

St Bernadette Parish St Mary Parish

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

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

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)



the Presentation of Jesus

depicting the scene of the gospel for the Feast of the Presentation, this Thursday

Painted (ca. 1430) by Alvaro Pirez (before 1411-after 1434)

in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The 4th Sunday of the Year

JANUARY 29, 2017

Our Parishes

FATHER THOMAS KESSLER (614) 634-0499
pastor wnthomaskessler@icloud.com

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

MARK SCARPITTI (740) 438-3970
deacon den.mark@frontier.com
JEFF CARPENTER (740) 681-9918
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ANN ESSMAN (740) 653-9347
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STEVE HUBER (740) 654-3137
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LIZ LATORRE (740) 243-1872
liturgical music lizlаторre@gmail.com

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, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

BEN FACTOR
liturgical music b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us
JIM SCHMELZER (740) 215-3894
maintenance chair
TYNA FOX-SCHMELZER (614) 371-7702
religious education

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 BOTH PARISHES

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AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

PAM ELTRINGHAM peltring@cdeducation.org
principal
BARB HUBER bhuber@cdeducation.org
secretary

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, (740) 654-3137
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com
stbernlan@cdeducation.org

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 Feb 22. Try to take the class before the 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 Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- 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 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 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.

The Church wishes to support couples through the years of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

let us pray together

with the Church today

Grant us, Lord our God, that we may honor you with all our mind, and love everyone in truth 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 the Holy Father in January: Christian Unity

That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

in February: Comfort for the Afflicted

That all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalized, may find welcome and comfort in our communities.

in both parishes

the catholic times

Next week is our parish collection for *The Catholic Times* weekly newspaper. This donation helps our parish to provide *The Catholic Times* to you and many of our parishioners. Donation envelopes for this collection are included in your February collection packet. For a minimum donation of only \$17 per year (parish rate), readers receive a Catholic perspective on the world around us: local, national, worldwide, and Vatican news; diocesan, parish, and school stories; articles, regular columns, editorials, and events are delivered right to your home. As an evangelization tool, Bishop Campbell encourages every Catholic family to receive *The Catholic Times*. Look for your envelope and sign up for, or continue receiving, the newspaper of our diocese, the *The Catholic Times*. If you are on “electronic” donation, you can still receive *The Catholic Times* – simply place your donation in an envelope marked “*The Catholic Times*” and your name and put it into the Sunday collection basket during February. Come enjoy “A journal of Catholic life in Ohio”.

christian initiation

Please pray for our **catechumens**. They are **officially-welcomed** members (albeit not yet full members) of the household of faith. These include **Ralph Mohler and his son Bryant** of Bremen St Mary, and **Jennifer Palmer** of St Bernadette. They have publicly ratified their desire to become baptized members of the Catholic Church and are preparing for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Learn their names so you can pray for them. Find out who they are so you can make them feel welcome.

psr (aka parish school of religion)

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, natural disasters or warfare—but not school outings or athletic events. This is a really important duty. Children will find **getting to know Jesus and his Church is an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**. Don't worry if from time to time they don't yet feel the joy. Stick with it. It will come.

sacristan / ushers

These are the people who make things flow smoothly during our Sunday (including Saturday evening) Masses. They get things ready, make sure all the other ministers are ready, and help late arrivals find a seat with a minimum of disruption. Want to help? Contact Kathy Kehnast or one of the folks you see doing the job.

some other ways to support your parish

You can support your parish with **gifts of cash, appreciated assets, real estate, retirement plans, life insurance and even a trust or bequest in your will**. Designate St Mary Bremen or St Bernadette (or another non-profit Catholic entity) to benefit from your gift knowing that these gifts are invested in ways that are faithful to Catholic teaching. For donors age 70½ and older, the IRA Charitable Rollover is permanent law. Under this provision, these donors can transfer up to \$100,000 from their IRA to an endowment fund at The Catholic Foundation. The transfer is made free of federal income tax and the gift qualifies for the donor's required minimum distribution. Should you have questions or need assistance, contact The Catholic Foundation. They can help

you take advantage of these opportunities in support of your beloved organizations. They can be reached at (614) 443-8893.

