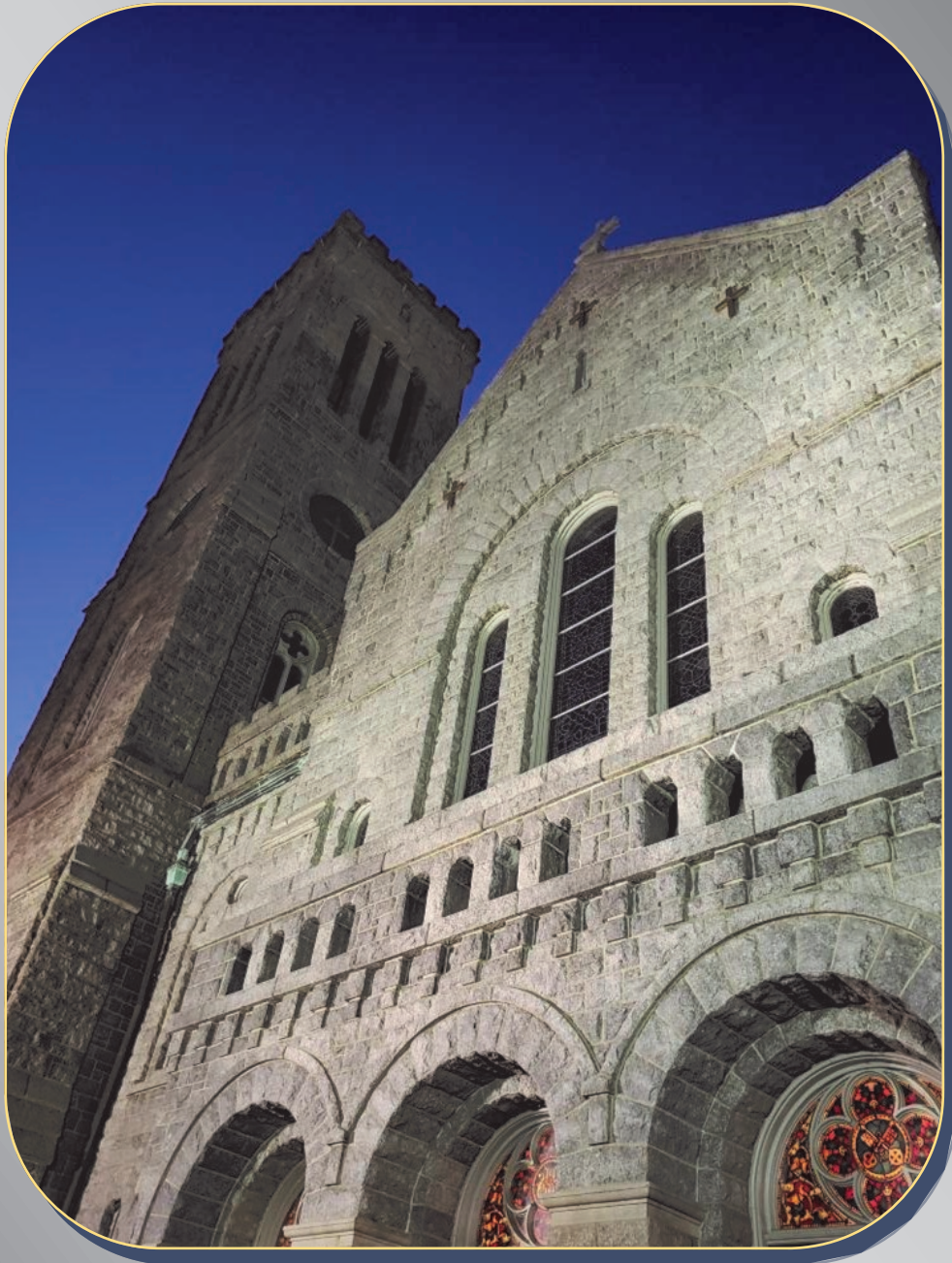


Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
September 23, 2018



St. Patrick Church at night

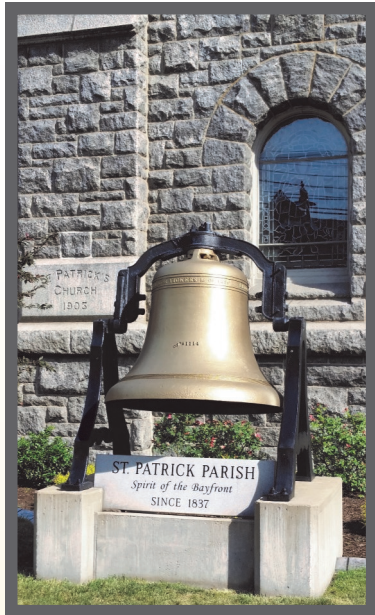
## Saint Patrick Parish

*Serving the East Bayfront of Erie since 1837*

Daily Mass: Monday-Thursday 8 AM

Saturday Vigil Mass: 5 PM

Sunday: 8 AM & 10:30 AM



### **Saint Patrick Parish**

130 East 4th Street  
Erie, PA 16507

***Monsignor Henry A. Kriegel—Pastor***

*Janine Carch Sliker—Office Manager*

*Ann Halupczynski—Director of Finances*

*Tom Golab—Sacristan*

*Mark Alloway—Organist, Music Director*

*Jan Gervasi—Wedding Coordinator*

*Anne Causgrove—Baptismal Preparation*

*Mary Pat Schlaudecker—Archivist,  
Genealogy research*

Phone: 814-454-8085

FAX: 814-459-8685

Email: [stpat@neo.rr.com](mailto:stpat@neo.rr.com)

Website: [www.saintpatrickparisherie.org](http://www.saintpatrickparisherie.org)

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

#### **MASS SCHEDULE:**

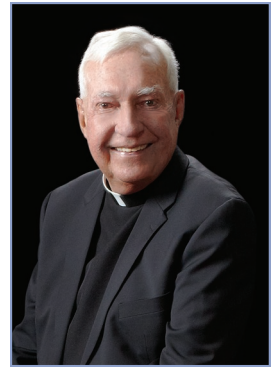
Daily Mass: Monday-Thursday: 8:00 AM (CHAPEL)

Saturday Mass: 5:00 PM

Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

Holy Day Mass: 12:00 PM

### ***From the Pastor's Desk...***



Today is the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. In our first reading, the author portrays the wicked. They simply do not tolerate the just man. They test and humiliate him to see if God, whom he invokes, will rescue him. If God does not, the wicked feel they are vindicated. The ironic expressions of the wicked are echoed in the insults of the leaders and officials against Jesus on the cross. In the just person, here referred to as "Son of God," we glimpse God's parental care of every just person. In the Book of Wisdom the foolish and bad people typically refuse to acknowledge God's action in the world, even as they test the claims of the just and seek pleasure for their own sake. They simply do not believe the just person has any grounds for trust in God.

James contrasts the qualities of the wise person with the defects of earthbound wisdom. He addresses the discord among Christians that make the common life difficult, and enumerates the principal causes: the passions of greed and envy, and later he will add the disordered love of worldly things, pride and arrogance, that breed bad talk. In the verses following today's reading, James notes that Christian wisdom is reflected in the community; it means living in sync with God's plan. Conflict, the result of envy and selfishness, disrupts wisdom, and wisdom shows itself as pure, peaceful, gentle, tolerant, merciful, constant and sincere in the quest for truth.

In our gospel, Jesus seeks solitude to instruct the disciples about what awaits them in Jerusalem. Here he is teaching them about Christian authority; not lording it over one another, but as one who serves. But once again, as is consistent in Mark's gospel, the disciples fail to understand the prediction of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. The nucleus of this section is the saying about the one who is first being last and the importance of becoming a servant of all. Mark illustrates this in Jesus placing a child on his lap. In the ancient world, children were not as highly valued as they



*From the Pastor's Desk continued...*

are today. Jesus presents the child as an example of what the disciples are to strive for as servants. They are to be attentive to the least esteemed in society—a child.

