



## ***Fifth Sunday of Lent April 2, 2017***

# **St. Peter's Church**

47 Central Avenue, Wellsboro, Pennsylvania 16901

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

Religious Education Office: 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 – [Dbechtel100@yahoo.com](mailto:Dbechtel100@yahoo.com)

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

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

Directors of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier & Melissa Mann – [stpreed@ptd.net](mailto:stpreed@ptd.net)

Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

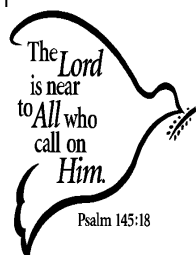
### **Schedule of Weekend Masses**

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

### **Reconciliation**

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

Saturday 4:15 – 4:45pm; By appointment by calling the Rectory.



**St. Peter's  
Lenten Penance Service**  
**April 4<sup>th</sup>  
6:30pm**

### **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.

### **Pregnancy Support**

Catholic Social Services (800) 982-4310  
Crisis Pregnancy Help line (888) 4-OPTIONS  
Endless Mountains Pregnancy Care Center (570) 673-4476

### **Welcome to St. Peter's Church!**

If you are visiting Tioga County this weekend, welcome and thank you for worshiping with us! If you are searching for a Spiritual home, we welcome you to join us and invite you to become part of our church family. Please complete this form and return it to the parish office or drop it in the offertory basket.

### **Request for Parishioner Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### **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.

### **Parish Contact Listing**

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 Lasko 570-439-7706  
Mary Beth Sampson 570-724-2953  
Church Linens & Decorations – Sue Singer 570-724-2360  
Buildings & Grounds – Rick Joachim 570-439-2591  
Cemetery Committee – Howard Rutledge 570-724-4529  
Fundraising Dinners – Tara Gordon 570-439-0006  
Paul Urner 570-723-9970  
Music Ministry – Christina Simonis 570-724-2085,  
Marilyn deGuzman 570-376-5427  
Samaritan House – Daria Guelig 570-724-3030  
Youth Group – Maureen Poirier/ Melissa Mann 570-724-9789  
Eucharistic Adoration – Mary Cleveland 570-724-5286  
Finance Council – Priscilla Walrath 570-724-2056  
Parish Council – Rectory 570-724-3371  
Worship Committee – Rectory 570- 724-3371  
Sunday Nursing Home Communion – Eileen Evert 570-439-4470  
Prayer Chain – Kate Black 570-724-3047  
Order of Secular Carmelite – Lori Makos 570-724-3371  
ChristLife – Norb Josten 570-724-9095  
Prayer Shawl Ministry - Jan Bernethy 307-267-0677

### **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. To register, please contact the Religious Education Office at 570-724-9789 or the Rectory at 570-724-3371.

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
<b>Monday 4/3</b> <i>Dn 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62; Jn 8:1-11</i>	No Mass	
<b>Tuesday 4/4</b> <i>Nm 21:4-9; Jn 8:21-30</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Jon Banik (Pat Gorda; Carolyn & Mary Clark)
<b>Wednesday 4/5</b> <i>Dn 3:14-20,91-92,95; Jn 8:31-42</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Honor of Sampson Family & Friends (Tom & Linda Sampson)
<b>Thursday 4/6</b> <i>Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Honor of Harry & Janet Bodine (Ostapowicz Family)
<b>Friday 4/7</b> <i>Jer 20:10-13; Jn 10:31-42</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Honor of the Bodine Family (Ostapowicz Family)
<b>Saturday 4/8</b> <i>Ez 37:21-28; Jn 11:45-56</i>	4:15-4:45pm 5:00pm	Confessions In Memory of Robert & Connie Brown (Daughter, Gina)
<b>Sunday 4/9</b> <i>Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14-27:66</i>	8:30am 11:00am	All Living and Deceased Members of St. Peter's Church In Memory of Casimir Perkowski (Janet Perkowski)

This week's Sanctuary Candle is offered in Honor of  
**Sampson Family & Friends** (Tom & Linda Sampson)

## The Week Ahead

### SUNDAY, April 2, 2017

Religious Ed. – Pre-School:8:30-9:30am; K-8<sup>th</sup>:9:30-10:40am  
First Holy Communion Parent Meeting – 9:30am  
Spring Rummage Sale – Set up/ Drop offs – 11:00am – 3:00pm

