

OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH

837 Bartlett Road • Harborcreek, PA 16421 • www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



January 10th, 2021 - The Baptism of the Lord

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekday and Weekend Mass has resumed with the following schedule and covid-19 protocols in place:

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Weekday: 8:30 a.m.

PARISH STAFF

Msgr. Gerald T. Ritchie, *Pastor*

Donna Clark, *Pastoral Minister*

Irene Lucas, *Director of Lifelong Faith Formation*

Brandon Vogt, *Director of Liturgy & Music*

Katie Stephenson, *Administrative Assistant*

Sarah Phipps, *Youth Minister*

Kirk Mientkiewicz, *Maintenance Coordinator*

Andrea Maille, *Lifelong Faith Formation Secretary*

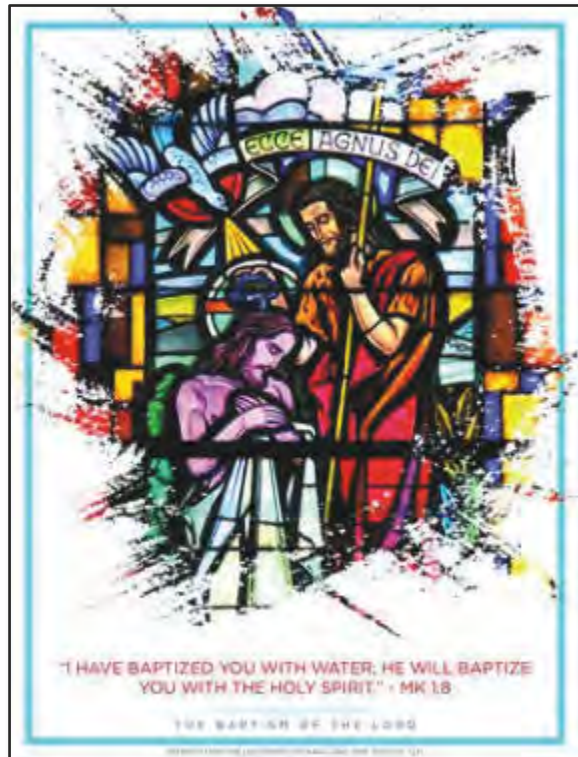
CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Office: 814-899-5342

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation: 814-899-6132

Fax: 814-898-3306

Email: info@ourladyofmercychurch.org



MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Eucharistic, Catholic Christian Community of Communities formed by the Word of God and the teachings of the Church. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live the values of Jesus Christ in a prayerful, welcoming and nurturing environment.

THE WEEK AHEAD

For a complete calendar of events, please visit
ourladyofmercychurch.org/calendar

| | | |
|-------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Mon. 01/11 | 9:00 a.m. | Quilters |
| | 9:30 a.m. | Steel Magnolias SCC |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Pastoral Facilitator Mtg. |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Catholicism - Zoom |
| Tue. 01/12 | 11:00 a.m. | Catholicism - Zoom |
| | 2:00 p.m. | Prayer Shawl |
| | 6:45 p.m. | Roman Candles SCC |
| Wed. 01/13 | 1:00 p.m. | Diamonds in the Rough SCC |
| | 6:30 p.m. | AGIFT Mtg. |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Knights of Columbus |
| Thur. 01/14 | 9:00 p.m. | Painting Class |
| | 6:00 p.m. | Prayer Shawl |
| Fri. 01/15 | | |
| Sat. 01/16 | 4:30 p.m. | Sacrament of Penance |
| Sun. 01/17 | 9:45 a.m. | Religious Ed Gr. K-8 |

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Offertory for the weekend of January 3, 2021

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Envelopes sent: | 355 | |
| Envelopes returned: | 53 | \$ 9,279.00 |
| Faith Direct Deposits: | 132 | \$ 3,447.70 |
| Loose Change: | | \$ 15.00 |
| TOTAL OFFERTORY: | | \$12,741.70 |

