

Saint Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

Saint Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

stbernadetteparish.net



The Madonna of Mercy

celebrating the Year of Mercy

Painted (about 1472) by the Florentine master Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494)

fresco in the Church of Ognissanti (All Saints), Florence

the 21st Sunday in the Year

August 21, 2016

Our Parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES

Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	<i>wmthomaskessler@icloud.com</i>
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	<i>stbernaparish@yahoo.com</i>
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	<i>kwkerns@gmail.com</i>
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	<i>maristellaspirt@gmail.com</i>
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	<i>businessmstbparish@yahoo.com</i>

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

Ben Factor	liturgical music		<i>b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us</i>
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair		
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	<i>schmelifox@earthlink.net</i>
Bremen St Vincent de Paul		(740) 569-3710	

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu.
602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	<i>dcn.mark@frontier.com</i>
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	<i>carpenter.277@osu.edu</i>
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	<i>aessman001@att.net</i>
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	<i>shuber57@yahoo.com</i>
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	<i>lizlatorre@gmail.com</i>

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

Pam Eltringham	principal	(740) 654-3137	<i>peltring@cducation.org</i>
Barb Huber	secretary	(740) 654-3137	<i>bhuber@cducation.org</i>

Saint Bernadette School is at
1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com

stberlan@cducation.org

Sacramental Life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be Wednesday, **Sept 14. Take the class before the child is born.** If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. **Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.** If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession.** The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick **when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.**

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to **call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long** since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

let us pray

FOR THE 20TH SUNDAY

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

AND WITH POPE FRANCIS IN AUGUST

His universal intention is about sports:

That sports may be an opportunity for friendly encounters between peoples and may contribute to peace in the world.

His evangelization intention is about living the Gospel:

That Christians may live the Gospel, giving witness to faith, honesty, and love of neighbor.

in both our parishes

rcia — who is this month of Sundays for?

Please recruit now! Extend the annual invitation to come to the Catholic Church! Or to come home. Or to find out what it is that Catholic Christians actually believe — even for those who are already Catholics. You could come to help those others who are interested. Or you could postpone it for another year. Perhaps you have postponed it in the past. When do you suppose you will quit postponing and come?

The first RCIA (**Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults**) session is Aug 21 ... that's this evening. So there isn't much more time for hemming and hawing. Plan to come. We'll make a place for you!

The Catholic Faith has **beautiful and true answers to the questions people ask about the meaning of our lives**. Are you or is your husband or wife or a friend searching for that meaning? Do you want to find deeper unity for your marriage and family? You or someone you know may want to learn what this Faith has to offer. Not the cartoon image of Catholicism that a hostile society presents, but the Faith of the Church herself. Sometimes a person already Catholic wants to find out what it is really all about. It can be any one, in any circumstance of life.

The RCIA helps such folks find what they are looking for. Many people don't know of this vital resource—unless we tell them. It is not a matter for insistence or pressure. It is a sharing, an invitation that is respectful. **The invitation** will be much more attractive when extended by **someone willing to accompany the quester** along the way.

People who have benefitted personally from the RCIA experience are urged to gather with the inquirers, serving as sponsors and mentors of various kinds, to help them, if it is God's will, to become grafted onto the life of the Catholic Christian Church.

RCIA in our parishes will meet each **Sunday evening for about a month of Sundays**, beginning on Aug 21.

Call Kathy at 654-1893 on Tuesday morning at Bremen St Mary or any other weekday morning at St Bernadette for information.

get ready for Mass

If it is something special, we get ready for it. That goes for Sunday Mass. The most important way to get ready is to be in—or get into—the **state of grace** so that we can receive Holy Communion worthily. Then we need to **fast** (a tough word for a very easy task) for at least an hour before we receive Communion. And we could try to prime the pump, as it were, for hearing the Word of God as it will be read that day by **reading and pondering that little portion of the Word** of God. Those are matters of spiritual readiness.

But to go to Mass is to approach the great sacramental mysteries, **approaching physically as well as spiritually**. Old-fashioned rural Protestants were on to something when they spoke of wearing their “**Sunday-go-to-meetin’ clothes**.” We could all **dress up** a little bit, not to show off our fancy wardrobe but to “do something beautiful for God.”

