

My Dearest Parishioners,

“Lord every nation on earth will adore you.”
With this refrain from today’s responsorial psalm we have the theme for today’s glorious feast of The Epiphany of the Lord.

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord is the original feast of Jesus’ birth. Eastern Christians were celebrating the birth of Jesus on January 6th years before Christians in Rome began to celebrate His birth on December 25th. Since the Epiphany was already well established as a major feast by the time the Roman Church started celebrating the birth of Jesus on December 25th (the Roman Church could not ignore it) so they centered on the coming of the Magi as the theme of the Epiphany. This extended the Christmas celebration for a number of days, which is appropriate, because Christmas is too amazing and wonderful a feast and celebration to limit to only one day.

The word “**epiphany**” comes from a Greek word which means **revelation, manifestation, showing, appearing** or **coming to light**. The dictionary tells us that “**epiphany**” means “a sudden recognition of or insight into the meaning, reality or significance of something.” It can be the manifestation of a profound reality. The Jewish shepherds who lived in the area of Bethlehem had already had their epiphany when the angels announced Jesus’ birth to them. Today we celebrate and commemorate the **revelation** of the Christ-child to the non-Jewish world in the person of the Magi. Magi is a term that designated persons who were priests of a pagan cult and who were experts in astrology, interpretation of dreams and various other occult arts. Their primary job would be to act as advisors to the king and his court studying the stars for messages from the gods.

The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of the invisible God in visible, human nature for the salvation of the world. It rejoices in the truth that the Son of Mary **is** the Son of God. The feast celebrates the fact that Jesus **is** the Savior not only for the Jewish people but for everybody in every land and culture. That is the theological meaning. But what has captured the imagination of people for centuries is the coming of the Magi from the East

(the visitors whom we have dubbed the Wise Men) seeking and discovering the Infant Jesus. We don’t know much about them since Matthew is the only Gospel that speaks of them. Over the centuries Christians have added all sorts of details. For example Christians have made the Magi **three** in number after the number of the gifts they offer to the Christ-child. Christians gave the Magi names of: Gaspar, Balthazar and Melchior. Christians made one of the Magi young, one middle age and one elderly. Christians posited that the Magi came from different parts of the world.

The mystery of the Epiphany begins by manifesting something about ourselves. Like the astrologers in today’s Gospel, it is not enough for us merely to know that Jesus is alive and living in the world as a human being. That information alone does not satisfy us. The Feast of the Epiphany **manifests** our deepest God-given desire to enter into the presence of Jesus and to be in His midst. Our passive knowledge of the Incarnation comes to perfection in our active, personal experience of that marvelous miracle.

The three astrologers manifest the sanctified way to respond to the miracle of the Incarnation. It begins by putting the Christ-child first and making union with Him their chief priority. If the astrologers had been totally self-absorbed and preoccupied with their own affairs and ambitions they never would have observed “His star at its rising”. Instead their alertness and sensitivity moves them to leave behind their lives for a while and follow the star. It is as if the astrologers already realize how empty of meaning their old life becomes until they personally embrace the Incarnate Christ who reveals the very meaning of human existence to all women and men. Being in the presence of the Christ-child elicited something from within them. They were so over whelmed by their extraordinary experience that they prostrated themselves before the Christ-child; humbly adoring, paying homage, worshiping Him and presenting their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This sacred encounter with the Christ-child changes the astrologer’s lives forever. They leave the encounter transformed. Mystically enlightened by God they returned home by another route. That new route is known as **The Way-** Jesus. The Epiphany experience

gave the astrologer's lives a new direction, meaning and value. The Epiphany experience enabled them to see within themselves the beauty and the goodness of God.

The Magi's journey to find the Christ-child is symbolic of **our journey** of seeking and recognizing God within ourselves and others. It wasn't without difficulties that the Magi came to believe in Jesus. Their trip was long and tedious. It is also with some difficulties that many of us today struggle with our personal journey towards God. The Magi wondered about what the road they should take. King Herod thought that the Magi were ridiculous for following a star that leads them along a road. Many voices invite us to take other roads and some ridicule us for taking the road that leads us to Jesus. The Magi recognized Jesus in the rising of a star. We recognize Him in the **Breaking of the Bread**. The Magi presented their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the King. We present the gifts of our love and our lives to Him. The Magi returned to their own homes taking away a treasure that surpasses anything they brought themselves as they were filled with delight at having met the Infant King of the Jews. We return to our homes with that same treasure-the gift of knowing Jesus. The Magi were enriched by their intimate encounter with Jesus and they enriched others by sharing the truth of their experience with them. We are enriched and blessed by Jesus every day of our lives and we share this truth with all those we encounter.

