



## ***Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*** ***January 17, 2016***

### **Mission Statement**

We, the parishioners of St. Peter's Church, are called to holiness by God as present day disciples of Jesus Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united in service to God to share our faith with one another and our community. May our participation in the Holy Sacraments, our ministries and our devotion to Mary bring glory to God and His Kingdom.

### **Baptisms**

Parents anticipating the birth of their first child are asked to attend baptismal instructions classes before the birth of their child, if possible. Please contact the Rectory to register. Note: Baptisms cannot be scheduled until all the necessary paperwork is completed.

### **Confirmation**

Confirmation is administered every three years to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in our Parish CCD program. Children wishing to receive Confirmation must be enrolled and participating in the CCD program for two years before they are eligible to receive the sacrament.

### **Marriages**

In order to complete the necessary paperwork, couples are asked to contact the Rectory at least one full year in advance of the proposed marriage date.

### **Anointing of the Sick**

Please contact the Rectory whenever a member of your family has become sick or hospitalized. Please note, because of the new government regulations regarding privacy, hospitals cannot release information without a patient's consent.

### **Reconciliation**

The sacrament is celebrated each **Saturday from 4:00 – 4:45pm and Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11:45am – 12:00noon** in the church and also by appointment.

### **Monthly Visitations**

Any parishioner who is homebound and wishes to receive the Eucharist on a monthly basis is asked to contact the Rectory to schedule a visit.

### **Rite of Christian Initiation in Adults (RCIA)**

The RCIA prepares interested adults for reception into the Catholic Church. The program is adapted to the each person's needs and prepares them for full initiation into the faith. Please contact the rectory to register for the classes.

### **Welcome to our Visitors**

If you are visiting Tioga County this weekend, welcome and thank you for celebrating the Eucharist with us! If you are searching for a Spiritual home, we welcome you to join us in worship and invite you to become part of our church family by contacting the Rectory.

# **St. Peter's Church**

47 Central Avenue, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania 16901

Rectory Phone: 570-724-3371~ Fax: 570-724-6322

Religious Education Phone: 570-724-9789

Website: [www.stpeterswellsboro.org](http://www.stpeterswellsboro.org) ~ Email: [stpch@ptd.net](mailto:stpch@ptd.net)

### **Rectory Office Hours**

Monday through Friday 9:00–2:00pm

### **Parish Staff**

Pastor: Rev. David Bechtel – [Dbechtel00@yahoo.com](mailto:Dbechtel00@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Connie Spang – [stpch@ptd.net](mailto:stpch@ptd.net)

Business Manager: Patti Mitchell – [stpadm@ptd.net](mailto:stpadm@ptd.net)

Director of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier – [stpreled@ptd.net](mailto:stpreled@ptd.net)

Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

### **Schedule of Weekend Masses**

Saturday Vigil: 5:00pm ~ Sunday: 8:30am & 11:00am

### **Reconciliation**

Saturday 4:15 – 4:45pm

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 11:45am-12:00noon

### **Emergency Contact**

In the event of an emergency, please call the rectory at 570-724-3371. If no answer, please call 570-329-5762. This is a pager. You will be instructed to enter your phone number and Fr. Bechtel will return your call.

### **Religious Education and Formation**

Religious Education classes are held for Pre-K – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Classes begin in September and conclude in May. Pre-K (ages 3-5) is held during the 8:30am Mass. K-12<sup>th</sup> begins at 9:30am and concludes at 10:40am. Confirmation Prep Class meets one Sunday a month from 5:00–6:30pm as scheduled.