SCRIPTURE READINGS

| | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mon. 01/11 | Heb 1:1-6 | / Mk 1:14-20 |
| Tue. 01/12 | Heb 2:5-12 | / Mk 1:21-28 |
| Wed. 01/13 | Heb 2:14-18 | / Mk 1:29-39 |
| Thur. 01/14 | Heb 3:7-14 | / Mk 1:40-45 |
| Fri. 01/15 | Heb 4:1-5, 11 | / Mk 2:1-12 |
| Sat. 01/16 | Heb 4:12-16 | / Mk 2:13-17 |
| Sun. 01/17 | 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 | / 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20 / Jn 1:35-42 |

MASS INTENTIONS

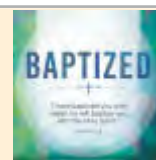
| | | |
|-------------|------------|--|
| Mon. 01/11 | 8:30 a.m. | Carlton Ritchie |
| Tue. 01/12 | 8:30 a.m. | Jean Gurnot (Steel Magnolias SCC) |
| Wed. 01/13 | 8:30 a.m. | Dan Sweeney (Janet Smith) |
| Thur. 01/14 | 8:30 a.m. | For the Intentions of Our Lady (Todd Beckes) |
| Fri. 01/15 | 8:30 a.m. | Patricia Lynch |
| Sat. 01/16 | 8:30 a.m. | No Mass- |
| | 6:00 p.m. | John Eckendorf (Pam & Dale Snyder) |
| Sun. 01/17 | 8:30 a.m. | Don McCurdy (Terry Miller) |
| | 11:00 a.m. | For the People of OLM |

PRAYER LINE

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
 Call Donna Smicker at 899-9108
 4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
 Call Gerri Extein at 490-9681



THIS SUNDAY'S REFLECTION



MARK 1:7-11

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes for us the Christmas Season and transitions us into the beginning of Ordinary Time. From a Scriptural point of view, this event in Jesus' life is also a transitional moment from His hidden life in Nazareth to the beginning of His public ministry. As we commemorate this glorious event, it's important to ponder a simple question: Why was Jesus baptized? Recall that John's baptism was one of repentance, an act by which he invited his followers to turn from sin and to turn to God. But Jesus was sinless, so what was the reason for His Baptism?

First of all, Jesus' true identity was made manifest through His humble act of baptism. "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased," spoke the voice of the Father in Heaven. Furthermore, we are told that the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. Thus, Jesus' baptism is in part a public declaration of Who He is. He is the Son of God, a divine Person Who is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This public testimony is an "epiphany," a manifestation of His true identity for all to see as He prepares to begin His public ministry.

Second, by His baptism, Jesus' incredible humility is made manifest. He is the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, but He allows Himself to become identified with sinners. By sharing in an act that was focused upon repentance, Jesus speaks volumes through His action of baptism. He came to unite Himself with us sinners, to enter our sin and to enter into our death. By entering the water, He symbolically enters into death itself, which is the result of our sin, and rises triumphantly, allowing us to also rise with Him to new life. For this reason, Jesus' baptism was a way of Him "baptizing" the waters, so to speak, so that water itself, from that moment onward, would be endowed with His divine presence and could be communicated to all who are baptized after Him. Therefore, sinful humanity is now able to meet divinity through baptism.

Lastly, when we share in this new baptism, through water that has now been sanctified by our divine Lord, we see in Jesus' baptism a revelation of who we become in Him. Just as the Father spoke and declared Him as His Son, and just as the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, so also in our baptism we become the adopted children of the Father and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, Jesus' baptism gives clarity as to whom we become in Christian baptism.

Sunday Morning *C*A*F*E*

Join us for our first Sunday Morning CAFÉ of 2021 on Sunday, Jan. 17 at 9:45 in the Worship Space and live streamed. Lori Palisin, the Executive Director of Safe Journey (and the daughter-in-law of Tom and Barbara Palisin) will present *Communities Against Domestic Violence: You Can Make a Difference*. Victims of domestic violence are in our communities; they are among our co-workers, our neighbors, our family, our parish. But too often, we are unaware of their situation because they suffer in silence. Lori Palisin will help us understand the many forms domestic violence takes, the signs by which we can recognize domestic violence and the ways we can help those we encounter who are struggling. Lori Palisin has served victims of domestic violence for 24 years, providing resources, support, advocacy and education.



Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit items for the February issue of *For Mercy Sake* is Jan. 17. Send items to ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org.

