

My Dear Parishioners,

While it still dark Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb of the Jesus who healed her, who taught her, who accorded her the respect and love she never thought herself worthy of. Mary feels the predawn **darkness** around her and within her: a void of hopelessness, a crushing sense of loss, and grief that cannot be articulated in words. But there is an admirable stubbornness about Mary. She possesses the **faith** and **courage** to continue to **hope** that the story of the Crucified Jesus was not over. Mary Magdalene refuses to surrender the sense of love, joy, and compassion that Jesus has brought forth from within her.

The **Easter Story** begins in the early morning **darkness**. This is always how our discovery of the Risen Christ begins- in **darkness**. For some members of our community this was a week of **darkness**. Earlier this week someone received devastating news from their physician –they have cancer. Earlier this week someone suddenly became unemployed-they lost their job. Earlier this week someone had their heart broken and their life turned upside down-they heard the words: “I don’t love you anymore and I want a divorce!” Earlier this week someone’s hope was crucified-their dreams were crushed. And for all the **darkness** is overwhelming.

No one is ready to encounter and experience **Easter** until they have spent time in the early morning **darkness** where hope cannot be seen. In such **darkness Easter** is the last celebration we are expecting and that is why for some **Easter** can be terrifying. We dread the **darkness** but we fear even more what is beyond it. Sometimes the **darkness** we know is preferable to what we don’t know. We have learned at least to function and exist in the **darkness**. We find a distorted solace in the fact that **darkness** means that nothing more can disappoint or hurt us.

Easter calls us out of the **darkness** that shrouds our lives and into the light of possibility, of healing, of resurrection and re-creation. **Easter’s** first light illuminates those places where we have become used to. **Easter** focuses our vision and attention on what we have never seen before. **Easter** dares us to imagine possibilities beyond our limited

understanding of what is possible. In His rising from the dead Jesus enables us to bring into our lives all that He lived and taught and gave: the love, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, humility and selflessness that ultimately triumphs over hatred, prejudice, despair, greed, death and even **darkness**.

Although the **Easter Story** begins in the early morning **darkness**, it moves beyond the state of **darkness** into the day of unparalleled significance. The **Easter Story** is so magnificent and wondrous that it touches the past, the present and the future. We remember the past in **faith**; we live a life of **love** in the present; and we anticipate the future in **hope**.

In **faith** we remember the past, Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead. Since we were not eyewitnesses of that glorious miracle we embrace this truth on the authority of God’s revelation which He communicated to His Church thru the Sacred Scriptures. In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) angels or men dressed in white announce the Good News of Jesus’ Resurrection to the weeping women gathered at Jesus’ tomb.

In John’s Gospel Resurrection **faith** springs forth from an experience of an “empty tomb” rather than an actual appearance of the Risen Jesus. In John’s account the **Easter Resurrection Story** begins with a report of Mary Magdalene’s visit to Jesus’ tomb. The first thing that she sees is that the stone has been removed from the tomb. Details about the burial wrappings are significant. The wrappings are still in the tomb but Jesus’ body is not. If His body had merely been transported to another tomb the burial wrappings would have been taken along for they would be needed. Mary Magdalene concludes that someone has stolen her beloved Jesus’ body. The text does not say that she actually looked inside the tomb. Her conviction that Jesus’ body had been stolen adds great urgency to her response. She immediately runs to Simon Peter and to the beloved disciple stating that Jesus’ body has been stolen. No one knows where His body has been taken. In a real sense Mary Magdalene becomes the Risen Jesus’ first herald. Simon Peter goes to the tomb and sees the discarded wrappings and is not sure what to make of it. The beloved disciple looks into the tomb and he “**sees and believes**” and

becomes the model of all who see with the eyes of **Easter faith**.

We look at Jesus' Resurrection with an eye on the future with **hope**. This **Easter hope** is a conviction that we, like Jesus, will be raised from **darkness** and death to light and the fullness of eternal life. Perhaps it is easier for us to accept and believe in Jesus' Resurrection rather than our own. After all Jesus is the Divine Son of the Father who came to this world to work out our salvation. It seems only natural that His death should lead to resurrection. We humans are another case. And yet **faith** in Jesus' Resurrection leads us to **believe** in and **hope** in our own resurrection. An **Easter** celebration and remembrance of Jesus' Resurrection is devoid of significance unless we have a firm **belief** and **hope** in our own resurrection. Death is the ultimate inevitable act of this life. We cannot escape death but only sin makes death a tragedy. Jesus destroyed death by overcoming sin. Therefore death is not the final step into oblivion but rather it is merely a transition to a higher form of existence as it was for Jesus.

