

Saint Bernadette Parish

Saint Mary Parish

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

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

stbernadetteparish . net



The Disciples of Jesus Admiring the Buildings of the Temple

portraying the scene of today's gospel reading

from a portfolio of watercolors of scenes from the life of Christ painted by James Tissot (1836-1902)

in the Brooklyn Museum

the 33rd Sunday in the Year

NOVEMBER 13, 2016

our parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES

Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	<i>wnthomaskessler@icloud.com</i>
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	<i>stbernaparish@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>businessmstbparish@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 *stbernan@cducation.org* 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, Nov 30. 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.

ANOINTING 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

WITH THE CHURCH THIS WEEK

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, the constant gladness of being devoted to you, for it is full and lasting happiness to serve with constancy the author of all that is good.

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 THE HOLY FATHER DURING NOVEMBER

His universal intention is :

That countries which take in a 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	deceased members of John Schmelzer family	Saturday, Nov 12	
		Sunday, Nov 13	8:30 AM for the people of the parish
11 AM	for the people of the parish	Sunday, Nov 13	
8:20 AM	Pete Konkler	Monday, Nov 14	
		Tuesday, Nov 15	8:20 AM Msgr Thomas Bender
8:20 AM	Abbott family	Wednesday, Nov 16	
6 PM	Carl J Messerly	Thursday, Nov 17	
8:20 AM	Fred & Virginia Guenther	Friday, Nov 18	
4 PM	for the people of the parish	Saturday, Nov 19	
		Sunday, Nov 20	8:30 AM for the people of the parish
11 AM	for the people of the parish	Sunday, Nov 20	

in our parishes

anointing the sick

We will celebrate the **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** at Sunday Mass on Nov 19 and 20. You should be anointed if you are a Catholic, age 7 or more, in the state of grace, and suffering serious health problems (like chronic or dangerous diseases, old age, or the prospect of major surgery). Determine before Mass begins if you will receive the sacrament, sit in the front row or at the end of the pew, and come to the altar when you are called (or notify an usher to ask the priest to come to your place in the pew if coming forward is difficult). Everybody else: Pray for our sick. Keep them in your prayers.

newly baptized

Welcome and pray for St Bernadette's newest Christian, **Greysin Paul Danison**, son of Ryan and Elizabeth Danison, who was baptized on Sunday, Oct 30.

a holy union

We extend our best wishes and a promise of many prayers for Brenden Shea and Lyndsey Jo Willis who received the sacrament of Holy Matrimony at St Bernadette on Saturday, Nov 5.

may they rest in peace

In your charity please pray for **Veral Kilbarger** of St Bernadette Parish who died last Saturday and whose funeral Mass was Thursday at St Bernadette.

Also please pray for the repose of the soul of **Shirley Hart**, daughter of Richard and Phyllis Kessler. Shirley died in an auto accident last week.

red cross blood drive

The **next St Bernadette blood drive** will be Saturday, Dec 3, from 9 AM - 2 PM in the parish hall. This is a great way to support our community blood needs. To make an appointment to donate, go to www.redcrossblood.org or call Joyce Guenther at (740) 974-5040. As always there will be lunch, cupcakes, and crafts for children.

On Saturday, Nov 12, St Bernadette parishioner Red Cross biomedical chair Joyce Guenther received a **Blood Ambassador Award** for her work in creating awareness of blood need in the central Ohio Region. This award would not have been possible without the work of our St Bernadette donors and volunteers. Since 2007 we have held 4 drives a year and collected over 1,300 units, saving as many as 4,000 lives.

We have also inspired our area Catholic parishes to hold regular blood drives. Only about 5% of eligible donors ever give blood, so it's an important gift to give. Please be generous.

choir

The Saint Cecilia Society (St Bernadette's parish youth choir) meets on Sundays at 6 PM in the church. All parish students in grades 2-8 (public, parochial, or home school) are invited. SCS members in grades 4-8 are also invited to be members of the Handbell Ensemble, which meets on Sunday evenings at 7 PM, right after the full SCS gathering. **Mrs Latorre can 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 has resumed practicing on Wednesdays 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. Membership in the choir is an opportunity to be involved in the parish and grow in your faith. Contact Liz Latorre at (740) 243-1872 if you have questions.

psr (aka parish school of religion)

PSR has begun but it is not too late to enroll students. Remember: 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 is an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**.

