# ST MARY'S CHURCH

14833 Kutztown Road • Kutztown, PA 19530 <u>www.StMarysKutztown com</u> <u>www.facebook com/stmaryskutztown</u> Church, Meeting Rooms, Business & Parish Offices: Phone : 610-683-7443 • Fax : 610-683-7625 Email: <u>Parish@StMarysKutztown com</u> Religious Education Center: 610-683-6454 Email: RelEd@StMarysKutztown com

### PASTORAL MINISTRY

PastorFr John MariaPastor EmeritusRev. Msgr Walter T ScheafferTransitional DeaconRev. Mr. N. Romero BrelinskyPermanent DeaconDcn. Howard SchultzCoordinator/Religious EducMrs. Ann PergoskyDirector of Music MinistryMrs. Anne Sitarikand Parish SecretarySchultz

Ladies Auxiliary Men of St. Mary's Pro-Life Committee R C I A

 PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

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 Theresa Bieak & Deb Massa

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 Mr. Tom Cengeri

 mittee
 Mr. John Tucker, O P

 Fr. John Maria
 DIOCES AN UNEOR MATION

### **DIOCESAN INFORMATION**

Diocesan Policies and Procedures on Youth Protection: <u>www.allentowndiocese org</u>

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator:

Wendy S Krisak, Direct Telephone: (800) 791-9209 Office of Safe Environment Secretary, Youth Protection and Catholic Human Services: Pamela Russo, MSW, MS ; PO Box F, Allentown, 181-5-1538 Tele. 610-871-5200 x2204 <u>Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service:</u> If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: <u>www.ReportBishopAbuse org</u> or 800-276-1562



## MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil 4:30 pm Sunday 8:30, 11: Daily Masses 7:30am ( 8:00am (

8:30, 11:00am 7:30am (Monday – Friday) 8:00am (First Saturdays)

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - Every Wednesday, 7-8 pm and First Friday of the Month, 8 until 9am SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM – Baptism is celebrated at various times, often 11a Mass, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Baptisms are also scheduled privately upon arrangement with families. Parents must contact the Religious Ed Office to arrange Baptismal Prep sessions and learn all the details.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - Saturday, 3:30-4:20p, Sundays 8:00-8:20; 10:30-10:50 am, Wednesdays 7:00-8:00p and by appointment

**SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK** – Those who are dangerously ill or facing serious surgery may receive this healing Sacrament. Please contact Father John Maria to make arrangements.

**SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY** – Congratulations! Couples must contact Father John at least six months in advance of desired date. Marriage Preparation is required for proper celebration of a valid and Sacramental marriage.

**PROSPECTIVE GODPARENTS/SPONSORS** asked to serve as Baptismal Godparents or Confirmation sponsor must request an eligibility certificate from the parish priest. To serve in this special role parishioners must: <u>Be in full communion</u> with the Catholic Church; <u>Attend Mass weekly</u>; <u>have received Sacraments</u> of Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation & Confirmation; <u>Married</u> <u>individuals</u> need be validly married in the Catholic Church. Please contact the Parish Office and allow 2 weeks to process.

**HOMEBOUND** – Parishioners homebound and unable to attend Mass please contact the Parish Office to arrange visitation, to receive Holy Communion

**HOSPITALIZED** - Call the Rectory to notify of someone in the hospital so we can pray for and possibly visit them. Each hospital in our Diocesan boundaries is either covered by a local parish or has a priest on call at the hospital.

**PARISH MEMBERSHIP** - Welcome to St. Mary's Parish! Please contact the Parish Office to meet with Father John and become registered. We also ask those who move to notify the parish **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** – Education for parish children occurs September 10 through April. Contact Religious Education

office: 610-683-6454 for registration. *Center-based* 

•Levels 1 to 5 meet every week, Sundays, 9:40-10:50am •Level 6-8 meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, 6-8pm •Youth Group (9-12) Stay tuned for upcoming events.

Home-based Arrangements may be made for select grade levels, contact Ann Pergosky

4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER, APRIL 21, 2024

MASS Intentions						
Mon 0	)4-22	7:30a	Intentions of Patty Keeney			
Tue 0	)4-23	7:30a	Lee Sadowski			
Wed 0	)4-24	7:30a	Harry and Clara Painter			
Thu C	)4-25	7:30a	William and Celestina Keller			
Fri C	)4-26	7:30a	Leonard Kusum			
Sat C	)4-27	4:30p	People of the Parish			
Sun (	)4-28	8:30a	Sophie Porambo			
		11:00a	Memory of Jennifer Schappell and intentions of Sabine Schappell			

Call the parish office to sponsor altar flowers in memory a loved one.

