

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

Like many people, I begin each new year by looking at the calendar and planning activities. As I am adding them onto a largely blank calendar on a quiet snow day in January the pace seems so reasonable. However, when the days actually come, weeks or months later, after a bunch of other activities have been added to the calendar and unplanned obligations crop up, it can seem like too much. When my schedule gets really busy, I sometimes even wonder why I scheduled some things in the first place.

I think most of us struggle with managing our time. As the essay below suggests, perhaps the most important lesson about using our time is to live in the present moment.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

THE FEAR OF TIME

by Abby Kowitz from Mind and Spirit Magazine

Time. I think it's safe to say we could all use more of it and struggle with balancing the many hats we wear with a limited number of hours in the day. Time is something we are all equally bound to yet utilize so differently (one simple glance into our culture can attest to that statement). In my own life I'd often complain about time or lack thereof, aware of the fact that I could probably spend more of it at the gym and less of it on my phone, but it wasn't until tragedy struck that I really began to question and look at time existentially.

Fear of Wasted Time My dad unexpectedly died in a car accident when I was living hundreds of miles away. Having never really questioned my decision to live so far from my family up to that point, something that I had originally deemed as a good and fruitful decision suddenly changed to time wasted and a missed opportunity. By living away from my dad, I missed the daily intimacies and closeness that naturally ensue from an in-person relationship during the last years of his life. Overcome with regret, I subconsciously decided not to miss such opportunities with those most important to me ever again. As you might imagine, the economics of time made this decision virtually impossible. By spending my time one way I am not spending it a thousand other ways. Every yes implies many more no's. This reality left me frazzled, exhausted, and fearful as I was plagued by the thought of missing something important again. I had entered into a sort of existential FOMO (fear of missing out). This fear was the driving force behind most of my actions as I sought time with others as a precious commodity, as well as viewing the ever-ticking hands of the clock as my greatest enemy as more and more opportunities slipped through my already-full hands.

Time As a Gift I realize now that I had adopted a false definition of time. If it's true that we never have

enough of it, then every passing moment is a missed opportunity because there will always be more things I am not doing than the one thing that I am, more places I am not than the one place I am, and more people I am not sharing this present moment with than the one person I am. If the goal of time is to maximize it and pack in as many tasks, experiences, places, and people as possible, then I will always lose. And that's what happened. I lost, and the growing number of gray-hairs and seemingly permanent bags under my eyes proved it.

Rather than viewing my life as a race against the clock, I needed to embrace the reality that time is a gift. And as is true of any gift, we can't grasp at it with an entitled attitude. With that understanding in mind, I still want to spend my time with multiple different experiences, places, and people, just as I wanted to be living where I was when my dad died and also wanted to have spent his last years of his life with him. These simultaneous desires point us to the infinite—on earth we are limited and I think this very longing points to the fact that we were created for more.

I've realized that it's not so much what I want, but where is God calling me and what is he asking of me? He has shown me that quantity of time is not the only or even the best measure of our love for others. If I can say that I am spending my time in accordance with God's will, then it is time well spent. As much as I wish I could have had the memories of many more recent days on the lake with my dad to cling to, I simply wasn't in the season of life where God was asking that of me or providing it. I had to accept my relationship with my dad (and everyone else for that matter) for what it was, not what I'd envision it to be in an ideal world. This acceptance has been hard—by doing so I've also been humbled to admit how little control I have over life. Other tragedies and disasters may indeed strike and should I know the details beforehand I would likely adjust how I spend my time accordingly, but I rest now in the comfort that, though opportunities will inevitably be missed, they are either what God is asking of me or things I need to do to prove myself.

The Present Moment This attitude leaves me free to fully embrace the present moment, where I'm experiencing it, and who I'm experiencing it with... no regrets. I've begun to see and value my time in what it's giving me rather than all the things it's not. In giving myself permission to be human and not have a contingency plan in place for every possible disaster, I can quiet all of my contradicting wants and respond to God's call for me today and leave the rest to his divine providence. And let me tell you, it's about time!

PRAYER GROUP MEETING THIS THURSDAY FROM 6:30-8:30 PM in the hall. Dinner is included. All are welcome as we celebrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For more information contact Father Conley.

Come to our new faith formation series**SONS & DAUGHTERS OF GOD**

This six-session series meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 in the hall. The cost is \$10 for the series and includes dinner before each session. Our next presentation on Thursday, January 25 is on the essential role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

You may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Father Conley at 301-870-2220, ext. 13 or

frconley@comcast.net

BELIEVE IT OR NOT-Lent begins in just 5 Weeks on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. Happy Ashes!**THIS LENT, HOW ABOUT GETTING A GIFT RATHER THAN GIVING SOMETHING UP?**

So we are inviting you to mark your calendars now to receive **The GIFT: A Life in the Spirit Course**. Over 200 people participated in this six-session and for many of them it was a life-changing experience. In fact, it was such a great experience for so many, that ten other parishes in Southern Maryland have asked us to help them present the program this year. This is an inspiring and practical series, aimed at people of all ages, to help them encounter the Holy Spirit and empower them to share their faith. The six sessions will meet on Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30pm and will include dinner.

The GIFT series begins on Wednesday, February 21st.

The cost of the series is \$10. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at 301-870-2220 ext 13 or at frconley@comcast.net.

WANTED!!! SPONSORS WHO WOULD LIKE TO ADVERTISE ON BACK OF OUR CHURCH BULLETIN.

If anyone is interested in advertising for the upcoming year that will start on March 1st, please call Mary at the rectory at 301-870-2220.

YOU DON'T DESERVE TO BE ABUSED

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of violent and coercive behavior by one adult over another in an intimate relationship. It can consist of repeated severe beatings or subtle forms of abuse, including threats and control. If you experience any form of abuse, please know that there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. To learn more about domestic violence, please visit

www.catholiccharitiesdc.org/familypeace.

YOU'RE WORTH IT! DAY RETREAT FOR WOMEN

The Church of Jesus the Divine Word in Huntingtown, MD (885 Cox Rd.) is hosting award-winning Catholic author/speaker/blogger/talk-show-host/mother-of-eight, Danielle Bean, on Saturday, January 27 from 9am-3pm. In the *You're Worth It! Day Retreat for Women*, Danielle invites women to find their worth by seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus. