

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH

From the Pastor's Desk

There are a couple things to start off with today; the first is the good news that our Summer Vacation Bible School was an overwhelming success. The staff and most of all the children who participated all had a great experience. We are very pleased with all the cooperation, planning and generosity of our volunteers who have made this year's VBS a wonderful experience for all. Thank you and God bless you.

Secondly, we have concluded an abbreviated "Parish Festival". We had a modest success. At least we did something. Unfortunately, there was a storm in the middle of it all. This put a damper on the event. However, the chicken dinner prepared by the Falls Township Volunteer Fire Department was a real crowd pleaser. They proved the point that firefighters know how to cook. A big thank you goes out to all who generously gave of their time and talents to make this one-day event happen. It was good to see many of our parishioners even if it was only for brief conversations and visits.

The ticket returns were very encouraging. The response on the part of our parishioners was great. Our general raffle was a success considering the smaller than usual window of opportunity for making your returns. Thank you for your individual efforts covering this important detail. Again, for all who volunteered and worked as they invested their time and talents for make this happen. We offer you our heartfelt Thank You and God Bless you.

Today's Gospel story, making a longer story short, is about Jesus walking on the turbulent water. There is a word to describe this miraculous event: *theophany*. Theophany is a term for a dramatic encounter with God involving a tangible manifestation of his power and presence. The disciples come into a direct encounter with the divine splendor hidden in the person of Jesus. The *veil* of his humanity is briefly pulled back revealing the divine mystery of his true identity: The Son of God.

Following last Sunday's gospel, where we read the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, Jesus sends his disciples away on another trip across the Sea of Galilee while he remained behind. Jesus dismissed the crowd intending to create an opportunity for prayer. Practicing what he preaches, he seeks solitude on the mountain to spend some private time in prayer with his heavenly Father. Jesus does what he encourages all of us to do: go to your room and pray privately to your heavenly Father.

In the meantime, the disciples are struggling as they row against a strong headwind and turbulent waters. They manage to make some progress, but they have not been able to reach shore. Suddenly they are alarmed to see Jesus walking toward them on the sea.

They react with fear thinking they are seeing a ghost. Jesus reassures them with the words "*Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.*" When times are turbulent, and we are tired our defenses are down and we tend to react as opposed to respond. In a weakened state we tend to fall back on our basic instincts... fear. The disciples are tired and overwhelmed and they react with fear. Life does that to us. No one escapes this human reality. This is another reason why the third commandment is so great of a gift that God has given to His people: we need to rest in the Lord that we may respond to His grace as opposed to react to worldly influences.

Peter is looking for proof. "*Lord if it is you; command me to come to you on the water.*" Jesus calls Peter and he walks on the water. Pretty awesome stuff. However, when Peter's

attention is drawn to the strong wind and the turbulent waters, he takes his eye off Jesus and begins to sink into the depths of the sea. The subtle thing here is that Peter took his eye off Jesus. He became too aware of the wind and the waters. He was distracted. In other words, when we take our eyes off Jesus we begin to sink into the ways of the world. The seas are a biblical symbol for a sinful world. When we pay attention to sin, wickedness, evil and most especially when we are overwhelmed by our sinful, we sink deeper into the world of sinfulness. Is it not true, when we are caught up in our own sinfulness, we do not look to Jesus? We are blinded by our sin. This happens most especially when we are overwhelmed by sinful temptations. The temptations seduce us and grab our attention and we do not look to Jesus. We begin to sink into the world of sin.

We do have to admire Peter in the first place. He boldly steps out of the boat. He is walking on the water. We have to say that because he knew Jesus, he also had a sense of faith in his master. Peter asks Jesus to call him and he responded by getting out of the boat. This little piece of the scene speaks to all of us. Consider this point. In knowing Jesus, we put our faith in him and trust his calling us to discipleship. With the joy of knowing Jesus we are ready to prove our faith by making a bold expression of the faith. However, at this point we must expect temptations to quickly follow.

