



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time ***January 31, 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 6th, 7th, and 8th 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 ~ Email: stpch@ptd.net

Rectory Office Hours

Monday through Friday 9:00–2:00pm

Parish Staff

Pastor: Rev. David Bechtel – Dbechtel00@yahoo.com

Secretary: Connie Spang – stpch@ptd.net

Business Manager: Patti Mitchell – stpadm@ptd.net

Director of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier – 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 – 12th grade. Classes begin in September and conclude in May. Pre-K (ages 3-5) is held during the 8:30am Mass. K-12th 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

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 31, 2016

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
Monday 2/1 <i>2 Sm 15:13-14,30,16:5-13; Mk 5:1-20</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Russell Cornell (Sue Olshevski)
Tuesday 2/2 <i>Mal 3:1-4; Heb 2:14-18; Lk 2:22-40</i>	6:00pm	In Memory of Eugene Getgen (Joan Getgen)
Wednesday 2/3 <i>2 Sm 24:2,9-17; Mk 6:1-6</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Anna & Joseph Henneberger (Ostapowicz Family)
Thursday 2/4 <i>1 Kgs 2:1-,10-12; Mk 6:7-13</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of Betty Frazier (Mike & Connie McNamara)
Friday 2/5 <i>Sir 47:2-11; Mk 6:14-29</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Richard Lynch (Maryanne Cunningham)
Saturday 2/6 <i>1 Kgs 3:4-13; Mk 6:30-34</i>	8:15 – 8:45am 9:00am 4:15-4:45pm 5:00pm	Confessions All Living and Deceased Members of St. Peter's Parish Confessions In Memory of Cliff Parsells (Tony & Tess Dooley)
Sunday 2/7 <i>Is 6:1-2, 3-8; 1 Cor 15:1-11; Lk 5:1-11</i>	8:30am 11:00am	All Living and Deceased Members of St. Peter's Parish In Honor of Jon Banik (Catherine Bogaczyk)



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 **Beth Patt** (Frank Patt & Family)

Stewardship

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

Sunday Collection for Jan.24th: **\$6,641.75**
Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,990.00
Difference: \$651.75
Year-to-Date Budget Variance: \$5,694.20

Attendance for weekend of January 24th

5:00pm – 143; 8:30am – 233; 11:00am – 160
Total number attending Mass – 536
Number of registered families – 477
Number of registered parishioners – 1003

Reflect on your gifts...and your giving!

Envelope usage statistics for the weekend of January 24th

Amount Given	Number of Contributors	Percentage of Contributors	Total Amount
\$0.00	307	64.77%	\$ 0.00
\$0.01 – \$1.00	2	0.42%	\$ 2.00
\$1.01 – \$5.00	16	3.38%	\$ 65.00
\$5.01 – \$10.00	30	6.33%	\$ 284.00
\$10.01 – \$15.00	12	2.53%	\$ 172.00
\$15.01 – \$20.00	30	6.33%	\$ 592.00
\$20.01 – \$25.00	22	4.64%	\$ 537.00
\$25.01 – \$50.00	34	7.17%	\$ 1,330.00
\$50.01 – \$75.00	7	1.48%	\$ 441.00
\$75.01 – \$100.00	6	1.27%	\$ 570.00
\$100.01 – \$500.00	8	1.69%	\$ 2,005.00
Totals	474		\$ 5,998.00

Loose Collection: \$ 643.75

The Week Ahead

SUNDAY, January 31, 2016

Religious Ed. – Pre-School, 8:30am; K-12th, 9:30am
Confirmation Prep Class – 5:00pm, Parish Center

TUESDAY, February 2, 2016

Adoration – 7:30am – 7:00pm
Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Parish Center
Worship Committee – 7:00pm, Rectory
AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

WEDNESDAY, February 3, 2016

Christlife Series – 6:30pm, Parish Center

THURSDAY, February 4, 2016

Cards & Games – 12:00noon, Parish Center
R.C.I.A. – 6:00pm, Parish Center
St. John Neumann Prayer Group – 7:00pm, Parish Center

FRIDAY, February 5, 2016

Polish Dinner – 4:00-7:00pm, Parish Center

SUNDAY, February 7, 2016

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

Ministers of the Altar Schedule

Weekend of February 7th

5:00pm

Servers: E. Poirier, J.Poirier, W. Poirier
Lectors: G.Poirier, C.Evert
E. Min.: E.Evert, M.Osborn, B.Butler

8:30am

Servers: E.Cimino, L.Cimino, M.Mann
Lectors: N.Kennedy, T.Reindl
E. Min.: T.Gamble, L.Whitney, C.Delong

