

My Dear Parishioners,

There is a story told of a teenage French soldier who deserted Napoleon's army but within hours was captured by his own troops. To discourage soldiers from abandoning their posts Napoleon declared that the penalty for desertion was death. The young soldier's mother heard what had happened and went to plead with Napoleon to spare the life of her son. Napoleon heard her plea but pointed out that because of the serious nature of the crime her son had committed he clearly did **not** deserve **mercy**. "I know he doesn't deserve **mercy**," the mother answered. "It wouldn't be **mercy** if he **deserved** it," she added.

That is the exact point about **mercy**; nobody **deserves** it. Everyone deserves true justice but **mercy** on the other hand is a **gift**. The gift of **mercy** cancels out wrongs and transgressions not because a sparkling defense has been found or excusing causes or extenuating circumstances have been found and skillfully argued but rather because that is the **free response** of the person who is grieved or hurt. **Mercy** does not suggest that the guilty are not guilty. **Mercy** recognizes the guilt but does **not** demand satisfaction for the wrong. In all this, **mercy** reflects the utter **graciousness** of the one who has been wronged or hurt. Our Scripture readings for today remind us of God's gracious gift of **mercy** for humanity as God forgives us sinners. Our readings also point out that humanity's "past" can trap people but it cannot trap God. God's loving response to human sinfulness is His gift of **abundant mercy** and not anger and destruction. God's **mercy** allows for the ongoing transformation of humanity into becoming God's sons and daughters.

Today's first reading from the prophet Isaiah shows that a right relationship with God isn't only important but **is** possible, no matter how difficult the situation. Isaiah writes to his fellow Israelites who are in Babylonian Exile due to their failure to follow God's messengers-His prophets. Isaiah promises his fellow Israelites that redemption, restoration and healing will be theirs because of God's love and **mercy** for them. Even though everything seemed more hopeless than their captivity in Egypt seven centuries before, Isaiah was speaking of a new Exodus from Babylon as God will work new wonders. Isaiah reminds his people of who their God really **is**. God isn't simply a god of fear and punishment but rather He is a loving and **merciful** God. To illustrate his point Isaiah uses powerful images telling his people that God would open a way in the sea and a path through the mighty waters forming a

new community. What God will do this time will be so dramatic that the Exodus from Egypt of long ago will pale by comparison. This time God will not only open up a highway in the desert but He will also provide streams of life-giving water which will be accessible for the Israelites as they travel.

Isaiah calls his people away from the inordinate dependence on the past, a dependence that prevented them from seeing the astonishing new thing that God was accomplishing before their very eyes. This new thing is a new creation; a new reality so overwhelming that the people could never imagined it by themselves. The God who was victorious in the primordial battle, and who created the magnificently ordered universe out of its wreckage, can also create something new from a people who had recently been released from the control of their conquerors-the Babylonians. God **will** provide the way home for the Israelites.

St. Paul was a man who knew and experienced quite well God's **mercy**. As a Pharisee he was adept at bringing persecution, torture and death to those who followed Jesus. But after his conversion experience (on the road to Damascus) he became a new man. That is why in today's second reading Paul writes to the Philippians and tells them with conviction that he has been touched by the grace of God's **mercy** and given a new mission as an apostle of Jesus' Gospel. He states that he wants to be made righteous through union with Jesus, and he wants to share in Jesus' sufferings in order to attain resurrection from the dead. Paul knows that profession of faith in Jesus does not automatically transport one into a higher realm of being, which is what the early Christians known as Gnostics seem to have claimed. He proclaims that only by taking on the day-to-day struggle with life in a way that conforms to the example set by Jesus that this identification is possible. The prize that he and all of Jesus' followers seek is life on high with Jesus. This will one day be possible and happen because of God's grace and **mercy**.

Today's Gospel passage from St. John is another story about God's abundant **mercy** towards humanity. The lesson from today's passage is not about the morality of adultery, or that sin has no importance, or that God does not punish sin. Rather today's lesson is about how God extends His love and **mercy** to repentant sinners so that they may turn away from their sins and start anew. God is not only interested in what humanity was but also God is more interested in what humanity can become. God wants humanity to know that He does not condemn humanity

but rather He challenges humanity to leave their sins behind and rebuild their lives and return to Him. God's love and **mercy** gives us another chance.

