



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

February 2023

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

837 Bartlett Road Harborcreek, PA 16421
814-899-5342 • www.ourladyofmercychurch.org
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THE SEASON OF LENT



ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 22
8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Mass with Distribution of Ashes

PARISH MISSION

March 12
4:00 p.m. - Part 1
6:00 p.m. - Part 2

LENTEN PASTUS

Wednesdays of Lent
March 1, 8, 22
5:30 p.m. - Mass
6:10 p.m. - Simple Soup Supper
7:00 p.m. - Presentation

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays of Lent
7:00 p.m.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

March 18 & 19
All Masses

THE SEASON OF EASTER

HOLY THURSDAY LITURGY

Thursday, April 6
7:00 p.m.

BLESSING OF FOOD

Saturday, April 8
11:30 a.m.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, April 7
3:00 p.m.
Outdoor Stations will be at
1:00 p.m.

EASTER VIGIL

Saturday, April 8
9:00 p.m.

EASTER LITURGIES

Sunday, April 9
8:30 & 11:00 a.m.



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LENTEN PRACTICES 2023



The season of Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023 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 6, 2023.

The following practices and regulations are promulgated and binding for all Latin Rite Catholics in the Diocese of Erie for Lent and the Paschal Triduum, 2023.

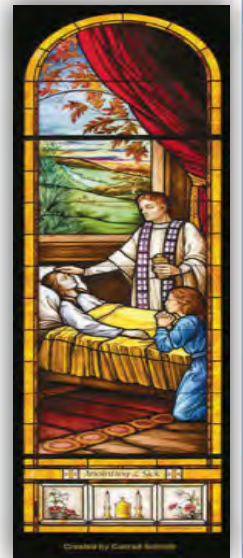
1. Traditional Lenten practices of PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING and other forms of self-denial are recommended most warmly by the Church. Daily Mass is particularly encouraged.
2. ASH WEDNESDAY, ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT, and GOOD FRIDAY are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age and older. In 2023, the Feast of St. Patrick (March 17) falls on a Friday of Lent. Thus, per Bishop Persico's dispensation, abstinence from meat is not mandatory on Friday, March 17, 2023.
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.*

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Our Parish Community will celebrate the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** at all **Masses on March 18 & 19 2023**. Jesus spent the greatest amount of his time healing both spiritually and physically. It is said that we spend our time on those things which are most important to us. If this is true, 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. Our celebration is not just for the sick. The faith community gathers with them to show their concern for the sick of our community, and to pray with and for the sick of the community.

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.



OPERATION RICE BOWL



Once again, this Lent, parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy are invited to participate in Operation Rice Bowl this Lent.

Operation Rice Bowl is a project sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. 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 were distributed to all of the children enrolled in our Rel. Ed. Program. Additional Rice Bowls and calendars are available for families not connected with Rel. Ed.

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 Rel. Ed. 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.

CSA 2023

FUELING THE MISSION TOGETHER



CSA
CATHOLIC
SERVICES
A P P E A L

As an individual parish, we are called upon to join with our Catholic community throughout northwest Pennsylvania to build up the mission of the church. Only through our support can the Diocese of Erie continue its mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and give hope to thousands. Many of these needs are beyond the scope and resources of any one parish. By working together we can fulfill our role in the building of God's kingdom.

Our assessed goal for the appeal is \$70,634. Unfortunately last year, 2022, we fell short of our goal and also took on several additional large maintenance projects having anticipated your generosity. What is raised over our goal this year will be used to address these short falls of last year.

Funds donated to the CSA are placed in a designated account and used solely to support the programs and ministries of the diocese and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Commitment Sunday is February 19. I encourage you to support the appeal. I also ask for you to pray for the success of the CSA throughout the year. Thank you in advance for sharing your gifts and responding to Jesus's call to serve the people in need, act with justice, and build up his church.

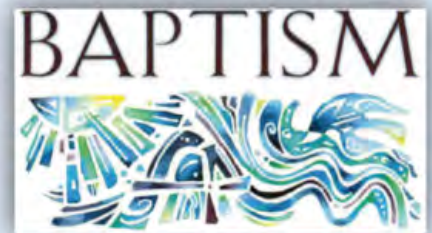
BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION

Are you expecting a new child? Has a baby recently blessed your family? Is the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism with your child something that you are planning for some time in the next year? If so, mark your calendar for **noon on Sunday, March 19** for our semi-annual Baptismal Preparation Session.