11:00am

Servers: A.Burge, L. Burge, B.Levindoski
Lectors: C.Waclawik, M.Stirnaman
E. Min.: C.Lannak, V.Anthony, L.Makos



Liturgical Reflection

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19

The First Reading relates the call of the prophet Jeremiah. Knowing the challenges that faced God's prophets, Jeremiah demurred from accepting God's call, giving all the reasons that he would not be a good prophet. Following God's path is never easy. The Lord tells Jeremiah as much. But, at the same time, God promises Jeremiah that he will never abandon him.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Paul was and is known for the power of his teaching and for his skill in building up the Church. Yet here he makes his priorities clear. No accomplishment has value without love. In the end, the love we have poured forth will be the measure of our lives. Only the faith we shared, the hope on which we have relied, and the love we have expressed will last when our earthly achievements have passed away.

GOSPEL: Luke 4: 21-30

Last Sunday's Gospel related Jesus' preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth. Today's shows the aftermath of that preaching. While the people were impressed by his preaching, they could not accept that it came from someone familiar to them. They wanted more proof. Jesus responds not with proof, but by reminding his listener that God does not act in the way we expect. He seeks out those disregarded by others and he protects all of those he calls.



ABOUT THIS SUNDAY

The Collect echoes the words of Christ to the scribe who asked him which Commandment was most important: we are to "honor God with all our mind, and love everyone in truth of heart." In the Prayer over the Offerings, we ask God to transform the "offerings of our service" and make them "the Sacrament of our redemption." In the Prayer after Communion, we pray that the "redeeming gifts" we receive may help the faith to spread. The sacrifice is offered not just for our own salvation, but for that of the whole world.

Parish Activities and Information

SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND

This week's second collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) needs your help. CCHD works to be a voice of hope for those on the margins of society who experience the realities of living in poverty. CCHD supports programs to heal the wounds of crime and violence, advocate for more just policies, protect God's creation, and develop strong communities. Your donation to the CCHD will help build a society where all have a voice and all know their inherent dignity. Please be as generous as you are able.

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 13th. If you would like to receive a meal or know a parishioner who would like to receive one OR CAN HELP WITH DELIVERY, 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.



BLESSING OF THROATS THIS WEEKEND



In the United States the annual blessing of throats is a traditional sign of the struggle against illness in the life of the Christian. This blessing is ordinarily given during Mass or a celebration of the Word of God on February 3rd, the memorial of Saint Blaise. Saint Blaise was a bishop during the 4th century. Very little is known about his life. According to various accounts he was a physician before becoming a bishop. His cult spread throughout the entire Church in the Middle Ages because he was reputed to have miraculously cured a little boy who nearly died because of a fishbone in his throat. From the eighth century he has been invoked on behalf of the sick, especially those afflicted with illnesses of the throat.

Throats will be blessed after all Masses THIS weekend.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

St. Peter's parish council had its first meeting of the New Year with many new members present, and is excited to meet the needs of St. Peter's parishioners.

The members of the 2016 council are:

Val Anthony, David Bleggi, Jon Banik, Coleen Evert, Lisa Feil, Patti Mitchell, Martin Ostapowicz, Lisa Pietropola, Matt Sampson, Sue Singer, Stephen Tokarz, Paul Urner, and Celeste Waclawik. Please feel free to express your thoughts and concerns to any member of the council. Look for an upcoming survey in the next couple of months, asking for your input on matters pertaining to our parish.



POLISH DINNER

Our annual polish dinner will be held on Friday, February 5th from 4:00-7:00pm in the Parish Center. Cost: Adults-\$12:00, Children under 12- \$5.00, Children 3 & under-free. The all you can eat menu is: 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.

SOCIAL CONCERNS FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION



The Social Concerns Committee is accepting donations each month for the local food pantry. **February's food items are chicken noodle or tomato soup.** Place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church anytime throughout the month.

THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD – FEBRUARY 2nd

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord celebrates the presentation of Christ in the temple at Jerusalem on the 40th day after His birth. According to Jewish law, the firstborn male child belonged to God, and the parents had to "buy him back" on the 40th day after his birth, by offering a sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24) in the temple. On that same day, the mother would be ritually purified. Saint Mary and Saint Joseph kept this law, even though, since Saint Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Christ, she would not have had to go through ritual purification. In his gospel, Luke recounts the story (Luke 2:22-39).

When Christ was presented in the temple, "there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). When Mary and Joseph brought Christ to the temple, Simeon embraced the Child and prayed the Cantic of Simeon: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

Why Candlemas?