And think of what we say to our kids before a trip or before a film or a concert or a ride on the ferris wheel: We tell them to **go to the bathroom ahead of time**. Emergencies can happen to just about everybody. And each of us has the health she/he has been blessed with. But with a little extra precaution we could be (and help others to be) even more single-minded about worship and to avoid the

procession to and from the rest rooms. Thanks for thinking about all these things.

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary	
4 PM	<i>for the people</i>	Saturday, Aug 20	
		Sunday, Aug 21	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, Aug 21	
8:20 AM	<i>Wilford & Loretta Beiter</i>	Monday, Aug 22	
		Tuesday, Aug 23	8:20 AM <i>David Stretton</i>
8:20 AM	<i>Martha Mitroff</i>	Wednesday, Aug 24	
6 PM	<i>intention of Jim & Rita Merk</i>	Thursday, Aug 25	
8:20 AM	<i>Chris Konkler</i>	Friday, Aug 26	
4 PM	<i>for the people</i>	Saturday, Aug 27	
		Sunday, Aug 28	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, Aug 28	

pray in church

You can come to church to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament **any day, during daylight hours** at either St Bernadette or Bremen St Mary. The front doors of both churches are unlocked during the day. People praying in church are welcome to **turn a light on** when needed. They are urged to **turn off lights** when they aren't necessary.

st bernadette

welcome to st bernadette catholic school

Our goal at St. Bernadette School is to nurture and encourage, in each child, academic, spiritual, emotional, and physical development; to guide them in their choices and appreciation of the cultural arts. Our students are active participants in their education.

from the school website

ministers at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	
Saturday, Aug 20 4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Abby, Mary, & Sam Frazier	Susan Garrett Marguerite Grimm Joyce Guenther	Kathy Kehnast Denise McGuire Brad Rider
Sunday, Aug 21 11 AM	Sandy Landefeld	Collin McCrady, Caroline Messerly, Diana Woo	Nancy Griffith Ben Peters Larry Sanford	Teresa Scarpitti Julie Whitehead Amy Woo
Monday, Aug 22 8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Becca Fuller Lexi Utz	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday Aug 24 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Brianna Hilyard Mitchell Ortiz	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday, Aug 25 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Jack Gentile Joey Mannella	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan
Friday, Aug 26 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Gunner Robertson Sarah Woo	Jim & Rita Merk	
Saturday, Aug 27 4 PM	Brad Rider	Isabelle Gentile, Gus & Olivia Spiegel	Tara Craaybeek Jim Kuhn Becky Kuhn	Craig Shaw Mary Steyaert Kathy Wagner
Sunday, Aug 28 11 AM	John Hartig	Anna Hartig, Logan & Tori Loy	Lee Guinan Jim Merk Rita Merk	Larry Sanford Valerie Shaw Becky Wickham

st vincent de paul

Next Saturday and Sunday, Aug 27 & 28, the **St Vincent de Paul Society truck** will in the St Bernadette Church parking lot to accept donations of clean, usable clothing and household items. Thank you for your continued support.

eucharistic adoration

St Bernadette Parish has **solemn exposition** of the Blessed Sacrament at 9 AM on **Wednesdays**. We have commitments for people to keep watch for the time from 9 AM until 1 PM. We could **extend exposition further into each Wednesday**. If you can commit to a regular presence for adoration for an hour from 1-2 or from 2-3, call Kathy at the parish office.

You can come to church to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament **any day during the daylight hours**.

a new hymnal !

We are watching the delivery trucks for a new hymnal. Sometime in the next few weeks, **St Michael Hymnal**, fourth edition, will be arriving at St Bernadette.

The St Michael Hymnal is the one that St Mary Bremen acquired a few years ago. It has served that parish very well. It is blue like our old hymnal, but with a different repertoire. It takes into account **the translation changes** which were implemented five years ago this Fall. It contains a lot of Spanish and Latin texts which won't have much impact on us. But it also has **the original wording of many classic hymns** without change for political correctness.

This hymnal was developed by a parish in suburban Lafayette, Indiana. It is used at St Patrick Cathedral in New York among many other parishes. We hope it will be welcome at St Bernadette.

