



## Third Sunday of Easter April 30, 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

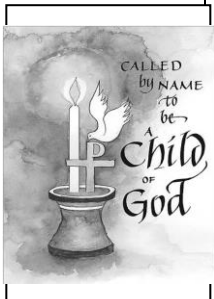
Pastor: Rev. David Bechtel – [Dbechtel00@yahoo.com](mailto:Dbechtel00@yahoo.com)  
 Secretary: Connie Spang – [stpch@ptd.net](mailto:stpch@ptd.net)  
 Business Manager: Patti Mitchell – [stpadm@ptd.net](mailto:stpadm@ptd.net)  
 Directors of Religious Ed.: Maureen Poirier & Melissa Mann –  
[stpreled@ptd.net](mailto:stpreled@ptd.net)  
 Maintenance Staff: Connie Spang, Francis Kennedy

### Schedule of Weekend Masses

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

### Reconciliation

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 11:45am-12:00noon;  
 Saturday 4:15 – 4:45pm; By appointment by calling the Rectory.



Today we welcome Lily Mae Prough,  
 daughter of Patrick & Florence Prough,  
 and Stanley Edward Hamm,  
 son of Edward & Mallory Hamm  
 into the One Holy Catholic Church  
 by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

### **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.

# Third Sunday of Easter

April 30, 2017

Date	Time	Confession Time and Mass Intention
<b>Monday 5/1</b> <i>Acts 6:8-15; Jn 6:22-29</i>	No Mass	
<b>Tuesday 5/2</b> <i>Acts 7:51-8:1; Jn 6:30-35</i>	7:30am	In Memory of Jeanette Neidhoefer (Norb & Nona Josten)
<b>Wednesday 5/3</b> <i>1 Cor 15:1-8; Jn 14:6-14</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confession In Memory of Patricia Dugan (Wayne & Sue Singer)
<b>Thursday 5/4</b> <i>Acts 8:26-40; Jn 6:44-51</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confession In Memory of Boyce Children (Rosemary Boyce)
<b>Friday 5/5</b> <i>Acts 9:1-20; Jn 6:52-59</i>	11:45am-12:00pm 12:10pm	Confession In Memory of Arlyne Robinson (Paul & Marion Patt)
<b>Saturday 5/6</b> <i>Acts 9:31-42; Jn 6:60-69</i>	4:00-4:45pm 5:00pm	Confessions In Memory of Jean M. Getgen (Mother, Joan Getgen)
<b>Sunday 5/7</b> <i>Acts 2:14, 36-41; 1 Pt 2:20-25; Jn 10:1-10</i>	8:30am 11:00am	In Memory of Dennis Owlett (Don & Lucy Whitney) In Memory of Edward Nonnenmacher (Dy Family)

This week's Sanctuary Candle is offered in Memory of **Richard Dunkel** (Steve, Lisa, & Alexis Banik)

## The Week Ahead

### SUNDAY, April 30, 2017

Religious Ed. – Pre-School: 8:30-9:30am; K-8<sup>th</sup>: 9:30-10:40am  
Cemetery Clean up – 9:45am, Pearl Street Cemetery  
Samaritan House Volunteer Dinner – 4:30pm, Parish Center

### TUESDAY, May 2, 2017

Adoration – 8:00am – 7:00pm  
Eucharistic Adoration – 8:00am-7:00pm  
Evening Prayer/Benediction – 6:45pm  
Women's Bible Study – 9:00am, Parish Center  
AA/Al-Anon – 8:00pm, Parish Center

### WEDNESDAY, May 3, 2017

Italian Dinner Prep – 8:00am, Parish Center  
Finance Council Meeting – 8:00am, Rectory  
ChristLife – 6:30pm, Parish Center

### THURSDAY, May 4, 2017

Cards & Games – 12:00pm, Parish Center  
St. John Neumann Prayer Group – 7:00pm, Parish Center

### FRIDAY, May 5, 2017

Italian Dinner – 4:00-7:00pm  
First Holy Communion Practice/Prayer Service -

### SUNDAY, May 7, 2017

First Holy Communion & May Crowning – 11:00am Mass

## Ministers of the Altar Schedule

### April May 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>

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

Servers: A. Osborn, B. Levindoski  
Lectors: P. Walrath, D. Sherman  
E. Min.: K. Wilcox, I. Dziengowski, M. Osborn