### **Pregnancy Support**

Catholic Social Services (800) 982-4310

Crisis Pregnancy Help line (888) 4-OPTIONS

Endless Mountains Pregnancy Care Center (570) 673-4476

### **Parish Contact Listing**

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – Patti Mitchell 570-724-3371

Guardians of the Redeemer – Rectory 570-724-3371

Women's Bible Study – Sue Singer 570-724-2360

St. John Neumann's Prayer Group – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085

Contemplative Spirituality Group – Kate Black 570-724-3047

Cards & Games – Patty Kramer 570-948-9023

Knights of Columbus – George Gamble 570-724-5216

Social Concerns – Karen Plumley 570-439-0175

Parish Rummage Sale – Mary Cleveland 570-724-5286

Funeral Luncheon Group – Rectory 570-724-3371

Church Linens & Decorations – Sue Singer 570-724-2360

Buildings & Grounds – Rick Joachim 570-439-2591

Cemetery Committee – Howard Rutledge 570-724-4529

Fundraising Dinners – Kathy Wilcox 570-724-3371

Music Ministry – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085,

Marilyn deGuzman 570-376-5427, Marian Miller 570-724-5245

Samaritan House – Daria Guelig 570-724-3030

Youth Group – Maureen Poirier 570-724-9789

Eucharistic Adoration – Mary Cleveland 570-724-5286

Finance Council – Priscilla Walrath 570-724-2056

Parish Council – Jon Banik 570-724-5968

Worship Committee – Rectory 570- 724-3371

Sunday Communion at Nursing Homes – Eileen Evert 570-439-4470

Prayer Chain – Kate Black 570-724-3047

Order of Secular Carmelite – Lori Makos 570-724-3371

# Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 17, 2015

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
<b>Monday 1/18</b> <i>1 Sm 15:16-23; Mk 2:18-22</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Honor of Alphonzo Dukes (Ostapowicz Family)
<b>Tuesday 1/19</b> <i>1 Sm 16:1-13; Mk 2:23-28</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Marie Coll (Samaritan House Volunteers)
<b>Wednesday 1/20</b> <i>1 Sm 17:32-33,37,40-51; Mk 3:1-6</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Betty Frazier (Pete & Cindy Mosher and Family)
<b>Thursday 1/21</b> <i>1 Sm 18:6-9,19:1-7; Mk 3:7-12</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Ingrid Quezada (Don & Lucy Whitney)
<b>Friday 1/22</b> <i>1 Sm 24:3-21; Mk 3:13-19</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Santo Gargano (Ed & Loretta Nonnenmacher)
<b>Saturday 1/23</b> <i>2 Sm 1:1-4,11-12,19,23-27; Mk 3:20-21</i>	4:15-4:45pm 5:00pm	Confessions In Memory of Betty Frazier (Craig & Linda West and Family)
<b>Sunday 1/24</b> <i>Neh 8:2-4,5-6,8-10; 1Cor 12:12-30; Lk 1:1-4, 4:14-21</i>	8:30am 11:00am	All Living and Deceased Members of St. Peter's Parish In Memory of Daniel & Edith Sparks (Leonard Fermeic Family)



## This Week's Sanctuary Candle

The sanctuary candle is a reminder to us of the presence of Christ reserved in the Tabernacle.  
This week's candle is offered in memory of **Jack Koch** (Family)

## Stewardship

**Your Gift of Time, Talent & Treasure**  
**Thanks for your continued support and generosity!**

Sunday Collection for Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>: **\$5,252.00**  
Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,990.00  
Difference: (\$738.00)  
Year-to-Date Budget Variance: \$5,756.45

### Attendance for weekend of January 10<sup>th</sup>

5:00pm – 151; 8:30am – 216; 11:00am – 159  
Total number attending Mass – 426  
Number of registered families – 478  
Number of registered parishioners – 1009