The cost of this new resource has been borne by generous parishioners who wish to remain anonymous. So you can't say "thank you" personally, but you can indeed pray for them and their intentions.

blood drive thank you

Thanks to all donors who supported our blood drive on Aug 13 with their donations of 39 units of blood. This can help save up to 117 lives. The need is great this summer with our usual seasonal drop in donations and with flooding in Louisiana and West Virginia. Everyone who stepped up to help is **very much appreciated**. Our next St. Bernadette drive will be Saturday, Dec 3.

parish contributions

The **St Bernadette offertory collection** for Aug 14 came to \$5,867.

bremen st mary

parish contributions

The **St Mary offertory collection** for Aug 14 came to \$1,886.

news about the parish school of religion

Thank you all for supporting our Parish School of Religion (PSR) Program. The children are filled with the joy and love of Christ and we appreciate the opportunity to be your partner in teaching them more about their faith. Please watch for **registration** forms in the parish hall and return by Aug 29.

We are excited for this upcoming PSR year with Sarah Borah as a

new voice for the weekly group faith discussion. Tyna is working to improve communications to families and staff. We have an abundance of teachers and are happy to announce **this year's teachers**:

Pre-school, K & 1st Angi Skinner
 2nd grade Wyatt Borah
 3rd & 4th grade Shawna Kunkler & Cody Schmelzer
 6th & 7th grade Jerry & Tyna Schmelzer

The parish is grateful to **our teachers from last year** for their dedication and time:

Sarah Borah Shawna Kunkler Angi Skinner
 Cody Schmelzer Nikki Schmelzer Jerry & Tyna Schmelzer

Others who have **assisted our program**, whether for set up/clean up, special programming, or assisting with programming:

Wyatt Borah Cody Fyffe Abby Skinner
 Sydnee Rogers Tony Schmelzer Pam Redding
 Angel Springer Angie & Kent Kerns
 Dismas & Jodie Schmelzer

ministers at mass at bremen st mary

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday, Aug 21 8:30 AM	Jeanne Schmelzer	Spencer Conrad Schmelzer	Damian & Debbie Schmelzer, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox	Maurice Schmelzer family	Damian Schmelzer
Tuesday, Aug 23 8:20 AM	Jim Schmelzer				Jim Schmelzer
Sunday, Aug 28 8:30 AM	Barb VanFossen-Cook	Abaigeal Bell Reagan Conrad	Irene Kunkler, Jim Schmelzer, Barb VanFossen-Cook	Catherine Noll, April Schmelzer	Jim Schmelzer

in the diocese of columbus

breakfast with the bishop

Catholic Social Services hosts **Breakfast with the Bishop** on Tuesday, Oct 4, at 7:30 AM at the Renaissance Columbus Downtown Hotel. Guest speaker is Robert Lupton, author of Toxic Charity. For registration and sponsorship information call (614) 221-5891 or visit www.colcoss.org.

catholic men's luncheon club

The Catholic Men's Luncheon Club on Friday, Sept 2, features Don Brey who will speak at St Patrick Church on *Faith and Politics*. Holy Mass begins at 11:45 AM followed by lunch and Mike's talk until about 1 PM. No reservations necessary. \$10 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend. For information, contact Tim Merkle, CMLC President at htm@ejhlaw.com.

the beauty of the feminine

The 5th annual Beauty of the Feminine **Catholic Women's Conference** will happen on Saturday, Oct 8, from 8 AM to 3 PM at St Thomas Aquinas Parish in Zanesville. It is a day of fellowship, prayer and faith formation. This year's theme is "**Witness to Mercy**." Registration is accepted until Sept 30 by calling St Thomas at (740) 453-3309 or by emailing thebeautyofthefeminine@gmail.com. Registration fee of \$20 includes breakfast and lunch. Registration on the day of the event is \$25. Contact Susan with questions or visit www.thebeautyofthefeminine.weebly.com and Facebook @ TheBeautyOfTheFeminine for information.

Sacred Heart congress

The 5th annual Sacred Heart Congress will be Saturday, Oct 15, at St Matthew Church in Columbus from 7 AM to 1 PM. It features Timothy O'Donnell, president of Christendom College; Fr Stash Dailey, spiritual director of Sacred Heart Columbus and administrator of Holy Family Parish; and Fr Ted Sill, pastor of St Matthew Parish. A free-will offering will be taken. For information and registration visit www.sacredheartcolumbus.org.

retrouvaille

If your marriage is troubled and stressed, unloving or uncaring; if you have grown cold and distant; if you are separated, or are thinking about it, don't give up. **Retrouvaille** (a French word that means "rediscovery") is a program to help heal and support married couples experiencing difficulties, loneliness or pain. It is also for separated or divorced couples wanting to try again. For information call (614) 296-9704 or visit www.retrouvaille.org.

