

Saint Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

Saint Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

stbernadetteparish.net



Moses in Prayer, Supported by the High Priests, Aaron and Hur

by Christian Daniel Rauch (1777-1857)

A sculpture in the inner courtyard of the Friedenskirche,
at the Park Sanssouci in Potsdam, Germany

The story of the vital importance of the persistent intercessory prayer of Moses as the Israelite People are fighting the forces of Amalekites, told in Exodus 17, and read in the first reading at Mass today

the 29th Sunday in the Year

OCTOBER 16, 2016

October is Respect Life Month

Pray that we may, in public policy as well as in our personal attitudes and moral behavior, return to an unflinching respect for the sacred dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death.

these parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES			
Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	<i>wmthomaskessler@icloud.com</i>
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	<i>stbermparish@yahoo.com</i>
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	<i>kwkerns@gmail.com</i>
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	<i>maristellaspirt@gmail.com</i>
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	<i>businessstbparish@yahoo.com</i>
AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH			
Ben Factor	liturgical music		<i>b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us</i>
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair	(740) 215-3894	
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	<i>schmelifox@earthlink.net</i>
Bremen St Vincent de Paul		(740) 569-3710	
The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.			
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu	602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107	(740) 569-7929	
AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH			
Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	<i>dcn.mark@frontier.com</i>
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	<i>carpenter.227@osu.edu</i>
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	<i>aessman001@att.net</i>
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	<i>shuber57@yahoo.com</i>
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	<i>lizlatorre@gmail.com</i>
The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.			
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, M W Th F; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu	1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130		
AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL			
Pam Eltringham	principal	(740) 654-3137	<i>peltring@cducation.org</i>
Barb Huber	secretary	(740) 654-3137	<i>bhuber@cducation.org</i>
Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 <i>stbermlan@cducation.org</i> www.stbernadetteschool.com			

the sacramental life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be **Wednesday, Oct 19. Take the class before your child is born.** If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. **Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.** If you don't attend **Sunday Mass regularly**, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

1. at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
2. at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty**

of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOIDING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick **when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.**

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to **call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long** since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? **Because this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

let us pray together

THE 29th SUNDAY

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

WITH POPE FRANCIS IN OCTOBER

His universal intention is:

That the countries which take in a great number of displaced persons and refugees may find support for their efforts which show solidarity.

His evangelization intention is:

That within parishes, priests and lay people
may collaborate in service to the community
without giving in to the temptation of discouragement

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary	
4 PM	<i>for the people</i>	Saturday, Oct 15	
		Sunday, Oct 16	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, Oct 16	
8:20 AM	<i>Abbott family</i>	Monday, Oct 17	
		Tuesday, Oct 18	8:20 AM <i>David Stretton</i>
8:20 AM	<i>Carl J Messerly</i>	Wednesday, Oct 19	
6 PM	<i>Elisabetta & Yolanda Mazzoli</i>	Thursday, Oct 20	
8:20 AM	<i>Martha Mitroff</i>	Friday, Oct 21	
4 PM	<i>Anna Alonso</i>	Saturday, Oct 22	
		Sunday, Oct 23	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, Oct 23	

both parishes

extraordinary ministers

The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, whom Bishop Campbell has reappointed, are being **commissioned** today at Mass.

All of our extraordinary ministers exercise this ministry at **the appointment of the bishop** of the diocese. And they are only ministers for their own parish. They know not to present themselves to other parishes to give the Blessed Sacrament in other circumstances. (The exception to this rule is the other parish served by the pastor.) Similarly, extraordinary ministers from other parishes, or those whose two-year warrant from the bishop for service in this ministry has expired, are not ministers of the sacrament. The pastor can make an exception in emergency circumstances.

When it is possible for them to do so, we ask that the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who will take **Communion to the sick** present themselves to the priest celebrant **at the conclusion of the reception of the sacrament by the congregation at Mass**. They should have presented the pyx (the small sacred vessel for carrying the Lord) to the celebrant before Mass.