The Magi found Jesus because God calls all people (of every race and nation) to discover and recognize Jesus as their Lord and do Him homage. God calls us too to discover and recognize Jesus. Our human life is a journey through time in which we seek signs of God in our midst. God sends out signals for us to pick up on and move further down the road that will take us back to Him. Sometimes we might get lost for a while but then (in a moment of grace) we see and hear a welcoming invitation from God that leads us back to Him. On our journey through life we're to search for a goal that gives meaning to life and try to acquire the qualities it takes to stay with that goal through thick and thin. Our goal has to have meaning, purpose, and commitment-all of which are inseparable. A life without meaning,

purpose and commitment in Shakespeare's words: "is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The meaning, purpose, and commitment in our lives **are** our call to be instruments of Jesus' **epiphany** in our world.

In our life-long search for the "**One**," in following our own "star" for meaning and purpose in our life's every day journey to God, may we embrace the wisdom of the Magi to recognize God's goodness in the midst of evil. May we have the humility to kneel on the stable floor in the presence of the "One" who is so much more powerful than our own wealth and our intelligence. And may we have the vision to go beyond our own safe territory and safety to encounter God in the poverty and simplicity of our world and in the humble love of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

As we journey through 2018 may the encounters of our hearts and spirits with the Christ-child, in Word and Sacrament, in our everyday journeys of both struggle and grace, be a constant **epiphany** of re-creating and transforming our hearts, spirits and lives as we re-discover the love of Emmanuel- **God in our midst**. I hope and pray that we all have a blessed and joyous 2018.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

FLU SEASON

For health reasons, during the months of January, February and March (flu season) we will refrain from receiving Jesus' Precious Blood at Holy Communion. Thanks, Fr. John

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.



SECOND COLLECTION

The annual collection for Aid to the Catholic Church in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa will be taken up in parishes in the Diocese of Harrisburg on **January 14th**. This combined collection supports the Catholic Church in several different parts of the world, funding catechesis, youth ministry and seminarian education.

HOLY HOUR FOR LIFE

We will have a Holy Hour for Life on Friday, January 19th from 11AM till Noon time. Please come out and spend some time with Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament praying for the Sanctity of Life.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS
After Mass today families that contributed to the Christmas flowers may take one Poinsettia per family.

LECTORS WORKSHOP

All Parish Lectors (Proclaimers of the Word) are asked to attend a workshop and Commissioning Service on **Monday, January 8th** in the Church **at 7 PM.** Fr. John

CHURCH SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
12-24-17	\$18,700.10	\$14,950.00	\$3,750.10
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
12-24-17	\$ 355,496.00	\$388,700.00	(\$33,203.29)

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, January 8, The Baptism of the Lord

7:00 † Dick Wager
9:00 † Anthony Colatta

Tuesday, January 9

7:00 † Faye Lipford
9:00 † Norman Domec

Wednesday, January 10

7:00 † Louis Chabot Sr.
9:00 † Joseph Dreher

Thursday, January 11

7:00 † Bill Hecker
9:00 † Michael Deodene

Friday, January 12

7:00 † Alexander Rent
9:00 † Peter W. Allwardt

Saturday, January, 13 St. Hilary, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

9:00 † Lorraine Toth
5:00 Aleyda Butrago

Sunday, January 14

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 † Joseph McGowan
11:00 † Robert & Katie Burkholder

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.

January 7: Maria Mannino, Margaret Gardner, Jane Muldowney, Brenda Crawford, Stephen Stanavage, Jennifer Ranker, Melissa Kurtz, Janet Tomko, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis Richard Warner, Jim Lehmier, Tonya Stoner, Kevin Kaiser.

December 17: Julius Uribe, Jim Huber, Karen & Carol Wank

December 24: James Conway
January 7: Jody Shimp

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



Like the Magi and returning exiles, we have been given great and precious promises not only about a heavenly kingdom, but also about God's rule breaking into our world here

and now. But how will that happen? Much of it depends on God's timing, but a lot depends on us. Every day, God invites us to roll up our sleeves and get to work building his kingdom. Every day, he reassures us that even our smallest acts of love contain within themselves the splendor and glory of heaven.

Today's feast tells us that the glory of God can be present in the most hidden and unlikely people and situations. It tells us that God is there in the everyday rhythms of our lives. May he give us eyes of faith to see him and trusting hearts to build the kingdom with him. The results will be spectacular!

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 Brenda Crawford.