spousal prayer: a way to marital happiness

A retreat for married couples happens on Saturday, Aug 27, from 9 AM to 4 PM at Immaculate Conception Church in Columbus. It features celebration of Mass and a reflection by Bishop Frederick Campbell and presentations by Deacon James Keating, author of **Spousal Prayer: A Way to Marital Happiness**. Cost is \$65 per couple, which includes a light breakfast, lunch and *Spousal Prayer* book. For information and to register, call (614) 241-2560.

help needed

The Sisters of Children of Mary just excavated 4 acres of land and they need help **clearing trees and building permanent pastures** for their cows at their convent in Newark. Any day is fine. Call (740) 323-1977. Find information at www.childrenofmary.net.

men's retreat at the shrine

The Catholic Laymen's Fall silent retreat happens at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 9, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 11. In reflection sessions, Fr Stephen Hayes OP will help men to appreciate the value of the medieval crusades by developing his theme "**Taking up the Cross: Becoming Modern Crusaders for the New Jerusalem of Christ**." Cost is \$130. For information and registration contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.1@osu.edu.

happily ever after ... despite the rough spots

Join us for a Marriage Encounter weekend and learn ways to use your marriage's ups and downs to deepen your love for each other and for God. Why not try a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend**? The next weekend in central Ohio is Nov 11-13. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmcecolumbus.org.

courage

Do you have a same-sex attraction and desire to live a life of authentic friendship, rooted in chastity? You are not alone. **Courage** provides spiritual support for Catholic men and women with a same-sex attraction, who strive to live chaste lives in accordance with the teachings of Christ and his Catholic Church. Visit www.couragerc.net.

living mercy in a jubilee year

mercy: beating heart of the gospel

It is a year of mercy. That's about seeking and enjoying God's mercy to us and extending that very same mercy to other people.

Have you been to Confession, to receive God's merciful forgiveness? Have you been in recent years. Pope Francis writes that "**Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel**". We seek God's mercy because we know he is full of mercy and is overflowing generous with his mercy. Now is the time to turn to him.

God's only requirement is that we, in our turn, be merciful. Have you been practicing mercy? You know in what need of his mercy you are. When we stop to think about it we can discover lots of folks in need of the mercy we could offer.

The Church helps us to discover the people we need to be helpful to by teaching us the works of mercy. To live mercy, we must (re)discover both

the **spiritual works of mercy**,

- counsel the doubtful
- admonish sinners
- forgive offences
- instruct the ignorant
- comfort the afflicted
- bear patiently those who do us ill
- pray for the living and the dead,

and the **corporal works of mercy**,

- feed the hungry
- clothe the naked
- heal the sick
- bury the dead.
- give drink to the thirsty
- welcome the stranger
- visit the imprisoned

Learn all 14 by heart. Post them where you'll see them often, on your refrigerator or your mirror or someplace. Then make it your daily aim to live them. Examine your conscience about them. It's not always easy. But the works of mercy are a must for anyone who seeks to follow Christ. They will bring you joy ... and bring you to eternal joy.

canonization of mother teresa on EWTN

Tune in to EWTN Global Catholic Network for extensive television coverage of the canonization of Mother Teresa **live from Rome on Sunday, Sept 4**. Go to ewtn.com for information and find EWTN on a channel near you by going to www.ewtn.com/channelfinder.

visit our lady of consolation

There will be a **Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation** in Carey on Wednesday, Oct 5. Bus departure time is 7:55 AM from the K of C Sunrise Center in Zanesville; return is at 6:45 PM. Cost is \$25 (lunch can be purchased at the cafeteria). Make checks payable and send reservations by Sept 7 to Margaret Kronenbitter, 2700 Wayne Ridge Rd., Zanesville, Ohio 43701. For information, call Ann Messerly at (740) 654-3447 or Rita Merkat at (740) 654-3255.

in the deanery

fisher catholic high school: advisory board

The pastor must appoint **two new members to the FCHS advisory board to advise the administration of the school**. A person does not need to be a Fisher parent or alum. The main requirement is that an adult parishioner be a practicing Catholic member of St Bernadette Parish who is concerned about how Fisher can continue in support of the high school's purpose: to help parents educate their young to be faithful Catholic Christians, good citizens, and good husbands or wives, good fathers or mothers. The term of service is two years. Interested applicants should contact Fr Kessler during August.