### MONDAY, April 3, 2017

Spring Rummage Sale – Drop offs – 8:00am – 5:00pm  
Confessions – 5:30-7:00pm

### TUESDAY, April 4, 2017

Eucharistic Adoration – 8:00am - **4:00pm**  
Spring Rummage Sale – 8:00am – 5:00pm  
Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Rectory  
Penance Service – 7:00pm  
AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

### WEDNESDAY, April 5, 2017

Spring Rummage Sale - 8:00am – 3:00pm

### THURSDAY, April 6, 2017

Spring Rummage Sale - 8:00am – 3:00pm  
St. John Neumann Prayer Group – 7:00pm, Parish Center

### SUNDAY, April 9, 2017

Religious Ed. – Pre-School:8:30-9:30am; K-8<sup>th</sup>:9:30-10:40am

## FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

This month's food pantry items are: *Creamy Peanut Butter and Grape Jelly*. Please place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church.

## GOODIES FOR OUR TROOPS

This month's Goodies for our Troops items are: *Eye Drops, Foot Aids (foam insoles, cream, powder), Homemade Fudge, & Personal Notes (cards, letters, drawings from children.)* Please place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church.

## Ministers of the Altar Schedule

### Weekend of April 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>

#### **5:00pm**

Servers: M. Mann, L.Singer, Z.Singer  
Lectors: L.Sampson, T.Sampson  
E. Min.: I.Dziengowski, A.Singer, K.Wilcox

#### **8:30am**

Servers: N.Ingerick, M.Ingerick, J.Poirier  
Lectors: N.Bickham, T.Reindl  
E. Min.: T.Gamble, L.Whitney, G.Poirier

#### **11:00am**

Servers: A.Swendrowski, K.Swendrowski, A.Dunke.  
Lectors: M.Stirnaman, D.Bleggi  
E. Min.: C.Delong, D.Sherman, M.Stirnaman

## Sacramental Information

**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 year to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in our Parish Religious Education program. Children wishing to receive Confirmation must be enrolled and participating in the 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.

**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 (R.C.I.A.)** - The R.C.I.A. prepares interested adults for reception into the Catholic Church. The program is adapted to the needs of each person and prepares them for full initiation into the faith. Please contact the rectory to register for the classes or for more information.



## Liturgical Reflection

### Fifth Sunday of Lent

#### FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:12-14

Ezekiel was a prophet and priest of the Jerusalem Temple, who was among the earliest Judean captive taken to Babylon. By the time of today's prophecy, the final dissolution of the kingdom and destruction of Jerusalem had recently taken place. In the land of exile, the prophet attempted to awaken the captive people to reasons for their catastrophe, principally their continuing refusal to hear and obey God's teaching through the Law and numerous prophets. Ezekiel also centers upon God's power over death. Through the prophet, God promises to open our graves and raise us to new life.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 130

The prayer of the psalmist is a supplication. The psalm was at one time known as the *Miserere*, which also included words from Psalm 51. Both psalms are a plea for the Lord's mercy. The psalmist calls on the Lord to be attentive to his plea, believing that only the Lord is able to give him strength to withstand "the depths" in which he finds himself. The psalmist doesn't give any indication what this might be, or why he is in this state. The focus of his pleading is on the kindness of the Lord; no one else can raise him up.

#### SECOND READING: Romans 8:8-11

In the preceding verses, the Apostle notes that "the flesh" orients someone toward death, but "the spirit" directs a person toward life – the life of God. Paul then reminds his baptized hearers that they are not "in the flesh," but share in the life of Christ's Spirit, by which they belong to Christ. Because they belong to Christ, even physical death cannot deprive them of divine life, which never ends. Paul points out that Christians are formed in the pattern of Christ. As God's Spirit raised him from death, so also his followers are raised from death through the indwelling divine Spirit.

#### GOSPEL: John 11:1-45



The raising of Lazarus is the last of John's signs and one that inspires faith even from many of "the Jews" in the story, thus escalating plans to kill Jesus. Jesus announces the true purpose of this sign: "for the glory of God," that is, to reveal concretely the true character of

God, who always wills fullness of life for humankind. Jesus has the power over all that threatens to separate us from God – even death itself. Not only is this central to the Scrutiny, but to the Lenten journey of the baptized into the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ. He forgives, enlightening our minds, hearts, and actions – he saves us from death – every one of us who have been baptized into the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ.

