

My Dear Parishioners,

We live in a world in which we use symbols to represent certain things. Many of us would know that the eagle is a symbol of the United States of America; a maple leaf is a symbol of Canada; a lion is a symbol of England; and a hammer and sickle was a symbol of the former Soviet Union. Guess what the symbol of ancient Israel was. The symbol of ancient Israel was a **grapevine**. The Israelites etched the **grapevine** on their national coins. They also emblazoned it in pure gold above the entrance to the Temple over columns of solid white marble forty feet high, creating a dazzling vista for anyone entering the Temple on a typically sun-drenched day. So how did a **grapevine** come to be the symbol for ancient Israel?

A vineyard was a prized possession in the ancient Middle East. It provided a reliable beverage since water was generally not safe to drink. It offered an abundance of sweet, succulent fruit for the long hot summer days. When dried as raisins it became winter morsels for baking or snacking, at a desolate time of the year when fresh fruits and vegetables were simply not available. Not surprisingly, therefore, ancient people lavished great care upon their vineyards, carefully planting the choicest vines, fencing them in with a stout wall for protection, and nurturing them assiduously over the generations. It is also not surprising that God chose the image/symbol of a vineyard to describe His special relationship with Israel. For over the years God had chosen her, cared for her, provided for her needs, and protected her in the time of danger. Just as a farmer would cultivate his vineyard, care for it and expect to harvest grapes from it, so God would care for His people and expect good works from them. God expected devout worship, obedience to His commandments, and justice and love for the poor and vulnerable.

Vineyard imagery/symbolism was often used in Sacred Scripture to describe both God's abiding love for Israel and His all too frequent disappointment in His people. The Jewish people themselves were very much aware of the vineyard imagery that was used of Israel in the Old Testament to convey Divine benediction and Divine malediction. In Jeremiah (2:21) God tells the Jewish people: "I had planted you, a choice vine of fully tested stock"; followed

immediately by, "How could you turn out obnoxious to me, a spurious vine?" In the **Song of the Vineyard** (Isaiah 5: 1-7), the author speaks of God as a friend who had planted a vineyard in which he planted the choicest of vines expecting good grapes, only to get sour grapes. The author then identifies God's vineyard as the House of Israel and the people of Judah as His cherished plant. Psalm 80 (9-20) in turn speaks of Israel as a vine God uprooted from Egypt and planted in the Promised Land after having cleared out other nations to give it space to grow.

Today's Gospel passage from John 15: 1-8 is a parable that uses the vineyard imagery/symbolism. The parable contains certain allegorical elements (e.g. Jesus is the vine, the Father is the vine-grower, and the disciples are the branches) which stresses the intimate interrelationship that exists among the Father, Jesus and Jesus' followers. John employs the metaphors of vine and branches to make this point. In grape vineyards branches can grow very long and must be always connected to the main vine to live. A branch is useless and totally unproductive unless it is connected to the vine. Unless the branches are united to the vine, they cannot produce anything. Cut off from the vine, they inevitably wither and die. As we heard in today's Gospel passage Jesus declares: "I am the vine and you are the branches....Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. Without me you can do nothing."

St. John's use of the metaphor of the vine and branches also characterizes the intimate nature of the relationship between Jesus and His followers. Jesus lives in His branches and His branches live in His life. We (branches) receive our spiritual life from our connection with Him (vine). Jesus gives us the injunction to live on in Him. The vine is not totally dependent on any one branch or group of branches. Therefore, it can endure pruning without withering and dying. However, there is no vine if there are no branches at all.

Branches that produce fruit are pruned (cleansed) so that they can even be more fruitful in the future. We (branches) have been pruned by the teachings and actions of Jesus, which served to reveal

the reality of the Father to us. The most important task for us (as followers of Jesus) is to bear fruit. Productivity means life in Jesus and life in Jesus means life for others. To share the life of the vine means to reveal the mystery of Jesus to others. We do this by keeping the commandments and doing works of charity for others. As we heard in our Second Reading (First Letter of John): "Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." Being a disciple and bearing much fruit go hand in hand!

The image of the vine and branches reminds us that because we are one in Jesus, we are one in one another (as a family and as a Church.) We are connected to one another, we belong to one another, and we are branches of the same vine planted by God the vine-grower. As branches of Jesus the vine, we are part of something greater than ourselves, something which transforms and transcends the fragileness of our lives. Despite our different races and creeds, our nationalities and cultures, languages and philosophies, we are branches that draw life from the same root-Jesus. If Jesus the vine is to continue His work of hope and love in our world then He must rely on us- the branches. In the words of St. Teresa of Avila: " Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours; yours are the eyes with which He looks compassionately at the world, yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now." Have a blessed week.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

P.S. Congratulations and blessings to the 28 children in our Parish who received Jesus for the very first time in the Most Holy Eucharist at our 11 A.M. mass. May our beloved Jesus continue to bless you as you continue your faith journey.

