Please know how very grateful we are to all who support our Grocery Certificate Program and ultimately our Religious Education Program.

IHM receives a 5% profit from the sale of all the grocery cards purchased. We thank all those who continually support the sale of the Weis and Giant cards.

The cards are sold after each Mass at the front entrance door. They are also available in the parish office throughout the week.

Please help support this wonderful program!
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

MASS INTENTIONS
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2020
5:00 PM + Richard & Michael Carley

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2020
8:15 AM + Rebecca Neiderer
11:15 AM – People of the Parish

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2020
NO MASS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2020
9:00 AM – Special Intention of Marilyn Drummer

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020
9:00 AM – Special Intention of Collette Filliben

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020
9:00 AM + Angelina Renda

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2020
9:00 AM – Special Intention of Steve Hoffman

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2020
5:00 PM + Warren Glass

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2020
8:15 AM + Ron Filliben
11:15 AM – People of the Parish

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NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS
Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18
1 Corinthians 3:16-23
Matthew 5:38-48

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FAMILY PERSPECTIVE – To experience the peace which Christ promises we must shed our grudges, jealousy and feelings of being misunderstood, unappreciated or ignored. Peace and anger don’t mix. Today’s gospel warns, if you want peace in your heart and home, get rid of your anger. Anger is too costly.

WE WELCOME the following new members of our parish through the Sacrament of Baptism: Leo Anthony Albin, son of Derek & Amanda Albin and Lillian Sullivan Kuhn, daughter of Dustin & Ashley Kuhn.
DIOCESAN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN
The 2020 Diocesan Annual Campaign, previously known as the Bishop’s Annual Lenten Appeal, will kick off in a few short weeks. The theme for this year is “Rooted in Faith”. During these challenging times, our faith is central to who we are. Just like the Disciples, we are called to remain faithful, demonstrate our commitment to our faith by word and deed, and spread the Good News.
We have been asked by the Bishop to prayerfully consider a pledge to this effort. As a parish, we benefit in a number of ways: shared administrative services like payroll and accounts payable to Human Resources to outreach ministries that are led by the Diocese, and implemented at the Parish level. By our collective efforts from parishioners and parishes throughout the Diocese, a multitude of programs and ministries are offered to those in need. We are relying on your generous support to insure that these programs and ministries continue. I thank you in advance for your loyal and steadfast support.

PRAYER SHawl RETREAT – The Harrisburg Diocesan Council of Catholic Women invites women from the Diocese to join us at our 9th Prayer Shawl Retreat. It will be held on Sat., March 21st at Good Shepherd Parish, 3435 E. Trindle Rd., Camp Hill from 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM. We’ll share a few special hours as we pray the Rosary, knit/crochet, share, enjoy fellowship and a catered lunch. Register by Monday, March 16th. Cost is $10. Mail your check (payable to Kathy Kokoski) to Kathy Kokoski, 6209 Westover Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. Please include your email address or phone number so that we can confirm your registration. Prayer Shawls will be collected for Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats in Columbia, PA. Please bring any prayer shawls you would like to donate.

ST. PATRICK’S DINNER – The Knights of Columbus will be selling tickets for our St. Patrick’s Dinner starting now until March 8th. Enjoy a great Irish meal and genuine Irish “The Seasons” Entertainers on March 14th after the Saturday Mass. Adults $20, Teens $15, children 6-11 are $5. Under 6 free. You can get your tickets by calling Ken Glass at 717-814-0256 or see him after the 8:15 Mass.

GROCERY CERTIFICATES – The sale of the grocery cards is very beneficial to our parish. Please know how very grateful we are to all of you who support our Grocery Certificate Program and ultimately our Religious Education Program. IHM receives a 5% profit from the sale of all the grocery cards purchased. We thank all those who continually support the sale of the Weis and Giant cards. The cards are sold after each Mass at the front entrance door. They are also available in the parish office throughout the week. Please help support this wonderful program! During the week of Feb. 9, 2020 we sold $1,090 for a profit of $54.50.

SOUPER BOWL REPORT: Thank you for the many, many donations. We had a great response of 1,156 items, which is almost 17 percent over last year’s total of 991 items. Here’s the breakdown: soup and other food items, 1060; condiments, 49; and laundry detergent, 47. We also had $50 cash. All those donations will be a big help in stocking the shelves for the Abbottstown/East Berlin mobile food pantry. Thanks also the volunteers who helped with moving all those donations from the hall to the truck.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2020
Mark your calendars now so that you don’t miss this fun-filled week, which is being held Monday, July 20th through Friday, July 24th from 6:00-8:30 PM. We invite all children ages 3 up to and including those who have completed 6th grade to hop aboard “ROCKY RAILWAY!” On this faith-filled adventure the children will discover that trusting Jesus will always pull them through life’s ups and downs. Watch the bulletin for more information!

