

My Dear Parishioners,

Over the past two weeks we have been commemorating the beautiful events of Jesus' infancy. We have celebrated several great Christmas feasts: the Feast of the Most Holy Family, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, and the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. With today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord we conclude the Christmas season. For some people the end of the Christmas season carries a touch of sadness. Christmas joy gives way to the winter blues. Our liturgy, however, turns our attention to the work that lies at the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. Today's feast of the Baptism of the Lord serves as a bridge from Christmas time to Ordinary time. Today's feast presents Jesus as God's "beloved Son" and it places Jesus on the road of His mission: to reveal the Father and to begin to bring about the kingdom of God in the world. We rarely think of Jesus as a beginner, just as we rarely think of Jesus needing help. But in today's feast of the Baptism of the Lord we celebrate those two things: Jesus makes a big beginning into His ministry and He receives help in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today's first reading is from the book of the prophet Isaiah. Many of Isaiah's oracles in his book encourage the Israelites to embrace the **truth** and let go of illusions. For too long they have been distracted by falsehoods from their duty as God's holy people. The **truth** is that they belong to God. If they attach themselves to anyone or anything other than God, they will be disappointed. This is exactly what the Israelites discovered when they trusted in earthly resources for security. Ultimately, they ended up exiled in a foreign land.

The book of Isaiah contains four poems called Servant Songs: 42:1-7; 49: 1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12. These songs speak of a Servant on whom God has poured His spirit. This Servant will enable and empower the Israelites to restore their relationship with God and make things right again. The Servant will also become God's agent in the wider world and bring justice to the nations. This justice will not be harsh and exacting but rather it will be gentle and understanding. This justice will be a source of consolation for all. With God's help, the Servant will become a beacon of light for all nations in the world. All nations were once blind to God's ways. They were confined to limited thinking.

They walked in the darkness of sin and ignorance. With the Servant to guide them they will now see God's ways, break free of limitations, and walk by the light of faith.

In hindsight, we can see how perfectly Jesus fulfilled this description of God's Servant. The words proclaimed in our reading from Isaiah are directly connected with the account of Jesus' baptism. In the passage from Isaiah God introduces the Servant in this way: "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am well pleased." It is on this Servant that God has put His spirit. The Father's words at Jesus' baptism are almost exactly the same except for one word that is changed. At Jesus' baptism, the Father speaks of Jesus as His Son. The Father then sends His Spirit upon Jesus. The words of the Father give direction to Jesus' future mission and ministry. Jesus is being called for the victory of justice. Therefore, Jesus **is** God's covenant with God's people. Jesus **is** the light for the nations that was described in the passage from Isaiah.

Today's Gospel passage is Luke's version of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Luke focuses on two major points. First, Jesus **is** the Messiah and John is **not** the Messiah. The second point is the **identity** of Jesus as **being** God's beloved Son; affirmed by a Divine voice from heaven.

All four Gospels agree that John the Baptist was a very important person in Jesus's life. It is the towering, fearless figure of John that stands between the hidden life of Jesus and His public ministry. Before Jesus goes to John He is known by the local people simply as the "son of a carpenter" who stays in the town of Nazareth. After His time with John, Jesus becomes widely known as an itinerant preacher with a unique prophetic mission. Clearly, something happened to Jesus while He was in the presence of John. Jesus underwent a change that gave His life a new direction.

While being with John, Jesus makes His new beginning. John was a very important turning-point in the life of Jesus. In fact John was so important that some people in the first century thought that he was the Messiah (as Luke states in today's Gospel): "The people were filled with expectation and all were asking whether John might be the Christ." Lest the people mistake John for the Christ (the Messiah), John

contrasts his ministry with that of Jesus. John's baptism with water was merely a ritual of repentance and cleansing. Jesus' baptism was of the Spirit and fire that transforms and purges. John then further admits that Jesus is far superior to him. John insists that he is not worthy to undo the sandals of that long-awaited one. But still Jesus submits Himself to John's baptism. The question arises then: why would Jesus do so? Jesus did not have any sins to repent of so John's baptism had no relevance in this regard. One approach to understanding why Jesus submitted Himself to John's baptism is to see it as a clarification of who Jesus truly is. John's baptism provides a moment to reveal Jesus' **true identity**. At Jesus' baptism, the skies opened (imagery frequently implying a vision of heavenly secrets), the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and the voice of the Father brought recognition that Jesus **is** the beloved Son of God who not only bears the sins of the world but will also take them away. The voice from heaven and the descent of the Spirit confirm Jesus' unique **identity**. This episode has been considered by many as the vent of the divine commissioning of Jesus. As God's beloved Son, Jesus will baptize with the Spirit bringing about the regeneration of the world.

