

My Dear Parishioners,

Most of us manage getting through the day without being bothered by the question of **life** itself: “what’s the point of being here?” It can take all our energy and time merely to cope with what the day brings. We are happy to leave questions about the **purpose of life** to the armchair philosophers and theologians. However, there are times when we are forced to pause and ponder because something happens that throws our routine into question. Something happens that throws our life upside down. Perhaps it is the sudden death of someone very close to us which leaves a large absence in our life. Perhaps it is unexpected economic hardship that leaves us in financial dire straits. Perhaps it is an illness that leaves us incapacitated. Perhaps it is a ruined relationship which leaves us heart-broken, lonely and depressed. Questions arise which are **our** questions. Things that we take for granted now look different from before. Ventures we thought so important begin to look insubstantial against the reality of loss. We wonder: “where are we going, if anywhere? What direction do we take when our very sense of direction seems to have disappeared?”

An experience of profound loss always makes us question our **own direction in life**. In today’s Gospel John shows us that it was no different for Jesus’ disciples. In today’s Gospel passage Jesus gives His final discourse before leaving His close friends and followers. Jesus tells them not to be afraid for He is going to prepare a place for them. He will return to take them with Him. Thomas voices the disciples’ problem: “what direction are they going to take in Jesus’ absence? What is to be their way when He leaves them?” Today’s readings remind us that Jesus will help us to discover the **direction** we must take in **life**. Our readings also remind us that if we trust in Him, Jesus will show us how to live our daily lives to the fullest.

In Acts 2:42-47, St. Luke described how the early Christians got along so harmoniously since they devoted themselves to the Eucharist (“breaking of the bread”) and to prayers. They followed the teachings of the Apostles and generously shared their material possessions. However as the Christian Community grew new problems arose. Today’s first

reading from Acts 6:1-7 demonstrates one of the tensions in the community between the Hebrew Christians and the Hellenistic Christians. The Hellenistic group complained that their poor widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food from the common store. The apostles take the initiative to heal the division. They know something needs to be done but they also know they are not the ones to do it. Their responsibility as apostles was to pray and promote the word of God. And so after prayer and discernment they arrived at a solution- a **new direction in the Community’s life**. The apostles propose selecting seven members of the Community to improve the Hellenist’s situation. These seven men were men filled with the Holy Spirit and they were called to ministry. Eventually their service to God will go beyond the present issue of caring for widows. They will be involved in the ministry of **evangelization**. Though these seven men were not called “**deacons**” in today’s passage their office is “**deconning**” that is, **service**. Today’s passage from Acts began with a real problem but ends with a report of the success and progress of the faithful Christian Community.

In today’s passage of First Peter (our second reading) the author exhorts his addressees to live up to their vocation. The addressees are called to be faithful to their commitments and obligations by **servicing** God and others. Through their baptism in Christ their lives have taken a **new direction**. They are no longer inert objects but rather they are persons made alive (“living stones”). They have a **new relationship** to and with Christ, which the author describes in several images (a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, a chosen race, a holy nation and God’s people.) The author of First Peter implies that now their lives are to be an ongoing act of worship since their baptism revealed to the world their transition from sin and darkness to light and eternal life.

In today’s Gospel (which is set at the Last Supper) Jesus prepares His Apostles for His imminent return to God the Father. Jesus knows that His departure will cause them much anxiety and consternation so He encourages them to be firm in the face of this serious challenge. Part of Jesus’ encouragement is a promise to His Apostles that in His Father’s house there are many dwelling places

where Jesus and His faithful followers can be together. Jesus' departure is necessary in order that He might prepare a place for **all**; a place where **all** will be eternally at home. Jesus is not talking about a location but rather a relationship. Thus, the Apostles and all of Jesus' followers are promised a place in the indwelling relationship between the Father and Jesus. This indwelling is a form of residence in God's eternal kingdom.

Thomas, however, thinks that Jesus is talking about going to a place or a location and he does not know where this geographical place/location might be. Thomas asks Jesus: "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus answers enigmatically with: "I am the **Way**, the **Truth**, and the **Life**." The **Way**, the **Truth** and the **Life** refer to the revelatory work of Jesus and all three concepts have their roots in the Old Testament. Moses and Isaiah often reminded their people that they "must walk in the way of the Lord and not stray from the ways of the Lord." In applying the concept of the **Way** to Himself Jesus is not referring to a geographical path, route or direction one must follow. Rather the **way** to the Father is not to walk where Jesus walked but to live as Jesus lived: to model our life and attitudes on Him because He is the fullest and most perfect expression of God's love. The Psalmist says, "Teach me your ways, so I may walk in your truth." **Truth** is that which conforms to reality. Jesus is the embodiment of **truth**- what it is to be truly human. Jesus is the embodiment of moral goodness. Moral truth is best conveyed by example and Jesus is the perfect example. When the Psalmist pleads, "Show me the path to life," he is not seeking knowledge for itself but he wants to make life worth living- to give it a **purpose**. In showing us through His life and example how to live as truly God's children, Jesus opens for us the way to **Eternal Life**. Jesus is the embodiment of **life** with God. Through the merits of His passion and death Jesus will gain access for us to **life** with Him and His Father that will never end. Thomas and the other apostles failed to understand that Jesus alone reveals the Father: in the **way** He lives, in the **truth** of His word, and in the quality of **new life** that He brings.

