



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

837 Bartlett Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421

814-899-5342

www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR LITURGIES AND EVENTS

We keep Lent together as one parish family. We put aside our business-as-usual to support each other in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We turn to God to enlighten us and purify us throughout the lengthening brightness of this holy season.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 26
8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Mass with Distribution of Ashes

LENTEN PASTUS

Wednesdays of Lent
March 4, 11, 25
5:30 p.m.—Mass
6:10 p.m.—Soup Supper
7:00 p.m.—Presentation

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays of Lent - 7:00 p.m.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Saturday/Sunday, March 21,22
at all Masses

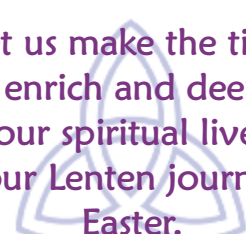
PARISH MISSION

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
March 15, 16, 17
7:00 p.m.

COMMUNAL RECONCILIATION SERVICE

Wednesday, April 1
7:00 p.m.

Let us make the time to enrich and deepen our spiritual lives on our Lenten journey to Easter.



February 2020

Inside this Issue:

Lenten Events.....	Page 1	Small Christian Communities.....	Page 7
Lenten Practices	Page 2	Parish History Scrapbook.....	Page 7
Holy Week Schedule.....	Page 2	Knightly News.....	Page 8
Sacrament of Anointing.....	Page 3	Scrip News.....	Page 8
Reconciliation.....	Page 3	A Parish Gift Formed.org.....	Page 9
Pastus.....	Page 4	Pastoral Council.....	Page 10
Parish Mission.....	Page 5	Cursillo Corner.....	Page 10
Catholic Services Appeal.....	Page 6	Social Justice Committee.....	Page 11
Operation Rice Bowl.....	Page 6	New Members.....	Page 12
Rite of Christian Initiation.....	Page 7	Baptismal Preparation.....	Page 12

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020 and concludes when the Paschal Triduum of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord begins at the start of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening, April 9, 2020.

The following regulations are promulgated and binding for all Catholics in the Diocese of Erie for Lent and the Paschal Triduum.



1. Traditional Lenten practices of PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING and other forms of self-denial are recommended most warmly by the Church. Daily Mass is particularly encouraged.
2. ASH WEDNESDAY, ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT, and GOOD FRIDAY are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age and older.
3. ASH WEDNESDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY are also days of fasting for those ages 18 to 58 inclusive. *On these days, those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one's needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or work is seriously affected, the law does not oblige.*

GIVE † PRAY † FAST

HOLY WEEK



SCHEDULE

PARISH SEDER MEAL

Monday, April 6 — 7:00 p.m.

PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE SYMBOLS OF TRIDUUM

Wednesday April 8 — 7:00 p.m.

HOLY THURSDAY: LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Thursday, April 9 — 7:00 p.m.

GOOD FRIDAY: LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Friday, April 10 — 3:00 p.m.

Outdoor Stations will be at 1:00 p.m.

BLESSING OF EASTER FOOD

Saturday, April 11 — 11:30 a.m.

THE GREAT EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, April 11 — 9:00 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY MASSES

Sunday, April 12 — 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

CELEBRATIONS OF HEALING 2020

We know from the scriptures that Jesus spent the greatest amount of his time healing both spiritually and physically. Since we spend most of our time on those things which are most important to us, then healing must have been a very important value to Jesus. Our Mission Statement reminds us that we are a community that lives the values of Jesus Christ.



This value of Jesus that deals with physical healing is called the *Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick*. As a community we celebrate this sacrament at all Masses on the weekend of **March 21st and 22nd**.

Who may celebrate this Sacrament? Those who are suffering any serious physical or mental illness; those who are suffering any chronic illness. those who are about to undergo surgery; the elderly who cannot get around as well as before.



Lent is a beautiful season to celebrate the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

The prayers and practices of this season help us call to mind our sins and God's forgiveness.

As we grow in awareness of our faults, we can bring them to God in a spirit of repentance, open to growth in grace, awaiting the full expression of mercy and love.