We can all breathe a sigh of relief now that the Irish Festival is over again for another year. But what a great weekend. It is great seeing all of these crowds of people in downtown Erie, and then seeing so many of you volunteering, meeting other parishioners for the first time, etc. I'm particularly grateful to Eric Albright for his leadership with the festival and for the support and help that Gary and Becky Johnson gave him in his first year as chairperson.

It will be several weeks before we know the final numbers on the festival, but, as I have said before, that is not my primary concern. I am primarily interested in parishioners working together, getting to know one another, becoming more and more a part of the St. Patrick family. And that certainly happened again this year.

Each year I am amazed when I walk quietly into church during the festival and see Erieites oohing and aahing about the interior of the church. These are people who have lived in Erie their entire lives, and they had no idea that such a beautiful building existed. This is one of the great side effects of our having moved the festival downtown.

On Wednesday, September 26, we will host a Wedding Anniversary Celebration. Invited are couples who this year are celebrating their 10th, 25th, 40th or 50th wedding anniversary. We will gather in church at 5:30 PM for a brief ceremony (no Mass) in which everyone will renew their marriage vows. Following that, everyone is invited to the rectory for a two hour cocktail party with an open bar and heavy finger foods. We ask that you call the parish office (454-8085) and indicate if you will be attending and what particular wedding anniversary you are celebrating this year. We did this last year, and everyone seemed to enjoy it very much so we thought we will make this an annual event.

I hope you're pleased with the new church doors. We were having serious problems with the old

ones. They were 113 years old and sometimes we couldn't secure them; other times we had trouble getting them opened, etc. You may recall that the original doors were 9 feet high. To replace those would have cost in excess of \$40,000 but if we went with seven foot doors and a two foot transom at the top, the cost dropped to \$20,000. You know what route this tight German pastor took. Besides, no one in the parish is taller than seven feet, so you can all enter and exit with ease.

You will notice that the handicapped entrance door is much wider than the original ones. This makes it easy for people in wheelchairs, a walker, etc. to enter the building. Now that a new door is on that entrance, we are also air-conditioning the southwest tower room. That is where brides wait before their wedding and is the only area of the church that did not have air-conditioning. It can get very hot in there in the summer months, and this will make it much more pleasant.

Some of the tile which we will place in the entire vestibule and the back of church has already been laid in the newly finished men's room. I am amazed at how beautiful it looks. As soon as they are finished putting the pipe organ together, we will start laying that tile. It's going to be a messy and inconvenient job because much of the old tile will have to be jack hammered out. The church is already dirty from the pipe organ work, and it's going to get worse. We have a team who were trained how to clean the Stations of the Cross and they are ready as soon as this work is done, and then we will do a thorough cleaning of the entire building.

When this work is done—new tile in the back and new carpeting in the balcony, almost everything in church is new. We have new A/C, new boiler, all new wiring, new doors, etc. I thank you for your support and patience as we've done all of this work. But when you have the most beautiful church in the diocese, you have to maintain it to the highest level.

As the minister began his Christmas Eve service, the electricity in church failed. The ushers found some candles and placed them around the sanctuary. The minister reentered the pulpit, shuffled his notes and muttered, "Now where was I?" A tired voice cried out, "Near the end."



# Saint Patrick News



## Stewardship

Offertory Collection	\$ 7,203.00
Online Giving	<u>1,645.30</u>
Total Income	\$ 8,848.30
Catholic Education	\$ 1,822.00

*Thank you for your generosity!*

We continue to thank those who make special donations to our parish and we pray for those people in whose memory and honor the donations were made:

## Sr. Mary Pascal Food Pantry

The **Food Pantry Truck** is sponsored this week by Kathy Alessi.

