

My Dear Parishioners,

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Easter which is also known as **Divine Mercy Sunday**. We are challenged to heed Jesus' call to become His hope-filled and **merciful** presence in our homes, in our schools, in our communities and in our work sites. The world needs **us** who have experienced Jesus' **mercy** and **love** within our lives to share that **mercy** and **love** with all those we meet.

Christianity has its beginnings in the fact that some people actually met Jesus of Nazareth and were never the same because of their personal encounter with Him. Something special happened to them and they were changed forever. Because of their encounter with Jesus these people saw themselves and their future differently. They claimed that their **new identity** and **new direction in life** was due to Him. They said that without Jesus they would have stayed the same. He was the sole reason for their **new experience of life**.

Jesus' first disciples and followers are good examples of people whose lives changed dramatically after their encounter with Him. Before they met Jesus they all had their own occupations, their own identities and their own way of life. After they encountered Jesus all of that changed. They did not stop being themselves but rather they saw themselves in a **new way** and the direction of their lives was changed to **following in Jesus' footsteps**. They become known as **Jesus' crowd**.

But what happens to all that when Jesus dies? If our **identity** as a follower of Jesus depends on Him being around what happens when there is no more Jesus? What happens to the **direction of our life** when Jesus is no longer physically present to lead you? What happens to our **enthusiasm** for the values of Jesus when He is no longer around to clarify what they mean for us? Does life after Jesus mean life without Jesus? Does everything come to a dead stop as long as He is not physically present with us? Everything does **not** come to a dead stop as today's readings will remind us.

Today's first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. This book records the achievements of Jesus' apostles after His Ascension into Heaven. None of the apostles, however, would ever take personal credit for what they did or for what they accomplished. They knew and proclaimed that all the credit belonged to the Risen Lord and to the power of the Holy Spirit which they received at Pentecost. However, the apostle Peter played a prominent role in the early Church as seen in

the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Peter addressed his fellow Jews on the feast of Pentecost, boldly proclaimed the Gospel before the high council, and pronounced judgement on the deceitful Ananias and his wife Sapphira.

Today's passage begins with the news that the apostles were God's instruments in working many signs and wonders in various communities. In doing so they carried forward the Jesus' work and ministry. The saving power of God (exhibited in Jesus) continues through His chosen apostles. Like Jesus during His public ministry, the apostles were given the charismatic power to heal the sick and to forgive sins. Just as people brought their sick to Jesus for healing so now they bring their sick to the apostles. People's faith is so strong that they are satisfied to have just the shadow of Peter fall upon their loved one, believing that their loved one would be cured and they were cured. Even though Jesus was not physically present His healing and saving power continued to flow and work through His apostles and through the community of those who believed in Him.

Our second reading throughout this year's Easter Season will be taken from the Book of Revelation. For many of us the Book of Revelation makes us nervous. Isn't that the book about the end of the world? Isn't that book about doom and gloom? In the book of Revelation there are so many obscure images, metaphors, and symbols (things like lampstands, robes, gold sashes, trumpets, beasts and monsters.) What is it all about and what does it have to do with me?

At the beginning of Revelation (as revealed in today's passage) we are given the context of everything that follows in the whole book. Hear clearly what the author declares: "I, John... was caught up in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet." John is caught up by the Spirit and is commissioned by God as if he were like the prophets of old. The function of John's vision is twofold: it clarifies the nature of his task and it confers divine authority on his task. John is gripped with fear; literally frightened to death. The figure in the vision responds with the standard declaration of reassurance: "Fear not! Do not be afraid!" The figure then identifies himself with the classic divine self-revelation: "I am!" The figure in the vision clearly takes to himself divine characteristics. This vision is not merely just for John but rather it is clearly meant for the entire Church as well. What the

Book of Revelation dramatically reveals to us is that Jesus' Resurrection from the dead means that He **is still** present to us, He **is still** speaking to us, and He **is still** revealing His purpose and plan to us.

According to John's Gospel, Jesus' Resurrection and His conferring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles all occurred on Easter Sunday. The synoptic Gospels, especially Luke, spread these glorious events out over a fifty day period. Today's passage from John contains a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to His disciples, the conferral of the Holy Spirit upon them, and a special encounter involving the apostle Thomas.