FUSSION - Fusion is Immaculate Heart of Mary’s youth ministry; open to all teenagers in grades 8 to 12. Be prepared for Lent. Check out our new program called 40 Days!
- Sunday, February 23, 5 - 7:30 PM: Youth Night: 40 Days, Session 1
- Saturday, February 29, 6 - 8:30 PM: Leap Night!
- Sunday, March 8, 5 – 7:30 PM: Youth Night: 40 Days, Session 2
- Sunday, March 22, 5 – 7:30 PM: Youth Night: 40 Days, Session 3
For more information, please call or email Paul Oakes: (717) 259-0611 ext.8 or poakes@hbgdiocese.org

ITALIAN MASS – La Santa Messa Per La Festa Di San Giuseppe (Italian Mass for the Feast of Saint Joseph) will be held Sunday, March 15th at 1 PM at the Church of the Holy Spirit, 300 W. Pine St., Palmyra, PA 17078. There will be a dinner reception after Mass in the social hall. For more information, please contact Maria Disanto at 717-554-5698, email: disanto1@comcast.net or Marietti Amato at 717-278-9420.

“LOVE AND MERCY” FILM originally scheduled for April 8th at St. Joseph’s social hall in Hanover has been rescheduled for Friday, April 17th at 7 PM.

DCHS CLASS OF 1966 – Class luncheon on Saturday, April 25, 2020 at Inn 94, New Oxford. Social hour 11:30-12:30, meal and fellowship from 12:30-3:30 PM. RSVP to Pat (Breiner) Webb via email pw4893@gmail.com or Julie (Houser) Habweker via phone 717-632-0620 or text 717-818-5051.

THANKS TO

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Sunday, Feb. 9th – Religious Education from 9:30 – 11 AM
Sunday, Feb. 9th – Adult Enrichment Class in The social hall, 9:30-11 AM

DECEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT –
Monthly Budget $ 45,500.00
Income for Dec. 1st $ 9,908.00
  Dec. 8th 10,674.00
  Dec. 15th 9,457.00
  Dec. 22 10,374.11
  Dec. 29th 9,796.00
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME $ 50,209.11

ADDITIONAL COLLECTIONS:
Capital Improvements $1,793.00
Religious Retirement 3,297.05
Dec. 8th Collection 1,049.00
Christmas Collection 14,482.20

GROCERY CERTIFICATES – Please know how very grateful we are to all of you who support our Grocery Certificate Program and ultimately our Religious Education Program. IHM receives a 5% profit from the sale of all the grocery cards purchased. Before going for groceries, please consider purchasing Weis or Giant cards after each Mass at the front entrance. Cards can also be purchased in the parish office during the work week. Thank you for your support of this wonderful program! During the week of Jan. 19, 2020 we sold $360 for a profit of $18.00.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
PARISH MISSION with Rev. William Garrott, OP. He will preach at all the Masses on May 2, 3. The Mission will be held in the church May 3,4,5 at 7pm.

PARISH CELEBRATION OF THE 175th ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CHURCH on June 7 at 10:15am. Most Rev. Ronald Gainer will be with us for Mass and the reception to follow.

PARISH EUCHARISTIC DEVOTIONS will be September 13, 14, 15 at 7pm and Rev. David Hereshko will be here to preach for our Devotions.

THURSDAY MORNING FAITH SHARING GROUP – All are invited to the Thursday Morning Faith Sharing Group’s presentation of Bishop Barron’s The Mass beginning on Jan. 30th and ending on March 3rd. Each session will begin after the 9 AM Mass at approximately 9:30 AM until 11:00 in the social hall. The video presentation will begin at 9:45 AM. For more information, please contact Bernadine Filliben at 717-259-9006 or Midge Stokes at 717-515-2693. Optional: If you wish to purchase a workbook, which coincides with the series, please contact Deb Robinson at 717-357-8817.

WEEKDAY MASS PARKING – In inclement weather please use common sense for traveling for daily Mass. Do not put yourself in any harm. Anyone attending the weekday Masses are asked to park in the lot beside and behind the Church whenever there is snow and ice. This parking area will be made ready first for anyone on the property.

