



## ***Palm Sunday April 9, 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 – [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)

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

Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

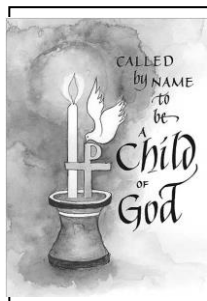
### **Schedule of Weekend Masses**

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.



We welcome **Zachariah, Alexander, Gabriel, Stephen, and Maximus**, all children of Nicholas and Rebecca Mahosky, into the One Holy Catholic Church by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on April 5, 2017

### **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.

# Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 9, 2017

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
<b>Monday 4/10</b> <i>Dn 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62; Jn 8:1-11</i>	No Mass	
<b>Tuesday 4/11</b> <i>Nm 21:4-9; Jn 8:21-30</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Jeannette Neidhoefer (Wayne & Sue Singer)
<b>Wednesday 4/12</b> <i>Dn 3:14-20,91-92,95; Jn 8:31-42</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confessions In Memory of George & Betty Patt (Frank Patt Family)
<b>Thursday 4/13</b> <i>Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59</i>	7:00pm	In Memory of Fr. Michael Scanlon (Wayne & Sue Singer)
<b>Friday 4/14</b> <i>Jer 20:10-13; Jn 10:31-42</i>	12:10pm - The Passion of the Lord	
<b>Saturday 4/15</b> <i>Ez 37:21-28; Jn 11:45-56</i>	8:00pm	Our Easter Intentions
<b>Sunday 4/16</b> <i>Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14-27:66</i>	9:00am 10:30am	Our Easter Intentions Our Easter Intentions

## The Week Ahead

### SUNDAY, April 9, 2017

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

### TUESDAY, April 11, 2017

Eucharistic Adoration – 8:00am-7:00pm

Evening Prayer/Benediction – 6:45pm

Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Rectory

AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

### WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2017

Broad Acres Mass – 10:30am

Green Home Mass – 2:00pm

### THURSDAY, April 13, 2017

Rectory Closed

Adoration – 8:30 – 11:00pm, Parish Center

### FRIDAY, April 14, 2017

Rectory Closed

Confessions – 1:30pm

Tenebrae Service – 7:00pm

### SATURDAY, April 15, 2017

RCIA Practice – 10:00am

Blessing of Baskets – 12:00pm, Parish Center

### SUNDAY, April 16, 2017

No Religious Education Classes

This week's Sanctuary Candle is offered in  
Honor of **Christopher Arena** (Family)

## Ministers of the Altar Schedule

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

**8:00pm**

Servers: J. Gordon, L. Gordon, X. Tellgren, L. Germino

*Altar Server Practice – 6:00pm*

Lectors: K. Tellgren, D. Gordon

E. Min.: G. Brown, B. Butler, N. Ostapowicz

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

**12:10pm**

Servers: E. Poirier, W. Poirier, L. Poirier

*Altar Server Practice – 11:00am*

Lectors: H. Sampson, M. Sampson

E. Min.: G. Poirier

### April 15<sup>th</sup> – Easter Vigil

**8:00pm**

Servers: A. Banik, W. Feil, A. Burge, B. Burge,

L. Burge, N. Burge

*Altar Server Practice – 11:00am*

Lectors: P. Walrath, C. Evert, M. Ostapowicz,

R. Kramer, P. Kramer

E. Min.: N. Ostapowicz, T. Gamble, V. Anthony

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

**9:00am**

Servers: J. Singer, L. Singer, Z. Singer

Lectors: A. Singer, D. Sherman

E. Min.: A. Singer, D. Stager, L. Stager

**10:30am**

Servers: A. Osborn, A. Osborn, A. Dunkel

Lectors: P. Walrath, M. Stirnaman

E. Min.: M. Stirnaman, N. Josten, C. Lannak

## 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.



# Liturgical Reflection

## Palm Sunday

### GOSPEL AT THE PROCESSION: Matthew 21:1-11



Jesus' entry into Jerusalem has all the markings of a royal procession. He takes charge of the arrangements; animals are requisitioned for him to ride on; his own disciples spread their cloaks along the way of the procession while others cut branches to mark the route. The frenzy of the crowd was

indicative of the arrival of a person of some importance. Matthew states that the Scriptures were being fulfilled as the shouts of the crowd name Jesus as the Son of David, the one for whom they had been waiting.

