Matthew has not told us specifically what Jesus taught. In chapter 5 of his Gospel Matthew now begins to unfold a considerable body of Jesus’ thought. Matthew blends much of Jesus’ teachings into a single sermon known as the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon fills the next three chapters of Matthew’s Gospel.

Matthew is anxious to show his Jewish audience that Jesus **is like** Moses who was the greatest teacher, leader, and law giver of the Old Testament. Since Moses received his revelation from God on Mount Sinai and a mountain was typically the place of revelation, Matthew is careful to tell us that Jesus too went up the mountainside, assumed the authoritative position of sitting, proclaimed the fulfillment of the Torah, and He revealed His teaching to the crowd and His disciples. Jesus begins His long-awaited teaching with a series of Eight Beatitudes. The Beatitudes represent the kernel or outline of Jesus’ teaching. The Beatitudes are also a simple and concise list of characteristics of Christ-like living,

In choosing the Beatitudes to encapsulate His teaching, Jesus was making use of a pedagogical literary

form device common to the Old Testament, found particularly in the Psalms and Wisdom literature. The Greek word for beatitude is "makarios" and it can be translated as "blessed", "happy" or "fortunate." It describes a very positive situation for a person wherein the significant aspects of one's life have come together producing joy and well-being. In a religious context this indicates a positive healthy relationship with God. Jesus uses His series of Beatitudes calling his followers to an inner conversion, radical transformation of life and an emptying of self and total commitment to God and God's will.

One of the oddities about Jesus' Beatitudes is that they are used to describe what the world would consider mostly states of diminishment. Jesus declares people blessed or fortunate who are poor in spirit, mourning, powerless, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and are insulted and persecuted for His sake. Some would ask: "How can that be?" The reason they are blessed is because their state of diminishment is not terminal. In fact these states of diminishment will ultimately be turned into their opposites. It is precisely because of this ultimate transformation that the person who is currently suffering is declared "blessed."

The key to living a "blessed, happy, fortunate" life is in living in humility and recognizing that all we have is given to us as gift from God. If we follow the virtues outlined by Zephaniah, St. Paul and Jesus we become better persons and disciples. But we know discipleship has its cost. At times we will know what it is like to be counted as a **nobody** because of our fidelity to God. But as St. Paul tells us Jesus is our wisdom and freedom. As Christians we are pledged to share the wisdom of Jesus who was counted as a **nobody** Himself. In doing that we will continue to show the world what is in the heart of such a **nobody** and we will inspire others and draw them closer to God. Have a **blessed** and **happy** week.

Love & prayers,
Fr. John

P.S. This week we celebrate **Catholic Schools Week**. We are so **proud** of our Parish Catholic School-OMPH and our Parish Catholic High School-Lancaster Catholic. OMPH School has been ministering to children in this community for 60 years and Lancaster Catholic with young people for 89 years. Please pray for God's continual blessings upon our school children, principal, faculty, staff and parents and pray for the continual success of our Catholic schools. Thank you, Fr. John.

**O.M.P.H.
Church and School Website
Our new Website for our Parish
and School is up and running.
Our new website is:
www.omph.org**

MASS INTENTION

Monday, January 30

7:00 †Ruth Jackson

9:00 †George Susa

Tuesday, January 3, St. John Bosco

7:00 †Dennis Allen

9:00 †Luit Liebl

Wednesday, February 1

7:00 †Carl Puschauer

9:00 Intentions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Thursday, February 2, Presentation of the Lord

7:00 †Ruth Jackson

9:00 †Phil Cardin

Friday, February 3, St. Blaise, Bishop & Martyr, St.

Ansgar, Bishop

7:00 †Russell Halyk

9:00 †Robert Michalik

Saturday, February 4, First Friday

9:00 †Luit Liebl

5:00 †Max Kessler

Sunday, February 5, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30 For the Parishioners

9:00 †Max Kessler

11:00 †Max Kessler

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.

