

My Dear Parishioners,

I am sure that most of us have had the experience of wandering lost and being directionless in the “**wilderness**”. At one time or another we have all had to make our way through a lonely, dangerous “**desert**.” The **wilderness** may have looked like a hospital waiting room to you, or looked like a cheap motel room after you have been kicked out of your house, or maybe it looked like the parking lot where you couldn’t find your car on the day you received the news that you lost your job. The **desert** may have been a specific time: the life-altering decision you felt unprepared and incapable of making, the endless calls and interviews for the job that eluded you, the nights waiting up for the son or daughter who was not coming home. **Wildernesses** are the places where we feel lost and helpless. **Deserts** are situations we don’t know how to handle. The **wildernesses** and **deserts** of our lives are those unknown and terrifying places in which we find ourselves as a result of circumstances beyond our control or because of our own mistakes.

And yet we somehow find a way through that unfamiliar terrain. We manage to cross that emptiness and barrenness. We discover something inside of us that enables us to make our way safely. We discover and see routes open to us that we had not seen before. The **wilderness** changes us. The **desert** frees us to trust, to hope, to move. It is in the **wilderness** and **desert** where we discover the Spirit of God within our lives. The same Spirit that led the Israelites during their sojourn in the **desert** and led Jesus into the **desert** accompanies us in our **wilderness** experiences of fear, despair, confusion and grief. Today’s Scripture readings reassure us that God’s Spirit is with us in our sojourns as God the Father was with the Israelites and with His Son Jesus.

At the heart of the Old Testament is the great story of **liberation**: how God intervened to free His Chosen People from Egyptian slavery. In the story of the Exodus the Israelites celebrate the momentous event of freedom from oppression and the beginning of their journey to the Promised Land. However, after they were freed from Egyptian slavery the Israelites had to face a new problem: the **wilderness**. Some preferred living under Pharaoh. They preferred the security that went with bondage over the pain that

went with freedom. The price of freedom was **wilderness**. During their 40 years in the **desert** the Israelites were tested. They were hungry and wondered if God would pay attention to their pleas. They were divided in their hearts about God. Many wondered if God was really with them and if God really did care for them.

In today’s passage from Deuteronomy (our first reading) Moses leaves the Israelites with some words of great wisdom. Moses addresses the assembled tribes of Israel seeking to motivate them to remain **loyal** to their Lord God. As he nears the end of his day as leader, Moses has an opportunity to speak to the Israelites about what lies ahead for them. Moses is concerned that once the Israelites enter the Promised Land their reliance on God may begin to fade so he reminds them that they must **never** forget that God is always with them and that they owe God a debt of gratitude for all the benefits He has given them. Just as God provided for them in their sojourn in the **desert** so too God will provide for them in the Promised Land. To reinforce this lesson Moses insists that the Israelites make a profession of faith each year. This profession of faith was part of the Israelite celebration of First Fruits. The profession of faith was a cultic ritual which consisted of both action (the offering of the basket containing the produce) and the recitation of the saving acts of God on behalf of His people.

It is against the background of Israel’s testing in the **desert** that St. Luke’s story (today’s Gospel) of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the desert is told. In typical Lucan style, we are told that Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit and that Spirit leads Him into the **desert** to be tested. The Israelites sadly failed the test by rebelling against God compromising their covenant commitment to God and putting God to the test. Now it is Jesus’ turn to be tested by Satan who will use all his cunning power to get Jesus to prove His Messiahship and prove that He is the Son of God. It is important to understand that Satan appeals not to any weakness of Jesus but rather directly to His strength: His compassion, His commitment to the Father, and His faith. All three of Satan’s temptations seek to get Jesus to secure a legitimate end by illegitimate means through the misuse of His power. In all his temptations Satan is offering Jesus a way to be the Messiah without facing the cross. However, through the power

of the Spirit, Jesus is able to resist Satan's offer. Three times Satan tempts Jesus and three times Jesus proves His allegiance to the Father. Jesus never directly addresses the question of His divine Son-ship but He does always show Himself to be faithful, whereas the Israelites were not.

Satan's first temptation to produce bread from stone recalls Israel's hunger in the **wilderness** and God's graciousness in supplying the people with manna. Satan tests Jesus to see if He is totally committed or not. Is Jesus like Israel in the **desert** – half-hearted about God's plan? Can one be hungry and still trust God? Can one follow God with one's **whole heart** even when one is aware of the vacancy within them? Our Gospel reminds us that Jesus is **wholehearted** ("One does not live on bread alone.") in His commitment and loyalty to His Father's plan.