altar flowers

If you wish to **donate altar flowers for 2017** contact either parish office. Your donation of \$40 may be placed in the collection basket at Mass.

at St Mary parish

Mass intentions at st mary

Sunday, Jan 29	8:30 AM	for the people of the parish
Tuesday, Jan 31	8:20 AM	Louise Shumaker
Sunday, Feb 5	8:30 AM	for the people of the parish

what st vincent does at st mary bremen

The famous “*season of giving*” isn't really over yet. For people in a financial jam, the season of need seems to go on throughout the year, especially when it starts to get really cold out. So, the **St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen** takes up a collection after Mass on the first Sunday of the month, every month. New members are always welcome. For information, call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

sunday at Mass at bremen st mary

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sun, Jan 29 8:30 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer	Caden & Cody Fyffe	Jim Schmelzer, Angi Skinner, Karen Wolfe	Maurice Schmelzer family	Joe Young
Sun, Feb 5 8:30 AM	Barb Van Fossen-Cook	Sydnee Rogers, Isaac Schmelzer	Barb Van Fossen-Cook, Joe & Cathy Young	Nick Schmelzer family	Damian Schmelzer

notes of gratitude

St Mary Parish, St Mary PSR classes, and the Bremen St Vincent de Paul Society received thank you notes for assisting the Bremen Food Pantry in providing food and gifts for 73 families this past Christmas and at five other distributions of food during the year. Please keep these families in your prayers. Thanks also to those who participated in the Giving Tree project. Your gifts helped many people in need.

at St Bernadette parish

mardi gras at st bernadette

Come and enjoy the annual pre-Lenten celebration and fundraiser on Saturday, Feb 11, from 5-10 PM. The date has had to be changed this year only from the traditional “fat Tuesday” anticipation of the Lenten austerity beginning on Ash Wednesday (March 1 this year). This **wonderful family night** raises funds to **support St Bernadette School**. Festivities include games and movies for the kids, \$1000 grand raffle, silent and live auctions, music, and fabulous food featuring our signature Fat Tuesday sliders, French Quarter french fries, cole slaw *d’carnival*, mini king cakes, pizza, and more. Parishioners, bring your friends and family to support our Catholic school. Grand prize raffle tickets are \$10 each and will be sold after Masses on Jan 28 and 29 and Feb 4 and 5 or through the school office at (740) 654-3137.

Mass intentions at St Bernadette

Saturday,	Jan 28	4 PM	for the people of the parish
Sunday,	Jan 29	11 AM	for the people of the parish
Monday,	Jan 30	8:20 AM	deceased of Seigny family
Wednesday,	Feb 1	8:20 AM	Veral Dick Kilbarger
Thursday,	Feb 2	6 PM	Paul Dreyer
Friday,	Feb 3	8:20 AM	Pete Konkler
Saturday,	Feb 4	9 AM	Dan Rudisille
Saturday,	Feb 4	4 PM	for the people of the parish
Sunday,	Feb 5	11 AM	for the people of the parish

st vincent de paul 5th sunday collection

Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society will take **up a collection at the church doors** today, the 5th Sunday this month. Please be generous. The society helps the needy in the Lancaster area. They operate on income from their store and from your donations.

sunday at Mass at st bernadette

	Lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	
Sat, Jan 28 4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Kendall Cox, Avee & Drew Solt	Rose DeFillippo Jim Kuhn Lee Guinan	Joyce Guenther MargueriteGrimm Denise McGuire
Sun, Jan 29 11 AM	Patrick Gins	Brooke, Bryson, & Zachary Vogel	Pat Dreyer Jim & Rita Merk John & Teresa Hartig	David Shonk
Sat, Feb 4 4 PM	Brad Rider	Isabelle Gentile, Samantha Kerns, Addy Myers	Bob & Angie Christy Susan Garrett Joyce Guenther	Kathy Kehnast Teresa Scarpitti
Sun, Feb 5 11 AM	Tara Craaybeek	Clara & Susan Craaybeek, Eve Darius	Terry Carpenter Nancy Griffith Larry Sanford	Anna Seigny Mary Jane Vajen Becky Wickham

in the diocese of columbus

columbus catholic renewal

St Elizabeth Parish in Columbus hosts an evening Mass, prayer, and social on Wednesday, Feb 8. The Rosary will be prayed at 6 PM followed by praise and worship. Trained prayer teams are available for individual prayer. Father Ramon Owerla will celebrate Mass at 7:30 PM. A potluck social will follow in the parish hall. The evening will be sponsored by Columbus Catholic Charismatic Renewal. For information, go to www.cccolumbus.org or call (614) 500-8115.