fisher fall festival

The Fisher Fall Festival happens Friday, Sept 9, from 5-10 PM and Saturday, Sept 10, from 5-11 PM. Enjoy inflatables, children’s games, adult games of skill, K of C Fish Fry, Bob’s Backyard Barbeque, a beer garden, and other entertainment. Contact Eileen Gundelfinger at (740) 277-7063 with questions.

fisher catholic’s book donation project

Please help Fisher Catholic students Emma Marcinko, Emma Burley and Madeline Wohrer with their Junior Service Project from Saturday, Aug 6 thru Saturday, Sept 3. By donating new or **gently used books** you are **helping underprivileged children grow** academically in their school and community. Drop off boxes are located in the main vestibule and school hallway at St Bernadette. Thank you for donating to a great cause.

(When polled some Catholics complain about that.) You won’t be able to say that you aren’t being nourished by the Word of God. The bishop’s production organization is called **Word on Fire**. That says it pretty well. Subscribe. You will be grateful for this recommendation.

saint bernadette parish has a website !

The address is stbernadetteparish.net. And it hosts the **bulletin and information about St Mary Bremen as well as St Bernadette**. Maybe we should have called it by both parish names. But that would have made it more difficult to google. The important thing is that it has information and bulletins, etc, for parishioners of both parishes. And for people who want to keep in touch with our parishes.

and so does the vatican

You probably already knew about it, but it can be a problem to google, because some fakes put up anti-Catholic websites with Vatican in their name. **Home for the real thing is Vatican.va**. One very helpful place to turn to find out what the Church really teaches is **the Catechism (book length) page** at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

on the web

the national catholic register

It is the best Catholic newspaper in the United States. Like all newspapers in this new era of electronics, they were on hard times a few years ago. EWTN, Mother Angelica’s broadcasting arm, bought the struggling paper, but kept it a first rate source of information about the Catholic Church and about the Catholic point of view on modern life. The pastor subscribes to the hard copy. He looks at their website before the paper arrives by snail mail. St Bernadette Parish provides it for members of parish council. But the app is not to be missed. It is a really great convenient way to keep in touch.

the word on fire

Remember **Catholicism**? That was the TV series written and hosted on PBS and EWTN TV a few years back by **Father Robert Barron** a very smart and very engaging priest from Chicago. Recordings were presented and discussed in lots of parishes, including St Bernadette. If you liked **Catholicism**, you will probably like now-Bishop Barron’s (auxillary Bishop of Los Angeles for about a year now) **Sunday homily podcast**. It is a really good weekly source of reflection on the Scripture readings of the week. It takes fifteen minutes each week, and is easily listened to during one trip between Bremen and Lancaster. Podcasts are great that way. By following Bp Barron you can do something about the quality of the sermons you hear on Sunday.



confessions & weekday Mass nearby

These times sometimes change, though, so call ahead

parish	confessions	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Bremen St Mary	8 am Sunday		8:20 AM				
Lancaster St Bernadette	5:30 Thursday 3 PM Saturday; 8:30 AM on 1 st Sat	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM	1 st Sat 9 AM
Lancaster St Mary	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		
Lancaster St Mark	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM	
Sugar Grove St Joseph	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	
Circleville St Joseph	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM		9 AM	10 AM
Logan St John	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM	9 AM

the Church’s plan for reading God’s word this week

Sat	Aug 20	Twenty-first Sunday	Isaiah	66:18-21	Hebrews	12:5-13	Psalms	117	Luke	13:22-30
Mon	Aug 22	Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	2 Thessalonians	1:1-12			Psalms	96	Matthew	23:13-22
Tues	Aug 23	St Rose of Lima	2 Thessalonians	2:1-17			Psalms	96	Matthew	23:23-26
Weds	Aug 24	St Bartholomew	Revelation	21:9-14			Psalms	145	John	1:45-51
Thurs	Aug 25	St Louis, St Joseph Calasanz	1 Corinthians	1:1-9			Psalms	145	Matthew	24:42-51
Fri	Aug 26		1 Corinthians	1:17-25			Psalms	33	Matthew	25:1-13
Sat	Aug 27	St Monica	1 Corinthians	1:26-31			Psalms	33	Matthew	25:14-30
Sun	Aug 28	Twenty-second Sunday	Sirach	3:17-29	Hebrews	12:18-24	Psalms	68	Luke	14:1-14

Some Personal Thoughts on the Road to the Election

So what are we to do this election cycle as Catholic voters?

by Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia

My column this week is a collection of personal comments. Read it as thoughts **from a brother in the faith**, not as teachings from an archbishop.