The appearance of the Risen Jesus to the disciples in today's Gospel passage reveals the praxis for **believing** in His Resurrection and the praxis for **living the new life** of the Resurrection. Our passage begins with getting rid of fear. The darkness of the evening and the locked doors of the place both highlight the degree to which the disciples' lives are enshrouded with fear. But Jesus emerges from the darkness and penetrates the locked room to demonstrate the futility of fear. The same divine force that causes the stone at the tomb to roll away permits Jesus to pass through human obstacles and defenses. Three times Jesus says: "Peace be with you!" His words invite His disciples to embrace the Divine Providence. Jesus then breathes upon them the power of the Holy Spirit and He sends them forth to become God's instruments of forgiveness, healing, love and mercy. The disciples breathe in and the Spirit becomes part of them. However, one of their numbers is missing-Thomas.

When Thomas arrives to hear the disciple's story he refuses to believe what he hears. Thomas is part of the apostolic group but he is also a distinct independent self-thinker. He cannot be loyal to the other apostles while being disloyal to his own inner self convictions. For Thomas honesty is more important than loyalty so he refuses to become part of the company of believers. It is not enough for him to shelter in a **faith** that he cannot credit for himself. Thomas may want to believe, he may yearn to accept as true what the others say, but still his wish cannot struggle into **faith**. Doubt cannot be transformed into **faith** by merely willing it. For Thomas it is more important for **what** he is asked to believe in rather than simply belonging to a company of believers.

Later on in today's passage the Risen Jesus appears to His disciples and the purpose of the visit is

clearly to pay attention to Thomas' doubt; not to scorn it. Thomas is invited to inspect a wounded Jesus in order to discover the reality of His Resurrection. Seeing Jesus is enough for Thomas so he is the one who proclaims the basic Christian credo: "My Lord and my God!" Just as Thomas is fearless in voicing his doubts so he is quick to proclaim his **faith**. Thomas makes the most important affirmation about who Jesus is; Jesus is Lord and God.

We all can appreciate that the character of Thomas is much larger than the apostle Thomas. Thomas stands for all those who have **not seen** Jesus but are asked to **believe** in Him. The story of Thomas leads to the beautiful beatitude aimed at generations of people who will **never see** the physically Risen Jesus: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

In coming to believe in the Risen Jesus the disciples experienced a profound change. They became **spirited followers** of their Lord and Savior. Jesus' disciples have a unique place in the Church since they experienced Jesus at firsthand and were authorized to be His witnesses. But what about all those people who never saw Him, heard Him or touched Him? And **we** are numbered among them. Can we believe without seeing or touching Him? That is why today's readings are so important because they reassure us that it **is possible** to believe in Jesus without physically seeing, touching or hearing Him. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." This beatitude is for all of us who live in the absence of the physical Jesus but still believe in Him as our Lord and Savior. It is in Jesus that **we** have our **identity as His disciples** and follow **His direction** in our lives. Like the apostles (because we too **believe** in Jesus) we now know **who** we are and **what** we must do. Have a blessed week.

Love & Prayers,
Fr. John

KITCHEN HELP WANTED



We are in need of a weekend cook for *St. Clements Rectory*. If you are interested in a part time position cooking for 10-15 priests, brothers and guests at the parish rectory, please call *Kim at 717-733-6596 ext. 111*. We would love to speak to those willing to provide fresh and nutritious meals and *serve with a smile*.

MASS INTENTIONS

**Monday, April 29, St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin
and Doctor of the Church**

7:00 Fr. John Biermann, S.A.C.
9:00 † Ian James West

Tuesday, April 30

7:00 † Robert Bruce
9:00 † Dorothy Killen

Wednesday, May 1, St. Joseph the Worker

7:00 † Robert W. Henry
9:00 † Florence Hydock

**Thursday, May 2, St. Athanasus, Bishop and
Doctor of the Church**

9:00 † Nick & Alice Nescot
7:00 † Dennis Engles

Friday, May 3, Sts. Phillip & James

7:00 † Bill Hecker
10:00 † Adriana Joy Fittipaldi

Saturday, May 4

7:00 † Mary Muscavage
9:00 † John & Helen Phillips

Sunday, May 5, Third Sunday of Easter

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 † Norman Kern
11:00 † Nina Tollis



Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-14-19	\$13,603.10	\$14,300.00	\$696.90
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-14-19	\$539,821.11	\$600,600.00	(\$60,778.89)

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 Catherine Hornberger.