We must not treat the reception of Holy Communion as a self-serve or carry out order. When the minister receives the pyx she / he should **proceed to the door of Church and wait for the conclusion of the Mass and then go directly to the sick**, whether in the hospital, nursing home, or home. It is not a time for small talk, listening to the car radio, or the like.

baptism

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strengthening the household of faith

Jesus asks us to demonstrate our love for him through our generosity to others. In our everyday lives, he calls us to share our gifts of time, talent and treasure with others. "While we have

the opportunity, let us do good to all people—but especially to those of the household of the faith." (Galatians 6:10)

st bernadette

youth choir

The Saint Cecilia Society (our parish youth choir) begins its sixth season on Sunday, Oct 30, at 6 PM in the church. All parish students in grades 2-8 (public, parochial, or home school) are invited to join. SCS members in grades 4-8 are also invited to be members of the Handbell Ensemble, which meets on Sunday evenings at 7 PM, immediately after the full SCS meeting. The Handbell Ensemble will have a special workshop on Sunday, Oct 23, from 6:30-8 PM. Mrs Latorre is happy to answer questions and provide registration materials after Mass, or you may call or text her at (740) 243-1872.

adult choir

St Augustine once said, "He who sings, prays twice." The St Bernadette Adult Choir resumes practicing on Wednesday, Oct 26, at 7 PM in the church. Our adult choir is both a vocal ensemble devoted to making beautiful music for the Lord and a small faith family within our parish. We love to welcome new members into this family. Please consider membership in the choir as an opportunity for you to get involved in the parish and grow in your faith. Contact Liz Latorre either in person after Mass or call/text at (740) 243-1872 if you have questions.

jillian's dinner

The 16th annual Jillian's Memorial Dinner will be held from 5-7:30 PM on Saturday, Oct 22, at St. Bernadette Church. This dinner raises money **to assist a family from our area who suffer catastrophic illness, the loss of a loved one, or some such major adversity.** This year's recipient is Monica Dickson Hoover, who is suffering from neuroendocrine carcinoid cancer. She is raising a 12-year-old daughter and they are parishioners of St Joseph Church in Sugar Grove. Proceeds of the dinner and the silent auction held during the meal will help offset her medical expenses. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children; carry-out meals are available. For information call Kathy Wagner at 687-0504 or the St Bernadette Parish office at 654-1893.



announcing : walking with purpose

If you are interested in meeting with a group of women to explore your Catholic faith, consider joining **Walking with Purpose** at St Bernadette. The first course is a six-week faith-sharing session based on the book, **Walking with Purpose: Seven Priorities that Make Life Work**. This will serve as an introduction to the Walking with Purpose program and focus on discovering the keys to **living a busy life with inner calm**. Groups will meet weekly at the Mary Good Center **starting Wednesday, Oct 19**, for the morning sessions (offering childcare) or **Thursday, Oct 20**, for the evening sessions. **Walking with Purpose** aims to bring women to a deeper personal relationship with Christ. The personal study and group discussions help to link our everyday challenges with solutions given to us through the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church. Cost is \$10. To learn more, come to the Mary Good Center on October 19 at 9:30 AM or October 20 at 7 PM. For questions or to register, call the parish office at (740) 654-1893 or contact Amy Woo at acfaching@yahoo.com or (740) 277-7922. For general program information, visit www.walkingwithpurpose.com.

friends forever

The Friends Forever group travels to Utica on Thursday, Oct 20, to visit **Ye Olde Mill** and the **Velvet Ice Cream factory** where they will enjoy lunch together. Car pool from St Bernadette departs at 10 AM. Call Ann Essman at (740) 654-1893 for details.

psr classes at st bernadette

St Bernadette PSR has begun but it is not too late to enroll students. Just a reminder: Catholic parents have a **solemn moral duty** to see that their children are properly and completely instructed in the Catholic Faith. And they have a duty to see that their children attend every week (barring health or weather deterrents). And children will find **getting to know Jesus and his Church to be an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**.

parish contributions

The **St Bernadette offertory** for Oct 9 came to \$5,707.

bremen st mary

parish support

The **St Mary offertory collection** for Oct 9 came to \$1,061.