Communal celebrations of the sacrament of reconciliation remind us that continued conversion is a journey we make together as the Body of Christ.

We will gather as a local faith community on the following days:

Sunday, March 29	3:00 p.m.	at St. Gregory in North East
Tuesday, March 31	7:00 p.m.	at Saint James in Wesleyville
Wednesday, April 1	7:00 p.m.	at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek
Thursday, April 2	7:00 p.m.	at St. Mark in Lawrence Park

Lenten Pastus Series

The holy season of Lent calls each of us to renewal. During these 40 days, we are challenged to deepen our understanding of the faith, strengthen our commitment to the work of the Gospel and grow in our love of God by increasing our life of prayer. The Wednesday evening Lenten Pastus is designed to feed us in body, mind and spirit as we make this Lenten journey.

February 26 8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. —Ash Wednesday Masses

Let us begin this holy season of preparation and conversion joined together around the Eucharistic table and the Word of God.

Pastus Events

Schedule for all events: Mass 5:30, Soup Supper 6:10 and Speaker 7:00

March 4—Fr. Gerald Ritchie, A Holy Tour of the Holy Land

Last year, Fr. Ritchie had the opportunity to tour the Holy Land. Visiting key places from the Gospels, standing in the spot where Jesus once stood, was an incredible experience. Our Lenten journey will begin with a vicarious tour of the Holy Land as Fr. Ritchie shares pictures and stories of his trip.

Fr. Ritchie needs no introduction. Having served as the pastor of Our Lady of Mercy for 29 years, he is loved and respected by all in this community.

March 11—Fr. Dennis Martin Dying And the Tough Decisions

As medical technology has advanced, the process of dying has become more complicated. How much should we do to keep those we love alive? When is extraordinary means of life support necessary? What is considered to be extraordinary means? How do we make the tough decisions about end of life issues for ourselves and for others?

Fr. Dennis Martin brings us the heart of a pastor, the experience of a hospital chaplain and the wisdom of the Church, as he leads us through some of the most emotionally complicated questions that we may ever face.

March 25—Fr. Jim Piszker St. John Henry Newman: A Saint for Our Times?

A look at a person who converted to the Catholic faith, rose to the level of cardinal and left a lasting impression on the entire spectrum of Catholic thought and theology leading to his being named a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. What does his elevation to sainthood and his persona have to say to us in the 21st century?

Fr. Jim Piszker is a priest of the Diocese of Erie and is currently chaplain, director of Campus Ministry and instructor in Catholic Studies at Mercyhurst University in Erie.

March 15-17—Fr. Frank DeSiano PARISH MISSION

See Page 5 for details

April 1 7:00 PM—Parish Penance Service

April 8 7:00 PM—Holy Pilgrimage Through Holy Week

Pack your bag. Leave your cell phone and day planner behind. Come and join us for a pilgrimage through Holy Week. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a wine glass.

*Please feel free to join us for any or all parts of the Pastus events.

Parish Mission

Lenten Parish Renewal

Sunday—Tuesday March 15-17, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

“Being a Disciple Today”

How Can I Live My Faith in a New Way?

Sunday: Prayer and Worship

Monday: God’s Word in My Life

Tuesday: A Community of Service



RENEWAL DIRECTOR: FATHER FRANK DE SIANO

Fr. Frank DeSiano, born in Manhattan and ordained a Paulist Priest in 1972, is a noted leader of evangelization in the United States. He has written numerous books and articles on spirituality, parish leadership, and evangelization. Now living in Washington, DC, he travels widely to preach and present to church leaders. He has written “Catholic Discipleship” and “Beyond the Pews.”

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Everyone is welcome!
Invite your friends and neighbors!



Catholic Services Appeal

The theme of this year's Catholic Services Appeal is "Forward Together...doing the work of Christ."

As an individual parish, we are called to support our diocese to help in its mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, and celebrate the sacraments. The CSA makes this important work possible. Only through our support can we meet the needs of our brothers and sisters in the 13 counties of the Diocese.

