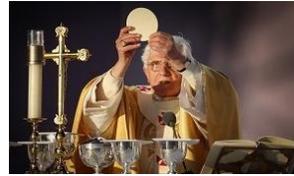




SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
By APPOINTMENT



THE MASS
LIVE STREAMED



MEETINGS - VIDEO CONFERENCING
ZOOM

OMPH NEWSLETTER

PASTOR'S LETTER

April 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

On April 30th, 2000, Sister Faustina was canonized, and Pope John Paul II surprised the world by declaring that the Second Sunday of Easter would be known as Divine Mercy Sunday from that point on.

On that same day, Pope John Paul II declared, *"This is the happiest day of my life. The Message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me... which I took with me to the See of Peter and which in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate."*

Easter Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday have a common thread running through them, the **mercy** and **compassion** of Jesus Christ. This was the mission of Sister Faustina - to be an apostle of Mercy!

On Good Friday, 1937, Jesus requested that Sister Faustina, a Polish nun make a special novena before Easter Sunday, from Good Friday through the following Saturday. In her journal, Sister Faustina describes an experience where Jesus came to her and asked that a picture be painted according to the vision of Himself as the fountain of mercy. He also left her a chaplet to be recited and said that it was appropriate to pray the chaplet at three o'clock each afternoon.

Commenting about the red and pale rays gushing forth from Christ's pierced side on the painting, John Paul II wrote, *"the blood recalls the sacrifice of Golgotha and the mystery of the Eucharist; the water according to the rich symbolism of the Evangelist John, makes us think of Baptism and the Gift of the Holy Spirit."* We can see why Pope John Paul II said, *"This is the happiest day in my life!"*

Easter Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday are all about God's **mercy** and **compassion**. Remember, on Easter night after the Resurrection, *"When the doors were locked,"* Jesus appeared to his disciples and breathed on them giving them the Holy Spirit to go out into the world to show **mercy** and **compassion** as the church's first ministers of reconciliation.

He is Risen Alleluia,
Alleluia!



Peace be with you.

Someone once asked me, "Why does God keep forgiving us?" Perhaps a glance at the picture of Divine Mercy will help us arrive at the answer - because he is full of **mercy** and **compassion**, or better yet - *he is* mercy and compassion!

The pale ray that we see in the picture symbolizes the sacramental life of the church begun at baptism when we are cleansed of original sin and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The pale ray also represents the sacrament of reconciliation where we go to experience God's overflowing **mercy** and **compassion** when we are weighed down by our sins and failures.

The red ray symbolizes the mercy and compassion flowing out to us at every Eucharistic banquet celebrated.

During this very difficult time of COVID-19, most of the faithful are unable to physically receive the sacraments, truly this is a sad time. But we are an Easter People, Christ has conquered sin and death, this time of darkness will not last forever. Remember, Christ has risen, he is present among us - Emmanuel. Although we are not gathered around the Eucharistic table, he continues to pour out his graces to all of us in many different ways.

May we be strengthened like the early disciples by the graces that flow from the Eucharistic banquet and may the renewal of our baptismal promises help us to be ministers of mercy and compassion to all those we meet, but especially those who are suffering or seem lost.

May Mary our Mother watch over and protect us always.

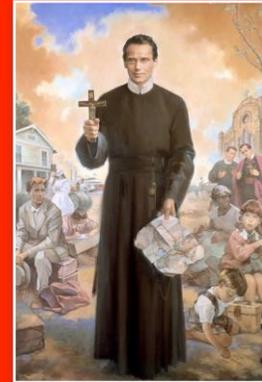
Fr. John

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ENTERING PARISH BUILDINGS DURING TIME OF PANDEMIC

We ask you please do not enter any of the parish buildings unless authorized by Fr. John or Fr. Jim during this time of COVID-19. The buildings are sanitized, and for your safety and ours we do not want to spread the virus. We know many of you have keys to the doors, but we ask you - **PLEASE DO NOT ENTER ANY OF THE CHURCH BUILDINGS WITHOUT APPROVAL.** Thank you,
Fr. John

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos



In 1860 Fr. Francis Seelos was proposed as a candidate for the office of Bishop of Pittsburgh. Having been excused from this responsibility by Pope Pius IX, from 1863 until 1866 he dedicated himself to the life of an itinerant missionary preaching in English and German in the states of Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

After a brief period of parish ministry in Detroit, Michigan, he was assigned in 1866 to the Redemptorist community in New Orleans, Louisiana. Here also, as pastor of the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption, he was known as a pastor who was joyously available to his faithful and singularly concerned for the poorest and the most abandoned. In God's plan, however, his ministry in New Orleans was destined to be brief.

