



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

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Harborcreek, PA 16421

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www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



PENTECOST

May 19/20, 2018

The Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, is a great festival full of traditions, images and music. Pentecost brings the Easter season to a grand and fiery close. In his masterful work, *The Church's Year of Grace*, the renowned liturgist Pius Parsch carried on at length about Pentecost and its relationship with Easter:



“At Easter, Christ, the divine Sun, rose in splendor; it is high noon at Pentecost and he sheds upon his vineyard the bright, warm rays that redden and ripen. Another comparison: At Easter the garden of the church is abloom with beautiful blossoms, Christians newly baptized and confirmed. By Pentecost, these blossoms have developed and have matured into fruit and now hang heavily upon the trees. The Gardener who tends the trees is our Savior, Jesus Christ; the sun that ripens the fruit is the Holy Ghost. And a third comparison: At Easter we are born anew as children of God. Like infants we sought our Mother’s nourishing milk, the holy eucharist; carefree and happy we grew up in our Father’s house. As we became older, Mother Church warned us that the happy time of childhood would pass. She taught us we were strangers and pilgrims on this earth, that we must suffer and be patient. Now at Pentecost, we have come of age.”

While some of these metaphors may seem outdated, the same kind of thoughts can delight us as we prepare for the celebration of Pentecost.

Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday are intimately related, and we are living and breathing this dynamic of water and spirit. This is far more than commemorating a historic event in first century Jerusalem, far more than throwing a birthday party for the Church. It is a day for *being* Jerusalem, *being* Church; for praising the Sun of justice, the Gardener, and the Mother. It is a day for letting our human affections be shaped by the experience of completing Easter in full heart and voice.

As part of the Universal Church and to acknowledge our unity in the Holy Spirit, all of us are encouraged to wear ‘red’ to Mass on the weekend of May 19/20.

May 2018

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A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR...

In the midst of everything that I have been through in the past month, I was reminded of how blessed I am and how grateful I should be to have the best staff and the best parish. It reminds us of the people, things, and abilities that we take for granted, like the great care I received from the doctors and nurses, but most especially, God's healing grace.

God is so good, but so are all of you. Thank you for being here for me, for your prayers and for your cards. I am truly blessed.

Fr. Ritchie



2018 CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL REPORT

Thank you to the 210 families who have pledged a total of **\$79,140** for our 2018 Catholic Services Appeal.

We celebrate the generosity of this community which allowed us to burn our Mortgage at our Feast Day celebration last September.

Now that we are debt free, we must begin to focus on the updates and ongoing maintenance of this beautiful building. We are in need of roof repairs; one of our boilers is having problems; we need to think about replacing the carpeting in the Gathering and Worship Space.

Any money we raise in excess of our **\$61,681** CSA assessment will stay in the parish and fund these capital improvements.

As a Parish Community, we are grateful for your support in the Catholic Services Appeal and in the upkeep of the parish facility. If you have not yet made a pledge, it is not too late. CSA Pledge Forms are on the bulletin tables or in the parish office.



EASTER GRATITUDE... A word of thanks to all who helped make our Easter Triduum liturgies a beautiful and worthy celebration of the Resurrection.

THANK YOU... to all of the liturgical ministers, the Art & Environment team, those who donated to the Easter Flower Fund, to the Music Ministry, Children's Choir and their parents, those who helped "behind the scenes" in various ways, any of those forgotten in this list...

Thanks to all of you: the People of God in this community, who give so generously of their time and talent.

May God bless all of you for your effort, your energy, and your enthusiasm.

May this springtime be filled with joy and gratitude for all that the Risen One has blessed us with!