ABBOTTSTOWN/EAST BERLIN FOOD BANK – The food pantry in East Berlin held on Jan. 3rd served 44 families which included 124 individuals. The number of families served at the Abbottstown location on Jan. 2nd was 22 for a total of 54 individuals. The link to the Time to Sign Up page for the food pantry on Wednesday, Feb. 5th at the East Berlin location is www.volunteersignup.org/MYX8P and Thursday, Feb. 6th at the Abbottstown location is www.volunteersignup.org/FPFHR. Please remember to drop off health/beauty items, such as soaps, toothbrushes, diapers, as well as LAUNDRY DETERGENT, etc. and place them in the food pantry barrels.

WELCOME! We welcome the following new member into our parish family:
John Henry, Abbottstown

Message from the Pastor

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION
WHEN: Every First Friday of the month beginning Jan. 3, 2020
WHAT: Two Hours of Eucharistic Adoration
WHERE: Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
TIME: 7 PM – 9 PM

HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES - We urge and encourage those of you who are in need of this service to please use them. They are so much closer to the Church. You may use the CHURCH EXIT to get into the spaces on Saturday night or for 8:15 Mass on Sunday. For the 11:15 Mass, you may use this
entrance until 10:45 and be parked before the children are being dismissed from Religious Education classes. For safety reasons, please do not come in the EXIT and park the wrong way along the side of the Church. Please note ~ the same rules apply here as elsewhere in using these spaces. You must have a Handicapped Placard or it be indicated on your license plate. Thank you!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY – CAN YOU DONATE NEW YARN? During the last year, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has made over 50 items for our own parishioners, Rachel’s Vineyard retreatants, Cross Keys Village Skilled Nursing patients, Spiritrust Lutheran hospice and Hanover Hospital Maternity. We rely on your donations to help with our yarn expense. Please drop off your donations in the covered gray boxes at the entrances to the church. If you know of anyone who would benefit from a prayer shawl, please call the parish office at 717-259-0611. Thank you!

END OF THE YEAR NOTICES – Most taxpayers will no longer need to itemize their deductions and will take the standard deduction amount. Therefore, since many people no longer use the end-of-year statements for tax purposes, we will only send out to those who request them. If you are interested in receiving a statement, please contact Anita in the parish office. The Diocese will no longer automatically generate year end statements, unless it is requested by the donor. You may contact the Office of Stewardship & Development at the Diocese at 717-657-4804 ext 245.

SURVIVING DIVORCE – Hope and Healing for Catholics. This program was developed to bring hope and healing to those who have suffered the pain and loneliness of a broken marriage. The program is designed to work through the emotional upheaval of separation and divorce, find personal healing and hope, discover understanding of God’s love for you, and to gain wisdom and comfort from experts and others who share your experiences. This 12 week program will be offered at St. Aloysius Parish on Tuesdays, Feb. 25 – May 12, 2020, 6:30 – 8 PM. Program cost is $25 to cover materials. Registration is required. Please contact Kathleen Hunter @ 410-259-2159 or kas3820@comcast.net to register. Deadline 2/10/20.

PARISH CARING COMMITTEE – Assists parishioners on an as needed basis, in times of need or stress and provides visitation, care giver relief, meals, errands, light household chores and local transportation. To request assistance or to become a Caring Committee Volunteer, contact Cathy Gunzelman at 717-225-5059.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students at Delone Catholic High School for achieving honor roll status:
FIRST HONORS: Audrey & Abigail Sell, Jacob Fleming
SECOND HONORS: Harrison Smith, Avery Kuntz & Julia O’Brien

A CELTIC EVENING – Saint Vincent de Paul Church, Hanover is hosting “A Celtic Evening” on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2020 in Msgr. Gotwalt Auditorium, 65 South Street, Hanover. Irish music will be provided by award winning “Across the Pond”. Doors open at 6:30 PM. Entertainment begins at 7 PM and concludes at 9 PM. No admission fee. Donations accepted. You may want to bring a designated driver. Any questions, contact Anthony DePastina by email adepastina@depastinalaw.com.

CHILDREN’S LITURGY - As you know, our children (ages 3 through 2nd grade) have a wonderful opportunity at the 11:15 Mass when they are called forth and dismissed for “Children's Liturgy of the Word,” the ability to learn about the scripture readings on their level. We are in great need of more volunteers, who have Diocesan clearances to participate in this ministry. If we have a pool of at least 6 to 8 volunteers, then everyone only has a turn every 6 weeks or so. PLEASE consider offering your services for this wonderful ministry for our children. If you are able to help out, please call Sister Rosanne @ (717) 259-0611, ext. 7.

