

St Bernadette Parish

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

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

St Mary Parish

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



St Stephen: ordained a deacon by St Peter and distributing alms to the Poor of Jerusalem

from today's first reading about the appointing of deacons, in Acts 6

by Fra Angelico (the Dominican friar, Blessed John of Fiesole, 1395-1455)

Painted (1447-1449) as one of a series of frescoes in the Cappella Nicolina of the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican

The 5th Sunday of Easter

MAY 14, 2017

our parishes

FATHER THOMAS KESSLER (614) 634-0499
pastor wthomaskessler@icloud.com

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

MARK SCARPITTI (740) 438-3970
deacon dcn.mark@frontier.com
JEFF CARPENTER (740) 681-9918
deacon carpenter.277@osu.edu
ANN ESSMAN (740) 653-9347
pastoral minister aessman001@att.net
STEVE HUBER (740) 654-3137
facilities coordinator shuber57@yahoo.com
LIZ LATORRE (740) 243-1872
liturgical music lizlаторre@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, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893

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

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 BOTH PARISHES

NIKKI SCHMELZER (740) 654-1893
bookkeeper businessmstbparish@yahoo.com
KATHY KEHNAST (740) 654-1893
pastoral coordinator stbernparish@yahoo.com
ANGIE & KENT KERNS (740) 654-2588
religious education kwkerns@gmail.com
JULIE & CHASE STALFORD (740) 808-7294
youth ministry maristellspirit@gmail.com

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

PAM ELTRINGHAM peltring@cducation.org
principal
BARB HUBER bhuber@cducation.org
secretary

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, (740) 654-3137
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com
stbernlan@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. Try to 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; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

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 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.

Remember, Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments.

The Church wishes to support couples **through the years** of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

belonging to the Church

If you actually live in the neighborhood of one parish and go to church in another parish for a good reason, register where you worship. But don't go shopping for a parish home the way you might decide which grocery store serves you best, has the best produce or the best prices. Our commitment to the Lord and his Church must never be reduced to a matter of consumer shopping. It is more a matter of blooming where you are planted. Our permanent membership is in the Catholic Church; parish membership needs to be registered with the parish where we worship each Sunday. Our "home parish" is important to us,

but, if we don't live there anymore, it is not likely to be our actual place of worship on anything like a regular basis. For purposes of baptism, first Communion, confirmation, marriage, sacramental sponsorship, burial, and such, the parish where we have registered and where we ordinarily worship is the one that counts. This has been the practice of the Catholic Church for a very long time, but it only becomes obvious when people grow up, establish a home, and sometimes have to move to another place. Whether it is here or there, register in the parish where you worship on Sundays!

praying with the Church

at Mass today

Almighty ever-living God,
 you constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
 grant that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
 may, under your protective care,
 bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal.
 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 the pope in may : for christians in africa

That Christians in Africa, in imitation of the merciful Jesus,
 may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace.

the regina coeli

Queen of Heaven rejoice, alleluia:
 For He Whom you did merit to bear, alleluia,
 Has risen as He said, alleluia.
 Pray for us to God, alleluia.
 Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
 For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray.

O God, Who gave joy to the world
 through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
 grant we beseech Thee, that
 through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His mother,
 we may obtain the joys of everlasting life.
 Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

may is Mary's month

Mary is the mother par excellence! She is the Mother of God and our Mother. Making May her month is a fairly modern step; it isn't found in the ancient liturgical calendars, although there is a feast of the coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven (May 31). But if you were casting around for a time to celebrate a month for Mary, May would be a good choice. It is a beautiful month. Winter is decidedly over, the fields and trees are green, lots of flowers are in bloom, cattle are back in the fields. It is **a month of new life and of hope**. That fits.

During the month of May, at both our parishes, we will pray the **Rosary before Mass on Sunday mornings**. Join in Mary's prayer

- at 8:30 AM at St Mary in Bremen or
- at 10:30 AM at St Bernadette.