### Reflect on your gifts...and your giving!

Envelope usage statistics for the weekend of January 10<sup>th</sup>

Amount Given	Number of Contributors	Percentage of Contributors	Total Amount
\$0.00	317	66.88%	\$ 0.00
\$0.01 – \$1.00	3	0.63%	\$ 3.00
\$1.01 – \$5.00	15	3.16%	\$ 65.00
\$5.01 – \$10.00	34	7.17%	\$ 323.00
\$10.01 – \$15.00	12	2.53%	\$ 172.00
\$15.01 – \$20.00	24	5.06%	\$ 478.00
\$20.01 – \$25.00	23	4.85%	\$ 566.00
\$25.01 – \$50.00	30	6.33%	\$ 1,114.00
\$50.01 – \$75.00	6	1.27%	\$ 366.00
\$75.01 – \$100.00	3	0.63%	\$ 290.00
\$100.01 – \$500.00	7	1.48%	\$ 1,355.00
Totals	474		\$ 4,732.00

Loose Collection: \$ 520.00

## The Week Ahead

### SUNDAY, January 17, 2016

Religious Ed. – Pre-School, 8:30am; K-12<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am

### MONDAY, January 18, 2016

Rectory Closed

### TUESDAY, January 19, 2016

Adoration – 7:30am – 7:00pm

Staff Meeting – 8:30am, Rectory

Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Parish Center

Parish Council – 7:00pm, Parish Center

AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

### WEDNESDAY, January 20, 2015

Social Concerns Meeting – 3:00pm, Parish Center

Christlife Series – 6:30pm, Parish Center

### THURSDAY, January 14, 2016

Cards & Games – 12:00noon, Parish Center

R.C.I.A. – 6:00pm, Parish Center

St. John Neumann Prayer Group – 7:00pm, Parish Center

### SATURDAY, January 23, 2016

First Penance – 11:00am, Church

### SUNDAY, January 24, 2016

Religious Ed. – Pre-School, 8:30am; K-12<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am

District Knight of Columbus Meeting – 2:00pm, Parish Center

## Ministers of the Altar Schedule

### Weekend of January 24<sup>th</sup>

#### 5:00pm

Servers: E.Poirier, J.Poirier, W.Poirier

Lectors: T.Sampson, P.Walrath

E. Min.: E.Evert, G.Poirier, G.Brown

#### 8:30am

Servers: J.Grab, A.Banik, L.Gordon

Lectors: T.Reindl, D.Gordon

E. Min.: T.Gamble, L.Whitney, M.Bialas

#### 11:00am

Servers: A.Bleggi, A.Burge, L.Burge

Lectors: M.Stirnaman, D.Bleggi

E. Min.: V.Anthony, C.Lannak, C.Delong



## Liturgical Reflection

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5**

The First Reading comes from a portion of the Book of Isaiah known as "Third Isaiah," dating to the period when Israel began returning to Jerusalem from their time in exile. The language is filled with hope and the promise of new life. Israel's situation is totally transformed and the nation's relationship with the Lord is renewed. No longer languishing in exile, Israel basks in the mercy of the Lord. Her sin of idolatry is behind her. The marriage imagery tells us that the people have a fresh start; God has the ability to take a painful past and turn it into a glorious future.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

Speaking to the oft-divided Church in Corinth, Paul introduces the concept of unity in diversity. Paul writes his spiritual children to restore peace and right teaching. He reminds them that their gifts come from God for the good of all, not for the glory of the one who is the conduit of God's grace. He reminds the Corinthians (and us) that, though the Spirit has bestowed a variety of gifts, these gifts have a purpose: to build up the common good. By placing our gifts at the benefit of the community, Christians build up the Church and the Kingdom of God.

**GOSPEL: John 2:1-11**

John calls Jesus' first miracle at the wedding of Cana "the beginning of his signs." At his mother's urging, Jesus transforms the situation, turning water into wine and changing what could have been a social disaster into a triumph. The seemingly unlimited fine wine calls to mind the "pure, choice wine" that the Lord has promised to provide on his holy mountain (see Isaiah 25:5) and so "his disciples began to believe in him." Mary's words to the servants – the last she speaks in all the Gospel accounts – echo down the centuries as sage advice to all who would be her son's disciples – "Do whatever he tells you."