Donations to the Food Pantry were made in memory of:

- ♦ **Michael Dailey** from Bernard Bleil, John & Sheila Butler, Paula Brocius, Duane & Barbara Dulin, Michael Fetzner, Girard State Police, Troop E, Ellen Gloekler, Angie Kontur, Timothy & Lisa Schriefer and Arthur & Lena Weindorf
- ♦ **Jeff Bomba** from Mom & Dad
- ♦ **Anthony Cassa** from Corrine Cassa
- ♦ **Mary Jean Cioccio** from Hubert Cioccio
- ♦ **William Lacy** from Leo & Jane Fitzgibbon
- ♦ **Rosemarie Bihler** from Marci Honard
- ♦ **Richard Miller** from Robert & Carolyn Schenker
- ♦ **Rosemary Kephart** from Christopher & Kristen Sinnott
- ♦ **John Michael McGettigan** from Theresa Stout

Also donations from:

Doug & Kathy Anderson, James & Linda Gehrlein, Dennis & Marie Gritzer, Jay & Carol Habas, Phil & Judy Kelly, Karl & Virginia Kelm and Adlin & Erin Strimel

**Special Thank You!!!**  
to **PANERA BREAD &**  
**EDIBLE ARRANGEMENT'S HABORCREEK**

## A Family Perspective—

Disagreements are common in families. But what would you say if Jesus posed the same question "What are you arguing about?" Is it silly and petty? Is it an attempt to impose your will and control on another, or to really solve a problem? Today Jesus tells us and his disciples to give it up. We are meant to serve each other, not control.



*The Sanctuary Lamp  
burns in loving memory of  
**Jean Rose Darcel**  
from the Candela family*

## Ministry Schedule

**Saturday, September 29, 2018 at 5:00 pm**

Lector: Kathleen Haslett

Eucharistic Ministers:

**HOST:** Anne Scutella, Steve Scutella, Kathy Sertz

**CUP:** Shirley Winschel, Patty Dailey

Greeters: Tom & Linda Brunner

Altar Servers: **NEEDED**

Ushers: Chris Lampe, Rob Oligeri, Phil Rewers, Jim Sertz

**Sunday, September 30, 2018 at 8:00 am**

Lector: Nick Straub

Eucharistic Ministers: Tom Golab, Lisa Straub, Joe Schneider

Ushers: John Maloney, Dave Korn, Chuck Straub, Mike Nies

**Sunday, September 30, 2018 at 10:30 am**

Lector: Dario Cipriani

Eucharistic Ministers:

**HOST:** Dario Cipriani, Charla Leemhuis, Ryan Palm

**CUP:** Cyndi Pristello, Kathleen Pae

Greeters: Arlene Miller, Tim Donlin

Altar Servers: Juliette Morales, Sarah Pristello

Ushers: Randy Pristello, Dave Wilcox, John Purvis, Chuck Agresti

Offertory Counters: Bill Welsh, Cindy Welsh, Tim Donlin, Kay Sauers

## NEED PRAYERS?

Please call **Mary Alice Hartwell** at **454-5908** to have your prayer intentions placed on our joint parish prayer wheel. Please be assured that your prayer requests will be treated with respect and confidentiality.



## Advertiser of the Week:

**frontier pharmacy**  
*Keeping Healthcare Affordable*  
**452-2347**



## LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Sept. 22** *Saturday, Vigil: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

5:00 PM JOHN L. FATICA, ANNIV. (JEANNE RAHILL)

**Sept. 23** *Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

8:00 AM FLO FABRIZIO

(BILL & BETTY ANN FILIPKOWSKI)

10:30 AM TOM COOK (BOB LAFARO)

**Sept. 24** *Monday, Weekday*

8:00 AM MILDRED KRAUCHEN, ANNIV. OF BIRTH

(BARBARA KRAUCHEN THOMPSON)

**Sept. 25** *Tuesday, Weekday*

8:00 AM HELEN LARocca, ANNIV. (ANGIE KONTUR)

**Sept. 26** *Wednesday, Saints Cosmas and Damian*

8:00 AM PRO POPULO

"FOR THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. PATRICK"