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

Servers: Z. Singer, L. Germino, J. Lubera  
Lectors: N. Bickham, M. Ostapowicz  
E. Min.: N. Josten, M. Sampson, M. Ostapowicz

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

Servers: A. Swendrowski, K. Swendrowski, A. Burge  
Lectors: D. Bleggi, C. Wacławik  
E. Min.: K. Tellgren, C. Delong, E. Payne

## 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.

**FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS** - This month's food pantry items are: *Canned tuna, ham, and chicken (5-6 ounce.)* 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: *"To Go" Powdered Drink Straws, Beef Jerky/Slim Jims (no pork or ham), Cookies – Oreos, etc., Homemade cookies & Fudge, & Personal Notes (cards, letters, drawings from children.)* Please place your donations in the box at the entrance of the church.

### **St. Thomas/St. Catherine Mass Schedule**

Saturday, St. Catherine, Westfield - 7:00pm  
Sunday, St. Thomas, Elkland - 4:00pm



## Liturgical Reflection

### Third Sunday of Easter

#### FIRST READING: Acts 2:14, 22-33

After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter speaks to all who are in Jerusalem, particularly the Jewish people who were there for the feast. He tells them that Jesus was commended to them by God, yet he was crucified and died. God raised him up, as foretold by David. Quoting Psalm 16, he explains that David foretold the Resurrection; while David died, Jesus died yet was raised. Exalted at the right hand of God, Christ received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 16

As we proclaim the psalm today, we will recall Peter's use of this psalm in his discourse. On this Sunday in Easter we take refuge in God, blessing the Lord who is always with us. We rejoice that through Christ, we will not be abandoned to the netherworld; at his right hand, we will abound in joy.

#### SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Those who commit themselves to living faith are to conduct themselves with reverence, recognizing and responding to the sacrificial and saving act of Christ, the unblemished lamb. This same Christ was known before the foundation of the world, and was revealed to those who through him believe in God. As those who have been saved by the blood of the spotless lamb, we are exhorted to find our faith and hope in God through Christ.

#### GOSPEL: John 24:13-35

The encounter of the disciples on the road with Jesus, whom they do not recognize, is likely a familiar story. Yet the narrative rings true for us, as it would have for its first hearers. Jesus reassures the disciples, explains the Scriptures they would have known since childhood, and joins them for supper, only to be made known to them in the breaking of the bread. This Easter narrative gives witness to the Resurrection and the enduring presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

## Parish Activities and Information

### BABY LAYETTE SETS

St. Peter's Social Concerns Committee will be collecting and assembling layette sets for donation to women who deliver at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hospital and are unprepared for their baby's arrival. Also, disposable diapers will be collected for donation to Seeds of Hope. Donations of new blankets and newborn infant clothing and disposable diapers in sizes 4, 5, and 6 should be placed in the box at the back of the church by TUESDAY, MAY 9<sup>th</sup>. No time to shop? Cash donations will be gratefully accepted to support this project. Kindly place your donation in an envelope marked "Layettes" and drop it in the weekly collection.

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## MOTHER'S DAY INTENTION ENVELOPES

Included in your monthly envelope packet is a Mother's Day Intention envelope to remember our living and deceased mothers and grandmothers. The envelopes will be placed on the Altar during the Mother's Day novena.

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## GIFT BEARERS AND GREETERS

If you or your family would like to take up the gifts or greet those coming to Mass at the door, please let an usher know or call the rectory. Our goal is to have a greeter at each door for all Masses and many individuals/families taking up the gifts. All are welcome to participate.