bremen food pantry

The Bremen Food Pantry **needs margarine or butter**. Donate at the refrigerator in our kitchen. The Food Pantry will have an **open house** at the Bremen Methodist Church on Walnut St on Saturday, Oct 29, from 9-11 AM. **Any family in need** can come by there that morning for food assistance; no registration or sign up is needed.

st vincent de paul

The next St Vincent de Paul meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct 18, at 7 pm. New members are always welcome.

in the diocese of columbus

protecting God's children

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish offers a Protecting God's Children session on Sunday, Oct 16, from 5-8 PM. A light supper will be served. Register at www.virtusonline.org and click on First Time Registrant. For questions, call Leslie Niedzielski or

Pam Klein at (740) 928-3264.

interactive weekend retreat for men

The Catholic Laymen's Retreat League sponsors this retreat with the theme :

The 4 Last Things :

Judgment, Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven,

directed by Father John Corbett, OP, on Nov 4-6, at St Therese Retreat Center in Columbus. A contribution of \$130 covers the cost. Contact Dave Mignerey at (614) 392-0146 for information or reservations, or visit www.retreatleague.org.

catholic youth summer camp

Catholic Youth Summer Camp is Ohio's one week-long, residential high adventure camp for students entering grades 6-12. Activities typically include jet skis, water tubing, paintball, blobbing, high ropes, archery tag, zip lining, rock climbing, giant swing, and mountain boarding. CYSC offers a **truly Catholic and safe environment with daily catechesis that awakens faith and builds missionary disciples**. A week at camp includes daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation, small group conversations, worship, service and authentic community. Go to www.cysc.com for information and to register for 2017 dates: high school sessions run the weeks of June 11, 18, 25, and July 2; middle school sessions run the weeks of July 9, 16, 23, and 30. Registration is open now.

marian dinner

In order to better **foster dedication to consecrated religious life among women** of the Diocese of Columbus, Bishop Campbell hosts the annual Marian Dinner at 6 PM on Wednesday, Oct 26, at St Andrew Church's Bryce Eck Center, with presentations by Bishop Campbell and Sr. Sharon Baldy, SCN. Call (614) 224-2251 for information or to register for this evening of prayer, friendship, learning, and discerning about vocations for women.

retrouvaille

If your marriage is troubled and stressed, unloving or uncaring; if you have grown cold and distant; if you are separated, or are thinking about it, don't give up. **Retrouvaille** (a French word that means "rediscovery") is a **program to help heal and support** married couples experiencing difficulties, loneliness or pain. It is also for separated or divorced couples wanting to try again. For information call (614) 296-9704 or visit www.retrouvaille.org.

happily ever after ... despite the rough spots

Join us for a Marriage Encounter weekend and learn ways to use your marriage's ups and downs to deepen your love for each other and for God. Why not **try a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**? The next weekends in central Ohio are Nov 11-13 and Feb 17-19. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmccolumbus.org.

vocation discernment group for women

Would you like to connect with other single, Catholic women, age 18-45, who are interested in discerning their vocation? Why not join the Dominican Sisters of Peace on Friday, Nov 4, to explore the possibility of religious life or service in the Church. The first discussion topic will be "**Growth in Relationship with God**." The group will meet in person in Columbus, OH and via Skype, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, to pray, discuss, and ask questions. If you wish to participate, contact Sr Pat Dual, OP at (614) 216-7688 or email pdual@oppeace.org.

in the deanery

employment opportunity

St Joseph Church in Circleville, Ohio, is hiring a **full-time (30/week) parish secretary**. For information, visit <http://www.saintjosephcircleville.com/employment-opportunities/> or contact the parish office: office @ saintjosephcircleville . com or (740) 477-2549, x300.

cemetery sunday and cemetery flowers

Cemetery Sunday is a time of prayer for our beloved dead. It will be observed this year on October 30

- at **St Mary Cemetery** at 1:30 PM, weather permitting, and
- at **Sacred Heart Cemetery** at 1 PM (if weather doesn't permit, we pray at the shelter at Schmelzer's Grove).

All are welcome to both services.