In the month of September, exhausted from visiting and caring for the victims of yellow fever, he contracted the dreaded disease. After several weeks of patiently enduring his illness, he passed on to eternal life on October 4, 1867, at the age of 48 years and 9 months. His Holiness Pope John Paul II, proclaimed Father Seelos Blessed in St. Peter's Square on April 9th of the Solemn Jubilee Year 2000. His Feast Day is October 5.

HOLY HOUR LIVE-STREAMED EVERY FRIDAY - 3:00 PM

This last Friday we started our first Holy Hour to pray for an end to the Pandemic, for the victims of the virus, and for all those who are sacrificing to keep us safe - first responders and health care professionals. During the Holy Hour we are also praying for all the needs of our parishioners. During the hour of prayer, we are having Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. This is a difficult time, but Our Blessed Lord has promised us that He would never abandon us - He is with us always, join us for this very special time of prayer.

NEW PARISH WEBSITE

We hope to introduce very soon a new parish website. One of the things we've noticed as a result of this pandemic is that communication is critically important to our parish life. The new website seeks to be much more engaging in a number of different ways especially for people seeking to deepen their relationship with the Lord. The new website also seeks to be more informative in regard to parish activities and spiritual nourishment. We will inform you when the new website is activated.

LIVE-STREAMING UPDATE

We believe (knock on wood) we have finally turned the corner when it comes to live-streaming. We have not had any major problems for close to one week, thank you Lord! One of the graces that we have received from this terrible virus is the live-streaming in our parish. We are able to reach out in so many creative ways now that we never thought possible. So many people are watching the daily Mass and the special video series that Fr. Jim is producing. Like Pope Francis says, "We have to reach out to those people on the periphery!" People are tuning in from all over the country. A special shout out to our camera people - Jim Lawson and crew.

FR. JIM'S VIDEO SERIES & SCHOOL MASS

I want to thank Fr. Jim for putting together such wonderful video programs for our families during this difficult time. While Fr. Jim is focusing on the family, he is also reaching out to the children in the parish on a separate day. You can see Fr. Jim's programs on Facebook - please watch for times on the parish website and Facebook. By the way, over 800 people watched one of Fr. Jim's presentations - thanks for spreading the Good News Fr. Jim.

How We are Reaching out to our Parishioners

- ◆ A parish response team has been formed - **OMPH CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE TEAM** - to come up with ways to reach out to OMPH parishioners. We will be meeting on ZOOM. Our first meeting was Friday, March 27.
- ◆ We have created a new **MINISTRY TEAM** to reach out to parishioners who may be in need at this time. If you would like to part of this team, *please notify us at* (church email-omphfin@omph.org)
- ◆ We have started to **LIVE STREAM** daily and weekend Mass as of March 29. We will live stream the 9:00 and 11:00 Mass on Sunday and the 9:00 weekday Mass. Also, we will have a Holy Hour every Friday at 3:00pm that will be live-streamed. Classes, instructions, holy hours, etc. eventually will be available via live streaming. Schedule will be published. Live streaming can be accessed on our parish website and Facebook.
- ◆ Fr. Jim has started a **VIDEO SERIES** based on the family and it can be viewed on Facebook. Next video will be announced.

OMPH SCHOOL MASS & RELIGIOUS ED. STUDENTS

We started the School Mass this Friday, April 17, at 9:00 am in the church. It was a different celebration, but a wonderful one. Although the children were not with us physically, they were with us spiritually, and I'm sure they enjoyed the Mass. As I have said before, let us never forget the students in the Religious Education Program. Although we don't see them or hear them in the hallways of OMPH during normal times - they are as dear to us as our OMPH students.

