

My Dear Parishioners,

If someone were to ask you what your greatest virtue is, how would you answer them? A virtue is a habit of doing good according to St. Thomas Aquinas. A virtue is something you are able to do because you have been **graced** by God. Being **graced** means being gifted. So another way of asking this same question is what is the greatest **gift** you have been given? I believe most of us would answer **“love.”** We know that **love** has many faces: patience, kindness, compassion, generosity, to name a few. But I would propose that the greatest expression of **love** (and the most difficult one to carry out) is **forgiveness**. How often do we **forgive** and really mean it? Like anything else, **forgiveness** can be used to manipulate others into believing that this is our intention (when in reality) we are trying to deceive others in order to have things our way. Today’s Scripture readings challenge us to **forgive** others as our loving God **forgives** us.

Our first reading is from the Book of Joshua. This reading recounts the first celebration of Passover in the Promised Land. After forty years of wandering in the desert the Israelites have finally crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land. During the course of this long journey the generation of Israel that left Egypt died for lack of trust in God. Now it is time for their descendants to enjoy God’s promises because they show signs of being people of faith. No Israelite born during those years in the desert had been circumcised so God orders all of them to undergo this ritual since now that they are safe in their ancestral land where Abraham was circumcised. After the ritual God announces: “the reproach of Egypt has been removed.” In other words, the allure of Egypt is now gone. The attraction that Egypt had on so many generations of Israelites should now be forgotten. Egypt could merely satisfy the Israelites with earthly things but only God could only satisfy their spiritual needs.

Once the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land God takes care of both their physical and spiritual needs. To mark the end of their long journey from oppression to freedom the Israelites celebrate the Passover. They had not done so since their departure from Mt. Sinai forty years earlier (Numbers 9: 12-14). It is appropriate for them to celebrate now so that they remember all that God has done for them. They no

longer need the manna that God provided them as they journeyed in the desert. Now they can enjoy the produce of the land of Canaan. At present (since they have only arrived) their food is simple unleavened cakes and parched grains. However because of God’s graciousness in time they will enjoy all the goods available in the land of “milk and honey.”

In our second reading (St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians) Paul focuses on God’s **mercy** and **forgiveness** by focusing on the reconciliation that puts an end to any enmity between God and humanity. Paul’s words jump out at us to let us know that we are not God’s slaves but rather we are God’s **children**. This means that we are not merely creatures or things but we are God’s highly chosen ones. Paul uses the notion of replacement sacrifice in his explanation of how God’s reconciliation is accomplished. Though he was innocent, Jesus becomes the sin offering for all the guilty. Joined to Jesus, all believers share in His righteousness and through Jesus, in the righteousness of God the Father. Through Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection all people become a new creation-God’s children. Since our heavenly Father is not self-righteous but rather loving and merciful, He generously offers humankind the gift of reconciliation and His **forgiveness**.

The concepts of **forgiveness** and reconciliation are St. Luke’s favorite themes. The concepts of **forgiveness** and reconciliation are the cutting edge of today’s Gospel passage (15; 1-3, 11-32). Luke is convinced that anyone who is willing to repent and return to God can be assured of God’s **forgiveness**. Today’s Gospel passage is commonly called the “Parable of the Prodigal Son.” But it could just as well be called the “Parable of the Loving and **Forgiving** Father” or the “Parable of the Jealous Older Brother” since all three persons in the story speaks to us in different, but equally powerful ways. I am sure that when we look at ourselves closely we can probably see parts of each of the three characters in the parable within each of us.

In the beginning of his Gospel passage Luke points out that tax-collectors and sinners were gathering to listen to and dine with Jesus. To eat with such people was thought to somehow share life with them. The Pharisees and scribes (those who dealt with the Law and

the things of God) criticized Jesus for the company he kept. Jesus saw His association with them as opening the reign of God to **all**. The Pharisees and scribes want Jesus to let the sinners stay lost. Why bother with the likes of them? Jesus sees everyone as a child of His Father. To show His point Jesus tells a parable about a father who has two sons and he loses both of them.

The younger son gets lost in a far- away country while the elder son gets lost staying at home. The younger son leaves home but his journey leads him to a place of hunger, misery degradation and possible death. He is in danger of dying far away from his father and family; forgotten and forsaken. But the younger son finally comes to his senses and realizes he does not really belong there but in actuality he has a home to return to. He makes a decision to make a journey of return to his father and family and makes amends.