All parents/guardians and godparents are asked by the Diocese of Erie, to prepare their hearts and spirits to celebrate this wonderful Sacrament with their child by attending a special session just for them. Because these sessions are only held twice a year here at Our Lady of Mercy, you will want to take advantage of the opportunity now.

To register for the Baptismal Preparation Session, parents/guardians are asked to call the Parish Office at 814-899-5342. Questions can be asked at that time. Or, check out our web page to see the answers to the most frequently asked questions about child Baptism.

If the session scheduled at Our Lady of Mercy does not fit your calendar, you may attend a Baptismal Preparation Session for Parents at any Catholic parish in the area. If you call the area parishes, you should find a session that meets your time constraints; evening and weekend classes are available.



RCIA INVITATION

God loved us so much that God sent His only Son so that we might have eternal life and everlasting joy. This eternal life and everlasting joy begins today, in the extraordinary reality of grace, in the gift of faith lived in the Christian community. Come and be a part of this legacy, The Body of Christ making God's love and mercy visible in a world of pain and alienation.

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 814-899-6132 or email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org 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.



To support the
Summer 2023 Youth Mission Trip
SATURDAY MARCH 11 12-4 P.M.

St. James Place - 2622 Buffalo Rd.

For tickets call Maggie **814-490-4275**
\$20 donation

- 15 Games ● Games of Chance ● Food & Drinks ●

If you would like to leave a donation without purchasing a ticket, please drop them off in the Parish office.

Thank you!

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LOWER YOUR TAXABLE INCOME?

If you are age 70-1/2 or older IRS rules require you to take a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your tax deferred retirement account.

To reduce the impact of RMD income investors may want to consider making a "Qualified Charitable Distribution" (QCD).

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from an IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. (OLM qualifies). Contributions can be excluded from your taxable income, thus reducing your tax bill.

You could consider OLM.....

For further information or questions call Tom Palisin at 899-9268 or 572-5437.

SAVE THE DATE FOR A DOUBLE DEDICATION! April 28, 2023 @ 6 p.m.

The Anniversary of the Dedication of Our Lady of Mercy
& the Dedication of the Ritchie Room and Gathering Space
to honor the late Msgr. Gerald Ritchie.

More information to be announced at a later date.

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.

Feb. 22 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Mass

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

March 1 5:30 Mass
 6:10 Soup Supper
 7:00 Eucharist: More Than Just The Host
 Rose Galeza, Candy Henry, Andrea Maille

Most of us think of the Eucharist as something we receive during the celebration of the Mass. But for many unable to get to Mass because they are sick, homebound or elderly, having that life-giving presence of Jesus brought to them has a real impact on them. Those who take Communion to others are giving the gift of Jesus, as well as the gift of themselves and of our OLM community. Candy Henry and Andrea Maille will share what they have learned through their ministry as Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick. Rose Galeza will speak about the impact of having the Eucharist brought to her at a time of need.

Rose Galeza, Candy Henry and Andrea Maille are familiar to most in our parish family. Between them, they have served the parish in Music Ministry, Religious Education, Adult Faith Formation, Sister Parish Ministry, Legion of Mary, Prayer Shawl and so much more.

March 8 5:30 Mass
 6:10 Soup Supper
 6:45 Eucharistic Miracles
 Dr. Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD, ABCN

(Please note that this presentation begins 15 minutes earlier than the others to accommodate its length)

Many of us read the fascinating article in the recent issue of Faith Magazine that highlighted miracles connected to the Eucharist. Dr. Phillips-Sabol will bring together the faith of the Church and the critical eye of science in a multimedia presentation exploring these amazing events.

Dr. Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD, ABCN, is a Board Certified Neuropsychologist. She is the former Director of Neuropsychology, Administrative Director of the UT Houston Center For Neurocognitive Disorders, and Assistant Professor of Neurology, at the University of Texas Houston Medical Center.

March 12 4:00 PARISH MISSION
Epiphany to Ascension: Jesus, Eucharist and Great Coffee
Fr. Chris Singer

In the midst of our national Eucharistic Revival, this mission will explore Emmanuel – how “God is with us” through the themes of the Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons. God came into the world, and He stayed. He has stayed with us. So pour a great cup of coffee as together we refocus our eyes on Jesus in the Eucharist, who is “God with us.”

Fr. Singer will give one session at 4:00 and a second session at 6:00. We will share a simple supper between the two sessions.

Fr. Chris Singer is originally from Oil City. He (and his classmate Fr. Matt Kujawinski) was ordained to the priesthood in June 2003. Fr. Chris currently serves as Chancellor and Master of Ceremonies for the Diocese of Erie, and as confessor/spiritual director for St. Mark Seminary in Erie. His favorite hobbies are amateur astronomy, hiking and drinking coffee.