Our Lady of Mercy's Catholic Services Appeal Assessment for 2020 is \$67,655.00. In our parish, we rely on the funds collected above this amount to work on repairs on roofs, heating units, boilers, furnaces, parking lot, and gas wells, along with our every day maintenance needs.

Please be assured that funding from the annual CSA is strictly designated for spending on the ministries and services coordinated through diocesan offices. No funds donated to the CSA have been or will be used to defray expenses related to the sexual abuse scandal.

I encourage you to support the Catholic Services Appeal. Because of you, we will *move forward together, doing the work of Christ* to help our brothers and sisters.

Thank you,
Fr. Ritchie

During Lent, we are called to penance, service, and prayer. **Operation Rice Bowl**, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services, is an excellent tool to help families embrace the spirit of Lent. As is the tradition at Our Lady of Mercy, religious education families and the entire parish community are invited to participate in Operation Rice Bowl.



\ CRS is a Catholic developmental organization assisting the poorest and most desperate of our brothers and sisters around the world. Through Operation Rice Bowl, we are given an opportunity to share our abundant blessings with those in need.

Rice Bowl cardboard banks and family calendars will be distributed to all of the children enrolled in our Religious Education program the first week of Lent. Additional Rice Bowls and calendars are available for families not connected with religious education.

The calendars offer excellent suggestions for keeping the needs of others before us during Lent. Information on the causes of hunger and poverty in various regions of the globe are given in a way that is easy for all to understand.

As we give up luxuries (such as chocolate or eat a simple meal once a week), we are invited to place the money we save into the Rice Bowl bank. In this way, our acts of self-sacrifice are not tests of our self-will, but opportunities to help others. The money in each bank is turned in to the Religious Education Office during the Easter season. From there, it is mailed to Catholic Relief Services to help the hungry and homeless, those without access to education or medical care around the world.



RCIA Invitation

Would you like to learn more about the Catholic faith? Are you attracted to the life of Jesus Christ and the thought of being one of his disciples? Would you like to be baptized into the Christian family?

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) would like to invite you to consider the richly challenging and profoundly rewarding life of Catholic Christianity. The RCIA is a year-long (or longer) process of prayer and study, of community ritual and personal reflection, of parish life and scriptural study designed to enable individuals to hear, understand and respond to the internal promptings drawing them to Christ and the Catholic Church.

If you would like more information about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, for yourself or for someone you know, you may call Irene Lucas at 899-6132 to schedule an individual meeting.

Come and journey with us. Our destination is out of this world! Asking your questions, starting the conversation, stepping onto the path does not obligate you. So, come and learn more.

Small Christian Communities



Just like the old advertisement for Trix cereal, the rabbit is missing the mark again! Is your spiritual life missing the mark?

Could you use a boost this Lent and Easter season? Why not take a step forward by joining a small faith-sharing community, just to try it out! Groups gather between 2 and 4 times per month, on different days and at various times, to read the scriptures and discuss how we can put the gospel message to work in our daily lives. Interested? Call the parish office or Dave at 602-4622. As our beloved pastor would say:

Think About It!

PARISH HISTORY SCRAPBOOK

An important part of any parish is its history. We are looking for help to memorialize a part of

Our Lady of Mercy Parish. We would like to scrapbook our pictures of the

preparation and building

of our new building. If you can help, please, contact Teresa Shamburg at

879-8622 or shamtacc@roadrunner.com.





CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR FAMILIES

The Knights purchased and distributed *Christ is Christmas* refrigerator magnets during Advent.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OLM SCHOLARSHIPS

Begin thinking about scholarships and encouraging a graduating high school senior of our parish to apply. In a few months, forms will be available in the office or on the website. Watch the bulletin for details. Also make plans to attend this year's Golf and Sports Raffle on May 8th. The income from this event enables the Knights to provide the scholarships.

25th ANNUAL GOLF & SPORTS RAFFLE

Planning is well underway for this 27th annual event, which has become one of the best in the Harborcreek area. Making it so are the Knights, Ladies of the Knights, parishioners and friends who generously offer their support. Thanks to all and we look forward to seeing you on May 8th.

