

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From the Pastor's Desk

The month of October is Respect Life Month in the Church. This month we reflect on the precious gift that we have received from God: life. We also are called upon to cherish this precious gift all around us especially when we consider the moral issues surrounding life. In fact, all moral issues are ultimately about ways of respecting life. "*Live the Gospel of Life*" is the theme of this year's Respect Life Month. It is also the 25th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical letter "The Gospel of Life." The Gospels are at the heart of our life as followers of Jesus Christ who is in his person the Incarnate Word. To know the Gospels is to know Jesus. To know and love Jesus is to live the Gospel. Serving the Lord is living the Gospel of Life.

During Respect Life Month we focus more specifically on those issues that deal directly with life itself. The obvious issues are abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, capital punishment, and so forth. We hear about these issues often in the secular media which subtly endorse the right to act on these violations against life. We hear about them in *drips and drabs* so often that they become common place in our society and find their way into our subconscious. Not too long ago I came across a small article about pediatricians encouraging the use of IUDs for teenage girls. What? My suspicion is that most people would accept this bit of "news" unchecked and as wise and prudent suggestion to intelligent readers. However, it was the final line of the article that I found particularly disturbing. It was a quote from a pediatrician (not an OB/GYN) ..." *All methods of hormonal birth control are safer than pregnancy.*" I don't know about you, but from my studies this *opinion* is beyond the pale. It begs the question; safer in what way? Yet this is the kind of information that the media will put out there in which an idea (right or wrong) is planted in the mind. That idea needs to be researched and challenged.

The ease in which this kind of thing is reported as well as the frequency, we can easily become numb to the seriousness of this issue and the vast array of life issues in general. We are aware that the Church has taken a strong position on all the life issues and to be honest most people hardly pay attention to the reasoning behind the Church's teaching. I think part of the problem is that the Church's positions take time to read, think, and understand in order to live. The Church teaches on the issues of life to assist us to be *right* with God. For those who do not know the truth and wisdom of what the Church teaches about the life-issues is the knee-jerk reaction that the Church must be against it therefore the Church is wrong.

However, these issues are important, and we do need to spend some for prayerful reflection. Being a Christian does not make living in this sinful world easier. In fact, to follow Christ in this world comes with the expectation that life will be difficult. It is a matter of taking up our cross every day and following Christ. Just the same, the more we spend time in reading and prayerful reflection about these things we will come to know of the greatness and the wisdom of God. We also discover that the small things are important as well as the big things when it comes to the life issues. The infinite wisdom of God is also found in the finite details.

I may have shared this story once before, but I think that the retelling is important about this very point. I remember several years ago when I was a young priest. I was called on to come and visit a young man who was dying. He was a Catholic who had fallen away from the Church for several years. He had done some serious thinking and realized that he needed to get his life in order. He needed to be *right with God*. The poor young man was suffering terribly: he was dying from AIDS. In his

reflection on his life he was expressing the devastating effect that a single cell, the HIV virus, had on his life. As he said, one microscopic virus erupted into this full-blown life destroying disease. In that one microscopic cell was the fullness of the disease. Yes, small things do matter. In that cell was the fullness of its identity: what it was: HIV. Life and death can be found in that one cell. Under the microscope the scientist sees and declares the truth of what this is... the HIV/AIDS virus. Written in that cell is its identity and its destiny.

As I think about this my thoughts go to another single cell: a fertilized human egg. When it comes to this single cell many people want to call it all kinds of things other than a new human life. They call it "tissue" or the "product of conception" or anything else, but not a new human life. In that single cell is written its identity and destiny. There exists in this cell everything that is needed, if I may say, for a fully developed human life. Amazing, the small things matter. We can discover the goodness, greatness and wisdom of God in the smallest of details.

This reminds me of a euphemism that is often used. Sometimes people refer to an embryo as a "*potential human being*." I don't know about you, but I find this wordplay rather disturbing. This phrase is used to soften the abortion debate. It sounds less harsh when seeking the legalization and acceptance for abortion. It is also used in support for embryonic stem cell research and cloning. It renders the embryonic cell to the status of inanimate object: not human; just a potential or possible human. In some circles there are people who give animals human status but are not willing to give that same status to a fertilized human egg. The point here is the embryo is not a "*potential human being*" it is already a human being. More precisely the human embryo is a "*human being with potential*". Words matter; they can clarify or confuse the issues.