All this time that he is gone his father has **not** given up on him or accepted his departure as “just one of those things.” His son being lost has not nullified their relationship. Even though his son has decided to let go of him the father has **not** let go of his son. He is a father who stays on the “look-out” scanning the horizon for the return of his son. When he does see his son a long way off he is moved with **pity** and runs out to meet him. The father’s love for his son takes the initiative. He meets his son with love’s extravagance (giving him gifts-fine robe, ring, sandals and a fatted calf) and rather than listening to his son’s speech of repentance, the father organizes a grand home-coming party. After all, his son who was lost is now found and is at home where he belongs.

Meanwhile the elder son stays at home and works long hours in the fields for his father. When he returns from the fields he really does not really make it home. His father tells him the good news of his younger brother’s return but the elder son refuses to listen. In fact the elder son is shocked by his father’s response to his renegade younger brother. His father comes out a second time to plead with him to come home and join the party since his younger brother has returned safely. The elder son’s response is one of anger and he refuses to join the party. It seems clear to him that bad behavior gets rewarded while good responsible behavior is ignored. The elder son cannot accept a father who does not abide by his rules. His younger brother should have

been shunned by his father for his bad behavior. He (elder son) should be getting his father’s love and attention because he has earned it with his responsible behavior over the years. Unlike his father the elder son cannot freely give his younger brother his love, mercy and **forgiveness**.

Jesus’ parable illustrates the love and mercy that God shows to repentant sinners. His parable also contrasts God the Father’s openness with the closed-mindedness of those who consider themselves faithful. In reality Jesus is contrasting the compassion of God with the mean-spiritedness of the Pharisees and scribes. Like the elder brother, these religious leaders lack compassion and they seem to resent the fact that God is merciful and gives His **forgiveness** freely towards all who repent and place their trust in Him.

During this season of Lent, as all of us are preparing to renew our baptismal promises at Easter, we would do well to examine how well we are living out the theological virtues of faith, hope and love that were given to us at our baptism. Also during this Lenten season, when we turn to the sacrament of Reconciliation to ask for **forgiveness** from God the Father who continues to reconcile the world to Himself through Jesus, it is good to ask ourselves how **we** are doing as **forgivers** and agents of reconciliation to one another. May all of us be granted to grace to **forgive** one another as God **forgives** us. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,  
Fr. John

#### PALM SUNDAY MEN'S RETREAT



**Malvern**  
Retreat House

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)

#### PARISH PENANCE SERVICE

Our Parish Penance Service will be on  
**Wednesday, April 10 at 7 PM**

## EASTER TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil/Mass constitute the Easter Triduum. ***These are the 3 highest holy days in the Catholic calendar.*** We urge every parishioner, wherever you may be on these days, to attend the main service on each day: Mass on Holy Thursday (the Mother of all Masses), the Good Friday Liturgy Service (commemorating Jesus' death), and the Easter Vigil and Mass (celebrating redemption and resurrection).



### HOLY THURSDAY - APRIL 18

**Tenebrae 9 AM** (Latin for "shadows" or "darkness") is service celebrated on the evening before or early morning of Holy Thursday, Good Friday,

and Holy Saturday, which are the last three days of Holy Week. The distinctive ceremony of Tenebrae is the gradual extinguishing of candles while a series of readings and psalms is chanted or recited.

**The Lord's Supper Mass 7:00**

**GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 19**

**Tenebrae 9:00 AM**

**Liturgy of the Passion 3:00 PM**

**Stations of the Cross 7:00 PM**



### HOLY SATURDAY - APRIL 20

**Tenebrae 9:00 AM**

**Easter Basket Blessing Tradition 11 AM**

**Easter Vigil Mass 8:00 PM**

## EASTER VIGIL

This Saturday during the Easter Vigil we welcome into full communion with the whole church members of our parish.

The Lord has called them by name from all eternity. ***You, and all of us, shall be called GOD'S DELIGHT because your God rejoices in you!***

We also wish to celebrate all those men and women who over the years have come into full communion with us. May the Holy Spirit always guide them closer to Jesus.

**EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 21**

**7:30, 9:00, 11:00 Masses**

**50<sup>th</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS**

Were you married in 1969? In honor of your 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, there will be a special Mass and reception on Sunday, **July 14, at 2:00 p.m.** at Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill. Bishop Ronald W. Gainer will be the celebrant. To receive an invitation, please contact your parish office. **Deadline April 25<sup>th</sup>.**



## 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**. We'd love to see you at the Men's Conference on April 6<sup>th</sup>!