Welcome
to Our Church **New Members!**

*If you live near these new parishioners
please send a card or stop in to say hello.*

Daniel & Michelle Czerwinski (*Lily*)
508 West Eaglewood Dr.
Erie, PA 16511

Sara Danowski
8665 Dundee Rd.
Erie, PA 16509

Peter Kotre
529 West 10th St.
Erie, PA 16502

Mark & Melinda Krahe
6329 East Lake Rd.
Erie, PA 16511

John Krahnke
529 West 10th St.
Erie, PA 16502

Dennis & Patti Maguire
5002 Station Rd.
Erie, PA 16510

Antoinette Marcoline Miller
4664 E. Lake Rd. Apt.#205
Erie, PA 16511

Brian & Amanda Stadler (*Maddox & Haley*)
1107 Troupe Rd.
Harborcreek, PA 16421

Travis & Kathryn Stauffer (*Claire*)
10085 North East Sherman Rd.
Ripley, NY 14775

Ashlee Steger
2131 Hannon Rd.
Erie, PA 16510



First Eucharist 2018

Congratulations to all
our young people who
recently celebrated their
First Eucharist.

Anthony Allegretto
Lila Bly
Clara Camillo
Landon Ford
Ella Hamilton
Kami Kinter
William Lunger

Liam Marshall
Frank Mazzaresse
John Parente
Thomas Pohl
Riley Whitney
Colton Wuerstle
Lillian Zielinski



Our beloved pastor,
MSGR. GERALD T. RITCHIE
was ordained to the Priesthood
on May 18, 1968.

Not too often,
there comes someone very special
like Father Ritchie,
who not only serves the Church
and its people faithfully,
but who makes of their own life
a living testimony of Christ's love.

Thank you, Father, for 50 years
of devoted and caring ministry.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Family Pancake Brunch

Can you smell the sausage cooking
and the maple syrup warming?

Is it making your mouth water?

That is right! It is time for our annual Pancake Brunch!

Sunday, June 3
9:45 —10:45 a.m.
in Sperry Hall

Call 899-6132 to let us know to set a place for you and your family.

This is an event for the entire parish family.

We will honor our graduates when we are all together,
but, this is a parish-wide event.

Congratulations Graduates!

The parish family of Our Lady of Mercy is very proud of all of our high school and college graduates. You have worked very hard to reach this milestone. We would like to celebrate this special event with you. Can we treat you to a special meal?

Come be our guests at our **Pancake Brunch on Sunday, June 3 at 9:45 AM.** There may even be a little something extra just for you if we know that you are coming.

Call 899-6132 to let us know to expect you at the Pancake Brunch.

Hopefully our parish data base has enabled us to identify all of our high school graduates and to send you each an individual invitation. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing who is graduating from a post-secondary program except through informants. If you know of someone who is receiving an Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral or other degree, please let us know by calling 899-6132. We want to honor all of our graduates!



CELEBRATING THE MINISTRIES OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Highlighting the ministries of Our Lady of Mercy Parish has always been a goal of both the Pastoral Council and the Stewardship Committee. However, this year we have aspired to celebrate all those involved in ministry on a grander scale for all they do to contribute to the spiritual health and growth of our faith community. We have so much to celebrate!

Throughout the year, one weekend each month, we will honor a different group of ministries. Hopefully you have enjoyed the celebrations in March, April, and May and have begun to appreciate how each ministry serves the needs of so many.

On **June 2 and 3** we will honor the **Liturgical Ministries** which include Altar Linen Care, Altar Server, Children’s Liturgy of the Word, Church Environment, Greeter, Lector, Presentation of the Gifts, Eucharistic Minister, Usher, Music Ministry, Children’s Choir and Offertory Counter. If you take part in these ministries, please wear **blue** to church and plan to take part in the celebration.

After each mass, information about each of the ministries and signup sheets will be available in the Gathering Space. The chart below shows the schedule of ministries and their date of celebration. Each ministry group has a symbol and a special color which coordinates with their banner. This October, and each year to follow, there will be a collective Ministry Celebration and Recommitment Ceremony at each Mass. From that point forward all banners will find a permanent home in the Gathering Space.

March 3 & 4	Faith Formation	Green
April 7 & 8	Service	Orange
May 12 & 13	Pastoral Care	Violet
June 2 & 3	Liturgical	Blue
June 30 & July 1	Spiritual/Prayer	Red
August 4 & 5	Administrative	Yellow
September 8 & 9	Outreach	Indigo
October 14	Ministry Celebration & Recommitment	

If you would like, you can sign up for a ministry on the coinciding date or you can contact Donna Clark now in the parish office at 899-5342. This also applies if you would like to retire from a ministry.

