

Dear Parishioners,

Ibn Saud the first king of Saudi Arabia was face with a problem of **judgment**. A woman came to him demanding the death sentence for a man who had killed her husband. The man had been in a palm tree gathering dates when he had slipped and fell landing on top of the woman's husband causing his death. Ibn Saud inquired: "Was the fall intentional? Had the two men been enemies?" The widow knew neither the man nor why he had fallen but in accordance with the law she demanded the blood price due her. "In what form will you have your compensation?" Ibn Saud asked her. The widow demanded the head of the guilty party. The king tried to dissuade her pointing out that she needed the money and that the execution of the guilty party would not benefit her or her children. But the woman was insistent arguing that it was not right that the man who killed her husband should be allowed to live in their community of good people. He should be rooted out immediately.

Ibn Saud replied: "It is your right in law to demand compensation and it is also your right in law to ask for this man's life. But it is my right in law to decree how he shall die. And so you shall take this man with you and he shall be tied to the foot of a palm tree. Then you yourself shall climb to the top of the tree and cast yourself down from that height upon him. In that way you shall take his life as he took your husband's." The king then paused for a moment and said: "Or perhaps you would prefer to take the blood money?" The widow took the money.

Humankind has had a constant but strange fascination with the exercise of power and making **judgments**. From ancient times right up to the present day people have been making demands for instant **judgment**; wanting to root out those who they consider to be harmful or a detriment to the community. Some people demand that God swoop down upon the earth and with His mighty scythe cut down all the evil weeds in society. Some want God to punish others swiftly and severely. Some believe that it would be a great blessing if God would use His power to eliminate from our midst all "evildoers". But it does not happen. And we wonder: "Why not?" People often wonder and ask: "why does God tolerate evil?" Our Scripture readings for today help to answer the pressing question: "Why God allows evil people to exist and why He does not use His power to destroy them." Today's readings also help us to understand why God is so patient and so merciful and moderate with our perceived enemies, and with sinners and evildoers.

Today's first reading is from the Book of Wisdom. This book was written about a century before Christ to the Jews living in Alexandria who were experiencing a great deal of pain and misery from the Egyptians who mocked, ridiculed and persecuted them. Because of their misery and pain many of the Jews were giving up their belief in God and converting to pagan ways. The author of Wisdom is struggling with the question: "Why is God allowing this evil to go on?" His conclusion is that God does not want to destroy evildoers but rather He shows patience; allowing evil persons to repent and change their ways. In other words the author is reminding the Alexandrian Jews that God has the ultimate power and will make the final **judgment**. Unlike the weak who think that they have to prove their power by bullying others. God shows His strength and power and expresses His **judgment** more by **leniency** rather than by punishment.

Today's passage is a beautiful picture of the God in whom we believe in: a God whose power is unlimited, whose concern extends to all people, a God whose sense of justice is above suspicion and whose **judgment** is one of understanding. In today's passage the author marvels at the vast differences between the ways of God and the ways of the world. Earthly rulers use their power to intimate others or reduce them to submission. By such displays of power they presume to secure their rule. God has no need of such tactics. In stark contrast to the kings of the world, God is patient and He exhibits His power and favors governing all with "great **leniency**" **clemency** and **forgiveness**. God's mercy is heaped on everyone in sight; even on traditional enemies and evildoers. The author of Wisdom then points out that people are asked to share in that same spirit of God and act with kindness and **leniency** towards all. Those who want to be recognized as just in the eyes of the Lord "must be kind." Patience and mercy will provide others with hope; terror and violence on the other hand will drive them away.

The concept of God's **patience**, **tolerance**, **mercy** and **forbearance** with wrongdoers also appears in today's Gospel account from St. Matthew. Today's Gospel is a continuation of Jesus' parables which reveal something about the Kingdom of God. While on the surface Jesus' parables seem simple and harmless. However there generally is a twist that takes place somewhere inside the parable making it surprising and very challenging.

Jesus' first parable deals with wheat and weeds. This agricultural parable reminds us of some important truths about God, about the world, and

about our Church. Recall in last week's Gospel Jesus compared his audience to soil. In today's passage Jesus tells his audience that wheat and weeds will grow in the same soil. On the simplest level of the parable Jesus is telling us that there is both good and evil within each of **us** and good and evil in the world. Jesus' message is one of **patience**. God **is** patient with us so we should have patience with ourselves and with others. Many people wish to love God with all their heart and soul but find themselves failing and staying away. They wonder if they should stay in the Church. Jesus' answer is **yes!** If we cooperate with God's grace then God will enable the good in **us** to prevail (like the wheat over the weeds.) In regards to the world we know that good and evil exist side by side in it and it is frequently difficult to distinguish who is good and who is evil. Jesus' parable tells us not to worry and not to **judge** others since we could be mistaken. The point is that God will one day **judge** all of us. God can distinguish between good and evil and no one escapes His **judgment**. People can slip through society's justice system but they cannot slip through God's justice. God's **judgment** is eminently fair and final. In regards to the Church this parable teaches us that our Church is a mixed bag of wheat and weeds. It always was and always will be. We are **not** a Church of the perfect or a Church of the purely elite. Rather we are a Church of sinners who are striving (with God's grace) to become saints.