Presidential campaigns typically hit full stride after Labor Day in an election year. But 2016 is a year in which two prominent Catholics — a sitting vice president, and the next vice presidential nominee of his party—both seem to publicly ignore or invent the content of their Catholic faith as they go along. And meanwhile, both candidates for the nation’s top residence, the White House, have astonishing flaws.

This is depressing and liberating at the same time. Depressing, because it’s proof of how polarized the nation has become. Liberating, because for the honest voter, it’s much easier this year to ignore the routine tribal loyalty chants of both the Democratic and Republican camps. I’ve been a registered Independent for a long time and never more happily so than in this election season. Both major candidates are — what’s the right word? So *problematic*—that neither is clearly better than the other. . . .

So what are we to do this election cycle as *Catholic* voters? Note that by **“Catholic,” I mean people who take their faith seriously; people who actually believe what the Catholic faith holds to be true; people who place it first in their loyalty, thoughts and actions; people who submit their lives to Jesus Christ, to Scripture and to the guidance of the community of belief we know as the Church.**

Anyone else who claims the Catholic label is simply fooling himself or herself—and even more importantly, misleading others.

The American bishops offer valuable counsel in their document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (available from the USCCB), and this year especially, they ask us to **pray before we vote**. This is hardly “news.” Prayer is always important. In a year when each Catholic voter must choose between deeply flawed options, prayer is essential. And **prayer involves more than mumbling a Hail Mary before we pull the voting booth lever for someone we see as the lesser of two evils. Prayer is a conversation, an engagement of the soul with God. It involves listening for God’s voice and educating our consciences.**

It’s absurd—in fact, it’s blasphemous—to assume that God prefers any political party in any election year. But God, by his nature, is *always* concerned with good and evil and the choices we make between the two. For Catholics, no political or social issue stands in isolation. But neither are all pressing issues equal in foundational importance or gravity. **The right to life undergirds all other rights and all genuine social progress. It cannot be set aside or contextualized in the name of other “rights” or priorities without prostituting the whole idea of human dignity.**

God created us with good brains. It follows that he will hold us accountable to *think deeply and clearly, rightly ordering the factors that guide us*, before we act politically. And yet modern American life, from its pervasive social media that too often resemble a mobocracy, to the relentless catechesis of consumption on our TVs, seems designed to do the opposite. It seems bent on turning us into opinionated and distracted cattle unable to gain mastery over our own appetites and thoughts. Thinking and praying require silence, and the only way we can get silence is by deciding to step back and unplug.

This year, a lot of good people will skip voting for president but vote for the “down ticket” names on their party’s ballot; or vote for a third party presidential candidate; or not vote at all; or find some mysterious calculus that will allow them to vote for one or the other of the major candidates. **I don’t yet know which course I’ll personally choose. It’s a matter properly reserved for every citizen’s informed conscience.**

But I do know a few of the things I’ll be reading between now and November. The list is not exclusive or comprehensive. But this year these particular titles seem especially urgent:

- **“Living the Gospel of Life.”** This 1998 pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops remains the best brief guide to American Catholic political reflection yet produced.
- ***Resurrecting the Idea of a Christian Society*** by R.R. Reno (Regnery) and ***It’s Dangerous to Believe: Religious Freedom and Its Enemies*** by Mary Eberstadt (HarperCollins). Both of these books are new, important, a key to understanding the current moment in our national life, and deeply engaging. They need to be discussed and shared widely.
- And finally two essays by the late, great Czech writer, Václav Havel, **“Politics and Conscience”** and **“The Power of the Powerless.”** Both are collected in *Open Letters: Selected Writings, 1965-1990* (Vintage Books). Havel was not (to my knowledge) a religious believer, and he wrote as a dissident during an era of Soviet bloc repression. But his commitment to what he called “living in the truth,” and his understanding and critique of the weaknesses in Western societies like our own — not just Marxist ones — were remarkable. They remain relevant *right now*, today.

The next few months will determine the next decade and more of our nation’s life. **We need to be awake, we need to clear our heads of media noise, and we need to think quietly and carefully before we vote.** None of us can afford to live the coming weeks on autopilot.

Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap., is the archbishop of Philadelphia.

*He also is the author of **Render Unto Caesar:***

***Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life.** (Image, 2009).*

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