

My Dear Parishioners,

Have you ever tried to tell the **truth** to someone who refused to listen? Or worse, have **you** ever resisted the **truth** that someone tried to tell you? From time to time we all bump into the **truth** about ourselves that there is a gap between what we say and what we do, between what we profess to be and how we actually behave. However often we notice this inconsistency more easily in others than seeing it within ourselves. One of life's biggest disappointments is to encounter people who will promise us anything and everything without holding themselves accountable for what they say. Their word or promise is **worthless**. But sometimes **our** words and promises are no great bargains either. We lie, we draw back, we water-down the **truth**, we make excuses, we tell half-**truths** or we simply decorate the **truth** with so many disguises that it becomes unrecognizable.

In sharp contrast to the fragility and the inconsistency of the human word, the Word of God is always effective and **truthful** because it gives us life. God's Word is a word of life, salvation and power: a word that can create, heal, rescue and revive. For God to speak is the same as for God to act. For God to promise is the same as for God to fulfill. God's word creates what it says. God speaks the world into existence when God says: "Let there be..." and it happens and is there. Our Scripture readings for today reinforce the **truth** that God's Word has power and is effective. As the rains water the earth giving all things life and enabling them to grow, so does God's Word give us life and helps us mature spiritually. The Word of God **always** accomplishes what it is supposed to do. God's Word is not empty; it is a powerful word which brings about God's purposes. As God's Word made the first beginning (Creation story) so it continues to make new beginnings and give us life.

Today's first reading comes from the Book of the prophet Isaiah. Throughout his book Isaiah seeks to awaken the Israelites to the power of God's Word to bring them life. The first half of Isaiah's book records the failure of the Jewish leaders (secular and religious) and people to believe in the power of God's word and promise. Ultimately their failure to

believe in God put their kingdom on the path to destruction. However, the experience of the Babylonian exile and all the misery connected with it disposed the Israelites to at least listen to Isaiah's prophetic message. Chapters leading up to today's message of consolation have assured the Israelites that God's bond of love was with them and that God had a plan for them as He would bring them back from their exile.

In today's passage God is assuring the Israelites that His promise to them would be fulfilled. God's mysterious Word not only brings them God's message but it also ushers them into God's presence. Today's passage also underlines the creative power of God's Word. For God to speak is to act, to say is to do. God's Word comes full circle. Isaiah makes rain and snow symbols for the powerful Word of God. When God sends moisture to the earth it does the work of keeping the world green and alive. Rain comes down and makes the earth fruitful; just so, God's Word rains down and enriches the world. When God send out His Word it is not full of empty promises but rather it is effective and powerful and is able to accomplish what it was sent to do. Isaiah then uses bread as a symbol for God's Word. Just as bread sustains life God's Word gives life to the inner self. God's dynamic Word nourishes people spiritually and equips and empowers them to nourish others.

In today's section of Romans (second reading) Paul reminds his listeners that there is a much wider vision of life in the world than comprehended at first sight. Paul sees all of creation as joined to humankind in being wounded by sin and in its present misery. We are God's representatives in His marvelous creation. Human destiny is intricately interwoven with the world we live in: its suffering, corruption, and agony. Because of Adam's sin and all subsequent sins creation has been frustrated. And yet despite humankind's sins against creation humans are able to await the final outcome in hope. This hope is the assurance that humans would be freed from the law of physical decay and eventually share in the transforming experience of the Risen Jesus.

One of the ways the Gospel evangelists show that Jesus speaks the Word of God is by

showing how Jesus speaks with **authority**(unlike the Pharisees and scribes.) Often in the Gospels we see Jesus speaking a word that is **always** effective. In his healing ministry Jesus speaks and people are immediately healed. Jesus commands, orders, and rebukes so that demons are silenced and sinners forgiven. Simply put, when Jesus speaks something **always** happens. Those who are open to His creative word are seen to leave His presence changed: something happens to them. And in that change they see themselves differently. They see Jesus in a new light and they can face the future with **new** hope.

But there is another word that Jesus speaks, a word that is **offered** to others and depends on **their** response if it is to be truly effective. This word is like a seed that is sown by Jesus; a seed that depends on the condition of the ground if it is to grow and bear fruit. Such is the case of today's Gospel passage from Matthew regarding the parable of "the Sower of the Seed." Jesus used many parables to teach, to challenge and to confront the people of His time. Being a teacher Jesus knew how effective a good story was in capturing the audience's attention. A story is helpful in remembering a lesson since everyone remembers a good story and like to pass it on to others. A story, if apt, is also helpful in driving the point of the lesson home. More importantly to today's Gospel passage a parable disarms the audience so that they don't automatically put up defenses. It is only later when they reflect upon the parable that they realize it is about them.

