

My Dear Parishioners:

In today's society there is a great temptation for many people to merely **"go with the flow"** when it comes to personal **decision making**. Some people **choose** to float along and live from one day to the next and somehow avoid making any really fundamental **decisions**. In fact some people actually resist having to decide. They let **choices** be made for them by certain events, by others, or even by the world around them. They merely do what others do; think the same way as others think; they simply **choose** what **others choose**; and mimic others words and actions. Some people simply allow the spiritual and moral **choices** that shape their life and soul be made by their surrounding culture. They rather **"go with the flow"** and not allow their moral conscience dictate what is right and wrong in their lives. They lack a sense of spiritual growth in their lives. Today's Scripture readings remind us that we **cannot** merely **"go with the flow"** when we are faced with making serious **choices** and **decisions** in our lives. We must **choose** to follow **God's way** and **not** the secular world's way.

"Going along with the flow" seems to be what was happening to the Israelites in their covenantal responsibilities with God in today's first reading. Moses had chosen Joshua to be his successor and leader of the Israelites. Initially Joshua lacked confidence in his role as Moses successor. God had to assure Joshua three times to be strong and steadfast (Jos. 1:6, 7, 9). But in today's reading Joshua has become a strong leader and boldly summons together all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, a spiritual center. All the tribe's people together with their elders stand before Joshua as he presents to them his farewell address.

In his address to the gathered assembly Joshua (shortly before his death) places before the assembly a **choice** that will shape their future self-identity and will determine the path that they will travel for the rest of their lives and the lives of their descendants. Joshua challenges all to **choose** who their God is; to whom will they give their allegiance to and worship? Whom will they follow and serve; the God of the Exodus or the gods of the surrounding culture? Joshua tells the assembly that they can continue to serve their ancestral gods (the gods they worship beyond the River); they can opt for the gods of the people in whose land they

are now dwelling (the gods of the Amorites); **or** they could worship the One True God-Yahweh. Speaking for his own family, Joshua boldly declares: "We will serve the Lord God Yahweh." The rest of the tribes make the same decision. Their **choice** of God is determined by the personal involvement of God in their lives.

Today's second reading from the Letter to the Ephesians (if not written by St. Paul himself, then written by a faithful follower to Paul's ideas) is tied in with our first reading and Gospel. Today's reading teaches us that the Church's submission to Jesus is to the One who gives Himself intimately and completely in behalf of the fullness of life.

The responsibilities of husbands in contrast to a traditional patriarchal marriage are the subject of today's reading. The author states that Jesus loved the church so much that He gave His life for it. This is the degree of spousal commitment envisioned for husbands. Following the example of Jesus who sacrificed His Divine privileges for the sake of the church, husbands are told to sacrifice their patriarchal privileges for the sake of their wives. As stated in the Book of Genesis the husband and wife constitute One flesh (Gn. 2:24). Building on this concept the author of Ephesians argues that when husbands **choose** to love their wives they actually love themselves. Just as Jesus handed Himself over (out of love for His Church) such **selfless love** is the **ideal** for husbands and wives. This transformed understanding of marriage is used to characterize the mysterious union of Jesus and the Church. Therefore husbands and wives should nourish and cherish each other as Jesus nourishes and cherishes the Church.

Today's Gospel passage from St. John focuses on the responses of different people in the Johannine community to what Jesus presented in His **Bread of Life** discourse. Today's passage is sometimes called the **"Crises of the Eucharist."** Jesus had spoken of Himself as the **Bread of Life** and how one must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have true life within them. This is a critical moment in Jesus' life. Before this profound proclamation Jesus had been a popular, heartwarming preacher and teacher. Many people followed Jesus and even hounded and chased Him. However now Jesus's sermon on the **Bread of Life**

brings all those gathered to a moment of **decision**. Jesus calls and challenges all to make a **decision** to believe in His words and make a **choice** to accept His words as truth and follow Him or merely **“go with the flow.”** Overall most of the gathered people now are **not** impressed with Jesus’ words. Their responses include grumbling, disbelief, rejection and betrayal. Many say, “This is hard to take” and they depart. However, the Twelve Apostles (in the name of Peter) make a confession of faith to Jesus and remain committed to following Him.