school book fair

Hundreds of children's books, as well as religious books, adult best-sellers, and unique cookbooks, will be available for immediate purchase at the **St Bernadette Scholastic Book Fair** in the school library during the week of Nov 14-18. Times are Monday through Wednesday from 7:30 AM to 3:15 PM; Thursday from 7:30 AM to 8 PM; and Friday from 7:30 AM until noon. Parishioners are invited to shop at a special preview event offered before and after the Vigil and Sunday Masses of Nov 13. Plan to come check out all the new titles. Proceeds help to build classroom collections and to support the school library. Sale flyers are available on the table in the school entry.

advent family fun day

Begin the Advent Season with an Advent Family Fun Day on Sunday, Nov 27, from 12-2 PM in the St Bernadette parish hall. There will be a **pancake breakfast** fundraiser for **youth attending Catholic Youth Summer Camp**, seasonal crafts, cookie making, as well as an opportunity to purchase Advent Wreaths and seasonal books. If anyone with a child attending CSYC this summer would like to help raise funds to offset the cost, please contact Kara . tencza @ gmail . com.

friends forever

The next Friends Forever outing will happen at the Main Street Bistro in Lancaster on Thursday, Nov 17, at noon. Call Ann Essman at (740) 654-1893 for details.

bremen thanksgiving service

A Bremen ecumenical Thanksgiving Service will be held at the Bremen United Methodist Church on Sunday, Nov 20, at 7 PM. St Mary parishioners are welcome to attend.

christmas baskets at bremen

The Bremen Community Food Pantry is in need of **turkeys and cookies for Christmas** baskets for families. Drop off ...

- **cookies** on Thursday, Dec 15, between noon and 6 PM and
- **turkeys** on Saturday, Dec 17, at 8 AM at the Calvary United Methodist Church.
- Bring **monetary donations** or **nonperishable food** items to Bremen St Mary Church.
- To make **other arrangements**, or if you can donate a turkey for the baskets, call Mary Shumaker at (740) 569-4796.

If you would like the gift of a Christmas Basket, sign up at the **Next to New Sale** at the Bremen United Methodist Church on Friday, Dec 2, from 9 AM to 5 PM or Saturday, Dec 3, between 9 AM and noon. Baskets will be distributed on Saturday, Dec 17.

parish contributions

The **St Bernadette offertory** for Nov 6 came to \$10,209 and the **All Saints Day** collection was \$670.

The **St Mary offertory collection** for Nov 6 came to \$2,220 and the **All Saints Day** collection was \$89.

st vincent de paul collection

Last Sunday St Bernadette collected \$959 and St Mary collected \$306 for local St Vincent de Paul Societies. Thank you for your generosity. The next Bremen St Vincent de Paul meeting is Thursday, Nov 17, at 7 PM. All are welcome.

The Lancaster St Vincent de Paul Society tells us that their biggest need these days is for non-perishable foods, paper products (kleenex, paper towels, toilet paper), personal hygiene products (deodorant, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes), and laundry products including detergent. So that's what they ask us to provide. Don't worry about too much of any of these items. There won't be too much, for the Society will share surplus items with the St Francis Center in McArthur. This drive will last through the four Sundays of Advent. Our drop off point will be in the vestibule between the school entrance and the church.

collection to help the ministry to catholic veterans and soldiers, sailors, marines, and coast guards

The Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) Collection happens today. The AMS provides **the same pastoral care and services as any other Catholic diocese, to Catholics serving in the United States Armed Forces, or undergoing treatment at any Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers**, as well as persons working in civilian jobs for the federal government

beyond US borders. The collection for the AMS coincides with Veterans Day and is held only every third year. These are **real needs**. So please be really generous.

campaign for human development

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty by funding community programs that encourage independence. Your generous donations next Sunday will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes. We can make a difference in families and communities across the country. Please donate prayerfully and generously.

in the diocese of columbus

morning of reflection

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW) will sponsor a morning of reflection on Saturday, Nov 19, at Sts Augustine and Gabriel Church in Columbus beginning at 10 AM. The talks on "**God is Here, God is Now**" will be presented by Sr Louis Mary Passeri, OP. Cost to attend is \$20 per person and includes lunch; registration begins at 9:30 AM. To register, send your name, address, email, phone number, and payment to DCCW, 197 E Gay St, Columbus, OH, 43215, by Tuesday, Nov 15, or visit www.dccw.colldioc.org. For questions, call Mickey McCormick at (614) 783-5555.

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.