Evening Grief Support Group

Meets on Monday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. (the First Tuesday of the month). This support group gives people the opportunity to share the challenges one faces after losing a loved one and to learn from others how to cope with those challenges and emotions. Unexpected things come up and often those who have been through the process can best understand and offer support, prayers and practical suggestions. This meeting will also be available to you by phone or video on Zoom. Call Donna Clark in the parish office or email dclark@ourladyofmercychurch.org to obtain the Zoom information. If you are uncomfortable with Zoom please contact Donna for other arrangements.



Hope – Restoring the Heart

The next session is Thursday, Jan. 21 at 7:00 p.m. These sessions are for anyone feeling stress, fear or anxiety. Sometimes it is difficult to pray and it appears as though we are losing hope. If you are in need of a spiritual boost please join us for an opportunity to share stories of hope and healing. You can also attend this meeting by zoom or by phone. To obtain the Zoom meeting ID and passcode or phone number to call please contact Donna Clark in the parish office or check the parish website. We are encouraging people to stay safe. We are taking precautions and following the county health department guidelines. If you would like to participate but don't feel comfortable, please call Donna in the parish office for other arrangements. One on one sessions are also available.



FORMED.ORG



If you are new to the parish subscription, you can enjoy formed.org for free by signing up as part of the parish subscription. All you need is your email, then select the option for an "institution or parish" subscription and search for Our Lady of Mercy Harborcreek.

"I have been impressed with the range and quality of content on formed.org. I have found so many inspiring talks by topnotch Catholic speakers. I have particularly enjoyed listening to Fr. Mike Schmitz and Dr. Edward Sri. The documentaries are so well done and have taught me so much. Formed.org makes quality Catholic programming so convenient." Irene Lucas

OLM Book Group

In January, we will discuss The Hummingbird's Daughter by Luis Alberto Urrea.



Thank You for Assisting Santa

To the Our Lady of Mercy Parish, On behalf of Operation Assisting Santa, I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank everyone who helped make our 2020 project a huge success. Because of wonderful people such as yourselves, along with many other fine groups and individuals we were able to help around 78 Veteran families along with gifts for over 300 of their children. We look forward to working with you again in 2021! May the Spirit of Christmas warm your heart. God Bless, Janet Smith & Mooch Zielewski
Coordinator Operation Assisting Santa



Help for Heating – LIHEAP

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) was open to help alleviate heating bill stress on low income families. A family of four with a gross annual income of \$39,300, qualifies for a grant. To find out if you qualify based on your household size and income, how to apply and what you need to apply, see the bulletin boards in the Gathering Space.



Be Alert!

It has been brought to our attention that Parishioners have received emails and text messages from someone claiming to be Fr. Ritchie. This is just a reminder that Fr. Ritchie will never solicit through email or text. Please delete the message ASAP.

We Remember...



Yvonne Strasser - aunt of Jessica Sarvis, and Suzanne Neth - sister-in-law of Randy Martin, who passed away recently.

Please hold them and their families in prayer during this difficult time.



Social Justice



World Day of Peace Message 2021

Annually, since 1967, the Holy Father has released a message in time for the first of January: The World Day of Peace. Pope Francis has continued this tradition with his message titled, "A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace". He traces the origins of the human vocation to care from Genesis to the ministry of Jesus and on to the days of the early church. "They strove to make their community a welcoming home, concerned for every human need and ready to care for those most in need. It became customary to make voluntary offerings in order to feed the poor, bury the dead and care for orphans, the elderly and victims of disasters like shipwrecks." Over centuries, the principles of these actions "became the beating heart of the Church's social doctrine.....commitment to promoting the dignity of each human person, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, the pursuit of the common good and concern for protection of creation." Pope Francis asks us to use these principles as a "compass" to point us in a "common direction". He says. "I ask everyone to take this compass in hand and to become a prophetic witness of the culture of care, working to overcome the many existing social inequalities." He has specific instructions for governments, laws, and educational institutions. He concludes, saying that there can be no peace without a culture of care. There is much more in this message than can be explored here. Take the time to read it yourself and consider how you might contribute towards a culture of care that brings peace. (Find the full text here: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20201208_messaggio-54giornatamondiale-pace2021.html)

Catholicism: A Journey Through the Mystery and Majesty of the Church

This is a 10-part series

Journey around the world and deep into the Faith.