Inspired by the words of the cantic ("a light to the revelation of the Gentiles"), by the 11th century, the custom had developed in the West of blessing candles on the Feast of the Presentation. The candles were then lit, and a procession took place through the darkened church while the Cantic of Simeon was sung. Because of this, the feast also became known as Candlemas. While the procession and blessing of the candles is not often performed in the United States today, Candlemas is still an important feast in many European countries.

Please note that the Mass time for Tuesday, Feb. 2nd has been moved to 6:00pm. Adoration will close right before Mass begins. Parishioners are invited to bring any candles they would like blessed. Following the repose of the Blessed Sacrament and right before Mass begins, Fr. Bechtel will bless the candles.

Pro Life News

"A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. This compromises the very meaning of our struggle for the sake of the environment. — Pope Francis, *Laudatio Si*, no. 91

Diocese of Scranton News

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 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. 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! To register or for more information, visit 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 25th or 50th 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 7th.

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).

ADMONISHING THE SINNER

- Do not judge, but be supportive in helping others find their way and correct their mistakes. Together we can learn to walk more closely with Christ.
- In humility we must strive to create a culture that does not accept sin, while realizing that we all fall at times
- Don't judge, but guide others towards the path of salvation.
- When you correct someone, don't be arrogant. We are all in need of God's loving correction.
- We should journey together to a deeper understanding of our shared faith
- "Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye" Mt 7:5

Visit www.usccb.org for ways you can participate in the Jubilee of Mercy.

That's The Way It Is!



By Fr. Dave Bechtel

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is a special devotion to the Eucharist that originated in the Middle Ages. In the first centuries of the Church, there were no major controversies surrounding the Eucharist. The Fathers of the Church, bishops, priests and theologians were, for the most part, content to say that Christ is present in the Eucharist and let it at that.

However, as time wore on, theologians began to ask as very specific questions about the Eucharist. The question being asked was not "Is Christ present in the Eucharist," but rather "What is the nature of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist?" Because this question had not been asked in the early Church, the theologians and bishops did not use precise terminology in their reflections on the question. As tends to happen when language is imprecise and unrefined, controversies develop around definitions, meanings, and usage of certain words.

Theological reflections on the Eucharist became debates. The debates became controversies, and the controversies began to affect the unity of the Faith. These controversies forced the Church to officially define what her belief is regarding the nature of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The definition the Church gave was, that the nature of the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species, is a substantial and an enduring presence. The presence is not merely spiritual, symbolic or "in" and "united" to the bread and wine. The word used to describe the nature of this presence is "Transubstantiation."

In the Middle Ages, one might suggest with the Church using the word "Transubstantiation" to describe the nature of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church deepened her understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist. As the Church deepened her understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was a natural outgrowth of this renewed and deeper understanding. It was a way that the Faithful expressed and showed their assent and belief in the Faith the Church more precisely defined in the Middle Ages, but none-the-less believed from the beginning.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is an opportunity to reflect and pray in the direct presence of the Lord and the mystery of his great love for us. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is the most solemn way the Church in her worship, expresses her profound belief that Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the Eucharist. When the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar, we look at Christ and Christ looks at us. We might imagine rays of God's love coming forth from the Blessed Sacrament right into our hearts.

Each Tuesday from 8:00AM to 7:00PM the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar of Saint Peters. While the Church is always open for private prayer, and while

many parishioners take advantage of this, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is an opportunity for a more intimate and personal encounter with our Lord. Not only is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament an opportunity for a personal encounter with the Lord, but there are special graces (gifts of God) attached to those who participate in the devotion.

One need not worry about what to do when praying before the Lord. Pray in whatever way you are comfortable. You can pray a Rosary, or you can choose to sit and meditate. You can silently talk to God about whatever is on your mind, or you can read Scripture. (Reading Scripture and meditating on the Scriptures is always a very good idea. What better place to read the Word of God, than in the direct presence of God?) There are also devotional materials and books available either in the parish lending library, or near the entrance of the Church. These books will help you with your prayer before the Lord.

I heartily recommend that all parishioners take advantage of this devotion. It is a way to deepen your relationship with Jesus. We always have to remember that the Catholic Faith, before it is anything else, is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and coming to know Jesus more fully and perfectly.

That's the way it is!

Father Dave Bechtel

News From the Vatican

COMMUNICATION AND MERCY



January 2016 (VIS) –"Dear Brothers and Sisters, The Holy Year of Mercy invites all of us to reflect on the relationship between communication and mercy. The Church, in union with Christ, the living incarnation of the Father of Mercies, is called to practice mercy as the distinctive trait of all that she is and does. What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all. Love, by its nature, is communication; it leads to openness and sharing. If our hearts and actions are inspired by charity, by divine love, then our communication will be touched by God's own power.