## SURVIVOR COMPENSATION PROGRAM

The Diocese of Harrisburg is committed to helping survivors of clergy sexual abuse find healing. In addition to mental and spiritual assistance, the Diocese has opened its Survivor Compensation Program. This Program is administered



by Commonwealth Mediation and Conciliation, Inc. (CMCI), an independent organization with decades of experience managing similar programs. Survivors of clergy sexual abuse that occurred in the Diocese of Harrisburg are encouraged to learn more about the program by visiting **www.commonwealthmediation.com**, **www.youthprotectionhbg.com**, or by calling 1-800-540-2624 or emailing **Harrisburg@commonwealthmediation.com**.

Please be aware that Survivors known to the Diocese are not automatically enrolled in the Program and must apply through the program administrator CMCI.

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, April 1**

- 7:00      ✠Ed Freeman
- 9:00      Josephine Novotnak

**Tuesday, April 2**

- 7:00      ✠Dorothy Huber
- 9:00      ✠George Novotnak

**Wednesday, April 3**

- 7:00      ✠Terrell Family
- 9:00      ✠Robert A. Box

**Thursday, April 4, St. Isidore, Bishop and Doctor  
of the Church**

- 7:00      ✠Karl Banack
- 9:00      ✠Frank Steidler

**Friday, April 5, St. Vincent Ferrer, Priest**

- 7:00      ✠Maria Lopez
- 9:00      The family of Jack Muldowney

**Saturday, April 6**

- 9:00      ✠Andy Zipfel
- 5:00      ✠Joseph Kopernik

**Sunday, April 7**

- 7:30      For the Parishioners
- 9:00      ✠Marion Frey
- 11:00     ✠Victoria Jumarang

**CHURCH  SUPPORT**

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
3-24-19	\$17,412.95	\$14,300.00	(\$3,112.95)
<b>YTD</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>YTD Needed</b>	<b>Difference</b>
3-24-19	\$500,688.33	\$557,700.00	(\$57,011.67)

**SECOND COLLECTION**

**APRIL 7-CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES:**

Next week, our parish will take up The Catholic Relief Services Collection. Funds from this collection provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and bring Christ’s love and mercy to all people here and abroad. Next week, please give generously to the collection, and **help Jesus in disguise**. Learn more about the collection at [www.usccb.org/catholic-relief](http://www.usccb.org/catholic-relief).

**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 Parishioners.

**YEARLINGS NEWS**

We will meet for lunch on **April 9<sup>th</sup>** at **11:30 AM** at the Wyomissing Restaurant & Bakery 1245, Penn Avenue in Wyomissing. Call if you need to car pool. We can meet in the church parking lot. Call Gloria at 717-738-9098. All seniors are welcome to join us.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED  
SACRAMENT**

In a sense, the prodigal son was “dead” because of the sins he had committed when he was away from home. But the moment he came back, it’s as if he had come back to life. Jesus used this fellow to describe people who have not accepted the love that God has for them. They need to turn and come home to him. They need what we would call an “initial conversion.”

These are the people God asks us to lift up in prayer in a special way—especially our loved ones who are far from the Lord. May they all experience an initial conversion!

The prodigal son’s older brother, however, was already “alive.” He was faithful and hardworking. But he also needed a conversion. He may have been obedient to his father, but a lot of sinful thoughts still occupied his mind. This fellow needed “ongoing conversion,” a deeper turning away from his habits of resentment, anger, and self-righteousness.

Even if we believe in Jesus, pray every day, and go to Mass regularly, we still need ongoing conversion. We can be trying our best to live good lives and to care for our families. But we can fall into judgmental, self-righteous, self-centered ways of thinking. And so God asks us to keep turning to him for help and healing.

**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.

Margaret Gardner, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Carlos Luciano Sr., Gerald Gigliotti, Francis Gatti,

Antonia Scribani, Jean Mash, Jody Shimp, Jean Mack, Gloria Kreider, Ellen Moran, Lisa Crills, Jayne Wenger, Marianne Kurtz, Connie Scanlon and Ray Ward.

**TV MASS FOR THE HOMEBOUND**

**WHP-TV channel 21 (CBS) at 7:30 AM**

Is someone you love unable to join us at church during this holy time of Lent and Easter? For the faithful at home or in healthcare settings, the Heart of the Nation Sunday TV Mass brings spiritual comfort and the blessings of joy-filled hope in our Risen Savior. Please invite anyone you know who cannot get out to church



to tune in Catholic Mass on TV or watch online anytime on Sundays at [www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org). (For those who can get to church, the TV or online liturgy does not fulfill the Sunday Mass obligation.)