Jesus' next two parables compare the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed and to yeast. The point of Jesus' parables is that from small things larger things can grow and develop. In His parables the mustard seed and yeast are compared to the growth and development of faith within individuals and within the Church. The growth and development of faith that takes place is hidden and one cannot see or perceive how it takes place. The mustard seed was a Jewish symbol for the smallest of elements. The seed is buried in the ground and somehow grows up to become the largest of plants. For humans it seems impossible that the seed can grow into anything but **not** for God. The same is true for the Kingdom of God. It might seem tiny and powerless when compared to earthly kingdoms but that is deceptive. What God can do for the mustard seed God can do for His Kingdom and even do more.

Yeast is kneaded into dough and functions as a leavening agent. A tiny amount of yeast causes a large amount of dough to rise and expand. So likewise our faith can rise and expand. The Holy Spirit is within us and the Church (even though we cannot see the Spirit) The Spirit gives life and growth in ways that we frequently cannot perceive. The

dynamic of yeast causing dough to rise is how the Kingdom of God works. It is a growth agent that has the ability to influence an area much larger than itself. The Kingdom of God is leaven for the world.

Many of us tend to see and **judge** people as either "good" or "bad". We take it upon ourselves to "separate" and pull out the "weeds" from our lives. However today's readings challenge us to see that **everyone** is both "wheat" and "weed" and **only** God should **judge** and separate the good from the bad. It is not our place to set up inquisitions, support witch hunts, or organize purges to free the field for our own approved supporters. We are not God. As Christians we have **no** authority to pronounce the final **judgment** on anyone. The last word cannot be said about anyone until death and then it is **God's part**, not ours, to say it. Let us all try and stop **judging** one another and leave **judgment** in the hands of God. Let us all listen to, heed and embrace the eloquent words of St. Paul: "There must be **no** passing of premature **judgment**. Leave that until the Lord comes." (1Cor. 4:5). Have a blessed and **non-judgmental** week.

Love & prayers,
Fr. John

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, July 24, St. Sharbel Makhulf
7:00 Intentions in the Prayer Box

Tuesday, July 25, St. James
7:00 †Bill Hecker

Wednesday, July 26, Sts. Joachim and Anne
7:00 †Charles Rosini Sr.
9:00 †Roseanne Riley

Thursday, July 27
7:00 †Bill Hecker

Friday, July 28
7:00 †Stephanie Mash

Saturday, July 29, St. Martha
9:00 †Isabel Eisenbise
5:00 †Nina Tolles

Sunday, July 30, 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 †Lloyd Hull
11:00 †Greg Miller

There are quite a few Mass times available for your intentions, over the next several weeks. Most are week days. Stop in after Mass today or call the office at 733-9641.

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.

July 2:

Melissa Kurtz, Janet Tomko, Elizabeth & Jack Farnquist Sr., Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Richard Warner, Brendan Holbriiter, Anthony Tassa, John Griffis, Duane Hartman, Byron Gift, and Jack McGowan, Declan Morgan, and Phyllis Schmook, Scott Peters.

July 16: Sue Beuhler, Elsie Becker

CHURCH SUPPORT

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
7-9-17	\$	\$14,326.00	(\$)
YTD	Amount	YTD Need	Difference
7-9-17	\$	\$.00	(\$)

Going on vacation? Please use online giving to catch up on offertory contributions. Go to www.omph.org and click on the Online Giving link it's quick and easy! Your support during the summer months helps sustain our parish.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT One weakness we face is the way we respond to suffering or hardship. Temptation, sickness, addiction, division in families, financial problems, natural disaster—any of these challenges can leave us fearful and overwhelmed if we try to face them on our own. But with the help of the Spirit, we can start to see things from God's perspective and find the strength we need to keep moving forward. Another weakness can be our struggle with prayer. The Spirit loves to help us pray! He helps us speak to God from our hearts and not just through rote prayers. He gives us the reassurance that our prayers have been heard. It's easy to think that it's "just us"—that we are doing it all by ourselves. But this is just not true. Every holy thought that we have and every loving action that we take have their origin in the Holy Spirit.

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 Bill Hecker.



ALTAR SERVER TRAINING

Any girl or boy in grades fourth and up that would like to become an altar server should contact Ben Hoover at 808-1115. We will start training in August and will get them on the schedule that comes out in September.



HELP WANTED

OMPH Church cleaners are looking for a couple of volunteers to clean the windows in the doors to the church. If interested call Sandra at 733-9453.