**Sept. 27** *Thursday, Saint Vincent de Paul, Priest*

8:00 AM ROBERT VITRON (JAY & CAROL HABAS)

**Sept. 28** *Friday, Weekday*

NO MASS OR COMMUNION SERVICE

**Sept. 29** *Saturday, Vigil: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

5:00 PM ROBERT VITRON (RITA DONIKOWSKI)

**Sept. 30** *Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

8:00 AM ALICE CARLOTTI (TIM & LOU ALWARD)

10:30 AM MARY WALKER

(FRANK & CHRISTINE ALTADONNA)

## DATES TO REMEMBER

St.P=St. Patrick, CP=Chapel, PR=Pascal Room, R=Rectory

**09/22** 4:30 PM Confessions - St.P

**09/25** 11:00 AM Food Pantry - PR

**09/26** 12:00 PM A.A. - PR

**09/26** 5:30 PM MASS

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**09/29** 4:30 PM Confessions - St.P

**The Irish Cultural Society of Erie County** is



erecting a monument in the garden on the east side of St. Patrick Church in honor of all immigrants from Erie county.

We invite all parishioners to celebrate their own heritage. Donor's names will be inscribed in the cobblestone which will encircle the Celtic cross.

If interested in sponsoring a cobblestone, please contact Donna (453-5978), Eileen (866-1096) or Kathleen (864-0375).

## **Joy Ministries to host retreat**

Joy Ministries will hold a retreat **Sept. 29 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families/caregivers. The event will be held at Camp Glinodo, 6270 E Lake Road, Erie. The retreat director is Father George Strohmeier. For more information, contact Michele Inter, director for disability and deaf ministries, at 814-824-1257 or at

[minter@ErieRCD.org](mailto:minter@ErieRCD.org).

## **6th annual Harvest Fest celebrates fall bounty**

All are welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Harvest Fest at **Emmaus Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen's Emmaus Grove**, 214 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Erie, on September 30 from 1-4 p.m. Enjoy the music of Tennessee Backporch, light refreshments, a garden tour and raffle baskets. No reservations needed.



## **Nova retreat scheduled for October—**

Nova, a marriage preparation retreat for those who are free to remarry in the Catholic Church, is being held Oct. 6 from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 695 Smithson Ave., Erie. To register or for more information, call or email the Family Life Office at 814-824-1261 or at [familylife@ErieRCD.org](mailto:familylife@ErieRCD.org).

## **Save the date for Hennessy talk—**

Mercyhurst University will host Kate Hennessy, granddaughter of Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, who will speak **October 9<sup>th</sup>** at 7 P.M. on her book, *The World Will Be Saved by Beauty*. The event will be held at the Mary D'Angelo performing Arts Center at the Erie campus. It is free and open to the public.

## **The 24<sup>th</sup> annual Rosary March**

sponsored by the Erie Division of the World Apostolate of Fatima will take place on **Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>** at St. Peter Cathedral rain or shine at 2 PM. Please come and offer your prayers for peace in the world, for your families, for Consecrated Life, for our Church. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction and the March will travel several blocks in downtown Erie. Bring your banners for your Church or group. For more information, please call coordinator Mr. John Walsh @ 868-1100.



A wedding is one day; but your marriage is for a lifetime! Invest in your marriage by attending **Engagement Encounter**. Spend a weekend away from the stress of planning for the wedding and enjoy the special moments of creating your future marriage together. Call the Family Life Office at 814-824-1261 or [familylife@ErieRCD.org](mailto:familylife@ErieRCD.org) to register! All couples are welcome; scholarships are available for those in need. The next EE weekend is scheduled for **October 19<sup>th</sup> through October 21<sup>st</sup>** at St. Mark's Catholic Center in Erie. If you would like to register on line, please visit [www.eriercd.org/familylifeoffice/ee.html](http://www.eriercd.org/familylifeoffice/ee.html).



