

My Dear Parishioners,

Over fifteen hundred years ago St. Benedict wrote down the following quote in his Rule for Monks: “Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.” The “Work of God” to which Benedict referred to is **prayer**. For Benedict and his monks **prayer** was serious business as their day was structured around **prayer** (not **prayer** around the work of the day.) Benedict acknowledged **prayer** as “work”- an activity that one must learn and master over a period of time. Benedict acknowledged **prayer** as not something to do haphazardly but rather it is something one reverences because it is an interactional dialogue with God. Because of its importance and necessity **prayer** took precedence over all else in the monastery. St. Benedict believed and preached that the monastery’s sole purpose for existing was because of **prayer**.

Our Scripture readings for today speak of the **priority of prayer**. Our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells us how Jesus’ disciples spent their time in **prayer**. In today’s passage Luke presents to us several groups of people that wait together while **praying**. These groups were known as first Christian community consisting of the Eleven Apostles, women from Galilee, the Blessed Mother Mary and the brothers of Jesus (relatives) who were gathered in an upper room following Jesus’ Ascension into heaven. The gathering of these groups into one community waiting in the upper room is very important for Luke. From the very beginning this community serves to demonstrate the unbroken continuity between Jesus’ life and the life of the Church. The Eleven enjoy a unique importance because they were chosen by Jesus to follow Him. The women from Galilee were the first to hear the message of Jesus’ Resurrection from the tomb (something not witnessed by the Eleven Apostles.) The Blessed Mother was the first to hear God’s message about Jesus and together with her husband Joseph was responsible for Jesus’ formation in His early years. The Eleven, the women and Mary bring the Gospel in its entirety into the Church since they constitute the basic community of the Church.

These women and men gathered in the upper room had witnessed much and experienced great emotional highs and lows in the past days leading up to Jesus’ Passion, Death and Resurrection.

They devoted themselves to **prayer** as they await the fulfillment of Jesus’ promises: “They devoted themselves with one accord to **prayer**.” (v.14). In **praying** together the whole Christian community directed itself in oneness toward opening itself to God’s Spirit. Their **prayer** aided them in reflecting and asking for understanding about all that had happened to their beloved Jesus. Modern Bible scholars marvel at how quickly these early Christians were able to come to such a deep understanding of who Jesus was and comprehending all that He had accomplished. These early Christians were able to gain such insight because they took time to **pray**. And with the gift of the Holy Spirit they came to understand how God brought salvation to the whole world through His Son Jesus.

Whereas in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles the Christian Church was embryonic and relatively safe, today’s second reading from the First Letter of Peter, makes a slight jump in time. The letter was written probably in the time of one of the persecuting Roman emperors Nero or Trajan. Christianity was outlawed and martyrdom was more than just a possibility. Today’s passage shows the ambivalence of trying to live the Christian life. On one hand we are to **pray** and rejoice in our giving glory to God and on the other hand we are to be aware that we will have to suffer. Such suffering is linked to the trials of Jesus. Those who suffer should regard themselves as enviable if they are insulted and persecuted for the sake of Jesus. In the midst of persecution God’s Spirit will be present; proffering both present and future glory. To suffer for being a Christian should not provoke shame. It should provide an occasion for glorifying God because of the implications of the name Christian-solidarity with Jesus Himself. In summary today’s passage reminds Christians that they should rejoice to the extent that they are able to share in Jesus’ sufferings and that they are able to give witness to their faith in Him by the way they face suffering.

Today’s Gospel scene takes place at the Last Supper. Today’s passage is the first half of Jesus’ final **prayer** which concludes His farewell discourse. Traditionally a farewell discourse contains the final words of a dying person directed to the person’s family, friends, or close associates. Such is not the case with Jesus. Jesus’ words come as He

completes His work on earth and is about to give up His life in ultimate glorification. Jesus' **prayer** is directly addressed to God the Father. The disciples are only able to overhear what Jesus says. Jesus' **prayer** was essentially for His Church (us) asking His Father to complete within it what He had begun.