women's silent retreat

Women of the Columbus diocese are invited to come away during this Lenten season for a week-end, to disconnect from the cyber world and connect with God by at a silent retreat for women from Mar 3-5 at St Therese's Retreat Center, 5277 E Broad Street, Columbus. Sponsored by the Catholic Laywomen's Retreat League, the retreat will begin Friday evening and end Sunday at noon. Fr Al Naseman, CPPS will be the retreat master. A member of the Cincinnati Province of the Precious Blood order, Fr Naseman has been leading retreats for 25 years. Prior to that he taught in three Precious Blood seminaries. He will give four conferences on "Reflections on Lent from the Book of Ecclesiastes." The fee of \$140 will cover six meals and a private room. For information, email retreatleague@gmail.com or call Sharon Gehrich, CLRL secretary, at (614) 882-1946. Registration will close Feb 20. God is calling you.

catholic men's luncheon club

The next Catholic Men's Luncheon Club features Bishop Frederick Campbell and the presentation of **the 2017 Catholic Man of the Year**. Join Bishop Campbell on Friday, Feb 3, at St Patrick Church in downtown Columbus. Mass at 11:45 AM will be followed by lunch and the presentation of the Catholic Man of the Year until about 1 PM. No reservations are necessary. \$10 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend. For information on Catholic Men's Luncheons, visit www.ColumbusCatholicMen.com or contact Tim Merkle, CMLC President at htm@ejhlaw.com.

male & female He created them: complementarity & intimacy in marriage

All married couples are invited to the diocesan celebration of World Marriage Day on Sunday, Feb 26, from 1-4 PM at Immaculate Conception Church, 414 E North Broadway, Columbus. Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers will search Sacred Scripture and Church teaching to examine **what God teaches us about the differences between authentic male and female spirituality**. He will explore how to enhance the intimate relationship of husbands and wives. **A Holy Hour for Marriage** will follow his talk. There is no charge for the event but space is limited. RSVP by Feb 13 at <http://familylife.colodioc.org> or (614) 241-2560.

pilgrimage to italy

Fr Jeff Rimelspach, formerly pastor at St Mary Bremen, will lead a pilgrimage to Italy from Oct 2-14. The trip will include visits with daily Mass to Venice, Bologna, Assisi, Cortona, San Marino, Rome, the Vatican, and the island nation of Malta. Brochures are available at the parish office or by writing Fr Jeff Rimelspach at St Margaret Church, 1600 N Hague Ave, Columbus, OH 43204 or emailing him at jrimelspach@msn.com. This is a great opportunity to visit many holy places in Italy. And it is a great time of year to go.

God can save your marriage

Has your marriage become unloving or uncaring? Your relationship grown cold or distant? **Thinking about a separation or divorce?** Already separated or divorced but you wish to try again? The *Retrouvaille* program may help you. *Retrouvaille* of Columbus will be sponsoring its next program on Feb 10-12 at the Procter Center retreat house in London, Ohio. The program consists of a weekend experience and follow-up sessions. All inquiries are confidential. For more details or to register go to HelpOurMarriage.com or call (800) 470-2230.

the book of Revelation

Dr Thomas Smith will speak on Revelation, the book, on Saturday, Jan 28, from noon to 3 PM at St John Neumann Church in Sunbury. Dr Smith's presentation will include discussion of the mysterious figures and events in the book of Revelation and provide insight into **how the Mass is really heaven on earth**. He will give the big picture for understanding Revelation and will share specific **keys for unlocking its images and characters**. He will also reveal key characteristics for **fearlessly, faithfully, and fruitfully sharing our faith**. This event is free and everyone is welcome. Contact Tina Burtch, director of Evangelization, with questions at tburtch.saintjohn@gmail.com

men's conference and women's conference

These are big events coming in February you won't want to miss. At each of these Saturday events Bishop Campbell will celebrate Mass and there will be opportunities for Penance, as well as some entertainment and lots of fellowship with a thousand or two of the most interesting people in central Ohio. Put them on your calendar now.

