

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

This weekend we send our heartfelt congratulations to our parish second graders who have received their First Holy Communion Saturday morning. This is a big step in their lives. I know they have been eagerly waiting for this great day. One young gentleman was giving me a daily countdown until his First Communion! Their joy and enthusiasm are inspiring to witness. Their joyful enthusiasm is something for us to note well. In their innocence they express a sincere desire to be close to our Lord Jesus Christ. This is something that as adults we sometimes forget. There are numerous pressures connected with all that we must do every day. These daily activities complicate our lives and many times in negative ways. Such is the society we live in. When we add the influence of our personal sin we lose the desire for holiness that is to mark our Christian lives. Sin taints the deepest desire of our hearts; namely our desire to be close to the Lord. Worldly pressures have a way of making our hearts numb, indifferent or hardened to our deep desire for God. We are hesitant to admit it and maybe even embarrassed to admit that we have lost our basic and innocent desire for the Lord.

We need to consider the innocence of our children. As harsh as the world can be we want to protect them and their innocence as much as we can. We do not want our adult problems and worries to burden them. (More and more often I am amazed when I see adults burdening their children with adult issues.) It is important that we allow our children to be children and enjoy their childhood as long as they can. Protecting and teaching our children is very important. This time is important for teaching and reinforcing virtue and goodness. All too often our children are exposed to vice and violence with not resources to help them.

The development and maturing of virtue happen in moments of silent reflection. This growth takes time in response to the grace of God. The important work of Christian parenthood is the spiritual and moral foundation of their children. It is essential for their development in greater knowledge and wisdom to persevere in this secular world. Growth in goodness and virtue (a.k.a. holiness) does not magically happen. It takes time for learning and reflection about what is most important in this life for the virtues to develop. That is where and when our faith comes into full focus.

It is our Catholic Faith that leads us to true understanding and wisdom in dealing with the reality of this world. Our Catholic Faith is the necessary means to know and understand that *grace builds on nature* and most importantly on the natural virtues; knowledge, wisdom, et al. This understanding that *grace builds on nature*, provides us with a Christian approach to life that directs our lives to Christian virtue in the midst of a sinful world. It keeps us from being swallowed up by secularism, materialism and hedonism which are so prevalent in our society and ultimately lead to the loss of true joy and meaning: The Kingdom of God.

So, we try the best we can to guide, educate and protect our children. This is a difficult task for all of us. At times it can be overwhelming. Yet we are never alone in this noble task. We have the *Grace of God*. Our children are a blessing in more ways than we can imagine. God's Blessings come to us through them. Children are dependent on their parents for so many things especially their need for love. Where there is love there is God. The more parents act in love in tending to the needs of their children, the more loving the parents become. This is a grace. It is the grace necessary for bringing the vocation of marriage/parenthood to its Christian fulfillment. However, as immediate as that grace is available to us it is never forced upon

us. We can freely receive it, deny it or ignore it. It is an act of faith to trust and actively open our hearts to receive God's grace and blessings especially though our children.

The Church has always been the channel of God's grace. It is in and through the Church that the necessary graces are available to us. How so? *First*, we understand that grace is the *abiding presence of God*. Thus, we can say the primary abiding presence of God in the world is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the primary grace of God as well as the first sacrament because He is God's perfect presence in the world. *Secondly*, to make a long story short, Jesus gave us the Church to be *His living presence* in the world. Jesus told his disciples, "*He who hears you hears me*". The Church, the Body of Christ, is the abiding presence of Christ in the world today. We can say that the Church is a sacrament. Lastly, within the Church, Christ has given us seven sacraments to personally communicate his abiding presence. Sacraments are personal encounters with Christ made available to us through the Church. The sacraments are not quaint little things Catholics do. They are the substantial rites of encounter with the Lord that lead us to salvation. A sacramental life is one that is directed to salvation. The most important of the Sacraments, because of its intensity of encountering Christ and its frequency of reception is the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is essential for our encounter with Christ and our Salvation. As the Second Vatican Council proclaimed, the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life.

We find it difficult, if not impossible, to live as faithful Catholic Christians in this world without the sacraments and especially the Holy Eucharist. As Catholics it is impossible to live in a Catholic Marriage and family, or to grow in our faith without the Church and her Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. This truth cannot be stressed enough. Wandering away from the Church and the Sacraments puts a Catholic in a very dangerous place spiritually.

Knowing that the Eucharist is essential you would think that the Church would be packed with Catholics every Sunday. Sadly, this is not the case. Many find going to church to be a burden, inconvenient or of little importance. In reality it is a small sacrifice to attend church and the sacraments considering the greater inconveniences and sacrifices people make for lesser worldly things. You can fill in the blank about those other things... i.e. sports etc.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the family is the *Church in Miniature*. As such it is an important thing for families to pray together. This is highly encouraged. There are simple ways this can be accomplished. One small way is to pray before meals: "*to say grace*". It is a prayer that requests God's blessings as well as giving thanks for the meal we are about to share. These are two very important aspects that are necessary for a prayer life: *thanksgiving and petition*. A good habit of praying grace before meals sets a *habit of prayerful thanksgiving and petition* in many other aspects of life. These prayerful elements are also part of our community at prayer in the Mass.