Luke celebrates the baptism of Jesus as the time when God no longer holds back but rends the heavens to signal the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is anointed for His prophetic mission by the Holy Spirit (the great enabler), the one who helps people to achieve God's plan. Jesus begins His journey in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the love of the Father. Jesus starts out on a difficult road that will eventually lead to an appointment with His Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Our baptism brought us into the Body of Christ and setting us on the path of continuing Jesus' mission. When the Holy Spirit came upon us we all became God's beloved children in Christ and the mission of Christ (which is the mission of the Church) became **our** mission. Today, as we celebrate Jesus' great public beginning, we look at our **own beginnings**. If our beginning looks a bit shabby now or half-hearted, we can take consolation from the Gospel challenge to **begin again**. There probably won't be any doves or voices from heaven but as Gospel people we make our beginnings like Jesus. We are not alone as we make them in the power of the Spirit and in the love of the

Father. So let us all take courage to face our own road following the example of Jesus.

As we bring to a close the Christmas season and prepare ourselves to enter into liturgical Ordinary time, may we be at peace as we realize that Jesus is present in our hearts, minds and souls. Have a blessed week.

Love & Prayers,  
Fr. John

### BISHOP GAINER HOST LISTENING SESSIONS



Bishop Ronald Gainer will host listening sessions throughout the Diocese of Harrisburg in January and February of 2019. He encourages anyone with questions regarding the Grand Jury Report, the Diocese's response to abuse, our path forward, or any other questions or concern to attend one of these sessions. Each session will include opening remarks from Bishop Gainer and retired PA State Police Capt. Janet McNeal, recently hired to oversee the youth protection efforts of the Diocese. Following their brief remarks, the floor will be opened for questions. The scheduled session for our deanery will be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at St. Leo the Great Parish 2427 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster PA at **6:30 PM**. In order to make the sessions welcoming and to encourage discussion, video and audio recording will not be permitted. Thank you

### BATHROOM RENOVATIONS

On **Monday January 14** Certified Carpeting Company will begin renovating the Women's, Men's and Sacristy Bathroom floors and the Narthex floor. The bathrooms will be closed those days. Please note that Mass will **only be celebrated at 7am** on those days.

Thank you, Fr. John

### REDEMPTORIST CHAPTER

Elected members of the Redemptorist Baltimore Province (including myself) will be attending a very important meeting at San

Alfonso Retreat House in West End, New Jersey from Monday, January 14 thru Friday, January 18 discussing the future of Redemptorist ministry in the Baltimore Province. I ask for your prayers for the success of this Redemptorist meeting. Thank you and God bless. Fr. John

**MARCH FOR LIFE**

Join us at St. John Neumann Parish, 610 E. Delp Road, in Lancaster on January 18<sup>th</sup> for the Annual Lancaster County March for Life.

The day will start at 9 AM and end at 3:30 PM and will consist of a Prayer Service, Music, Speakers, and Videos.

The speakers in Washington will be streamed live. We will also have an indoor walk. There will be coffee and pastries in the morning; lunch will also be served. A free will offering will be taken.

*New this year* is an evening session for those who cannot make a daytime session. Join us for fellowship, inspiration, and a hot meal from 6-8:30 PM.

For more information call or email Tom Ramsbottom at 717-468-3822 or [tramsbottom354@comcast.net](mailto:tramsbottom354@comcast.net)

**MARCH FOR LIFE**

The 2019 March for Life will be held in Washington, D.C., on **Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>** Catholics Defending Life of Lancaster PA is sponsoring a bus trip to this most worthy pro-life event. After a 7 AM Mass at St. Leo's, three busses will depart from the church parking lot, bound for D.C., at approximately 8:15 AM. Suggested Donation to cover costs is \$10 per person and \$20 per family, with free seats available for the mere asking. Reservations are a must! **Phone by January 13<sup>th</sup>!** Call Rosie Gross at 717-397-6966. Come to the March for Life. Pray and protest to end the atrocity of abortion in our nation.

**DON'T GET SCAMMED!**

Scammers are now posing as priests and other clergy. In this latest scam, you might receive an email or a text message that appears to be from your Pastor or another priest that you may know. The scammer asks you to help someone in need by purchasing a gift card and to provide the codes on that card.

Here's how to protect yourself from being scammed:  
1 – Know that scammers are out there. Be suspicious of any request for funds of any type via an email message or a text message. Verify any request with a call to the person who supposedly sent it or a call to the phone number of the text that you received.