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 weekend in central Ohio is Feb 17-19. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmccolumbus.org.

sts peter & paul retreat center needs help

Have you or a member of your family ever participated in a group or personal retreat at the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center? If you have, the experience was spiritually uplifting and rejuvenating for your soul. They ask for our prayerful consideration and our continued support of the Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center. They need assistance through our tax deductible donations that will help **update and improve their facility**. They will continue to operate the Retreat Center in a frugal manner so that more retreatants will be able to enjoy the peace, tranquility and spirituality that Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center offers. The needed updates and required improvements to enhance current and future retreatant experiences include:

- energy efficient boiler system (replacing the unit from 1955)
- wifi accessibility

- refrigerated storage unit (compressors and condensers)
- air conditioning the chapel and north hall.

Mail your tax deductible donation to: Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center, 2734 Seminary Road, Newark, OH 43056.

healing Mass

A Mass of Healing will be celebrated on Monday, Nov 21, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral. After the Mass there will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of a relic of the True Cross of Christ, an opportunity for each person to speak individually with a priest, and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, and Benediction. **All who seek Christ's healing are invited** – especially those with physical illness and infirmities and those seeking emotional and spiritual healing. Caregivers, family members, and members of the medical community are urged to attend. If you have questions, call the Cathedral at (614) 224-1295.

in the deanery

prison christmas party

On Saturday, Dec 3, Lancaster area churches will sponsor **the "Wings" Christmas party** at the Southeastern Correctional Institute for the inmates and their families. Fifty volunteers are needed that day, from 10 AM - 4 PM. Donations of sugar cookies are needed for decorating. Cookies should be delivered to the First Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, Nov 30. For information or to volunteer, call Jayne Brook at (740) 654-7822.

circleville 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.

fisher catholic open house

Fisher Catholic High School will hold **an Open House** on Sunday, Nov 20, from 9 AM to 1 PM. Fisher Catholic is dedicated to the development of Catholic Christian values, academic skills and social experiences by providing a strong academic foundation within the Catholic tradition. Meet faculty, staff, and coaches; take a guided tour of the facilities; and hear presentations from the principal, Mr Joe Jasinski, and guidance office at 9:30 AM. Come explore Fisher Catholic and register to win a \$500 tuition grant and other door prizes. Contact Julie Kilbarger at (740) 654-1231 or jkilbarg@ceducation.org for information.

BABIES WELCOME HERE!

I loved life in the monastery. The work was hard, but invigorating. The scenery was beautiful. The monks were good men. The worship was simple and beautiful. But there was one thing missing at worship: There was the lack of small children and babies. A church, if it is going to be complete, needs the young and the old. Needs them. One of my favorite things to do as a priest has always been to baptize babies. They are wonderful little people and essential to our life together. At baptisms I often read the saying of Jesus: "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

Jesus did not address the fact that sometimes children can be a distraction. I am thinking of three situations when they can be distracting. I think that common sense and concern for the children, for their parents and for the people around them can help us in dealing with a natural distraction.

- Sometimes parents are embarrassed about the noise and movement of the little person. They think everyone is being disturbed; they may even wish they hadn't brought the child to church. Of course the parents should try to calm the child. That may or may not work, but it is important to start early teaching a child reverence and silence in church — both as a means of prayer and as a matter of respect for the people around. But we can't expect that the lesson will be learned immediately. To the parents the advice is: please don't be discouraged; please keep bringing the child and please keep trying to teach her what behavior is needed in

An **Irish4Life Pancake Breakfast** happens simultaneously from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. The menu includes blueberry, chocolate chip or regular pancakes, sausage, coffee, milk, and juice. Eat as much as you like; the cost is your generous donation.

st mary holiday happening

The Saint Mary Home and School Association presents the 2016 **Holiday Happening** on Saturday, Nov 12, from 3 PM until 8 PM, and on Sunday afternoon, Nov 13, until 3 PM. Join in family fun featuring children's games, live entertainment, chicken & noodles dinner, bake sale, and silent and live auctions.

when at Mass

a canadian priest on how to behave at Mass

Remember you have entered into the house of God to pray, adore, reflect, or celebrate a sacrament. It is the time to talk not to your friends, but to God. Please do not bring in any cups of coffee! To help you enter into a sacred space, we ask you to remember:

- Turn off cell phones.
- Dress with dignity for Mass.
- Do not drink bottled water, chew gum or have a snack in a house of worship.
- If you are late for Mass, please do not walk down the aisles looking for a seat until it's appropriate.
- Do not be an observer of the Mass, but a participater.
- Do not have conversations during the Mass.
- In addition, the kneeler is for the knee, not for the feet, do not step on it.