March 22 5:30 Mass
 6:10 Soup Supper
 7:00 Christ For Others: Expressing the Eucharist through Song
Brandon Vogt

The National Eucharistic Revival has been described as “a time of healing”. Join together in an evening of communal and reflective song and reflect upon the meaning of the Eucharist in your life.

Brandon Vogt is the Director of Worship for the Sisters of Saint Joseph of NWPA. He was Director of Liturgy and Music at his home parish here at Our Lady of Mercy from 2015 – 2021. He received his Masters in Liturgical Ministry from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and studied music and voice at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music. Brandon is currently the tenor section leader for the Saint Peter Cathedral Choir and a member of Erie’s first all-professional chorus, Transcendence. In addition, Brandon enjoys performing on local theatrical stages such as DramaShop and the Erie Playhouse.

April 5 7:00 A 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.





In honor of
National Eucharistic Revival

A presentation on

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

"My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink"

Come in 'believing.'

Walk out

'BELIEVING!'

SPEAKER

Jaci Phillips PhD



"Cease your doubting and believe!" ...Jesus



*Our Lady Of Mercy - Wednesday March 8th @6:45pm
837 Bartlett RD, Harborcreek, PA
Mass at 5:30 and soup at 6:10*

Multimedia presentation of the evidence and science of Eucharistic miracles, by Dr. Phillips. Please bring people who would like to increase their belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

"This is the first time in my life that I actually believe it's really Jesus" - Participant



Sunday, March 12

4:00-7:00 PM

Epiphany to Ascension Jesus, Eucharist and Great Coffee Presented by Fr. Chris Singer

In the midst of our national Eucharistic Revival, this mission will explore Emmanuel – how “God is with us” through the themes of the Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons. God came into the world, and He stayed. He has stayed with us. So pour a great cup of coffee as together we refocus our eyes on Jesus in the Eucharist, who is “God with us.”

Fr. Singer will offer two talks, at 4:00 and at 6:00 p.m. Between the talks, we will break to share a light supper.

Fr. Chris Singer is originally from Oil City. He (and his classmate Fr. Matt Kujawinski) was ordained to the priesthood in June 2003. Fr. Chris currently serves as Chancellor and Master of Ceremonies for the Diocese of Erie, and as confessor/spiritual director for St. Mark Seminary in Erie. His favorite hobbies are amateur astronomy, hiking and drinking coffee.

RARE GEMS

By: Joanne Fournier



In our last newsletter, I gave thanks for evidence of God’s working hand in rare disease and highlighted initiatives in the fight against these diseases. I write again because February 28th is **Rare Disease Day**® - a day to raise awareness of the over 7,000 rare diseases that impact over 300 million people globally!

It’s an opportunity for me to share the concept of ‘**Rare Gem Sales**’ which entails adding an element to used item sales (garage/yard/on-line market sales). As the saying goes, ‘one man’s junk is another’s treasure’, so why not make the purchase of these ‘gems’ extra special by contributing a portion of the sale to rare disease research? My husband and I have started doing just this.

So, the next time you find yourself searching for your ‘gem’ at a used item sale may it trigger a prayer for a cure of rare disease. And, if you see a reference to it being a Rare Gem Sale may it bring a smile in the knowledge you are truly buying into a rare gem!

*The National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) is the official US partner for Rare Disease Day. They work with EURORDIS (Rare Diseases – Europe) and others all around the world to drive an international campaign that shines a light on rare diseases.

Lenten Season

A time for Prayer, Penance, & Alms Giving



Looking for Easter Basket Fillers or like to shop from home?

Gift Cards could be the answer!

One stop shopping AND the Church earns money.

Gift Card Order Form

Our Lady of Mercy earns cash with every gift card purchased.

(2.5% - 14% depending on the gift card)

The cards listed below are those available in the Parish Office or visit the RaiseRight mobile app or RaiseRight.com to see all 750+ brands and available denominations.

3 ways to order:

Stop by the parish office after the weekend Masses or during the week between 9 and 2.