Our Gospel story about a woman caught in adultery is **not** found in the earliest manuscripts of St. John's Gospel. In many ways it fits better with the Synoptic tradition especially in Luke's Gospel which focuses on Jesus' **mercy** and **forgiveness**. Nevertheless, it is in John's Gospel and it is from that perspective that it must be interpreted and understood.

Today's Gospel passage begins by stating that Jesus was teaching in the Temple area when the Pharisees and scribes placed a woman who had "been caught in the act of adultery" in front of Him. Consider the effort that went into catching her in the "act of adultery." The Pharisees and scribes caught her and dragged her into the public area of the Temple. She is pulled forward to embarrass her and make a point in front of the staring crowd. The Pharisees and scribes wanted to undermine Jesus' credibility by asking Him a question in order to trap Him. Their real interest was not her sin but rather their desire to discredit Jesus. Jesus was very well aware of the Jewish law that stated that if a woman was caught in adultery she was to be stoned. However Jesus was more interested in **justice** and **mercy** and the spirit of the law than its letter. Jesus knew that the Pharisees were trying to trap Him. If Jesus said, "Stone her," He would violate Roman law because only Romans could execute since Jews did not have the power to pass or carry out the death penalty on their own. Besides opting for the death penalty would lose the sympathy of the people who knew Jesus to be kind, compassionate and **merciful** towards sinners. If Jesus said, "Let her go," he would appear to be diminishing the authority of Mosaic Law and appear to be condoning the sin of adultery. The Pharisees and scribes were trying to get Jesus to choose between Roman authority and Moses' authority.

Jesus answered their question with two responses; one non-verbal and the other verbal. At first, Jesus says nothing and merely bends down and scribbles on the ground. Symbolically, this meant that Jesus refuses to engage in their issue. He ignores his accusers and their question. But the Pharisees and scribes persisted in their questioning of Jesus so his second response is a verbal one directed towards them: "Let the man among you who has no sin be the first to throw a stone." Then Jesus bent down and this time he did not scribble but wrote something. We do not know what Jesus wrote as the Gospel passage leaves that to our imagination. Whatever Jesus wrote the Gospel states that the Pharisees and scribes started to leave

one by one beginning with the eldest. In challenging the Pharisees and scribes with His verbal response and writing on the ground a second time Jesus moves beyond the legal question and focuses on the issue of sin. Jesus' focus is **not** on the woman's sin but rather on the sins of her accusers.

As the Pharisees and scribes left, Jesus looked up and saw the trembling woman and asked her: "has anyone condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Although Jesus knew her guilt, He told her: "I do not condemn you. Go and from now on do not sin anymore." Jesus gave the woman a new lease on life and a new opportunity to go forward to accomplish great things. The woman caught in adultery felt guilty and ashamed. But when Jesus pardoned her with His love and **mercy** He healed her, restored her dignity and made her whole again.

The challenge of today's readings for us is **not** merely to ignore our sins but rather to recognize them, repent and embrace the forgiveness and loving **mercy** of our God. We are to recognize the fact that God the Father sent His Son Jesus into our lives **not** to condemn us but rather to empower us to overcome our sins by embracing God's free grace of **mercy** and everlasting life. As Jesus' followers we are called to act as He did. Instead of merely judging others based on their actions or sins, we are called to help and encourage them to recognize their inner worth and change their ways. As God has shared His gift of **mercy** with us so too we must share our gift of **mercy** with one another. Have a blessed and **merciful** week.

Love & prayers,  
Fr. John

**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>.**



Mountain Retreat Center in Stevens, PA from Friday evening, April 26, 2019 until Sunday morning, April 28, 2019. The weekend will include daily Mass, Eucharistic Holy Hour and confessions, a time for personal reflection and prayer, large and small group discussions and time to relax and unwind. For more information and to register online, visit: [www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch](http://www.hbgdiocese.org/youngchurch)

### A MONTHLY POCKET PRAYER FOR APRIL

Keep this little prayer in your pocket and say, to help get you through each and every day.

