

Saint Bernadette Parish Saint Mary Parish

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

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

stbernadetteparish.net



October is the Month of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary

That would seem to build on the feast of the Holy Rosary, which is October 7. That date, in turn, commemorates the day of the victory of European Christian coalition naval forces off the coast of Greece, where a vast navy of Islamic jihadists was preparing for the conquest of Europe. Pope Saint Pius V convened the coalition and called on the people of Europe to pray for the intercession of Mary for success in this horrible conflict. He encouraged the Christian peoples to pray the rosary, a prayer which is easy to learn and can be prayed in groups, in church or at home, and also individually. It is a prayer which takes a bit of time and helps the supplicant to keep turning back to the fundamental mysteries of the Incarnation of Jesus, his Passion and Death, and his life giving Resurrection and Ascension.

All of this remains relevant for the life of the Catholic Christian today.

October is also Respect Life Month

Don't forget to pray that we may, in public policy but also in our personal attitudes and moral behavior, return to an unflinching respect for the sacred dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.

the 27th Sunday in the Year

OCTOBER 2, 2016

these parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES			
Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	wthomaskessler@icloud.com
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	stbernparrish@yahoo.com
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	kwkerns@gmail.com
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	maristellaspirt@gmail.com
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	businessmstbparish@yahoo.com

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH			
Ben Factor	liturgical music		b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair	(740) 215-3894	
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	schmelifox@earthlink.net
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	(740) 569-7929	

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH			
Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	dcn.mark@frontier.com
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	carpenter.27@osu.edu
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	aessman001@att.net
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	shuber57@yahoo.com
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	lizlatorre@gmail.com
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, M W Th F; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu	1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130		

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL			
Pam Eltringham	Principal	(740) 654-3137	peltring@cducation.org
Barb Huber	Secretary	(740) 654-3137	bhuber@cducation.org
Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 stberlan@cducation.org www.stbernadetteschool.com			

the 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, **Oct 19. 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

1. at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
2. 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 together

FOR THE 27th SUNDAY

Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

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.

WITH POPE FRANCIS IN OCTOBER

His universal intention is:

That the countries which take in a great number of displaced persons and refugees may find support for their efforts which show solidarity.

His evangelization intention is:

That within parishes, priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary	
4 PM	Lawrence & Gertrude Berens	Saturday, Oct 1	
		Sunday, Oct 2	8:30 AM for the people
11 AM	for the people	Sunday, Oct 2	
8:20 AM	Chris Konkler	Monday, Oct 3	
		Tuesday, Oct 4	8:20 AM Marie Young
8:20 AM	Jack McGuire	Wednesday, Oct 5	
6 PM	Daniel Hoover	Thursday, Oct 6	
8:20 AM	Fred & Virginia Guenther	Friday, Oct 7	
4 PM	Thomas Stover	Saturday, Oct 8	
		Sunday, Oct 9	8:30 AM for the people
11 AM	for the people	Sunday, Oct 9	

both parishes

extraordinary ministers

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who have received their renewed training and whom the Bishop has reappointed, will be **commissioned** at Sunday Masses on **Oct 15-16**. Some of the ministers have been appointed with special training to take Holy Communion to the sick served by our parish.

The new and / or renewed Ministers of Holy Communion are:
from St Mary Parish

Neil Boch	Dismas Schmelzer	Wyatt Borah
Eileen Schmelzer	James Schmelzer	Irene Kunkler
Tyna Schmelzer-Fox	Leo Kunkler, Sr	Angi Skinner
Susan Foltz	Pam Redding	Barbara VanFossen-Cook
Karen Wolfe	Damian Schmelzer	Cathy Young
Debbie Schmelzer	Joe Young	

and from St Bernadette

Rebecca Kuhn	Jim Kuhn	Teresa Carpenter
Angeline Christy	Bob Christy	Anna Sevigny
Tara Craaybeek	Sandy Landefeld	Craig Shaw
Rosalie DeFillippo	Denise McGuire	David Shonk
Patricia Dreyer	Jim Merk	Ann Essman
Rita Merk	Mary Steyaert	Kevin Monnett
Shelia Taylor	Susan Garrett	Benjamin Peters
Mary Jane Vajen	Patrick Gins	Nancy Griffith
Bradley Rider	Kathy Wagner	Marguerite Grimm
Jean Robertson	Becky Wickham	Joyce Guenther
Larry Sanford	Lee Guinan	Teresa Scarpitti
Kathy Kehnast	John Hartig	Teresa Hartig
Amy Woo		