	READINGS and CELEBRATIONS for the WEEK
Sun	04-21 <i>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter</i> - Ac 4:8-12; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Jn 10:11-18
Mon	04-22 Ac 11:1-18; Jn 10:1-10
Tue	04-23 Ac 11:19-26; Jn 10:22-30
Wed	04-24 Ac 12:24—13:5a; Jn 12:44-50
Thu	04-25 1 Pt 5:5b-14; Mk 16:15-20
Fri	04-26 Ac 13:26-33; Jn 14:1-6
Sat	04-27 Ac 13:44-52; Jn 14:7-14
Sun	04-28 <sup>5<sup>th</sup></sup> Sunday of Easter- Ac 9:26-31; 1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8

# MUSIC MINISTRY

INTUSIC INTINISTRY						
	THIS W	'EEK	NEXT	WEEK		
4.300	Spanier, Ame	lia	Moore, Mark			
4:30p	Casey, Peggy		Casey, Peggy			
8:30a	Talarico, Tim		Skoronski, Nathan			
	Cebenko, Stev	re	Cebenko, Steve			
11:00a	Sitarik, Anne		DeWald, Heather			
11.00a	Talarico, Tim		Talarico, Tim			
Collecti	ion info: 04/07	OLG	Church	Expenses		
Regular Collection		\$2,664.00	\$4,533.16	\$8,355.09		
Building Fund		\$5.00	\$1,000.00			
Capital Campaign		\$200.00	\$1,298.00			
Parish Partnership		\$60.00	\$0.00			

## How do I sign up for Online Giving?

- 1. Visit <u>www.stmaryskutztown.com</u>
- 2. Click on the Online Giving link
- 3. Complete the online registration form. It's that simple! For more info or help setting up your account please contact

# Please pray for the sick of our parish ..... and those that care for them



Logan Alkons Shannon Morris Evie Barletta Ken Gorski Nikolette Nolte Caleb Bauer Bijou Greenwood Diana Novi Christopher Bennett Muriel Hadnagy Joanne O'Connell Benedicta Otchere Claudia Berg Devon Hanna Rick Padilla Greg Bradford Jacqueline Hartz Monica Bradford Linda Haurus Ed Pilarski Bradford family Kathy Henry Pat Regensburger David Byer Lillian Karch **Rosemarie Reimert** Nadia Cahill Michael Karch Bill Pettit Drew Cengeri Joanne Kear Megan Roth Meaghan Clark Patricia Keenev Nina Hertzog Rundle Colleen Wolff Jane Kern Richard Rusconi Jerome Costanzo Milton Kern Tina Scatamacchia Kim Costanzo Joan Kiwak Jim Sherman Nancy Devlin-Carol Korbe Litinsky John Korbe Barbara Shidisky Dave Ebling Tracy Snyder Cena Knowles Trent Eidle Nicole Sosik Henry Kryeski Patricia Farabaugh Edward & Rosemary Arlene Stadalnik Ashley Geidner Law Todd Tanis Farhat Harry Lewellen Ralph Touch Paula Fehlinger Julie Lindsey Amy Turko Florentine Firlein Eva Malanczuk Christine VanDoorn Joey Flecher Dennis Martinsen Phillip Vazquez Tammy G. Barry, Sharon Miller Joseph Wawrzak Joe Galantino Bonnie Wessner Elaine O. Miller Michelle Galantino Geoff Miller Sandra George Contact office to update list: secretary@stmaryskutztown com

## Please Pray for all those serving our nation

-						
Keenan Albright	Anthony DiPietro	Nick Marakovits				
Kyle Albright	Charles Douglass	Melissa Marks				
Michael Barron	Joseph Douglass	Laura Miller				
Andrew Barthol	Keith Essig	Spencer Morris				
Frank M. Bieda	Ryan Flanagan	Heather				
John Boyer	Kale Follweiler	O'Donnell				
Matthew Boyer	Michael Allen Haak	Menaka Nayyar & Anthony Pirnot Jake Schmeck Phillip Talarico Steve Ziegler				
Jonathan Cardé	Diane Henry					
Ryan Cengeri	Cmdr. Jason Hoch					
Eric Cunningham	Joshua Joseph					
Timothy DeVall	Dan King					
	James Knight					
Contact office to undate list: secretary astmary algutztary						