Called to *Serve*

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE NEWS

CARE FOR CREATION: WATER



As a gift from God, water is a vital element essential to survival; thus, everyone has a right to it. By its very nature water, cannot be treated as just another commodity among many, and it must be used rationally and in solidarity with others.

These statements are from the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and should guide our thoughts, prayers and especially our actions towards the availability of water for all of humanity. Unfortunately, there are currently 2.1 billion people in the world without safe drinking water at home (www.worldwaterday.org). Even in the United States, one percent of Americans do not have access to clean drinking water.

March 22 of every year is World Water Day. This year, Pope Francis released a short video reminding us of the importance of water (www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-03/pope-francis-world-water-day.html) He begins by saying, “Water is the most essential element for life and the future of humanity depends on our capacity to guard it and share it.”

What does this mean for you and me? We in Erie County are fortunate to live near the shores of Lake Erie, part of the Great Lakes, the largest system of fresh surface water in the world. We depend on our lake to provide us with clean fresh water and wonderful recreational opportunities. We can act to preserve water and keep it available for all.

On the community level, The Great Lakes Restorative Initiative was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore this vital natural resource. The organization targets the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem such as invasive species and nutrient runoff. The federal funding for this initiative was recently in peril, as it was proposed that the budget be slashed from \$300 million to \$30 million. However, a deal struck in Washington in March 2018, fully restored the funds. Stay aware of programs like this and let your legislators know that you support them.

On a family level, there are many things you can do to reduce your use of water and help to preserve it. Below is a list of actions for you to consider. See how many you are already accomplishing and give thanks to God for this precious resource by beginning some new actions!

- Use your dishwasher when full and use the air-dry setting. Dishwashers that are Energy Star rated use less water than hand washing.
- Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Instead compost your food waste.
- Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them.
- When doing laundry, only wash full loads and/or match the water level to the load.
- Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you will save up to 150 gallons per month
- Even better: shorten your shower to 5 minutes, you will save 1,000 gallons per month!
- Install low flow shower heads and water faucets.
- Turn the water off while brushing your teeth.
- Reduce lawn watering by adjusting your lawn mower to 2 inches. Taller grass shades roots and holds moisture. Also, leave lawn clippings on the grass to hold moisture.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean sidewalks and driveways.
- Protect the quality of our water by using fewer plastics. Two easy ways:
 - Refuse plastic shopping bags – bring your reusable bag.
 - Use your own reusable water bottle.
- Test yourself on this home water audit calculator and challenge yourself to do better next month! (<https://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/home-water-audit/>)



JOINING OUR CATHOLIC FAMILY



Do you have questions about the Catholic faith? Have you thought about becoming a member of the Catholic Church? Would you like to explore the possibility of being baptized? Then come and join the members of the RCIA ministry. (RCIA stands for *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*).

Unbaptized adults or teens or those not raised in a Christian community are invited into a rich and powerful ministry of prayer, faith-sharing, learning and reflection. This one-year (or longer if desired) process allows participants to explore the teachings, practices and communal life of the Catholic Church so that individuals can make an honest decision about their faith journey. Because this process requires a full year, those considering baptism or acceptance into the Catholic Church next Easter would need to begin the process now.

Individuals raised and well-formed in a Christian denomination other than the Catholic Church are invited to explore the Catholic tradition and beliefs in a time-frame and context that best meets their needs. Full reception into the Catholic Church for those baptized and steeped in the Christian faith can take place when the individual and faith community discerns is appropriate.

Baptized adults who wish to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation may also pursue the formation appropriate for this sacrament. Our Lady of Mercy will celebrate Confirmation in Sunday, October 28, 2018.

For more information, or to have your questions answered, contact Irene Lucas @ 899-6132, any member of the parish staff @ 899-5342, or speak with a member of this parish community. All members of our parish family are reminded that an invitation to a friend or relative can be the one word that was needed. Invite someone you love to join our Catholic family.



Thank you, Thank you!

Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time and talent so generously during this past year serving in the catechetical ministry. Your prayerful witness, creativity and patience, dedication and cooperation have been noticed with appreciation by your parish family. Your students are grateful. The families of your students are very grateful. This entire parish community is grateful beyond words for your hours of selfless service.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS®

“KNIGHTLY” NEWS

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OLM SCHOLARSHIPS

Our Knights of Columbus Council is now accepting applications for scholarships. Shortly after the council's formation, the scholarship program began. Its purpose was to give a portion of the proceeds from the annual Golf and Sports Raffle to college-bound graduating high school seniors who, along with their parents are members of our parish.

note: The process has begun earlier than past years.

Applications are available through the OLM Website or at the church office. Along with an application, a brief essay is required and a certified, and sealed, transcript from the applicant's school. The transcript need not include the final grading period. The deadline for applications is **Friday, May 18**. Please remind others who may be interested. Watch the bulletin for reminders.

25th ANNUAL GOLF & SPORTS RAFFLE

The Knights of Our Lady of Mercy held their 25th consecutive raffle on May 11. Over the years it has become one of the area's largest events of its kind, attracting 600 attendees. The proceeds from the raffle are donated back to our parish and community with over \$180,000 having been donated to date. Parish donations support youth programs, provide scholarships for high school seniors and fund capital projects.

Community donations include the Ella Cochran Food Pantry, needy families at Christmas, the Gertrude Barber Center and local athletic team whom we sponsor. The Knights would like to thank all of you – parish and non-parish members alike - who support and promote this event by buying and selling tickets and helping out before and during the raffle.

MEN'S NIGHT-OUT EVENT

Our Knights of Columbus Council 11144 and the Men's Night-Out Committee were proud to have arranged for United States Congressman Glenn “GT” Thompson to be our featured speaker on Friday May 4th. Congressman Thompson has been a strong voice for protecting the unborn and recently spoke on the status of Pro-Life legislation in Washington, D.C. His message will be educational and uplifting.

BINGO & PIZZA NIGHTS AT THE V.A. MEDICAL CENTER

Several Knights spent an evening with the veterans who live at the V.A. Hospital. They play a few games of bingo, eat some pizza and we all have some good social time together. Come join us if you can. The next will be in July; come join us if you can.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our Lady of Mercy provides Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW) for our young parish members, between the ages of 4 and 7 years of age. CLW is offered during the 11:00 Sunday Mass year round.

At the beginning of Mass, children are invited forward for a special blessing before leaving the sanctuary with a trained CLW leader. While the older members of the community listen to and reflect on the Word of God, our young people do the same. They process to the classroom area where they hear the Sunday readings from a Children's Lectionary. The readings are explained in a way that relates to their young lives. Like the adults, they pray a Creed in simplified language and offer their Prayers of the Faithful. The children return to their families in time for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministry is in need of new leaders. Several recent retirements from this ministry has left us with a tight schedule. The goal is to have 6 trained leaders who will rotate through a schedule that would assign a leader to no more than one Sunday per month.

If you enjoy working with young children but can not make the weekly commitment of a classroom catechist, this might be a perfect ministry for you. All CLW leaders must present the parish with current child abuse clearances before they can work with the children. All CLW leaders receive training for the ministry.



OREMUS: A Catholic Study on Prayer

We know we should pray. We want to pray. But often we don't know how to start or where to go. Our prayer is empty. Distractions and life's demands pull us away from prayer. So, we pray half-heartedly, sporadically, tiredly. **Oremus** is a multi-week study for those who want to pray better, both those who are not sure they know how to pray and those who have been praying for many years and want to deepen or enrich that life of prayer. Learn new ways to pray, how to hear God when you pray, how to handle times of struggle in prayer and more.

This is an 8-week program. Each week will include a video presentation and facilitated conversation on one aspect of prayer. A workbook is available for \$15, but is not required to participate.



The session will be offered twice (if there is an interest)

Thursday mornings from 9:15 — 10:15 a.m.

and Thursday evenings from 6:30—7:30 a.m.

Thursdays, May 31 – July 26

in the Conference Room

There is no need to commit to every week.

Coffee and sweets provided. All welcome!

No cost except if you want a workbook. Contact Irene at 899-6132 by May 25 if you want a workbook ordered for the first class.