Keep these in mind and you will enjoy more (not less!) being in the Lord's presence at the Eucharistic Celebration.

something pope francis said

"The dominant thinking sometimes suggests a 'false compassion,' that which believes that it is: helpful to women to promote abortion; an act of dignity to obtain euthanasia; a scientific breakthrough to 'produce' a child and to consider it to be a right rather than a gift to welcome; or to use human lives as guinea pigs presumably to save others. Instead, the compassion of the Gospel is that which accompanies in times of need, that is, the compassion of the Good Samaritan, who 'sees,' 'has compassion,' approaches and provides concrete help."

church. To the people sitting nearby: remember you once had to learn about holding still and being quiet too; the less attention you pay to the distractions the better for the child, the more helpful for the parents, and the more attentive to worship you'll be.

- Sometimes the child is just cute. Cute, and thus attention getting. Bystanders (and babysitters) are not doing anyone a favor by making a fuss over the child during the time at prayer. Adults can disturb the other people nearby, and they can send the wrong message to the child. That's when the adults become the problem.
- Finally there are times when a child throws a tantrum. Let's face it; most of us did once in a while when we were that age. It makes the most sense and is the most respectful to other people in the congregation if a parent takes the really loud or resistant child into the vestibule or, weather permitting, outside. Usually (but not always) the furor lasts only a few moments. That child is a welcome and important part of our congregation. But the loud noise is not. Knowing when to take a walk to the back of church is an art. Remembering that we understand your difficulties may be a help.

—Father Kessler

ministers at Mass at st Bernadette							
			lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday,	Nov 12	4 PM	Sandy Landefeld	Samantha Kerns, Dominic & Emeline Neighbor	Susan Garrett Marguerite Grimm	Denise McGuire Jim & Becky Kuhn	Mickey Steyaert
Sunday,	Nov 13	11 AM	John Hartig	Anna Hartig, Jack Tencza, Diana Woo	Tara Craaybeek Ben Peters	Larry Sanford Anna Seigny	David Shonk Mary J Vajen
Monday,	Nov 14	8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Jack Gentile, Carley Matson	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast	
Wednesday	Nov 16	8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Brianna Hilyard, Mitchell Ortiz	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen	
Thursday,	Nov 17	6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Becca Fuller, Sarah Woo	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday,	Nov 18	8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Joey Mannella, Lexi Utz	Jim & Rita Merk		
Saturday,	Nov 19	4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Abby, Mary, & Sam Frazier	Rosalie DeFillippo Brad Rider	Craig Shaw Mickey Steyaert	Shelia Taylor Kathy Wagner
Sunday,	Nov 20	11 AM	Jim Merk	Isabelle Gentile, Ashlyn & Brennan Quaintance	Tara Craaybeek Patrick Gins	Jean Robertson Bob & Angie Christy	Teresa Scarpitti

ministers at Mass at bremen st mary							
			lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday,	Nov 13	8:30 AM	Paul Kunkler	Caelie Bell Sydnee Rogers	Irene Kunkler, Leo Kunkler Sr, Pam Redding	Paul Kunkler family	Jim Schmelzer
Sunday,	Nov 20	8:30 AM	Linda Qualls	Brooke Holt Jillian Wilkinson	Jim Schmelzer, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox, Angi Skinner	James Noll Jr family	Joe Young

the Church's plan for reading God's word this week								
Sat	Nov 12	33 rd Sunday	Malachi 3:19-20	2 Thessalonians 3:7-12	Psalms	98	Luke 19	21:5-19
Mon	Nov 14		Revelation 1:1-2:5		Psalms	1	Luke 18:35-43	
Tues	Nov 15	St Albert the Great	Revelation 3:1-22		Psalms	15	Luke 19:1-10	
Weds	Nov 16	St Margaret of Scotland, St Gertrude	Revelation 4:1-11		Psalms	150	Luke 19:11-28	
Thurs	Nov 17	St Elizabeth of Hungary	Revelation 5:1-10		Psalms	149	Luke 19:41-44	
Fri	Nov 18	Dedication of Basilicas of Sts Peter & Paul St Rose Philippine Duchesne	Revelation 10:8-11		Psalms	119	Luke 19:45-48	
Sat	Nov 19		Revelation 11:4-12		Psalms	144	Luke 20:27-40	
Sun	Nov 20	Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe	2 Samuel 5:1-3	Colossians 1:12-20	Psalms	122	Luke 23:35-43	

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

How Catholic Funerals are Different from Other People's Funerals

Sometimes Catholics feel like telling you that we are pretty much like everybody else, in our lives and in our Faith. To be honest, though, we have to admit that we have some remarkable and exceptional beliefs and ways of behaving, which are there for all neighbors to see and which are a blessing which we must keep alive and which we must share.