It may seem cumbersome always to use such a long title as “extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.” But the Church has reasons for clarifying the language we use. They are not “distributors”; giving Holy Communion is not a mere matter of distribution. They are not “special ministers”; this is not a special honor or privilege given to someone for her / his accomplishments. It is precisely “**extraordinary**” that these folks are asked to help do the work which is the responsibility of the bishop, the priest, and the deacon.

They only exercise this ministry at the **appointment of the bishop** of the diocese. And they are only ministers for the ministry of their own parish. They know not to present themselves to other parishes to give the Blessed Sacrament in

other circumstances. (The exception to this rule is the other parish served by the pastor.) Similarly, extraordinary ministers from other parishes, or those whose two year warrant from the bishop for service in this ministry has expired, are not handed the sacrament. The pastor can make an exception in emergency circumstances.

When it is possible for them to do so, we ask that the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion who will be taking Holy Communion to the sick present themselves to the priest celebrant **at the conclusion of the reception of the sacrament by the congregation at Mass**. They should have presented the pyx (the small sacred vessel for carrying the Lord) to the celebrant before Mass. **We must not treat the reception of Holy Communion as a self-serve or carry out order**. When the minister receives the pyx she / he should **proceed to the door of Church and wait for the conclusion of the Mass and then go directly to the sick**, whether in the hospital, nursing home, or home. It is not a time for small talk, listening to the car radio, or the like.

in your charity

Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Thomas D. Stover** and **Paul Gallagher**, both of St Bernadette Parish and both of whom died recently.

church is a place to pray

Socialize outside. Our church is always a place for prayer. Even when Mass is over and we are exiting. Keep it a place of silence. Visit aloud after you have gotten outside. That way, you will be respecting the awesome and continuing presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, reserved in the tabernacle. And you will be respecting the people who are trying to make a prayer of thanksgiving. It matters. If that respect disappears, Catholic Faith will be lost.

st bernadette

jillian's dinner

On Saturday, Oct 22, St Bernadette Parish will host the 16th annual **Jillian's Dinner**. This dinner raises money **to assist a family from our area who are suffering catastrophic illness, the loss of a loved one, or some such major adversity**. To recommend someone who might benefit from Jillian's Dinner,

contact Kathy Wagner at (740) 687-0504. Nominations will be considered by a lay committee and are kept confidential. A raffle is held during the dinner to generate more funds to help the family. If you have items to donate, you may bring them to the St Bernadette parish office by Oct 10.

announcing : walking with purpose

If you are interested in meeting with a group of women to explore your Catholic faith, consider joining **Walking with Purpose** at St Bernadette. The first course is a six-week faith-sharing session based on the book, *Walking with Purpose: Seven Priorities that Make Life Work*. This will serve as an introduction to the Walking with Purpose program and focus on discovering the keys to **living a busy life with inner calm**. Groups will meet weekly at the Mary Good Center starting Wednesday, Oct 19, for the morning sessions (offering childcare) and Thursday, Oct 20, for the evening sessions. **Walking with Purpose** aims to bring women to a deeper personal relationship with Christ. The personal study and group discussions help to link our everyday challenges with solutions given to us through the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church. Cost is \$10. To learn more, come to the Mary Good Center on October 19 at 9:30 AM or October 20 at 7 PM. For questions or to register, call the parish office at (740) 654-1893 or email Amy Woo at acfaching@yahoo.com. For general program information, visit www.walkingwithpurpose.com.

