

My Dear Parishioners,

Hansen's disease (also known as leprosy) has pretty much been eradicated from our contemporary society. However in ancient times leprosy was considered one of the most dreaded of all diseases. In the Old Testament the Jewish people used the word "leprosy" which meant literally a "striking down" or a "laying low" for any disease of the skin which manifested itself through sores, skin blotches or scabs. The numerous references in the Jewish Scriptures to what they considered to be forms of leprosy (as in today's passage from the Book of Leviticus) attest to the Jew's fear of the disease, particularly the danger of contagion. Their fear is understandable in view of the fact that they had no scientific knowledge of the disease and there were no antibodies, medicines or remedies. The only safeguard known to their primitive hygiene was to demand the stricken person's isolation. Lepers were considered "**unclean outcasts**" and were referred to as "**members of the living dead.**"

Leprosy was inherently fatal, terribly disfiguring, and totally debilitating. It robbed people of life, limb, and liberty. It ruined people's lives irreparably and consigned them to a living death in all the important aspects of life. Physically, there was no known cure for leprosy so all the leper had to look forward to was pain, disfigurement and death. Spiritually, with sickness and disabilities viewed as punishment for sins, lepers were made to feel like people who were cursed by God. They were alienated from the worshipping community as they were not permitted to enter the synagogue for prayer and religious services. Psychologically, they could expect no sympathy or compassion. Since illness was considered a direct result of sin, people judged lepers somehow responsible for their own afflictions. Lepers had to face the incredible guilt trip and lingering doubt of having caused their own suffering. Socially, with leprosy considered

contagious and no cure available, people shunned lepers and forced them to live as **outcasts** on the outskirts of civilization. Lepers were forced to live outside the city walls. Those with leprosy were deemed "**unclean**" and were banished from the community and they were forbidden to be near "healthy" relatives and friends. However when the conditions that made a person "unclean" no longer held, it was necessary for the person to go to the priest and undergo a rite of purification before being readmitted into the community.

Life as a leper was deplorable and lepers yearned to be free. To be a leper was to be cut off from others in all ways. One was cast out of the community, isolated, doomed to live in deserted places, no longer part of the human family, unable to participate in social events, and considered unfit to worship God. One's life was summed up in the words of the Law of Moses that we heard in today's first reading from the Book of Leviticus: "The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!' As long as the sore is on him he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp."

In light of the Mosaic Law and the common custom of the day the fact that the leper in today's Gospel dared to approach Jesus at all was a sign of the man's great desperation and his even **greater faith**. The leper approached Jesus begging and seeking a cure. He was way out of line. He had no business leaving his place of exile to go where others gathered because he was considered to be an "ostracized degenerate." Rather than asking for help from Jesus he should have been crying out: "Unclean, unclean, stay away from me" so that Jesus and others would avoid coming near him. However, Jesus was moved with **compassion** and **pity** and does something extraordinary for him. Jesus invokes an authority higher than that of Mosaic Law.

Instead of being repulsed by this poor disfigured person Jesus not only “welcomes” the leper but he actually reaches out and touches him. Thereby acknowledging and accepting him as a fellow human being. Yet according to the Mosaic Law for Jesus to touch him meant that in the eyes of the Law Jesus also became “**unclean**” and unfit to associate and worship with others. Even so Jesus implicitly rejected such legislation and by His actions He declared that charity is more important than any law. By touching and curing the leper Jesus manifested His divinity with a simple unequivocal command: “I do will it. Be made clean.” It is easy to hear in His response that compassion and pity took precedence over the Law. It is also easy to see that in curing the leper Jesus has the power to forgive sins since the disease was commonly associated in people’s minds with sin. Just as Jesus eliminated the leprosy and restored the man to physical health and returned him to community, so Jesus by His divine power can expunge our sins, reinstate our spiritual wholeness, and reunite us once again to God’s love.