#### ABOUT THIS SUNDAY

The Fifth Sunday of Lent can be seen as a turning point in the Lenten journey as we enter the final days of the liturgical time, with less than two weeks left before we begin the Sacred Paschal Triduum. This marks the beginning of what used to be called Passiontide. There is a noticeable shift in focus, to the events, that lead up to the Death of Christ.

## Parish Activities and Information

### SCRUTINIES

The Scrutinies are rites for self-searching and repentance and have above all, a spiritual purpose. They are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. The Scrutinies complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ, and to carry out their decision to love God above all. They are celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent. Today we pray for *Rebecca Mahosky* as she receives the **Third Scrutiny**, in preparation for initiation into the Catholic faith. Also keep in your prayers our candidate, *Chad Owlett*, who is continuing his preparation for the reception of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The final Stations of the Cross for this Lenten season, will be held on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in the church. Children's Stations of the Cross (open to all parishioners) will also be held at 3:30pm. Students are invited to the parish center after school for a light snack before stations begin. The students will be chaperoned following the conclusion of stations (4:00pm), until parents are able to arrive. All parishioners are encouraged to attend Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season.



### PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY TO MEET



Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet again, Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> following the 8:30am Mass, in front of the Blessed Sacrament. We will knit and crochet and share our shawls

that we are working on. Please join us if you would like to know more about this ministry or if you would like to knit or crochet with us. If you know of anyone in need of a shawl, please call Jan Bernethy 307-267-0677.

### SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

This year's annual Spring clothing, books and household sale schedule is as follows:

April 2 – 12:00pm - 3:00pm – Donations accepted – set up

April 3 – 8:00am - 5:00pm – Donations accepted – set up

April 4 – 8:00am - 5:00pm – Sale

April 5 – 8:00am - 3:00pm – Sale

April 6 – 8:00am - 3:00pm – Take what you want for donation

**PLEASE NO DONATION OF TV'S - NO EARLY SALES!**

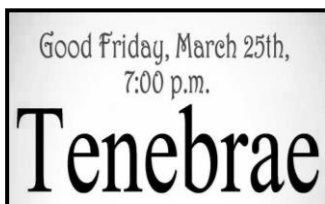
**BAKE SALE** - We will have a bake sale during the Rummage Sale. Please consider donating to the bake sale!

**Bake Sale donations accepted April 2<sup>nd</sup> & April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!** - We are in need of volunteers for the sale. Can you give an hour, half a day or a full day? Great way to meet new people! Call Mary Lasko 570-439-7706 or MaryBeth Sampson 570-724-2953 for more information.

## TENEBRAE SERVICE

What is a Tenebrae service? The word "tenebrae" comes from the Latin meaning "darkness." The Tenebrae is an ancient Christian Good Friday service that makes use of gradually diminishing light through the extinguishing of candles to symbolize the events of that week from the triumphant Palm Sunday entry through Jesus' burial. This increasing darkness symbolizes the approaching darkness of Jesus' death and of hopelessness in the world without God. The service concludes in darkness, sometimes with a final candle, the Christ candle, carried out of the sanctuary, symbolizing the death of Jesus. A loud noise may also sound symbolizing the closing of Jesus' tomb. The worshipers then leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the coming Resurrection. **Join us on Good Friday at 7:00pm for this moving service.**



## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

"Sharing Christ", the 3<sup>rd</sup> series in the ChristLife New Evangelization program, will be offered on Wednesday evenings, from May 3<sup>rd</sup>-June 7<sup>th</sup>, with a full-day retreat on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. All who have participated in the "Discovering Christ" and "Following Christ" series, are encouraged to join! Space is limited so please confirm your intent by calling Norb Josten at 570-724-9095. Registration closes Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>.

## SUGGESTION BOX

There is now a suggestion box hanging on the side wall of the Confessional where the literature is kept. If you have suggestions but prefer to remain anonymous, you may write suggestions on the index cards and place them in the box. We will empty the box from time to time and talk about the suggestions at the parish council meetings.



## Religious Education and Youth Group News

### MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP LUAU



All 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are invited to join the fun at the Middle School Youth Group Luau. The event will be held on Fri., April 28<sup>th</sup> from 3:15-5:15pm in the Parish Center. Come after school and enjoy fun games and crafts, snacks, and fellowship!

### SAVE THE DATE FOR VBS

Vacation Bible School will be held July 16-19, 2017. More information will be provided as the date gets closer.