Another simple little practice is to say prayers when waking up and before going to sleep at night. Quick prayers for God's blessing as we begin the day and a reflection at the end of the day can frame the day in God's presence. Thanksgiving for a new day and for the blessings of the day is positive. Reflection over the day should take into account a *prayer of contrition* for the bad choices or sinful things we may have done during the day. This leads us to saying we are *sorry for our sins*. Thus, in prayer we ask for forgiveness, we give thanks for the blessings of the day and we ask for God's Divine protection on us and for those who have asked us to pray for them. This practice leads to a habit of prayer and reflection. It is a good habit for all Christians.

If these things happen in the family, the “*Church in Miniature*” it will lead to the Church as the community of believers gathering together as the Body of Christ. These same practices in the family are also the practices of the Catholic Christian Community. These elements of prayer are found in the greatest prayer of the Catholic Church: the Mass.

It is something to consider that when people claim that they do not get anything out of the mass; it may be for the simple reason that they do not have a habit of prayer that includes praise/thanksgiving, contrition, petition and intercession at home. The prayer of the Church may seem so foreign for the family that does not have a habit of prayer at home. If family prayer is difficult, then make Sunday Mass a priority with the desire to bring that prayer to the home. The added benefit of the mass is that we also hear the Word of God and receive the greatest gift from God: Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The readings can be an opportunity for a family discussion. It can be a great starting point that can only grow and get better into the future.

Going to church needs to be understood as that time in which we go as a family to worship God as he desires for us to worship. God desires us to worship him in this way because we need it. It is God’s desire for us to encounter Him and receive His abundant grace. It is a time for us to be in the presence of God, to give praise and thanksgiving, to offer our contrition for sinful behaviors, seek intercessions for our lives and for our community of faith. In offering our prayers to God, God receives our prayer and returns our prayer in the form of His presence in Word and Sacrament. Grace calls us to worship, grace sustains us in our worship and grace is given to us in the Sacraments of the Church.

Thus, we come to this important point. Parents, it is vitally important for you and your children to come to Sunday Mass every week. Your children want to be close to Jesus especially in the Eucharist. They have a spiritual hunger that they may not be able to articulate and express to you. Your Children are a blessing from God. Let the Children lead you and your family to Christ. We live in a difficult world and we need all the help we can get. The greatest help is always available to us and it is always right here in the Church and in her Sacraments; especially the Eucharist. Please take advantage of the abundant Grace of God.

God Bless you and Congratulations First Communion class of 2019!

Father Ralko

Church Support

APRIL 28, 2019

OFFERTORY	\$7,313.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$3,424.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(3,436.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

**This week we pray Week III of the
Liturgy of the hours.**

We welcomed into the church through Baptism last weekend: Kyana, Tylynn and Maddox children of Mr. David Bowers & Ms. Tabitha Tigner

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Neighbor Helping Neighbor Day is Saturday, May 18th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students will help with minor home repairs, housework, yard work, etc. Students meet at St. Nicholas Teen Center at 9:00 a.m. to be teamed up with our adult volunteers and to receive work assignments. Permission Slips Required! Download the permission slip from our website: <https://zanesvillecatholic.wixsite.com/zanescathteens>

Neighbor Helping Neighbor - Saturday, May 18th from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. High School Students will be available to help with spring projects, yard work and minor home repair. In the past our students have washed fences, painted, washed windows, cleaned garages and helped with minor home repairs. If you have a job for our students, call the parish office. We will be happy to put you on the list.

ATTEND THE INFORMATION MEETING IN THE ST. NICHOLAS TEEN ROOM ON SUNDAY, MAY 5TH AT NOON FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE 2019 NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE – “BLESSED BROKEN GIVEN” The event is to be held November 21-23, 2019 - A three-day experience of prayer, community and empowerment for Catholic Teenagers. Includes 3-night stay at a hotel, coach buses round trip, 7 meals, shirt, water bottle and bag. All high school students and their parents are encouraged to attend this informative meeting. (This includes students who will be Freshmen in November 2019).

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA BAKE SALE - SUNDAY, MAY 5th FOLLOWING THE 8:15 A.M. AND 10:45 A.M. MASSES IN THE CHURCH BASEMENT.

MOTHER’S DAY TRIBUTE

The Muskingum Valley Right to Life will once again be sponsoring a full-page Mother’s Day tribute ad in the Times Recorder on **May 12**. For this we will be collecting names, along with a \$3.00 donation, at all masses, this weekend from all who wish to honor mothers on their special day.

Join the Parish in Praying the Rosary

Each weekend of May, St. Nicholas parishioners will pray the Rosary before each Mass. Please come about 20 minutes before Mass and pray the Holy Rosary during Mary’s month of May. If you would like to volunteer to lead the Rosary, call 740-453-7141.

Spring Card Party - Wednesday, May 15, 2019. In the St. Nicholas Church Basement. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Soup, Salad & Dessert! \$5.00 per person, includes the meal! ALL ARE WELCOME! Hosted by the Daughters of Isabella.

