

My Dear Parishioners,

Sometimes when people point out something that is wrong with us we can see what they are saying, recognize it as true, understand it, but proceed to do nothing about it. Like the father who told his teenage daughter, “We must have a little chat” and she responded by pointing out that the **only** time they ever had a “little chat” was when he wanted to lecture her on something. “And besides,” she said, “why is it that you **always** come off looking so good?” The father recognized and understood what she said was true but doubted his ability to change.

We know from experience that **insight** does not necessarily lead us to change. Recognizing the truth does not compel us to alter our perspective or ways. Particularly when our self-esteem is injured, the truth can have the effect of paralyzing us rather than energizing us to action. Sometimes the prospect of what the change would involve disheartens us. We feel it is too much; we are too long in the tooth; we are too set in our ways. Or perhaps we are not **ready** yet. Most of us can recognize ourselves in St. Augustine’s honest reflection: “You showed me that what I said was true and I was convinced by the truth. But my only answer was those dreary words: ‘Soon, soon; presently, presently’ or ‘Leave me alone for a little while.’ But my ‘Presently’ came to no present, and my ‘little while’ lasted a long time.”

In today’s readings we hear a number of voices encouraging people to change, to have a vision of hope and optimism, and to imagine a good future that God has in store for them. None of these voices assault people with the bare truth, which could serve only to deepen their helplessness. At the heart of all our readings is the voice of hope and optimism which encourages people to change their attitudes and ways and grow because good things will come of it. People are invited to imagine the best there is in God and in themselves and give that best the opportunity to take charge of their lives. Today’s readings also challenge us to do the same.

Our first reading is taken from the Book of Baruch, which was written by an anonymous author around 200 B.C., probably at Alexandria for the Jews living there who had a problem of keeping their faith. The Temple in Jerusalem was far away, they were living in a culture which was completely opposed to the heritage of Judaism, and some were finding local prosperity very attractive, to the detriment of their faith. Significantly telling the Jews to “look to the east,” the author personifies Jerusalem as a grieving mother. Her sorrow is for her children carried off, exiled and scattered both east and west. Since this meant the loss of any future, Jerusalem faced extinction. This is why she is clothed in the traditional garments of mourning. The author then asks and directs the people to change their wardrobe (“take off your robe of mourning and misery!”) –throw away the dress of sorrow and distress and wrap the cloak of God’s integrity around them. Things are going to look up; they should be dressed appropriately and have courage in the future. Transformed by the glory of God, they are told to

stand on the heights and witness a reversal of fortune: the captives will return rejoicing; led away on foot, they will be carried back on royal thrones. The splendor that God bestows upon Jerusalem will be revealed to all the earth.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians (known as “the Epistle of Joy”) was written while he was suffering in a prison in Ephesus around the year 56 A. D. In today’s section of his letter, Paul strikes a note of hope and optimism as he expresses his feelings for the Philippian people. Paul’s affection for the Philippians flows from his appreciation of their faithfulness to the righteousness that God is accomplishing in them. Although Paul brought the Good News of the Gospel to the Philippians, he acknowledges that it was really God who made it take root in their hearts and it is God who will oversee its maturation until it is brought to completion at the day of the Parousia (Christ’s Second Coming). Paul then prays that the Philippian’s mutual love will increase and that they will be pure and blameless for the coming day of Christ.

St. Luke begins his Gospel narrative of Jesus’ public ministry with John the Baptist, who was straightening out the crooked paths of human hearts and leveling the valley’s and hills of people’s selfishness to prepare them for Jesus. John the Baptist was also trying to straighten out the calf-paths of the human mind-those paths into which human minds, like some modern roads, continue to follow primitive trails made by calves for their own reasons, but which reasons are no longer valid for people. John’s personality, conviction, enthusiasm and insight caused people to flock to him and listen and respond to his message.

In today’s section of his Gospel, Luke provides a roll-call of who held political and religious power at the time of Jesus and John. Among the secular figures, all of the individuals mentioned were corrupt, cruel, lecherous, barbaric, and depraved, and provide a great contrast for the righteousness of John’s message. The mention of the religious leadership (Annas and Caiaphas) links the story of salvation history to the events of world history. This is Luke’s way of showing that secular history and salvation history are intertwined. God’s saving word took place at a specific time in human history.

From this background of intrigue and political and religious power emerged the solitary figure of John the Baptist, with a message of optimism and hope. John’s ministry begins in the wilderness, which is a symbol of purification and repentance. His message consists of proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Repentance signifies not regret for the past or the performance of “penance” but rather a new outlook on life in keeping with the will of God. This was to be a heightening of the Jews’ response to deliverance from captivity: an attitude of gladness, joy, laughter, song, and grateful recognition of the God responsible for their deliverance. To perform his mission, John travels around the entire region of the Jordan announcing to anyone within earshot the great day to

come when “all mankind shall see the salvation of God.” What John announces and promises will later be fulfilled in and through the life and ministry of Jesus.