Philip asks Jesus to show him and the other apostles the Father. Jesus tells Philip, "Whoever has

seen me has seen the Father." Philip misunderstands Jesus as he is totally unaware that Jesus' entire life and ministry have been doing what Philip requests- showing people the Father. Jesus explains to Philip the dynamics of divine mutuality. The Father **is in** the Son and the Son **is in** the Father. To see one is to see the other. To hear one is to hear the other. What neither Thomas or Philip or the other apostles understood was that Jesus was inviting them into this divine mutuality. The disciples were being invited through faith to carry on Jesus' very same ministry of revealing God the Father to the world.

Throughout today's Gospel passage irony is front and center. What the apostles seek, they already have. Where they want to be is where they already are. The **direction** and **purpose of life** that they seek was right in their midst in the presence of Jesus. The answer they seek can only be grasped through their faith. Jesus tells them at the beginning and the end of today's passage: "You have faith in God; have faith also in me."

All the challenges we face each day have a **purpose**. Jesus challenges us to face the confusion and complexity of our world. That is why Jesus does not leave us with a theology or philosophy handbook that will answer all our questions about **life**. However, Jesus promises us that He **is** our **Way**, **Truth** and **Life** and if we put our faith and trust in Him then He will guide us through the complexities and difficulties of our lives. The ultimate **purpose** of our life is to obtain and enjoy **eternal life** with our God. The only way we can accomplish this is by following our Jesus and placing our faith and trust in Him. Have a blessed and purposeful week.

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

P.S. I want to wish a most blessed and happy Mother's Day to all our mothers. May God continue to bless you in your very special vocation.

**BISHOP'S ANNUAL LENTEN
APPEAL UPDATE
"I GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE"**

John 13:15

We began our Annual Diocesan Lenten Appeal on March 12th. Our Parish assessment figure for this year is **\$104,900**. As of May 1st **356** families/households have pledged **\$96,229.76** and we have collected **\$72,884.54**. 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 **\$8,670.24** 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. This way we will be able to 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

SECOND COLLECTIONS

This weekend there will be a Second Collection taken up at all the masses. This Collection is known as the Parish Education Collection and it supports our Parish School and Religious Education Program.

Next weekend there will be a Second Collection taken up to support the United States National Shrine of The Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.



**FIFTH ANNUAL HOPE FOR HAITI
BENEFIT AUCTION**

A team of community volunteers have gathered together to create the 5th annual Hope for Haiti Benefit Auction, with a bevy of auctioned items, bake sale, children's activities and food. The auction hosted by Beiler-Campbell Auction Services, Curvin Horning and HHBB Staff and volunteers will take place on Saturday, **May 20 at 9 AM** at Hertzog Homestead Bed and Breakfast, **470 W. Metzler Road, in Ephrata.**

All proceeds will go towards Haiti Partners and Christian Aid Ministries in Haiti.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, May 15, St. Isidore the Farmer

7:00 †Leonard Riley
9:00 †Nina Tollis

Tuesday, May 16

7:00 Zeiler Family
9:00 Mary Crawford

Wednesday, May 17

7:00 †Stephen Lehmier
9:00 †Poor Souls

Thursday, May 18, St John I

7:00 †Margaret McGowan
9:00 Zeiler Family

Friday, May 19

7:00 †Ben Lorenzo
9:00 †Mike Kizeik

Saturday, May 20, Bernadine of Siena

9:00 †Poor Souls
5:00 †Max Kessler

Sunday, May 21, 6th Sunday of Easter

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 †George Givler Sr.
11:00 †William Hughenbruch

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.

May 7: Melissa Kurtz, Byron Gift, Janet Tomko

April 9: Alex Masluk, Mary Kay Guthrie, Elizabeth Farnquist

April 23: Jennifer Ranker

April 30: Anthony Tassa, John Griffis, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Richard Warner, Brendan Holbriiter.

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 Margaret McGowan.