God's word ... at sunday Mass

<i>Sunday, May 14,</i>	Acts 6:1-7	Psalm 33
<i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	1 Peter 2:4-9	John 14:1-12
<i>Sunday, May 21,</i>	Acts 8:5-17	Psalm 66
<i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>	1 Peter 3:15-18	John 14:15-21

... during the week

<i>Mon, May 15</i>	Acts 14:5-18	Ps 115	John 14:21-26
<i>Tues, May 16</i>	Acts 14:19-28	Ps 145	John 14:27-31
<i>Weds, May 17</i>	Acts 15:1-6	Ps 122	John 15:1-8
<i>Thurs, May 18</i>	Acts 15:7-21	Ps 96	John 15:9-11
<i>Fri, May 19</i>	Acts 15:22-31	Ps 57	John 15:12-17
<i>Sat, May 20</i>	Acts 16:1-10	Ps 100	John 15:18-21



let us adore Him

Spend a **holy hour** with our Lord in the presence of his Blessed Sacrament in either of our parish churches. Or spend a **few holy minutes**. We try to keep both churches open all through the daylight hours. Anybody can come, any time. Perhaps you could.

the feast days this week

May 15 Saint Isidore
 May 18 Saint John I, pope and martyr
 May 20 Saint Bernardine of Siena, priest

in both parishes

christian initiation

Keep praying all through the Easter season for the new members of the household of faith, **Ralph Mohler** and his son **Bryant** of Bremen St Mary, and **Jennifer Palmer** of St Bernadette. They were baptized and confirmed and received Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil at St Bernadette Parish at the Great Easter Vigil liturgy of the Lord's Resurrection. And pray for **Dick Usilton** of St Bernadette Parish who made a profession of his Catholic Faith, was confirmed, and received Holy Communion on Divine Mercy Sunday. His sacramental reception was different because he was already a baptized Christian. Please welcome all of our new members. And please be thinking now about **who you are going to invite to join the Church in the coming year**.

anointing the sick

We will celebrate the **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** today. You should be anointed if you are a Catholic, age 7 or more, in the state of grace, and suffering serious health problems (like chronic or dangerous diseases, old age, or the prospect of major surgery). Determine before Mass begins if you will receive the sacrament, sit in the front row or at the end of the pew, and come to the altar when you are called (or notify an usher to ask the priest to come to your place in the pew if coming forward is difficult). Everybody else: Pray for our sick. Keep them in your prayers.

happy mothers day

Participate in the PDHC's **Baby Bottle Campaign** by collecting your loose change **from Mother's Day to Father's Day** to help local parents and would-be parents in need. Spare change from baby bottles goes a long way to continue offering free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, material assistance and life-affirming programs to strengthen families. Grab a bottle and bring it back on Father's Day. Let us give thanks to our father and mother for choosing life and help a local family do the same.

vacation church school

Vacation Church School happens this summer at Schmelzer's Grove on the evenings of June 26-30. Anyone interested in helping should contact Angie Kerns at (740) 654-2588. The next two planning meetings for Vacation Church School happen on Monday, May 15, at St Bernadette and on Sunday, May 21, at St Mary Bremen, both at 7 PM.

contribution envelopes can travel

If you happen to attend **Mass at the other parish**, put your home parish collection envelope into the basket. It will be sent to that parish to be included in their collection count. Thank you for giving generously ... wherever you are!

the bishop's annual appeal

Bishop's Annual Appeal 2017

"LIVING THE GOSPEL IN FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY"

The Bishop's Annual Appeal **began last Sunday at St Bernadette and begins this Sunday at St Mary**. It's time for us to do what we can to support the programs and ministries that benefit both our parishes and the wider community. The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**. Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year's appeal a success.

Here are the goals, the amounts we have been asked to raise:

Diocesan goal	\$ 6,500,000
St Mary Parish	\$ 12,443
St Bernadette Parish	\$ 42,210

Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly. Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate of \$4,947 from the diocese. So we know we can do this if, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, every one of us gives according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others.

baa prayer

Heavenly Father, we are always thankful for all you have given us. We are especially grateful that you have sent to us your Son to be our Savior. That is the true Good News: that you love us and call us to yourself. Help us to live this Good News, this Gospel, in Faith, Hope, and Charity. Help us to respond generously to your love by sharing our material blessings for the good of all in our diocese. Send your Spirit to dwell in our hearts, so that all we do may give praise and honor to your name. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

school advisory board

There are two open seats on the St Bernadette Advisory Board for next Fall. The term is three years. If you are interested, please submit a simple bio, or pick up a bio/nomination form from the school office. Please submit nominations as soon as possible.