Our well-founded **Easter hope** is that our death will lead us to our own resurrection. Since Jesus' Resurrection provides us with a confident **hope** in the future, it leads us to live a **life of love** in the present. If we want to be with Jesus in eternal happiness then we must live with Him now in the same way He lived while present in our world. We all understand what that means for our daily living. Jesus' life presents to us what we must do: to be unselfish, to be caring and generous, to be forgiving, to be devoted to prayer, and to be of service to all.

We all know that Jesus' Resurrection is the central mystery of our Catholic faith. Jesus' Resurrection gives **hope** and true **meaning of life** to those who have lost it. Jesus' Resurrection snatched victory from the jaws of death, vindicated His life and teachings, proved that truly **He is** the Son of God and confirmed our **faith** in Him. Jesus' Resurrection is not merely a miracle that happened in the past but rather it is the power and love of God that is seen in our inner experience of newness of life. Jesus' Resurrection **is** the sign of God's loving interest in our lives and His promise of the gift of happiness and everlasting life for each one of us.

Like Mary Magdalene we stand before the empty tomb this **Easter** morning. We wonder, ponder and reflect upon the significance of the empty tomb. If we are a person of **Easter faith** we will realize that the empty tomb **is** the sign of perfect **love**: that in Jesus all things are possible, that we can live our lives with meaning and purpose, and that we can become the person God created us to be. If we are a person of **Easter hope** we will discover that the empty tomb **is** the first bud of God's new spring of rebirth and re-creation.

I pray that this **Easter** we may not fear or shrink from the morning's first light but rather embrace that light and the **hope** it promises in the Risen Jesus who is forever in our midst shattering the **darkness**. I pray that this **Easter**, like the **faithful** and **courageous** Mary Magdalene, we may go forth and tell others that Jesus has truly been raised from the dead and now is very much alive in our midst. May the Risen Jesus bless you and your loved ones.

Have a **Happy** and **Blessed Easter**.

Love & prayers,

Fr. John

**BISHOP'S ANNUAL LENTEN APPEAL
"I GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE"**

"I give you an example." John 13:15

We have begun our Annual Diocesan Lenten Appeal. We need every family/household in our parish to support the Appeal in order that we may meet our assigned assessment figure. Our assessment figure for this year is **\$104,900**. The funds collected for the Lenten Appeal help support the numerous Pastoral, Charitable, Educational, and Spiritual Programs in our diocese (Catholic Charities, Respect Life, Adult Religious Formation, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Catholic Schools and Religious Education Programs, Prison Ministry, Ministry with Homeless Persons, Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, Ministry with Immigrants, and Evangelization Programs-to name a few.) I hope and pray that everyone would consider supporting the vital important ministries of our diocese by making a pledge and contributing to this year's Appeal. I also want to express my appreciation and gratitude to those who contributed to the Bishop's Appeal in previous years. Please note that funds raised 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. For more information about this year's Appeal and if you need pledge envelopes, please see the display in our Church narthex. May God bless you and your loved ones for your kindness, generosity and support.

Thank You
Fr. John

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHURCH TOUR

On **Saturday, April 22 from 10 AM until 3 PM**, our parish will be hosting tours of OMPH. Tickets will be sold on site. They are \$15 per adults 18 and older. Children under 18 are free. Tickets can be used at all 9 participating churches.



Bergstrasse Lutheran church will be serving breakfast from 8:30 - 11:30 on the tour day, and Salem Evangelical Church will be serving lunch from 11 AM - 1 PM.

If you would like to help guide tours or need information, call Theresa Novotnak at 738-5061.

JULBILEE

There will be a celebration of Father John's 25th Ordination on **Saturday, May 13** in the Father Jackson center from 12:00-3:30. It is open to all who wish to attend.



There will be sign-up sheets in the narthex after all Masses. Please sign as soon as possible so we can have a count for the caterer. Due to the fact there will be adult beverages available, it will be open to those 21 years of age and over.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, April 17

7:00 ✦ Stephanie Mash
9:00 ✦ Sue Eisenbise

Tuesday, April 18

7:00 ✦ Charles & Lucy Marrone
9:00 ✦ Mike Kiziek

Wednesday, April 19

7:00 ✦ Jill Cleary
9:00 ✦ Leo McCready

Thursday, April 20

7:00 ✦ Al & Frances Levine
9:00 ✦ Edwin Freeman

Friday, April 21

7:00 ✦ Souls in Purgatory
9:00 ✦ Regina Pushauver

Saturday, April 22

9:00 ✦ Leonard Riley
5:00 ✦ Teresa Peters

Sunday, April, 23

7:30 For the Parishioners
9:00 ✦ Luit Liebl
11:00 ✦ Jeff Montgomery

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.