RUTH’S HARVEST – Ruth’s Harvest packing will be Wednesday, Oct. 23rd from 10-11 AM at the Abbottstown Fire Hall. Consider joining others in this ecumenical ministry as we bag single-serving food items for elementary school students to take to their homes. For more information, call Pat Renaut at 717-637-1110.

PARISH FLOWER BEDS – Fall is officially here and it is time to clean out the flower beds for the winter. Anyone who “adopted” a flower bed needs to trim back and clean out their respective flower beds. Thank you for making everything look so beautiful!

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS – We are often asked about which items are most in need. Well, the answer would include a number of non-food items because those items are very much needed but not donated as often as food. These items include such essentials as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, dental floss, toothbrushes, deodorant, toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, and laundry detergent. Of course, we can also use food donations; but we ask you to donate items with good expiration dates (or expired in the current year). Also, all donated items must be unopened. Any questions contact Pat Renaut at 717-637-1110 or patrenaut@hotmail.com.
A FRIENDLY REMINDER
From the middle of September until the beginning of May, Religious Education Classes are in session!
Please be extra mindful of SAFETY on Sunday mornings after the 8:15 Mass as you are leaving the parking lot (especially if you are parked on the side of or behind the Church). That is when our children are being dropped off for CCD. Cars are moving and children are walking and most likely "aren't looking/noticing" that cars are backing up and pulling out.

Also around 11:00 AM when children are being dismissed from the Religious Education Center and are waiting for their parents to "pull up in the car line" to pick them up. There are 150 children in the CCD and they and their safety are our #1 priority!

If you are in need of a "Handicap Parking" spot, please plan on coming to the 11:15 Mass by 10:55 AM. You can come in the EXIT driveway and pull right into one of the spots. Parents pick their children up beginning at 11:00 AM. Once their cars start moving, it is about safety! If you choose not to do this and you get in the "parent car line" then please be patient. Please do not try and come up along side the cars that are in line. Most of the time all children get in their cars on the right hand side where adults are right there with them. Occasionally, the children need to get in on the left side because of infants in the car. It takes about 7 minutes to get every child in their car and on their way home safely. Thank you for your understanding!

AERO ENERGY HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM –
This program was established to provide Aero Energy customers an opportunity to give to our church. To participate, Aero Energy customers sign up by phone or online and Aero Energy donates 4 cents for every gallon of fuel they use to us. Please call if you are not already part of this wonderful program. It’s an easy way to benefit Immaculate Heart of Mary. Last heating season, IHM was among the top 5 churches in donations received! To sign up, call 888-827-17136.

HOUSE OF WORSHIP PROGRAM
We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to all those who participate in the Aero Energy House of Worship Program. Our parish received a check in the amount of $527.16 from this past heating season! IHM receives 4 cents per gallon for anyone using heating oil or propane that is a current customer of Aero Energy or anyone who becomes a NEW customer. If you are not already participating in this program and would like to, please call Aero Energy at 888-827-1713 to sign up for the House of Worship Program. There is no additional cost to anyone who participates – it is a donation from Aero Energy to our church. Thanks to all who participate!

OFFERTORY PROCESSION – For the benefit of you, our long-time parishioners as well as you, our NEW parishioners ~ we invite you and your family to participate in the Offertory Procession when you come to Mass on Saturday night or Sunday.

Perhaps you have NOT noticed the 3 crosses and the picture frame on the ledge behind the last pew (right hand side) as you come into Church. There is an invitation from Fr. Burger in the frame for you to bring forth the gifts at the Offertory time. You just need to take the 3 crosses to the pew with you, and when the altar server goes to the back of the Church with the Processional Cross, you get out of your pew and head to the back of the Church. One of the ushers is there to assist you, if necessary. The gifts (the paten of hosts and the cruet of wine) are on the ledge by the picture frame. You bring those gifts, as well as the collection basket forward, following the altar server with the cross. Please consider having your family participate in the Offertory Procession. This is a simple way to participate more fully in the celebration of the Mass.

SCAM ALERT! Once again someone is using the Pastor’s name to scam people into buying gift cards or giving their cell number to them. Neither Fr. Burger, nor any Diocesan Priest, will ever ask you to supply him with gift cards or give your cell number in order to help him out. Please DO NOT respond to any emails you may receive or any text message asking if you are available to do him a favor and purchase gift cards for someone who is sick.