In the second temptation Satan offers to turn over the control of the world to Jesus. Jesus is tested about His attitude to power, glory and wealth. To acquire power and glory will Jesus go to any lengths? Will He love God with His **whole might** with everything He is and has? Or will He grasp for the kind of power and prestige that most people aspire to and admire by selling out to Satan or by compromising? Jesus' whole life says no to that kind of power, authority or glory ("You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve."). Jesus' life shows that He completely submitted Himself to the Father's will.

Satan's last temptation was a test for Jesus challenging Him to believe that He could serve God without pain and suffering. "Do a swan dive from the wing of the temple and land without a scratch!" To throw Himself down from the Temple and have God's angels save Him would enable Jesus to attain messianic notoriety. The question is: can Jesus love God with His **whole soul** even when His own life is in danger? Will Jesus risk his life for the sake of His mission or will he opt for self-preservation? Can one love God even when one's life is slipping away? Jesus' whole life answers yes to these questions. He knows that loving God does not mean exemption from harm. Jesus' own death on the cross proves that He loves the Father and all of us more than life itself.

This year once again our Lenten journey will take us into the **wilderness** and **desert** where we are invited to reflect upon our lives. As we journey we will be asked both to renounce Satan with all his perks and promises and to place **our wholehearted trust** in God who created us, in the Son who redeemed us, and in the Spirit who dwells within and enlightens us. As we continue our journey, God's Spirit reminds us to treasure our basic baptismal values in the face of temptations as Jesus did. As we journey we ask ourselves how do we deal with our own temptations? When times get rough and we feel hungry and alone, do we still trust in God? When our life just seems to be a vast vacancy, do we still believe in the Father who loves us? Are we willing to risk our lives for the sake of the Gospel or do we settle for guarding our own security? Do we make our authority felt so that people are degraded or do we use our power as a real service to others? These are not easy questions to answer. That is why we need to go into our **wilderness** and **desert** to meditate, pray, reflect and listen to God's voice. Have a blessed week and a **blessed Lenten Journey**.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

### FORMED

#### ACCESS CATHOLIC FAITH ON THE GO

As we prepare for the Lenten and Easter Seasons I would like to make you aware of the many excellent Catholic programs that are available to you for **free** thru our parish program FORMED. Lenten and Easter movies, video studies, inspiring talks, audiobooks, testimonies and e-books are available for your spiritual enrichment. Lenten programs such as **Forgiven, Presence**, and the **Footprints of God: Jesus** are now available to you to ensure that this Lent and Easter will be a truly rewarding spiritual journey for you and your family. New books written by notable Catholic authors Dr. Scott Hahn, Dr. Edward Sri, Paul McCuskey, and Jennifer Fulwiler are now available for you and your family's Catholic faith development. To access these Lenten and Easter programs and other amazing Catholic materials simply visit **omph.formed.org** and click "**Register**" and enter your name, email address and desired password. You will then be ready to access all the inspiring and engaging Catholic content on **FORMED**. Enjoy and God bless. Fr. John

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

We will begin praying the Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent beginning on **March 15<sup>th</sup>** at **2pm** (Children Stations) and **7pm** (St. Alphonsus Version).

### 2019 DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The Redemptorists have published a Daily Lenten Devotion Book for 2019 in English/Spanish. Copies are available in the Church Narthex. Suggested donation for this book is two dollars. Thanks Fr. John

### 2019 DIOCESAN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The **2019 Diocesan Annual Campaign**, previously known as the **Bishop's Lenten Appeal**, will begin **this week** with the in-pew solicitation. The theme for this year is **Faith Forward**. During these challenging times, our faith is central to who we are. Like the Disciples, we are called to remain **faithful**, demonstrate our **commitment** to our **faith** by word and deed, and spread Good News. You will be receiving a letter from Bishop Gainer asking for your support. I have pledged to Bishop Gainer my assistance in achieving our Parish goal of **\$101,300**. As you prayerfully consider your support of both our Parish goal and the overall Diocesan goal, I hope you will join me in supporting these important ministries and services that the Diocese provides to our Parish, parishioners, and community. By our collective efforts from parishioners and parishes throughout the Diocese, a multitude of programs and ministries are offered to those in need. We are relying on your generous support to insure that these programs and ministries continue. Bishop Gainer and I thank you in advance for your loyal and steadfast support.