A good example: when a vow is made as in Christian Marriage, Holy Orders or Religious Profession, the battle lines are drawn. This is precisely where the temptations will rise up that will challenge the call (vocation) of Christ to follow him in these Christian Vocations. The call to follow Jesus will be met with strong headwinds and turbulent waters. As Peter seized this bold moment of faith, this is exactly when the temptation to take his eyes off Jesus came. Even so briefly he gave into the strong winds and turbulent waves of the world.

It was Jesus who provided the grace for Peter to do what is humanly impossible. Grace builds on nature. Without the grace of Jesus, Peter is left to rely on his own feeble power. When he cries out, it is Jesus who reaches out and saves him. Jesus chided him with the words "*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?*" These are words of correction and not condemnation. Jesus did not want to humiliate Peter for his failure but rather to encourage him to stronger faith. Peter always needs to keep his eyes firmly focused on Jesus.

This problem for Peter will resurface later when Jesus is arrested and when he is questioned in the courtyard. Peter will consider the present danger to his life. He fears being discovered as one of Jesus' disciples. He will deny Jesus three times. Knowing this we are painfully reminded by this story that we need to keep Jesus in our sight and trust the grace he provides that keeps us faithful during difficult and trying times.

The conclusion is worth noting here. The disciples proclaim... "*Truly, you are the Son of God.*" This is the first of three times of this declaration of Jesus' divine sonship in the Gospel of Matthew. They have come to recognize that Jesus has done exactly what Yahweh was said to do in the Jewish Scriptures. For Matthew's Jewish Christians this is a notable and affirming point. Knowing their scriptures, they connect that it is God who treads upon the waves of the seas. This is noted in the book of Job and the Prophet Habakkuk. God is the one who stills the storms that makes the waves rough and as the One who saves the faithful from drowning in the seas of mortal danger found in the Psalms. These Old Testament references give testimony to the Divine Sonship of Jesus. He is acting as only God can act, doing only what God can do.

The point that is being built up in the gospel of Matthew is the conclusion... *“Truly, you are the Son of God.”* We, the readers, are to come to this faith conclusion. Jesus continues to reveal God and His divine plan for our salvation. There is only one way to the Kingdom of God and that is through the only begotten Son of God: Jesus Christ. Wherever Jesus is, there is the Kingdom of God. We are to put our faith in Him. When we put our faith in Him, we will trust His word. He is the Word in the flesh. It’s all about Jesus Christ. And like St. Peter, Jesus will call us out of the safety of the boat, doing what is humanly impossible. With eyes firmly fixed on him we can walk on water. His grace will assist us to remain faithful when everything is trying to distract us and tempt us to look away from Him. Then when we need rest we can get into the boat (the Church) with him and he will encourage us and strengthen us to be his faithful followers.

Have a great week
Father Ralko

NOTE WELL: Next **Saturday, August 15th**, is a Holy Day: The Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The obligation to attend mass has been lifted for a couple of obvious reasons. However, for those who would like to observe the Holy Day, I will have mass at 9:00 a.m.



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

CHANGE IN OFFICE HOURS

Our new office hours are
Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

JULY BOOSTER MANIA WINNERS

- \$50- Mark Hill
- \$25- Mary Ann Ewart, Dr. Jessi Middaugh, Jim McKee, Fr. Ralko, Ginny Guttridge, Carter Hogue, Steve Dickerson, Marcy Fulk and Myron Paul



Tools for School relies heavily on the community’s support. WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Here are some ways you can help:

Make a monetary donation by mailing a check/cash to Eastside Community Ministry, P.O. Box 965, Zanesville, OH 43702-0965.

- Purchase school supplies to donate. (Please drop off your donations to Eastside Community Ministry in a sealed bag Monday – Thursday from 9a.m.-4p.m.)
- Call Eastside Community Ministry at [740-452-7519](tel:740-452-7519) and sign up to VOLUNTEER!