In both cemeteries **artificial flowers**, including stone top arrangements, are permitted from Nov 1 until Mar 1. Thank you for your cooperation. Thank you for helping keep our cemeteries **places** of respect and Resurrection faith.

thanksgiving eve party

The Chuck Rogers Memorial Fund and Fisher Catholic invite you to a fun evening **to kick off your Thanksgiving weekend**. **Join Fisher Catholic alumni and friends** on Wednesday, Nov 23, from 7 PM until midnight at FC Alumni Hall. Local band Bad Influence will rock the place with live music. Food and legal beverages available. If you would like to help sponsor this free event contact Jim Faulkner at (614) 284-9369 or jfaulk51@hotmail.com.

around and about

get the daily readings at Mass

Yes, you can have the daily readings at Mass **sent to your email every morning**. Just go to USCCB.org, select "readings", then scroll down to the tan box, sign on. It's free. But it's valuable.

A prayer before logging onto the internet:

Almighty and eternal God, who created us in Thine image and bade us to seek after all that is good, true and beautiful, especially in the divine person of Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, that, through the intercession of Saint Isidore, Bishop and Doctor, during our journeys through the internet we will direct our hands and eyes only to that which is pleasing to Thee and treat with charity and patience all those souls whom we encounter. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

new EWTN programming

Join EWTN to celebrate **the 100th Anniversary of Fatima**. All season long, hear new programs, updates and information and see a host of photo galleries based on the young Fatima visionaries, apparitions and message from our Blessed Mother. Go to www.ewtn.com for complete information.

catholic faith-based volunteer programs

Would you like to make a difference in your community, the

country, or the world? Do you want to serve those in need and work for social justice? Check out **response 2017**, a free guide **listing nearly 200 faith-based volunteer programs and thousands of opportunities**. Volunteers serve full-time for the summer or for periods of one week to one year across the US and in more than 100 countries worldwide. Volunteers are from all walks of life—from high school to senior citizens. Contact Catholic Volunteer Network to receive your free copy/copies of *Response 2017*. Call (800) 543-5046 or email info@catholicvolunteernetwork.org. You can also search **Response 2017** online at www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org.

my house columbus

Pornography is a plague. 56% of divorce cases involve one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites. **What can we do** about this plague? It's a sin and sinners can go to Confession. And for those who "resolve to avoid the near occasion of sin," there is My House of Columbus. Visit **My House Columbus.org** or call them on their confidential hotline at (888) 989-9886.

beloved deceased Mass

Everyone is welcome to attend a Beloved Deceased Mass with the Franciscan Sisters, TOR on Sunday, Nov 6, at 10 AM at Father of Mercy Chapel, 369 Little Church Road, Toronto, Ohio. They invite you to send the names of your beloved deceased whom they will remember to pray for by individual candles lit in their memory during the Mass and lit throughout the month. To submit names, visit www.franciscansisterstor.org/beloveddeceased.

being a catholic citizen

register so that you can vote

Don't complain about it. Vote about it. Become informed and pray for guidance. There is a process for voting absentee for people who are shut in (or are likely to be shut in or travelling on election day). So you can vote without ever leaving your home. It has become possible to vote at the Board of Elections prior to election day. Early voting is better than not voting. **Registration must be done by Oct 11**. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov 8. You can go either in person at the Fairfield County Board of Elections, 951 Liberty Drive in Lancaster (off West Fair Ave) or to <http://www.fairfieldelections.com> or www.myohiovote.com.

respect life month

october is respect life month

Moved by Mercy is the theme of the 2016 Respect Life Program. The Catholic Church has long held October as a month for prayerfully remembering our firm belief that all life is **sacred**. Saint John Paul II wrote in his Encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*:

"The family proclaims life when parents teach children to communicate openly, to value all life and to fulfill their belief that **all human life is** God-given mission. The family celebrates life through prayer, thanking God for the gift of life and for each other. The family serves life by promoting the welfare and well-being of its own members and the members of the greater 'family of life.'"