Monies collected by our Parish support the programs and ministries that are Diocesan led, Parish implemented and Parishioner supported. **No funds given to the Diocesan Annual Campaign are directed to the Survivors Compensation Fund or legal fees.** Any funds collected in excess of our Parish goal of **\$101, 300.00** will be returned to our Parish Savings Account. Thank you and God bless. Fr. John

### MUSIC ACCOMPANISTS NEEDED

The OMPH Music Ministry is in need of an accompanist, preferably piano or organ, for the Adult Choir. Practice is only once a week (Tuesdays from 7-8 pm) and we sing at 1 or 2 Masses per month. The music ministry is a great way to meet other parishioners and to become more involved in our faith community. If you are willing to share your talent, please call or email Jill McGowan at 717-336-5578 or [jmcgowan333@yahoo.com](mailto:jmcgowan333@yahoo.com).



### CONGRATULATIONS

Jim Lawson was installed as an Acolyte on February 24 by Bishop Ronald Gainer as part of the Permanent Diaconate Program in our Diocese. I ask everyone to continue to remember Jim and his wife Helen in your prayers as he continues his studies and preparation for his Ordination.

Thank you,  
Fr. John

### YOUTH CHOIR NEEDS YOU

Our Youth Choir is currently taking a short break while we find someone to take over directing duties. If you love music and want to help inspire the children of our parish, this is a great opportunity. Music is a wonderful way to get kids more involved in Mass. This position does require clearances but I will happily help you get them if you are interested. Please contact Jill McGowan at 717-336-5578 or [jmcgowan333@yahoo.com](mailto:jmcgowan333@yahoo.com).



### DIOCESAN MEN'S CONFERENCE

Men of the Diocese of Harrisburg and beyond...the **Diocesan Men's Conference** is Saturday, **April 6, 2019**, at Bishop McDevitt High School. The theme is **Men Called to be Saints**. The Keynote Speaker is **Dr. John Bergsma**, noted Catholic author, speaker, Bible expert, and theology professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville. The title of his keynote address is **The Top 3 Reasons I Became Catholic and Always Will Be: Perspectives from a Former Protestant Pastor**. Besides the keynote, the Men's Conference includes 40+ workshops from a blue-ribbon panel of speakers, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with benediction, opportunity for Confession, beautiful music, good food, numerous Catholic vendors, Mass with Bishop Gainer as Principal Celebrant and Homilist, and fellowship with up to 1,000 men from around the Diocese of Harrisburg and beyond. Each of the past two years we have had 1,000 men attend this conference. We expect another large crowd this year. Please register now at [www.hbgdiocese.org/men](http://www.hbgdiocese.org/men). We'd love to see you at the Men's Conference on April 6<sup>th</sup>!



**PALM SUNDAY MEN'S RETREAT**

Men you are invited to join us April 12-14, for a Palm Sunday weekend Retreat in Malvern, PA. It is a beautiful oasis amid 125 acres of natural woodlands. This a great time to step aside, relax, rest, and look at the important things in your life. Strengthen, renew, or discover your personal relationship with Jesus. The theme for 2019 is Encountering the Divine Physician, Jesus Christ. Malvern has a proud tradition whereby no retreatant is turned away based on financial need.

To make your reservation please call Jim Lawson 717-799-0080 or go online at [www.malvernretreat.com](http://www.malvernretreat.com)

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, March 11**

7:00 ☩ Sidney Mash

9:00 ☩ Marianna Banaszek

**Tuesday, March 12**

7:00 ☩ Jean Gould

9:00 ☩ Stanislaw Szatkowska

**Wednesday, March 13**

7:00 ☩ Fr. John Biermann, SAC

9:00 ☩ Jack Muldowney

**Thursday, 14**

7:00 Sr. Aleksandra Stremel

9:00 ☩ James Mascherino

**Friday, March 15**

7:00 ☩ Clara Welsh

9:00 ☩ Zofia Sarnowska

**Saturday, March 16**

9:00 Curran Family

5:00 ☩ Mary Howhoski

**Sunday, March 17**

7:30 For the Parishioners

9:00 ☩ Francis Keating

11:00 ☩ Greg Fitzpatrick

**CHURCH  SUPPORT**

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
3-3-19	\$	\$14,300.00	(\$)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
3-3-19	\$	\$500,500.00	(\$)

**YEARLINGS NEWS**

The Yearlings will meet for lunch at **11:30 on March 12, at Bright's Restaurant** in Ephrata. Please call Gloria for reservations at 717-733-9098. All seniors are welcome.

**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 Muscavage Family.

There are 22 openings for you to have the Sanctuary Lamp burn for your intention.