HEALING MASS

On **Sunday, May 6th** Fr. John will celebrate a Mass with the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** at **1 PM** in our Church. We invite all parishioners and their family members who are afflicted by illness and all our

beloved **elderly** to attend this special Eucharistic celebration. Come and receive Jesus' healing power and love.



Lenten Appeal

2018-19 Bishop's Annual Lenten Appeal "LOVE MADE VISIBLE."

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am asking you to consider making a **gift** to our 2018-19 Bishop's Annual Lenten Appeal. Our Parish assessment goal for the 2018-19 fiscal year is **\$101, 300**. As of April 25th 346 households have pledged **\$90,732.10** and we have collected **\$66,228.09**. There are **1368 households** registered in our Parish. We still need **\$10,568.00** to accomplish our goal. I hope and pray that **every household** will contribute to our appeal, enabling us to reach our goal and support the mission of our Church. 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



YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

Discerning God's Will in my Life Designed for anyone in their 20s & 30s, single or married, this retreat taking place at **Refreshing Mountain Retreat Center in Stevens, PA** will begin with dinner on **Friday, May 11** and end shortly after dinner on **Saturday, May 12**.

Retreat directors, Father Brian Wayne and Sr. GERALYN Schmidt, SCC will explore the reality that discernment is an ongoing process in which God calls us to do something and how prayer allows and nourishes authentic discernment. During this retreat, you will learn about practical methods of discerning God's will, particularly following the rules of St. Ignatius. For more information and to register online, visit: <https://www.hbgdiocese.org/event/young-adult-retreat-discerning-gods-will-life/>

TEACHING POSITION OPEN AT OMPH SCHOOL

Our Mother of Perpetual Help School in Ephrata, PA is seeking a **fifth grade** teacher for the **2018-19** 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 Harrisburg Diocese** and **provide current clearances (PS 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 more information please contact Rev. John McLoughlin, C.Ss.R. (Pastor) at (717) 733-9641 or e-mail: johnmack57@hotmail.com

LCHS ENGLISH TEACHERS NEEDED

Lancaster Catholic High School seeks 2 full-time English teachers for the 2018-2019 school year. Minimum qualifications include a PA secondary certification (or equivalent) in English and appropriate clearances. Preferred qualifications include a master's degree in English, and experience in teaching English at the high school level. Experience in teaching Advanced Placement and/or dual enrollment college classes a plus. A pastor's recommendation will be required.

Interested applicants should forward a cover letter, resume, certifications and list of references to Mrs. Cecile Carr, ccarr@lchsyes.org, by May 4.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, April 30, St. Pius V, Pope

7:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel
9:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel

Tuesday May 1, St. Joseph the Worker

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

Wednesday, May 2, St. Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

7:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel
9:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel

Thursday, May 3, Sts. Philip and James, Apostles

7:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel
9:00 ✦ Andy Zipfel

Friday, May 4

7:00 ✦ Mary Muscavage
9:00 ✦ Mary Bakajza

Saturday, May 5

9:00 ✦ Elizabeth Shuda

5:00 ✦ Jim Mondo
Sunday, May 6, 6th Sunday of Easter
7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 ✦ Kathy Brandt-Wiley
11:00 ✦ Maria Mondo

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.

April 2: Margaret Gardner, Brenda Crawford, Jennifer Ranker, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Tonya Stoner, Kevin Kaiser, Jody Shimp, Joe Ferrara, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Anna Mae Finkey, Susan Buchler, Danny McGuire, William Oktela, Bill Garcedau, Gloria Reynolds, Tracy Yeakel, Paula Karem, Greg Garred and Carolann Capizzi.

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-22-18	\$16,745.00	\$14,950.00	\$1,795.00
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-22-18	\$586,157.63	\$642,850.00	(\$56,692.37)

CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS

Right, now, over 40 % of the dioceses in the U.S. are considered home mission territory, because they are unable to fund the essential pastoral work needed in their communities. Our support funds religious education, seminary formation and lay ministry training to build vibrant faith communities. Please be generous. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/nationalcollections.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

On one end of the spectrum, John talks about having "confidence in God," which means the Spirit is pouring God's love into us and reassuring us that we are following his commands. On the other end of the spectrum, our hearts can "condemn" us when the Spirit makes it clear that we have acted selfishly and



taken advantage of someone. Surely we have all had experiences on both ends of this spectrum.

John makes it clear that it's not only a matter of our own consciences. Throughout his letter, he emphasizes the Holy Spirit's work of writing his words in our hearts and helping us to follow them.

It's exciting to know that the Holy Spirit is constantly at work forming our hearts and helping us to make good decisions. He's even at work when we aren't aware of him! It's reassuring to know that he won't stop working in us until our every thought and action pleases Jesus and builds up his kingdom.

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 John & Helen Phillips.

A total of 23 weeks are available your intentions.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

The OMPH Benevolent Society's community food bank is in need of: Instant mashed potatoes, canned fruit, spaghetti sauce, and canned vegetables: corn, peas, green beans, carrots, mixed vegetables. Please place these items in the food bank crate in the narthex of the church. The underserved families in our community served by our food bank appreciate your donations!



