

My Dear Parishioners:

There is an old rabbinic story about a faithful Jewish man who every morning would write down on a piece of paper the words: **I am but dust and ashes** and place the paper in his pocket. Throughout the day he would take out the paper and read it. Those same words spoken by Abraham in the Book of Genesis (Gn. 18:27) served as a prayerful reminder of the man's **unworthiness** and **humility** before God. One day the man showed his paper to his rabbi. The rabbi was moved by the man's reverence. But the rabbi took out a second piece of paper and wrote the Hebrew words: **Bishvili Novra haslam**—"For my sake, the universe was created."

"Take these words as well and carry them too," the rabbi told the man. "Let there be a **balance** in your life. Realize that of yourself (before God) you are nothing **but** because you are created in God's image out of love, you possess the greatest dignity imaginable: you are a **child** of God." (As told by Burton Visotzky in **Genesis: A Living Conversation** by Bill Moyers.)

As we begin the holy season of Lent we are reminded that our "Desert Experience" for the next 40 days is a time for striking that **balance** between realizing our **humility** and **unworthiness** before God and our identity as God's **beloved chosen children**. The season of Lent calls us into the deserts of our hearts. The season of Lent challenges us to turn away from the attitudes and behaviors that mire our lives in selfishness, unhappiness and disappointment and turn toward the values of God we seek to embrace. As Jesus was led to the desert to confront the mission before Him so too we are called to the desert of our own hearts and spirits to confront what we are making of this time we have been given, to confront what we want our lives to stand for, and ask what we want to leave to those we love. Lent challenges us to ask ourselves what we really believe in, ask what and who are most important to us, and ask what are we willing to sacrifice for, fight for, and die for. Our "Lenten Desert Experience" enables us to realize that when we are consumed by the notion that we are in total control of our lives or when we have arrogantly become self-absorbed because of what we possess and what we have achieved, we should take out the first paper and remember: **I am but dust and ashes**. But when we

feel abandoned, when hope seems far away, when we feel lost in the desert, we need to embrace the message of the second paper: **For my sake, God created the universe. I am God's beloved; I am created in God's image.**

Today's Scripture readings reinforce the notion of our need for striking that balance between realizing our **unworthiness** before God and realizing our identity as God's **beloved children**.

Our first reading is from the Book of Genesis. This passage is an account of the covenant that God entered into with the children of Israel after the flood. It was made with Noah, with his descendants, and all living creatures. The covenant was promissory. God pledges that never again would unruly waters destroy the world and its inhabitants. God assures Noah he need not fear there will ever be another flood like the one that removed all life from the earth. The outward sign of God's covenant with humanity was the "bow in the clouds" (the rainbow) which becomes a sign of peace as God embraces a renewed human race and all other living creatures. The rainbow also becomes a sign that in the midst of despair and chaos, God is still present and He is still at work as He establishes order in the entire universe.

Our second reading from the Letter of St. Peter reminds us that Jesus is the New Covenant between God and all people and the outward sign of that covenant is Baptism. Baptism not only removes Original Sin but it is also our birth into Christ—the way we become the beloved adopted children of God, heirs of heaven, temples of the Spirit, and sharers in the priesthood of Christ. Peter's letter also reminds us that the waters of baptism are an antitype of the waters of the flood. The flood destroyed all people except Noah and his relatives. The waters of baptism (on the other hand) are a cleansing agent that has the power to save all who receive them. Through the waters of baptism, God offers us spiritual life, saving sinners from the flood waters of sin, despair, and disillusion that can sweep over and destroy us.

In all three liturgical cycles the Gospel passage for the First Sunday in Lent is the "Temptation of Jesus in the Desert". The public ministry of Jesus is preceded by a 40-day testing period in the desert. The testing-period symbolized a

time of purification and confrontation with the powers of evil. It is interesting to note that it was the Holy Spirit that “drove” Jesus into the desert. The term “drove” (**ekballo** in Greek) is a strong and even violent word. The word is used to show that the time in the desert was going to be a severe test for Jesus as described in Matthew and Luke’s temptation scenes. Matthew and Luke describe Jesus’ struggle with Satan in rich and vivid detail. They present the temptations of Jesus focused on three events. All three events are aimed at persuading Jesus to do some fantastic or miraculous action that would prove that He **is** in fact the Messiah. Mark however, treats this epic encounter only in passing by offering a very brief and generic account of Jesus’ temptations. His account is a transition from the Baptism of Jesus (Mk1:9) to the beginning of Jesus’ Public Life and His Ministry (Mk. 1:14).

In his account Mark chooses to rely on a few key images that were sure to evoke memories of similar past events in Jewish history that invite comparison. Devoting a scant two lines to the entire episode, Mark tells us little more than that the Spirit drove Jesus into the desert to fast for forty days and eventually He is tempted by the evil one. The geographical location (desert) and the duration of time (forty days), however, particularly mentioned in concert, would invariably call to mind earlier individuals and events critical to salvation history. Moses fasted for forty days as he inscribed the commandments (Exodus 34: 28) and Elijah fasted for the same length of time as he walked to Horeb (1Kings 19:8). Mark then tells us that Jesus’ ministry can be summarized in the content of His preaching. The few words that Jesus proclaims constitute what is for Mark His programmatic statement of the Gospel. Jesus makes four important points in His programmatic statement. First, the time is **fulfilled**. Second, the kingdom of God is at **hand**. The Kingdom of God is a new reality inaugurated by Jesus’ life and ministry. Third, this new reality requires a **radical change**, designated as “repentance”. Finally, one is to **believe** in the Gospel or the Good News. Thus in Jesus, God’s kingdom (His providing for the needs of His people) has finally dawned. In Jesus the new age has begun. And so followers of Jesus are invited to change their lives radically (repent and believe) and put their trust

in the Good News of salvation which comes only in Him.

My brothers and sisters may these next six weeks of our “Lenten Desert Experience” be a time for striking that balance in our lives: a balance that leads to selflessness and joy in the ever-present love of God in our midst. As we journey through the deserts of our hearts may we turn away from the attitudes and behaviors that mire our lives in selfishness, unhappiness and disappointments, and turn toward the values of God that we seek to embrace. The Lenten season challenges us to ask ourselves what we really believe in, what and who are most important to us, and what we are willing to sacrifice for. In confronting these questions honestly, sincerely and faithfully, we will complete our Lenten Desert Experience with a new realization of God as the center of our hopes and dreams and a new yearning for the fulfillment of the Easter promise in our lives. Have a blessed and holy Lent.

Love & Prayers,

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.



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.

**Lenten Appeal
2018-19 Bishop's Annual Lenten Appeal
"LOVE MADE VISIBLE."**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am ever so grateful for the generous gifts of prayer, talents and treasure that you have shared with our O.M.P.H. Parish Family all these years. We are fortunate that so many of our Parishioners have responded with such **generosity** to the needs of our Community and our Diocese.

I am asking you to consider making a **gift** to our 2018-19 Bishop's Annual Lenten Appeal. The ministries and agencies whose operational needs are funded by our Bishop's Annual Lenten Appeal serve thousands of our brothers and sisters throughout our Parish, Diocese, and south central Pennsylvania. **Our Parish** benefits **directly** from Bishop Gainer's Lenten Appeal through assistance in areas such as Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Catholic School Education, Marriage and Family Life Programs, Religious Education, Prison Ministry, Ministry to Persons with Disabilities, Catholic Charities and our Benevolent Society.

Our Parish assessment goal for the 2018-19 fiscal year is **\$101, 300**. Your prayers and generous financial support will assist us in reaching our goal. I am **confident** that each of us will give all that we can to help us reach our goal and support the mission of our Church. Please give **prayerful consideration** to what you can contribute to this year's Appeal and please respond by making a pledge of support. Pledge envelopes will be mailed to you or you can pick them up in the Church narthex or at the Parish Office. Remember, all **gifts** that **exceed** our assessment goal will be **returned** to our Parish and placed in our Parish Savings Account.

May you and your loved ones be abundantly blessed by our God for your continued commitment and sacrifices to Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish and to our Diocese of Harrisburg. Be assured of my prayers, blessings and love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John

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 REISTER!

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

DIOCESAN MEN'S CONFERENCE

Men of the Diocese of Harrisburg may now register online at www.hbgdiocese.org/men, for the 7th Annual Diocesan Men's Conference, Saturday, March 10, 2018, at Bishop Mc Devitt High.

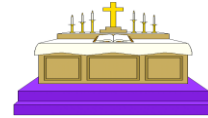
Theme: Men of Mary, Mercy, and the Eucharist.

Keynote Speaker: Father Chris Alar, MIC, noted speaker and expert on Divine Mercy.

The title of his keynote address is *Mary, Mercy, and the Eucharist*. Besides the keynote, the conference includes 34 workshops from a blue-ribbon panel of speakers, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction, many Priest available for Confession, beautiful music, good food, Catholic vendors, Mass with Bishop Gainer as Principal Celebrant and Homilist, and fellowship with up to a thousand men from around the diocese. Last year we had 1,100 men attend. We expect another large crowd this year. We'd love to see you there! Please register now!

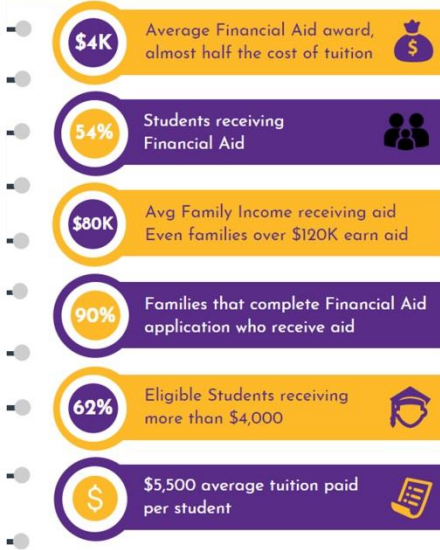
For more information, pick up a brochure in the narthex or call Jim Lawson at 717-799-0080

Catholic Radio Benefit Dinner - Veteran Catholic radio broadcaster Fr. Thomas Loya, host of EWTN's radio program, "Light of the East" will keynote a benefit dinner for Holy Family Radio on April 20. His topic is inspired by a call from Pope Saint John Paul II, "A Church That Must Breathe with Both Lungs, East & West." Bishop Ronald W. Gainer will offer prayers & remarks at the event that will be held at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel. The evening begins at 6 pm with the popular silent auction, music and a cash bar. Dinner begins at 7 pm. Reserve your seat now. Tickets are \$100 each, a table of 8 with patron listing is \$1200. Send your check along with your name, address and telephone number to Holy Family Radio, PO Box 6028, Lancaster, PA 17607. Questions, call 717-525-8110. Holy Family Radio operates the only Catholic radio station in the Diocese of Harrisburg, AM 720 WHYF.



MASS INTENTIONS

- Monday, February 19**
7:00 ✠ Mary Tedesco
9:00 ✠ Jamie Heston
- Tuesday, February 20**
7:00 ✠ Antonia & George Vazquez
9:00 ✠ Henry & Miriam Kashiwa
- Wednesday, February 21, St. Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor of the Church**
7:00 ✠ Cecilia Howard
9:00 ✠ John Hohman
- Thursday, February 22, The Chair of Peter the Apostle**
7:00 ✠ Marc Havay
9:00 ✠ Lorraine Frey
- Friday, February 23, St. Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr**
7:00 ✠ Jackie McCarthy
9:00 Beth Eberly
- Saturday, February 24**
9:00 Intentions in the Prayer Box
5:00 ✠ Rose Barrone
- Sunday, February 25, Second Sunday of Lent**
7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 ✠ Bernice Harper
11:00 ✠ Jan Huiser



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: 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, Joe Ferrara, Anna Lesher



Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
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2-11-18	\$12,224.75	\$14,950.00	(\$2,725.25)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
2-11-18	\$445,359.56	\$493,350.00	(\$47,990.44)

SPAGHETTIDINNER

The Knights of Columbus will be holding its annual Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, **February 24th, from 3to 7PM**. 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 Auker at 717-572-1160 with any questions.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

We all face temptation, just as Jesus did in today's Gospel. But because Jesus triumphed in the wilderness, we can triumph as well. Jesus, the victor, is always ready to help us when we call out to him. He is right next to us, reminding us of his forgiveness and urging us to accept the grace he has stored up for us. He is here to remind us that he has overcome sin and that we can now enjoy the fruits of his victory. Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation this Lent. And when you do, know that the grace of this sacrament is there to cleanse you and to fill you with God's power. It is an ongoing grace that brings you closer to Jesus and strengthens you against any and all temptation

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 Lou Leone.

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.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER:

Beginning This Week, Over The Next Five Weeks, We Will Give A Brief Explanation Of Each Of Corporal And Spiritual Works Of Mercy During The Lenten Season Which Began On Wednesday, February 14th With Ash Wednesday.

This Week's Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed The Hungry:

- Donate to the Food Bank and/or other food drives.
- Volunteer to help at the Food Bank.
- Try not to be wasteful with the food you have.