For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.  
Prayer from the diary of St. Faustina

### MASS INTENTIONS

#### Monday, April 8

7:00 †Kathy Snyder  
9:00 †Walter Benning

#### Tuesday, April 9

7:00 †Rita Leyo  
9:00 †Joe Benning

#### Wednesday, April 10

7:00 Eileen & George Vazquez 50th Anniversary  
9:00 †Anne Johnson

#### Thursday, April 11, St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr

7:00 †Paul Ziolotti  
9:00 †Tony Colatta

#### Friday, April 12

7:00 †Richard Leyo  
9:00 †Kathy Snyder

#### Saturday, April 13, St. Martin I, Pope & Martyr

5:00 †Nina Tollis

#### Sunday, April 14, PALM SUNDAY

7:30 For the Parishioners  
9:00 †Alexandra Hughes  
11:00 †Eileen Hughes

CHURCH  SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
3-31-19	\$	\$14,300.00	(\$ )
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
3-31-19	\$	\$562,000.00	(\$ )



### 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 Ron Barranco

### 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.

### 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.**

### ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

**Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.** (John 8:11)

This is what happens when we have an encounter with God’s mercy. Our gratitude for what Jesus has done for us leads us to follow him more closely. It softens our heart and helps us be more merciful toward other people. And we receive the grace that strengthens us against further temptation to sin.

Do you want to have this kind of encounter? It’s yours for the asking! The words Jesus spoke to this woman are essentially the same words the priest says to us in Confession: “I absolve you from your sins.” Even if you feel as if other people are condemning you, even if you are condemning yourself, Jesus doesn’t condemn you. He forgives you. He saves you.

Over these next two weeks, take advantage of the opportunities that will be offered at your parish or one nearby to go to Confession. Let Jesus’ mercy set you free.

### 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.)

### 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	holyland
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

**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**

**Visit The Imprisoned:**

Donate Bibles, Rosaries or other religious items to a local prison.

Get involved with an organization that helps the children of prisoners.

Write to someone you may know who is incarcerated.

**This Week's Spiritual Work of Mercy**

**Bear Wrongs Patiently:**

Pray for someone who irritates you.

Pray for patience when dealing with difficult people and/or situations.

Show patience in your interactions with others.

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

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

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

**Happy Easter!**

**Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup> – NO RE Classes**

**Last RE Classes Of The Year**

**Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> – RE Classes Resume**

**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@lchsves.org](mailto:khockley@lchsves.org) for more information.

### 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>.**



**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/omphgolffouting](http://www.golfgenius.com/ggid/omphgolffouting).

### 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!

### OMPHEASTEREGG HUNT

Easter is just around the corner. Time for bringing families together, sharing stories and the joy of Easter egg hunts!!! The Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary will again be helping to organize the OMPH Easter egg hunt, and would like to thank everyone for previous candy donations, and plastic eggs. So gather the family and come on out and enjoy another family fun event! The Easter Egg hunt will be held rain or shine on Saturday, **April 20<sup>th</sup>, Promptly at 1 pm** in the Field of Dreams - behind OMPH. If it rains, or too cold the egg hunt will be held indoors, at the Father Jackson Center (OMPH Gym). Ages for the Easter Egg hunters are 0-10. This is a great family tradition for children.



We are in need of donations of plastic eggs, and candy for the egg hunt. A donation box will be in the church narthex. Please contact me, Sherri Schlotterer at [717.951.6473](tel:717.951.6473) if you have any questions. Hope to see you there!!

The Knights of Columbus **Ladies Auxiliary's Annual Peanut Butter Egg Sale** made



with **Wilbur Chocolate**. This year we will have even more Dark Chocolate and Milk Chocolate to choose from. Each box will contain 12- 1/2oz. Peanut Butter Eggs for only **\$9.00** No

need to pre-order this year we will have plenty. **Eggs will be available after all masses on April 13th and 14th** Don't miss out on these fabulous eggs. Any questions you may contact Rita Pfautz at [733-9247](tel:733-9247) . Psst !!!!!!!!!!! They go quick!!!!!! Get them while you can!!!!!! The Ladies Auxiliary

Thank you  
Ladies Auxiliary