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-7

This reading offers us the third of the four oracles of Isaiah by the "Servant of the Lord," sometimes called the "Suffering Servant." This passage is deeply solemn. The entire passage is evocative of both the work and the spirit of the Messiah. God's servant will be cared for, with God's protection he can face the torment surrounding him, knowing he will ultimately enjoy divine vindication.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 22

The psalm is both a lament and an expression of praise. The psalmist, like the figure in Isaiah, is a suffering servant. His torments are described in excruciating detail, but no reason is given as to why he is attacked and ridiculed. But the commitment of the psalmist is unshaken; he professes his trust in the Lord and boldly states that he will continue "to proclaim your name to my brethren." The reference to his garments being divided and lots being cast for them is quoted by John in his account of Jesus' Passion.

### SECOND READING: Philippians 2:6-11

Paul's poetic hymn to Christ captures both heart and imagination. Jesus, in human form, did not seize status; rather, he entirely emptied himself (kenosis) and in doing so his divinity is revealed. His death was not any death, but a heroic and transformative death that reveals his true nature. Now, he is exalted by God and all can see him for who he really is – and believe.

### GOSPEL: Matthew 26:14-66

Matthew's Passion narrative is a series of events that unfold in several locations and takes us through the events of the final days of Jesus. Jesus is a righteous figure, ready to embrace his martyrdom. He is not a victim, but a servant choosing to do the will of the Father. This supreme expression of love, for the Father, for his followers, and for us is the heart of this narrative. The authorities secure the tomb and post a guard. The Gospel reader knows what the authorities did not know; even these measures would not contain the plan of God. Throughout, the message is that God's plan will be accomplished and the Messiah will be glorified.



## ABOUT THIS SUNDAY

Branches of palm, olive, or sometimes even budding willow, are ancient symbols of victory and hope, as well as of new life. The procession celebrating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem overflowed with praise and excitement, as onlookers waved these triumphant branches and proclaimed their blessings. Yet, in a few days, they will cry "Crucify him!" The crowd's change of heart illustrates the problem of holding God to our expectations. The crowd expected a liberating leader, the Messiah, to free them from Roman oppression. Jesus instead takes up his Cross and invites us to do the same. Through his Death and Resurrection he is indeed a liberator, but from death and sin, not from Rome. But unable to see past their need, the crowd's disappointment turns into anger and a death order. As we enter Holy Week, Palm Sunday teaches us to let God be God, and to trust in God's wisdom not only to meet but shatter and exceed our expectations.

### NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED AT THE EASTER VIGIL

At the Easter Vigil, Rebecca Mahosky and Chad Owlett will become the newest members of our church family. Please keep them in your prayers as they take this next step in their faith journey and prepare to receive the sacraments of initiation.

### RECEPTION AFTER EASTER VIGIL

Parishioners are invited to a reception in the Parish Center immediately following the Easter Vigil Mass in honor Rebecca Mahosky and Chad Owlett.

### DIVINE MERCY NOVENA BEGINS THIS WEEK

The Novena in preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday begins this Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, Good Friday, and continues through Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Copies of the Novena have been placed on the table in the back of the church.

### DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET

Immediately following the 8:30am Mass on Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday with a blessing of the Divine Mercy Image, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction. All members of the parish are invited and encouraged to participate in this special devotion. *Religious Ed students are expected to participate and should plan on attending the 8:30am Mass on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

### GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION

Christians around the world are united in a special way during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Our hearts, minds, and prayers are also especially aware of the Holy Land. Our parish, once a year on Good Friday, is called on to support Christians in the Holy Land. Many Christians in the Holy Land depend on the collection for their lives. As a pontifical collection requested by Pope Francis, the annual Good Friday Collection offers a direct link for parishioners to be witnesses of peace and to help protect the Holy Places and the work of the Franciscans and others in the Holy Land. Please be as generous as you are able.