Nevertheless, God reveals His greatness in the smallest of details. In the miracle of conception, a new life is created: the parents contribute the human material and God creates the new human soul. Thus, the parents procreate; they share in the act of creation with God who creates the new human soul. This new human life has begun. It is a miracle. This new life deserves our genuine respect. In our respect for life we give our humble praise to God.

God creates the new human soul for this new life. Written into this fertilized egg is the identity and destiny of this unique life. The fertilized egg is a new human life from the first moment until the last moment of his/her life in this world. The new human soul created by God is present from the first moment of conception and remains through the last earthly moment to its ultimate destination with God. With this human soul, God has written into this new life the true identity of this human life as a child of God who is destined to find his/her fulfillment in God. Again, the words of St. Augustine speak tenderly to our hearts. "*You have made us for yourself O God and our hearts are restless O God until they rest in you.*" We have respect for life not merely because this life is human; we have respect for life because this unique life is created in the image and likeness of God. It is a holy respect.

"*Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.*" Pope Francis.

Pray for a greater respect for life.

Father Ralko

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

Church Support

September 27, 2020, 2020	
OFFERTORY	\$5,177.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$1,288.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly deficit	\$(5,572.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Youth Ministry News:

STUDENTS IN GRADES 7-12 are invited to St. Thomas Activity Center Sunday, October 11 from 6:00 -8:45 p.m. for Catalyst Night. Enjoy games, skits, food and friends as we welcome the NET Ministries Team. All students are invited (Catholic Schools, Public Schools, Home Schools).

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Mt. Olive Cemetery has a part time position available. Duties would include mowing, weed eating, helping to open and close graves, help pouring footers for headstones and snow removal. If interested, please call the Parish Office at 453-0597.

Men of the East

St. Mary’s Mattingly Settlement will host the Men of the East for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Thursday, October 8 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the church. All men of the twelve-parish consortium are invited to attend. All current state and diocese COVID-19 protections will be observed. Men of The East is a new Catholic Men’s Laity Ministry comprised of all Catholic men 18 years and older who are registered at one of the twelve parishes in Knox, Licking and Muskingum Counties. Men of The East exist to support, strengthen, and help maximize the spiritual growth of men of the Catholic Church. Men of The East is a part of the larger Catholic Men’s Laity Ministry for the Columbus Ohio Diocese.

October, The month of Our Blessed Mother, Mary

In honor of Our Lady of The Rosary, we will pray the Rosary before the weekend Masses.

ROSARY RALLY 2020

Come and join us for the celebration of “Our Lady of Fatima’s apparitions” to be held **Sunday Oct. 11** from 1:30p.m.-3:30 p.m. in front of the Muskingum County Courthouse esplanade. Please be there between 1:00-1:30. Bring your rosaries and a chair. For further information, please contact: Patty Schmutz at 452-3369, Carol Fluharty at 704-6477 or Margaret Kronenbitter at 221-0813.

Bishop Fenwick Preschool has been adding students weekly, which is a wonderful thing, so there are now 2 positions available. Part-time Aide - Monday-Friday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Part-time EDP - Monday-Friday 2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Please contact Susan Swackhammer, Elementary Director, Bishop Fenwick at 740-454-9731 or sswackha@cducation.org to apply for one of these positions. Childcare experience is beneficial. Must have Protecting God’s Children and a background check.

2020 ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH BAZAAR

The parish bazaar for 2020 is cancelled. We hope to see everyone in 2021.

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program for men and women who experienced the trauma of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional home. It is a safe place to learn how alcoholism and other family dysfunction affected the past, how it influences the present, and how to heal the wounds for a better future. Meetings will be held in the Saint Nicholas Church Social Hall (Church Basement) Wednesdays, beginning October 14th, at 7:00 p.m. Please use the Silliman Street door. Meetings are expected to last no more than one hour, and masks are required. Contact James Sullivan for more Information at (740) 670 –2959.