### ECSS to hold All-American Classic Auto Show



Save the date for the Erie Catholic School System's All-American Classic Auto Show **Sept. 29** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle Church, 2801 W. 6th St., Erie. This event is sponsored by GTS Classic Motors, with proceeds benefiting the Erie Catholic Education Fund that supports families that need tuition assistance. More information and sponsorship and donation opportunities can be found at [www.eriecatholic.org/advancement/all-american-classic-auto-show](http://www.eriecatholic.org/advancement/all-american-classic-auto-show).

### St. Stanislaus Parish— ANNUAL PARISH DAY:



St. Stanislaus Parish is hosting their Annual Parish Day on Sunday, **October 7, 2018 from 12:00 PM—5:00 PM**, A *delicious* "Polish Platter Dinner" will be served from 12:00 PM until 5:00 PM. Cost for adults - \$11.00; Children (6-12) \$5.00; and children under 5 are FREE. All festivities take place in the Parish Hall located at 520 East 13th Street.

There will be:

Special Awards ~ Fresh Baked Goods ~  
Chinese Auction ~ Theme Baskets ~ Raffles  
Children's games, fun for all ages!  
A fun afternoon to get together with your family  
and friends. All proceeds benefit the Parish.

### SACRED HEART FALL FEST

**October 7th 11:00 AM—5:00 PM**

Enjoy a fun day of food, fellowship and activities for all ages!

A varied menu will be offered featuring the famous Chiavetta's BBQ Half Chicken cooked on the premises.

The ever-popular Sacred Heart Theme Baskets Raffle will certainly be a highlight

**A Grand Prize Drawing of \$5,000 with five additional \$500 prizes will be awarded in advance at the door.**

**Other Prizes include:**

- \* **10 foot Lifetime Zenith Kayak with a Field and Stream Chute paddle**
- \* **1st PRIZE—55" Samsung Curved LED 4K Ultra HDTV**
- \* **2nd PRIZE—32" Samsung Smart HDTV**
- \* **Men's Golf Clubs and Women's Driver—professionally hand crafted by Phil Temple**

There will be a selection of beverages as well as games for children and adults.

**For more information call 456-6256**



## NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION FORM

### Saint Patrick Parish

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE BELOW:

New Registration

Change of Address

Moving

Want Envelopes

**PLEASE DROP THIS INFORMATION INTO Offertory Basket or mail to Rectory**



## SAINT PATRICK PARISH

130 EAST 4TH STREET • ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16507

PHONE: 814/454-8085 • 814/454-6232

FAX: 814/459-8685

Fall, 2018

Dear Parishioner –

November begins with the Feast of All Saints on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the Feast of All Souls on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Traditionally, the church has set aside November as a particular time to remember the dead in prayer.

Our bulletin of October 27 & 28 will contain a listing of any deceased members of your family whom you wish to be remembered during the month. That list will remain on the altar throughout the month so that we can remember them at every Mass celebrated here.

If you wish someone remembered, please complete the information below and make sure it is in the parish office no later than Monday, October 22. An offering is optional.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. Kriegel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and a stylized "Kriegel".

Monsignor Henry Kriegel

In Memory of:

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Requested by:

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# 21 THESES

Pope Francis:

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the laity hereby posts 21 Theses on the doors of St. Peter Cathedral, the spiritual home of the Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, not as a rebuke or condemnation of our Bishop, but on the contrary, to emphasize and endorse his exemplary capacity to receive and to listen. In that same spirit, we hope you and all leaders of the Church receive and listen to these words in thoughtful contemplation.