## Holy Week & Easter Sunday Schedules

### Palm Sunday – April 9<sup>th</sup>

8:30am – Mass begins in Parish Center  
(5:00pm & 11:00am Masses begin in Church)

### Chrism Mass – April 11<sup>th</sup>

4:00pm – St. Peter's Cathedral, Scranton



### Holy Thursday – April 13<sup>th</sup>

6:00pm – Altar Server Practice

7:00pm – Mass of the Lord's Supper

8:30-11:00pm – Adoration

### Good Friday – April 14<sup>th</sup>

11:00am – Altar Server Practice

12:10pm – Celebration of the Lord's Passion

1:30pm – Sacrament of Reconciliation

7:00pm – Tenebrae

### Holy Saturday – April 15<sup>th</sup>

10:00am – RCIA Practice & Prayer Service

11:00am – Altar Server Practice

12:00pm – Blessing of Baskets  
(In Parish Center)

8:00pm – Easter Vigil

### Easter Sunday – April 16<sup>th</sup>

9:00am & 10:30am – Easter Sunday Masses



## Pro Life News

### PRIESTS FOR LIFE

The theme of this weekend's readings is an overwhelming proclamation that God is master of life and death. Lent is meant to deepen our awareness and conviction of this truth, which is in turn the basis of the pro-life movement. We are not simply counteracting an evil in society through our human strength; rather, we are sent on a mission by the one who has authority over death, to free the human family from its oppressive regime. Imagine going to a wake service and having someone say to you, "If you had been here sooner, my loved one would never have died." Yet that is what both Martha and Mary said to Jesus. They knew he had power over life and death. And yet they were subject to the all too human fears and calculations we make when we battle the culture of death. Martha says, "By now there will be a stench."

We say the same thing. We know what is right, and what has to be said and done to defend life. Yet we fear the stench. We fear who will object, who will get angry. Politicians fear who will vote against them; businesses fear who will stop supporting them. "Surely, there will be a stench." And that becomes the excuse not to act – even when we know that Jesus has authority over death.

As we approach the climax of Lent and proclaim these powerful readings of God's victory over death, let's call our people to a confident and persistent activism for the cause of life, without fear or excuses.

## Community News

### WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES

The final Wellsboro Ministerium Wednesday Lenten Services will be held this week at the First Presbyterian Church from 12:00-12:30pm, with a light lunch to follow. The theme for this year is *Repentance and Conversion*.

### BBBS INVITES YOU TO BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) will host its annual *Bowl for Kids' Sake* fundraiser on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, at Maple Lanes in Mansfield from 7:30-10:30pm. Whether you're a bowling pro or a bumper-bowler, *Bowl for Kids' Sake* is a great way to have fun while supporting BBBS in Tioga County! The entry cost is \$20 per team of 4; then, teams are asked to raise pledges from their friends, family members, colleagues, or anyone they know that wants to make a difference in the life of a Tioga County Youth! Bowling, shoe rental, and refreshments will be provided for all bowlers; there will be great prizes for raising the most pledges, highest bowling score, and more. This year's *Bowl for Kids' Sake* will be a Rock-n-Bowl theme with lots of fun for the whole community. Please call 570-265-3009 or 1-866-344-2447 or visit [www.bbbstwieters.org](http://www.bbbstwieters.org) to register as a team and receive a pledge sheet.

BBBS of the Twin Tiers matches local children with a positive adult mentor from the community and is part of the largest, oldest, and most effective youth mentoring organization in the US. We currently have both community-based matches as well as School-based mentoring matches in Northern Tioga School District and we are looking to expand our impact throughout Tioga County! We are experiencing an increase in the demands of mentors needed in Tioga County, which means we need your support through more than ever! Come celebrate with us and start something big by donating your time or money to help local children reach their full potential through the powerful impact of mentoring.

### WEDNESDAY MORNING MUSICALS

You are cordially invited to an organ concert by Marian Miller on Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 10:15am at the First Presbyterian Church, Wellsboro. Marian will play a program of light pieces that display the organ's versatility, including some jazz, a Broadway musical, and a Sousa march or two. Sponsored by the Wednesday Musicales, the concert is free and open to all. For those with mobility limitations, there is street-level access through a door to the west of the main entrance. Come and join the fun!