## TENEBRAE SERVICE

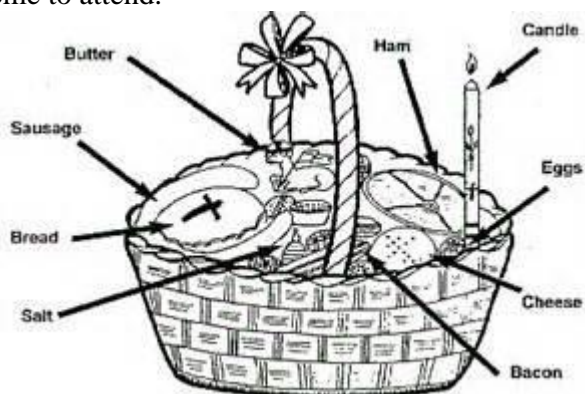
What is a Tenebrae service?

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.**

# Tenebrae

## BLESSING OF BASKETS

Baskets will be blessed on **Holy Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon in the parish center.** All parishioners are welcome to attend.



### *Items often found in the Blessed Easter Basket*

The Christian significance of Easter is symbolized in the foods used for the Holiday feast. Baskets are lined with a white cloth and decorated with ribbons and greenery to symbolize Spring, renewal, and the Resurrection. Traditionally, the baskets would include: decorated hardboiled eggs (representing Christ's Resurrection), lamb shaped butter or sugar (representing Christ as the "Lamb of God"), bread (symbolic of Jesus as the "Bread of Life"), ham (symbolic of great joy and abundance), sausage (symbolic of God's favor and generosity), smoked bacon (symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy), some prefer lamb (representing Christ as the "Lamb of God"), salt (symbolic of prosperity and justice and to remind us "You are the salt of the earth"), cheese (symbolizes the moderation Christians should have at all times), horseradish & pepper (symbolic of the Passion of Christ and the bitter herbs of the Passover). A white candle is often inserted into the basket to represent Christ as the "Light of the World." Lastly, the basket is cover with linen symbolizing the covering of Christ's shroud.

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## 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.



## 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.



## Stewardship

Sunday Collection for April 2<sup>nd</sup>: \$6,309.00

Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,990.00

Difference: \$ 319.00

Year-to-Date Budget Variance: \$ 141.66

Diocesan Collection-Care & Education of Priest: \$720.00

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



## 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

*Jesus' Death is Our Example* - "Jesus, who upon entering into the world said: "I have come, O God, to do your will" (cf. Heb 10:9), made himself obedient to the Father in everything and, "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (Jn 13:1), giving himself completely for them. He who had come "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45), attains on the Cross the heights of love: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). And he died for us while we were yet sinners (cf. Rom 5:8). In this way Jesus proclaims that life finds its center, its meaning and its fulfillment when it is given up. At this point our meditation becomes praise and thanksgiving, and at the same time urges us to imitate Christ and follow in his footsteps (cf. 1 Pt 2:21). We too are called to give our lives for our brothers and sisters, and thus to realize in the fullness of truth the meaning and destiny of our existence." -- John Paul II (The Gospel of Life, n. 51).

*Hope helps believers to be open to the surprises God has in store for us.*

*Pope Francis @Pontifex*

## 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.

## Community News

### 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. *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. 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.bbbstwintiers.org](http://www.bbbstwintiers.org) to register as a team and receive a pledge sheet.

