

My Dear Parishioners,

St. Pope John Paul II was concerned about some of the confessors at St. Peter's Basilica. He was hearing that some of his priests (who were celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the many pilgrims) were being judgmental and rough on the penitents. He called the confessors together and reminded them that their ministry is about **mercy**. "Confession and reconciliation is an act of honesty and courage," John Paul II said, "an act of entrusting ourselves beyond sin to the **mercy** of a loving and forgiving God." John Paul II then encouraged his priests to be sure that they **always be** a reflection of God's **mercy** with their penitents.

Pope Francis in his Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of **Mercy** known as "Misericordia Vultus" stated: "We need constantly to contemplate the **mystery of mercy**. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. **Mercy**: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. **Mercy**: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. **Mercy**: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. **Mercy**: the bridge that connects God and man; opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

Today we celebrate "**Divine Mercy Sunday**." **Mercy** is the expression of God's charity: God's **love** and **forgiveness**. The purpose of the "**Divine Mercy**" devotion is for all of us to "obtain **mercy**, to trust in Christ's **mercy**, and to show **mercy** to others." The Scripture readings for today remind us that we should be grateful that we **do** have a God of **mercy** and that we need to share that message with others: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Jesus invites and sends us forth to be the face of the Father's compassion and **mercy** in the peace of the Holy Spirit within our families, schools, work places, and communities.

During the Easter season our first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles rather than from the Old Testament because we are to see the life of the young Christian Church as a continuation of the redeeming

work of Jesus' **mercy**. In the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke (the author) records the advance of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the various parts of the Roman Empire. Throughout his writing Luke reminds his readers that the power of the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to go to the ends of the earth preaching and witnessing to the Risen Jesus.

Today's passage from Acts (along with 4: 32-35 and 5:11-16) constitutes Luke's three major summaries which present a rather idyllic picture of the Christian community at its inception. The early Christian community was a **faithful** Church devoted to the teachings from the Apostles. The Apostles witness to Jesus' Resurrection provided an invaluable link to the Incarnate Word. The Apostolic teaching also provided the source of **unity** among all the believers. The Christian community was a **communal** Church where all members shared and cared for the poor. The faith community pooled its earthly resources to help those less fortunate and needy. The Christian community was a **praying** Church devoted to "the breaking of the bread" (celebrating the Eucharist). The early Christian community was a happy Church enjoying favor with all people. All their energy was focused on service to the Lord and the kingdom He preached. Their numbers grew daily because of the Risen Lord's Spirit and because others were inspired by the sincerity of their charitable lives and their constant praise of God.

Today's second reading is from the First Letter of St. Peter. This letter was written from Rome to the Christian converts in northern Asia Minor in the late 70's or early 80's either by St. Peter shortly before his death or by a group of leaders who knew Peter well and his thought. The letter presents the reality of authentic Christian life which must be tested by fire in situations that transcend all cultural experiences, political situations, and time.

In today's passage the author reminds his audience that their life is patterned in an unbelieving world on the death and resurrection of Jesus. The author reminds his listeners that God's **mercy** is the cause of all the good that takes place in the life of a Christian. A Christian's new life on earth and their destiny to enter the Kingdom of heaven are due to the **mercy** revealed in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Baptism enables a Christian to receive this new life. Baptism is a new birth to many blessings. It is a birth to true **hope**; a hope which draws its life from what happened to Jesus in His rising from the dead. A Christian's new life is a birth to an **inheritance**-the heavenly kingdom. Christians can see themselves as reborn of the incorruptible seed of God Himself. And best of all, a Christian's new life is a birth to salvation. Because of their new life Christians can rejoice when facing suffering, trials, and disappointments because they are preparing for the glorious coming of Jesus Christ.