## Stewardship

Sunday Collection for March 26<sup>th</sup>: \$5,293.00

Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,990.00

Difference: (\$ 697.00)

Year-to-Date Budget Variance: (\$ 177.34)

*We are grateful to all those who financially sacrifice every week to support our parish and its ministries!*

## Diocese of Scranton News

### CHRISM MASS

The faithful of the Diocese are invited to attend the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter, Scranton, on Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00pm. At this Mass, priests throughout the Diocese will renew their priestly promises and the oils to be used for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick and Holy Orders, will be blessed. Participation in the Chrism Mass is a beautiful way to pray for and support the priests of the Diocese.

### CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE MAY 6<sup>th</sup>



The 2017 Third Annual Catholic Men's Conference "Be A Man: Mary's Call to BATTLE" will take place on May 6, 2017 at King's College, Wilkes-Barre. Experience a prayerful, spirit-filled, life-changing day featuring keynote presentations by Fr. Andrew Apostoli, Steve Ray, Matt Fradd. The Most Reverend Bishop Joseph Bambera will celebrate the closing Mass. Eucharistic Adoration 6:00am, Registration/Continental Breakfast 7:00am, with main Conference and Mass from 8:00am to 2:45pm. Cost: \$35, \$30 early bird, \$15 for students. Register online at: [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org) or by. **St. Peter's will provide transportation through Benedicts Bus Company and will pay half of the registration fee for those interested in attending.** Registration forms can be found on the hand out table on the side of the church.

### Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to report any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement. If you are a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, deacon, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton, you are encouraged to immediately report the matter to law enforcement. If any priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton has cause or reason to suspect that a minor has been subjected to any form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, the matter will be reported to law enforcement. In accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Laws, reports of suspected child abuse should also be made immediately by phone to the 24-Hour Child Abuse hotline (ChildLine) at 1-800-932-0313 or [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis).

It is also the policy of the Diocese to adhere to all civil and state regulations. To this end, the Diocese is equally committed to adhering to the norms of the Code of Canon Law and to upholding the tenets of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which includes supporting victims of sexual abuse in their pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, information regarding an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor should also be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator Mary Beth Pacuska (570-862-7551), or Diocesan officials, including the Vicar General, Monsignor Thomas Muldowney, V.G., (570-207-2269).

## That's The Way It Is!



Pope Francis has indicated that he is open to the idea of married clergy. This means all the single women in Wellsboro better look out because Father Bechtel is about to become the world's most eligible bachelor-right? In a word: NO. (I know. This is a huge disappointment.)

This topic causes a lot of confusion for people. First: Pope Francis is open to the idea of married clergy. It does not entail that Pope Francis is considering allowing clergy to get married. The Church has had a tradition of married clergy. The apostles, save John, were married. What has never happened in the Church is clergy who get married. In other words---there is a tradition in the Church for men getting married, then becoming priests. There is not a tradition in the Church of men becoming priests, then getting married while still maintaining the duties and obligations of priestly ministry. If a priest wants to get married he cannot remain in active ministry and work as a priest. He must give up, for all intents and purposes, the priesthood itself.

What prompted me to explain this was an article that I read on YAHOO. (Where else?) The article is entitled "Why Catholic Priests Practice Celibacy." This quote stood out: "Celibacy is one of the biggest acts of self-sacrifice a Catholic priest is called upon to make, forgoing spouse, progeny and sexual fulfillment for his relationship with parishioners and God." This kind of talk always confounds me. When did marriage cease being a huge sacrifice? When did the commitment a man and a woman make to each other in the Sacrament of marriage become easy? When did family life become easy? When did child rearing become easy? When did marriage go from being a huge sacrifice to being a lifelong college frat party? Did I miss something?

People speak with a forked tongue on this issue. I have had people tell me that they do not understand how anyone can be expected to forgo marriage and live a celibate life; it isn't fair that the Church asks us to make this commitment. Thing is---they are right. It isn't fair. It is very difficult. It is a commitment that must be renewed every day. But---and this is important: I could say the exact same thing about marriage. That is what people seem to forget. It isn't fair that people are expected to commit to one person for life. That is difficult---and it is not natural. Our sexual passions draw us to multiple partners. I mean- it isn't like you never notice an attractive man or woman again once you are married. Who could possibly be expected to make such a commitment? How can you possibly commit to one person for the rest of your life at age---say 30---when you have no idea what the future holds? Consider: how do you know you won't meet someone better in a few years? How do you know you will still love this person in a few years? How do you know you will still want to be married in a few years? How does

the other person know all this? What if your career takes off? What then?

