

My Dear Parishioners,

Today's readings from Scripture challenge us (when we find ourselves in troubled waters) to stop and ask ourselves: "Why do we doubt in God? Why do we have so little faith in Him?" It is the same question that Elijah and Peter had to ask themselves when they faced challenges and troubles in their lives. It is the same question Mr. Smith had to ponder upon and answer in the following story.

One day Mr. Smith found himself sitting on the roof of his house watching the flood waters arise all around him. After a while a man in a canoe paddled by and offered him some help. Mr. Smith refused his help and simply answered, "No thanks. I have faith in the Lord and He will save me." The water continued to rise and Mr. Smith became more worried. At this point a motorboat pulled up and a woman yelled out offering her help. Mr. Smith refused her help simply saying, "No thanks. I have faith in the Lord and He will save me." Soon the water rose to level of the roof and complete panic set in for Mr. Smith. A helicopter hovered over the roof and a voice cried out, "I will lower you a rope. Grab it!" Mr. Smith simply responded, "No thanks. I have faith in the Lord and He will save me." Finally after hours of threading water the exhausted Mr. Smith drowned. As he arrived at the Pearly Gates Mr. Smith met his Creator and began to complain about the turn of events that happened to him. "Tell me, Lord", he said, "I had such faith in You to save me and You let me down. Why?" The Lord smiled and simply replied, "Mr. Smith, what more do you want from me? Did you happen to notice that I sent you a canoe, a motorboat, and a helicopter?"

What happened to Mr. Smith happened to the Prophet Elijah and the Apostle Peter. It happens to all of us at one time or another. We become overwhelmed with details and decisions. In so many tears, in utter frustration, in crippling loneliness, we cry out: "Lord save me! Lord, I'm sinking! Lord, where are you?" We begin to panic. We try to run away and hide from God. We tend to lose our faith and trust in Him. We look for help and security in all the wrong places. We don't trust ourselves to know what the right thing is and we doubt in our ability to do it. God calls out to us but we refuse to listen to Him. God reaches out to us but we refuse to recognize and acknowledge Him. God asks us to surrender all to Him but we are not ready to risk

giving up control, letting go, grabbing His hand and placing our total trust in Him.

Elijah experienced discouragement, doubt, and frustration. Threats from Queen Jezebel (angered over the killing of her pagan prophets and priests) have filled Elijah with great anxiety and fear. Elijah escapes to the desert where he asks God to take his life. Elijah is convinced that he can no longer serve God effectively, declaring that he is no better than his dead ancestors. In this state of mind he falls asleep in the shade of a tree as he waits for God to grant his request. But God does not grant his request. Instead God sends a messenger (angel) with food and drink for Elijah. The messenger orders Elijah to rise and eat and drink for God is interested in keeping him alive to do God's work. But Elijah has no desire to follow God's plan so he decides to ignore God and not listen to Him. He continues his fleeing and hiding from God clinging on to his request to die.

In today's passage we find Elijah hiding in a cave on the holy mountain of Horeb. Mount Horeb is the same mountain on which Moses once stood and interceded for the people of Israel after their great sin of idolatry with the golden calf (Exodus 32). God tells Elijah that he should be on the lookout for God since He would be passing by. When a wind came (so strong and heavy that it was tearing at the mountain and crushing the rocks) Elijah thought that all this power was a sign of the Lord God. Not so. Surely then God would be in the next shattering phenomenon-an earthquake. Again Elijah was wrong. Then came fire (a frequent symbol of God because of its brightness and intensity) but this time God was not in the fire. Then came the most ordinary of events, a tiny whispering sound. There, lo and behold, in the much more subtle way (the way most people would hear the Word of God) was God's presence. Standing before God Elijah reverently covered his face with his cloak, realizing his nothingness in the presence of the Divine.