BINGO / PIZZA NIGHTS AT V.A. MEDICAL CENTER

Knights recently went to the V.A. to provide the once-per-quarter evening of bingo and social time with the veterans. Come join us for the next one which will be in April.

PRO-LIFE MARCH

Two vans of parishioners left early for Washington DC, where they participated in the Pro-Life March. Open-time was filled with pertinent stops and visits. We thank them for representing us and look forward to a report upon their safe arrival back home.

KNIGHT & FORMER PARISHIONER MICHAEL ADAMUS

Michael Adamus, a board member of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, presents an award from the NCPD to Supreme Knight Carl Anderson Nov. 8, 2019, in Silver Spring, MD., in recognition of the extensive work done by the



Knights of Columbus on behalf of people with disabilities, including the distribution of free wheelchairs. (CNS photo/Knights of Columbus)

Michael moved from Harborcreek to Orlando a few years

ago, where he continues to work on behalf of people with disabilities. The full article is published in the November issue of the Columbian Magazine.

JOHN WEGELIN

We have been saddened by the passing of Brother Knight and good friend John Wegelin and offer sympathy to his family and all who mourn his passing. May he rest in peace. John, a member of St. James Parish, joined our council several years ago and was always ready to volunteer for as long as he was able - especially at the Golf Raffle.

SCRIP News



There are many occasions during the year when you could give a gift card: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, weddings, bridal or baby showers. For these special events, consider purchasing your gift card from Our Lady of Mercy's SCRIP program. There are a number of cards in stock in the Parish Office. If the card you want is not in stock, you can order your cards by filling out a paper form or order on-line. SCRIP now accepts **credit card payments** for on-line purchases only.

Don't forget to buy your gas, restaurant, and grocery cards! In-stock cards are available after each Mass and during parish office hours (Monday - Friday: 9 AM-3 PM). Our Lady of Mercy benefits from each card sold and the money! Call Peggy Jacquell 725-9869 or e-mail piggywiggy59@yahoo.com for more information.

A Parish Gift To You... *A Subscription to FORMED.ORG*

To each is given the
manifestation of the
Spirit for the
common good
1 Corinthians 12:7

Through an Education Grant of the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania, Our Lady of Mercy has been able to subscribe to **Formed.org**.

Now you can access a complete library of great Catholic material. Stream movies for the family. Download eBooks for your spiritual reading. Listen to outstanding podcasts. Study the Bible. Formed.org offers movies, audio, eBooks and more for children, families and adults available on your web browser, iOS, Android and TVOS, Roku, Amazon Fire, Tizen and AndroidTV.

Whether it's family movie night or entertaining kids on long car rides, your personal devotional reading, or the desire to learn more about prayer, Scripture, or current events, this is an excellent resource. And it is free to all people at Our Lady of Mercy for 2020.

Small Christian Communities can use the weekly Sunday video reflections to enhance their reflection on the Word, read an eBook for discussion, or watch a Scripture study series together.

How to log in to **Formed.org** and begin to access the content:

1. Visit <https://formed.org/> using an internet browser
2. Click Sign Up
3. Select "I Belong to a Parish or Organization"
4. Find your parish by name, zip, or address
5. Enter your email - and you're in!

Once you have registered, you are free to browse the website's vast library of content or you can search for particular types of content or specific topics.

No internet? No problem! **Formed.org** offers offline playback to all FORMED users at no additional charge. Simply download the FORMED app on your portable device, find the content you want to watch offline, and download it to your device. Then watch it anywhere without Internet.

"I learned early on as a priest that very few know their faith, and those who do, don't really know it. FORMED is amazing and has helped do that. My parishioners continue to thank me for providing FORMED. I can't wait to see all the new materials FORMED will be providing in the future."

— **Fr. McCarthy** CINCINATTI, OH



Cursillo News

Start making plans for life's best weekend!
Lois Heise would love to talk to you about
Cursillo and how it can change your life!
Call Lois at 882-9555

CURSILLO DATES

- March 19-22 Men's #251**
at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek
- April 16-19 Women's #258**
at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek
- June 11-14, Men's #252**
at Elk County Christian High School in St. Marys
- July 16-19, Women's #259**
at Kennedy Christian High School in Hermitage
- August 13-16, Men's #253**
at St. Philip in Linesville
- October 15-18, Women's #260**
at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek
- November 19-22, Men's #254**
at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek

Cursillo Valentines Day/Mardi Gras Party!