The difficulty that most of the gathered people had with Jesus’ **Bread of Life** discourse was the high Christology unfolded in John 6:35- 50 and His challenge to them to follow Him in the **Way of the Cross** (sacrificial love). Many could not grasp the fact that Jesus claimed that He had an intimate relationship with God the Father (high Christology) as expressed in His words: **“I am the Bread of Life** which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” The grumbling people found this to be a hard saying as they could **not** move beyond the surface meaning of what Jesus said. Jesus is not surprised by their negative responses to His words. Nevertheless, Jesus does not back away from the points He made. In fact Jesus challenges them to go further. Jesus declares that the words He has spoken are **“spirit and life.”**

After Jesus finished speaking to the crowd there was only a small group left. Many ceased to follow Him and returned to their former ways of life. However a hopeful moment happens when Jesus asks His Twelve Apostles if they too want to leave Him. Peter speaks for the Twelve and responds in these words: “Master to whom shall we go? **You** have the **words of eternal life**. We have come to believe and are convinced **You** are the **Holy One of God.**” The Twelve have faith in what Jesus said even though they do not have a full understanding of what Jesus is asking them to do (sacrificial love).

Too often we react and respond to a situation by merely **“going with the flow.”** Hopelessness can become a way of life. The feeling that God has abandoned us or that God doesn’t exist in our lives can cripple us emotionally and spiritually and force us to merely **“go with the flow.”** Those people who could not accept and endure Jesus’ talk about giving them His **“flesh to eat”** leave Jesus and return to their

directionless, hopeless lives. But St. Peter’s simple confession articulates his faith that God is **always** present in the light of goodness and that the God of sacrificial love is **always** with us. Despite our moments of doubts, fears, and misgivings, we **know** in the debts of our hearts that Jesus **is the Bread of Life**. We also **know** that Jesus **has the words of eternal life** for us. As we continue our life’s journey let us always continue embracing our deep faith in the **Most Holy Eucharist**. And like Peter and the other Apostles let us always remain with Jesus listening to Him and **not** merely **“going with the flow”** along the world’s path. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers, Fr. John

BLACK CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE



The Black Catholic Apostolate is sponsoring a family and friends picnic that will be held on **Sunday, August 26, at noon** at the **River Front Pavilion on City Island, Harrisburg. All are invited!** 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 (717) 954-4620, or email jcurran@hbgiocese.org

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ABORTED CHILDREN

When: Saturday, September 8 at 9:40 a.m.
Where: At the memorial stone in front of OMPH Church 320 Church Ave. Ephrata, PA 17522

Americans throughout the country will gather at the gravesites of aborted babies and other memorial sites dedicated in their honor for the fifth annual National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children.

Solemn vigils will be held at these sites to commemorate the more than 59 million children who have lost their lives to legal abortion since 1973, and to remind our society of the humanity of the unborn child. Please join us for the memorial service in our community:

More Info: Call Marty Long at 717-381-8538 or email at mcllong@gmail.com

Together let us remember the victims of abortion and pray for a final end to this injustice in our land during the National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children.

ATTENTION YOUNG ADULTS



The Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg is hosting a night for **young adults ages 21 to 40** from throughout the region called **Get Connected on Saturday, September 22**. The evening will begin with a 5 pm Vigil Mass at Saint Rose of Lima Church, York, followed by lite fare and a social at the Veranda Room at the York Fairgrounds. Registration and detailed information may be found at: www.hbgdiocese.org/getconnected or follow this event on Facebook.



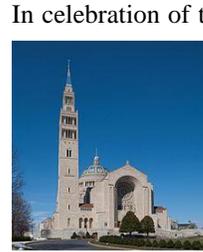
STEWARDSHIP:

AMMISSION OF FAITH FALL CONFERENCE

Stewardship: A Mission of Faith, invites you to join Fr. Michael Gaitley, Jason Evert, Christopher West, Damon Owens, Msgr. John Esseff, Marty Rotella, Devin Schadt, Mark Forrest, Megan Murphy, Bishop Alfred Schlert and many more, for an adult conference this fall.

The event will be held on Wednesday, September 19th and Thursday, September 20th. One and two-day tickets are available. The conference will be held in Elizabethtown, PA, at the beautiful Stone Gables Estates which features the historic Star Barn Village and Ironstone Ranch (www.stonegablesestate.com). In between the 6 keynote talks, 24 workshops, daily Mass and evening adoration, you can enjoy 275 acres of God's creation including horseback riding, wagon rides, campfires, an outdoor stations of the cross, Marian grotto, vineyard and more! For complete information, visit us at www.stewardshipmission.org and click on the Fall Conference link. We'll see YOU in September!