Jesus' **prayer** is of a Eucharistic and priestly nature. His **prayer** is considered Eucharistic because it expresses His gratitude for what the Father had given to Him. It is considered priestly because as mediator Jesus interceded with the Father. From the 16th century, this **prayer** has often been referred to as "**Jesus' Great High Priestly Prayer**" but that title does not accurately capture what this **prayer** is about. In many ways Jesus' **prayer** is the theological climax of the whole New Testament. It summarizes all that Jesus came to do and it describes the intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father that allowed Him to complete His work. The **prayer** assumes the genre of a "farewell discourse"- a genre present in the Jewish Scriptures. In the Old Testament it was common for great spiritual leaders like Jacob and Moses to deliver a farewell address to their people before they died. In their address they typically did three things: (1) They praised God for His goodness towards them. (2) They asked their followers to remain true to God and His Covenant. (3) They **prayed** for God's blessings on those they were leaving behind.

Jesus' **prayer** is shaped by the presence of His hour which has now come. The hour refers to Jesus' saving death on the cross. The tone of His **prayer** seems as He has already started His departure from this world and is on His way to the Father. Much of Jesus' **prayer** focuses on His pending glorification. His language of glorification can be a bit confusing. Jesus is not talking about glorification as we understand it in modern terms (personal gain/ triumphal accolades). Rather Jesus' glorification points to and is about His Father. The whole purpose of Jesus' Incarnation had been to reveal the identity of God. To reveal God's identity is to glorify God. Key to all of this is Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. All of these combine to glorify God the Father by making more visible God's identity in and through His Son Jesus.

The latter part of Jesus' **prayer** makes a very interesting move, beginning with verse 9. Jesus

begins to **pray** for the faith of His disciples and the larger community. The **prayer** that Jesus addresses to His Father is for the strength and protection of those faithful believers who will remain in the world as Jesus returns to the Father. By doing this Jesus indicates that believers are now part of the divine unity which includes the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In many ways this unity can be seen as the central theme of His entire **prayer**. The work and ministry that Jesus came to do has been accomplished. Now Jesus' work and ministry must be taken up by His disciples who will be able to do what He did because they are now part of the divine mutuality of the Father, Son and Spirit. Now the disciples will be able to truly know God and the One who God sent-Jesus Christ. The disciple who really knows that God is Father and recognizes Jesus as the One who reveals Him, will then enjoy eternal life!

To be a true disciple of our Lord we must make **prayer** a **priority** in our lives. **Prayer** is more than rapidly reciting an "Our Father" or a "Hail Mary" or a "Glory Be". True **prayer** is spending quality time with God. True **prayer** is speaking from our heart to God and listening to Him in quiet silence. Are we too busy to spend quality time with God? Unfortunately we live in a world that places **prayer** and **faith** rather low on the priority scale. **Prayer** is so often relegated to a moment here and there or to a time when we want or need something from God. However if we want to come closer to God and truly know Him we **must** make time for **prayer**. Like St. Benedict we must make **prayer** a **priority** every day. Have a blessed and **prayerful** week.

Love & **prayers**,

Fr. John

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to all of our wonderful parishioners who helped in the celebration of my 25th Priesthood Jubilee. Thank you for your most generous gifts and most importantly thank you for your prayers, love and support. A special word of thanks to the Knights of Columbus, the Ladies Auxiliary, Weiser's Markets, Ensinger's Printing Service, Melissa's Cookies, OMPH School Community, and our Parish Council Members. God bless you.

Love and prayers, Fr. John

**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 22nd **375** families/households have pledged **\$101,469.76** and we have collected **\$76,388.43**. I want to express my appreciation and gratitude and say **Thank you** to all those who have already made pledges and have given to this year's appeal.

As you can see we are **\$3,430.24** short of our goal. According to our recent Parish Census there are approximately 1200 families/households in our community. I humbly ask and pray that those who have **not** made a pledge as of 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 collected 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 of this year's appeal.