### 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!

# That's The Way It Is!



Last week I explored some practical issues concerning celibacy vs. marriage. The overarching point that I wanted to make was that marriage is no more, no less difficult than celibacy. People tend not to realize that for whatever reason. Because of this,

many people tend to think of the choice between a celibate life and marriage as a choice between having nothing and having it all. The truth is that both vocations in ways unique to them lead the person to a life of sacrifice. This week I wanted to explore the theology of celibacy.

We cannot understand the meaning of marriage or the meaning of human sexuality without a celibate priesthood. Marriage, human sexuality and celibacy are inter-related. Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 19:12 "For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others--and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." This saying would have been shocking to the Jews. The Jews would have seen the inability to engage in sexual relations and thus to marry as a curse. (This is much like many people see celibacy today.) Here Jesus is saying that not only is celibacy not a curse, some will voluntarily choose it for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Celibacy is a not a curse, it is a blessing and gift. This marks a turning point in revelation.

In the Old Testament, when God made a covenant with someone, he would tell them to be "fruitful and multiply." Now, God is saying that celibacy is a blessing and gift in the new covenant. You can understand given the Old Testament context why a Jew would find this difficult to accept.

Marriage, like all the sacraments, is in some way a sign and foretaste of the life of heaven. In heaven, there are no sacraments. Therefore, in heaven, there is no marriage. The Sacraments are like signs that point us to heaven and in some way, reveal heaven to us. Once we are in heaven, we no longer need signs that point to heaven, nor do we need a foretaste of heaven—for we experience heaven in its fullness. In this earthly life, marriage is meant to prepare us for the wedding feast of the Lamb in which all the baptized take part. The white garment given to us in our baptism is analogous to our wedding garment. Of course, people will see their spouses in heaven. The difference is that once we are in heaven, the same intimate communion that spouses shared on earth will be shared with everyone—because of our intimate union with Christ.

Celibacy foreshadows the coming kingdom where there is no longer a need for marriage. Those who are given the gift of celibacy, then, foreshadow eternal life. They are forgoing the Sacrament of Marriage in anticipation of the eternal life of heaven. This is why marriage, sexuality and celibacy are interrelated. They all point to the everlasting life of heaven, but in different and even paradoxical ways.

Marriage itself reveals the kind of life and relationship we will have with God and the saints. Sexuality reveals the intimacy we will have with God and the Saints. Celibacy reveals that marriage, while good and holy, is nevertheless only a sign and foretaste of life eternal. God planned from all eternity to marry us—that is to unite us to God in such a profound way that we also know God as intimately as the Son. In a sense, we will all experience the life of marriage in heaven. Those who live a celibate life on earth are looking forward to and anticipating this reality, while also foreshadowing this reality. Celibacy is said to be a higher calling than marriage. Many people mistakenly think that this means the Church is saying that celibacy is better than marriage and in some way more holy than marriage. Celibacy is a higher calling than marriage or better than marriage in the same sense that the life of heaven is a higher calling than our earthly life, and heaven is better than our earthly life. Celibacy is not a sacrament because it points us to the life beyond the sacraments; a life where the sacraments are no longer necessary. That also is what makes celibacy a higher calling than marriage---it points us to a life where the sacraments are no longer necessary.

Unfortunately, when people think about celibacy, they think only in terms of what the person is giving up. When one looks at celibacy from this perspective, indeed, one will never understand how it can be a gift. Consider, however, from last week's article—that one could look at marriage from that exact same perspective. My challenge this week is to suggest that people start looking at the priestly and celibate life from the perspective that that one looks at marriage; that is, what one is gaining, rather than what one is giving up. When a man and a woman enter into marriage, they are not thinking about what they are giving up, they are thinking about what they are gaining. When a man or a woman embrace priesthood or religious life—coupled with the calling to celibacy, they are looking at the life from the exact same perspective. They are not thinking about what they are giving up, but what they are gaining.