friends forever

The Friends Forever group travels to Utica on Thursday, Oct 20, to visit **Ye Olde Mill** and the **Velvet Ice Cream** factory where they will enjoy lunch together. Car pool from St Bernadette departs at 10 AM. Call Ann Essman at (740) 654-1893 for details.

psr classes at st bernadette

St Bernadette PSR has begun but it is not too late to enroll students. Just a reminder: Catholic parents have a **solemn moral duty** to see that their children are properly and completely instructed in the Catholic Faith. And they have a duty to see that their children attend every week (barring health or weather deterrents). And children will find **getting to know Jesus and his Church to be an irreplaceable and joy-filled part of their upbringing**.

parish contributions

The **St Bernadette offertory** for Sept 25 came to \$5,960.

bremen st mary

prayer request

Ann VanAtta is very ill and your prayers for her are appreciated. You could also send a card to: Ann VanAtta c/o Lori Stradley, 10651 Martinsburg Rd, Utica, Ohio 43080

the oktoberfest that was

It was a colossal success. The food was outstanding; the music was delightful; the company was a great mix. Thank you to everyone who helped make the Bremen St Mary Ox Roast and Oktoberfest last Sunday such a big success. The weather cooperated for a day of fun with friends old and new.

parish contributions

The **St Mary offertory collection** for Sept 25 came to \$1,439.

st vincent de paul

Today, the first Sunday of the month, the Bremen **St Vincent de Paul Society** will collect after Mass for the needy. Please continue to be generous in your support.

in the diocese of columbus

ladies' brunch

The ladies of Bremen Calvary Church invite **the ladies of Bremen St Mary to a brunch** on Saturday, Oct 8, at 10 AM. RSVP to Irene Kunkler at (740) 475-7736 by Tuesday, Oct 4.

protecting god's children

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish offers a Protecting God's Children session on Sunday, Oct 16, from 5-8 PM. A light supper will be served. Register at www.virtusonline.org and click on First Time Registrant. For questions, call Leslie Niedzielski or Pam Klein at (740) 928-3264.

diocesan young adult retreat : who do you say that i am?

Connect with Jesus and others of faith as they seek to consider who Christ is in their own life, in others, and in the world. Encounter His humanity by walking the Gospel stories with Jesus and reflecting on your relationship with Him. Grow in the love you share for each other and for those around you. The retreat begins at 9 AM Saturday, Oct 8 and concludes with 11:30 AM Mass on Sunday, Oct 9. This **Charis retreat** is offered for **young adults** from age 18 to 39. Cost is \$70. Bring a check for the Diocese of Columbus to the retreat or mail it to: Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, 197 E Gay St, Columbus, OH 43215. Financial assistance is available for this event. For information, contact Sean Robinson at srobinso@cducation.org or (614) 241-2565.

family rosary day

Our Diocesan Family Rosary Day will be celebrated this year at 3 PM on Sunday, Oct 9, at St Joseph Cathedral. This liturgy, presided over by Bishop Frederick Campbell, is an opportunity to **enjoy community, worship God, and ask our Blessed Mother's intercession** for the needs of God's people. All are welcome.

catholic men's luncheon club

The next Catholic Men's Luncheon Club features Bishop Campbell's annual address on Friday, Oct 7, at St Patrick Church in downtown Columbus. Mass at 11:45 AM will be followed by lunch and **Bishop Campbell's talk** until 1 PM. No reservations necessary, \$10 covers the lunch and meeting. Bring a friend. For information, visit www.ColumbusCatholicMen.com.