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## 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

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE



Today marks the last class of the 2016-17 religious education year. A special thank you to all our catechist for their dedication and willingness to share their faith with the children of our parish – *Jake Singer, Lauren Singer, Madeleine Mann, Elizabeth Poirier, Emma Poirier, Kaitlyne Kramer, Kristen West, Lisa Banik, Jill Campbell, Kelly Pearson, Patty Perry, Kirsten Tellgren, Ginny Reindl, Melissa Mann, Marilyn deGuzman, Meghan Henneman, Mike Stirnaman, Maggie Stirnaman, Coleen Evert, Anja Stam, Val Anthony, Priscilla Walrath, Glenn Poirier, Steve Tokarz, and Helen Mazur.*

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### 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 23<sup>rd</sup>: \$5,651.00  
 Weekly Goal to Meet Expenses: \$5,990.00  
 Difference: (\$ 339.00)  
 Year-to-Date Budget Variance: (\$1,337.64)  
 Cemetery Collection: \$1,399.00

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

## Italian Dinner

Friday, May 5, 2017 ~ 4:00 – 7:00pm

**Basket Raffle**

Adults - \$10.00

Children (under 12) - \$5.00

**All You  
Can Eat!**

Menu: Chicken Cacciatore, Pasta with Marinara  
Sauce, Pasta with Alfredo Sauce, Meatballs,  
Italian Wedding Soup, Salad, Bread  
Homemade Desserts  
Coffee, Soda, Tea, Lemonade

**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

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

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

## That's The Way It Is!



The undergraduate program in seminary is weighted heavily towards philosophy. We do not start studying in depth theology until we reach the graduate level. This is because philosophy is the language of theology in much the same manner as math is the language of science. Many people today think philosophy is irrelevant. This is because philosophy has no apparent economic value, philosophy has no apparent scientific value and is difficult to boot.

The problem is that people think scientific advancement is what is truly important while understanding the deeper questions of life is an exercise in futility. People do not realize that scientific advancement can only take us so far when it comes to truly grasping the fundamental nature of reality. The study of the fields of science can only tell us how things work. Scientific study cannot tell us about the true nature of reality or the answers to the deeper questions of life: why are we here? Is there a purpose to our existence? Is there a God or gods? If there is a God or gods, what, if anything, does this God or gods want from us? Can we even know anything about this God or gods? Is there such a thing as truth, beauty, happiness, love, justice, fairness, etc.? If so what is the nature of truth, beauty, happiness, love, justice, fairness, etc.?

This is precisely where philosophy comes in. I think most people can agree that there are things like love, justice, beauty, happiness, fairness, truth, etc. People may disagree on how these things should be defined, but most, I think, agree that these things truly exist. Why is this important? Because science can tell us nothing about the nature of love, justice, truth, fairness, happiness, love, etc. These things do not weigh anything; they have no color, mass, shape, size, volume or any material component. Because they lack materiality, science can tell us nothing of them because science is designed only to tell us about material reality.

Those who put their faith exclusively in science do one of two things when faced with these questions. 1) Dismiss the questions as irrelevant, since science cannot answer the questions or 2) deny the existence of love, truth, beauty, etc., and claim they are mere projections of the human mind.

People who can think critically are not so dismissive. They know it is foolishness to dismiss questions as irrelevant just because you lack the tools to answer them. They also know it is foolishness to deny the existence of love, justice, truth, beauty, etc. The fact is, even those who think these are nothing more than projections of the mind behave as if they exist objectively.

Philosophy provides us the tools that scientific tools lack. This is what makes philosophy important. This is why philosophy is more important than scientific inquiry. Philosophy provides us with the ability to analyze, understand and probe questions like “What is the nature of love?” “What is the nature of Justice?” “What is Truth?” etc. One of the tools of philosophy is metaphysics. Metaphysics allows us to probe the nature of reality itself and come to understand it. Logic is another tool of philosophy. Logic ensures that when we put forth arguments to support positions that those arguments are sound—and not based on emotion, appeals to authority, caricatures of your opponent’s arguments, circular reasoning, etc. I want to note that many of the arguments of the opponents of Catholicism and Catholic morality in particular are not based on logic. They are based on emotion and caricatures of Catholic teaching. How many times have you heard someone say, “Catholicism won’t ordain women because it is stuck in the Middle Ages.” “Catholic morality is outdated.” Those are not arguments. Unfortunately a lot of people are swayed by these non-arguments. As a priest, I care what the Truth is. I don’t care what happens to be in vogue with Hollywood and pop-culture in a given time and place.