**ARTICLES FOR THE BULLETIN**

Announcements 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.**

**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**.

**ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTS  
DESIGNER BAG BINGO**

Join us on Saturday, April 27 1-4 pm, doors open at 12 NOON! Tickets - \$25 -20 Bingo Games with Designer bag prizes. Other chances to WIN: 50/50 • Games • Door Prizes 2 special Bingo • Raffle Snack bar open for food and drink purchases! For Tickets - Contact Lisa Sheafferlisaksheaffer@gmail.com

**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, in the Parish Office after Sunday Masses, or in person at the school office. **Sales end April 24<sup>th</sup>.**

**HERSHEYPARK**

*Hersheypark* Discount Ticket Offer! Discount tickets to *Hersheypark* are available to the friends and families of the parish for **significant savings**.

Gate admission for Regular is \$69.80; our price is **\$35.50** (ALL ages 3+).

\*ADD-ON discount *Hersheypark* Meal Tickets at a savings of up to 30% off retail prices - **\$11.99 each** and \*ADD-ON Snack Vouchers - **\$3.50 each**.

Orders must be received at the parish by **Monday, April 29**. Parishes will receive tickets by **Friday, May 24**. Order forms can be found on the table in the Narthex. *Also, keep an eye out for an order form in the bulletin soon!*



Religious Education Corner:

**This Week's Corporal Work of Mercy  
Care For The Sick:**

Make a meal for a friend/neighbor who has a family member with a chronic health condition.

Visit with an elderly neighbor,  
friend or family member.

Volunteer to help at a local nursing home.

**This Week's Spiritual Work of Mercy  
Forgive Offenses:**

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet  
for someone who has wronged you.

Let go of grudges.

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**Our RE Class Schedule For End Of March  
And The Beginning Of April Is As Follows:**

**Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes In Session**

**Kelly Lawrence**

**FORMED**

**ACCESS CATHOLIC FAITH ON THE GO**

As we draw closer to Holy Week I would like to make you aware of the many excellent and outstanding 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. Programs and movies such as **I Thirst**, **Seven Secrets of a Good Confession**, **Mary of Nazareth**, **Along the Way of the Cross**, **The Paschal Mystery Study**, **Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead**, and **The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy** are now available to you to ensure that Holy Week and the Easter Season will be a truly rewarding spiritual journey for you and your family. Children movies and cartoons are available too! To access these programs, movies and other amazing Catholic materials simply visit

[omph.formed.org](http://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

*CRUSADER EXPERIENCE*

Come experience what it is like to be a Crusader on **April 11 and May 9<sup>th</sup>** during our Group Shadow days. Students in eighth through eleventh grades in public schools, or other private schools, are encouraged to join us. A **FREE LUNCH** is provided to all prospective students when they visit. **Contact Kyla Hockley at 717-509-0313 or email [khockley@lchsyes.org](mailto:khockley@lchsyes.org) for more information.**

**NEEDED**

**GOLFERS AND SPONSORS**

**for Our Mother of Perpetual Help  
School 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Golf  
Tournament May 8, 2019  
Honeybrook Golf Club**



Enjoy a fun filled day of golf at a first class course. Prizes and contests including a chance to win a trip for two to the 2020 Super Bowl or \$15,000 cash. A single golfer is only \$90 and includes golf at Honeybrook Golf Course, cart, range balls, contests, prizes, light breakfast, delicious lunch and refreshments.

Advertising through sponsorship reaches members of surrounding business communities as well as school families and friends and is available by contacting the School Development Office at 717-738-2414 or [www.golfgenius.com/ggid/omphgolfouting](http://www.golfgenius.com/ggid/omphgolfouting).

**ROSARY IN HONOR OF THE FAMILY**

The Knights of Columbus are inviting all members of OMPH to participate in the organization's 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Rosary Program. **This service will be conducted after the 11 am mass this Sunday, March 31st** The Rosary will be dedicated to the families of OMPH parish.

The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882, by the Venerable Father Michael McGivney, a priest at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn. With charity as

its first principle, the organization has grown to 1.88 million members worldwide. Last year, the Knights donated more than 173 million and more than 71.5 million hours of service to charitable cause.

### GIFT CARDS

Gift Cards are now available for purchase in the Parish Office!

Gift cards to local grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies and restaurants are now available for purchase in the Parish Office every Sunday from 8am to 11am. It costs nothing extra to purchase these gift cards, and OMPH School earns a percentage of the value of the gift cards purchased! The funds raised through the gift card initiative are directed to the School Support Scholarship program. Purchases can be made using cash or a check made out to OMPH School. Please join us in supporting our gift card program!