Contact office to update list: secretary@stmaryskutztown.com

		EVENTS THIS WEEK				
Sun	04.21	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter				
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Mother's Day				
		Hoagie Orders due				
		Elementary Religious Education, 9:40a				
		Level 3 Family Retreat, 1:30p				
Tue	04.23	Faith Sharing, 10a				
Wed	04.24	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7-8p				
		Make hoagies in the p.m.				
		Pickup hoagies, 7p				
Thu	04.25	Hoagie pickup, 7:30a				
		Finance committee meeting, 7p				
		Music Ministry, 7p				
Sat	04.27	St. Mary's Women's Spirituality Retreat at				
		Alvernia Univ., 9:30a-3p				
		Pray the Rosary, 4p				
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership				
		EVENTS NEXT WEEK				
Sun	04 28	$5^{\text{TH}}$ SUNDAY OF EASTER				
Sull	04.20					
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership				
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a				
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception				
Tue	04 30	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception <u>Junior High closing celebration, 6p</u>				
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception <u>Junior High closing celebration, 6p</u> Faith Sharing, 10a				
	05.01	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception <u>Junior High closing celebration, 6p</u> Faith Sharing, 10a Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7-8p				
Wed	05.01 05.02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception <u>Junior High closing celebration, 6p</u> Faith Sharing, 10a Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7-8p Music Ministry, 7p				
Wed Thu	05.01 05.02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection – Parish Partnership <u>Closing Mass for Religious Education, 8:30a</u> Coffee & Donuts, <i>plus</i> Dcn. Romero reception <u>Junior High closing celebration, 6p</u> Faith Sharing, 10a Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7-8p				

Lv1. 3 1st Communion Practice, 6:30pSat05.04 1st Saturday daily Mass, 8aPray the Rosary, 4p

2<sup>nd</sup> Collection – Mother's Day

**BULLETIN DEADLINE:** Submit items by 12n one week prior to Sunday. *Submit full-page items two full weeks in advance.* 

**PARISH MEMBERSHIP:** Welcome! Please register for parish membership. Call 610-683-7443 for an appointment and find out about all the parish has to offer! *Inform us if moving.* 



<u>OFFERTORY ENVELOPES</u>: If you'd like to receive offertory envelopes please contact the parish office: <u>secretary@stmaryskutztown.com</u>

**SOUP KITCHEN REPORT:** Apr 13/14 we served 230 meals of hot food: chili, rice and green beans with fruit cup, PB&J, and beverage (coffee, hot chocolate, water, milk). The patrons were *very* grateful for our service and the gift of food. We had great workers and plenty of food. Many thanks for all donations of food and money; to those who prepared and transported the food and supplies; to those serving meals and washing pots and trays; and those who supervised. All leftover food and supplies were given to Kennedy House. **Next Soup Kitchen dates: Dec. 21/22**.

<u>MARY'S CAFÉ</u>: God is Calling! On Friday, April 26 at 7pm, all are invited to join Father John at Mary's Cafe. The topic will be "God is Calling!" All too often, we think only a few special people have a calling from God, and the rest of us just wander around on our own. Not so!

God IS calling, but can we hear Him? Are we willing to take His call? The evening will mention the particular vocations to marriage, religious life and the priesthood, but will focus upon the UNIVERSAL call to holiness for all of us – at every stage of life! From there, we can discern our particular call from God, and encourage others to do the same.

Join us for this informal & informative talk, Q&A and fellowship with your family at St. Mary's. Hope to see you Friday, April 26 at 7pm in the Religious Ed Center! (*The morning edition of this talk will be Friday, May 3 at 10am.*)

**ADULT CONFIRMATION AT CATHEDRAL**: 11:30a, May 19 Bishop Schlert will celebrate Mass wherein he will confirm adults of our Diocese. Those to be confirmed are those adults who were baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, received their First Holy Communion, are catechized, but never confirmed. Please contact Fr. John Maria to discuss necessary instruction, and registration with the Bishop!

**YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED**... The Bishop announced in February: effective June 18, Fr. John Maria will also add the role of Director of Vocations, Diocese of Allentown. Please note he is not leaving St Mary's! In this new responsibility, he'll oversee assisting formation of current seminarians as they discern the call to the priesthood and promote vocations throughout the diocese. Please pray for Fr. John, and above all, *pray for vocations to the priesthood*!

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTION- FATHER JOHN MARIA

Our readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter illustrate the power of the Risen Christ, proclaimed by His Church in every generation.

In the Gospel, Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd, who came to lay down His life for His flock. He knows His sheep, and they know the voice of their shepherd, because they are trained to follow and trust. We hear the desire of Christ that there be but one flock, and one shepherd.

In our reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear the proclamation of another shepherd, Peter, whom Christ called and empowered to continue His saving mission, in gathering the nations. Saint Peter boldly calls souls to Christ, while proclaiming "There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved." This was true then, and it remains true today.

The Lord is still calling souls to follow Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

In our noisy culture, we can let the voice of the Good Shepherd be drowned out. As a result, His call to holiness for every one of us becomes indistinct. And His particular call to men to serve as priests and shepherds can go unheard.

Please pray for an increase in young men willing to listen and follow the call of the Good Shepherd! He desires to provide and feed us with the Bread of Life -- the Holy Eucharist, food for the journey home!

**DEACON BRELINSKY TO BE ORDAINED JUNE 01:** Deacon N. Romero Brelinsky has been a great blessing to our parish since his diaconate assignment began in June 2023. His formal assignment with us has come to an end as he finishes his last semester at seminary and prepares to be ordained a priest on June 1. The Bishop will inform him that day of the new parish he will be assigned to serve.

Dcn. Brelinsky be with us the weekend of April 27 & 28,

and there will be a Farewell Gathering at "coffee & donuts" in rm. 117/122 after 8:30am Mass. There will also be a reception on Saturday June 1 at 2pm in the social hall, where Father Brelinsky will greet people and give "first blessings" - a beautiful and powerful blessing from newly-ordained priests. More details will follow as that time nears.



Please keep Deacon Romero in your prayers as he approaches his special day!

**MASSES FOR THE "PEOPLE OF THE PARISH**": You may have noticed that frequently the Mass intention is offered for the "People of the Parish". Some might speculate that this is used for an otherwise "unfilled slot", but that is not the case! By canon law, a pastor is obliged to apply a Mass for the people entrusted to him on each Sunday and holy day of obligation. There are some alternative options, but the norm is to have one weekend Mass reserved for this purpose.

It is also interesting that this applies to registered parishioners, and ALL those within territorial boundaries, whether Catholic or not. This is because a pastor has a certain spiritual responsibility for all souls within the parish territory. (No wonder he looks tired!)

Offering Mass "Pro Populo" ("for the people") is one of the ways a priest prays for all the intentions people have - a sick mother, a grieving widow, a wayward son, an unemployed husband, etc. Even if you have not asked, rest assured that your needs are being prayed for at Mass.

**MASS INTENTIONS:** As Catholics we believe souls united in Christ remain connected-even after death, seek the prayers of the saints, and pray for the souls of loved ones who have died in Christ. It's a most powerful prayer and act of love to request Mass be offered for the souls of loved ones.

The Mass book is open for Saturday/Sunday and weekday Mass requests. <u>Contact the parish office to</u> <u>schedule a Mass intention</u>. Because of the increased demand for scheduled Masses:

- <sup>†</sup> The book is open for the whole year until dates are full.
- <sup>†</sup> Please request no more than 1 weekend Mass per month.
- <sup>†</sup> There are no limitations on daily Masses.
- Personal Mass intentions not available for: Holy Thursday, Easter, Christmas, Mothers' nor Father's Day

DAILY MASSES WITH BISHOP SCHLERT, BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC: All are invited to celebrate with the Bishop: April 25, 8:30a - Sacred Heart, Palmerton May 22, 8:30a - St. Joseph the Worker, Orefield Sept. 9, 8:00a - Our Lady of Mercy, Easton Sept. 12, 8:00a - Holy Guardian Angels, Reading MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! St Mary's will have a Parish Mission on May 19, 20 & 21! Each evening - Sunday, Monday & Tuesday- at 7pm, we will gather for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Evening Prayer, song and a talk by some of the finest priests in the diocese, including Fr Mark Searles, Fr. Richard James and Fr. Matthew Kuna.