March 26: Melissa Kurtz, Joann Dever, Bob Suga

April 3: Tony Cicero, Jean Givler, Abigail Lowe-Critchfield, Margie Willwerth

April 9: Alex Masluk, Mary Kay Guthrie, Elizabeth Farnquist, Richard Warner

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 Bernie Mack.

Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-2-17	\$ 13,215.06	\$14,326.00	\$1,110.94
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-2-17	\$558,467.10	\$ 573,040.00	(\$14,572.90)
Date	Amount	Needed	Difference
4-9-17	\$	\$14,326.00	\$
YTD	Amount	YTD Needed	Difference
4-9-17	\$	\$.00	(\$)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



Jesus, you are the risen Lord, and all creation sings your praise today! Even the stone that sealed your tomb is rolled away and proclaims a wondrous mystery. Instead of being an immovable testament to your death, it has become an indisputable

witness to your resurrection. Today, the burial cloths come alive to declare your victory. How tightly those garments of death bound Lazarus when you summoned him from the grave! They clung to him and would not release their grip until you spoke the word: "Untie him." But death had no hold on you, Lord. You broke free in a great burst of light, and left the burial cloths tidily behind. These cloths invite me to believe

that my Redeemer lives. They urge me to stake everything on your mercy and your promise of eternal life.



&



Religious Education Corner:

Isaac's Fundraiser To Benefit OMPH RE

On Wednesday, April 19, 2017, Isaac's Famous Grilled Sandwiches (Ephrata) will host a fundraiser to benefit the OMPH RE Program. BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY to enjoy homemade soups, grilled sandwiches, and fresh green salads. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the cost of your meal will go directly to the OMPH RE Program. Dine-In, takeout and online orders apply! You will need the special form that has been inserted in the bulletin this week. Want to help us earn even MORE? Add an Isaac's Gift Card to your check and 15% of the gift card sale will be added to the fundraiser! Gift card must be used on future visit. Hope to see you there! Thanks!



DIVINE MERCY AT WORK

Next week is Divine Mercy Sunday with the most amazing promises attached to our going to Confession and receiving Holy Communion that day! Jesus promised "a complete forgiveness of sins and punishment." That's huge! Jesus also said "On that day [Divine Mercy Sunday] the very depths of my tender mercy are opened. I pour

out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach my fount of mercy." To be able to receive this mercy, one needs to go to Confession before or on the feast and be in the state of grace (no mortal sin) and receive Holy Communion with the intention of obtaining the promised grace.

When we think about this great grace in relation to the grave sins that deal with life and sexuality, this grace takes on an even more amazing dimension. The killing of pre-born babies is known to be a grave evil.

Many women who have had abortions feel that they can't be forgiven.

Today Our Lord calls them to His infinite mercy. Yet all the sins dealing with our sexuality are grave, and as such carry a weight of punishment with them. Our Lord promises to take that weight away today with the most amazing mercy. Take advantage of this mercy!

Think about those sins most minimized by our society. Are there some that need your repentance? Have you used contraception, in any form?

Have you encouraged someone to get an abortion? Have you materially cooperated in any way- driven to clinics, paid for abortions or sterilizations? Have you been silent and not tried to discourage someone from an abortion or sterilization? Have you condoned sexual Immorality- before marriage or as adultery? Have you used someone for your own pleasure? Have you used pornography or turned a blind eye to someone else's use? Have you been closed to new life?

Divine Mercy proclaims the longing of Our Lord to forgive us and offers forgiveness of sins and punishment. Let us embrace it! www.marian.org
Andrea Ostrowski



Don't forget to SAVE THE DATE for OMPH VBS! Join us at Maker Fun Factory July 9 – 13 from 5:45 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. Look for volunteer sign up in the hallway in the upcoming weeks. Call Carolyn at 799-8222 with any questions. See you there!!



While we greatly appreciate each and every donation, below are some do's and don'ts for food bank donations (or any organization collecting multiple items.)

DO: If you are buying more than one item, consider buying all of the same item. It is easier for volunteers sorting if we receive 6 cans of tomato soup rather than one can of tomato, one can of chicken noodle, etc.

DO: Buy nonperishable items you regularly serve to your family.

DON'T: Donate any items that are opened, dented, leaking, or expired. Unfortunately, we cannot use these items and take up valuable volunteer hours sorting and discarding unusable items.

LASTLY: We are in great need of a few items for our food bank : Macaroni, peas, green beans, canned pasta, and canned peaches/pears.