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. Speaker is Robert Lupton, author of *Toxic Charity*. To register call (614) 221-5891 or visit www.colsscs.org

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.**” To register call St Thomas at (740) 453-3309 or email [thebeautyofthefeminine @ gmail . com](mailto:thebeautyofthefeminine@gmail.com) . If you register by Sept 30, your \$20 include breakfast and lunch. Registration on the day of the event is \$25. Contact Susan with questions or visit [www . thebeautyofthefeminine . weebly . com](http://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. A free-will offering will be taken. For information and registration visit [www . sacredheartcolumbus . org](http://www.sacredheartcolumbus.org).

marian dinner

In order to better foster dedication to consecrated religious life among women of the Diocese of Columbus, Bishop Campbell hosts the annual Marian Dinner at 6 PM on Wednesday, Oct 26, at St Andrew Church’s Bryce Eck Center, with presentations by Bishop Campbell and Sr. Sharon Baldy, SCN. Call (614) 224-2251 for information or to register for this evening of prayer, friendship, learning, and discerning about vocations for women.

retrouaille

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. **Retrouaille** (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 . retrouaille . org](http://www.retrouaille.org).

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 weekends in central Ohio are Nov 11-13 and Feb 17-19. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit [www . wmccolumbus . org](http://www.wmccolumbus.org).

from the chair

Bishop Campbell takes your questions from 5-6 PM on Tuesday, Oct 4, during his live monthly call-in show. Call St. Gabriel Catholic Radio AM 820 at (614) 459-4820 to ask your question about the Catholic faith and growing in holiness.

in the deanery

join the life chain

The Life Chain is a **visual statement of solidarity** by the Christian community that **the Church supports the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception to natural death**. It is a peaceful, prayerful, public witness of prolife Americans in honor of the 56 million lives lost to abortion, praying for our nation, for people in crisis situations, and for an end to abortion. The Life Chain assembles at Miller Park parking lot at 12:45 PM **today**, Sunday, Oct 2, and stands **along Memorial Drive for one hour**. Signs are provided. Come! Let us seek God’s divine intervention for the healing of our nation

around and about

new EWTN programming

Join EWTN to celebrate **the 100th Anniversary of Fatima**. All season long, hear new programs, updates and information and see a host of photo galleries based on the young Fatima visionaries, apparitions and message from our Blessed Mother. Go to [www . ewtn . com](http://www.ewtn.com) for complete information.

catholic faith-based volunteer programs

Would you like to make a difference in your community, the country, or the world? Do you want to serve those in need and work for social justice? Check out **response 2017**, a free guide **listing nearly 200 faith-based volunteer programs and thousands of opportunities**. Volunteers serve full-time for periods of one week to one year or more across the US and in more than 100 countries worldwide. Summer opportunities are also available. Volunteers are from all walks of life—from high school to senior citizens. Contact Catholic Volunteer Network to receive your free copy/copies of RESPONSE 2017. Call (800) 543-5046 or email [info @ catholicvolunteernetwork . org](mailto:info@catholicvolunteernetwork.org). You can also search RESPONSE 2017 online at [www . catholicvolunteernetwork . org](http://www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org).

my house columbus

Pornography is a plague. 56% of divorce cases involve one party having an obsessive interest in pomographic websites. **What can we do** about this plague? It’s a sin and sinners can go to Confession. And there is My House of Columbus. Visit **My House Columbus . org** or call them on their confidential hot line at (888)989-9886.

being a catholic citizen

register so that you can vote

There is a process for voting absentee for people who are shut in (or are likely to be shut in or travelling on election day). So you can vote without ever leaving your home. It has become possible to vote at the Board of Elections prior to election day. Early voting is better than not voting. Registration must be done by Oct 11. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov 8. You can go either in person at the Fairfield County Board of Elections, 951 Liberty Drive in Lancaster (off West Fair Ave) or to [http://www . fairfieldelections . com](http://www.fairfieldelections.com) or [www . myohiovote . com](http://www.myohiovote.com).

respect life month

october is respect life month

Moved by Mercy is the theme of the 2016 Respect Life Program. The Catholic Church has long held October as a month for prayerfully remembering our firm belief that all life is **sacred**. Saint John Paul II wrote in his Encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*:

“The family proclaims life when parents teach children to communicate openly, to value all life and to fulfill their belief that **all human life is** God-given mission. The family celebrates life through prayer, thanking God for the gift of life and for each other. The family serves life by promoting the welfare and well-being of its own members and the members of the greater ‘family of life.’”