Our Advent readings today all share a marvelous insight: people begin to change when they are **encouraged** to see the best in themselves, not when they are asked to dwell with the worst in themselves. Simply to tell people what is wrong with them and leave it at that can be to leave them a wreck. People rarely change when they are left to themselves, enclosed in their own weakness, staring at their own mistakes. That’s a lonely project precisely because there is no one to care whether change takes place or not.

All of us need each other’s help and **encouragement** to leave behind familiar attitudes and ways which have become destructive. We need help and **encouragement** in imagining ourselves differently and imaging the good effect that will have on others. We have to take time to reflect what kind of person God wants us to be, what His plan is for us. We need faith in the future, to see the power of God working in the change. If our Community is to be constantly converted to Jesus we all have to breathe in **encouragement** and breathe it out. Perhaps this Advent we all could exercise that **encouragement** in a simple, practical way. That will be a change for the better. In the words of Cardinal Newman: “To be human is to change. To be perfect is to have changed often.” God bless us all!

Love & Prayers,
Fr. John



If anyone would like to send Fr. Small a Christmas card here is his address:

Rev. James Small, CSSR
St. John Neumann Residence
Stella Maris
2300 Dulaney Valley Road
Timonium, MD 21093-2739



Our annual **Parish Advent Penance Service** will be held on **Wednesday, December 19 at 7 PM**. There will be at least 5 priests available to celebrate the Sacrament with you. Please take the time to come out and prepare yourself for the Coming of the Christ-child at Christmas. There will be no confessions on Christmas Eve.



CHRIST IS BORN TO US
COME...LET US ADORE

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Christmas Eve, December 24: Masses are 5PM, 8PM and 11 PM, with carols starting at 10:15 PM.

Christmas Day, December 25: Masses are 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM.



NEW YEAR'S MASSES

New Year’s – Feast of Mary, Mother of God

New Years Eve, December 31, Mass 5 PM

New Years Day: January 1 Masses are 9:00, 10:30 AM



Dear OMPH Parishioners and Community,

It is with our deepest appreciation my children and I wish to send everyone our personal thank you for the meals, cards, gifts, and the much overwhelming support we have received each and every day. We humbly and gratefully thank everyone in the church and community who have helped make our lives a little better and the pain a little less. Even though Nancy is not physically here with us any longer, she does live on in spirit in all of our cherished memories and will always be close to our hearts. We would like to wish everyone in the parish and community a very happy and blessed upcoming holiday Christmas Season and a happy and safe joyous New Year.

May God bless all of your families and please accept our blessings and our prayers. Thank you again for all your generosity of time and donations on my children’s and my behalf.

Very Sincerely,
The Brezina Family

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 10

7:00 † Vera Gunselman
9:00 † Teresa Pilley

Tuesday, 4 December, St. John Damascene, Priest & Doctor of the Church

7:00 † Bernie Mack
9:00 † Lou Leone

Wednesday, December 5

7:00 Mass of Prayer & Penance
9:00 † John Gunselman

Thursday, December 6, St. Nicholas, Bishop

7:00 † Kathy Kilkuskie
9:00 † Marie Chase

Friday, December 7, St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

7:00 † Martha Moran
9:00 † Sue Eisenbise

Saturday, December 8 The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mother

9:00 † Lou Liebl
5:00 † Special Intention

Sunday, December 9, 2nd Sunday of Advent

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 Conchita Liwag
11:00 † Mary Brooks



Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
12-2-18	\$12,914.15	\$14,300.00	(\$1,385.85)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
12-2-18	\$289,254.82	\$328,9.00	(\$39,645.18)

KIDS HELPING KIDS

Buy a \$15 cookie tray and feed 375 impoverished children.



OMPH Parish will be participating in **The Cookie Sale on December 9, 2018.** We will join with other parishes in our Diocese to feed thousands of children in Haiti and

try and break the cycle of poverty that plagues that small country.

100% of the proceeds from the sale of these cookies will be used to purchase meals to be distributed to children in Haitian schools during the school day in 2019. Last year The Cookie Sale provided over 3.6 million meals to impoverished children.

Please visit thecookiesale.com to learn more about this wonderful local charity that began in Lancaster at St. Joseph's Church twenty one years ago. If you would like more information or would like to help with the sale in any way, please contact Marybeth Tearpock 717- 940-1633.

ADDORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

John's baptism was for one purpose: for our pardon. But the Holy Spirit has many purposes. He reveals God's love to us. He helps us understand Scripture. He teaches us how to live as brothers and sisters. He holds the Church together and moves us to work for the kingdom of God. And so much more.



When we are baptized into Christ our sins are washed away, and we receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus doesn't want us to miss out on anything! It's all wrapped up in one gift, which we call the "seed of faith." If we want to see these blessings unfold in our lives, we need to tend to and nurture this seed. When we feel God's love. We become more loving. We want to reach out to those who are hurting. We find the strength to say no to temptation. In short, we become a new creation.

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 Alice & Courtney Morrison.

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.