Today's Gospel takes us from fear to joy, seclusion to mission, absence to presence, disbelief to faith, and mere existence to new life. In short, today's Gospel reminds us that God's **love** and **mercy** is available to all. St. John reveals this thought through two episodes and a conclusion in today's Gospel passage. The first episode (vs. 19-23) deals with Jesus' appearance to the disciples and the second (vs. 24-29) with His appearance to Thomas. John's conclusion (vs. 30-31) challenges future generations to believe in the availability of God's **love** and **mercy**.

Immediately following Jesus' crucifixion His disciples went into hiding behind locked doors. They feared that Jesus' fate would also be their fate. To their astonishment and without warning Jesus appears in their midst. Jesus emerges from the darkness of the tomb and penetrates the locked room to demonstrate the futility of the disciple's fear. Jesus' first words to the disciples are, "Peace be with you." He calms their fears by showing them His wounds; indicating that it is really Jesus who had been hanging on the cross. Jesus transforms their fear into joy. The disciples are no longer looking at the Crucified Jesus but rather the Risen Jesus. Two more times Jesus confirms His gift of peace to the disciples. His words invite them to embrace Divine providence. Jesus divinely commissions His disciples by breathing upon them the power of the Holy Spirit and sending them forth to become God's instrument of His **forgiveness, love** and **mercy**.

Thomas was not present when Jesus commissioned the other ten disciples. The disciples shared with Thomas everything that had happened and confessed that they had seen the Risen Lord. Thomas'

response to them is one of doubt, indicating that he did not believe what they shared with him. He wants some sort of proof; expressed by his wanting to see Jesus' wounds and put his finger in the nail marks. If he can do that then he will believe.

A week later, Thomas gets his wish. The Risen Jesus once again appears in the midst of the disciples and this time Thomas is present. Jesus goes through the locked doors, grants everyone His peace, and then invites Thomas to inspect His wounds. Thomas's doubt is removed and He believes in the Risen Lord. He confesses and proclaims that Jesus is his "Lord and God." Jesus then states that those who have not seen and experienced His **mercy** but still believe in Him are truly blessed. Thus Thomas' "profession of faith" becomes the model for all believers in every generation.

Jesus was **merciful** to the disciples and to Thomas in his doubt. There are so many people in our community in need of God's **mercy**. Children cry out for **mercy** as they stumble through life. Married couples cry out for **mercy** as they make mistakes in their married life. Pastors need **mercy** for not always being the best administrator or communicator. The poor need **mercy** in order to survive. The sick need **mercy** in dealing with their illness and not feeling like they are a burden to others. The Church itself needs **mercy** because we often reflect the face of power, popularity and prestige rather than the face of the Risen Christ of compassion, charity and forgiveness.

The Risen Jesus gave Saint Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis and all Popes throughout the Church's history the authority and mission to be a sign of His **love** and **mercy** in our modern world. That same Risen Jesus gives to every one of **us** that same power and authority to be His instrument of **forgiveness, love** and **mercy** in our communities. May we all realize this Easter season our ability to be Jesus' instrument of love and **mercy** and utilize this ability to bring His love, joy, hope, and **forgiveness** to all we meet. Have a blessed and **merciful** week!

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

BISHOP'S ANNUAL LENTEN  
APPEAL UPDATE

“I GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE”

“I give you an example.” John 13:15

We began our Annual Diocesan Lenten Appeal on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Our Parish assessment figure for this year is **\$104,900**. As of Easter Sunday **335** families/households have pledged **\$86,524.76** and we have collected **\$64,278.15**. I want to say **Thank you** to those who have already made pledges and have given to the appeal.

As you can see we are **\$18,376.00** short of our pledge goal. According to our Parish Census there are approximately 1200 families/households in our Parish. I humbly ask and pray that those who have **not** make a pledge yet will kindly consider doing so in order that we make our assessment. You do **not** have to pay off your pledge all at once. You can pay it off weekly or monthly. If you need a Pledge Envelop you may pick one up in the Parish Office or in the Church narthex.