2019 Diocesan Appeal

On March 17th we began our 2019 Diocesan Appeal which supports numerous ministries and programs in our Diocese. As of April 21st only **257 families/households** have made pledges in the amount of **\$69,605** and we have collected **\$48,028**. I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to those who have already made pledges

and given money to the Appeal. As you know our Parish Assessment is **\$101,300**. There are approximately **1250 families/households** in our Parish. I humbly ask those who have **not** made a pledge yet to kindly do so. Pledge envelopes can be found in the Church narthex or can be picked up in the Parish Office. Thank you and God bless. Fr. John

DIVINE MERCY

Jesus told John, "Do not be afraid," and then proceeded to give him messages for the churches (Revelation 1:17). Isaiah had his sins purged, and God called him to be a prophet (Isaiah 6:8). Seeing Ezekiel facedown on the ground, God told him to stand up; he just wanted to talk with him (Ezekiel 2:1). And Jesus told Peter, "Do not be afraid," and then called him to become a disciple (Luke 5:10). Do you see the **pattern**? In each story, God made it clear that the person's past sins and mere mortality didn't pose obstacles to him. He was more focused on the work he had for them to do. This is what divine mercy looked like in biblical times, and it's what it looks like **today**. It's God forgiving our every sin, **cleansing** our consciences, and easing our fears. It's also God looking with sadness on a darkened, sinful world and sending us out as his ambassadors. Do not be afraid. Jesus says these words to you today. Don't be afraid of God. He loves you and he forgives you. And don't be afraid to share that mercy with the people around you. Forgive them just as you have been forgiven. Let them see in you the merciful face of God.

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, Gloria Kreider, Ellen Moran, Lisa Crills, Jayne Wenger, Marianne Kurtz, Connie Scanlon, Ray Ward, Caroline LaMacchin, Edward Hoffman, Jean Mack, Andy

Marvin, Jane Muldowney, Thomas Lynch and Edward Hoffman.

-HERSHEYPARK DEADLINE - TOMMORROW
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:

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

**Last RE Classes Of The Year
Sunday, April 28th – RE Classes Resume
Also *RE Closing Mass 9:00 AM With Reception
To Be Held During RE Class Pickup Time.***

**Saturday, May 4th
First Holy Communion Mass
5:00 PM Mass
Kelly Lawrence**

We would like to thank our OMPH family for all the cards, flowers, love, and prayers and kind words, due to the loss of our beloved granddaughter Adriana Joy Fittipaldi. Please pray for our continued healing, God Bless You! The Wanchalk, Fittipaldi & Southward Families.



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.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

OMPH Vacation Bible School is looking for volunteers!! IF you are an adult or teen who likes working with kids or crafting, building sets ... we have a job for you! Please consider sharing your gifts and talents with the children of our parish. VBS will be held **July 14-18** from **5:45 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.** We can use help for the whole week, a few days or even help ahead of time cutting out decorations or even working on bigger projects. Any questions please call Carolyn at 799-8222 or email carolyn@ensingerprinting.com



NEEDED GOLFERS AND SPONSORS

**Our Mother of Perpetual Help School
27th 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.



**OMPH Golf Outing May 8th
Not a Golfer?
Can't take time off to participate
in this year's
27th 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 Items
Sports Theme Items**

Sponsorships are still available.
Golf Registration Deadline is May 1st
What a great way to support the school while advertising
for your business.

Contact the Development Office at 717-738-2414 for more information.



support.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

The parish Benevolent Society's food bank is in need of canned corn, green beans, instant mashed potatoes, canned fruits. Please consider purchasing an extra item or two on your next grocery trip. As always, we are grateful for your continued

OMPH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

The mission of this organization is to promote Catholic morals, values and sportsmanship through athletic programs for Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMPH), Our Lady of Lourdes (LOL) and St. James parishes. The goal is to teach the fundamentals of sports, the importance of team play and stress good sportsmanship according to Catholic principles.

President – Chris Schaeffer
Vice President – Bill Baumler
Treasurer – Melissa Kern
Secretary – Amanda Lamison

The Faculty of OMPH extends congratulations to graduates of OMPH School and members of OMPH Parish who were recognized for their outstanding academic achievement at LCHS. We are very proud of our students who received honors for the third quarter of the 2018-2019 academic year.



Distinguished Honors: Alexis Baker, Ella Cassidy, Kevin Draeger, Jacob Fertal, Adeline Hibshman, Rachel Houser, Daniel Leonard, Allie McCormac, Ava McTamney-Prexta, Riley Smith, Isabelle Titzer and Camille Zapata.

Honor Roll: Cecilia Deel, Maria DeTrempe, Daniel Duchesneau, Erin Haldeman, Mathias Hummer, Johann Imperial, Emma Kirchner, Colin McCullough, Alexis Pickel, Anthony Sivillo and David Vasquez Cabrales.

Ella Cassidy was named Student of the Quarter.