In His day Jesus wanted to change people’s attitude towards lepers. Today Jesus wants to change our attitude towards the so call “**outcasts**” of our society. Our attitudes and perceptions often reduce others to “lepers”-those we fear, those who do not “fit” our image of class and sophistication, those whose politics or religion or ethnicity or orientation or identity seem to threaten our own. The “lepers” of today are people who for one reason or another are defined by their condition and are not treated as our brothers and sisters: the Unborn, the Homeless, the Mentally Challenged, Gay and Lesbian persons, Immigrants and Refugees, those incarcerated in prison and those who are HIV positive and/or living with AIDS. Often we catch ourselves furtively looking at them with a shaming mixture of sympathy and repulsion, pity and horror, relief and superiority. We make

assumptions and judgments about them as we boldly mark the limits of what we take to be acceptably human. At times we exile these “lepers” to the margins of society, outside our gates. We dismiss them with the simple labels and stereotypes. We reject them as too “**unclean**” to be part of our lives and our world. Those of us who hold these attitudes may need to be reminded that one of the great turning points in the conversion of St. Francis of Assisi to a life totally dedicated to God was his embracing of a leper. Later, reflecting upon that “graced moment” in his life, St. Francis said: “What before seemed bitter was changed into sweetness of soul and body.”

Perhaps we all need to remind ourselves that all of us are at times (in one way or another) are inwardly “leprous” (self-righteous, hateful, jealous, envious, judgmental and discriminatory). We must decide what particular “leprosy” is calling to be healed here and now in our personal lives and in the life of our community. The Christ who heals lepers comes to heal us of our debilitating sense of self that blinds us to the sacredness and dignity of those we demean as “lepers.” Christ comes to heal us of our own “leprosy” so that we are able to realize again that God extends His compassion, mercy, love, and grace even to the likes of us. Before God no one is an “**outcaste**,” no one is beyond the reach of God’s mercy, love and compassion. All of us are daughters and sons of God. All of us are made in the sacred image of the God of love, justice, peace, compassion and reconciliation.

Like Jesus and St. Francis of Assisi we also have the power to extend ourselves to the “**outcasts**” of our family, school, work-place and community. We have the power (if we will humble ourselves) to reach out and touch others, making their lives better. How? First we must have empathy and love for them. We must recognize the Jesus that is present within them. Secondly, we must **not** fear, or we must **let go** of

fear that we will be “infected” by them. We all **need** to love and be loved so let us stretch out our hands and hearts to one another especially the most abandoned. Have a blessed week.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

P.S Today we celebrate World Day of the Sick. Let us take some time to pray for our own beloved sick in our families and in our parish. Let us also pray for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world who suffer from chronic illnesses and diseases.

P.S.S. Today we also celebrate World Day of Marriage. Let us pray for God’s blessings upon all married couples and pray for those couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of marriage.

DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The Redemptorists have published a Daily Lenten Devotion Book for 2018 in English and Spanish. Copies of this book are available in the Church Narthex. Suggested donation for a copy of this book is **two** dollars. Thank you. 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 celebrate a 9 o’clock Mass but please use your judgment whether or not to attempt to attend.



CONGRATULATIONS

We want to congratulate two of our parishioners, Johann Imperial and Sheridan Schreyer, students at Lancaster Catholic High School, who recently received Scholastic Writing Awards.

ASH WEDNESDAY-FEBRUARY 14th



MASS SCHEDULE

Mass will be celebrated at 7AM, 9AM, and 7 PM. Ashes will be distributed after the homily at these masses.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS



On Fridays during the Lenten Season, we will pray the Stations of the Cross at 2PM (Children’s Version) and 7 PM (Traditional Version). Come join us as we walk with

Jesus along the road to Calvary.

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. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics; those divorced who wish to marry Catholics, those parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and others who may have a vested interest because of family or friends.

March 12 - St. Joseph’s Parish in York at 7 PM

March 19 –Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg, 7 PM

No prior registration is required. For further information, please call 717-657-4804 ext. 304, or email: tribunal@hbgdiocese.org

FLU SEASON

During this flu season I suggest that at the Kiss of Peace during Mass we refrain from shaking hands with those around us in order to prevent the spreading of germs. Instead let us share words of peace with one another.

Thanks, Fr. John

A PILGRIMAGE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Join Pope Francis and young adult Catholics from around the world for an experience of the Universal Church. Post high school young adults (ages 18-35) will gather **January 21-28, 2019** for World Youth Day 2019 in Panama. This promises to be a week of engaging prayer, vibrant liturgy, powerful catechesis provided by Cardinals and Bishops, concerts by Catholic artists, and an unforgettable vigil and Mass with the Holy Father. For information visit www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch or contact Rob Williams at 717-657-4804.floor) - 201 N. Queen St., Lancaster, PA

STATUS FOR BEING A SPONSOR

We receive many requests from parishioners to be a sponsor for the Sacraments of Baptism and Conformation. Part of that request is to be able to verify that a person is practicing their faith and is an “active member of OMPH Parish.”