at st bernadette parish

Mass intentions at st bernadette

Monday,	May 15	8:20 AM	Gladys McAndrews
Wednesday,	May 17	8:20 AM	Paul Gallagher
Thursday,	May 18	6 PM	Wilford & Loretta Beiter
Friday,	May 19	8:20 AM	deceased of Seigny family

The Church requires the pastor to offer Sunday Mass for good of the people of the parish.

blood drive

Our next St Bernadette blood drive will be Saturday, May 20, from 9 AM-2 PM in the parish hall. Lunch and cupcakes will be served. To help **make up for drives cancelled by winter weather**, please attend if you can. Appointments at www.recross.org or Joyce Guenther at (740) 974-5040. Thank you.

new teachers for st bernadette school

St. Bernadette School is accepting resumes for a **kindergarten** and a **third-grade** teaching position, both to begin the 2017-18 school year. The candidate must

- be a practicing Catholic, well versed in the Catholic Faith;
- hold an appropriate Ohio teaching license (1-8, K-8, K-3; professional, provisional, permanent, or resident educator) or be eligible to obtain one by August 2017;
- have current BCI&I and FBI background checks;
- have attended or be willing to attend a VIRTUS Protecting God's Children Safe Environment seminar;
- completed the online teaching application for the Diocese of Columbus.

Contact Principal Pam Eltringham by e-mailing resume and letter of interest to peltring@cdeducation.org.



ministry at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion
Saturday, 4 PM	Sandy Landefeld	Kendall Cox, Samantha Kerns, Cady Tipple	Bob & Angie Christy Terry Carpenter Rose DeFillippo Susan Garrett Marguerite Grimm
Sunday, 11 AM	David Shonk	Brooke, Bryson, & Zachary Vogel	John & Teresa Hartig Tara Craaybeek Pat Dreyer Patrick Gins Ben Peters
Monday, 8:20 AM	Mary Jane Vajen	Joey Mannella, Mitchell Ortiz	Patricia Dreyer Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday, 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Jack Gentile, Gunner Robertson	Bob & Angie Christy Mrs McGuire
Thursday, 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Becca Fuller, Sarah Woo	Lee Guinan Paul Lonergan
Friday, 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Carley Matson, Lexi Utz	Jim & Rita Merk
Friday evening 7 PM Fisher Catholic HS baccalaureate Mass		Mason Ortiz, Gus Spiegel, Bryson Vogel	Deacon Carpenter Mr Holbrook Mr Maynard
next Saturday, 4 PM	Becky Kuhn	Mallory, Mason & McKenzie Ortiz	Joyce Guenther Kathy Kehnast Jim Kuhn Denise McGuire Mickey Steyaert Shelia Taylor
next Sunday, 11 AM	Amy Woo	Logan & Tori Loy, Diana Woo	Jim & Rita Merk Nancy Griffith Jean Robinson Larry Sanford Anna Seigny

at st mary parish

st vincent de paul at bremen

For people in a financial jam, the season of need seems to go on throughout the year. So, the **St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen** takes up a collection after Mass on the first Sunday of the month, every month. New members are always welcome. For information, call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

sunday at Mass at bremen st mary

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday 8:30 AM	Susan Foltz	Sydnee Rogers, Isaac Schmelzer	Susan Foltz, Damian & Deborah Schmelzer	James Noll Jr family	Damian Schmelzer
next Sunday	Paul Kunkler	Caden & Cody Fyffe	Irene Kunkler, Leo Kunkler Sr, Pam Redding	Paul Kunkler family	Nikki Schmelzer

in the deanery

lay religious evening

Do you desire a stronger sense of community and prayer? Do you find yourself asking how you can develop more of a consistent quiet time with God? Can you have more of a monastic way of life and keep your day job? What is the difference between a lay Franciscan, Benedictine, Dominican, Cistercian and Carmelite anyway? How does God desire you and your family to order your lives? Come and learn about the opportunities to join lay associates and oblates from the Columbus and Lancaster area. Discover if God may be drawing you to Him through a deeper connection with one of these lay orders. This meeting happens on Wednesday, June 21, at the Spirit Center of St Mary Church in Lancaster from 7-9 PM. Light refreshments provided. Contact Lisa for information at lmreshad@gmail.com.