May the prayers of our children rise to heaven and may the angels of God protect us and keep us from harm. Amen

OUTREACH MINISTRY

A word of thanks to the new outreach ministry at OMPH. Last week, the new ministry group reached out to one of the vulnerable groups in our parish (especially now with this epidemic) - those over 75 years of age. Approximately 300 parishioners were called in one day. The call was simply to say *hello, how are you, we're thinking about you, is there anything we can do for you?* Some of our older parishioners might be living alone, might feel lonely or perhaps even abandoned. The phone call was a reminder - that although you might feel alone, remember - we are connected, we are the **BODY OF CHRIST**. The group also reached out to the many shut-ins in our parish. The new ministry group plans to **continue** making calls on a regular basis to those who have no email addresses, to shut-ins, and to others in the parish who may need to be contacted.

A word of thanks to those who are taking the time to call parishioners who are in nursing homes or health care facilities. Thanks to the kindness of those parishioners who are calling others who might be lonely or feeling sad at this time.

OMPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

While our school is closed, we are continuing our student's learning through online remote learning. Our goal is to prevent our students from suffering any educational loss during this unpredicted time out of the classroom. OMPH is currently accepting registrations for the 2020-2021 school year and we would love for you to join our family in our new school. During our closure, we will still be able to respond to emails. If you are interested in information about the 2020-2021 school year please contact our school principal, Mrs. Patricia Foltz, MM, - pfoltz@omph.org

PALMS AND HOLY WATER

- ◆ Palm were blessed on Palm Sunday and will be given out at a later date.
- ◆ Water will be blessed at the Easter Vigil and saved for parishioners.

PRAYER IDEAS FOR THE FAMILY

The family is the "Domestic Church." This is the first 'church' where we are taught to pray and to love God. This is an opportune time for families to come together and pray - perhaps in new and different ways. Please check out the website below, it is loaded with many wonderful and varied prayers. Also, I have enclosed at the end of this newsletter a program for ***Sunday Prayer at Home*** that can be prayed by the entire family. Since families are unable to receive the Eucharist at this time, the faithful are encouraged to make a ***Spiritual Communion*** (enclosed) which is encouraged by many of the saints including St. Alphonsus Ligouri.

<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/praying.html>

I have enclosed two new websites for spiritual nourishment that I think you might find helpful especially at this time.

NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

<https://nfcym.org/covid19/>

THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF THE CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

<https://www.cgsusa.org/homepage/covid-19-response/>



Religious Education Corner:

Happy Divine Mercy Sunday!

Divine Mercy Facts:

The Message And Image Of The Divine Mercy Of Jesus Was First Revealed To Sister Faustina Kowalska In The 1930s.

Always Celebrated The Sunday Immediately Following Easter Or The Second Sunday Of Easter

Became An Official Feast Of The Church On April 30th, 2000

The Same Day That Sister Faustina Now Saint Faustina Was Canonized

By Pope John Paul II Who Himself Became A Saint

Divine Mercy Sunday Of 2014 Which Was April 27th, 2014

Along With Saint John XXIII

Please Check Your Email For Additional Divine Mercy Information And For A Fun Treat That You Can Have With Your Family To Celebrate The Day.

Stay Hopeful, Have Courage, And Be Well!

Kelly Lawrence

ompheled@dejazzd.com | 717-738-4517

In our Thought and Prayers

Jane Muldowney, Anna Leshner, Florence Windish, Gloria & Basil Reynolds, Patrick Michael Ward, Jody Shimp, Megan Kreider, John Mento, Anna Finkey, Phoenix Rann, Joanne Dever, Josie Novotnak, Mary Stanavage, Mary Ann Wilk, Theresa Foley, Tom Trachte, Kody Ingham, Mary Kay Guthrie, Diane Lerman, Ron Pogwist, Philomena Rozario, Beverly Benning, Julie Leone, Joe Columbo, Lael Swank, Diane Lerman, Barbara Beebe, Sean Hanrahan, Mary Crawford, Barbara Szobonya, Pat Fry and Margaret Gardner.



Prayer to our Patroness for Protection

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.
We fly to you today as your beloved children.
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.
Pray for us, loving Mother,
and gain for our nation and world,
and for all our families and loved ones,
the protection of your holy angels,
that we may be spared the worst of this illness.
For those already afflicted,
we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,
wipe away their tears and help them to trust.
In this time of trial and testing,
teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.
Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.
We come to you with confidence,
knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother,
health of the sick and cause of our joy.
Shelter us under the mantle of your protection,
keep us in the embrace of your arms,
help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

MASS INTENTIONS

Masses that were scheduled will still be said in private. To schedule a new Mass intention, please call the Parish Office at 717-733-9641.