Please Save The Date

Attention All Families Of Students

Entering 6th Grade This Fall:

On Sunday, October 15th Lancaster Catholic High School Will Host The 5th Annual I AM Rally.

All OMPH 6th Grade Students Will Be Expected

To Attend The Rally Including RE Students, OMPH School Students, And Home School Students. There Will Be No 6th Grade RE Classes That Week So That All 6th Grade RE Students Can Attend The Rally.

Please Note: Any Seventh Or Eighth Grade Student Who Was Unable To Attend Last Year's Rally Will

Be Expected To Attend This Year's Rally.

Please Contact Kelly Lawrence In The RE Office With Any Questions omphreled@dejazzd.com

Kelly Lawrence



Religious Education Corner:

The Regular Tuition Rate Is Now In Effect!

New Registration Forms (Blue) Can Be
Found In The Narthex Of The Church
On The Small Blue Table.

The New Registration Forms should be used if:

Your Oldest Child Is Entering Into Public First
Grade For The 2017/2018 School Year.

Your Child Is In Grades 1-8 And
Does Not Attend Catholic School.

You Are New To The Parish And
Your Child Is In Grades 1-8.

We Are Also Running Our Kindergarten Home-Study
Program Again For The 2017/2018 RE Year.

This Program Is Intended For Families Whose
Oldest Child Will Be Attending Public
Kindergarten This Year.

To Register For This Program Please Complete The

OMPH ALUMNI

We will be having a school reunion Saturday, September 16 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 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!

ROSARY IN HONOR OF THE FAMILY

The Knights of Columbus are inviting all members of OMPH to participate in the organization's 5th Sunday Rosary Program. **This service will take place after the 11 AM mass on July 30th.** The Rosary will be dedicated to the families of OMPH parish.



The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882, by the Venerable Father Michael McGivney, a priest at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn. With charity as its first principle, the organization has grown to 1.88 million members worldwide. Last year, the Knights donated more than 173 million and more than 71.5 million hours of service to charitable causes

CRUSADERS YOUTH SOCCER TEAMS



Do you have a son or daughter between the ages of 5 and 15? Does your child like to be active, learn, make new friends and have fun in a Christian atmosphere? Then sign up for Crusaders Fall Soccer! We invite every level of recreational player to participate - U6 through U15. Program is open to any youth attending Catholic elementary school or registered in religious education at a Lancaster County parish. **Register on-line at CYAAathletics.org through August 6th.** Cost is \$45/per child for grades Pre-K – 2 and \$50 for grades 3 - 8. If you have any questions, please contact Scott McCuen (League Director - CYAA Soccer Program) at cyaasoccer@comcast.net or call 717-419-6985.

DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG CHARISMATIC DAY OF RENEWAL

“The Holy Spirit – Fountain of Grace”

On Saturday, September 16, a 50th Jubilee Day of Renewal will be held at the Cardinal Keeler Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road in Harrisburg. This special event celebrating the 50th anniversary of Charismatic



Renewal in the Catholic Church will take place from 8am to 4pm and the keynote speaker will be Rev. William “Bill” Cosgrove, a 12-year service team member for the

Charismatic Renewal and current Liaison for the Charismatic Renewal under Timothy Cardinal Dolan in the Diocese of New York. For 32 years, Fr. Bill has been an active member of the International Fraternity of Priests, one of a number of priest support groups that is a strong advocate of priestly fraternity. Fr. Bill is also an active member of the Clarkstown Ethics Board, New City Rotary and the Clarkstown Ecumenical Clergy Association.

The \$20 program cost includes lunch, if registered by September 5, 2017. (Same day registration will be available at the door, but lunch will not be included). Checks can be made payable to “Diocese of Harrisburg”. To register online or for additional information

go to: www.aliveinthepirit.net or www.hbgdiocese.org/renewal or call Mary Ann: 717-564-7709 (Please do not call the Diocesan Office.)



I would like to thank everyone for the well wishes, cards and most of all the prayers I received during my recent medical tests and surgery. All were really appreciated.

Thank You,
Jack McGowan

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 have now set up an eight-hour course for OMPH on Saturday, July 29, and Saturday, August 5 from 8:00 am to 12 noon. You must attend both days.** If interested call Charlotte and Bob Galgon at 733-4369

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL SEEKS PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS/AIDES

Sacred Heart Preschool is growing! We need additional teachers and classroom aides for the 2017-2018 school year. Interested? Please contact Linda Simpson at lsimpson@sacredheartsch.org.

RESURRECTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL SEEKS MATH/SCIENCE TEACHER

Resurrection Catholic School seeks a full time junior high level math and science teacher for the 2017-18 school year. Candidates must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree and PA Instructional I teaching certificate. Send cover letter, resume and references to Miss Brenda Weaver at bweaver@resurrectioncatholicsschool.net