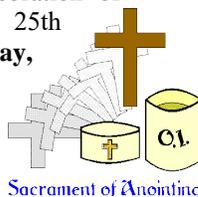
The funds collected for the Lenten Appeal help support the numerous Pastoral, Charitable, Educational, and Spiritual Programs in our diocese. Please note that funds raised during this year’s Appeal that surpass our Parish assessment figure will be returned to us and placed in our Parish Saving’s Account. Likewise, if we do not meet our assessment figure, funds will be taken out of our Savings Account to make up the difference. May God bless you and your loved ones for your kindness, generosity and support to this year’s appeal.

Gratefully,  
Fr. John



### JUBILEE

There will be a celebration of Father John’s 25<sup>th</sup> Ordination on **Saturday, May 13** in the Father Jackson center from 12:00-3:30. It is open to all who wish to attend.



Sacrament of Anointing

There will be sign-up sheets in the narthex after all Masses. Please sign as soon as possible so we can have a count for the caterer. Due to the fact there will be adult beverages available, it will be open to those 21 years of age and over.

### IMMACULATE CONCEPTION NATIONAL SHRINE WASHINGTON DC



The Trinity Dome is the central and largest dome of the National Shrine. This “Crowning Jewel” will be adorned in mosaic according to the original iconographic scheme of the Great Upper Church and will depict the Most Holy Trinity, the

Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception, and a procession of saints who have an association with the United States and the National Shrine.

The procession of saints includes, among others, **St. Juan Diego** (the first canonized male Native American), **St. Kateri Tekakwitha** (the first canonized female Native American), **St. Teresa of Calcutta** (an honorary American citizen), **St. Francis Cabrini, M.S.C.** (the first U.S. citizen to be canonized), **St. John Paul II** (the first pope to visit the National Shrine), and **St. Junípero Serra** (declared a saint by Pope Francis at the National Shrine in 2015 for the first canonization ever to take place on American soil).

**The Nicene Creed will encircle the base of the dome**, while the dome’s four curved triangles formed by the intersection the dome will feature the **four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.**

For a detailed view visit:

<https://www.trinitydome.org/about/#the-trinity-dome>

### HEALING MASS

On **Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>** Fr John will celebrate a Mass with the **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** at **2 PM**. We invite all of our parishioners who are afflicted by illness (whether in body, soul or spirit) and our beloved **elderly** to attend this special Eucharistic celebration Come out and receive Jesus’ healing power and love.

### THANK YOU

I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to our **Knights of Columbus Father Daley Council #4191** for their most generous donation of **\$1,000.00** which was used to help purchase our **new ice machine** in our Parish kitchen. Thank you my Brother Knights and may



The Diocese of Harrisburg is seeking dedicated Catholic educators for our Catholic Schools who are rooted in their faith and prepared to share the message of the gospel. Positions are available for **September 2017** from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

For more information contact the Diocese of Harrisburg, Secretariat for Education, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710; 657-4804 or visit our website [www.hbgdiocese.org](http://www.hbgdiocese.org).

### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY-MONDAY, APRIL 24

Pope Francis said it was a duty of everyone not to forget the “senseless slaughter” of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians from 1915 to 1923. The Armenian Genocide began on the 24th of April, 1915. The systematic massacres and deportations of Armenians from their historic homelands began on the 24th of April, 1915. Public figures – politicians, clergymen, educators, artists – were arrested and summarily executed in the capital Constantinople (Istanbul) or sent into exile. The Armenian Genocide followed decades of discrimination and pogroms against Armenians and other minorities, most notably the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1896, and the Adana Massacre of 1909.