God challenged Elijah to come out of his fear, doubt and discouragement and place his total trust in Him. Elijah did venture out of his cave (out of himself, really) and listened to God placing his total trust in Him. God spoke to him in the most ordinary of events, a tiny whispering sound in the wind. Elijah listened and with renewed faith set out to face the obstacles and challenges of his world.

Elijah accepted God's plan to become a powerful prophet- speaking in His name and doing His work.

Today's Gospel from St. Matthew is a story rich in its possibilities for meaning. The meanings are found in the story itself-not in attempts to recreate what might lie behind it. First and foremost Matthew's story emphasizes Christology. It is an epiphany story that reveals Jesus' divinity. In response to the fear of the disciples seeing Jesus coming to them walking on water, Jesus declares, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." This is the same way God revealed His Divine identity to Moses on Mt. Sinai, "I am who am." Secondly, today's Gospel reading is not just about a storm on a lake but it is about the storms in our lives. At times all of us are caught up in the storms of life: storms that have to do with marriage, children, finances, health, emotions, work or other people. Finally, some would say that the meaning of the image of boat in Matthew's story is symbolic of the Church. Like the boat the Church at times has been battered by waves of chaos and appeared to be sinking. However, just as God in the Old Testament is portrayed as conquering the raging and chaotic waters seeking to destroy creation (Psalm 107: 23-32), so too Jesus is conquering the sea that threatens to destroy the boat containing the frightened disciples. The Church, like the boat, is built not only for calm days but for storms; not only for a few people but for the whole human race. The Church is a sturdy boat that has lasted over thousand years and has helped billions of people weather the storms in their lives.

In today's passage Peter is emboldened by the presence of Jesus and asks to come join Him. Jesus invites Peter to join Him and Peter steps out of the boat with confidence. But then he realizes where he is and begins to panic. He begins to sink because his faith and trust in Jesus is not sufficient. In response to Peter's cry for help, Jesus saves him. The lesson for Peter and for all of us is that we all need a strong unwavering faith.

Peter made the mistake that many of us make in the face of trouble and difficulties; he took his eyes off Jesus. As his faith lost its buoyancy, he began to sink into despair. However, Jesus comes to his rescue, chiding Peter-not for having no faith at all, but for having "little faith". The point that Jesus makes for Peter and for us is that we can do anything as long as we keep our confidence and trust in Him.

When Peter trusts in Jesus, he is able to subdue the sea. When he focuses on himself and his predicament he sinks and is lost. This is just as true for us too. If we place our trust and hope in God and put ourselves at His disposal God will do wonderful things for us. If we concentrate on ourselves and our own weaknesses there is little we can do, especially in the work of God's kingdom.

Neither Elijah nor Peter had the faith to match their zeal but God supported them in their dangerous tasks. That same promise is extended to all of us if we put our faith in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Often when we feel that we are battling against the odds, we wonder why God always seems to be somewhere else. We get that sinking feeling that God has abandoned us. Fear not! Despite the storms that come into and batter our lives, Jesus promises to be that calming presence, that steadying hand for us if we keep our faith and trust in Him. We can always be assured that God will make His presence known to us in the silence of our hearts. We can be assured that God will always be present in the storms of our lives. And we can be assured that God will always comfort and support us as we make our way through life's most trouble waters. Have a Blessed Week.

Love & Prayers,

Fr. John

**FEAST of the ASSUMPTION
of the BLESSED VIRGIN
MARY**

Tuesday, August 15th is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother Mary. This day is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. The Vigil Mass for this Feast will be celebrated on Monday, August 14th at 7 PM. Masses will be celebrated on August 15th at 7 AM, 9AM and 7 PM.