We must keep in mind that Matthew's intent of including Jesus's parable in today's Gospel was to try to explain why some Jews accepted Jesus' Word and became His followers while others rejected Jesus and His Word completely.

Jesus' parable about the sower puts great stress on the act of sowing the seed. The sower can only control the act of sowing itself. He cannot make or force the seed to grow. The Sower is God or Jesus Himself as the two are the same. The seed is the Word of God: God's teaching and revelation, whatever communication God has had with humankind. The soil is the audience itself. The different degrees of **receptivity** among humans and the interpretation of the variety of their **responses** to

God's Word are compared to different types of soil (hard path, rocky ground, thorny ground, and rich soil). First there are those who hear the word without understanding it and the word is taken away from them by those who oppose its power. Second there are those whose first enthusiasm for the word cannot withstand trial because the word has never taken root in them. Third there are those who hear the word but are overcome by a litany of distractions and lose it. Finally there are those who hear the word, understand it, take it to heart and make it their own, and then yield a bountiful harvest through their persistence and their perseverance.

Jesus' parable can be interpreted in two ways. If it is interpreted and understood as the Parable of the Sower, the focus is on **God** and the main message is the universality and all-embracing outpouring of God's love (the liberality with which God sows the seeds of faith: indiscriminately, with great abundance, on the receptive and non-receptive alike.) The point being God reaches out to all because He wants to save all. If Jesus' parable is interpreted and understood as the Parable of the Soil, the focus and major emphasis is on the condition of the soil. The harvest depends not only on the sowing, which is generous, but also on the quality of the soil on which the seed falls: the **receptivity** of the **individual**. The reason for various responses to God's word is due solely to human freedom and personal choice.

Today the Word of God is still scattered generously. God still shares His Word and love hoping that people will take to it, welcome it, and make it their own. How would you describe your own **receptivity** and **response** to His Word? What kind of soil are you? What kind of soil am I? Are you the pavement where God's Word stays on the surface and anything can distract us from the Word? Or are you the rock that never lets God's Word sink in deeply? Do you reduce your faith to feelings and nice thoughts but never let it shape your life in any serious way? Are you filled with thorns (ego, interests, addictions, distractions, agendas, unchanneled drives, or other priorities) that choke off the Word of God in your life? The question is not whether we **hear** God's Word in our life but rather what do we **do** with it. God's Word comes to us daily through Scripture, Liturgy, Revelation, and through the Teaching of the

Magisterium. But how do you **respond** to it? Do you let it take root and grow in your life? Do you make serious efforts to understand and embrace it and know what it is asking of you? Do you welcome it with great show and then go your own sweet way? Only you and I can answer these questions **truthfully** when we examine our consciences and hearts. No one can do that for us. Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

On behalf of Fr. Francis Patrikson, SMA, I thank you for your generosity towards his missionary efforts. We raised \$4,103.19 for his ministry.

Thank you and God Bless,

Fr. John

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 Alex Masluk, Elizabeth & Jack Farnquist Sr., Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Richard Warner, Brendan Holbriiter, Anthony Tassa, John Griffis, Duane Hartman, Mary Zaleski, Byron Gift, and Jack McGowan, Declan Morgan, and Phyllis Schmook.

July 16: Sue Beuhler, Elsie Becker

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, July 17

7:00 ✠ James Woodside

Tuesday, July 18, St. Camillus de Lellis, Priest

7:00 ✠ Bill Hecker

Wednesday, July 19

7:00 ✠ Bill Hecker

9:00 ✠ Bill Hecker

Thursday, July 20, St. Apollinaris, Bishop and Martyr

7:00 ✠ Bill Hecker

Friday, July 21, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest and Doctor of the Church

✠ Bill Hecker

Saturday, July 22, St. Mary Magdalene

9:00 ✠ Bill Hecker

5:00 ✠ Tyler Spohn

Sunday, July 23, 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30 For the Parishioners

9:00 ✠ Francis & Helen Gombar

11:00 ✠ Joe Purvis

There are quite a few Mass times available for your intentions, over the next several weeks. Most



Please Check Next Week's Bulletin For This Information.