Jubilee of Anniversaries Celebrates Marriages with Mass on October 25, 2020 -- Couples celebrating their 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th, 60th (and every year thereafter) anniversaries in 2020 are invited to the annual Jubilee of Anniversaries in honor of their marriages! Bishop Robert Brennan will celebrate Mass at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 25, at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Westerville. The Jubilee Mass will also be livestreamed for couples who prefer to attend virtually. All registered couples, whether attending or not, will receive a personalized certificate. Couples who R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, October 14, will be included in the Mass worship aid and The Catholic Times. Visit columbuscatholic.org/marriage-enrichment.



Many people think they know what the Church teaches, but often what they have heard is rumor or restatement from someone who, though well intentioned, did not really know themselves. We are all on a journey but where are we headed? The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a great opportunity to discern God’s call and mission for our lives, and an opportunity to learn more about the Catholic faith. Persons who attend RCIA include current Catholics who desire to go deeper into their faith, spouses of Catholics who want to learn more about what the church teaches, and inquirers who are just curious; as well as those who have made that decision to join the church. Not everyone who participates in the RCIA program joins the church. Everyone makes their own decision. All are welcome! Classes begin Wednesday, October 7th and will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Office. If you would like to join us, please call the office (740) 453-0597, ext. 14.

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Building a Culture of Life Series is October, Respect Life Month. Join us for an extraordinary virtual series. Topics include Raising the Next Pro-Life Generation, Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service, Making End of Life Decisions, and a Respect Life Mass celebrated by Bishop Brennan. Sponsored by the diocesan Office for Social Concerns, Marriage & Family Life Office, and Greater Columbus Right to Life. No Cost. To register and for speaker details go to www.bclc.life.

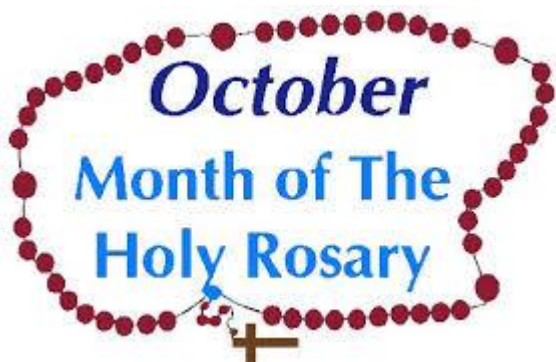
ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

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. 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 something prevents 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.

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.

Please join us each Monday at The St. Nicholas Parish Office Chapel 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.



What's Happening in Our Parish

MONDAY, October 5, Blessed Frances Xavier Seelos
8:00 a.m., Mass: Jeff Armbrust, Church

TUESDAY, October 6, St. Bruno
9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church
[St. Nicholas Intention, Dee Joseph]

WEDNESDAY, October 7, Our Lady of the Rosary
9:00 a.m., School Mass: Ray Andrews, Church

THURSDAY, October 8
8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church
[St. Nicholas Intention, Sr. Miriam Dosch]

FRIDAY, October 9, St. Denis, bishop
8:00 a.m., Mass: Joan Shaffer, Church

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, October 10
4:15 p.m.-4:45 p.m., Confessions, Church
5:15 p.m., Mass: Mr. & Mrs. Fred Sullivan, Church

SUNDAY, October 11
8:15 a.m., Mass: St. Nicholas Parishioners, Church
10:45 a.m., Mass: L/D Members of the Sullivan & Floss Families, Church

Readings for Week of October 5

Mon.	Gal 1:6-12	Lk 10:25-37
Tues.	Gal 1:13-24	Lk 10:38-42
Wed	Gal 2:1-2, 7-14	Lk 11:1-4
Thurs.	Gal 3:1-5	Lk 11:5-13
Fri.	Gal 3:7-14	Lk 11:15-26
Sat.	Gal 3:22-29	Lk 11:27-28
Sun	Is 25:6-10a	Mt 22:1-14

Live the Gospel of Life

RESPECT LIFE MONTH
October 2020