February 22 @ 6 p.m.
Sacred Heart Parish Center

What to bring: A side dish or a dessert to share, your own alcohol if you desire, and your best attire for either holiday!!!! (You are welcome to drop food off before Mass if you would like.)

What will be provided: We will have rigatoni and meatballs, chicken, water, pop and all place settings. In addition there will be music so that if you would like to work off some of that food you just ate you can shake your booty on the dance floor. We will provide the atmosphere for a fun and festive evening!

Come join us to kick off the 2020 Cursillo year!
PLEASE RSVP BY FEBRUARY 17 814-824-1119 OR
OFFICE@ERIECURSILLO.ORG so that we have enough food!

Pastoral Council News

As parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy we are called to deepen our relationship with God and to continue to grow spiritually. Our Pastoral Council strives to do just that - to contribute to the ongoing spiritual renewal of the parish.

This year, the eleven-member council is learning about liturgical celebrations and observing their experiences during the Mass. We have just entered our goal setting phase where we will identify what elements in our liturgy need attention so we can all have a more meaningfully transformative experience when we come together in our prayer of thanksgiving.

The pastoral planning process identifies areas in which the parish needs to grow and then creates goals and objectives to reach those goals. Generally, we do not deal with the day to day operations of the parish; that is left to other committees like the Finance Council, the Buildings and Grounds Work Group or Lifelong Faith Formation committee. The council focuses on the needs of the community in prayer, leadership, service, and pastoral action.

Please consider sharing your gifts of leadership and vision with the Council. Council members have a willingness to share their vision for Our Lady of Mercy.

Please enter into prayer about nominating yourself or someone else for the council. Accepting the nomination does not mean you automatically become a member. There is an informational meeting followed by a period of discernment and prayer. A nominee is asked to discern if they are being called to serve at this time.

The current council members are: Todd Beckes, Maureen Brainard, Joanne Fournier, Vickie Gilchrist, Bill Matrogran, Nathan Matusiak, Maureen Rizzo, Katie Stephenson, David Seyboldt, Ashlee Skarzenski and Dan Szczesny.



An Invitation to Love

By Jack Jezreel

One of the most exciting discoveries of my young life was to learn in 4th grade science class how sunlight, when refracted, transforms into a panorama of colors. How fascinating to learn about the nature of light and the constellation of hue and tint that is part of its essence. What a wonder!

Similarly, part of the wonder of our faith tradition includes the step-by-step discovery of how faith and love are similarly composed of a panorama of commitments. Despite the seeming simplicity of the admonition “love your neighbor,” it’s a choice that draws us into a matrix of complementary commitments and complexity.

At the start, the invitation “to love” might mean a more deliberate commitment to the good of one’s family; and, to be sure, for someone who has been neglectful of a spouse or children, this is an important choice and a good beginning. But as the implications and many “colors” of love get explored, love expands into relationships with neighbors, strangers, the poor, the abandoned, even the enemy. Jesus’ beckon to love even our enemies is not so much a request to extend the boundaries of love as it is to honor the expansiveness that is inherent in love from the start.

But love’s refraction or love’s essence is not just a matter of breadth; it’s also a matter of substance. As love is explored and experienced and applied to life’s realities, it mutates into dozens of commitments, many unanticipated. The Apostle Paul speaks to this in his letter to the Corinthians: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” To love draws us into an interconnected set of obligations and possibilities; Paul’s list is but one of many.

Add to these lists: love is nonviolent.

On the face of it, this seems inarguably true. How could love ever be violent? How could God possibly smile on or even tolerate the pain and suffering that is the bitter fruit of violence? How, to use Paul’s words from Corinthians, could patience or kindness interconnect with violence? With that said, the challenge of nonviolence is not found in the comfortable musings of theology;

From the Social Justice Committee

the challenge is found in the painful and powerful realities that characterize the brokenness and wounds of the world in which we live.