CHURCH  SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
5-14-17	\$13,690.00	\$14,326.00	\$(636.00)
YTD	Amount	YTD Need	Difference
5-14-17	\$631,187.28	\$644,670.00	\$(13,482.72)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

There is no way anyone in the upper room was more troubled than Jesus. In a few hours, he was going to be beaten, crowned with thorns, and crucified—and he knew. Still, he took the time to encourage his apostles. Their faith wasn't strong enough to sustain them when they faced a life-or-death situation. But that's not how their story ends. Their faith returned when Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them. They were so excited that they went out and set the world on fire for Jesus. When our faith is tested? The best thing you can do is go easy on yourself. Remember how Peter lost his trust and denied even knowing the Lord. He wept bitterly. But when he saw Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, he jumped into the water and ran to him. So whatever you are struggling with right now, remember that Jesus knows you. He



knows your worries. He is with you, surrounding you with his love. Try your best to rest in him.

ATTENTION MUSICIANS



The OMPH Music Ministry invites you to share your musical talents with our parish family. We always welcome new singers, guitarists, pianists, organists, etc. The music ministry is a great way to meet other parishioners and to become more involved in our faith community. If you are interested in learning more about the many different opportunities we have available, I'd be happy to discuss details with you. Just email me, Jill McGowan, at jmcgowan333@yahoo.com.



Religious Education Corner:

The RE Program Would Like To Thank The Following Local Vendors For Their Generous Donations During The 2016/2017 RE Year.



RESPECT LIFE

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

“The legalization of the termination of pregnancy is none other than the authorization given to an adult, with the approval of an established law, to take the lives of children yet unborn and thus incapable of defending themselves. It is difficult to imagine a more unjust situation, and it is very difficult to speak of obsession in a matter such as this, where we are dealing with a fundamental imperative of every good conscience — the defense of the right to life of an innocent and defenseless human being.” - St. John Paul II

May Our Blessed Mother intercede for us.

Andrea Ostrowski



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

VBS DONATIONS NEEDED

We are currently taking donations for our parish Vacation bible school. Do you have an overflowing craft closet/room? We are looking for a lot of crafty items and they can be left overs/ scraps as well as other items that can be purchased. Stop by the VBS donation board in the narthex and grab a gear and help us GEAR UP for our Maker Fun Factory VBS in July. Please bring items with gear attached by June 1 so we can prepare. Call Carolyn at 799-8222 with any questions.

We are still taking volunteers if you are interested please call!! REGISTRATIONS will be available April 30...look for our Robot in the narthex!



HERSHEY PARK TICKETS

*SAVE THE DATE SCHOOL
EVENTS*

OMPH ALUMNI

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

OMPH SCHOOL



REGISTRATION 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 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 738-2414. To learn more about our school, please **visit our website** at www.omph.org or call the school office at 738-2414 for further information. **Find us on Facebook** at OMPH Ephrata!



All

LCHS CROSS COUNTRY boys and girls who will be in grades 7-12 in the fall and their parents are invited to attend a no-obligation informational meeting for the fall 2017 LCHS junior high and high school cross country teams. The meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 21st at 5 PM** in the Lancaster Catholic High School cafeteria. Please contact Coach Simpson at tsimpson@lchsyes.org with questions.

SOME FOOD BANK NEEDS



We are looking for some volunteers for our distributions. We have four groups of volunteers, one group for the first Wednesday, another for the second, etc.... If you can commit to attending our distribution the same

week each month from 4:50 PM to 6:30 PM--we need you!

Please email Bonnie Brown at bbjnb@ptd.net.

Also, it seems that we have an abundance of a certain food item one week and the next week, it is empty! The OMPH benevolent society food bank is currently in need of: **instant potatoes corn and mac & cheese**. Thanks in advance; we are graciously humbled by your continued generosity.

SENIORS 55 AND OLDER

Would you enjoy a 5% discount on your car insurance for the next three years? Who wouldn't! Well, in Pennsylvania it is mandatory that if you take the AARP Smart Driving Course, the insurance company must give you a 5% discount. To get the discount, all you have to do is show up at the course, spend two four hour sessions and at the end you will get a completion certificate to give to your insurance company. **There are no tests. You cannot fail.** It is all in the classroom — **NO** on the road driving. The cost per person is \$15 for AARP Members and \$20 for non-members. If both husband and wife are on the insurance policy, both must take the course. For example, if your insurance cost for the year is \$1000 you would get a \$50 Discount for each of the next three years. So, for an investment of \$15 or \$20 you would save \$150. If you are interested in saving some money and learning about ongoing changes in yourself, vehicles, the roads, the driving laws and refreshing your memory on some safety strategies you might have forgotten, call the number below to register. We are holding a 4 hour Refresher Course on **June 3 from 8- 12 noon** and if we get enough people interested, we will hold an Eight-Hour course at OMPH for those taking the course for the first time. Please call the following phone number to register. Charlotte and Bob Galgon at 733-4369.