- Women of our diocese will gather on Feb 18 with a theme of **“Courageous Faith, Contagious Joy.”**
- Men will meet on Feb 25 with a theme of **“Into the Breach – Call to Battle”**

Both events will take place at the Ohio Expo Center at the Ohio fairgrounds in Columbus.

josephinum lecture series

The Pontifical College Josephinum's annual lecture series continues Wednesday, Feb 8, with a presentation by Christopher Ruddy, PhD, associate professor of systematic theology at The Catholic University of America. Dr. Ruddy will present **“Gaudium et Spes: Its Crafting and Legacy”** at 7 PM in the Jessing Center on the Josephinum campus. The event is free of charge and open to the public; reservations not required. For information, call the Academic Dean's office at (614) 985-2274.

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. This is especially valuable for young people who are not now receiving other catechesis as well as to reinforce catechesis for those who are. Go to www.cysc.com for information and to register for 2017 dates:

- high school sessions in the weeks of June 11, 18, 25, & July 2;
- middle school sessions in the weeks of July 9, 16, 23, & 30.

Registration is open now.

happily ever after

... despite the rough spots

Come to 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 Feb 17-19 and Apr 21-23. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmecolumbus.org.

pilgrimage to fatima and lourdes

Fr Stash Dailey, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Columbus, invites you to join him on a pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes from June 19-30, **celebrating the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima.** For details, contact Liz Grinder at the Lourdes Pilgrimage Office at (877) 276-7279 or lourdespilgrimageoffice@comcast.net or go to www.lourdes-pilgrimage.com. Reservation deadline is March 15.

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donate a van for the seminarians

The Pontifical College Josephinum is a Catholic Seminary in Columbus. Seminarians there are studying for the priesthood and need transportation from time to time for a variety of local needs. The Josephinum has a small fleet of vehicles but could use additional vans. If you have **a used van that you could donate** to the Josephinum, contact their business office at (614) 985-2230 so delivery arrangements can be made. The Josephinum is a non-profit charitable organization and will provide you with the appropriate documentation for the donation of a vehicle.

from the bishop's chair

Bishop Campbell takes your questions from 5 - 6 PM on Tuesday, Feb 7, during his live monthly call-in show, **“From the Chair”**. Call St Gabriel Catholic Radio at (614) 459-4820 to ask **your question about the Catholic faith and growing in holiness.**

a culture of life

what does “pro-life” mean to you?

Certainly, being pro-life is to **oppose any form of abortion, euthanasia,** or other taking of innocent human life. But, it's more than that.

To be pro-life is **to care about others.** To be pro-life is **to put the political in perspective** and yearn for the charitable. It's the embracing of tenderness, the treasure of compassion. Ultimately, the depth of our conviction is measured in our love for one another. So, being pro-life is **to build a community.** A community that cares. A community that sees Christ in others. A pro-life community. And, in the end, this community will not have a mandate to make abortion illegal, or more restricted. The mandate for the pro-life community and the Christians that inhabit it will **not be to make abortion illegal, but to make it unthinkable.**

guidance in prayer

saints to celebrate and prayers to offer

Tues, Jan 31	St John Bosco
Thurs, Feb 2	The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple
Fri, Feb 3	St Blase, St Ansgar

God's word at sunday Mass

Sunday, Jan 29, 4 th Sunday	Zephaniah 2:3-3:13 Psalm 146	1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Matthew 5:1-12
Sunday, Feb 5, 5 th Sunday	Isaiah 58:7-10 Psalm 112	1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Matthew 5:13-16

God's word during the week

Mon, Jan 30	Hebrews 11:32-40	Ps 31	Mark 5:1-20
Tues, Jan 31	Hebrews 12:1-4	Ps 22	Mark 5:21-43
Weds, Feb 1	Hebrews 12:4-15	Ps 103	Mark 6:1-6
Thurs, Feb 2	Malachi 3:1-4	Ps 24	
		Hebrews 2:14-18	Luke 2:22-40
Fri, Feb 3	Hebrews 13:1-8	Ps 27	Mark 6:14-29
Sat, Feb 4	Hebrews 13:15-21	Ps 23	Mark 6:30-34

children at Mass

It is great to see very young people at Mass. Even to hear them. But **parents need to train their children** in the appropriate times. We are grateful when they are not engaged in playing with toys, or

eating, and drinking (a bottle is okay; Cheerios aren't!).
 Emergencies can always happen. But take them to **the bathroom**
before Mass so they won't have to take a stroll during Mass.