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**ABOUT THIS SUNDAY**

With the end of Christmas Time, we are now in a brief period of Ordinary Time until the season of Lent begins. The Collect acknowledges God as the one who governs "all things," and so asks him to "bestow his peace on our times." The Prayer over the Offerings reiterates how "whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated, the works of our redemption is accomplished." The Prayer after Communion highlights the unity of the faithful that is a constitutive element in the meaning of the Eucharist. It asks God to pour out the spirit of love on us so that those who have been nourished by the "one heavenly Bread" may become "one in mind and heart."

## Parish Activities and Information

### SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND

There will be a second collection taken up at all Masses this weekend in support of the *Service to Help the Poor*. This is not a diocesan collection. All money collected stays here and is used to help those in need in our community. Please be as generous as you are able.

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### VALENTINE'S DINNER

The Social Concerns committee will again be delivering a Valentine's dinner to any parishioner (homebound, living alone, recovering from an illness, a "sweetheart" who contributes in a special way to the parish) who would like one. Delivery, weather permitting, will be Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to receive a meal or know a parishioner who would like to receive one, please contact Jackie Murphy at 570-724-7334. Also, to assist with needed supplies, please look for our sign-up sheets near the main entrance of the church.

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### ADULT ED UPDATE

The Discovering Christ Pilot series begins Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Parish Center. Those parishioners who signed up are asked to arrive by 6:20pm to complete registration. The seven sessions will run on consecutive Wednesdays (weather permitting, Ash Wednesday excluded.) Each session will conclude not later than 9:15pm.

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### CHAPLAIN TRAINING OFFERED

Susquehanna Health is offering a volunteer chaplain training session at Soldiers and Sailors Hospital, for anyone interested in being a volunteer chaplain. The dates of the training are Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am-12:00noon. Anyone from the parish who is interested, is invited to participate.

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### SOCIAL CONCERNS FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

The Social Concerns Committee is accepting specific donations each month for the local food pantry. **January's food items are canned tuna, ham, or chicken (5-6oz).** Place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church anytime throughout the month.



## Neighboring Parish News

### HOLY CHILD TO HOLD INFORMATION SESSION

At the invitation of Bishop Bambera and supported by the Office of Parish Life, Holy Child parish is considering engaging in ARISE Together in Christ, a new process of spiritual renewal and evangelization presented by RENEW International. ARISE is designed to enable us to deepen our faith, develop a closer relationship with Christ, grow in community and reach out in service to others. An information session will be held at 7:00pm on January 21<sup>st</sup> at Holy Child in Mansfield. Please come hear about this great opportunity and perhaps together, we will ARISE Together in Christ.

# That's The Way It Is!



**By Fr. Dave Bechtel**

Last week I explained the different tools available to theologians and why philosophy matters to theology. This week I want to explain why one's philosophical system is going to influence their theology.

One of the most basic problems in metaphysics is a certain paradox about reality: there is unity, yet diversity, change, yet permanence, multiplicity yet singularity, in everything that exists. The wisest of philosophers over the centuries have tried to harmonize and reconcile these seeming paradoxes with greater or lesser success.

The philosophers who have grappled with this problem fall into one of four metaphysical systems: 1) Realism, 2) Moderate Realism, 3) Conceptualism, 4) Nominalism. The modern philosophers tend towards Conceptualism and Nominalism, while the ancient and medieval philosophers tended towards Realism and Moderate Realism.

Why is this important? To egregiously oversimplify: If one's metaphysical system is Realist or Moderate Realist, one believes that there is an objective principle that makes things what they are. This principle, whatever it is called, whatever it is—is the underlying basis of all reality. If one's metaphysical system is Conceptualist or Nominalist, reality has no objective principle that makes it what it is. Any objective principle that seems to exist, exists only in the human mind (Conceptualism) and or is a name we assign something for convenience sake. (Nominalism.)