For information, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540. Visit the U.S. Catholic Bishops' website at www.usccb.org/prolife.

pancake breakfast at fisher catholic

The Fisher Catholic Irish4Life Club is hosting a series of pancake breakfasts **to raise money for the annual March for Life in Washington DC in January**. They are an organization of young people who willingly stand up in defense of the

inherent dignity of every human life. The next breakfast will be on Sunday, Oct 23, from 8:30-1:30 in the Fisher Catholic cafeteria. They will have blueberry, chocolate chip, and regular pancakes along with sausage, OJ, milk, and coffee. Please support our young people. The cost is your generous donation.

ministers at Mass at st bernadette					
	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday, Oct 15 4 PM	Sandy Landefeld	Abby, Mary & Sam Frazier	Marguerite Grimm Brad Rider	Teresa Scarpitti Craig Shaw	Mickey Steyaert Kathy Wagner
Sunday, Oct 16 11 am	Bob Christy	Collin & Emma McCrady, Caroline Messerly	Pat Dreyer Patrick Gins	Mary J Vajen Jim & Rita Merk	Jean Robertson
Monday, Oct 17 8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Mitchell Ortiz, Gunner Robertson	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast	
Wednesday Oct 19 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Becca Fuller, Brianna Hilyard	Mary Guinan	Mary J Vajen	
Thursday, Oct 20 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Joey Mannella, Sarah Woo	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday, Oct 21 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Carley Matson, Lexi Utz	Jim & Rita Merk		
Saturday, Oct 22 4 PM	Jennifer Spiegel	Kendall Cox, Gus & Olivia Spiegel	Rosalie DeFillippo Lee Guinan	Jim Kuhn Becky Kuhn	Sandy Landefeld Shelia Taylor
Sunday, Oct 23 11 AM	Scott Wood	Samantha Kems, Logan & Tori Loy	Terry Carpenter Ben Peters	Bob & Angie Christy Nancy Griffith	Amy Woo

ministers at Mass at bremen st mary					
	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday, Oct 16 8:30 AM	Barb Van Fossen-Cook	Sydnee Rogers, Jillian Wilkinson	Damian & Deborah Schmelzer, Barb Van Fossen-Cook	Catherine Noll April Schmelzer	Damian Schmelzer
Sunday, Oct 23 8:30 AM	Karen Wolfe	Caden Fyffe, Cody Fyffe	Pam Redding, Jim Schmelzer, Karen Wolfe	Nick Schmelzer family	Jim Schmelzer

confessions & weekday Mass nearby		These times sometimes change, though, so call ahead!					
<i>Bremen</i>	<i>St Mary</i>	8 AM Sunday		8:20 AM			
<i>Lancaster</i>	<i>St Bernadette</i>	5:30 PM Thursday, 3 PM Saturday; 8:30 AM on 1 st Sat	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM
<i>parish</i>	<i>confessions</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<i>Lancaster</i>	<i>St Mary</i>	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM	
<i>Lancaster</i>	<i>St Mark</i>	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM
<i>Sugar Grove</i>	<i>St Joseph</i>	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM
<i>Circleville</i>	<i>St Joseph</i>	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM		9 AM 10 AM
<i>Logan</i>	<i>St John</i>	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM 9 AM

the Church's plan for reading God's word this week										
Sat	Oct 15	29 th Sunday	Exodus	17:8-13	2 Timothy	3:14-4:2	Psalms	121	Luke	18:1-8
Mon	Oct 17	St Ignatius of Antioch	Ephesians	2:1-10			Psalms	100	Luke	12:13-21
Tues	Oct 18	St Luke	2 Timothy	4:10-17			Psalms	145	Luke	10:1-9
Weds	Oct 19	Sts John de Brébeuf & Isaac Jogues & Companions	Ephesians	3:2-12			Isaiah	12	Luke	12:39-48
Thurs	Oct 20	St Paul of the Cross	Ephesians	3:14-21			Psalms	33	Luke	12:49-53
Fri	Oct 21		Ephesians	4:1-6			Psalms	24	Luke	12:54-59
Sat	Oct 22	St John Paul II	Ephesians	4:7-16			Psalms	122	Luke	13:1-9
Sun	Oct 23	30 th Sunday	Sirach	35:12-18	2 Timothy	4:6-18	Psalms	34	Luke	18:9-14

Politics, Politics, Politics !