Epistemology is another tool of philosophy that studies how we attain knowledge. The truth is that many scientists have as much Faith in science as any theist has in God. You see, when a scientist goes about studying nature and tries to uncover how nature works, the scientist is presupposing that nature is rational and follows laws. To my knowledge there has been no scientist who has conclusively proven that nature is rational and operates according to principles that we can uncover by utilizing the scientific method. When scientists look out into space and measure the distance between a star and earth and say that stars moving away appear redder, while stars closer appear bluer, they are presupposing that the laws of physics are universal—and not just limited to our area of the universe. To my knowledge no scientists has proven that the laws of physics are universal. They presuppose it in order to go about their work. How does the scientist know this—since the scientist did not gain this knowledge through the use of the tools of empirical science? Once again, it is philosophy that undergirds scientific inquiry. Science presupposes philosophical principles in order to do its work! Do not be so dismissive of philosophy! Without it, we would have to dismiss much of what science has taught us!

That’s the way it is!

The Reverend David W. Bechtel

# Pro Life News

## PRIESTS FOR LIFE

"You will show me the path to life." This line from today's responsorial psalm sums up the message of this liturgy and of the Easter season. Christ Jesus, risen from the dead, fills his people with the same life, and this becomes a path, a way of life. The journey of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, of course, symbolizes this "path of life" and the new way in which we are called to walk. Along this way, and amidst the challenges of life, we can be tempted, as they were, to "look downcast" and simply discuss how "we were hoping" that things would be better. We can fail to recognize that Jesus is walking with us through the most difficult hours.

This is especially true in a "culture of death," when those most difficult hours can tempt people to resort to abortion or euthanasia. Christ, risen from the dead, walks with us and dines with us. He rescues us from the "futile conduct" of turning to death as a solution to our problems, because now, the kingdom of death has been conquered. Embracing life-giving repentance, we are now filled with the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Christ sends upon us, as the first reading declares. That Spirit not only purifies us, but enables us to announce the Gospel of Life and to become advocates for all our brothers and sisters, just as the Holy Spirit is an advocate for us.

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## Diocese of Scranton News

### SECOND COLLECTION FOR MISSION SUNDAY

Home mission diocese are those dioceses in the United States and its territories and former territories that cannot provide basic pastoral services to Catholics without outside help. Basic pastoral services include Mass and the sacraments, religious education, and ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters, and lay people. Right now, over 40 percent of dioceses are considered home missions. There will be a second collection taking place **this weekend**, April 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> to support our mission dioceses. Please be as generous as you are able.

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

**It's Not  
Too Late  
To Register!**

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.

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## WESTERN REGIONAL GATHERING FOR SERVICE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

**Attention: Social Concerns Leaders** – and ALL those interested in supporting our Church's Parish Social Ministry in the areas of Charity, Justice, and Peacemaking. Everyone is invited and encouraged to join us Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from 10:30-12:30 at Resurrection Church, Muncy, (75 Musser Ln, Muncy, PA 17756 in church hall below church) for a 2-hour "working-shop" – Networking, Learning, Strategizing, Praying, and getting to know your neighboring parishes.

From our USA Bishops in their 1993 document, *Building Communities of Salt and Light*: "This vital tradition is an essential resource for parish life. It offers a framework and direction for our social ministry, calling us to concrete works of charity, justice, and peacemaking."

As Bishop Bambera's Pastoral Vision states: Parish social ministry responds to human needs, whatever and wherever they may be, whether with parishioners or other members of the community, whether the need be hunger, housing, illness, loneliness, employment, fair wages, physical disabilities or ecological sustainability. Parish social ministry must respond to issues of respect for human life at every stage of existence. We must encourage broad group action on behalf of those who hunger for righteousness and peace. However it is done, parish social ministry needs to be organized and deliberate. It must be communal, planned and directed by a group, and not a simple individual response.

Let's gather together to help you and your neighboring parishes Create or Build up your Parish Social Ministry!

RSVP - Dan Doyle 570-546-2385 [danjdoyle3@comcast.net](mailto:danjdoyle3@comcast.net). For more information, contact Richard DeBona, Director for Service & Social Concerns 570-207-2213 ext. 1130 [Richard-DeBona@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:Richard-DeBona@dioceseofscranton.org).