Please note that the Parish Office will **only** be opened Monday thru Thursday from 9AM until noon time this week.



| Date | Amount | Needed | Difference |
|---------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 7-30-17 | \$12,029.90 | \$14,950.00 | (\$2,920.10) |
| YTD | Amount | YTD Need | Difference |
| 7-30-17 | \$65,066.59 | \$74,750.00 | (\$9,683.41) |

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, August 14, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Priest & Martyr

7:00 †Bill Hecker
7:00 †Robert Governanti

Tuesday, August 15, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7:00 †Daniel & Regina McCune
9:00 Fr. John McLoughlin
7:00 †Mary Brady

Wednesday, August 16, St. Stephen of Hungary

7:00 †Bill Hecker
9:00 †Bill Hecker

Thursday, August 17

7:00 †Bill Hecker

Friday, August 18

7:00 †Bill Hecker

Saturday, August 19

9:00 †William Muldowney
5:00 †Thomas Pagerly

Sunday, August 20, 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 †Sr. Mary Theresa Escher
11:00 †Kenneth Wolfe

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 16: Sue Beuhler, Elsie Becker, Scott Peters.

July 30: Janet Eberly

August 6: Melissa Kurtz, Janet Tomko, Elizabeth & Jack Farnquist Sr., Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Richard Warner, Brendan Holbritter, Anthony Tassa, John Griffis, Duane Hartman, Byron Gift, and Jack McGowan, Declan Morgan, and Phyllis Schmook, Sandy Kurz.

August 13: Joe Lerman, Dorothy Blessing

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

Jesus' words to his disciples in today's Gospel "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" He loves them. He loves Peter's bold attempt to walk toward him on the waves. He knows that Peter is taking an important step toward a confident mature faith. He also knows that Peter's flop into the water won't be the end of the story. Far from being a failure or a disaster, it will become a milestone on his journey of discipleship. Yes, Peter had "little faith," but he did have faith! Jesus looks at us with love when he sees our attempts to follow him. He applauds our successes, and he reaches out to help us when we fail. He is quick to come to our aid if we take a misstep or start to doubt. He knows that each step reflects our growth toward maturity.

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 Robert Governanti.

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.



COME AND SEE

Maybe the Spirit is tugging at you to come into the Catholic Church. Come, experience God's Grace together with others in the The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The RCIA is a process which helps a person figure out what God is saying to him or her at this point in life. The emphasis is on personal reflection and prayer in community. Where is God leading all of us?

MARRIAGE ANNULMENTS

The Tribunal of the Diocese of Harrisburg will be giving 3 presentations within the diocese concerning marriage, divorce and annulment according to the Church teaching. These presentations will be helpful for divorced Catholics, those divorced who wish to marry Catholics, those parish leaders involved in the RCIA process and any others who may have a vested interest because of family or friends.

September 11 – Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg
7 PM

September 14 – St. Joseph, Hanover, 7 PM

September 25 – St. Philip, Millersville 7 PM

No prior registration is required. For further information call 657-4804 ext. 304 or email: tribunal@hbgdiocese.org



The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process whereby adults enter the Catholic Church.

The goal of RCIA is the preparation of adults who wish to enter the Roman Catholic Church through the Sacrament of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. You will learn about beliefs, practices and truths of our Catholic faith with a focus on spiritual growth.

Classes Start

Monday, September 11 at 7 PM

If you would like to attend or would like more information please contact or call Linda at 733-2676.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

1. Were you ever baptized? Yes No

2. If baptized in what denomination:

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.

WE NEED ACCOMPANISTS



The OMPH Music Ministry is in need of some more pianists and organists to play at the weekend Masses. You can do as little as 1 Mass per month or as many as 1 every week. You'll be scheduled according to your availability and preferences. There is a small group of singers who can sing with you and song suggestions and sheet music are provided. The music ministry is a great way to meet other parishioners and to become more involved in our faith community. If you are willing to share your talent, please call or email Jill McGowan at 717-336-5578 or jmcgowan333@yahoo.com.

**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS
MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD**

In conjunction with Pope Francis and the 2018 Synod of Bishops on the topic of *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the Diocese of Harrisburg is surveying youth and young adults (ages 15 – 39). Both those who identify as Catholic and those who do not are encouraged to complete an online survey at. The results will be used to answer questions of the Synod of Bishops and to better serve youth and young adults within our diocese. To participate please visit www.hbgdiocese.org/synod2018 or contact Rob Williams, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 657-4804 or at rwilliams@hbgdiocese.org.