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 \[www.omph.org\]\(http://www.omph.org\) 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 Saul was chosen by God to rule over Israel, but because of his fear and selfishness, he disobeyed the Lord. He didn't make a good return to God or bear lasting fruit. As a result, God chose someone else—a man after his own heart—to replace Saul: the shepherd David. Now, David did what God asked him to do. He fought Israel's enemies, he

rescued the ark of the covenant from the Philistines, and he even danced joyfully before the Lord for all to see. Of course, we all know that David was far from perfect. He committed adultery and let himself get caught up in a web of deception and murder. But he also repented. Despite his serious failings, David's humility allowed God to continue to use him. It wasn't because he was perfect that David could bear fruit for the Lord; it was because he loved God and tried to follow him with his whole heart.

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 Lourdes Dimaano.

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.

VOLUNTEERS WITH TRUCKS NEEDED!

The OMPH Benevolent Society has some needs that involve needing a pickup truck driver. We have teams of people who go to **Lancaster on Tuesday** mornings to pick up food and another group who picks up from **Target and Redners each Wednesday**. It is **NOT a weekly commitment but perhaps once or twice a month on these days**. If you would like to work with an incredible group of volunteers, this just may be the



job for you! Please call Bonnie Brown at 824-1054 or email bbjnb@ptd.net for more details.

Also: our food bank is in need of instant potatoes, canned pasta, jello/pudding, cake mixes, and frosting! Please consider picking up one of these items next time you are in the grocery store. Place items in the food bank crate in the narthex of the church! We are always humbled by the generosity of the OMPH parishioners.



We Are 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 Papers Found In The Narthex Of The Church On The Small Blue Table And Return Them To The RE Office.

Every Year the Religious Education Program is in need of Catechists, Aides, and Occasional Substitutes for the up-coming Religious Education year.

There are three different grade levels in which to volunteer and they are as follows:



A Woman's Concern is seeking a part-time receptionist for our N. Duke St. location. The receptionist is the first connection person for individuals seeking pregnancy help and support and must be passionately pro-life and have excellent communication and computer skills.

We are also seeking a Marketing & Events intern from September-November. This person must be either a current college student or recent graduate.

Please contact our office for a full job description and application for either position at 394-1561.

OMPH COMMUNITY MEALS



OMPH will be hosting our second Community Meal of 2017. We are once again looking for volunteers to help. Our Community Meal Program provides free, freshly prepared and nutritious meals, to hungry residents of the Ephrata area. This meal will be held on **July 20 at Bethany United Church of Christ, 140 East Main Street, Ephrata, PA.**

There is no special expertise required. Volunteer will have varied duties from helping to set up the dining area, serving meals to our guests and of course cleaning up after the meal. Our meal program serves anywhere from 120 to 180 people so we usually need around 25 volunteers. Without our volunteers it would be difficult if not impossible to accomplish our mission. Whether you have helped in the past or this is your first time we would love to have you join us for this worthwhile and rewarding experience.

For those individuals who are unable to volunteer some of their time but still want to help out, monetary donations are always welcome for the "*OMPH Community Meals*". If you are interested in

volunteering or want more information please email Tara Montgomery at jazzcat9@ptd.net or contact Pat or Georgia Hogan at 738-0825.

ENIORS 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



RESPECT LIFE

Prayer for the Baptism of Aborted Babies

"Today the blood of innocent children has filled heaven. Their number is too great, too great the wrath of the Eternal Father is about to fall on mankind. Their blood disturbs My Agonizing Heart and increases My agony. Through this prayer, large numbers of innocent unborn babies will be saved. Pray it daily and make it known to the world. Anyone who teaches it will not be lost. Innocent souls in heaven will not let them

become lost. I, with My Love and Mercy, will protect them from falling into mortal sin.”

Heavenly Father, Your love is eternal. In your Ocean of love, You saved the world through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Now look at Your only Son on the Cross who is constantly bleeding for love of His people, and forgive Your world. Purify and baptize aborted children with the Precious Blood and water from the Sacred Side of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who hung dead on the Cross for their salvation; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

May they, through the holy death of Jesus Christ gain everlasting life, through His wounds be healed and through His Precious Blood be freed. There to rejoice with the saints in heaven. Amen. from the Association of the Precious Blood
<http://www.preciousbloodinternational.com>

Andrea Ostrowski

THE HOLY SPIRIT - FOUNTAIN OF GRACE



On **September 16th** the Diocese of Harrisburg will offer a Charismatic Day of Renewal from **8 AM - 4 PM** at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg. The **KEYNOTE SPEAKER** will be Fr. Bill Cosgrove, Liaison for the Charismatic Renew in the Diocese of New York, NY. **REGISTRATION FORMS** and additional information are in the parish office. There will be a collection of non-perishable food items for a local ministry, the Silence of Mary Home.

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 ACTIVITIES
ASSOCIATION SOCCER TEAMS ARE NOW
FORMING.

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.