1. "Everything in the world is about sex, except sex. Sex is about power." — *Oscar Wilde*
2. Mr. Wilde's provocative opinion may be subject to debate and misuse, but the notion that sex, in its many varied forms, is often about power, cannot be dismissed.
3. The recent dark revelations of clergy abuses within our Commonwealth involve a deviant, criminal form of sex and the laity weeps and prays for the victims. But we will forever err if we consider such horrific abuses singularly as a sex scandal. Just as Rosa Parks' act of civil disobedience was not about the deficiencies of public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama, we demur and argue that the struggle of the laity presently is not about sex; it is a struggle against centuries-old abuses of unilateral, secretive, unaccountable power.
4. We are reminded and acknowledge that the profound and sweeping power of the Church, true to the mission of Jesus, has clothed, fed, healed, educated and cared for more souls than any other charitable organization on God's Earth through its missions, soup kitchens, schools, universities, charitable endeavors and hospitals.
5. One could be forgiven for highlighting in the final ledger, that these good uses of the Church's great power outweigh any corrupt or sinful uses of the same. But when abuses of such an order threaten to irreparably cleave the Church from the embodiment of Jesus' true essence and mission, the laity can no longer kneel. We must stand.
6. The laity must stand, to assume meaningful positions in the Church vested with the tools of informed oversight and guidance.
7. Women clergy must stand, to assume positions of actual leadership and authority within the Church, vested with the same tools of informed oversight and guidance.

8. Presently, the Church crisis is a crisis of hierarchy, a crisis of structure, a crisis of culture and composition. Predictably, the abuses of power were committed, as they almost always are, with the encouragement and permissiveness of secrecy, far from the eyesight and sober judgment of those untethered to any formal station in the Church or instincts for self-preservation. Increased oversight and guidance from the laity and women clergy are the only means by which to deliver the Church from this crisis and gird the institution in the future with truth and credibility.
9. The Church shall recognize, hear and receive its new brothers and sisters, not as competitors or threats to the mission of Jesus, but as benevolent partners and protectors. However, these new brothers and sisters are in fact coming, emboldened by the light of truth, to threaten the forces of unchecked, unaccountable power. And the Church is admonished to share its power, leaven its power, lest there be little left on which to cling.
10. While we will forever err if we consider the recent revelations singularly as a sex scandal, the laity knows that the Church's misplaced and tortured fixation on issues of sexuality and its incongruent views on the role of women, has fed its unique culture of secrecy and exclusion. And it is this very culture, born from such conflicted views, that in turn directly led to the abuses of power.
11. To start, we should be reminded that Peter, the Chief Apostle, the Founder of the Church, the First Pope and whose name adorns the walls of this majestic cathedral on which the 21 Theses are posted, was a married man who raised a family. Notwithstanding, Peter was able to live the life of Christ and commit to the foundational work of creating the Church. For the majority of the Church's history, so too were the vast number of priests and popes. Not until over a 1,000 years later did the Church, in reaction to the clerical abuses of *its* day, opt to separate priests from the natural sexual world.
12. This separation from the natural sexual world, a separation with reed-thin theological justification, a separation with no equal in any of the other major religions, including the Jewish, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox faiths, unwittingly created a cloistered, secret world of men, accountable only to one another. In such an environment, there can be no shock of expectation that the great powers vested in the Church would metastasize into corrupt forms. In fact, nowhere in the annals of history has a secretive body of powerful men, accountable to no one other than themselves, ever succeeded in not abusing power.
13. As an unintended consequence of separating priests and nuns from the natural sexual world, such a realm has proven attractive to some who feel that the priesthood and sisterhood are respectable vocations where their sexual identities can be hidden in plain sight. This is not a condemnation in any sense of these good men and women, many of whom are among the most faithful and righteous servants within the Church. Nor can



this point be dismissed as controversial or provocative. The laity knows. The Church knows. The Vatican knows. The priests know. The nuns know. Yet, the laity is asked to accept pronouncements to the contrary, to act as if such a dynamic does not exist despite what it knows through its eyes, ears and heart. The denial of this dynamic is preposterous to accept; it insults the laity's adult intelligence; and it injures the Church's credibility on a daily basis, thereby eroding confidence in the Church's capacity to communicate honestly on all other matters of consequence. To promote a lie of such magnitude in His Name no less, cannot be the fulfillment of God's Divine Will. Most significantly, this denial exposes the fallacy of the Church's vociferous condemnation of homosexual sexual expression. And a Church that cherishes and protects life cannot and should not condemn or diminish the very life of any one of its children.