Those things get in the way of teaching children that Jesus is there
 on the altar and why, and teaching them how important it is to
 participate in the Mass.

from the liturgical office of readings for this Sunday

From Ignatius, known as Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father and of Jesus Christ, his beloved, at Smyrna in Asia, wishing you all joy in an immaculate spirit and the Word of God. By his mercy you have won every gift and lack none, filled as you are with faith and love, beloved of God and fruitful in sanctity.

I celebrate the glory of Jesus Christ as God, because he is responsible for your wisdom, well aware as I am of the perfection of your unshakeable faith. You are like men who have been nailed body and soul to the cross of Jesus Christ, confirmed in love by his blood.

In regard to the Lord, you firmly believe that he was *of the race of David according to the flesh*, but God's son by the will and power of God; truly born of the Virgin and baptized by John, *that all justice might be fulfilled*; truly nailed to a cross in the flesh for our sake under Pontius Pilate and the Tetrarch Herod, and of his most blessed passion we are the fruit. And thus, by his resurrection he raised up a standard over his saints and faithful ones for all time (both Jews and Gentiles alike) in the one body of his Church. For he endured all this for us, for our salvation; and he really suffered, and just as truly rose from the dead.

As for myself, I am convinced that he was united with his body even after the resurrection. When he visited Peter and his companions, he said to them: *Take hold of me, touch me and see that I am not a spirit without a body*. Immediately they touched him and believed, clutching at his body and his very spirit. And for this reason they despised death and conquered it. In addition, after his resurrection, the Lord ate and drank with them like a real human being, even though in spirit he was united with his Father.

And so I am giving you serious instruction on these things, dearly beloved, even though I am aware that you believe them to be so.

you could have your throat blessed on the feast of st blase!

There will be an opportunity for the annual Saint Blase Day blessing of throats **at Mass** on the feast day **this Friday morning** and at a **brief prayer service at 9:15 for the school community**.

The Book of Blessings contains a brief historical background of the blessing of throats:

Saint Blase was the bishop of Sebaste in Armenia during the fourth century. Very little is known about his life. According to various accounts he was a physician before becoming a bishop. His cult spread throughout the entire Church in the Middle Ages because he was reputed to have miraculously cured a little boy who nearly died because of a fishbone in his throat. From the eighth century he has been invoked on behalf of the sick, especially those afflicted with illnesses of the throat. *(article 1625)*

And here is how the Book of Blessings prescribes for the blessing to take place:

The blessing of throats may be given by a priest, deacon, or a lay minister who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister. If the blessing is conferred during Mass, the blessing follows the homily and general intercessions, or, for pastoral reasons, the prayer of blessing may take the place of the final blessing of the Mass. When the blessing is given outside Mass, it is preceded by a brief celebration of the word of God. If the blessing is to be celebrated at Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, it is given after the reading and responsory (and homily) and before the gospel canticle.

The blessing may be given by touching the throat of each person with two candles blessed on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Feb 2) and which have been joined together in the form of a cross. *(articles 1626 & 1627)*

The candles may be joined together by a red ribbon, the color of martyrdom. Although it is the general custom to touch the throat with the candles, it is not required, especially if the candles are lit. The candles may be held over the person. The following blessing is said:

**Through the intercession of Saint Blase, bishop and martyr,
 may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness:
 In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

The priest or deacon makes the sign of the cross over the recipient as the blessing is said. If necessary, laypersons are permitted to give the blessing of the throats, but are not allowed to make the sign of the cross.

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

What a Healthy Parish Needs

This week I want to talk about what a parish really needs to be like and what good parishioners need to do. This review of the things we may already know is not meant to point a finger at anyone. Many people are doing what they can do. All of us need to look at how we are doing.