Gratefully,
Fr. John

GIFTED/AUTISM GROUP

Scientists are finding that many autistic people have IQs above 120, which means that disability may go hand in hand with giftedness. They are also finding that standard IQ tests may miss the profoundly gifted. Many do not discover an autism diagnosis until after they are successful, and many do not discover they are gifted until they are past the school support years. There may be misdiagnosis or ineffective treatment because the biomedical model is limited by the culture. This is why I would like to start an Autistic and Gifted support group for adults whose goal is independent living and/or full recognition of their giftings. For more information, contact Chris Trachte at 717-606-5678 or cdromtrachte@gmail.com

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, May 29

7:00 †Michael Bronokoski
9:00 †Chip McCarthy

Tuesday, May 30

7:00 †Ron Slover
9:00 †Rev. Mike Hopkins, CSSR

Wednesday, May 31, Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7:00 Sue Bemis
9:00 †Mildred Leone

Thursday, June 1, St. Justin

7:00 †D & J Killen
9:00 †Rev. John Kelly, CSSR

Friday, June 2, St. Marcellinus & St. Peter

7:00 †Brad Roda
9:00 †Douglas Fulton

Saturday, June 3, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

9:00 Aleyda Butrago
5:00 †Mike Keziek

Sunday, June 4, Pentecost Sunday

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 †Regina Puschauer
11:00 †Rita Huiser

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 28: Ramon Stief, Robert Christian, Byron Gift

May 7: Melissa Kurtz, Janet Tomko Alex Masluk, Elizabeth Farnquist

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

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 Rita Huiser.

CHURCH  SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
5-21-17	\$11,728.30	\$14,326.00	(\$2,597.70)
YTD	Amount	YTD Need	Difference
5-21-17	\$655,836.63	\$673,322.00	(\$17,485.37)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Evil spirits are real, and they are most effective when we are indifferent to them. There are real-life situations of people who are possessed by evil spirits through witchcraft, curses, and the like. These people need the help of an exorcist. But those are rare cases. For the rest of us, Satan tends to harass us, not possess us. He whispers thoughts that tempt us to be negative, resentful, or self-condemning. We may think these thoughts come from ourselves, and partly they do. But at the same time, they are fostered by Satan's negative accusations.



So what can you do? First, have faith that the Holy Spirit is in you, helping you fight Satan's temptations. Second, pray. Hold on to the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Then, pay attention to what is going on in your heart. Look for signs of how the temptation is diminishing. Rejoice in even the smallest sign of freedom!

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

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!!



Religious Education Corner:

**The Religious Education Program Would
Like Congratulate All 2017 Graduates!**

**Registration/Re-Registration Forms For The
2017/2018 RE Year Will Be Available Next Week.**

Thanks!

**Please Remember Summer Break
Still Includes Attending Mass On
Sundays And Holy Days Of Obligation.**

**Please Visit <http://masstimes.org/>
To Locate Parishes With Mass Times
Both Here In The US And Worldwide.**



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



RESPECT LIFE

Do you want teens to hear the truth about abortion and the freedom of chastity? www.teenbreaks.com is a project of Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation and contains accounts in teens own words of how abortion affects them, as well as practical ways to live chastely.

Hear the bitter regrets of the girls who were pushed into abortion by parents or boyfriends. Abortion haunts these girls daily with sorrow, grief, and anger. Their advice to pregnant teens is a resounding "No!" to abortion and "Yes!" to life.

Teens are given strategies to deal with peer pressure, ways to live authentic love and the vision that their bodies are sacred and worthy of respect.

This is a great resource! Pass this website on. Post it for teens to get the real facts about unexpected pregnancy.

Pray for one teen who is faced with a crisis pregnancy. Pray for one teen to choose chastity and freedom. Our prayers have power!
www.teenbreaks.com **Andrea Ostrowski**

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 bjnb@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.

HERSHEY PARK TICKETS

You may pick up your Hershey Park tickets in the parish office **Monday-Friday, from 9-4 PM.**

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](tel:733-4369).



OMPH ALUMNI



We will be having a school reunion Saturday, September 16, 2017 in the gym for anyone in the classes of 1960-2009. This is a 21 and over event. Flyers are available in the narthex. More information can be found on our Facebook page: OMPH Reunion or by calling Lauren (DePaul) Caramenico (Class of '94) at 717-314-1806.

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!