As sons and daughters of God, we are called to communicate with everyone, without exception. In a particular way, the Church's words and actions are all meant to convey mercy, to touch people's hearts and to sustain them on their journey to that fullness of life which Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to bring to all. This means that we ourselves must be willing to accept the warmth of Mother Church and to share that warmth with others, so that Jesus may be known and loved. That warmth is what gives substance to the word of faith; by our preaching and witness, it ignites the 'spark' which gives them life.

Communication has the power to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, and thus to enrich society. How beautiful it is when people select their words and actions with care, in the effort to avoid misunderstandings, to heal

wounded memories and to build peace and harmony. Words can build bridges between individuals and within families, social groups and peoples. This is possible both in the material world and the digital world. Our words and actions should be such as to help us all escape the vicious circles of condemnation and vengeance which continue to ensnare individuals and nations, encouraging expressions of hatred. The words of Christians ought to be a constant encouragement to communion and, even in those cases where they must firmly condemn evil, they should never try to rupture relationships and communication.

For this reason, I would like to invite all people of good will to rediscover the power of mercy to heal wounded relationships and to restore peace and harmony to families and communities. All of us know how many ways ancient wounds and lingering resentments can entrap individuals and stand in the way of communication and reconciliation. The same holds true for relationships between peoples. In every case, mercy is able to create a new kind of speech and dialogue. Shakespeare put it eloquently when he said: 'The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes' (The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene I).

Our political and diplomatic language would do well to be inspired by mercy, which never loses hope. I ask those with institutional and political responsibility, and those charged with forming public opinion, to remain especially attentive to the way they speak of those who think or act differently or those who may have made mistakes. It is easy to yield to the temptation to exploit such situations to stoke the flames of mistrust, fear and hatred. Instead, courage is needed to guide people towards processes of reconciliation. It is precisely such positive and creative boldness which offers real solutions to ancient conflicts and the opportunity to build lasting peace. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God'.

How I wish that our own way of communicating may never suggest a prideful and triumphant superiority over an enemy, or demean those whom the world considers lost and easily discarded. Mercy can help mitigate life's troubles and offer warmth to those who have known only the coldness of judgment. May our way of communicating help to overcome the mindset that neatly separates sinners from the righteous. We can and we must judge situations of sin – such as violence, corruption and exploitation – but we may not judge individuals, since only God can see into the depths of their hearts. It is our task to admonish those who err and to denounce the evil and injustice of certain ways of acting, for the sake of setting victims free and raising up those who have fallen. The Gospel of John tells us that 'the truth will make you free'. The truth is ultimately Christ himself, whose gentle mercy is the yardstick for measuring the way we proclaim the truth and condemn injustice. Our primary task is to uphold the truth with love. Only words spoken with love and accompanied by meekness and mercy can touch our sinful hearts. Harsh and moralistic words and actions risk further alienating those whom we wish to lead to conversion and

freedom, reinforcing their sense of rejection and defensiveness.

Communicating means sharing, and sharing demands listening and acceptance. Listening is much more than simply hearing. Hearing is about receiving information, while listening is about communication, and calls for closeness. Listening allows us to get things right, and not simply to be passive onlookers, users or consumers. Listening also means being able to share questions and doubts, to journey side by side, to banish all claims to absolute power and to put our abilities and gifts at the service of the common good. Listening is never easy. Many times it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says. It involves a sort of martyrdom or self-sacrifice, as we try to imitate Moses before the burning bush: we have to remove our sandals when standing on the 'holy ground' of our encounter with the one who speaks to me. Knowing how to listen is an immense grace, it is a gift which we need to ask for and then make every effort to practice.

Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. Social networks can facilitate relationships and promote the good of society, but they can also lead to further polarization and division between individuals and groups. The digital world is a public square, a meeting-place where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in a meaningful discussion or unfair attacks. I pray that this Jubilee Year, lived in mercy, 'may open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; and that it may eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination'. The internet can help us to be better citizens. Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for our neighbor whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected. The internet can be used wisely to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing.

Communication, wherever and however it takes place, has opened up broader horizons for many people. This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility. I like to refer to this power of communication as 'closeness. The encounter between communication and mercy will be fruitful to the degree that it generates a closeness which cares, comforts, heals, accompanies and celebrates. In a broken, fragmented and polarized world, to communicate with mercy means to help create a healthy, free and fraternal closeness between the children of God and all our brothers and sisters in the one human family."

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.

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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 Mimlitsch, 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, Darleen Kohler, Mary Lou Bonk, Jon Banik, Kaydence Burger, Callie Cavanaugh, Tina Janeski, Jonathan Boyce, and Karen Roggow.

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

Charlie Griscavage

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.