

My Dear Parishioners,

On this Second Sunday of Lent in all three liturgical cycles our Gospel passage recounts the Transfiguration of Jesus. Someone once called this particular Sunday the “Sunday of the three mountains.” We have Abraham on Mount Moriah, Jesus the Redeemer on Mount Calvary and the Transfigured Jesus on Mount Tabor. During the season of Lent we too are invited and challenged to climb those mountains. Mountain climbing may seem to be hard but when we reach the top we see things in a clearer and different way.

In Sacred Scripture mountains are considered sacred places. God traditionally appears on mountains. God makes Himself known to certain individuals inviting them to **listen** to Him. Moses met the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” on Mt. Sinai. The prophet Elijah had an experience of this same life-giving God on Mt. Horeb. In two of today’s readings we hear about people who journeyed up a mountain and had an encounter with God. Abraham ascended Mt. Moriah in obedience to God’s command to “take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love and offer him there as a holocaust.” The apostles Peter, James and John ascended Mt. Tabor and witnessed in Jesus the very life and love of God. For many of us the season of Lent might feel like one of those “high mountains” mentioned in Scripture. The season may seem arduous, beyond us, and never-ending. The Church is sensitive to our struggle and that is why the mystery of the Transfiguration gives us hope as we continue our individual Lenten journeys.

This Sunday’s Lenten lesson can be summarized in three simple words found in today’s Gospel: “**listen to Him.**” These three words are spoken by the Father’s voice that came from the cloud that overshadowed Peter, James, and John when they had witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. These three simple words are spoken by the Father who identifies Jesus as “my beloved Son.”

But given the presence of Jesus garbed in dazzling white garments as well as the visible appearance of the two greatest prophets of the Old Testament Moses and Elijah, wouldn’t it have been more appropriate for the Father to have said, “This is my beloved Son, **look** at Him”? After all, it was the

sight of the transfigured Jesus that prompted Peter to blurt out, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here!” Furthermore, that transfigured Jesus does not speak until He and the three apostles come down from the mountain and He charges them “not to relate what they had seen to anyone.” The Father chooses to emphasize the primacy of **listening**, not seeing when it comes to continuing the message and mission of Jesus. God did not say, “Look at Him,” but rather God said “**Listen** to Him.”

The focus on **listening** is also highlighted in today’s first reading from the Book of Genesis. Abraham’s journey of faith arrives at a significant milestone. Abraham is at last ready to **listen** to God and demonstrate his total trust in the word of God. This readiness did not come easily for him. So many times before Abraham hesitated to **listen** to God and place complete trust in God’s word. Abraham doubted God’s promise that Sarah would bear him a son (even going so far as to present his wife Sarah to foreigners as his sister.) Abraham puts his hope in Ishmael, born from a union with Hagar. Even when learning that his son by Sarah was to have the name Isaac, Abraham pleaded with God to favor Ishmael.

Today’s passage of Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac is one of the most disturbing in all of Scripture. This story known as “The Sacrifice of Isaac” might be better called “The Testing of Abraham.” Recall that ritual murder and human-sacrifice was a common practice among the people in the region surrounding Israel. Most religions at that time required people to offer to their gods what was most precious to them. What could be more precious and dearer than one’s firstborn child? The disturbing exchange we hear in Genesis between God and Abraham prompts us to wonder why Abraham did not refuse to **listen** to God’s frightful command that he offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Yet Abraham promptly obeys this dreadful command that no parent should have to fulfill; namely to kill one’s own offspring. Abraham chooses simply to **listen**. He did not argue or complain. He did not analyze the situation nor refuse to obey God’s outlandish command. Deep in his trusting and devoted heart Abraham must have decided that he would simply “let go and let God.” Through his willingness to offer God whatever He wanted, Abraham clearly demonstrated God came first

in his life. In refusing to allow Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac God showed unmistakably He did not want human sacrifice. In fact the Abraham story demonstrates that God actually abolishes the notion and practice of human sacrifice. God wants and desires the wholehearted dedication of our lives and our love. The story of Abraham was crucial in showing the Jewish people that the practice of child sacrifice was evil. Equally as important the story shows us today (by the way of contrast) that God does not want our sacrifices but rather He desires our love and total trust in Him.

Although God spared the only son of Abraham (in a spiritual irony) God did not intervene to spare His only Son-Jesus. Echoing the Psalms and the prophets St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Romans (today's second reading) that the all-conquering power of God's love has overcome every obstacle to people's salvation and every threat of our separation from God. To have God on one's side means to have no real opposition. Paul then speaks about the extent of the passion of God's enormous love for us. This is portrayed in the fact of the Father's handing over the Son to die on Mount Calvary assuring us that there is no limit to God's love and concern for us. The power of God's love manifested itself fully when God delivered up to death His own Son for our salvation: "God did not spare His own Son...." saving us from sin, death and eternal damnation.

All of us are invited and challenged by our God to ascend the mountain and **listen** to Him. If we are to fulfill this command and accept God's invitation then we need to begin making a serious effort to be **silent** long enough for God's word to get edgewise into our heads and hearts. It is no easy task to turn off and tune out the rush of words that threaten to drown the word of God that is proclaimed in our Scriptures. The three simple words that highlight Jesus' transfiguration experience, "**Listen to Him,**" are sufficient to give us a meaningful mantra or motto for our Lenten journey. These three little words will eventually train our ears and our hearts to sort and sift out the jabber, the gossip, and the chatter to make room for the words of joy, peace, healing and glory that Jesus whispers to us in the **silence of our listening hearts**. Have a Blessed week. Fr. John

**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

KITCHEN HELP WANTED



We are in need of good cooks for *St. Clements Rectory*. If you are interested in a full or part time position cooking for 10-15 priests, brothers and guests at the parish rectory, please call *Kevin* at 717-359-4541. We would love to speak to those willing to provide fresh and nutritious meals and serve with a smile.

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.

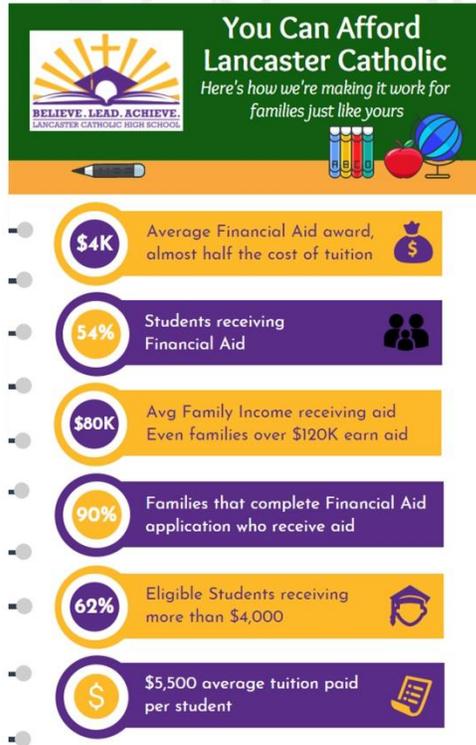
Theme: *Men of Mary, Mercy, and the Eucharist.*

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 26

- 7:00 †John Hohman
- 9:00 †Jackie McCarthy

Tuesday, February 27

- 7:00 †John Hohman
- 9:00 †Bernie Manning

Wednesday, February 28

- 7:00 †Souls in Purgatory
- 9:00 †John Hohman

Thursday, March 1

- 7:00 Spiritual growth of the Parish
- 9:00 †Grace Poulan

Friday, March 2

- 7:00 Spiritual growth of the Parish
- 9:00 †James Clarkin

Saturday, March 3

- 9:00 †Maria Mannino
- 5:00 †Joseph Kapernik

Sunday, March 4, 3rd Sunday of Lent

- 7:30 For the Parishioners
- 9:00 †Erin Vazquez
- 11:00 †John & Anna Mura

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 25: 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 Leshner, Pat Frey