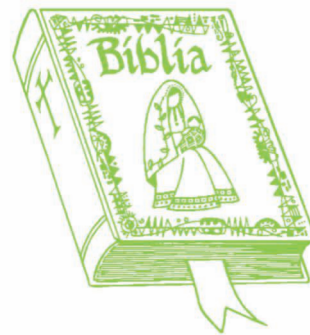
Women's Summer Scripture Study

June 18, 25, July 9, 16
7:00 p.m.

at the Home of Irene Lucas
1019 Bartlett Rd.

Of the thousands of canonized saints in the Catholic Church, only 35 have been named "Doctors of the Church", recognized as exemplar teachers of the faith. Of these 35 Doctors of the Church, only 4 are women, all receiving that title in the last 50 years. Unlike their male counterparts, these women did not have the opportunity to study at the finest universities of their day, did not hold Church office or even have access to great libraries. Yet their faith, prayer and cooperation with the Holy Spirit overcame all restrictions for women of their day enabling them to emerge as extra ordinary, if accidental theologians, whose words continue to instruct and inspire. Over 4 weeks we will look at the lives and teachings of St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux. What might these holy and creative women have to teach holy and creative women of our day?

Patio if weather permits,
(extra lawn chairs appreciated)
Inside if weather is bad
All Welcome...
No Need to Register



Enjoy a cold drink, a casual
summer evening and time with
sisters in faith as we explore a
few outstanding women of faith.

Our Lady of Mercy 3rd Annual Street Dance



**SATURDAY, JULY 21, 2018
7PM—10 PM
DUTTON ROAD PARKING LOT
BY THE PICNIC PAVILION**

***BYOB *CHAIR OR BLANKET
* BUG SPRAY *BRING A SNACK
TO CHASE AWAY THE HUNGER
FROM DANCIN'**

**SHAKE YOUR GROOVE
THING WITH FAMILY AND
FRIENDS TO THE SOUNDS
OF YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC
PROVIDED BY THE DJ**



An event for the whole family. Come, relax, listen to music, spend time with family and friends, play some games.....JOIN US!!!!

Our Parish Festival is SUNDAY, JULY 8, 2018



As I write this newsletter update I once again am reminded of the amazing faith community we have here at Our Lady of Mercy (OLM). Each year we are blessed to have an amazing crew of co-coordinators and volunteers who ensure that each year we have **“The Best Festival Ever”**. The parish here at OLM, with eager volunteers and generous donors, reminds me of hometown parish in Okarche, Oklahoma. Our community constantly reminds me of the power of God’s love and answering His call. We, as a parish, make a great team! Thank you so much for making the coordinator’s jobs easy!

Each year as we begin to prepare for the festival, we try to make things better than the previous year. This year I would like to hear from you, members of our community, regarding the following: What prizes would you like to see (maybe a Dyson vacuum)? What would enhance our Festival? What would you like to do to help make this Festival better? What are your concerns about our Festival? Please either visit the Our Lady of Mercy Facebook page and answer the questions, or send your responses to jaynesuess@gmail.com.

If you are a current co-coordinator and have not heard from me, please send me an email with your commitment for another great year! If you are interested in apprenticing for a co-coordinator position, please also let me know. If you would like to continue with the same volunteer job you had last year, please reach out to the coordinator of that area or to me. If you cannot volunteer, please offer prayers for all our co-coordinators!

Thank you so much for your help! Jayne Suess

Hey There! Save the date, Sunday, July 8, OLM Festival!



Friends, WE NEED YOUR HELP:

- **Community Advertisers:** Please tell your friends about our festival and plan to attend! Flyers to post at your work will be available starting in May.
- **Selling of Raffle Tickets:** Raffle tickets will be available in June! Help us by selling to your friends and family!
- **Volunteers, volunteers, and more volunteers!** Signups will be posted during the last Sunday in May.
- **Chinese Auction** (items, baskets, and completed baskets)
- **Restaurant gift cards** (All donations are appreciated)
- **Sweet Breads** (Calling all parish bakers! Bake now, freeze and we will be collecting starting the first of July.)