irish alumni golf

Alumni of St Mary, Bishop Fenwick and Fisher Catholic High Schools play at Pleasant Valley Golf Course, Coonpath Rd, on Saturday, June 10, at 9 AM. Cost is \$150 per team, 3 player scramble format. Send your check payable to A One Events, LLC, with entry to: A One Events, Box 961, Lancaster, OH 43130, and include player name, class year, email or phone. For information contact Mike Wolshire at (740) 687-0055 or mike@miller-lewis.com.

in the diocese of columbus

face forward

Developed for the **Vocations Office** of the Columbus Diocese, Face Forward app contains valuable information for Catholics right at their fingertips. It includes such features as the **verse of the day, pray for priests, care for the common home, saint of the day and the Face Forward blog**. Face Forward give young folks something meaningful to read when they power up. Discerning what God is calling you to do can be a long journey full of many questions. Having **easily accessible information** is **invaluable to the discernment process**. This new app provides just that. Face Forward will continue to add fresh and relevant content to the app daily with the goal of getting users to come back each day for new offerings. With the repeat visits and usage of the app, the hope is that users will gain more love, knowledge and understanding about the Catholic faith and **clarity about what God is calling them to do**. The Face Forward app is

Mass intention at st mary

The Church requires the pastor to offer Sunday Mass for good of the people of the parish. Tuesday morning Mass will be celebrated for Thomas G Kunkler.

men's night out

The next Men's Night Out gathering and dinner happens at Bremen St Mary on Wednesday, May 17, at 6:30 PM in the parish hall. All men of the parish are invited. Bring a friend. For information, contact Jim Schmelzer at (740) 215-3894.

available now in the iTunes store. Face Forward is a program of the Office of Vocations that allows for interaction with the youth in the Columbus Diocese and provides platforms for communication, events and opportunities to learn more about the Catholic faith and a life in vocations. There are currently over 12,000 people within the Face Forward community. For information about the Face Forward App, contact Anne Harkin at (614) 787-2377 or anne.harkin@mj2marketing.com.

service & retreat opportunity

The **Dominican Sisters of Peace** are sponsoring a four-day service and retreat opportunity for single Catholic women between the ages of 18 to 45 who are discerning a possible call to religious life or lay ministry in the church. This experience is scheduled for May 18-21 in Columbus and includes prayer, service, community, and fun. Participants will live together in a small community house and serve at an ecology farm—Shepherd's Corner—and at a local soup kitchen. Group prayer and reflection time will explore the connection between service and justice. Space is limited; free room and board provided. Visit <https://oppeace.org/pray-serve-reflect/> to register, or for information contact Sr Pat Dual, OP at (614) 216-7688 or email at pdual@oppeace.org.

marriage preparation volunteers

Looking for a way to serve in 2017? Engaged couples in our diocese need your help. Volunteer to serve on the diocesan **Marriage Preparation Team** as a speaker and presenter. Present virtues-based topics to engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. **If you are currently married, and have wisdom and experience to share**, you already qualify. For information, contact Kathleen Hall at khall@columbuscatholic.org or (614) 241-2560.

diocesan senior citizens celebration

On Tuesday, June 6, **senior citizens will be honored** at St Joan of Arc Church in Powell. Bishop Campbell will celebrate Mass at 10:30 AM, and a luncheon will follow. Registration is \$10; send a check payable to the Office for Social Concerns, Catholic Diocese of Columbus, 197 E Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For information, call (614) 241-2540 or email socmailbox@columbuscatholic.org. Registrations are needed by June 1.