Holy Family  
Radio  
AM 720 WHYF

**Support the New Evangelization,** enjoy a great meal and listen to a very special speaker. That is what is planned for **Friday, May 5** when Holy Family Radio, AM 720 WHYF presents Dr. Steven Smith of Mount St. Mary's Seminary. He will keynote the evening that will be emceed by Tom Russell of CBS 21 and Bishop Ronald Gainer. Held at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey on Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, the fundraising dinner for the non-profit independent Catholic Radio Apostolate begins at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. Cost is \$100 per person. Register on-line at [www.720whyf.com](http://www.720whyf.com) or via mail: Holy Family Radio, PO Box 6028, Lancaster, PA 17607-6028. Smith is a popular Catholic speaker and author. His audio CD —“The Resurrection of Jesus: Fact or Fiction” has sold over 12,000 copies. He has appeared on the EWTN TV program, The Journey Home.

**SEEKING CATHOLIC EDUCATORS**

### MASS INTENTIONS

#### Monday, April 24, St. Fidelis, Priest & Martyr

7:00 Intentions in the Prayer Box  
9:00 †David Seas

#### Tuesday, April 25, St. Mark, Evangelist

7:00 †D & J Killen  
9:00 †Deacon Arthur Colonell

#### Wednesday, April 26

7:00 †J & D Killen  
9:00 †Mike Kiseik

#### Thursday, April 27

7:00 †J & D Killen  
9:00 †Leonard Riley

#### Friday, April 28, St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, Priest

7:00 Special Intention  
10:00 Grandparents Day

#### Saturday, April 29, St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin & Doctor

9:00 †Ian James  
5:00 †Richard Dieckhaus

#### Sunday, April, 30

7:30 For the Parishioners  
9:00 †Thomas Sikie  
11:00 †Margaret McCabe

### IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

We will be publishing the names of your dear loved ones who are seriously ill or injured. *We will keep them in the bulletin for one month.* 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.

**April 2:** Tony Cicero, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Margie Willwerth

**April 9:** Alex Masluk, Mary Kay Guthrie, Elizabeth Farnquist, Richard Warner

**April 23:** Jennifer Ranker,

**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 Thomas Sikie.

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-9-17	\$ 13,896.02	\$14,326.00	(\$429.98)
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-9-17	\$572,363.12	\$587,366.00	(\$15,002.88)
Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-16-17	\$ 16,162.89	\$14,326.00	\$1,836.89
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-16-17	\$588,526.01	\$601,692.00	(\$13,164.99)

extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday where God desires to flood the world with His mercy in a special way. To receive these graces, the only condition is to receive Holy Communion worthily on Divine Mercy Sunday (or the Vigil celebration) by making a good confession beforehand and staying in the state of grace and trusting in His Divine Mercy. We are also to perform works of mercy. Praying for a a culture of life and the conversion of all those participating in the culture of death are spiritual works of mercy. Pray for conversion for all those mothers who have abortions scheduled this week. Pray for all those grieving over the loss of a child. Let His Divine Mercy overflow from our hearts to the whole world.

**Andrea Ostrowski**

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED  
SACRAMENT**

**DIVINE MERCY AT WORK**



*Today is Divine Mercy Sunday.* The Old Testament tells us about God’s merciful love. When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, he promised to show mercy to everyone who loves him and obeys his word. King David sang about the Lord who “pardons,” “heals,” and “redeems” us because he is “merciful and gracious”. Even the prophets, who regularly spoke about doom and destruction for the “rebel Israel,” also recalled God’s desire to pour his merciful love on his people. The teaching of God’s merciful love shines even brighter in the Gospels, Jesus prays, “Father, forgive them”. Pause for a moment and picture God’s merciful love flowing into you. See yourself as the imperfect, sinful person you know you are. Now, see Jesus washing you clean and embracing you.