Give Drink To The Thirsty:

- Donate to programs that help to get water to those who need it.
- Donate bottled water to the Food Bank or shelters.
- Try not to be wasteful with water.

This Week's Spiritual Works of Mercy

Counsel The Doubtful

- Let your life be rooted in Christ so that advice that you may offer may be rooted in Christ.
- Let your actions show your love of Christ.
- Help a relative or friend who is struggling with his/her beliefs.

Teach The Uninformed

- Donate to someone going on a mission trip.
- Volunteer to help with the RE Program.
- Invite someone to attend Mass with you.

Our Religious Education Class Schedule For The Remainder Of February And The Month Of March Is As Follows:

Sunday, February 18th – RE Classes In Session

who cooks all the chicken for the Ephrata Pioneer Fire Company's events.

A big thank you to the OMPH parishioners for their donations on February 3rd and 4th to the Steubenville trip. We were humbled at how **God works for the good of His church**. God bless! In His Service, Denise Ives.

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!

BAKE SALE

On February 24th, The Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus is holding a **Bake Sale at the Spaghetti Dinner**. We hope with the money raised to "adopt a family" at Easter, as we did last year. Any baked goods that you are able to donate would be greatly appreciated (we are unable to accept anything that needs to be kept cold like cheesecakes and meringues) . **This year we are really in need of cookies, brownies, fruit pies, and cakes**. For us to accept your donation we would need a **list of the ingredients** used, due to food allergies. Items may be dropped off in front of the Father Jackson Center(gym) on Saturday 2/24 any time after 10 am or call **Rita Pfautz 733-9247** to make arrangements if you are unable to get there, you may also call me with any questions. **Thank You**.

STEUBENVILLE FUNDRAISER

Mark your calendars!!!! Radiate Youth Group is doing a fundraiser toward the **final expenses for their trip** to Steubenville Youth Conference. **Saturday April 7th** we plan to host a chicken barbecue in the front parking lot of OMPH from 10 a.m. til sold out. **Chicken halves will be sold at \$6 each or two for \$10**. Pre-orders may be placed with Denise Ives at 717-989-8900. Please pass the word to the larger community if you'd like. We are grateful for the parish's support in this way. The credit for the delicious chicken goes to Matthew Hildebrand and Brian Kurtz. Matthew Hildebrand is the firefighter

SAVE THE DATE



OMPH CYO Athletic Association Fundraiser, Designer Bag Bingo, \$20 Ticket Price, **Saturday April 28** from 1-4pm. More details to come!



RESPECT LIFE

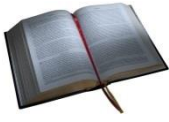
Lancaster County Sanctity of Life Prayer Campaign
Once again, people of faith will conduct an ecumenical "Prayer Campaign" in our community in concert with the 40 Days for Life worldwide spring campaign. Lancaster's "Prayer Campaign" is based on love, compassion and restoration, and embodies three key elements - faithful prayer, community outreach, and sidewalk counseling. Please join us on the public sidewalk in front of Lancaster's Planned Parenthood facility at 31 South Lime Street in Lancaster City between 10:00 AM and Noon on the following days: **Mondays Feb 19 and 26, Wednesdays Feb 21 and 28 and Saturday Feb 24**. Days in March are Mondays March 5, 12, and 19. Wednesdays are March 7, 14, and 21, and Saturday March 10.

Contact: Tom Ramsbottom at tramsbottom354@comcast.net or 717 468-3822 for questions about Wednesday or Saturday vigils. Contact Bob Dunn at lancaster40days@aol.com or 717 396-3838 for questions about Monday vigils. See 40daysforlife.com for more information

These prayer vigils have an incredible impact! Many women have shared how one person praying outside the clinic saved the life of her baby! You could be that person!

Andrea Ostrowski

THE MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE



Depart at 7 AM (OMPH side parking lot) Return approximately 6 PM (leaving DC at 3 PM) **COST \$47** (this includes driver tip.)

NON-REFUNDABLE

The Museum of the Bible is a museum in Washington D.C. which documents the narrative, history and impact of the Bible. The museum opened on November 17, 2017. There are 2 places to eat on the premises and a gift shop (we will receive 20% off purchases at the gift shop. The last day to reserve and pay for your seat is **April 14th**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact **Rita Pfautz at 717-341-1211** or email at **ritapfautz@yahoo.com**

Please add the clip art you have been using. If you are able to forward it to me I will add it each week.

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!