January 22: Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Anna B., Karen & Frank Wank

January 15: Alec Masluk, Robert Coleman, Jean Givler

January 1: Anthony Tassa, John Mento



CHURCH  SUPPORT

| Date | Amount | Needed | Difference |
|---------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1-22-16 | \$13,085.65 | \$14,326.00 | (\$1,240.35) |
| YTD | Amount | YTD Needed | Difference |
| 1-22-16 | \$413,342.00 | \$429,780.00 | (\$16,438.00) |

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.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount he says that something "will" happen. It's completely different from the exaggerated promises of some people. In the Beatitudes, he is saying, with **certainty**, "This is how it will be." Read the Beatitudes, and substitute the word "might" each time you see the word "will." "They might be comforted. . . . They might inherit the land." Not so inspiring, is it? Now read them as they are written. In these words, the almighty Son of God is assuring you beyond doubt that you, who are merciful, will receive mercy; that even though insults are hurled at you, you will have a great reward in heaven. Let that assurance deepen your faith in him.

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 the living and deceased members of the Benefactors of OMPH School Family.

OMPH COMMUNITY MEALS FOR 2017

As we start another new year, we would like to thank all of our Community Meal Volunteers for saying yes and making a commitment to lend a hand for our 2016 meals. You all did a magnificent job. We welcomed and served a lot of hungry people and it couldn't have been done without your commitment and support.

Please save these dates for our Community Meals for 2017. They are as follows:

1. **March 16**, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 167 East Main Street in Ephrata.

2. **July 20**, at Bethany United Church of Christ 140 East Main Street, Ephrata, PA.

3. **October 26**, at Bethany United Church of Christ 140 East Main Street, Ephrata, PA.

It was a blessing and a privilege to have worked with such a great group of people. We are look forward to working with you again this year. Thank you for serving our God, our church and our community. Until we see each other again; May God bless you and give you peace.



RESPECT LIFE

There is much hope and excitement with the new President's pro-life promises. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan is pushing to defund Planned Parenthood through H.R. 7 – the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which will be voted on by the Senate soon. H.R. 7 is vital in three important ways. **First**, it will write the Hyde Amendment into permanent law. Currently, the Hyde Amendment must be approved every year by Congress. H.R. 7 will make it permanent, so that it isn't necessary to have this annual budget battle. **Second**, it will extend the Hyde Amendment so that it covers all federal spending, not just programs funded through the Health and Human Services spending bill. This will therefore make it unnecessary for Congress to have multiple votes on multiple measures each year regarding abortion funding from various government funding sources. **Third**, it will end taxpayer funding of abortion through Obamacare.

Contact your Senators:

Pat Toomey <https://www.toomey.senate.gov>

Bob Casey. <https://www.casey.senate.gov> to tell them of your support for this bill.

To keep abreast of the newest legislative bills, you can subscribe to Fr Frank Pavone's alerts at www.priestsforlife.org Andrea Ostrowski

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



We saw 33 families one week this month and 3 of those families were new. Two of those families stated that their situation had changed and were now in desperate need of food. It is a constant struggle for some in our community.

The Benevolent Society's Food Bank is there for those people and others in dire situations trying to figure a way to buy their medications and pay their rent and keep food on their tables.

But now the food bank has some empty shelves! We need canned fruit, boxes of mashed potatoes, and tuna fish. Please drop off your donations in the food bank crate in the narthex of the church. We are grateful and humbled by your continued generosity.

Religious Education Corner: The Religious Education Program Would Like To Wish The Students, Staff, And Parents Of OMPH School A Happy Catholic Schools Week!

Religious Education Upcoming Events:



**Valentine's Basket/Bake Sale After All Masses
Saturday, February 11th And Sunday, February 12th.**

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

**Sunday, January 29th – RE Classes In Session
Monday, January 30th – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, February 5th – RE Classes In Session From
2:00 PM – 3:15 PM This Week Only**

**Monday, February 6th – RE Classes In Session
At Their Normal Time (5:30 PM – 6:45 PM)**

**Sunday, February 12th – RE Classes In Session
Monday February 13th – RE Classes In Session**

Second Weather Make-Up Class If Needed Otherwise

**Sunday, February 19th – NO RE Classes
Monday, February 20th – NO RE Classes**

**Sunday, February 26th – RE Classes Resume
Monday February 27th – RE Classes Resume**

Kelly Lawrence

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AT LCHS

Join Lancaster Catholic High School during Catholic School's Week for the following events:

- Open House on Thursday, **February 2** from 6:30-8:00 p.m. - Preregistration is preferred at www.lchsyes.org/admissions/open_house
- CYO & Basketball Fun Night on Friday, **February 3**. Free admission and snack voucher for 6th/7th/8th graders in our Catholic schools and parishes. Schedule will be girl's junior varsity at 4:00pm, girls Varsity at 6:00 pm, and boys' varsity

at 8:00pm. Enjoy raffles and activities between games!

- Catholic High Night at Sky Zone Lancaster on Monday, **February 6** - drop in anytime and prospective students will receive a discounted rate of \$6/hour. Students and staff will be available to answer any questions about Catholic High!

All students in 8th-11th grade in public schools or other private schools are invited to join us for a Group Shadow day on Thursday, **February 9**. Come see what Lancaster Catholic is all about - a free lunch is provided for all prospective students when they visit! Register for a shadow day by visiting www.lchsyes.org/admissions and clicking on "Admissions Events" on the left hand side.

MIRACLE HEALING SERVICE

"Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God." (John 11:40) **Saint Leo the Great**, 2427 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster, PA, will host a Miracle Healing Service on **February 4th (Snow Date-February 25th)** from 1-4 pm with the Sacrament of Penance available from 2-4 pm. Dr. Bob Sawyer comes to us from Baltimore, MD *and has the support of Most Reverend William Lori, Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, MD.* This service is about Jesus, not about Bob or the Healing Prayer Team working in this ministry who all can witness to JESUS' INCREDIBLE HEALING POWER. For more information, contact Bob or Linda Metz at 285-7635.

SAVE THE DATE

Cold weather getting you down! **Our Mother of Perpetual Help School** is hosting its **25th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament** on **Wednesday, May 10, 2017** at Honeybrook Golf Club, 1422 Cambridge Road, Honey Brook, Pennsylvania. The cost for the Tournament is \$90.00 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!



UPCOMING BAPTISMS

For parents thinking about their child receiving the Sacrament of Baptism please know:

- If you choose a godparent who is a practicing Catholic from OMPH parish, no sponsor certificate is needed.
- If you choose a godparent who is a practicing Catholic at another Catholic Church they will need to obtain a **sponsor certificate** from their Pastor before scheduling the Baptism at OMPH.

- We schedule the Baptism as part of the celebration of Mass during the 1st & 3rd weekends of the month: Saturday- 5pm, Sunday- 9 AM & 11AM.
- There are 3 steps in OMPH's Baptisms: Welcoming (a Baptism Companion makes a visit to the family), Gathering (Baptism class given by our priest) and the Baptism.

Ben & Pat Dangelo schedule the Baptisms as guided by Fr. John. Please call Ben & Pat at 738-0272.

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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.



OMPH School Scene



Celebrating Catholic Education!

Please join us as we celebrate our students, our teachers, and
OMPH School!

Sunday, January 29th

9:00 AM Mass at Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish
10:00 – 11:30 AM Open House –
Reception

Monday, January 30th

Celebrating Our Service to Others
Classes will hold game challenges, bake sales and auctions to raise funds to support Redemptorist parishes and schools in Haiti devastated by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

Tuesday, January 31st

Celebrating Our Senior Citizens
Students will meet with their prayer pals to create handmade cards and notes to the elderly and shut-ins of our parish.

Wednesday, February 1st

Celebrating Our Students
Student dress-down day, special treat from the PTO, no homework.

Thursday, February 2nd

Celebrating Our Civic Leaders and Service Personnel
1:15 PM A special program to honor those who serve our community and nation as elected officials, members of the armed services, firefighters, police officers and first responders.

Friday, February 3rd

Celebrating Our Faculty
9:00 AM School Liturgy followed by a special blessing of the teachers. Faculty luncheon hosted by the PTO.



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK
January 31 – February 6, 2017