For information, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540. Visit the U.S. Catholic Bishops' website at www.usccb.org/prolife.



ministers at Mass at st bernadette						
		lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday,	Oct 1 4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Eve Darfus, Isabelle Gentile, Addy Myers	Susan Garrett Patrick Gins	Jim Kuhn Mickey Steyaert	Shelia Taylor Kathy Wagner
Sunday,	Oct 2 11 AM	Jim Merk	Avee & Drew Solt, Daniel Turner	Tara Craaybeek Bob Christy	Angie Christy Ben Peters	Jean Robertson Mary Jane Vajen
Monday,	Oct 38:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Jack Gentile, Gunner Robertson		Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday	Oct 58:20 AM	Bob Christy	Becca Fuller, Mitchell Ortiz		Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday,	Oct 6 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Brianna Hilyard, Carley Matson		Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan
Friday,	Oct 78:20 AM	Jim Merk	Lexi Utz, Sarah Woo		Jim & Rita Merk	
Saturday,	Oct 8 4 PM	Teresa Scarpitti	Mallory, Mason & McKenzie Ortiz	Joyce Guenther Lee Guinan	Kathy Kehnast Jim Kuhn	Becky Kuhn Sandy Landefeld
Sunday,	Oct 9 11 AM	Dennis Forquer	Brooke, Bryson & Zachary Vogel	Nancy Griffith Larry Sanford	Anna Sevigny David Shonk	Becky Wickham Amy Woo

ministers at Mass at bremen st mary						
		lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday,	Oct 28:30 am	Linda Qualls	Abaigeal Bell, Brooke Holt	Neil Boch, Joe & Cathy Young	James Noll Jr family	Joe Young
Sunday,	Oct 98:30 am	Jeanne Schmelzer	Regan Conrad, Isaac Schmelzer	Pam Redding, Angi Skinner Tyna Schmelzer-Fox,	Maurice Schmelzer family	Jim Schmelzer

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 PM 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	Oct 1	27 th Sunday	Habakkuk	1:2-2:4	2 Timothy	1:6-14	Psalm	95	Luke	17:5-10
Sun	Oct 2									
Mon	Oct 3		Galatians	1:6-12			Psalm	111	Luke	10:25-37
Tues	Oct 4	St Francis of Assisi	Galatians	1:13-24			Psalm	139	Luke	10:38-52
Weds	Oct 5		Galatians	2:1-14			Psalm	117	Luke	11:1-4
Thurs	Oct 6	St Bruno, Bl Marie Rose Durocher	Galatians	3:1-5			Luke	1	Luke	11:5-13
Fri	Oct 7	Our Lady of the Rosary	Galatians	3:7-14			Psalm	111	Luke	11:15-26
Sat	Oct 8		Galatians	3:22-29			Psalm	105	Luke	11:27-28
Sun	Oct 9	28 th Sunday	2 Kings	5:14-17	2 Timothy	2:8-13	Psalm	98	Luke	17:11-19

The Catholic Outlook on Halloween

(We have printed this bulletin essay before. It is included here yet again because this is still an issue and because the way we celebrate our holidays affects the way we believe and the way we share our Faith.)

For a pastor who resists rushing the season on Christmas and Easter, I may seem to be breaking my own rule by rushing into Halloween a month early. There is a reason: I have already seen yard decorations with a Halloween theme, decorations like plastic tomb stones in people's yards and skeletons hanging from trees, and ghosts dancing around the shrubbery. And, frankly, I hate to see that.

What!? You may ask. Does the Catholic Church even have an attitude about Halloween? Why on earth would they want to butt in on the way we entertain ourselves on a harmless secular semi-holiday?