Vacation Bible School – More Volunteers needed!!

If you desire to share your time and faith with our kindergarten through sixth grade children in Vacation Bible school, please call 740 453-7141 to volunteer. Dates for VBS are **Monday, June 10 through Friday, June 14**, from 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in the St. Nicholas Parish Activity Center.

...see more announcements on the last page-

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

LITURGICAL MINISTERS SCHEDULE

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if needed.

May 12, 2019
Third Sunday of Easter

Saturday, May 11 @ 5:15 p.m.

Cantor: Jim Gable

Lectors: Nicole Hannahs, Bill Sullivan

Servers: Charles Peterson, Christina Rozsa

Eucharistic Minister – Coord: Dan Snider

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Molly Ritchey, Charlotte Snider

Eucharistic Ministers: Dottie Durant, Philip Kocoloski, Margaret Kronenbitter, Paul Ritchey

Sunday, May 12 @ 8:15 a.m.

Cantor: Ryan Teti

Lector: Bernard Budde, Pam Logan

Servers: David Eppley

Eucharistic Minister- Coord: John Haswell

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Laurie Harmon, Joshua Wright

Eucharistic Ministers: Linda Haswell, Erin Roush, Claire Tiberio, Gerald Tiberio

Sunday, May 12 @ 10:45 a.m.

Cantor: Lucille Morosco

Lectors: Othello Repuyan, Rocky Rowe

Servers: J. D. Wilson, Wesley Wilson

Eucharistic Minister - Coord: Larry Denbow

Eucharistic Ministers - Wash Vessel: Al Burns, Diana Dunn

Eucharistic Ministers: Vicki Burns, Karen Hardman, Kevin McCarthy, Dodi Sealock

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving our country currently and with their loved ones at home. We pray for a safe homecoming and that the world may one day be at peace.

Please join us each Monday at The St. Nicholas Chapel in the Parish Office at 2:00 p.m. as we gather to pray the Rosary asking Our Lady's Intercession for the many needs of our nation, community, and parish.

“God Makes Every Grace Abundant”

Next weekend is the start of the Bishop's Annual Appeal. The theme of the appeal, “God Makes Every Grace Abundant” reminds us to place our trust in Him as we continue His work on earth by responding to the needs of others. The Appeal makes possible the many good works facilitated by the Office of Social Concerns and the Office of Marriage and Family Life, contributes to the education of our future priests and deacons, and supports the education of our young people in their faith. These are just a few examples of the many ministries and programs supported by your gift to the Appeal. Together we can bring hope that can change lives.

What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, May 6

8:00 a.m., Mass: **Rita Hecker**, Church

2:00 p.m., Pray the Rosary, St. Nicholas Chapel, Parish Office

6:00 p.m., Blessed Virgin Mary Bible Study, Parish Office, meeting room

TUESDAY, May 7

8:00 a.m., Mass: **Thomas Keane**, Church

WEDNESDAY, May 8

8:10 a.m., School Mass: **Richard F. Harsh**, Church

7:00 p.m., R.C.I.A., Parish Office, meeting room

THURSDAY, May 9

NO MASS

FRIDAY, May 10, St. Damien

8:00 a.m., Mass: **Cecil Mary Soller**, Church

4th Sunday of Easter

SATURDAY, May 11

4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church

5:15 p.m., Mass: **Shirley Knox**, Church

SUNDAY, May 12

8:15 a.m., Mass: **St. Nicholas Parishioners**, Church

9:15 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Religious Education, Bishop Fenwick

10:45 a.m., Mass: **Ann Arnold**, Church

Mass: **Bob Cherrington**, Church

Readings for Week of May 6, 2019

Mon.	Acts 6:8-15	Jn 6:22-29
Tues.	Acts 7:51-8:1a	Jn 6:30-35
Wed	Acts 8:1b-8	Jn 6:35-40
Thurs.	Acts 8:26-40	Jn 6:44-51
Fri.	Acts 9:1-20	Jn 6:52-59
Sat.	Acts 9:31-42	Jn 6:60-69
Sun	Acts 13:14,	Jn 10:27-30
	43-52	

Gospel Road 2019

GREAT WAY TO EARN SERVICE HOURS! High school students are invited to a five-day mission focused work camp for teens in grades 9-12. Gospel Road provides teens the opportunity to live the Gospel message of love while learning practical skills such as painting, building, landscaping, etc. This year's Gospel Road will be hosted by Seaton Parish in Pickerington. Sunday July 14th through Thursday July 18th. Cost \$150 per person – can be supplemented. Registration deadline is June 8th. Only 175 participants will be accepted – spots will fill up fast. **Do Not Delay!** Call the St. Nicholas Parish Office for more information and to register.

Heartbeats - Muskingum Valley is located at 216 Hazlett Ct. (2nd Floor). Heartbeats Client Services provides pregnancy options with trained client consultants, pregnancy tests, ultrasound confirmation of pregnancy, information on STI's/reproductive health/fertility awareness, and much more. All services are provided free of charge and are kept confidential to the full extent allowable by law. 24 Hour Helpline 1-800-712-HELP.