**LEGION OF MARY NEWS**



Legion of Mary ACIES (Rededication Service to the Blessed **Virgin Mary**) will be held at **Holy Trinity, Columbia on 23 March at 1 PM**. All active and auxiliary members are encouraged to attend. Calls will be made to determine attendance.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Faith in Jesus sanctifies our hearts. It directs the affections of our hearts toward Jesus. It moves us to say no to sin. The devil's "belief" didn't sanctify his heart. It didn't move him to have any affection for Jesus. If anything, it made him hate Jesus all the more. That's because he didn't put his faith in Jesus. Every day this Lent, the Holy Spirit wants to move you toward a deeper faith, a faith that strengthens your love for Jesus and other people. Think of it this way. Married couples know that love involves much more than saying and believing the words "I love you." They know it means staying united, serving each other, working out differences, and putting each other above themselves. Likewise, confessing Jesus as Lord and believing it in your heart is much more than accepting a fact and saying it. Confessing and believing is a way of faith. It's a way of life.

**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.

Fr. Paul Bryan CSSR, Margaret Gardner, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Anna Lesher, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Carlos Luciano Sr., Gerald Gigliotti, Francis Gatti, Antonia Scribani, Jean Mash, John Mento, Joe Lewis, Joe Ferrara, Joan Dever, Alicia Craig, Robert Bevans, Chris Hohowski, and Jody Shimp, Kathy Snyder, Jennifer Ranker, Jean Mack, Gloria Kreider, Lori Ritz and, Ellen Moran.

**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>
Catholic Relief	April 7th	Catholicrelief
Easter Flowers	April 14th	easterflowers
Holy Land	April 19th	holylan
Catholic Home		
Missions	April 28th	homemissions
Easter	April 21st	easter

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

**SAVE THE DATE**  
OMPH CYO Athletic Association will be having a Designer Bag Bingo on Saturday, **April 27** 1-4pm. Ticket **Price \$25**



Religious Education Corner:

**This Week's Corporal Work of Mercy  
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 Work of Mercy  
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 The Month Of March  
Is As Follows:**

- Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**
- Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**
- Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**
- Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Kelly Lawrence**

**ARTICLES FOR THE BULLETIN**

Announcement for the Palm Sunday (April 14) bulletin should be submitted to the parish office by the end of the day on Thursday, April 4.

Announcements for the bulletin for Easter Sunday (April 21) should be submitted to the parish office by the end of the day on Thursday, April 11.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**OMPH School's Benefit Golf  
Tournament**

It's time to Par-Tee at OMPH's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament! **Our Mother of Perpetual Help School** is hosting its **27<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Golf Tournament** on **Wednesday, May 8, 2019** at Honeybrook Golf Club, 1422 Cambridge Road, Honey Brook, Pennsylvania. The cost for the Tournament is \$90.00



and includes greens fee, cart, range balls, contests, prizes, thank you gift, light breakfast, lunch, beverages and the **satisfaction of knowing that you helped OMPH School**. while having fun! Don't miss Fr. John's last Golf Par-Tee for OMPH School!

### OMPH SCHOOL'S LOTTERY CALENDAR RAFFLE

The OMPH School Development Department and PTO are excited to announce a new and exciting Fundraiser - The May 2019 Lottery Calendar! Purchase a raffle ticket for \$10 and if your ticket number comes out straight on the Pennsylvania Lottery Pick 3 Evening Drawing in May, you win the amount marked on the calendar for that day. Tickets can be purchased through any OMPH School family, after masses in February in the Narthex or in the Parish Office, or in person at the school office. Sales end April 24<sup>th</sup>.

### OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION TUITION ASSISTANCE DEADLINE

MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup>



Families registering at OMPH School for the 2019-2020 school year are advised the deadline to apply for tuition assistance scholarships for the upcoming school year is March 15<sup>th</sup>. Funds are available through the Diocese of Harrisburg's Neumann Scholarship Foundation, funded through Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program, and the George and Mary Kremer Foundations. FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment is used to conduct the financial needs analysis and tax credit program eligibility verification.

The Preschool program, for children who are 3 and 4 years old by September 1st, provides developmentally appropriate activities in a Catholic environment. It also offers an extended day program including lunch. Our full day Kindergarten program, for children who are 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>, provides daily instruction in Religion along with skill development in Language Arts and Math, and special classes in Spanish, computer, art, music, library and physical education. Students in grades 1 through 8 experience an education rich in STEM learning noted

for academic excellence in an environment which reinforces our Catholic identity. An on-site afterschool program is available for all students in Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Come see why so many families choose OMPH Catholic School for their children! Please call the School Office if you have questions regarding financial assistance or the schedule a personal tour.

To learn more about our school, please visit our website at [www.omph.org](http://www.omph.org), call the school office at 717-738-2414, or find us on Facebook at OMPH-EPHRATA