2017 service awards

The Columbus Diocese Office of Vocations announces the 2017 Service Awards. The chance to win a \$500 Service Award is available to all students in grades 8-12 in the diocese whether attending public or Catholic schools, as well as home schooled

students. Criteria for award eligibility include parish involvement, service, and a short essay on the topic “If you could model yourself after one person (teacher, priest or seminarian) who would it be and why? How are they walking in the steps of Christ?” Enter at faceforwardcolumbusblog.com/service-awards/. For information, visit faceforwardcolumbus.com; submit entries by May 19.

healing Mass at saint joseph cathedral

A Mass of healing will be celebrated on Monday, May 15, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral in Columbus. Following the Mass, a service of healing begins with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of a relic of the true cross of Christ, and an opportunity for each person to speak individually with a priest and receive prayers of healing; the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is also available. The service closes with Benediction. Call the Cathedral with questions at (614) 224-1295.

crs spring luncheon meeting

The annual luncheon of the Catholic Record Society happens on Sunday, May 21, at St Elizabeth Church, Columbus. This year’s luncheon will be held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the founding of St Elizabeth Parish. The speaker will be Monsignor Robert Noon, founding pastor of St Elizabeth, whose talk consists of memories and reminisces of the early days of the parish. The schedule of events includes 11 AM Mass, noon luncheon, 1:45 PM speaker and business meeting, and 3:30 PM Holy Hour, Rosary and Benediction. Cost is \$21 per person. For information contact Chairman Mike Finn at fcoolavin@aol.com or (614) 268-4166.

+

catholic communication campaign

A special collection for the Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC) will be held on May 20 and 21. The CCC helps spread the Good News to you – and focuses on new and existing ways to communicate Jesus’ gospel message, making it available to both the faithful and those seeking the faith. The CCC supports both national and diocesan communication efforts that provide news, discussions, and special events and programs. Please be generous in the collection and support this important work.

jubilee of anniversaries 2017

This celebration happens on Sunday, June 25, at St Matthew Parish in Gahanna. Bishop Campbell celebrates Mass at 2:30 PM, and an informal reception follows. Parishioners who are celebrating significant wedding anniversaries (25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th, 60th, and every year thereafter) are invited to attend. For questions, call the Marriage & Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560. RSVP by June 16.

franciscan sisters crown Our Lady

The Franciscan Sisters TOR (third order regular) — they’re the women who bake most of our altar breads—invite you to their annual **Open House and May Crowning** on Saturday, May 20, at their monastery, 369 Little Church Road, Toronto, OH. This family fun day will include hay rides, a petting zoo, an inflatable slide, face painting, indoor and outdoor games, a vocation talk for two different age groups, and more. They will also have a free lunch from 11:30 AM-1:30 PM (Who said there is no such thing?), an outdoor May Crowning at 1:30 PM, and an indoor May Crowning and Vigil Mass at 3:45 PM. No reservations necessary; donations are gratefully accepted. For information, visit www.FranciscanSistersTOR.org or call (740) 544-5542.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby			These times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!				
	<i>Bremen St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Bernadette</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mark</i>	<i>Sugar Grove St Joseph</i>	<i>Circleville St Joseph</i>	<i>Logan St John</i>
Monday		8:20 AM	7 AM	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Tuesday	8:20 AM		9 AM	8 AM	NOON	7 AM	8 AM
Wednesday		8:20 AM	7 AM	6 PM	6:30 PM	9 AM	9 AM
Thursday			9 AM	8 AM	NOON		
Friday		8:20 AM		8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Saturday		1 st Saturday only 9 AM Mass				10 AM	9 AM
confessions	Sunday @ 8AM	Thursday @ 5:30 PM Saturday @ 3 PM & @ 8:30 AM on 1st Saturday only	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 5:30 PM	½ hour before Mass	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 4 PM

Happy Mothers’ Day

A few years ago I drove through Grafton WV on old US 50 on my way to Winchester, Virginia. On the road I saw a historic marker that said that nearby was the home of **the lady who invented “mother’s day”** about a hundred years ago. Her first concern was to get people to honor **her own long-deceased mother**. Later she added the idea of an invitation to celebrate **everybody’s mother**. And this has more recently morphed into a day for **thinking about motherhood more generally**. In fact there is a Mother’s Day Shrine in Grafton which has a website that explains the mission of the foundation as being “to preserve, promote and develop the Spirit of Motherhood.”