“An active member” of this parish is one who:

- Is properly registered for 6 months.
- Faithfully attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- If married, must be validly married, in the Catholic Church.
- If single, must be 16 years of age and have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Participates in parish activities when possible.
- Regularly contributes through the Sunday offertory collection by use of the parish envelope system or direct withdrawal. (Your envelope use confirms attendance at Mass)
- While assessments of an inquirer’s status will be made individually, the above main Diocesan factors that will be considered in making that determination.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Who Am I to Judge? Responding to Relativism With Logic and Love.

What: An 8-week Young Adult Study
30-minute video/30-minute Discussion/No Homework

Where: St Leo the Great Lancaster – Weber Center

When: Tuesday Nights at 7:30 starting February 20th

Sign Up/Questions: Liz Kreckel
(eakreckel@gmail.com)

A LENT TO REMEMBER

A Lenten Encounter with Mercy

Join us for a 4-week video-based study based on **formed.org** featuring the Augustine Institute original productions Symbolon and Forgiven. The Transforming Power of Confession. A Lent to Remember is a beautiful presentation of the transforming power of mercy in the Sacrament of Confession. No matter what you have done, no matter how long you have been away, Jesus is waiting for you with open arms this Lent!

- Week One: 2-12-18 to 1-18-18
Forgiven: Where Are You?
- Week Two: 2-19-18 to 2-25-18
Forgiven: An Encounter with Mercy

- Week Three: 2-26-18 to 3-4-18
Forgiven: Embraced in Mercy: The Rite Explained
- Week Four: 3-5-18 to 3-11-18
Symbolon: The Paschal Mystery
- Bonus Episode: For Children
For Children: How to Make a Good Confession
NOT ON FORMED YET?
EASY AND FREE TO REGISTER!

1. Go to www.formed.org Parish Code **4BGYH2** and click “register”
2. Enter your name, email address, and desired password
3. Use the Symbolon and Forgiven Leader Guides for discussion



MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, February 12

7:00 ✠ Dorothy Killen

9:00 ✠ James Thomas Taulbe

Tuesday, February 13

7:00 ✠ Patricia D’Azzo

9:00 ✠ Andrew Mays

Wednesday, February 14, ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00 ✠ Luther Shimp

9:00 ✠ Dorothy Killen

7:00 ✠ Stephanie Mash

Thursday, February 15

7:00 ✠ Dorothy Killen

9:00 ✠ Carl Billig

Friday, February 16

7:00 ✠ John Reedy

9:00 ✠ James Clarcken

Saturday, February 17

9:00 ✠ Maryann Kase

5:00 ✠ John & Helen Phillips

Sunday, February 18, 1st Sunday of Lent

7:30 For the Parishioners

9:00 ✠ Lou Leone

11:00 ✠ Theresa Rozario



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.

February 11: Joe Ferrara

February 4: Maria Mannino, Margaret Gardner, Jane Muldowney, Brenda Crawford, Stephen Stanavage, Jennifer Ranker, Janet Tomko, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Jim Lehmier, Tonya Stoner, Kevin Kaiser, Jody Shimp.

14 January: Declan Morgan, Anna Leshner

CHURCH SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
2-4-18	\$ 14,102.97	\$14,950.00	(\$847.03)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
2-4-18	\$433,134.81	\$478,400 .00	(\$45,265.19)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Ash Wednesday is this week. *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do.* Remember, the kingdom of God isn't a matter of eating and drinking. Neither is it a matter of not eating and drinking. So don't get hung up on the details of your resolution. Focus on your love for Jesus. Running errands. Doing laundry. Caring for a spouse. Even fasting. These can all become opportunities to let your love for God work itself outward into every nook and cranny of your life.

FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are obligatory days of universal fast and abstinence. Fasting is obligatory for all who have completed their 18th year, and have not yet reached their 60th year. Fasting allows a person to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may be taken, not to equal one full meal. Abstinence (from meat) is obligatory for all who have reached their 14th year.

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 John & Helen Phillips.

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.

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS AND COORDINATOR NEEDED



The OMPH Church Nursery is in need of adult volunteers during the 9AM Mass on Sundays. Volunteers are needed for one mass a month or as little as four times a year.

Diocesan Youth Protection Clearances area required.

The Nursery is also looking for a new coordinator, who would schedule volunteers and help maintain the nursery. If you are interested in volunteering or coordinating please call Laura Kauffman at (717) 575-8221 or email omphnursery@yahoo.com to get more information.