HEALING HEARTS is a support group for widows and widowers. The group will meet once a week on Thursday nights from 6pm until 7:30 pm at Kim Aiello’s house at 1650 Pine Run Road, East Berlin. The meetings will consist of prayer, bible study, share time, Christian music, group social outings, like going to see a Christian movie, attending a Christian Concert, or listening to a Christian Speaker. The support group goal is to help heal the broken heart and replace sorrow with joy, by finding peace through a personal relationship with the Lord. Contact Kim Aiello at 717-476-7504 or emailing her at jkilo1@hotmail.com.

SUMMER WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE
Saturday 5 PM, Sunday 8:15 AM and 10:15 AM

ARE YOU CARING FOR AN AGING PERSON?
There is a safe website where you can get help and ideas. Go to www.agingcare.com. You can sign up for their emailed newsletter at the bottom of the homepage. I have been following the newsletters and find a lot of articles which may be useful. If I can be of any help, please contact me at roywainwright3@gmail.com or 717-619-7243.

FLOWERS – Looking for a way to memorialize a loved one or celebrate a special occasion? A beautiful way would be to order flowers on the altar. Most weekends are available from now through the end of the year. Please call Anita in the parish office to make arrangements.

MASS INTENTIONS – Mass intentions are a wonderful way to celebrate a special occasion, remember those who have died or are sick and in need of our prayers. Please consider this as a “gift” for someone. Call Anita in the Parish Office to arrange your Mass intentions.

PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL
St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snare of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING SERVICES:
Depression and anxiety can occur when we have a loss or a major change in our life. A licensed skilled therapist can help you by listening, processing, and giving you the power to make positive change. Catholic Charities Counseling Services is accepting new clients for four office locations throughout the Diocese. Catholic Charities Counseling is for anyone: children, adolescents, adults, and couples. Services are provided in a confidential office setting. Services include individual and family therapy, marital counseling, and parent-child counseling. We accept Medical Assistance, or clients can pay for services (discount fee schedule available). Just call for an appointment: Capital Region 717-233-7978; Lancaster 717-299-3659 or 717-392-2113 (Espanol); York 717-845-2696; Paradise School Office (Abbottstown) 717-259-9537. Visit www.cchbg.org for more information.

Don’t Get Scammed!
Scammers are now posing as priests and other clergy. In this latest scam, you might receive an email or a text message that appears to be from your Pastor or another priest that you may know. The scammer ask you to help someone in need by purchasing a gift card and to provide the codes on that card.

Here’s how to protect yourself from being scammed.
1. Know that scammers are out there. Be suspicious of any request for funds of any type via an email message or a text message. Verify any request with a call to the person who supposedly sent it or a call to the phone number of the text that you received.
2. Know that any email from a priest should be from a diocesan or parish email account. Messages sent from free services, such as Gmail or Yahoo, are more likely to be scammers.
3. Many clergy do not share their cell phone numbers publicly. If you receive a text message from someone not on your phone’s contact list, be suspicious.
4. Know that priests will NEVER ask for financial transactions via email or text messages.

IMPORTANT CHANGE FOR HANOVER HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS – The Hanover Hospital – UPMC Pinnacle Health has issued the following changes to their policy effective December 2018.

1. Clergy will not be able to view denominational lists at the front desk.
2. Clergy will not be able to obtain patient information at the front desk unless they have the patient’s name.
3. If the patient indicates a congregational affiliation in the admisions interview, the Chaplain will call the congregation. If the patient indicates to the Chaplain on his or her rounds that he or she belongs to a particular congregation and gives permission the Chaplain will call the congregation.
4. In an emergency situation if the patient or family indicates a congregational affiliation to the Chaplain or other staff and gives permission to call the congregation, every effort will be made to notify the congregation.

Because of these changes, it is very important that a family member contacts the parish when someone is admitted.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT – It has been noted that some people, who are dropped off or picked up for Mass, are doing so at the steps right along West Canal Road. Especially at night, and given the adjacent hill, it is deemed this is unsafe given the speed and flow of traffic. For accessible and safe access to the Church at all times, please use the side social hall doors. Thank you.
SUGGESTION CARDS are available on the back ledges and at the entrances of the church. If you have any suggestions on how to make our parish better, please fill one out and return it in the collection basket.

BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION – Please keep collecting and sending in those BoxTops for Education for St. Teresa School. If you’d like to help out trimming those BoxTops, please contact kwenger@hotmail.com. All help is appreciated!