Fill out the form below and drop it off or mail it to OLM 837 Bartlett Rd Harborcreek PA 16421

Contact Pat Marshall: Text (814)440-4890 or email pmm1955.erie@gmail.com

Please make checks payable to: Our Lady of Mercy Church

For questions or more information please call Pat Marshall at 814-440-4890

Denomination Quantity Total Cost

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost
Amazon	\$25	
Amazon	\$100	
Apple/Itunes	\$25	
Applebees	\$25	
Arby's	\$10	
Barnes & Noble	\$10	
Bath & Body Works	\$10	
Bath & Body Works	\$25	
Bob Evans	\$10	
Bob Evans	\$25	
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$10	
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$25	
Burger King	\$10	
Chipotle	\$10	
Cinnabon-Moes etc	\$25	
Country Fair	\$25	
Country Fair	\$50	
Country Fair	\$100	
Dairy Queen	\$10	
Darden Restaurants	\$25	
Domino's	\$10	
Dunkin'	\$10	
Dunkin'	\$25	
Giant Eagle	\$25	
Giant Eagle	\$50	
Giant Eagle	\$100	

Denomination Quantity Total Cost

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost
Home Depot	\$25	
Kohl's	\$25	
Michaels	\$25	
Old Navy	\$25	
Outback Steakhouse	\$25	
Outback Steakhouse	\$50	
Panera	\$10	
Panera	\$25	
Pizza Hut	\$10	
Stan's Garden Center	\$25	
Starbucks	\$10	
Starbucks	\$25	
Subway	\$10	
Target	\$10	
Target	\$25	
Target	\$50	
Tim Hortons	\$10	
Total Wine	\$25	
Ulta	\$25	
Walmart	\$25	
Walmart	\$50	
Walmart	\$100	
Wendy's	\$10	

Others found at RaiseRight.com

Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost

Customer Info:

Name: _____

Phone # _____

Email: _____

In stock: Total \$ _____ # Cards _____

Ordered: Total \$ _____ # Cards _____

Total: \$ _____ Total Cards _____

Check # _____ Or Cash



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS®

KNIGHTLY NEWS WINTER 2023

PRO-LIFE

We are pleased to announce that the Mobile Ultrasound Unit was recently delivered to the Women's Care Center of Erie County, and will begin serving the women and unborn children of Erie, Warren and Crawford Counties in April of this year. We also received an additional check of \$59,300 from the K of C Supreme Council in Connecticut, which paid the entire cost of the Ultrasound Machine which will be placed in the Mobile Ultrasound Unit. Many thanks to all of you who gave so generously to our Baby Bottle Fundraiser.

On 1/21, several OLM Knights attended the first Post Roe March for Life in Washington DC. We were so enthused to see so many young people marching along with us.

CHARITY

Our council paid for the food at the reception of Father Matt Kujawinski's installation. New vestments were purchased for our Deacon Paul Barko. Your generous support of the OLM Knights of Columbus initiatives and events enables such donations to be made and so we say thank you.

Several Knights will join one another to prepare the meatballs, spaghetti and sauce for the upcoming Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser for the Religious Education Ministry. Frank Abate heads things up in that area.

Surplus OTCs Collection (community outreach to Mercy Center for Women in conjunction with St. Luke & Holy Rosary Knights) has collected about \$400 in goods and cash.

AWARDS

Representing our council, Jim Perrotto applied for the Columbian and McGivney Awards, which were approved. Plaques were received and presented to him by Grand Knight Dave Lefaiver. They are now displayed on the wall in Sperry Hall, which was rearranged to have a simple, less-cluttered appearance.

OLM GOLF & SORTS RAFFLE

It's hard to believe that we are talking Golf Raffle already, but May will be here before we know it. Committee meetings have already begun and we need your help for this large event. Hopefully, your name is already on the roster. We hope you will say yes to continuing or being added when contacted.

REMINDER

Council meetings will continue regardless of the cold weather that will settle in for the next few months. If you are a member, come join us on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm in Sperry Hall. Contact one of the Knights if you are not a member but are interested in becoming one. Meetings are strictly held to one hour with optional social time and refreshments following.

THANK YOU

Gift cards were presented to Katie Stephenson and Kirk Mientkiewicz for their hard work and dedication.

John Skuce
Jan. 22, 2023
(814) 899-3692
(814) 860-4141



iWitness

By: Katie Stephenson

Over the past year, I've had many opportunities to share with others, the encounters I've had with Christ throughout my life. These times of sharing inspired me to write a brief newsletter article, so share them with all of you.

In my younger years, when I heard the phrase "encounter with Christ" I pictured the skies opening up with a great big beam of light and a loud, low toned, James Earl Jones type of voice speaking from the heavens. Turns out, an encounter like that, has not been part of God's plan for me, not yet at least.