CHURCH SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
2-18-18	\$9,925.85	\$14,950.00	(\$5,024.15)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
2-18-18	\$455,285.41	\$508,300 .00	(\$53,014.59)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Try to imagine that three-day journey to the place of sacrifice. The silence, the awkward answers to Isaac's questions, the agonizing over what he was about to do. How many times did Abraham almost turn around and head back home? But somehow, Abraham trusted that God would still fulfill his promises. So when he arrived at the place, Abraham told his servants, "We will . . . come back to you". Even then, he trusted that both he and Isaac would return. Notice, when the angel intervenes, Abraham again repeats the only thing he had said to God so far: "Here I am". These words must have sounded much different now, three harrowing days later, as he was on the verge of doing the unthinkable to his son. Imagine the fear, the exhaustion, even the anger, in his voice. Yet even now, as his grip on his faith was fragile at best, he held on and trusted. We all have times when God seems to be asking the impossible of us: to accept a terminal illness or permanent disability; to resolve a bitter,

long-standing conflict; to give up on a treasured dream. Abraham's response, "Here I am," may feel like the hardest thing to say. But this story tells us that God still loves us and is still offering us his grace.

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 Joseph Jacko.

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:



**Thank You To Everyone Who Donated To, Purchased
A Basket, Or Baked Goods
From Our Valentine's Sale! Thank You
For Supporting OMPH's RE Program!**

This Week's Corporal Work of Mercy

Clothe The Naked:

Donate money to programs that help to get clothing to those who need it.

Only purchase clothing that your family truly needs.

Clean out your closets and donate your family's old clothing to an organization that helps get clothing to people who lose their clothing in fires.

This Week's Spiritual Work of Mercy

Correct The Sinner:

Try not to judge others but show them the right way through your actions.

Show mercy not conceit when correcting someone.

Correct your own sinfulness before pointing out some else's sinfulness.

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

Sunday, February 25th – RE Classes In Session

Sunday, March 4th – RE Classes In Session

Sunday, March 11th – RE Classes In Session

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

THE MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

On **Saturday 12 May** we will depart at 7 AM (OMPH side parking lot) Return approximately 6 PM (leaving DC at 3 PM) **COST \$47, NON-REFUNDABLE** (this includes driver tip.)

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

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 25** 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!



The Faculty of OMPH extends congratulations to graduates of OMPH School and members of OMPH Parish who are recognized for their outstanding academic achievement at LCHS. We are very proud of our students who received honors for the second quarter of the 2017-2018 academic year.

Distinguished Honors: Ella Cassidy, Michael Chirico, Cecelia Deel, Kevin Draeger, Caroline Erb, Jacob Fertal, Meghan Flynn, Devon Gerhard, Erin

Haldeman, Adeline Hibschan, Johann Imperial, Siobhan McShea, Jake Mercer, Sheridan Schreyer, Riley Smith, Anthony Quagliata, Connie Quagliata, Lizbeth Stephan, Camille Zapata and Christian Zapata.

Honor Roll: Anthony Andrews, Taylor Geiss, Kayla Lipson, Erin Mohr, Angeline Rann, Anthony Sivillo and David Vasquez-Cabrales.

Ella Cassidy was also recognized as a "Student of the 2nd Quarter".



RESPECT LIFE

So many people say they're reluctant to pray at a 40 Days for Life vigil because "I wouldn't know what to say. "The truth is that oftentimes ...you don't need to say a thing. Just be there – and pray!

Volunteers at the 40 Days for Life vigil in Columbia, South Carolina say a car leaving the abortion center pulled up beside them. These people had come for an abortion – something they felt they had to do because the girl who had the appointment was only 15 years old. But they changed their minds."We just thought about it some more," said one of the people in the car. Would they have "thought about it some more" if people had not been outside praying? What could have happened if no one had been there?

Join the vigil outside of the Lancaster Planned Parenthood, 31 S Lime St from 10:00 am until 4 PM on Monday February 26, Wednesday February 28, and Saturday March 10. Join them on Mondays in March: 5, 12 and 19; Wednesdays in March 7, 14, and 21.

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

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!

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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!**

Go to www.formed.org Parish Code **4BGYH2** and click “register”

Enter your name, email address, and desired password.

Use the Symbol on and Forgiven Leader Guides for discussion

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!