No doubt that celibacy is extremely difficult---but marriage is no less difficult. It absolutely and utterly confounds me that people can't see this. When people talk about celibacy vs. marriage---it is presented as a choice between having nothing and having it all. Actually I might suggest that in some ways celibacy is easier than marriage. I grant I don't have that special woman in my life whose smile could launch a thousand ships, for whom I would swim a thousand oceans, to whom I would give the stars, but the other end of that is that my life is far simpler and far less complicated. Being unencumbered with the demands of family life- I can focus totally on the work of God. It frees me to be more present to the people. Consider: when I was in Williamsport I was acting pastor of two parishes and one of the top administrators in the Catholic school system. Family life would have greatly complicated that arrangement---and made it far more difficult to manage. Being unencumbered with family life I was able to handle that arrangement quite easily. I did not have a wife and children competing with the parishioners, faculty, staff, parents and students for my time.

Consider the linkage at present. I now have two parishes to pastor rather than one. Again, family life would greatly complicate this arrangement. When Catholics talk about "They should just let priests get married" they don't know what they are asking for. How would you feel if I started missing important parish events because of family issues, relationship issues, etc? How would you feel if my family life or relationship took precedence over the parishes? I doubt that would go over well.

At the end of the day, I truly think people simply do not think when they make statements like "Celibacy is difficult---they should let priests get married." In my mind, this makes about as much sense as saying "Marriage is difficult. They should allow for adultery to ease the burden of the commitment. I mean come on! Who can possibly make a commitment to someone for life?" This week I looked at the more practical aspects of celibacy. Next week I will examine the theological aspects of celibacy.

That's the way it is! The Reverend David W. Bechtel

### April – Month of the Holy Eucharist

During the month of April, we give special honor to the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist, the Second Vatican Council taught us, is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). What does that mean? It means that our participation in the Eucharist is the source from which we draw our strength to live as Jesus taught, and to serve in his name. It is also the summit, the high point of our communal life. We use the same word when we speak of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

In this month of the Holy Eucharist, let us participate more fully and actively in the Church's liturgy, our celebration of the Eucharist. And let us take time, too, for quiet adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and become more aware of the wondrous way Christ comes to us in the Eucharist.



## News from the Vatican



### TO HAVE FAITH IS TO LIVE OUR LIVES WITH JOY'

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to get on with things, living life with joy. Speaking during the homily during Mass at the Casa Santa Marta, he urged them to

avoid complaining and not to let themselves be paralyzed by the ugly sin of sloth.

The Gospel story at the heart of Pope Francis' reflection tells of a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. He was lying at the side of a pool called Bethesda with a large number of ill, blind, lame and crippled who believed that when an angel came down and stirred up the waters the first to bathe in the pool would be healed. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him: "Do you want to be well?" "It's what Jesus repeatedly says to us as well," the Pope said, "Do you want to be well? Do you want to be happy? Do you want to improve your life? Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit?" When Jesus, the Pope pointed out, asked that strange man if he wanted to be well, instead of saying "yes," he complained there was no one to put him in the pool while the water is stirred up and that someone else always got there before him. His answer, Francis said, was a complaint, he was implying that life had been unjust with him. The Pope said this is clear from his attitude of always complaining and trying to blame the other. "This is an ugly sin: the sin of sloth," he said. Pope Francis said this man's disease was not so much his paralysis but sloth, which is worse than having a lukewarm heart. It causes one to live without the desire to move forward, to do something in life, it causes one to lose the memory of joy, he explained, saying the man had lost all of this.

Jesus, the Pope continued, did not rebuke him but said: "Take up your mat, and walk." The man was healed but since it was a Sabbath, the doctors of the law said it was not lawful to carry a mat on that day and they asked him who was the man who told him to do so. The sick man, the Pope noted, had not even thanked Jesus or asked for his name: "he rose and walked with that slothful attitude "living his life because oxygen is free," always looking to others "who are happier" and forgetting joy. "Sloth, he said, is a sin that paralyzes us, stops us from walking."

Even today, the Pope said, the Lord looks to each of us sinners – we are all sinners – and says "Rise." The Lord tells each of us, Pope Francis concluded, to take hold of our life, be it beautiful or difficult and move on: "Do not be afraid, go ahead carrying your mat," and remember to come to the waters and quench your thirst with joy and ask the Lord to help you get up and know the joy of salvation.