In breathtaking, high-definition cinematography, the beauty, goodness and truth of the Catholic Faith are illustrated in a rich, multimedia experience.

Journey with acclaimed author, speaker and theologian Bishop Robert Barron to more than 50 locations throughout 15 countries. Be illuminated by the spiritual and artistic treasures of this global culture that claims more than one billion of the earth's people.

From the sacred lands of Israel to the beating heart of Uganda... from the glorious shrines of Italy, France, and Spain, to the streets of Mexico, Kolkata, and New York City, the fullness of CATHOLICISM is revealed.

Journey deep into the Faith as you watch each episode.

Mike Leonard, a veteran NBC Today Show correspondent and acclaimed filmmaker, is the Executive Producer of this groundbreaking series.

Each week will include a video followed by an opportunity for discussion.
Due to COVID, this program will be provided via Zoom.

When: Monday @ 7:00 PM beginning Jan. 11

OR Tuesday @ 11:00 AM beginning Jan. 12

Contact ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org for the Zoom link
Participants do not need to be present for every week of the series.

I have all this time now . . . why can't I pray?

A reflection by Donna Clark



At least, that is the way it seems . . . with not a lot of other things happening I should be able to spend more time in prayer, right? Yet it feels like I am praying less.

There is something uncomfortable about being alone with myself. My mind fills with an endless stream of thoughts - dreams, limitations, past events, and unknown futures. My theory is that if I can step through the whirlwind of thoughts, I will discover the unconditional love in which God created us. Julian of Norwich wrote: "We can never know God until we first know clearly our own soul." If I can push through the discomfort, the fear and the anxiety of knowing myself, I can exist in the unconditional love of God. But the stream of thoughts usually brings me back to a place of not liking myself. Help . . .

Years ago, I read a book called *Make Space, Make Symbols* by Keith Clark, Capuchin. There is a reflection on the scripture passage of Jesus calming the storm with a simple rebuke: "Quiet! Be Still!" (Mark 4:35, Mt 8:18, 23 or Lk 8:22). This wonderful metaphor for the storm in our minds can help us find our soul. From afar, it appears that others have an easier time quieting their stormy minds and listening for God, as monks and nuns do, for instance. They must have an edge – right? After spending four months in a cloistered monastery in my 20's, I discovered that we are all "in the same boat." Thomas Keating reminds us that "When it comes to prayer, we are all beginners."



So, back to the storm in our mind. Does God appear unconcerned that we are drowning in the storm? Must I work hard to clear my mind, empty it of thoughts and distractions and be still so God will come and tell me His will? The funny thing is: God is already present in both the calm and the storm; therefore it holds that prayer is possible in both the calm and the storm.

Some practical Suggestions:

- † Be gentle and compassionate to yourself – your storm experience is universal.
- † When fears of an unknown future crowd in, remind yourself that all is well. The future does not exist in this moment.
- † When plagued by embarrassing thoughts, words, or actions from your past, ask if an apology is needed and decide to act. (The plaguing thoughts stop.)
- † When obsessing about someone else's past words or actions, remind yourself that your worth is not determined by what others say or do. You are worthy simply because you are a child of God.
- † If your mind makes lists of things that need to be done, write them down and free yourself of trying to remember them. Eventually the mental list making stops.
- † When restless, go to a favorite spot in your mind – sitting in an Adirondack chair next to a stream in a State Park. Hear the stream and the birds; see the sunlight filter through the trees.
- † Finally, simply Breathe. Breathe in God's love and exhale all fear, anxiety and doubt.



The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8: 14-16 and 26-28). Trust the Spirit to support you within the storm, to teach you how to still the torrent of thoughts. Practice inviting the Spirit; stillness will become easier. Pay attention to thoughts that come after short moments of stillness. Can we distinguish from the storm the voice of God bearing intuitions and insights for self-love, future actions, or simple thoughts of peace?

PS: the book, *Make Space, Make Symbols* by Keith Clark, Capuchin, is worth reading.

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