There is something distinctive, something special about being a Catholic, something to celebrate! To hide that something special would be to fool ourselves as well as to fail to provide our non-Catholic neighbors with the distinctive witness that comes from the ways of our Catholic Christian Faith. One of the most basic ways people live out their heritage is in the way we respond when a loved one dies.

A Catholic funeral has something in common with anyone else's funeral. Sort of. We contact the funeral home; we have a viewing, and we say the same inadequate words about sympathy and about how the dead person was embalmed and dressed to look just like she or he is asleep; we have a funeral, and the cremation or burial in a cemetery. People send flowers ... or gifts to a charity in the dead person's memory. There is often a funeral lunch after our funerals. And the people closest to the dead person do a lot of quiet mourning. But there is something decidedly different about our Catholic approach to funerals. In fact there are several things.

For one thing we go to church for the funeral. We go for a funeral or "**requiem**" Mass. That word requiem is the Latin word for "rest," and we go to that Mass to pray for the eternal rest of the dead person. To rest means to be refreshed, but not to be ended. It is not for people who have ceased to exist. We are praying for the rest and refreshment of the soul of the dead person. This is because we believe that the soul of the person lives.

But that's not all. **We go to a funeral Mass** to remind ourselves we believe that, on the last day, at the end of the world, at the resurrection of the dead, the Lord will raise up the dead person— in fact, all of the dead persons, ourselves included. It is this, and not the flowers or any happy memories of the good old days when the loved one was still alive, that is the source of our comfort.

The Catholic funeral is in a certain important sense a memorial. But the thing our memorial remembers is the dying and rising of Jesus Christ. We pray at the heart of every Mass one of three very brief acclamations that make one basic point. My favorite one of them says: "**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**" That is our memorial.

We don't preach a eulogy. Not at the funeral Mass. And that is not because we don't have happy memories of the dead person, but because the reason to be at the Mass, in the church, is to remember not Uncle Herman or Aunt Marie, but what Saint Paul was remembering when he wrote to the Corinthians: "**I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**"

There is another very important reason for our not preaching a eulogy. The priest or deacon's job is to invite your prayers for the dead person. In addition to recalling the difference that the dying of Jesus has made for all the dead.

And more than just rekindling our hope in the resurrection of the dead, we have come together to pray for the dead person. I won't canonize the dead person, for to say that the person was wonderful is never completely correct. It would suggest that the person is not in need of our prayers. She is.

And of course, we don't damn the person. It is not our call to determine whether the person is damned or saved. This is one more time that the words of Jesus apply: Stop judging, that you may not be judged. We pray for the dead when it is reasonable to presume that the person has, at death, been judged by God to have been saved. But we also know that there may have been aspects that were still sinful about the person.

The Catholic doctrine of purgatory enters the picture here. Purgatory is the state of the soul of the dead person who has been saved, but who was flawed by sins forgiven but still marring the readiness of the person for the eternal bliss of heaven. Heaven and hell are the permanent realities. Ultimately, every human person will be assigned—will assign himself or herself—, irrevocably, to one or the other. Heaven and hell will continue after the Last Judgment. But purgatory is the interim situation of the person who is saved, who will never go to hell, but who, at death, is not yet quite ready for heaven. This doctrine of purgatory is not bad news at all. It is rather very good news to learn that, even those of us who are saved but still flawed by our sins and thus not really ready to enjoy the beatific vision of God, have the opportunity to be spruced up for heaven.

It helps if we think of purgatory as a kind of a front porch where a person stops to scrape the mud before he can go into the house which is heaven. The person is not quite ready for the living room, but our loving, caring prayer for them can envelope them in a purifying participation in the effects of the saving work of Jesus.

Our prayer and sacrifices offered for them do not take their sins away. You might say we help scrape the mud.

We also express our Catholic Faith in the way we dispose of the remains of the dead. We have cemeteries because we need somewhere to store and to cherish these bodies as they await the resurrection of the dead. Of course our being cremated, or buried at sea, or in some other way having our bodies destroyed, will not frustrate the glorious restoration the Lord has in store for us. After all, if he could put them together in the first place, he won't have any trouble putting them back together.

But the Church wants to make sure that we don't lose track of that restoration which is the resurrection of the dead. So she now gives us permission to cremate, but only with the stipulation that there must be faith in the resurrection of the body. And she insists that we dispose of the ashes in a way that coincides with that faith. So we may not scatter them over the ocean or from a mountain top. We don't keep them at home on a mantle. And we don't share out portions of them. The intentions in all of those are undoubtedly good, but they do not show respect for the belief in the resurrection of the dead.

We do all these things in a special way, not to emphasize our being special, but to celebrate the wonder that is our Catholic Faith.

—Father Kessler

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