A parish needs **the regular and faithful attendance of all the parishioners at Sunday Mass**. This is not a luxury for the particularly pious. It is what Catholics do. All the people of the parish need to do it, if they possibly can. When the number drops off, the quality of parish life drops off. In this generation there has been such a significant drop off all over our country. This is a serious problem. In many cases it amounts to a kind of religious suicide. But no one has to be merely a part of the statistics.

A parish needs people who are aware that the new role of the laity called for by the Second Vatican Council is not about having lay people take over clergy jobs. It is not about lay people becoming the ruling body or the trustees of a parish. It has to do rather with **lay people bringing the Catholic message into the marketplace, into their neighborhoods and jobs and schools**. The Council's notion of the role of laity in the parish is that they be **cooperators, not just consumers** of services.

A parish needs for **each member to be concerned to share the Faith with others**, including our next generation, but also our spouses and neighbors. A new effort for evangelization is something that a healthy parish designates a high priority.

A parish needs to be **rich in works of Christian charity**. That doesn't mean just making financial contributions or giving foodstuffs or no-longer needed clothes and household items. Those are essential, but so is the personal contact and friendly, respectful smile of the parishioners. St Vincent de Paul chapters in Lancaster and in Bremen help coordinate our charitable efforts and see that more people become involved and that there is continuity in our efforts. But most of all to see that we grow spiritually.

A parish needs parishioners with **a sense of responsibility for the parish**. That does not mean running the parish, which is the job of the pastor. **Stewardship in all aspects of our parish life** means **being involved, with a cooperative spirit**.

A parish needs lay folks who are **willing to volunteer for specific tasks**. That means **signing up for things** and not holding back to see if somebody else will do the job, not waiting to see if the people you want to work with are going to be involved, **not waiting to see** if something else more interesting might come up instead. It means **not marking out turf** which is yours alone to run.

A parish needs to **educate the children**. For us that means **bringing kids to PSR every week**. My parents didn't give us any option. They said we had to do the thing we were committed to do **whether we were interested or not**. Why do some parents cave in? Because they want their kids to like them? Because they want to choose their battles? When they say religious education is the child's choice, they have already chosen to lose the struggle to raise the children in the Catholic Faith. Parents need to be willing to say "as long as you live under my roof, you will go to Mass on Sunday" or "you will go to religious education every week." Their kids may accuse them of being tyrants; that's a ploy kids have used since time immemorial to get their way. The new thing is that some parents now cave in to that pressure. And that is very sad.

A parish needs for its kids and parents to insist that **no other activity is ever going to preempt going to Mass and to religious education** class.

A parish needs to have a **spirit of regular support of the church**, at a level that is in keeping with the actual need and the ability to pay. This requires that **everyone — well-employed, underemployed or even jobless — make a commitment to give at a certain level as regularly as possible**. When our circumstances change we may have to **adjust downward** ... or we may be able to **adjust upward** in the amount of our giving. But **fixing an amount on the basis of our gratitude for the good things the Lord has done for us**, and then *attempting* to follow through on that amount to the best of our ability — that is how it is possible for a parish to carry out its needs.

A parish doesn't need a lot of programs or a lot of employees. Sometimes we forget that the really basic program of a Catholic parish is **the liturgical life**. The "**source and summit**" of our parish liturgical life — of all our parish life and of all of our lives as followers of the Lord Jesus — is Sunday Mass. But people who seek enrichment, who seek to know the Lord better, to have prayer experiences and continuing education, should think about going to daily Mass and/or to the daily praying of the Liturgy of Hours which we do for ten minutes each morning at Morning Prayer. These are our fundamental programs. Add to that the special services, like Lenten Stations of the Cross and Penance Services and you see some of the basics of Catholic life. Of course, most people can't attend these services most of the time. But a lot of people can at least from time to time.

In a lot of ways a lot of people are fulfilling these needs. Some are making a heroic effort. Many are doing the very best they can, even if that is not obvious. **All of us need to examine our consciences to see what we can do** to make our parish better. Thank you all for your efforts, for all you do.

— Father Kessler

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