Understanding this, one should begin to understand why something like gay marriage or gender reassignment surgery (for example) makes sense to the modern mind. The metaphysical systems underpinning modern Philosophy (Conceptualism and Nominalism) reject an objective basis to reality. This means there is no objective essence to marriage. Marriage is whatever we project it to be or define it to be. The idea that there is an objective essence underpinning gender is also rejected. If this is the case, then one's gender is a projection of the human mind, it does not exist objectively. This means all one has to do to change one's gender is change the biological components to bring them in line with one's personal and subjective "gender identity."

In a Realist or Moderate Realist metaphysical system, such things are unintelligible because there IS an objective basis that undergirds and unifies reality. This entails marriage does have an objective basis and the definition cannot be changed based on cultural whims. This means gender does not lie in one's mind, but has a basis in reality. In this system, then, gender reassignment surgery does not change one's gender. A man who has his genitalia removed and female genitalia added is not a woman but a man with female genitalia. The same with a woman who has male genitalia added and female genitalia removed. She does not become a man through such a surgery; she just becomes a female that has male body parts.

In some ways, the disagreements between liberal secularism and Catholicism are as much a disagreement about differing metaphysical systems as it is theology and doctrine. In fact I would suggest that one's metaphysical system is going to govern how one approaches the sources of Revelation and the teachings of the Church.

This may be one of the reasons dissident scholars have such trouble finding many of the Catholic teachings regarding morality in Scripture and or Tradition. For these scholars, even IF it is admitted that Scripture forbids something (say homosexual behavior) they can just dismiss the verse as being culture bound and time bound. You see, it is the culture that gives meaning to and informs the message of Scripture for the Nominalist or the Conceptualist. For the Realist or Moderate Realist, it is Scripture that gives meaning to and informs the community.

What I have written above is NOT intended to be in any way exhaustive and as I admit, overly simplistic. It has to be given the patience people have with such heady concepts and a limited amount of space in the bulletin. Anyone interested in learning more should consult the works of Professor Edward Feser, a philosophy professor at Pasadena City College in CA. A particular work of his is "The Last Great Superstition: a Refutation of the New Atheism." He covers in far greater detail and far greater depth, the issues I am talking about. Caution: his works are not for the faint of heart. They are extremely heady. Even I have a tough time with them, and I am brilliant---or so I tell myself.

That's the way it is!

Father Dave Bechtel

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## Pro Life News

### PRO LIFE MARCH IN WASHINGTON

Chemung County Right to Life is sponsoring a bus trip the March for Life March in Washington, D.C. on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. For more information, call 607-857-8479. Also, the Susquehanna Chapter for Human Life will have a bus leaving from Williamsport at 6:00am. The cost is \$15. For more information, call Evelyn Rall at 570-398-0722.

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### PRO-LIFE DEMONSTRATION TO BE HELD

There will be a Pro-Life demonstration in front of Holy Child Church, 272 S. Main Street, Mansfield on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1:30-2:30pm. Posters will be provided along with chairs for those who need them. Let this be the year we speak out for LIFE! All are welcome.

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### WORD OF LIFE

"Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings... if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?"—*Pope Francis, Laudatio Si, no. 120*

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## 9 DAYS FOR LIFE

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> our nation will mark the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal throughout the U.S. Since that tragic decision, more than 56 million children's lives have been lost to abortion, and many suffer that loss -- often in silence. Join thousands of Catholics across the country in prayer for a Culture of Life from Saturday, January 16, 2016 - Sunday, January 24, 2016. The U.S. bishop's annual novena *9 Days for Life* takes place Saturday, January 16 – Sunday, January 24. Pray for the respect and protection of all human life with new intentions, brief reflections, and more each day. Download the novena online, or participate through Facebook, email, text message or an app. Join at [www.9daysforlife.com](http://www.9daysforlife.com)!



## Diocese of Scranton News

### ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION OF GOD'S WORD

The Diocese of Scranton will again participate in the worldwide Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is celebrated each year in January. The Diocese will host an Ecumenical Celebration of God's Word on Monday, January 25, 2016, at 12:10pm in the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton. All are welcome to attend. The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, will preside, and Bishop Jeremiah Park of the Susquehanna Conference, Methodist Church will deliver the homily. Clergy and representatives from various Christian traditions and ecumenical agencies will be present. Liturgical music will be provided by All Saints Academy, Scranton.