EVENT NOTICE – I have been a parishioner at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church for more than 40 years and employed in the newspaper business for more than 20 years. We have many wonderful events happening here at our parish and we’d like to get the word out to the public. Please feel free to send me any events that would be of interest to our local community – from Lenten dinners to youth events to Bible studies and everything in between! You can send information to: 6fletch@embarqmail.com. Don’t forget to tell me the following: WHAT is the event? WHO is invited? WHEN is the event? WHERE is the event? WHY should people attend? HOW can they get more information? If you have any questions, feel free to call or text me at 717-357-8051. Thank you!
Holly Fletcher

HEARING IMPAIRED – Anyone who is hearing impaired may find it helpful to sit in Pew #9 on the Sacristy side. You will notice “hearing impaired” stickers on the side of the pew to indicate the best place to sit if you are hearing impaired.

CHILDREN’S CHAPEL – For everyone’s information, especially for those who may be new to our parish, there is a so-called Children’s Chapel or Cry Room here in the Church. It’s located in the front left corner of the church, where a restroom is also located. As a parish family, we want children and families to be welcome here at Mass, and so it’s important to have an appropriate place in the church for babies and young children when they get fussy and need extra attention. We really want to encourage parents to use this space to tend to their children as needed. Please, feel free to just get up when need be from the body of the church, and utilize this space. Then you can better tend to your children without feeling like you’re being watched. And this will also allow the other parishioners to be able to more fully focus on worshipping.

CREMATION
Since 1963, Catholics have been allowed to choose cremation over burial as a means of laying a loved one to rest. Cremation is a popular choice since it is less expensive and more manageable than a full burial. Cremation, like death, is final. But that doesn’t mean you won’t have second thoughts. Susan Skiles Luke, a marketing consultant in Columbia, Missouri, had her mother cremated and buried in a family plot. Now, she wishes it was her mother’s body and not just the cremated remains that was in the grave. “When I go there, which isn’t often, I want to feel like her body is under ground, right alongside my grandparents and beloved great aunt, all dressed up in their Sunday best…”

Although creation is permitted, some Catholics have not been dealing properly with their loved ones remains. Common practices include scattering ashes, parting ashes out to friends and relatives, and keeping the ashes in a common area, such as a living room. While scattering ashes may seem romantic to some (but is also contrary to Catholic teaching), there’s something to be said about keeping your loved one in once place, and then marking that place with a name. “We mark the graves of our loved ones with a headstone to memorialize them, so we don’t forget them”. When visiting that person’s grave, just seeing his or her name can give comfort.

To instruct the faithful in this regard, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued updated guidelines. According to these, burial is still preferred, but cremation is an option. When a loved one has been cremated, their ashes must be kept intact, the same as one would treat a body. The ashes may not be separated or scattered. Instead, they should remain in a proper vessel that is interred in a proper place, such as a cemetery or church. Finally, the document stresses that Catholics who choose cremation for reasons contrary to the faith, (e.g., to have their ashes scattered) must be denied a Christian funeral.
In the end, whether cremation or burial is chosen, we await from the grave the second coming of Jesus Christ and the blessed Resurrection of the Dead.

Tips for talking to children about difficult subjects/news reports

The topic of sex abuse, particularly child sex abuse, is a daunting one for parents. Every parent must consider many factors including the best age-appropriate way to discuss the topic. Below are some points to consider adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and First Things First.

1. Make sure you are composed before you talk with your child.
2. If you believe your child is aware of news concerning abuse in the diocese, start the conversation. Not talking about a difficult event can make the event even more threatening in your child’s mind.
3. Listen carefully to what your child is asking or talking about.
4. Clarify just what any concerns are before you answer. Sometimes we make assumptions and
give far more information than what the child needs.

5. Keep your answers simple and brief. Don’t answer questions that have not been asked. Do not overload your child with information that is beyond his/her level of understanding.

6. Assure your child that you and other adults that are in charge are doing everything possible to make sure they will be safe. This will give them a sense that adults are actively taking steps to protect those who are currently suffering.

7. Don’t make guarantees that such a thing can never happen again. Words like “never” and “always” should be used very carefully because small children trust that this is a promise from you.

8. Explain that we do not know why people treat other people badly.

9. Try to limit your child’s exposure to media coverage. A child believes what he or she sees on television, or in the newspapers is always true.

10. Let your children know about successful community efforts. You may want to share positive media images, such as reports of individuals helping those in need.

Additional information is available at
www.YouthProtectionHBG.com

FROM THE PASTOR’S DESK