**RESPECT**

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God's mercy is greater than our sins. He wants us to call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

The Divine Mercy message is one we can call to mind simply by remembering ABC:

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to



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Religious Education Corner:

Isaac's Fundraiser To Benefit OMPH RE

Thank You To Everyone Who Dined At Or Picked-Up Takeout From Isaacs On Wednesday, April 19, 2017 To Benefit The RE Program

**Our RE Class/Mass Schedule For The  
Remainder Of The Year Is As Follows:**

**Last RE Classes Of The Year**

**Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> – RE Classes Resume**

**Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes Resume**

**Closing Mass Invitations Will Go Home This Week**

**Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> First Holy Communion Masses**

**9:00 AM Mass & 11:00 AM Mass**

**Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> RE 5:00 PM RE Closing Mass  
With May Crowning And Social To Follow**

**For All RE Families**

**Kelly Lawrence**



Don't forget to SAVE THE DATE for OMPH VBS! Join us at Maker Fun Factory July 9 – 13 from 5:45 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. Look for volunteer sign up in the hallway in the upcoming weeks. Call Carolyn at 799-8222 with any questions. See you there!!

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



Our FIRST EVER Designer Bag Bingo!!!! **Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup>** from 1-4 PM. Doors will open at 12 noon \$20 per ticket includes 20 BINGO games! Win Designer Bags – Michael Kors, COACH, Kate Spade, Thirty-One and MORE! Food/Drink will be available for purchase! **Tickets will be for sale after all masses in April**, but for more information contact, Kerry Pepper at [Kbpepper99@gmail.com](mailto:Kbpepper99@gmail.com) 721-6766.

*SAVE THE DATE SCHOOL  
EVENTS*

OMPH ALUMNI

Calling all OMPH alumni! Join us **on Saturday, September 16**. All classes welcome to celebrate the schools **60<sup>th</sup> year!** For more info- find us on Facebook under OMPH reunion. Thank you! Lauren DePaul Caramenico.

OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION  
FOR 2017-18

WE ARE ENROLLING! Registration is now open to all parish families for Preschool through Grade 8 for the 2017-2018 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 738-2414. To learn more about our school, please **visit our website** at [www.omph.org](http://www.omph.org) or call the school office at 738-2414 for further information. **Find us on Facebook** at OMPH Ephrata!

OMPH GOLF OUTING MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>



Not a Golfer? Can't take time off to participate in this year's 25th Annual Golf Tournament? There is another way to participate and support this important school fundraiser. We are in need of donations for door prize items, such as:

**New Golf Equipment  
Golf Day Spirit Basket  
Sports Theme Basket**

Sponsorships are still available. Golf Registration Deadline is May 3rd. What a great way to support the school while advertising for your business. Contact the Development Office at 738-2414 for more information

materials by June 2, 2017. Visit [www.lchsyas.org/apps/jobs/](http://www.lchsyas.org/apps/jobs/) for qualifications, required materials, and more information!

### TEACHING POSITION OPEN AT OMPH SCHOOL

OMPH School is seeking a first grade teacher for the 2017-2018 school year. Interested candidates must be a practicing Catholic holding a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and PA Instructional I teaching certificate. Applicants must complete the online Youth Protection program of the Diocese of Harrisburg and provide current clearances (PA State Police, Child Abuse Clearance and FBI Fingerprinting) along with employment information compliant with Pennsylvania Act 168 regulations. Benefits include medical coverage, dental plan, life insurance policy and 401K plan. For further information please contact Principal Margaret Gardner, at 738-2414; [mgardner@omph.org](mailto:mgardner@omph.org)

### LCHS ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the first time, LCHS is proud to announce an Online Raffle to benefit the 3rd Annual Purple & Gold Gala. For the entire month of April, you will be able to purchase raffle tickets to win 8 different baskets with themes including... "The Royal Treatment", "S'more Family Fun", "Rossmere Tailgate Party", "Lovin' Lancaster", "I-P-yAy!", "Gift Cards Galore", "Hidden Treasure" and "Stock the Bar".

**Winners will be announced on April 29 at the Gala.  
YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.**

Visit

<https://www.accelevents.com/events/galarafflebasket17#raffle> to purchase tickets!

### MATH TEACHER NEEDED

Lancaster Catholic High School is seeking a full-time, certified math teacher for the 2017-2018 academic year. Interested applications should submit all