Black Catholic Apostolate Summer Picnic - The Black Catholic Apostolate invites all African-American, African & Afro-Caribbean Catholics in our diocese to a picnic that will be held on **Sunday, August 27** at noon at the **River Front Pavilion on City Island, Harrisburg**. Meat and drinks will be provided. Those attending are asked to bring a favorite covered dish or dessert to share. Also bring your favorite games to play. For additional information and to RSVP, please contact Gwen Summers at 236-4310 or gsummers@hbgdiocese.org



Religious Education Corner:

The Late Tuition Rate Is Now In Effect!

New Registration Forms (Pale 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 Pink Registration Paners Found In The Narthex

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Women of the Diocese of Harrisburg, please mark your calendar for the 3rd Annual Diocesan Women's Conference, on Saturday, **October 14, at Bishop McDevitt High School.**

Theme: "Lead All Souls to Heaven": Mary's Message to Us from Fatima.

Keynote Speaker: Award winning Catholic author and noted speaker, Susan Brinkmann.

The Women's Conference includes 36 workshops from a blue-ribbon list of speakers, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Rosary and Benediction, opportunity for Confession available, beautiful music, good food, a wide variety of exhibitors, and celebration of Mass by Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. Conference information, including Online Registration, is currently available at www.hbgdiocese.org/women Registration brochures for paper registration are also available at parishes and online. Last year we had more than 800 women attend this conference. This year we are hoping for 1,000+ women. Thank you! For answers to your questions call Kelly at 738-4517.



This Year's Theme: "ON MISSION"

Please Save The Date

Attention All Families Of Students

Entering 6th Grade This The 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

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 experiences 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!



RESPECT LIFE

Hillcrest abortion clinic in Harrisburg was shut down recently due a health inspection uncovering serious health and safety violations. The list of violations includes using outdated equipment in unsafe conditions, using outdated/expired medications, and having unsecured prescription medication available to anyone who walked through the doors. Abortions were performed by a "doctor" who could not provide proof that he is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology, and no nurses were present, and no one monitored women as they recovered.

These violations are similar to "the house of horrors" of abortionist Kermit Gosnell in Philadelphia, where seasoned police officers were ill when they raided his office.

To keep this clinic closed permanently, the Pa Pro-Life Federation is broadcasting this information to keep the pressure on the state. Pa Governor Tom Wolfe, a former Planned Parenthood escort, has pledged his support for Planned Parenthood, so there is no pro-life ally in the Governor's mansion. Spread

the word about unsafe and appalling conditions of abortion clinics. See www.paprolife.org for more information and ways to spread the word. Pray for Hillcrest to remain closed.

Andrea Ostrowski

ATTENTION: OMPH SCHOOL FAMILIES!

It's *Back to School Time!* The family *Back to School Information Packet* will be available at your parish on the weekends of **August 12th-13th** and **August 19th-20th**. Included will be all school emergency information forms and affirmation/permission forms to be completed at the opening of the new school year. All registered school families are asked to please pick up your envelope in the church lobby after any Mass. If you are unable to get your envelope at this time, they will be available in the school office from August 22nd to 24th between 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM. The school newsletter, calendars, lunch menu and informational sheets will be emailed to families in mid-August. Thank you!



DAY OF RENEWAL

On **Saturday, September 16**, the Harrisburg Diocesan Charismatic Day of Renewal will be held at the Cardinal Keeler Center, 4800 Union Deposit Road in Harrisburg. The theme this year is "The Holy Spirit – Fountain of Grace."

The event will take place from 8-4 pm 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, or 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 or for additional information go to: www.aliveinthespirit.net or www.hbgdiocese.org/renewal or call Mary Ann at 717-564-7709 (Please do not call the Diocesan Office.)