YEARLINGS NEWS

We will meet for lunch on **Tuesday, February 13th** at **11:30.** Join us at Gus's Restaurant on Rothsville Road. Please call Gloria at 717-728-9098.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER:



**Valentine's Basket/Bake Sale After All Masses This
Weekend Saturday, February 10th
And Sunday, February 11th.**

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

Sunday, February 11th – RE Classes In Session

Second Weather Make-Up

**Sunday, February 18th – RE Classes Now In Session
At Their Normal Time Of 5:00PM – 6:15 PM Due To
Classes Being Cancelled On Sunday, February 4th.**

RADIATE YOUTH GROUP

Radiate Youth Group will be meeting on **Sunday, February 11th, at 5:30 pm** in the church for a short prayer service followed by a service project. Grades 7-12 are welcome to join us. Bring a friend! It is encouraged for all youth who are registered for Steubenville conference this summer, to attend this meeting. We will be doing some planning on the group t-shirt designs for the trip. Hope to see you all there. Any parishioners who care to join us for the prayer service are also welcome. God bless you all! In His Service, Denise Ives

SPAGHETTI DINNER

The Knights of Columbus will be holding its annual Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, **February 24th, from 3:00 to 7:00 PM**. Cost for the dinner is \$9 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and under. Children 3 and under are free. All tickets will be available at the door. Contact Matt Aufer at 717-572-1160 with any questions.



GIRLS SPRING SOFTBALL

Girls Crusaders Spring Softball ages 7-12 (age as of 1/1/2018) Registration and more information online at <https://stleosathletics.com/>. St. Leo's Athletic Association invites your daughter to play the great game of softball with the 2018 season of Crusaders Girls' Fast-Pitch. Our program is open to any girl attending a Catholic school or parish within Lancaster County. The program is for all levels of skill, with an emphasis on confidence and instruction. Girls new to the sport are welcome at any level: 8U, 10U, 12U. Your daughter's age on January 1 determines her eligibility. **Registrations deadline is this Friday February, 16.** For program information call/text Jude Krady 717-314-5965 or email jdkrady@msn.com.

GRACE: THE BIG QUESTION

What is grace? How do we receive it? Who can receive it? Are there different types of grace? Are there mistaken or erroneous teachings about grace? How does contemporary research help us understand the idea of grace?

All of these questions will be answered within a 33 minute film on **Sunday, February 18** after the 7:30 Mass and after the 9:00 Mass in the Bernardine Center at 10:15. If you go to 11:00 Mass, you can still attend the 10:15 showing. Please plan to attend!

ALPHA



Come explore the Alpha Course, a life-changing experience! an opportunity to cultivate your relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit and to find a way to live a Spirit-filled life. A fun 10-week program with lite dinner, music, fellowship and MORE! Begins Monday, **February 12th At St. James Catholic Church, 505 Woodcrest Ave., Lititz, PA. Contact: Georgie Weese at 717-380-9407. Free babysitting included!**

LOST AND FOUND

Two prayer books have been found in the church. If you are looking for them please check in the Parish Office. One has the name Mildred written inside the cover.

**OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION
FOR 2018-19**

WE ARE ENROLLING! 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 an after-care 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 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 March 25th!**

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!

**RESPECT LIFE
HEALING FROM ABORTION**

For those wounded by their participation in abortion, the door to healing often feels like crossing an abyss of great fear: fear of judgment, fear of being torn apart by the pain, by self-hatred and rage at those who hurt and abandoned you, and manipulated you in your time of temptation. For men in particular, entering the unknown waters of emotional vulnerability, so necessary to healing, calls for a different kind of courage that feels deceptively like weakness.

The door to healing is humility. The hearts cries out, "I have committed a grave offense against my Creator and I am consumed by regret, grief and sorrow!" During these forty days let us pray for all who have participated in abortion and with love call them to healing and reconciliation. With healing these women and men can become as John Paul II proclaimed in the Gospel of Life, "the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life." from Kevin Burke, executive director of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries. www.40daysforlife.com

For info about local pregnancy centers and much more see www.paprolife.org
Andrea Ostrowski



MISTER CAR WASH

OMPH School Development Department will be selling Miser Car Wash passes in the narthex after all masses this weekend! OMPH School receives **50%** profit from every pass we sell. The funds raised from this event will go toward purchasing Chromebooks. You may also purchase tickets in the school office or from any student until **March 15th**.