When I was a kid I thrived on politics. I was always interested in history anyway, and when I was eleven my family took a summer vacation trip to Washington. We saw a motorcade and my brother and I determined it must have been President Eisenhower's. After that I was hooked. I needed to know who all the members of the cabinet were, the justices of the Supreme Court, the leaders of the Congress, but most of all, the candidates for president and vice president. It was as much fun as baseball cards — without the expense of the bubble gum.

It took a long time, but somehow I got the obsession out of my system. But I am still convinced that political things are important. Politics can entertain. But elections shouldn't be reduced to watching them like a horse race. Huge amounts of money are involved in waging a successful campaign, especially now that campaigns last so long. But at election time each citizen must invest serious study and thought — and prayer — in this process. And then vote!

I would like to review a Catholic response to some of the **erroneous or inadequate perspectives** I have heard often in recent years.

1. "Clergy should stick to religion and stay out of politics." Well, yes and no.

As a citizen a priest has the right to speak out politically; the government has no right to try to stop him — even from using the pulpit for political ends. But the Church's law does have the right to stop him. A Catholic priest or deacon knows that his pulpit and any authority he has is for proclaiming the Gospel and the Church's teaching; it is not for anointing any political candidate or party or platform. God does not endorse a favorite son or daughter. But some platforms are sinful—especially platforms that endorse the falsification of marriage, the killing of embryonic human persons or worn out human persons, and the penalization of religious freedom. The Church's teaching does have important things to say about **the moral implications of political things. Most fundamental** among those things is the need to **respect all human life**, from conception until natural death.

2. "They are all liars anyway." No. Cynicism is destructive.

There are politicians who tell a lot of lies. But it is disabling and juvenile cynicism that rules out the possibility of truth; an adult has to grow out of that cynicism. We should **insist on the truth** and be wary of **politicians who have not honored the truth**. But if we drop out of political life because of liars, we are helping liars have their way. That's how totalitarian leaders come to power.

3. "Single issue voting is just fanatical." But some issues are more fundamental than others.

If we vote simplistically, we will choose poorly. **Key issue voting** is a better idea. That means that we don't limit ourselves to one principle, but we do see that there are some principles that are most fundamental. I am put in mind of my great-great-great-grandfather Thomas Harper, a Baptist preacher in New Lexington, who changed political parties over one issue. After a lifetime (he was a veteran of the War of 1812) as a member in one party, in the 1850s he changed to a new party, one that was ardently against slavery. That didn't mean that other issues ceased to count for him; but one was key to his understanding of political life in the United States of America. Two of his sons died during the Civil War for that opposition to slavery.

4. "Vote for the man/woman, not the party." No. Pay attention to both!

Well, yes, it is important to know something about each candidate and his/her record and views. A shorthand way to learn about the individual candidate is to check what party he belongs to and what is the platform of that party. But there are good persons and there are bad persons in each party. A straight party-line vote doesn't dispense me from **the duty to check out the principles and the record of the individual I vote for**.

5. "This party or this candidate is God's choice." No. Man must do God's will, not impose his will on God.

This is perhaps the most dangerous perspective a religious voter can get caught up in. Not only is it incorrect; it runs the danger of blasphemy. I know which candidate I like best, but if I determine that therefore this must be God's choice too, I am redesigning the will of God in my own image. That will lead me away from the truth. In fact, no candidate—including the one I vote for—is perfect, none has a perfect voting record, not even the one whose record matches mine. Most importantly, no candidate, no party, has the power to save. Ancient coins in pagan Rome often had the word "**Savior**" stamped below the picture of Caesar. This is what Jesus had in mind when he said "**render to Caesar what is Caesar and to God what is God's.**" **Only God has the power to save.**

I don't like the choices that we have set before ourselves this year. But I am going to vote for one of them. Pray for me that I will make the best choice. And for yourself, that you will too.

—Father Kessler

Ads