Please consider purchasing some during your next grocery trip! Nonperishable food items can be placed in the food bank crate in the narthex of the church.

As always, we are humbled by our parishioners continued generosity!

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

Our FIRST EVER Designer Bag Bingo!!!! **Saturday**



April 29th from 1-4 PM. Doors will open at 12 noon \$20 per ticket includes 20 BINGO games! Win Designer Bags – Michael Kors, COACH, Kate Spade, Thirty-One and MORE! Food/Drink will be available for purchase! **Tickets will be for sale after all masses in April**, but for more information contact, Kerry Pepper at Kbpepper99@gmail.com 721-6766.

HERSHEYPARK TICKET OFFER

FOOD BANK REMINDER!



NARTHEX.

Discount tickets to Hersheypark are available to friends and families of the parish at a significant savings. FORMS ARE IN THE

Orders must be in the parish office by 4 PM, April 19th

*SAVE THE DATE SCHOOL
EVENTS*

OMPH ALUMNI

Calling all OMPH alumni! Join us **on Saturday, September 16**. All classes welcome to celebrate the schools **60th year!** For more info- find us on Facebook under OMPH reunion. Thank you! Lauren DePaul Caramenico.

OMPH SCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR 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. Financial aid is available to qualifying families through FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment. **The deadline to apply for financial aid is April 1st!** 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!

SPRING IS HERE



It's time for the OMPH School 25th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament on **May 10** Honeybrook Golf Club.

Enjoy a fun filled day of golf at a first class course. Prizes and contests including a chance to win a trip for two to the 2018 Super Bowl or \$15,000 cash.

A single golfer is only \$90 and includes golf at Honeybrook Golf Course, cart, range balls, contests, prizes, light breakfast, grilled lunch and refreshments.

Advertising through sponsorship reaches members of surrounding business communities as well as school families and friends and is available by contacting the

School Development Office at 738-2414.

TEACHING POSITION OPEN AT OMPH SCHOOL

OMPH School is seeking a first grade teacher for the 2017-2018 school year. Interested candidates must be a practicing Catholic holding a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and PA Instructional I teaching certificate. Applicants must complete the online Youth Protection program of the Diocese of Harrisburg and provide current clearances (PA State Police, Child Abuse Clearance and FBI Fingerprinting) along with employment information compliant with Pennsylvania Act 168 regulations. Benefits include medical coverage, dental plan, life insurance policy and 401K plan. For further information please contact Principal Margaret Gardner, at 738-2414; mgardner@omph.org

HONOR ROLL

The Faculty of OMPH extends congratulations to graduates of OMPH School and members of OMPH Parish who were recognized for their outstanding academic achievement at LCHS. We are very proud of our students who received honors for the third quarter of the 2016-2017 academic year.



Distinguished Honors: Anthony Andrews, Kevin Draeger, Meghan Flynn, Jillian Gentile, Devon Gerhard, Rachel Houser, Johann Imperial, Rachel Loretan, Siobhan McShea, Anthony Quagliata, Sheridan Schreyer, Riley Smith, Miles Titzer, David Vasquez, Camille Zapata and Christian Zapata.

Honor Roll: Morgan Caramenico, Taylor Geiss, Maria Guevara, Mathias Hummer, Kayla Lipson, Cory Pogwist, Ava McTamney-Prexta, Angeline Rann and Anthony Sivillo.

LCHS ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the first time, LCHS is proud to announce an Online Raffle to benefit the 3rd Annual Purple & Gold Gala. For the entire month of April, you will be able to purchase raffle tickets to win 8 different baskets with themes including... "The Royal Treatment", "S'more Family Fun", "Rossmere Tailgate Party", "Lovin' Lancaster", "I-P-yAy!", "Gift Cards Galore", "Hidden Treasure" and "Stock the Bar". Winners will be announced on April 29 at the Gala.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.

Visit

<https://www.accelevents.com/events/galarafflebasket/s17#raffle> to purchase tickets!

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with the recent parish library project. Over 200 books were donated to the Lancaster County Prison. Also, there are **many** overdue items that were borrowed that should be returned. They can be put in the "Return Bin" any time.

Diane Lerman – Parish Librarian

THE AWAKENING

All are welcome to The Awakening - an evening of praise, worship and intercession at St John Neumann Parish on Delp Rd. in the church hall on April 21st from 7:30 – 9 PM. All Christians welcome! This is a multi-generational gathering. Free babysitting provided by Lancaster Catholic High School!

The evening is hosted by the Sanctuary and Cornerstone prayer groups affiliated with the Harrisburg Diocese's Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

PARISH LIBRARY NEWS