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE



In celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Diocese of Harrisburg, a diocesan-wide pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. is planned for **Saturday, November 3, 2018**. This pilgrimage will be led by our own Bishop Ronald Gainer. The Pilgrimage will last from **9 AM** until **4 PM** and will include a visit to the Shrine and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. Buses will be departing from various sites in our Diocese for the Pilgrimage. Additional information about the Pilgrimage can be found on the Diocesan web site, www.hbgdiocese.org/150. If you are interested in attending the Pilgrimage please see or contact Mrs. Rita Pfautz (717) 341-1211 for more information.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, August 27, St. Monica

- 7:00 † Ethel "Nana" Fetsch
- 9:00 † Louis LaMacchia

Tuesday, August 28, St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

- 7:00 † Rose Phillips
- 9:00 Intention of the donor

Wednesday, August 29, The Passion of St. John the Baptist

- 9:00 † Darlene Curran
- 7:00 † Bernard Ceegan

Thursday, August 30

- 7:00 † Joseph Pasko
- 9:00 For the teachers, students and parents of OMPH School

Friday, August 31, St. Bartholomew, Apostle

- 7:00 † Janina Szatkowska
- 9:00 † Helen Campbell

Saturday, September 1

- 9:00 † Intention of the donor
- 5:00 † John & Helen Phillips

Sunday, September 2, 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

- 7:30 For the Parishioners
- 9:00 For the teachers, students and parents of OMPH Religious Education
- 11:00 † Jean Givler

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.

June 24: Phoenix Rann, Margaret Gardner, Brenda Crawford, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Michael Lillis, Richard Warner, Kevin Kaiser, Jody Shimp, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria Reynolds, Susan Buchler, Bill Garcedau Tracy Yeakel, Paula Karem, Greg Garred, Mary Hohowski, Don Tellam, George Seuber, Jeff Gorman, Wanda Rutt, Pat Fry, Robert Bevans, Bob Eisenbise and Carlos Luciano.



Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
8-19-18	\$ 18,120.00	\$14,300.00	\$3,820.00
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
8-19-18	\$101,922.3 1	\$114,400.00	\$12,477.69

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED
SACRAMENT**

Many disciples who heard Jesus' teaching on the Bread of Life could not accept it. Why would they need his flesh and blood to have life with God? They already had the Law of Moses. But Peter saw through these objections and proclaimed: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Just as God was the Israelites' only hope in conquering the Promised Land, Jesus was Peter's only hope in living a life of purity, love, and freedom.

You are about to receive Jesus in Communion. Look closely at the Host and the chalice. You are receiving something that has astonished believers for two thousand years. You may not understand this great mystery, but you can still echo Peter's words: "Master, where else can I go? You alone can give me what I need."

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 Alice & Courtney Morrison.

FORMED

Enjoy a free subscription to formed.org – an incredible online gateway to the best Catholic content, all in one place!

1. Visit formed.org with a web browser
2. Click on Register (lower right of page)
3. Enter Parish Access Code: **4BGYH2**
4. Enter your email and create a password (you need this to log in later)
5. Go to **STUDY** and watch **FORGIVEN** Episode

WE NEED ACCOMPANISTS

The OMPH Music Ministry is in need of an accompanist, preferably piano or organ, for the Adult Choir. Practice is only once a week (Tuesdays from 7-8 pm) and we sing at 1 or 2 Masses per month. 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.



Religious Education Corner:

RE Classes Will Begin On Sunday, September 16th.

RE Classes Will Take Place On Sundays

Radiate Youth Group is attending Abbeyfest again this year on September 22nd. This is a Catholic praise and worship day in Paoli, PA. We still have one \$30 ticket if any youth still wants to attend with us. Contact me at 717-989-8900 for more details.

Radiate Youth Group meetings will kick off again on Sunday September 9th from 3:30-5:30 in the Bernadine Center. God has great things in store for us again this year! Praise His Holy Name...In His Service, Denise Ives



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 Sacraments 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 17 at 7 PM

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

CALLING ON YOUNG ADULTS!
We need you!
We are looking to form a Youth Council for OMPH
We need talented, outgoing, and creative young adults
We'll be hosting an information session soon!
Want to hear more?
Contact: Megan Williams, Megan207@gmail.com

Get Involved!

The graphic is a blue oval containing text and a logo. The text is centered and reads: "CALLING ON YOUNG ADULTS!", "We need you!", "We are looking to form a Youth Council for OMPH", "We need talented, outgoing, and creative young adults", "We'll be hosting an information session soon!", "Want to hear more?", "Contact: Megan Williams, Megan207@gmail.com". Below the text is a yellow sun-like logo with "OMP" in the center. At the bottom of the oval, it says "Get Involved!".



WE ARE ENROLLING!

Registration is now open to all parish families for Preschool through Grade 8 for the 2018-2019 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 717-738-2414. To learn more about our school, please **visit our website** at www.omph.org or call the school office at 717-738-2414 for further information. Find us on Facebook at OMPH Ephrata! Please feel free to share and contact the Development Office with any questions.