My hometown, Louisville, Kentucky, is a city like most cities. There are neighborhoods where violence is common and regular. School teachers who serve the children in these areas report that almost all the children from these neighborhoods carry with them to school profound trauma from regular exposure to gun violence. Many of them have seen people shot or have lost family members to gun violence; all of them hear gun shots regularly and are trained to fall to the floor of their home when they hear gunshots. The point? Human beings do not thrive in violent settings. Human beings are mangled by violence, sometimes physically (from bullets and bombs) but always psychologically and spiritually; twenty-one war veterans commit suicide every day in our country. Our faith proclaims that this is clearly NOT what God had in mind for the human family.

To say that love is nonviolent or that God is nonviolent is, in effect, to say that the world should be nonviolent; peacemaking is an act of love which seeks to make right a piece of the world that has been scarred by violence. Violence comes in all kinds of packages: the weapons can be guns, but they can also be neglect (the absence of food or housing) or words (racist or homophobic remarks).

Nonviolence is to shine another *word-flashlight* on the world to help make sense of how to heal it. To note the linkage between poverty and violence, for example, is to highlight that poverty is not just about deprivation - it’s the taking of people’s lives; hence, the urgency of the matter is made clear. To note the linkage between verbal harassment of women and violence is to highlight that such harassment is not “playful fun” but a profoundly damaging and hurtful act that needs to be stopped immediately. To make the linkage between racism and violence is a call to action.

Nonviolence is a lifestyle, a way of being in relationships, a spiritual practice and a political strategy. “To love,” to walk in the way & footsteps of Jesus, to be faithful necessarily means to eschew violence, to heal violence, to work for an end to violence.

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New Members!

Please welcome these new parishioners by sending a card or stopping in to say hello.

Catherine Buffum
4560 East Lake Road Apt. B-1
Erie PA 16511

Chuck Odenwalt
7048 Buffalo Road
Harborcreek PA 16421

Nick & Erica Taccone
& Kara, Logan
1020 Boyer Road
Erie PA 16511

Daniel & Michelle Czerwinski
& Lily
508 W. Eaglewood Dr.
Erie PA 16511-2366

James & Ashley Peters
& Gabrielle, Lydia
4044 Dominion Dr.
Erie PA 16510

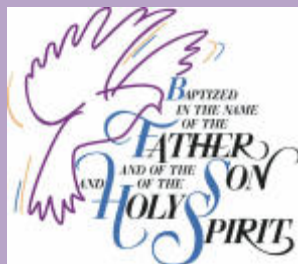
Leroy & Gail Warren
2152 Victory Drive
Erie PA 16510

Jake & Danielle Gamble-
Pelensky
430 Manistee Ave
Erie PA 16511

Jon & Janet Sedelmyer
142 Kraus Drive
Erie PA 16511

Julie Wittman
4634 E. Lake Road
Erie PA 16511

John & Karen Kelly
& Addison, Connor, Reagan
7016 Stoney Trace Ln.
Erie PA 16510



BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION

A parent's decision to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism with their child is one of the most important choices they may make for that child. In Baptism, our identity is permanently altered; we are conformed to Christ, made a member of the Body of Christ which is the Church and united to Christ's death and Resurrection. A parent presenting a child for baptism is pledging to raise that child to live no longer for self, but for Christ.

Because of the significance of this sacrament, the Diocese of Erie mandates that Parents desiring the baptism of a child must attend an informational session in preparation for this celebration. These sessions are held at all parishes through the diocese. Parents may attend the session at any Catholic parish. At Our Lady of Mercy, these meetings are held semi-annually, in September and March.

The next Baptismal Preparation Session for Parents will be held Sunday, March 15 beginning at noon. In order to ensure sufficient materials, parents and godparents are asked to pre-register for the session by calling the Parish Office at 899-5342. Because these sessions are only held in the spring and autumn at this parish, any parent anticipating the birth of a child or the baptism of a child in the coming 6 to 9 months is encouraged to take advantage of this March 20 session.

If you have any questions, (or to register), call the Parish Office at 899-5342.