There will be special periods of Eucharistic Adoration each day, as we honor our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek the intercession of His Mother. Watch future bulletins for more details in committing to a time of adoration!

"For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day." - John 6:40

## The 2024 Because We Are Catholic Annual Appeal is

underway! Our parish support is a vital part of this Diocesan-wide effort to serve children and families in our own community and throughout the Diocese of Allentown. Scan the QR code to make your gift today: www.BecauseWeAreCatholic.org. Thank you!



HGA REGIONAL SCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN

**<u>REGISTRATION:</u>** 2024-2025 school year registration is open! Learn more, contact Kelly Prechtl: <u>kelpre@hgaschool.org</u>

EXPLORE \*NEW\* DIOCESAN EMPLOYMENT OPENINGS Visit: www.allentowndiocese.org/about/employment

**ST FRANCIS CLASSICAL ACADEMY, BALLY HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM 2024**: Regional teens-classical Catholic education is here for you! If you are interested in using your state tax dollars to aid area families afford SFCCA for their HS tuition, visit <u>WhySFCCA.com</u>

**HGA Regional School DINE OUT EVENT**: 4-8p, April 24 at Chipotle (Muhlenberg location). Use code LVARGTK and a portion of your bill will support HGA!

HGA REGIONAL SCHOOL-FIGHTIN' PHILS NIGHT: 6:45p Apr. 26. Tickets: <u>fevo-enterprise.com/event/Holyguardian</u>

**INDOOR FLEA MARKET:** 8a-1p Apr. 26; 8a-1p Apr 27; after Masses Apr 28, St. Columbkill, Boyertown. Drop off clean, useable, working items 8a-6p Apr 22 and 23 (**no clothing, electronics, baby items, or car seats please**).

**FRIEND, INC. BENEFIT AUCTION**: 5p April 27, Kutztown Fairgrounds. In-person and virtual in 2024. Bid on art, jewelry, household items and local gift certs. AND the famous desserts! Learn more: <u>friendinc.org/benefit-auction/</u>

**MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEA:** 1-4p, April 28, St. Francis of Assisi Church Hall, Allentown. Mothers and daughters, ages 9 to 13, together spend a memorable afternoon exploring God's gift of femininity. Featuring presentations on the physical and emotional changes girls experience, the sacredness of life, and empowering tips about modesty, virtue, and personal style. Light lunch, door prizes, games. Register: <u>allentowndiocese.flocknote.com/signup/152407</u>

**YOUTH EVENT APRIL 28**! The Bishops of the US have declared 2024 a Year of Eucharistic Revival! Catholics in America are called to draw closer to Jesus and reflect upon the amazing gift He has given us in the Holy Eucharist. He desires to be near each and every one of us. He is truly present in the Holy Eucharist - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Fr. Patrick Baikauskas is one of a handful of priests chosen to travel the country and will be speaking about the Holy Eucharist as a "A Mystery to be Believed, Celebrated, & Lived". **On Sunday, April 28** at Holy Guardian Angels, his talk will be geared to teens – grades 7-12. We will have adoration from 6:30-8pm with Fr. Baikauskas' presentation at 7pm. Light refreshments will follow.

Our Religious Ed levels 7 and 8 will be going to this event. All parish youth in grades 9-12 are invited. Connect with other teens and be a part of the youth group gathering at St Mary's over the next few months! Call or email Fr John for details! \*\**General Public event 6-8p, April 29. Register:* <u>allentowndiocese.flocknote.com/signup/157078</u>

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING: May 17, Blackwood Golf Course, 510 Red Corner Rd, Douglassville. Hosted by St. Benedict's Knights of Columbus. Shotgun start 8:45a, 4-person scramble. Incl. breakfast, cart, snacks, beverage and Steak dinner. Sign up by May 01. \$120 individual/\$400 per foursome; Benefits in part St. Francis Hospice Care. Info and for sponsorships call Joe Drahus: 610-763-2844

2025-PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY WITH BISHOP SCHLERT & FR. HOFFA: Tue. March 25, 2025-Sat. April 3, 2025. The Diocese of Allentown Int'l Pilgrimage will "Follow the Footsteps of Saints Peter and Paul" through Florence, Assisi, and Rome. Sign up: Fr. Allen Hoffa

ahoffa@allentowndiocese.org or 610-921-2729 x 2205.

E ach year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month.