2 – Know that any email from a priest should be from a diocesan or parish email account. Messages sent from free services, such as Gmail or Yahoo, are more likely to be scammers.

3 – Many clergy do not share their cell phone numbers publicly. If you receive a text message from someone not on your phone's contact list, be suspicious.

4 – Know that priests will NEVER ask for financial transactions via email or text messages.

For more information on how to protect yourself visit: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0003-phishing>

**MANDATE RENEWAL**

On **January 16<sup>th</sup>** there will be a mandate renewal program **for our Parish Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who have not renewed their certification within the past three years.** This program will be held at St. John Neumann Parish from **6:30 to 8 PM.** Also if anyone is interested in becoming an Extraordinary Minister **please call Mary Burkholder at 733-4989 for more information.**

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, January 14**

- 7:00      ✦ Anne Lowell
- 9:00      NO MASS TODAY

**Tuesday, January 15**

- 7:00      ✦ Patricia Kline
- 9:00      NO MASS TODAY

**Wednesday, January 16**

- 7:00      Day of Prayer and Penance

9:00      ✦Miss Carlton  
**Thursday, January 17, St. Anthony, Abbot**  
 7:00      ✦Helen Sippie  
 9:00      ✦Jack Lewis  
**Friday, January 18**  
 7:00      John Doman  
 9:00      ✦Peter Allwart  
**Saturday, January 19**  
 9:00      ✦Bob Jones  
 5:00      ✦Ruth Joos  
**Sunday, January 20, Baptism of the Lord**  
 7:30      For the Parishioners  
 9:00      ✦Elizabeth Ganter  
 11:00     ✦Neil Gruber

**CHURCH  SUPPORT**

| Date       | Amount        | Needed            | Difference        |
|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1-6-19     | \$14,126.03   | \$14,300.00       | (\$173.97 )       |
| <b>YTD</b> | <b>Amount</b> | <b>YTD Needed</b> | <b>Difference</b> |
| 1-6-19     | \$354,833.01  | \$400,400.00      | (\$45,566.99)     |

**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.

**ALTAR SERVERS NEEDED!!**

Any girl or boy in grades fourth and up that would like to become an altar server should contact Ben Hoover at 717-808-1115. This is a great way for RE and LCHS students to achieve required service hours.



There is a commitment involved with being an altar server, but the schedule can be planned around sports, work and any other activities if known in advance. Training will begin in January and the new schedule will come out in March.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Learning to hear God's voice isn't always easy. Just ask Samuel. But this story has three pieces of encouraging news for all of us.

First, it's okay to struggle and get it wrong. Samuel occasionally missed God's voice as well. We're all still learning how to tune into the Spirit.

Second, God was very patient with Samuel, even when he didn't catch on immediately. The Lord is patient with us too. He keeps sending messages our way, even though he knows we will likely miss some of them in the commotion of life.

Finally, the last bit of news might come as a surprise. You're probably hearing from the Lord already; you just may not realize it yet.

God doesn't usually speak to us with an audible voice. Rather, he often chooses natural means, including our consciences and our imaginations. Sometimes our thoughts and feelings—even mental images we see—have their source in God.

**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

Joseph McGowan.

**IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS**

We will be publishing the names of your dear loved ones who are seriously ill or injured. 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.

Margaret Gardner, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Carlos Luciano Sr., Mary Kay Hensel, Gerald Gigliotti, Fr. Paul Bryan, CSSR, Francis Gatti, Antonia Scribani, Jean Mash, John Mento, Joe Lewis, Joe Ferrara, Joanne Dever, Alicia Craig, Robert Bevans, Chris Hohowski, and Jody Shimp.

**HORSE RACING, FUN AND FOOD**

Join the Knights of Columbus for their K of C Derby, Saturday, **January 26<sup>th</sup>**. The evening will consist of 11 exciting horse races with pari-mutuel betting, door prizes, food and beverages. **Tickets are \$20** and include a chance to win \$50 in one race and a chance to win up to \$1000 in Race 11. Doors open at 6 PM and post time for the first race will be 7 PM. For tickets or further information contact Ben Hoover at 717-808-1115 or email at [hooverben4@gmail.com](mailto:hooverben4@gmail.com)

**IS OUR LADY CALLING YOU?**



If you have an interest in going on a Pilgrimage to Medjugorje, please contact me for details: Carol Foltz, 717-859-1218 or [carolfoltz1218@gmail.com](mailto:carolfoltz1218@gmail.com) Date is April 29, 2019 - May 9, 2019. Cost is \$2499.00 (from Newark NJ airport) - air, lodging, and meals.