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### 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



## THE ONLY FUTURE WORTH BUILDING INCLUDES EVERYONE

*Partial Transcript of Pope Francis' video talk shown at TED 2017 Conference.*

I am thrilled to be participating in your conference. I very much like its title – "The Future You" – because, while looking at tomorrow, it invites us to open a dialogue today, to look at the future through a "you." The future is made of yous, it is made of encounters, because life flows through our relations with others. Quite a few years of life have strengthened my conviction that each and everyone's existence is deeply tied to that of others: life is not time merely passing by, life is about interactions. As I meet, or lend an ear to those who are sick, to the those who face terrible hardships, to prison inmates..., I often find myself wondering: "Why them and not me?" I, myself, was born in a family of migrants; my father, my grandparents, like many other Italians, left for Argentina and met the fate of those who are left with nothing. I could have very well ended up among today's "discarded" people. And that's why I always ask myself, deep in my heart: "Why them and not me?"

First and foremost, I would love it if this meeting could help to remind us that we all need each other, none of us is an island, an autonomous and independent "I," separated from the other, and we can only build the future by standing together, including everyone. We don't think about it often, but everything is connected, and we need to restore our connections to a healthy state. Even the harsh judgment I hold in my heart against my brother or my sister, the open wound that was never cured, the offense that was never forgiven, the rancor that is only going to hurt me, are all instances of a fight that I carry within me, a flare deep in my heart that needs to be extinguished before it goes up in flames, leaving only ashes behind. Many of us, nowadays, seem to believe that a happy future is something impossible to achieve. [Such concerns] can be overcome when we don't lock our door to the outside world. Happiness can only be discovered as a gift of harmony between the whole and each single component.

And this brings me to my second message. How wonderful would it be if the growth of scientific and technological innovation would come along with more equality and social inclusion. How wonderful would it be, while we discover faraway planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters orbiting around us. Only by educating people to a true solidarity will we be able to overcome the "culture of waste," which doesn't concern only food and goods but, first and foremost, the people who are cast aside by our technological systems which, without even realizing it, are now putting products at their core, instead of people.

The story of the Good Samaritan is the story of today's humanity. People's paths are riddled with suffering, as everything is centered around money, and things, instead of people. And often there is this habit, by people who call

themselves "respectable," of not taking care of the others, thus leaving behind thousands of human beings, or entire populations, on the side of the road. Fortunately, there are also those who are creating a new world by taking care of the other, even out of their own pockets. Mother Teresa said: "One cannot love, unless it is at their own expense."

We have so much to do, and we must do it together. But how can we do that with all the evil we breathe every day? Thank God, no system can nullify our desire to open up to the good, to compassion and to our capacity to react against evil, all of which stem from deep within our hearts. Now you might tell me, "Sure, these are beautiful words, but I am not the Good Samaritan, nor Mother Teresa of Calcutta." On the contrary: we are precious, each and every one of us. Each and every one of us is irreplaceable in the eyes of God. Through the darkness of today's conflicts, each and every one of us can become a bright candle, a reminder that light will overcome darkness, and never the other way around. To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. Hope is the door that opens onto the future. Hope is a humble, hidden seed of life that, with time, will develop into a large tree. And it can do so much, because a tiny flicker of light that feeds on hope is enough to shatter the shield of darkness. A single individual is enough for hope to exist, and that individual can be you. And then there will be another "you," and another "you," and it turns into an "us." And so, does hope begin when we have an "us?" No. Hope began with one "you." When there is an "us," there begins a revolution.











The third message I would like to share today is about revolution: the revolution of tenderness. And what is tenderness? It is the love that comes close and becomes real. It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen also to the silent cry of our common home, of our sick and polluted earth. Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart to comfort the other, to take care of those in need. Tenderness is the language of the young children, of those who need the other. God himself descended into Jesus to be on our level. This is the same path the Good Samaritan took. This is the path that Jesus himself took. He lowered himself, he lived his entire human existence practicing the real, concrete language of love. Yes, tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women. Tenderness is not weakness; it is fortitude. It is the path of solidarity, the path of humility.

The future of humankind isn't exclusively in the hands of politicians, of great leaders, of big companies. The future is in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a "you" and themselves as part of an "us." We all need each other. And so, please, think of me as well with tenderness, so that I can fulfill the task I have been given for the good of the other, of each and every one, of all of you, of all of us.

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***God's mercy is forever; it never ends, it never runs out, it never gives up when faced with closed doors, and it never tires. – Pope Francis***

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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.*