My first true, life-changing encounter with Christ came to me as a young 10th grader. I had recently dropped out of my confirmation class, though I continued to attend Mass on a weekly basis. I was looking for something more spiritually, and I'm not sure I even realize it. In the midst of my spiritual chaos, I was invited to go to Harrisburg with a school group for a couple of days. The small group met at Harbor Creek High School very early in the morning, loaded up a little car with the overly packed suitcases of 4 teenaged girls, and we started the 4 hour trip to the state capital. It didn't take long before I dozed off to sleep, though I have never been a very good "car sleeper". What I didn't realize was that a very ordinary thing would

change the course of my life when I woke up. When I finally woke up from my nap, I learned we were near State College. I rubbed my sleepy eyes open, and looked out the backseat window. At that moment, through dark, morning clouds, the bright sun appeared and the sunrays connected the earth to the heavens.

Though there were 4 other people in the car that morning who saw the exact same beautiful sight, I was the only one who saw it as an encounter with Christ. From that moment on, my life was changed. Why? I believe it was because I was open to having an encounter with Christ. I believe it was because, though I have never had a life changing encounter, I knew it could happen one day. Prior to that encounter with Christ, I was living for myself, as most teenagers do. But it was at that moment that I was transformed. The very real presence of God was made known to me, which gave me something greater to live for. I'm so thankful that our God is a forgiving one, and that perfection is not expected from us. Though this encounter changed my life, I didn't always make the best of choices. For you to understand the next encounter with Christ I'm going to talk to you about, I need to get personal for a sentence or two. I was a young single mom and though I have been blessed with amazing family and friends who I consider the best support system possible, I am essentially an only parent to my daughter, Bailey. This next encounter took place when Bailey was about 3 years old. One of our favorite things to do when Bailey was so young, was to visit the Blasco Library on the Bayfront. I had recently sprained my ankle, and relied on crutches to get around. Though it would be very convenient, life with a child does not slow down or stop due to an injured parent. So I packed up Bailey's book bag with all of the books we read the week before, and off to the library we went. It didn't take long after we went through the automatic doors for Bailey to take off towards the



Children's Library section. Though I tried to keep up, I just couldn't manage; she was too fast for me. It didn't take long for me to find her in her favorite section, skimming through all of the science books. After a brief "talking to" we filled up her backpack with dozens of new books to read over the course of the next couple of weeks. Before we headed to checkout, I wanted to look for a book to enjoy while I was laid up with a bummed ankle. Before I could tell Bailey we would be going upstairs, she jettied for the door. She couldn't wait to get home to read her new books. At that point, I ditched the crutches and hobbled along to catch up to her. After *another* talking to we made our way back into the library to retrieve the crutches I dropped somewhere along the way and to make the journey upstairs. Once we got the crutches, we headed over to the elevator, where Bailey threw a typical 3 year old fit because she wanted to climb the big stair case because it looked like "stairs in a castle". Though I explained to her that I couldn't climb that many stairs with my hurt ankle, she began to cry anyway. So there we were...a mom on crutches with a "Sofia The First" backpack over my shoulder, an ankle brace on my left ankle, leaning up against my crutches...and my 3 year old daughter, face covered in tears because she wanted to be like a princess by climbing the stairs...waiting for the elevator door to open up. Just like clockwork, about .5 seconds away from my breaking point, the door opened. Out of the elevator walked a disheveled

elderly man, in dirty clothes, and an overgrown beard. The dirt on his face and hands and the stains on his shirt matched the odor that hit me like a ton of bricks just mere seconds after the door opened. As he stepped out of the elevator, I stepped in (if you can even call it that) the elevator with my still crying child. Before the door shut behind us, this gentleman looked me square in the eyes, then a big smile spread across his face (the kind of smile that you see and you instantly

feel better, you feel safe, you feel joy). And he said "have a good day, and God bless you!" His words took my breath away. The next thing I knew, the doors closed, and I was now crying in the elevator with my 3 year old daughter.

We made it home safe from the library that day. But once again, my life was changed. I truly believe the fateful elevator encounter I had was in fact, one with Christ himself. God made himself present to me here on earth when I needed him the most. It was later that week that I contacted the church and began the process of getting Confirmed.

Of course, like I mentioned before, both of these examples of my encounters with Christ could be mistaken as ordinary, every day life events. They became life-changing encounters with Christ because my eyes and heart were open to God's wonderful work here on earth. As we enter this season of Lent, I challenge all who have made it this far in my newsletter article to journey through Lent with the same open eyes and heart. Be aware that God is with us always and works in mysterious ways, whether it be a sunrise or a stranger in an elevator. Then I encourage you to share your story of your encounter. Imagine what could come about if we became a community so in love with God that we just can't stop talking about Him and His amazing presence in our lives.