Bishop Ronald Gainer, Phoenix Rann, Margaret Gardner, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Carlos Luciano Sr., Margot Arden, Mary Kay Hensel, Gerald Gigliotti, Fr. Paul Bryan, CSSR, Gloria Kreider, Francis Gatti, Walter Benning., Antonia Scribani, Marleen Battisti, Jean Mash, John Mento, Joseph John Lewis & Joe Ferrara.

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.





Religious Education Corner:

Our Religious Education Class Schedule For The Remainder Of 2018 And Beyond Is As Follows:

**Sunday, December 9th – RE Classes In Session
Sunday, December 16th – RE Classes In Session
Merry Christmas!**

**Sunday, December 23rd – NO RE Classes
Happy New Year 2018!**

**Sunday, December 30th – NO RE Classes
Sunday, January 6th – RE Classes Resume**

Kelly Lawrence

HORSE RACING, FUN AND FOOD

Join the Knights of Columbus for their K of C Derby, Saturday,



January 26th. 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.

OMPH COMMUNITY MEALS FOR 2019

As we are about to 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 2018 meals. You all did an outstanding 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 new Community Meals for 2019. They are as follows:

- 1. February 21, 2019** at *First United Methodist Church*, Ephrata. 68 N. Church Street, Ephrata.
- 2. October 10, 2019** at *Bethany United Church of Christ* 140 East Main Street, Ephrata, PA.

3. **December 5, 2019** at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 167 East Main Street in Ephrata.

It has been a blessing and a privilege to work with such a great group of folks. We are look forward to working with you again in 2019. Thank you for serving our God, our church and our community. Until we see each other again; May God bless you and grant you peace.

PRISON CHRISTIAN GROWTH GROUP

This organization that brings the message of Christ to inmates in prisons throughout Pennsylvania will be holding a Symposium on **Saturday, December 15, beginning at 8:30 AM** at the Diocesan Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg PA. Internationally known motivational speaker, John Foppe will speak as well as our Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. Learn how you can be energized in your faith and hear how you can serve Jesus Christ by serving others. The registration fee of \$25 includes coffee, donuts and lunch. See the flyer in the narthex for details.

ONLINE GIVING - NEW WAYS TO GIVE

TEXT-TO-GIVE!!!

We are keeping up with technology! With 97% of smartphone users texting at least once a day, our parish has decided to add the option to give via text. You can text an amount to **717-401-4159**, and your transaction will be processed through the Online Giving account associated with the phone number. If you do not have an account set up, you will receive a text back with a link to set up an account.

Step 1 – Text the amount you would like to give to our number – **717-401-4159**

Step 2 – Hit “send”!

Instructions on how to give to second collections via text-to-give will be in the bulletin prior to each collection.

Online Giving App

Manage your online giving account with the new app! Download the online giving app today at OLGApp.com.

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>
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Retirement for Religious	12/9/2018	retirement
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Christmas		
Flowers	12/16/2018	flowers
Christmas	12/25/2018	christmas
Solemnity of Mary	1/1/2019	solemnity

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

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



In celebration of Thanksgiving and Christmas, the parish's Benevolent Society would like to say thank you for the GIFT of supporting our food bank.

The crate in the narthex is ALWAYS full each and every Sunday with your nonperishable donations.

When we ask for a specific item in the bulletin, we KNOW that shelf will be filled after the next week's masses!! Our parishioners always come through with physical donations as well as donations to the poor box in the back of the church. Every single coin that is placed in the poor box goes to help people in our community!

We have a few weekly donors who have made the food bank a priority for many years and we are so very grateful! This past year we had many other donors or organizations who donated or held food drives for us: 4 Seasons Produce, Dairy Queen, Brinks, The Knights of Columbus and the Ladies Auxiliary, OMPH Vacation Bible School, Peters Porches, Dot to Dot ministries, Boy Scout Troops 73, 115, & 363, Venture Crew 363, Al's Service Center, Sauder's Eggs, and the OMPH School and Religious Education students. Matthew 25 also raised funds for us.

Several parish families who lost loved ones requested donations to the Benevolent Society; we are humbled by this loving gesture. We are also thankful for the local grocery stores that do regular weekly donations: Weisers, Redners, Weis, and Aldi.

Last and CERTAINLY not least: this year our list of volunteers has AGAIN increased to over 95 regular volunteers! We truly appreciate the efforts of each and every one. There are so many other donors to individually mention but please know that we are humbled by your continued generosity!

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.

RADIATE YOUTH GROUP



News from Radiate Youth Group: Fan the Fire Youth Rally was an amazing experience where we were reminded of the importance of family and of family outside of the family. We were brought closer to Jesus through Eucharistic Adoration and confession. God spoke to our young people in many ways on this day. Thank you for remembering us in prayer!

Radiate Youth Group has taken over the care of the OMPH monument garden at Cedar Hill Cemetery. Through serving in this way, we hope to remember our lost loved ones fondly and show our respect for them and their families.

Next Radiate Youth Group meeting is **today** from 3:30-5:30 in the Bernadine Center. See narthex board for more details. In His Service, Denise Ives