### 2016 MEN'S CONFERENCE

The 2016 Men's Conference will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2016. Registrations are now open on our new web site [www.BeAManConference.com](http://www.BeAManConference.com) for an early bird rate of \$30.00 per adult. We have an exciting day planned with a great lineup of speakers, breakfast, lunch, confessions, adoration and concluding with Mass celebrated by Bishop Bambera. If you liked the conference last year, please register early and bring your friends, sons, grandsons and nephews! At a time when Goodness seems to be under attack worldwide, The Church needs her Men to step up and join the battle. Why not make the commitment today by registering for this conference. We guarantee that you will be fired up about our Faith when you leave the conference April 23rd! The Be A Man Conference is presented in cooperation with the Diocese of Scranton. To register or for more information, visit [www.BeaManConference.com](http://www.BeaManConference.com).

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and the Office for Parish Life wish to invite couples celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2016 to an anniversary Mass on Sunday, June 5, 2016. The event includes a 2:30pm mass at St. Peter's Cathedral followed by a reception. Requests for an invitation, with a mailing address, should be made calling the rectory before March 7<sup>th</sup>.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK - Jan. 31st – Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>

Celebrate Catholic Schools Week by attending one of our Catholic School Open Houses! You are invited to come experience our communities of faith and academic excellence. From Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, our students live their faith, challenge their minds, serve their communities, and build lifelong friendships. For specifics about the Open Houses or for more information about our Diocesan Catholic Schools, including tuition assistance opportunities, please visit [www.DiocesefScranton.org/CatholicSchools](http://www.DiocesefScranton.org/CatholicSchools).



## Jubilee Year of Mercy

*This Holy Year will commence on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Sunday, November 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe and living face of the Father's mercy.*

***How can we show others the mercy of God? Our actions need to authentically reflect God's mercy.***

### Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual writers throughout history. Just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to "help our neighbor in their spiritual needs" (USCCA).

### COUNSELING THE DOUBTFUL

Everyone has moments of doubt in their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should always remember that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to him along our way.

- Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may eventually become wise" (Prov 19:20)
- The Cross of Christ "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength" (1 Cor 1:25)
- Has someone asked you for advice? Orient your response to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- Follow Christ with the witness of your life so that others may see God's love revealed in your actions
- Accompany a friend who is struggling with believing to join a parish group for service or faith formation, share a book you found useful in dealing with your friend's faith concern, and worship at Sunday Mass

Visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) for ways you can participate in the Jubilee of Mercy.

# News From the Vatican



## PRAYERS WORK MIRACLES

2016-01-12 (Vatican Radio) - Pope Francis says prayer works miracles and prevents the hardening of the heart. Pope Francis took his cue from the Bible reading of the day which tells the story of Hannah, a woman whom,

deeply distressed by her infertility, desperately prays to the Lord to give her a child, and of Eli, a priest, who looks on vaguely from afar and superficially judges the woman as a drunkard as he can see her babbling but cannot hear her words. "Hannah was praying silently, her lips moved but her voice was not heard. Hers is the courage of a woman of faith who is weeping and grieving and asks the Lord for his grace. There are many good women in the Church, many! They place all their trust in prayer. Let us think of one of them, Saint Monica who was able, with her tears, to be granted the grace of conversion for her son, Saint Augustine. There are so many."

Eli, the priest, is "a poor man" towards whom, Francis says, he feels "a certain sympathy because I find faults in myself that allow me to understand him well and feel close to him. How easily do we judge people and lack the respect to say: 'I wonder what he has in his heart. I do not know, but I will say nothing.' When the heart lacks compassion one always thinks evil and does not understand those who pray with pain and anguish and entrust that pain and anguish to the Lord."