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



## ACCOUNTING FOR OUR HOPE

The Apostle Peter's First Letter bears in it an extraordinary charge! It is necessary to read it one, two, three times to understand this extraordinary charge! It is able to infuse great consolation and peace, making one perceive how the Lord is always at our side and never abandons us, especially in the most delicate and difficult situations of our life. But what is the "secret" of this Letter? This is a question. I know that you will take the New Testament today, you will look for the First Letter of Peter and you will read it slowly, slowly, to understand the secret and force of this Letter. What is the secret of this Letter?

The secret is in the fact that this writing sinks its roots directly in Easter, in the heart of the mystery that we are about to celebrate, thus making us perceive all the light and joy that flow from the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Christ is truly Risen, and this is a beautiful greeting to give one another on Easter day: "Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen!" as so many people do. Remember that Christ is Risen, He is alive among us; He is alive and dwells in each one of us. It is because of this that Saint Peter invites us forcefully to adore Him in our hearts (cf. v. 16). The Lord made His abode there at the moment of our Baptism, and from there He continues to renew us and our life, filling us with His love and the fullness of His Spirit. See then why the Apostle recommends that we account for the hope that is in us (cf. v. 16): our hope is not a concept, it is not a sentiment, it's not a mobile phone, it's not a pile of riches! Our hope is a Person; it is the Lord Jesus that we acknowledge alive and present in us and in our brethren, because Christ is Risen. When the Slav people greet one another, instead of saying "good morning," "good evening," during the Easter days they greet one another with this "Christ is Risen!" "Christos voskrese!" they say to each other, and they are happy to say it! This is the "good morning" and the "good evening" they give one another: "Christ is Risen!"

Then we understand that we must not so much give an account of this hope at the theoretical level, with words, but especially with the testimony of life, and this be it within the Christian community, be it outside of it. If Christ is alive and dwells in us, in our heart, then we must also let Him be visible, not hide Him, and let Him act in us. This means that the Lord Jesus must become increasingly our model: model of life and that we must learn to behave as He behaved. To do what Jesus did. Therefore, the hope that dwells in us, cannot remain hidden within us, in our heart: but, it would be a weak hope, which does not have the courage to go out and have itself seen; but our hope, as it shines through in Psalm 33 quoted by Peter, must necessarily burst outside, taking the exquisite and unmistakable form of gentleness, respect and benevolence toward our neighbor, being able in fact to

forgive one who does evil. A person who does not have hope is unable to forgive, is unable to give the consolation of forgiveness and to have the consolation of forgiving. Yes, because Jesus did this, and He continues to do through those who make room for Him in their heart and in their life, in the awareness that evil is not overcome with evil. Some think that evil can be overcome with evil, and so they engage in revenge and do the many things we all know. But they do not know what humility, mercy and meekness are. And why? Because they do not have hope. Think of this.

See what Saint Peter affirms that "it is better to suffer for doing right, than for doing wrong" (v. 17): it does not mean that it is good to suffer but that, when we suffer for the good, we are in communion with the Lord, who accepted to suffer and to be put on the cross for our salvation. Then, when we also accept to suffer for the good, in the smallest or greatest situations of our life, it is as if we scattered around us seeds of resurrection, seeds of life, and made the light of Easter shine in the darkness. It is because of this that the Apostle exhorts us to respond always "with a blessing" (v. 9): a blessing is not a formality, it is not only a sign of courtesy, but it is a great gift which we received first and that we have the possibility to share with brethren. It is the proclamation of the love of God, a limitless love, which is not exhausted, which never fails and which constitutes the true foundation of our hope.

Dear friends, we also understand why the Apostle Peter calls us "blessed," when we must suffer for justice (cf. V. 13). It is not only for a moral or ascetic reason, but it is because every time we take the side of the last and the marginalized, or that we do not respond to evil with evil, but by forgiving and blessing, every time we do this we shine as living and luminous signs of hope, thus becoming instruments of consolation and peace, according to God's heart. And so we go forward with gentleness, meekness, being kind and doing good also to those who don't love us, or who do us evil. Go on!

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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.

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, Larry Mommico, and Loretta Nonnenmacher.



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

Edward Schepp

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.