Well, first off, Halloween isn't a secular holiday. It is **one of our Catholic holy days!** Or more precisely, the eve of a holy day. You probably already knew what my dictionary knows, that the word "Halloween," is a contraction of the words "All Hallow Eve[ning]," which just means it is the evening before All Saints' Day, that it is "commonly celebrated by children who dress in costume and solicit candy or other treats door-to-door." My dictionary doesn't seem to know any more than that about why it is celebrated. Problems of space, I suppose. But we Catholics won't get the teaching of this holy day right if we don't understand what it is all about.

We should not surrender our Catholic heritage to a false interpretation. Our holy days of Christmas, St Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, and Mardi Gras have all already been highjacked and turned into something else than they started as. But we can restore those days in our own lives and those of our families as days of religious observance. The same goes for Halloween.

Halloween, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day (Oct 31 and Nov 1 and 2) are days Catholics have designated for focus on the afterlife. That doesn't mean witches, ghosts, ghouls, or vandalism. It means **the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.** We are often squeamish about death, afraid even to say the word. I googled "euphemisms for death" and found 96 phrases in the first entry. Some are meant to be humorous, some try to soften the reality of death. What they have in common is a natural desire to avoid thinking about a difficult subject. A kind of neo-pagan mythology gets around death by establishing a preposterous cartoonish picture.

But we Catholics have **a beautiful belief about death.** We die and our souls are removed from our bodies. Our bodies are reverently buried in a sacred place. This is true whether our bodies are cremated or not. The Church now allows us to **cremate** bodies, but only on **the important condition** that the ashes be buried intact in a place sacred to the Christian community, and that we keep intact the teaching that the body – **this particular body – will be raised on the last day**, at the Last Judgment of the living and the dead.

In the meantime, the soul is faced with the **particular judgment**: on the basis of how we have lived our lives we are definitively adjudged bound for heaven or for hell. There aren't ghosts roaming the earth worried about how their lives ended. There are instead bodies in the ground (or if the body is disrespected by the ignorant or by non-believers, left out of the ground, but with no real detriment to the soul's judgment at the moment of death and the body's final raising up at the last day). There are souls, saved or damned.

The soul that is damned is damned, and that is final. **Hell is very bad news.** But not a surprise to a person with a well-formed conscience. There are consequences to living an evil life. The Lord's revelation and the Church's proclamation of it in her teaching makes clear what consequences to expect. The damned have wrecked their own hope of arriving at what God wants to give them. They have written their own tragedy, have dammed themselves.

The soul that is saved is bound either for heaven immediately or for purgatory prior to entry, guaranteed entry, into heaven. **Purgatory** is not a scary place. It is a circumstance of putting **the finishing touches** on a person not yet ready to see God face to face, a person whose soul is free of mortal sin but who needs further cleaning up, freeing from the stain of venial sins. The condition of purgatory is like that of a person welcome to a person's home but in need of stopping on the porch to have the tar cleaned from his shoes before he goes through the front door. Whether the time spent there is brief or long depends on the seriousness of the cleanup that is needed. There is joy in knowing that the entry will happen, but sorrow in knowing that the preparation wasn't taken care of with the help of the sacraments before arrival and that the person receiving this purgation can't do anything to help himself. **Those still living can assist that purgatorial cleanup** effort with our prayers to assist our loved ones, prayers which say to the Lord, "Look not on their sins but on the Faith of your Church." We enfold our deceased loved ones, who may have been flawed (we have no way to know the situation of any of the dead as they face the particular judgment), in our loving prayers and entrust them to the mercy of God. We believe that God hears and answers our prayers.

But the Church's teaching about **the glory of heaven** is really glorious! Saint Paul has written that "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, **what things God has prepared for them that love him.**" (1 Cor 2:9) This is what we were made for. We don't know the particulars, only that it is very good. It has to do with seeing God face to face, with being granted the beatific vision, with no further sorrows.

There is only one additional thing to add. Saint Paul uses these riveting words:

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this **corruptible** must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin: and the power of sin is the law. **But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

That is what we Catholics believe about the afterlife. What place is there in that for a phony Halloween afterlife?

— Father Kessler

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