"Jesus knows this kind of prayer. When he was in Gethsemane and was so anguished and hurt he sweated blood, He did not accuse the Father: 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but Yours be done.' Jesus responded in the same way of the woman: with meekness. Sometimes, we pray, we ask things of God, but often we do not know how to engage with the Lord, to ask for grace."

The Pope also recalled the story of a man in Buenos Aires whose 9-year-old-daughter was dying in hospital. He said he spent the night at the shrine of the Virgin of Luján clinging to the gate and praying for the grace of healing. The next morning, when he returned to the hospital, his daughter was healed. "Prayer works miracles; it works miracles for Christians, whether they be faithful laypeople, priests, bishops who have lost compassion. The prayers of the faithful change the Church: it's not us popes, bishops, priests or nuns who carry the Church forward, but Saints. Saints are those who dare to believe that God is the Lord and that He can do everything."

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## CATECHESIS ON MERCY IN THE BIBLE

Vatican City, 13 January 2016 (VIS) – During today's general audience, the Pope began a new cycle of catechesis dedicated to mercy from a Biblical perspective, to foster an understanding of what mercy is through listening to what God Himself teaches us with His Word.

Francis referred to a passage from the Book of Exodus in which the Lord describes Himself as "a God merciful and

gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." "In other texts too we encounter this formula, with some variation, but stress is always placed on the mercy and love of God Who never tires of forgiving," he said, before going on to analyze each of these terms used in the sacred Scripture to describe God.

The word "merciful" evokes an attitude of tenderness, "like that of a mother towards her child. Indeed, the Hebrew word used in the Bible makes us think of the maternal womb. Therefore the image suggested is that of a God who is moved to tenderness for us like a mother when she holds her child in her arms, wishing only to love, protect and help him, willing to give everything, even herself. A love, then, that can be defined as ... visceral."

The Lord is full of pity and compassion; in His greatness "He stoops to those who are weak and poor, always ready to welcome, understand and forgive". He is like the father in the parable of the prodigal son "who does not close himself in resentment at his abandonment by his youngest son, but on the contrary continues to wait for him, and then runs out to meet and embrace him. He does not even let him finish his confession ... so great is his love and joy at finding him again".

Of this merciful God it is also said that He is "slow to anger", as if He waited before responding, breathing deeply without losing patience. "God knows how to wait: He does not have the impatience of men. He is like the wise farmer who knows how to wait, who leaves time to let the good seed grow, rather than weeds".

Finally, the Lord proclaims Himself "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness". "How beautiful is this definition of God!", exclaimed the Pope. "Here we find everything. Because God is great and powerful, but this greatness and power are shown in loving us, so small and incapable as we are. The word 'to love' as used here indicates affection, grace, goodness. It is the love that takes the first step; that does not depend upon human merits but on an immense gratuity. It is the divine solicitude that nothing can stop, not even sin, as it goes beyond sin, conquering evil and forgiving it. A faithfulness without limits: here is the last word of God's revelation to Moses. God's faithfulness never ceases because the Lord ... never sleeps, but rather keeps watch over us continually to bring us to life".

"God is always and completely loyal", concluded Francis. "His is a solid and stable presence. It is the certainty of our faith. In this Jubilee of Mercy, let us trust fully in Him, to feel the joy of being loved by this merciful and clement God, slow to anger and great in love and faithfulness".

\*\*\*\*\*

## POPE FRANCIS' JANUARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

**Universal:** *Interreligious Dialogue* - That sincere dialogue among men and women of different faiths may produce the fruits of peace and justice.

**Evangelization:** *Christian Unity* - That by means of dialogue and fraternal charity and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians may overcome divisions.

\*\*\*\*\*



# St. Peter's Church

## Polish Dinner

Friday, February 5, 2016

4:00 – 7:00pm in the Parish Center

Adults: \$12:00

Children (Under 12): \$ 5.00

(Children 3 & Under are free)

Bring  
Your  
Own  
Bottle!