MARY'S PEACE PLAN FROM HEAVEN



Have you heard that Our Lady's peace plan for the world is the daily Rosary? Have you heard about Fatima, but didn't know the details? Do you want peace in your life? Do you want to learn how to pray the Rosary? Then join us! **May 5: 9:00 AM Mass followed by viewing of the**

Fatima movie, refreshments, and discussion of the movie/Rosary workshop, ending around 12:30. See the poster in the narthex for details, and to RSVP or contact Susan Strosser at susan@strosserfamily.com/717-203-1070

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2018

Mark your calendars and save the date for this year's **Vacation Bible School July 16-20, 2018!** At this year's VBS our kids will get Shipwrecked and discover how **JESUS RESCUES**. As we gear up for this great week we are looking for a few more adult volunteers to make it an amazing week for the kids. If you are interested in helping out please contact Laura Kauffman at (717) 575-8221.

Hersheypark Discount Ticket Offer!

Discount tickets to *Hersheypark* are available to the friends and families of the parish. Gate admission for Regular is \$67.80; our price is \$34.85 (ALL ages 3+). discount *Hersheypark* Meal Tickets at a savings of up to 30% off retail prices - \$11.99 each and *ADD-ON snack Vouchers - \$3.25 each. **Orders must be received at the parish by tomorrow, April 30**. Parishes will receive tickets by May 25.

NEEDED GOLFERS AND SPONSORS

For Our Mother of Perpetual Help School 26th Annual Benefit **Golf Tournament May 9** at 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 2019 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, grilled 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

Our parishioners came through AGAIN at the Boy Scout Troop 363 spring food drive with a whopping 964 pounds of food. This food went to our OMPH Community Food Bank which serves the food insecure families in northern Lancaster County. As always, thank you for your generous support!



SCOUTING FOR FOOD

We need your help! Members of Troop/Crew 363 will be in Narthex the weekend of **May 5th & 6th** to hand out bags. Please fill the bags and bring them back to church the weekend of May 12th & 13th to the troop trailer in the parking lot. All food collected will be taken to the Benevolent Society to help

feed those in our community who are in need of assistance and Aid Assessment. To learn more about our school, Thank you for your assistance with this service project please **visit our website** at www.omph.org or call the Gretchen Hartman Crew 363 President, Jennifer Hartman Crew 363 Advisor school office at 738-2414 for further information. **Find us on Facebook** at OMPH Ephrata!



Religious Education Corner:

Congratulations To The 28 Children Who Will Receive Jesus In Holy Communion For The First Time, Today, Sunday, April 29th At The 11:00 AM Mass!

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

**Sunday, April 29th First Holy Communion Mass
11:00 AM Mass**

**Saturday, May 5th RE 5:00 PM RE Closing Mass
With May Crowning And Social To Follow For
All RE Families. Please Remember To RSVP To
The Email Address Found On The Blue Invitation
By Thursday, May 3rd To Let Us Know That Your**

Exciting News!



Pennsylvania will follow the Federal tax legislation signed into law on *December 22, 2017*, which includes several new provisions related specifically to 529 plan accounts, beginning with the 2018 tax year:

Account owners can use assets to pay for qualified K-12 expenses up to \$10,000 per year, per student.

Account owners can treat K-12 withdrawals as qualified education expenses with respect to federal tax and PA PIT purposes.

Account owners can roll over 529 plans to Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) savings plans (an IRC Section 529A plan), up to the ABLE annual contribution limit as determined under IRC Section 2503(B). However, a taxpayer may not claim a deduction for the rollover amount on their PA-40 return.

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

- Once again the Pennsylvania tax law follows the Federal tax law, the same as before, and allows the deduction for the expanded 529 plans. For more information, please see https://revenuepa.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/3399/kw/529%20withdrawals/session/L3RpbWUvMTUxODYzOTc2MS9zaWQvWXBpQnJqRm4%3D.

Please feel free to share and contact the Development Office with any questions.

ABORTION, CHILD ABUSE AND HEALING

Since abortion was legalized in the US, reports of child abuse has risen a staggering 1000%, according to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglects. John Garvey, President of The Catholic University of America, notes, "It turns out that normalizing violence against children in the womb doesn't lead us to be kinder to them once they're outside of it."

Post-abortive women suffer in many ways, with guilt, grief, suicidal urges, depression, self-abuse, and emotional trauma. Fathers suffer as well, and their grief is often ignored.

Many of us know people whose lives have been changed by abortion.

Rachel's Vineyard offers hope and healing to those men and women who have been victimized by abortion. Weekend retreats are offered locally. www.rachelsvineyard.org and they also have a hotline 1-877-HOPE-4-ME.
Andrea Ostrowski



Tuesday, May 1, 2018 marks the 22nd Anniversary of Perpetual Adoration in the Lancaster Deanery. Please plan to join us for a special Anniversary Mass at 7PM at St. Joseph Church, Lancaster.