Holy Father Prayer Request for April: For the role of women: We pray that the dignity and immense value of women be recognized in every culture, and for the end of discrimination that they experience in different parts of the world.

**PREGNANT? WANT A FREE ULTRASOUND?** Lifeline of Berks Co. seeks women 8-16 weeks pregnant, currently receiving prenatal care. RN Cecily is training to provide ultrasound confirmation of pregnancy to women facing unplanned pregnancy and needs to scan 50 women to gain practical skills. Receive a Dunkin' Donuts gift card, a cookie, a picture of your baby and our thanks. Call Stephanie Conrad: 610-374-8545 for an appointment.

<u>Word of Life</u>: "Suicidal individuals—with or without a terminal illness—typically do not want to die; they want to escape what they perceive to be an intolerable situation, and they inaccurately believe that suicide is their only way out. The patient requesting assisted suicide is often asking, 'Does

anyone want me to be alive, or care enough to talk me out of this request and support me through this difficult time?'" ~ USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, "Every Suicide is Tragic" <u>usccb.org/every-suicide-tragic</u>

## REFLECTION... by Rev. Leonard N. Peterson

Each of us has that certain friend, relative or neighbor who is good at something that we're not. That ability could be about almost anything you can name. Baking a cake; building a deck; telling a story; driving an RV or flying a plane. It is these talents and abilities of others that make life better for us, even if we must fight off a little jealousy. But, when you add in your specialty, we have an expanded basis for gratitude, well past the fourth Thursday in November.

There is one Person who once came to live with us from a faraway place called heaven who had every possible talent and ability there could be: Our Lord Jesus. Even so, He put limits on Himself. Yes, He performed miracles. Yes, He rose from the dead. But in His teaching, He only told us what we needed to know; never to limit ourselves in becoming better; told us how to be better; and then invited us to live in His kingdom.

In today's Gospel Reading, Jesus made bold to call Himself "The Good Shepherd." That title meant more to His contemporaries than it does to us, at least at first glance. Most of us know nothing about this humble and difficult way of life called shepherding. We have to "Google" it. We do know that shepherds raise and tend to sheep.

When Jesus called Himself the "Good" Shepherd that word in John's gospel meant more than "good at" some task or other. It meant "noble" or "ideal" shepherd. That declared that Jesus was not like the bad shepherds who neglected their flocks and let them become victims of wolves. In fact, Jesus gave His life for His sheep, who, in this context are namely you and me.

The good news is that we are always part of His flock if we want to be. We will receive His attention, His care, His love. Of course, that word "if" makes all the difference. We can reject Him. Write Him off our list of priorities if you will. This happens to otherwise faithful sheep, particularly when inclusion in His flock, or loyalty to Him involves pain and difficulty.

In our society, with its upside-down value system, that pain may be no more than embarrassment at being known as His follower. Yet every crucifix, large or small, is a vivid reminder of how much He loves us and will not hold back His love if we repent. Like a good shepherd, He feeds His flock with the finest of foods, namely the Holy Eucharist. Boy is our Shepherd good at loving us, is He not? How are we at loving Him back?

Even a four-year-old little girl knows the coldness implied when we make no return to God. Her mother watched her one day hugging a doll in each of her pudgy little arms. After a few minutes, she wistfully looked up at her mother and said, "Mama, I love them and love them and love them, but they never love me back."

Well...God love you and may you always love Him back.



-SELLER'S INFORMATION-KEEP THIS PORTION OF ORDER FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS-

NAME	ITALIAN WITH ONION	ITALIAN NO ONION	ROAST BEEF WITH ONION	ROAST BEEF NO ONION	TURKEY WITH ONION	TURKEY NO ONION	HOT PEPPER packs	Total#of hoagies	TOTAL DUE/ \$6.00 each
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Totals for						╞╺━╸╸		#	\$
Cut at dotted line, return lower portion of order form only	ITALIAN WITH ONIONS	ITALIAN NO ONION	ROAST BEEF WITH ONIONS	ROAST BEEF NO ONION	TURKEY WITH ONION	TURKEY NO ONION	TOTAL HOT PEPPER PACKS	Total#of hoagies	TOTAL DUE/ \$6.00 each
Seller Name: **Email me hoagie forms at:				Telephone:					
Select pickup time: Wednesday (7-8:30PM) or Thursday (7:30-9:30AM)									
$\square$ Call me to help make hoggies									