14. Importantly, the issue set forth in Thesis 13 should not be lazily associated with the deviant and criminal sexual abuses of the clergy, although some among the laity and Church may be inclined to make such associations and attribute one as the cause of the other. The medical and psychiatric literature on such abuses is irrefutable that such matters are not intertwined.
15. Unquestionably, the denial of the dynamic set forth in Thesis 13 begs for a frank, thoughtful, adult discussion among members of the Church and laity on *all issues* of sexuality and the role of women with a goal towards reconciliation.
16. When such a discussion does occur, we should note that Jesus rarely focused on issues of sexuality or women's place in the world. Jesus spoke not a word on the subject of homosexuality, or of an all-male celibate priesthood. When Jesus' teachings intersected with issues of sexuality, they often did so indirectly and not in the form of prohibitions or condemnations. To the contrary, Jesus' teachings involving such matters always turned toward acceptance and love: halting the stoning of an adulterer; breaking bread with prostitutes, etc. Jesus never was afraid of such subjects and was always comfortable among all of God's children.
17. Similarly, we should note that the Bible can hardly be said to fixate on issues of sexuality. For example, on the subject of homosexuality alone, there are merely four passages in the entirety of scripture. On the contrary, there are just as many passages on the prohibition of eating shellfish, grapes that fall in one's vineyard, fruit from a tree within 4-years of planting and touching the skin of a pig. There are 17 passages on how to make a grain offering. Accordingly, the issue of homosexuality does not, by any reasonable assessment, assume a place of prominence in the teachings of Jesus or anywhere else in the Bible. Yet, how often from the pulpit are we led to believe that issues of sexuality are among the most concerning of all issues confronted by the laity today? They are not. The Church's misplaced emphasis on such matters is disproportionate, rising to the level of an unhealthy fixation which unnecessarily distracts from the Church's broader



mission. The Church must reconcile these issues of sexuality above all, and it can do so just as Jesus did, through embrace, through love, through acceptance.

18. Moreover, despite living in the patriarchal Jewish culture of the first century, which separated women from social, legal, economic and spiritual power, Jesus rejected these rules and conventions at every opportunity. He respected women as peers, engaged with them publicly, and many women were among the disciples who traveled with him. Perhaps most telling, it was women with whom Jesus entrusted to tell the other disciples of his Resurrection (*Mary Magdalene, Martha and the Samaritan woman at the well*). As such, women were in fact, the first true believers in Jesus. And when they gave testimony of Jesus' Resurrection, strikingly, it was the male apostles and disciples who did not believe them. (*Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:11; Luke 24:22-24*) Just as it was proven wrong in the first century, the Church proceeds at its own peril if it continues to ignore the example of Jesus and turns a deaf ear to women's voices on matters of consequence.
19. In short, while the recent revelations of clergy abuse in the Commonwealth and elsewhere were created and fostered by a culture of unaccountable power, the Church's inability to reconcile issues of sexuality and women's place in the Church created that very culture through secrecy, separateness, dishonesty and denial. One feeds the other. Therefore, if the Church is ever to properly and successfully hold itself to account for centuries-long abuses of power and move forward as a credible and faithful embodiment of Jesus' mission, these issues of sexuality and women first must be reconciled.
20. This crisis, while deplorable and shattering, does not have to be fatal. The laity and the Church can move forward and continue to exercise the full goodness of the Church's power. The 21 Theses mark such a path. And that path leads to the truest form of the Church—the one that is worth fighting for rather than fleeing.
21. The 21 Theses do not pretend to be all-inclusive or the only path, nor do they pretend to hold a monopoly of wisdom. Other members of the laity, through all means, media and manner of speaking, are invited and encouraged to make additions to the 21 Theses when so moved and where appropriate. The laity is encouraged to assemble. The laity is encouraged to act. The laity is encouraged to lead. For the 21 Theses are not the end, but merely the beginning of a deep, unflinching, self-examination of the Church, the fruits of which can and must be realized. With haste.

Peace be with you.

Humility be with you.

By the loud voice of your conscience, know that God is with you.