You can tell something about a society by looking at what it thinks is worthy of or in need of celebrating and how it celebrates. You can also learn something by watching how the celebrations change and what other celebrations branch off from it. You can learn what groups or institutions are thought to need a renewal of respect. Maybe that’s why we have a Labor Day, a Veteran’s Day, a Flag Day, a Constitution Day. We need to recall why we need to respect those persons and things. And we need to be sure that our culture pays proper attention and respect to the persons and things involved.

I think there is no institution in our society in greater need of our recovery of grateful respect and support than motherhood. To all mothers, then, Happy Mothers’ Day. And **thank you for your service** to our society.

Wedding: a Sacrament and a Liturgy

Talk about the liturgy involves talking about why we Catholics do things we do at the liturgy, and why it is important to do these things faithfully and well, with the full and active participation that the Church calls for. We need to rekindle the awareness that Catholics are the people who believe that God touches his people through sacraments.

These seven sacraments are so much more than just little ceremonies for people who like or need that sort of thing. They are God's ordinary way—his default way—of communicating that grace in **the great intersections of our lives**. **The grace** is the participation in the life of God — for which we were made. **The intersections** are the great facts of our lives :

- birth, growing up, nurture
(to which the **Initiation Sacraments** of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion correspond),
- guilt and sickness
(to which the **Healing Sacraments** of Penance and Anointing of the Sick correspond), and
- making a family and standing before God to represent God to man and man to God
(to which the **Vocation Sacraments** of Matrimony and Holy Orders correspond).

In prayer we can deepen our awareness of this wonderful context of God's life-giving touching of lives where they need it most. These seven rituals have been entrusted to the Church to be faithfully celebrated and made to come alive in our communal and personal lives.

That could lead to a needed rediscovery that this is what we need to pay attention to, and this is what preachers need to talk about to help us be renewed. We all know that liturgy means sacraments, and that sacraments are "the outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace." But are people thinking about it or is the Church getting the point across?

That is the context for a few thoughts about Holy Matrimony. It is a sacrament that did not begin the possibility of marriage. God had made marriage from the beginning of humanity. It was his first gift to Adam and Eve. It was the one blessing not forfeit by the Fall into original sin.

Yes, certainly **Matrimony is about mating**, and humans do indeed have mating in common with other animals. **It is concerned with the making of new life**. But **the human being is unlike the other animals**. She and he are **the spiritual creatures who know what is happening** in this making of new life, are capable of — and indeed, require the giving of—love.

Love and procreation are the two amazing things about this human mating. Love is **not just a sentiment**; it is that, too, but it is also **a commitment**. And procreation is **not just reproduction of copies**, which even a Xerox machine does — but it is **the cooperation with God in his creation of new life**. These are the wonderful things that set human mating apart and which make it something fine, **teaching us what it means to be human**. But the capacity to love and to procreate also make us **capable (unlike the animals) of getting it wrong**, of misusing the other person and ignoring our dignity as conscious cooperators with God.

Human marriage is **not just animal mating and it is not just a sentimental attachment**. It is nobler and more demanding. It is holy. Marriage necessarily involves a **permanent, stable, faithful commitment** between **one man and one woman**, **open to the possibility of making new life**. This is not just a legal restriction. It is not a discrimination against anything. It is **the beautiful way God has made us**.

Something new happened to marriage in **the new Covenant**, the new dispensation which is inaugurated by Christ. The prayer of the Church's nuptial blessing captures what Saint Paul spoke of:

"[O God,] You have sanctified marriage by a mystery so excellent that in the marriage union
You foreshadowed the union of Christ and the Church."

This is the mystery that the sacrament is a sign of. Husband and wife become **a permanent sign to each other and to the rest of us of that unity between Christ and his bride, the Church**. To be like Jesus (*Dominus*) is not to dominate or to domineer; Christ is the Lord who washes the disciples' feet and then goes on to lay down his life for his beloved. His bride the Church is never the groveling inferior, but rather the one who is given love that enables her to participate in the Lord's divine life.

The Catholic wedding ceremony is **not a ritual that we redesign** to express our own affections. That's why **the couple turn to God in prayer, not to the camera for keepsakes**; why *Annie's Song* or a reading from a popular love poem is not used as the expression of the meaning of the sacrament; why a unity candle contributes nothing to the reality of the sacramental sign.

— Father Kessler

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