

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

From the Pastor's Desk

This Friday we recall the 48th anniversary (January 22, 1973) of the Supreme Court's decision *Roe v. Wade*. It is our sincerest desire as Catholic Christians that this decision, which is bad law, needs to be overturned. Such a desire leaves many people feeling uneasy and nervous. We know from history that it is nearly impossible to take back something that has been granted in law. In this particular case abortion is considered a right under the law. Furthermore, the right to abortion was passed under great pressure from special interest groups rather than reasonable debate. At the time of its passing (1973) scientific and medical facts were dismissed. The issue was wrapped in the language of personal rights and privacy. There was no real and honest discussion on these matters based on the scientific facts. We know this by the fact that whenever the topic is raised there are raw emotional flare-ups. This is followed by much pettifoggery of the issue. Just the same, though abortion is protected by the law and is lawful, it remains immoral and sinful.

We look at our modern society with a Christian mind and heart. We witness the ongoing secularization of society and the weakening of faith and morals. A telltale sign of this weakening is a growing hardness of heart toward others. With the hardness of heart comes a lack of gratitude. The first lack of gratitude is present in the most basic and simplest way: thankfulness for the gift of life. People take life for granted. Once life is taken for granted there is a loss of respect for life itself. Life is no longer seen as precious. Life becomes subject to qualification; one life is more important than another; my life is more important than yours. This leads to the argument of which life has greater rights: the born versus the unborn.

Respect for life makes us look beyond ourselves. It forces us to consider the life of others. Life is the gift graciously granted to all people by God. We are all created in the "image and likeness" of God. That must move us to contemplate respect for all human life. It is ultimately respect for God.

This is rooted in the Christian virtue of Love. Christian love is selfless. With this virtue we are called to be willing to make sacrifices for others for the sake of God. It is a virtue that rejects the notion that my life is more important than another's. It is a virtue that tells us that all life is precious and deserves our love and respect. Is this easy? No. However, with the grace of God all good things are possible.

In our secularizing society, along with the hardness of heart, the source for this hardness of heart is overlooked and denied: sin. We are often blinded to the reality of sin. This blindness is present in our personal lives as well as in our society in general. It is manifested in the many arguments justifying abortion. The immoral sinful aspect of abortion is not even considered: the intentional death of an innocent human being. Blindness can easily be hidden behind the argument of the primacy of personal rights. There is blindness and denial in self-justification. Sin blinds us. Along with the hardness hearts, truth no longer resonates within the mind, heart and soul.

Nevertheless, we recall many Catholic politicians hiding behind that politically correct canard who say that they are personally opposed to abortion, but they cannot impose their personal beliefs on others. That sounds like a well thought out benign response. In reality it is nonsense and it is cowardly. The same argument should be directed toward them since they are by their statement imposing their moral position on others.

Whenever politics and morality come into contact there is always tension. When there is a clash between politics and morality it is usually interpreted as a conflict between Church and state. It is the political side that always claims that the Church is getting political, which by the way is the only way they interpret things: politically. Politics can never speak on matters of faith and morality. The Church on the other hand is quite capable of speaking of matters of faith and morals. This is not political. However, politicians should be concerned that their political opinions and decisions be morally good. What the Church teaches on morals is important. As the Church teaches, she is not imposing but merely proposing her teachings on Faith and Morals. These matters are proposed because personal ascent to the teachings on matters of faith and morals must be freely given; not forced. The Church teaches the truth. The Church cannot teach falsehoods since that would be immoral and inhuman. The Church cannot expect individual persons to give ascent to falsehoods. In an ironic way, it is the political side of the argument that imposes their opinions or ideas.

When it comes to the life issues such as abortion, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, cloning etc. we are dealing with moral issues not political issues. Abortion has been declared a right and thus in a secular society there is an attempt to take it out of the moral realm. Yet the truth remains, it is a moral issue. The other life issues are moving in a similar direction. (If these are considered a right, how can they be morally evil?) Nevertheless, as a people of faith we are very much aware of the moral character as well as its sinful nature. These are serious issues; they also carry serious sinful characteristics. Sin always leaves its destructive mark. We can try to deny it, ignore it or refute it. The mark remains and it taints every aspect of life and every relationship. This is the growing hardness of heart and blindness to sin.

Faithfulness to God always comes first. It is impossible to be faithful to one another unless that faithfulness rests on the foundation of a faithful relationship with God. In the same way we cannot genuinely love one another unless we have a loving relationship with God first. The destructive nature of sin destroys our relationship with God as well as our relationships with others. It also follows that *our respect for the gift of life* finds its foundation in our respect and faithfulness to God; the source of all life. Respect for life is respect for the sovereignty of God as the Lord of life. Sin is a lack of respect for the Author of life and life itself.

It may be an exercise of the mind to imagine where our society would be if the Catholic Church did not propose her teachings on morality: especially those that concern the life issues. Without the persistent teachings and challenges from the Catholic Christian community on these crucial moral issues our society may very well be further down the road of moral decline: more than where we are today. If the Church were to remain silent over the last forty-eight years, we can realistically say that we would be living in a very different world.

As the Catholic Christian community, we must take a firm and absolute stand on this issue. The life issues, especially on abortion, are very basic. We must get the abortion issue clear and correct in our mind and heart or we will never get anything about life correct. Since it is so fundamental, we must expect that our stand on abortion will not be welcomed in this secular, sexualized and sinful world. We must also expect and be

prepared to experience great opposition against the Church. This may also result in greater persecution as well. It will not be easy. Thus, we must take seriously that we need to grow in knowledge and virtue with humble devotion before God.