**All You  
Can Eat!**

- ❖ Homemade Pierogies
- ❖ Kielbasa
- ❖ Stuffed Cabbage
- ❖ Baked Haddock
- ❖ Sauerkraut
- ❖ Applesauce & Veggie Tray
- ❖ Homemade Desserts
- ❖ Coffee, Soda, Iced Tea, Lemonade

*In order for this dinner to be a success,  
we need volunteers to work during &  
after the dinner and donations of some  
food items and baked goods.*

*Signup sheets can be found  
in the back of the church.*

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Thank you for connecting with us!

## A Gift in Your Will

We hope you'll consider including a gift to St. Peter's Church in your will or living trust. Called a charitable bequest, just a few sentences in your will or trust are all that is needed. Share this sample bequest language for St. Peter's Church with your estate planning attorney:

"I, [name], of [city, state, zip], give, devise and bequeath to St. Peter's Church, Wellsboro [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for its unrestricted use and purpose."



## Parish Prayer List

Nettie Mays, Nan Bowser, Rebecca Kreider, Bill Jacobson, Trish Knowlton, Sheldon Moon, Helene Carpenter, Angela Shirley, Joe Heminhaus, Jr., Jasmine Williams, Judy Nagel, Sue Evert, Allisa Abrams, Logan Williams, Valerie Tobin, Michael Farrington, Debbie Adleman, Darlene Brennan, Shirley Mekos Broughton, Cynthia Gordon, Tim Christman, Michelle Lawrence, Ann Porter, Tucker Gromosiak, Meghan Henneman, Joyce Bowe, Donna Brennan, Peggy Zona, Natasha Rymarczuk, Bob Erway, Mary Mekos, Mary Cramner, Bob Black, Maci Lynn Perry, Martha Desch, Pam Robbins, Leon Herb, Deb Finestone, Nick Cavagnaro, Patricia Jaworowicz, Sunny Fernandez, Maxwell Fook, Antoinette Davis, Kay Evans, Anna Marie Mimplitsch, Sean Rice, Jonathan Hardman, Sylvia Darrow, Lola Moore, Edwin Rosa, Carol Johns, Joan Kilmer, Stephen Hurd, Stephanie Hemighauf, Suzie Alexander, Larry Sasani, Kathy Barnes, Wendy Doan-Newcomb, Michele Bush, Ashley Johns, Syler Sullivan, Carter Goodwin, Adrienne Gilbert, Rita Grinnan, Bob Murphy, Richard Wheeler, Carolyn Antoniow, Sylvia Smith, Jean Thurman, Robbie Butler, Susan Cleveland, Lynn Bower, Brian Abbott, Dominic Bianco, Tom Mohr, Carol Weatherby, Carol Shine, Teresa Pavlock, Jerry Pierce, Joann Black, Gabriel, Melissa & Daniel Espinoza, Lori Lopaz, Patricia Quattrone, Larry Jackson, Katie Seip, Lisa Jones, Grace Bickham, Edward Collins, Floyd Williammee, Barbara Gaugler, Renee Kennedy, Gay Furlong, Elsa DiBernardo, Fran Rose, Christine Palmer, June Sherman, Kathy Smith, Beverly Heck, Tim Bogaczyk, Beth Valdez, Virginia Shaefer, Charles Barrett, Joe Engel, Tony Dooley, David Naugle, Connie Kenderdine, Darlene Kohler, Mary Lou Bonk, Jon Banik, Kaydence Burger, Callie Cavanaugh, Tina Janeski, and Jonathan Boyce.



Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them, O Lord and  
Let the Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them.

Betty Borden

Lord, this we know, no matter how difficult life may be at this time, we know you will not stop loving us and will always hold us in the palm of your hand. We are reaching to you, Lord, to hold us, comfort us, and heal us. Lord, this we know, you are faithful in your love for us today and forever. You are with us, and we are with you. Amen.