RADIATE YOUTH GROUP

Our next youth group meeting will be Sunday January 14th at our new time 6-8 pm in the Bernadine Center. We are having a game night and the topic for the evening is New Year Resolutions. God bless! In His Service, Denise Ives

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



We are constantly reevaluating our needs at the OMPH Community Food Bank run by our parish Benevolent Society. We are currently in need of Peanut butter, jelly, boxed dinners, egg noodles, & tuna. Please place items in the food bank crate in the narthex of the church. We are amazed and thankful by the support of our parishioners.

HORSE RACING, FUN AND FOOD



Join the Knights of Columbus for their K of C Derby, Saturday, **January 27th**. 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 808-1115 or email at hooverben4@gmail.com.

LANCASTER CATHOLIC NEWS
LANCASTER CATHOLIC ACTIVITIES FAIR
Lancaster Catholic will be hosting an Activities Fair on **Saturday, January 27th from 1-3 PM**. All aspects of Lancaster Catholic's culture will be highlighted, from the Fine and Performing Arts department to the vast options of clubs including Mini-Thon and Respect Life to Athletics and Campus Ministry.

ONE LUCKY FAMILY

One lucky family that is looking to join the Lancaster Catholic community for the 2018-2019 school year, by attending the Activities Fair, will be awarded one year's paid tuition upon completion of their application. For more information about the day or the admissions process, please contact Kyla Hockey at khockley@lchsyes.org.



Religious Education Corner:

**Our RE Class Schedule For The
Next Four Weeks Is As Follows:**

Happy New Year 2018!

Sunday, December 31st – NO RE Classes

Sunday, January 7th – RE Classes Resume

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

Sunday, January 14th – NO RE Classes

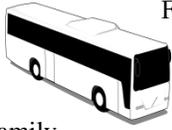
Sunday, January 21st – RE Classes Resume

Kelly Lawrence

WINTER/SPRING ADULT FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Diocesan Institute schedule of Winter/Spring adult education offerings is now available. Visit www.hbgdiocese.org/institute to access the schedule and registration information. Courses and sessions are available via live webinar, allowing you to participate remotely, and recordings of sessions enable you to access formation at your convenience. Contact Ryan Bolster at rbolster@hbgdiocese.org or (717) 657-4804, ext. 225 for information.

45th MARCH FOR LIFE- JANUARY 19



family

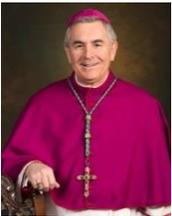
and plenty of free bus seats available. To reserve a **seat call Rosie Gross at 717-397-6966**

Four buses will leave from St. Leo's parish in Lancaster at **8 AM and returning at 9 PM**. Suggested bus fare is \$10 a person, and \$25 per of 3 or more, with reduced fares

AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE
Join us for a Mass celebrating African & African American Catholic Faith and Culture and to remember Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his fight for civil rights in our country. Holy Mass will take place at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, 558 West Walnut Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 on January 14, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. All are always welcomed! Refreshments and fellowship to follow. For more information, please contact Gwen Summers at (717) 954-4620, or Jaelyn Curran at (717) 657-4808 ext. 313 or jcurran@hbgdiocese.org

ANNUAL SANCTITY OF LIFE MASS

January 22, 2018



The Lancaster Region of the Order of Malta extends an invitation for you participation in this special Liturgy. A free will offering will benefit



“A Women’s Concern.”

Host Bishop & Concelebrant is Most Rev. Ronald Gainer, Diocese of Harrisburg, and the Celebrant and Homilist will be the Most Rev. William E. Lori, S.T.D. Archdiocese of Baltimore.

St. Joseph’s Church on Cabbage Hill in Lancaster will be our location again this year with **Mass starting at 7 PM**. We will be providing offsite parking with shuttle bus service to and from St. Joseph’s for you convenience. **Contact Gerry Ganse 717-577-2735 for shuttle information.**

OMPH SCHOOL 2018-19 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 2018-2019 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 1st, 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 available for all students in Preschool through 8th grade. Interested parish families are encouraged to register by February 1st; registration will then open to non-parishioners.

Please join us on Sunday, January 28th as we celebrate the gift of Catholic education in our parish at the 9 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 or call the school office at 738-2414 for further information. Find us on Facebook at OMPH-Ephrata! Financial aid is available to qualifying families.



ALL ARE WELCOME!

MARCH FOR LIFE LANCASTER

The **Lancaster County Annual March for Life** will be held on **Friday, January 19** at St. John Neumann Church, 601 E. Delp Road in Lancaster. The day will start at **9 AM and end at 3:30 PM**, and will consist of a **Prayer Service, music, speakers and videos**. There will be coffee and pastry at 9 AM, and lunch will be served. A free will offering will be taken to cover expenses and to support the ministry of OFF THE STREET.

Call or email Tom Ramsbottom

717-468-3822 - tramsbottom354@comcast.net