\*\*\*\*\*

### ASK YOURSELVES: 'DOES GOD WEEP FOR ME?'

The dream and disappointments of God emerge in the Book of Exodus, because of the betrayal on the part of His people. However, the biblical text also exudes the love that the Lord has for His people, despite everything. Pope Francis recalled the affair of the golden calf, that the people took care to construct for themselves because they did not have the patience to wait for God for just forty days. Thus, they forgot that God has saved them, generating disappointment in Him. You have forgotten who raised you, affirms the prophet Baruch. This forgetfulness on the part of men is also found in the Gospel, for instance, in the episode of the man who has a vineyard and then fails, because the laborers want to take it for themselves. There is always this restlessness in man's heart! He is not satisfied with God, with faithful love. Man's heart is always inclined to infidelity. And this is the temptation.

See how every day we are called to take up the path to not slide slowly towards idols, towards fantasies, towards worldliness, towards infidelity. Therefore, ask yourselves if God is disappointed with us. Ask yourselves, he said, if God weeps for me. If He is disappointed it is because we go to seek love, wellbeing elsewhere and reject His love. It is about a little examination of conscience, appropriate for Lent. And the surprise will be that He always waits for us, as the Father of the Prodigal Son, who saw him come from afar, because he was waiting for him.

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### POPE FRANCIS' MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION

*Pope's Prayer Intention for April* - That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Pope Francis @Pontifex

*March 30<sup>th</sup>* - Prayer is powerful. Prayer conquers evil.

Prayer brings peace.

*March 29<sup>th</sup>* - The peace that springs from faith is a gift: it is the grace of feeling that God loves us and that he is always beside us.


*March 27<sup>th</sup>* - Caring for the sacred gift of all human life, from conception to death, is the best way of preventing every type of violence.

---

Jesus rode into Jerusalem not as a conquering king, but in humility, the Servant King, ready to complete the task for which he had walked this world. Forgive us those times when we think too highly of ourselves, and remind us always that you ask from us lives dedicated to service, to you and to our neighbors, wherever and whoever they might be. Enable us to take off our cloaks of self-righteousness, and lay them down at your feet.

'Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" – and you forgave the guilt of my sin.' Psalm 32:5

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*"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



PRAYERS  
Needed For...

Nettie Mays, Nan Bowser, Trish Knowlton, Judy Nagel, Sue Evert, Valerie Tobin, Michael Farrington, Debbie Adleman, Darlene Brennan, Shirley Mekos Broughton, Michelle Lawrence, Ann Porter, Tucker Gromosiak, Joyce Bowe, Donna Brennan, Peggy Zona, Natasha Rymarczuk, Bob Erway, Mary Mekos, Mary Cramner, Maci Lynn Perry, Martha Desch, Leon Herb, Deb Finestone, Nick Cavagnaro, Antoinette Davis, Kay Evans, Anna Marie Mimplitsch, Sean Rice, Jonathan Hardman, Edwin Rosa, Carol Johns, Joan Kilmer, Stephen Hurd, Stephanie Hemighauf, Suzie Alexander, Larry Sasani, Wendy Doan-Newcomb, Syler Sullivan, Adrienne Gilbert, Rita Grinnan, Bob Murphy, Sylvia Smith, Robbie Butler, Susan Cleveland, 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, Floyd Williammee, Renee Kennedy, Gay Furlong, Elsa DiBernardo, Fran Rose, Christine Palmer, June Sherman, Kathy Smith, Tim Bogaczyk, Beth Valdez, Virginia Shaefer, Charles Barrett, Joe Engel, Darleen Kohler, Victoria Salerno, Wanda Trynovich, Tim Cunningham, Tony Pranses, Bob Snyder, Don Brooks, Kathy Macensky, Paul Beuter, Jerry Eckert, Michael Liebner, Cole Salerno, Mark Kilmer, Margaret Barnett, Bob Brostrom, Richard Nowak, Frank Dziengowski, Jr., Stephen Horvatch, Callie Cavanaugh, Eileen Evert, Fr. Paul Mullen, Jane Johnson, Gus Vargas, Helene Carpenter, Barb Sobotik, and Michele Bush, Clark Hewitt, Colleen Rose, and Larry Mommicco.



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

*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.*