**TEXT-TO-GIVE SECOND COLLECTION CODES**

Second collection text-to-give is easy! Just text the amount you would like to give followed by the “code word” for each specific collection. For example, “10 flowers”, makes a gift of 10 dollars towards our flower collection. Each week before a second collection, the “code word” will appear in the bulletin for your convenience.

The code words for the next few weeks:

| <u>Collection Name</u> | <u>Collection Date</u> | <u>Code Word for Text-To-Give</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| European Relief        | 1/13/2019              | europeanrelief                    |
| Initial                | No date                | initial                           |

Reminder the Text-To-Give phone # is **717-401-4159**.

**YOUTH GROUP NEWS**



Next Radiate Youth Group meeting is Sunday January 13 from 4-5:30 pm in the Bernadine Center. We will be playing games and making cards for nursing home residents. Snack and bottled waters will be provided. Grades 7-12 are welcome! In His Service, Denise Ives

**BENEVOLENT SOCIETY**



Have you ever looked at the food bank crate in the narthex as you walk into mass on the weekend? The crate is ALWAYS overflowing with non-perishables donated by YOU, the OMPH parishioners.

We are extremely humbled by the unending support of our parish in our quest to help those struggling in Northern Lancaster County. So, THANK YOU!

Our food bank is open on Wednesday evenings [from 5-6:30pm](#) on the grounds of St Clement Mission House. If you know of any local families who can use help with food, please send them to one of our distributions to see if they qualify. Any parishioner who needs help with food is welcome at any time without any need for financial qualification.

Our current needs are: applesauce, peas, canned corn, and Mac& cheese.

**OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

Selection of your child’s school is among the most important choices you will make. OMPH School partners with parents in providing a faith-based education for the children of our parish. We have a strong tradition of academic excellence, but more importantly, the gospel message and spirit of Catholicism permeate the school day. Our children are blessed to have daily interaction with the Redemptorist Fathers serving our parish.

Registration is now open to all parish families for Preschool through Grade 8 for the 2019-2020 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 a Munch Bunch school lunch 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, Spanish, 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 available for all students in Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Interested parish

families are encouraged to register by February 1<sup>st</sup>; registration will then open to non-parishioners.

Please join us on **Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>** as we celebrate the gift of Catholic education in our parish at the 9:00 am Mass. Following the liturgy, there will be an Open House and the opportunity to meet the faculty and visit the school. You can also schedule a personal tour of the school for any day, at your convenience, by contacting the Development Office.

To learn more about our school, please visit our website at [www.omph.org](http://www.omph.org) or call the school office at 717-738-2414 for further information. Find us on Facebook at OMPH-Ephrata! Financial aid is available to qualifying families.

**January 31<sup>st</sup>**, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. This is a unique opportunity to tour Lancaster Catholic with one of our students, observe our faculty and students in classroom activities and enjoy performances from a variety of our student ensembles.

Go to [www.lchsyes.org/openhouse/](http://www.lchsyes.org/openhouse/) to register for this event!

If you can't make it to the Open House but would still like to see LCHS, join us for a day in the shoes of a current Lancaster Catholic Crusader during our group shadow day on February 7th.

Contact Kyla for more information at 717-509-0313 or email [khockley@lchsyes.org](mailto:khockley@lchsyes.org).



Religious Education Corner:

**Our Religious Education Class Schedule  
For The Next Three Weeks Is As Follows:**

**Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

***First Weather Make-Up Class If Needed Otherwise***

***Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup> –NO RE Classes***

**Kelly Lawrence**

**PIANO BAR NIGHT**

Lancaster Catholic's Fine & Performing Arts Department will be hosting a Piano Bar Night on Saturday, **January 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30** in Lancaster Catholic's Cafeteria. Snacks and drinks will be served. This is a 21 and older event. Admission by donation to the FPA Program. Please **RSVP by Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>** to Tony Brill at 717-509-0310 or email [tbrill@lchsyes.org](mailto:tbrill@lchsyes.org) with full name, number of attending and phone number. To reserve a table, you must have 8-10 people in your party. All others will be able to choose your seating when you arrive to the event.



**SAVE THE DATE**

Lancaster Catholic's Purple & Gold Gala will be held on Saturday, **April 6<sup>th</sup>**, from **6 pm – 11 pm** at the Lancaster Country Club. This year's Saint John Paul II Excellence Award honorees are Father Allan Wolfe and Marilyn Berger. For more information please contact Lancaster Catholic's Department of Advancement at 717-509-0313.

**LANCASTER CATHOLIC'S WINTER OPEN  
HOUSE**

If you are thinking about who you can become in our colors, join us at our Winter Open House on Thursday,