Our great source for strength is found in the sacramental life of the Church. We have the grace of the sacraments to fortify our lives as Christians. This is particularly noted in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Pray for a greater respect for life.
Fr. Ralko

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

We pray for those who have died recently:

Ann Bronkar,



Church Support

January 10, 2021

OFFERTORY	\$5,342.00
Diocesan Tax	\$(770.00)
Fenwick Subsidy	\$(2,635.00)
Rosecrans subsidy	\$(485.00)
Available for Parish Operations	\$1,453.00
Parish Operating Expenses	\$(7,825.00)
Religious Education Expenses	\$(890.00)
Other Income	\$1,855.00
Weekly surplus	\$(5,407.00)

May God bless you for supporting your parish!

Respect Life Mass is Friday, January 22, 2021, 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph Cathedral. Bishop Brennan will be the main celebrant. On this day of the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade, our diocese will join all dioceses of the United States in observing a Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. The Mass will be livestreamed on the [Diocese of Columbus YouTube Channel](#). For more information contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at socmailbox@columbuscatholic.org or 614-241-2540.

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 are held in the Saint Nicholas Church Social Hall (Church Basement). **MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THURSDAYS 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.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED
The Parish Office will be closed on Monday, January 18th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Bishop Rosecrans Athletic Boosters

It's time again to purchase your Booster Mania tickets for the upcoming year. \$25 each or three tickets for \$60, January 1 is the first drawing, they make a good gift. Questions: Contact Marvin Paul at 740-819-3429.

Youth Ministry News!

Catalyst Nights – Students grades 7-12 are invited to a Catalyst Night at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the activity center on Sunday, **January 24th at 6:00 p.m.** The evening is led by the National Evangelization Team (NET), college age missionaries. The night includes dinner, presentations, games, skits, prayer, friends and fun. This is a joint, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas youth event and all teens grades 7-12 regardless of affiliation are invited. Parents are welcome!

The Catholic Foundation's Applications for Scholarships will open on February 1 and close March 1. Since 2007, The Catholic Foundation has awarded over \$1,300,000 in scholarships empowering over 200 young people to continue their academic and vocational studies. For more information and to apply, please visit www.catholic-foundation.org/scholarships. If you have any questions about our scholarship process please feel free to contact Dan Kurth, VP of Grants, at 614-443-8893 or dkurth@catholic-foundation.org.

Catholic Men's Conference: Called to Be Saints - February 27, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. This year's Columbus Catholic Men's Conference will be both virtual/online and in-person. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, this year's event will be small group gatherings at various parishes throughout the diocese along with live streaming on the Catholic Men's Ministry website, Facebook and YouTube. Speakers include Devin Schadt, Chris Stefanick, Fr. Donald Calloway, and Bishop Robert Brennan. To register go to www.cathollicmensministry.com.

WE NEED YOUR HELP FINDING OUR PEOPLE. Even though we are not able to visit those in nursing homes and the homebound, we continue to send cards and deliver prayer books. However, it has come to our attention that some have moved. Please help us update our nursing home and homebound lists by notifying the parish office with the name and location of those who are either homebound or in nursing homes. We don't want to miss anyone! (740) 453-0597, ext. 14.

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.

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND PRAYER CARDS! Looking for a good read? A variety of good books are available in the vestibule, including children's books. The suggested donation is \$2.00 per book and proceeds are used to purchase additional books. Free copies of the "National Catholic Register", a Catholic newspaper that covers today's hot topics, are available on the front pews in the church and in the vestibule. Also, prayer cards and pamphlets on a variety of topics are available in the vestibule. These are also free. If you don't find what you're are looking for, try New Beginnings Book Store located at 1204 Brandywine Blvd Ste A, a locally owned Christian book/gift store.

The Book of Intentions - Praying for each other's intentions is an essential part of parish life. The Book of Intentions can be found in the vestibule. If you would like the parish to pray for your intentions, please write the intention in a sentence or two in the book. The intentions will not be read aloud, but will be referenced during the "Prayer of the Faithful" at each Mass.

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, January 18

Parish Office Closed

8:00 a.m., Mass: Rita Petho, Church

TUESDAY, January 19

9:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

WEDNESDAY, January 20, St. Fabian

9:00 a.m., School Mass: Dee Joseph, Church

THURSDAY, January 21, St. Agnes

8:00 a.m., Mass: St. Thomas Intention, Church

7:00 p.m., Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting, Church Basement

FRIDAY, January 22, Day of Prayer for the Protection of Unborn Children

8:00 a.m., Mass: John Hohman, Church

The 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

SATURDAY, January 23, St. Vincent

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

5:15 p.m., Mass: Myra Tetak, Church

SUNDAY, January 24

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

9:15 a.m., Sunday School, Parish Office

10:45 a.m., Mass: Doug Davis, birthday, Church

Readings for Week of January 18

Mon.	Heb 5:1-10	Mk 2:18-22
Tues.	Heb 6:10-20	Mk 2:23-28
Wed	Heb 7:1-3, 15-17	Mk 3:1-6
Thurs.	Heb 7:25-8:6	Mk 3:7-12
Fri.	Heb 8:6-13	Mk 3:13-19
Sat.	Heb 9:2-3, 11-14	Mk 3:20-21
Sun	Jon 3:1-5, 10	Mk 1:14-20

Cantor Schedule

January 23 & 24

5:15 p.m. Kevin McCarthy

8:15 a.m. Janet Moses

10:45 a.m. Sandy Black