2020 ST. NICHOLAS PARISH FAMILY FUN NIGHT WINNERS

Capital Prize Winners:

- \$5000.00 – Larry & Connie Wilson
- \$100.00 – Diane Searls, Nathan Nordine, Marie Fleer, Heather Newman, Jeff Kosco, Angie Mansor, Allie Coury, Natasha Oliver and Marvin Paul

Chinese Auction Winners:

Will Kline, Karen Millward, Mary Klemens, Jamey Kuhn, Nancy Peck, Sally Paul, Heather Newman, Aiden Rhoades, Patty Boggs and Marcia Fulk **THANK YOU** to Mike & Corine Musselman, Sandie & Ed Jackson and Miriam Cornett for your donations!

The month of August is dedicated to the **Immaculate Heart of Mary**. We celebrate Jesus' mother (and our mother) during this month, in particular on August 15th when we remember her **Assumption into Heaven** and August 22nd when we celebrate the **Queenship of Mary**. Mary has been given many titles over the last 2000+ years, but did you know that St. Pope John Paul II gave her the title of **"Queen of the Family"** in 1995? What a beautiful name describing her relationship to both God and us!



“He said, “Come”. Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.” - MATTHEW 14:29

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Church Support

July 26, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$8,555.00
EFT	\$5,940.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$10,606.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$3,746.00

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

St. Nicholas Church has a convenient way to make your regular offerings. With our electronic giving program, you can easily set up a recurring giving schedule. It provides a much-needed consistency for our church. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, our church will continue to receive your contributions on an uninterrupted basis. To become an electronic giver, call or visit the church office or our website: stnickparish.org.

BISHOP ROSECRANS HIGH SCHOOL/ BISHOP FENWICK SCHOOL SCRIP PROGRAM

Gift cards in our SCRIP program at Bishop Rosecrans High School and Bishop Fenwick Schools can still be purchased. As of now, any special SCRIP orders will be ordered on Monday's. SCRIP is still being sold from inventory. If you would like to purchase SCRIP at any time or need information about our program, please email Julie Wagner or call the school office at (740) 452-7504. A time will be arranged for the gift cards to be picked up.

St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel is open to pray the Rosary on Monday at 2:00 p.m. for anyone who would like to participate.



What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, August 10, St. Lawrence
9:00 a.m., Mass: Cecil Mary Soller, Church

TUESDAY, August 11, St. Clare
9:00 a.m., Mass: Minh Nguyen, birthday, Church

WEDNESDAY, August 12, St. Jane Frances de Chantal
9:00 a.m., Mass: Barbara Miller, birthday, Church

THURSDAY, August 13, SS, Pontian, Pope and Hippolytus
9:00 a.m., Mass: Pastor's intention, Church

FRIDAY, August 14, St. Maximilian Kolbe
9:00 a.m., Mass: Reg & Sue Grear, anniversary, Church

20th Sunday of Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, August 15, THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

9:00 a.m., Mass: Mary Lou Wagner, Church

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

5:15 p.m., Mass: Family of Herbert & Rose Cooper, Church

SUNDAY, August 16

8:15 a.m., Mass: Bertha Haren Church

Mary Lou Staker, birthday

10:45 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church

Readings for Week of August 10

Mon.	2 Cor 9:6-10	Jn 12:24-26
Tues.	Ez 2:8-3:4	Mt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14
Wed	Ez 9:1-7; 10:18-22	Mt 18:15-20
Thurs.	Ez 12:1-12	Mt 18:21- 19:1
Fri.	Ez 16:1-15, 60, 63	Mt 19:3-12
Sat.	Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab	Lk 1:39-56
Sun	Is 56:1, 6-7	Mt 15:21-28

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 REMEMBER ST. NICHOLAS PARISH IN YOUR WILL. CALL THE PARISH OFFICE AT 453-0597 FOR MORE DETAILS.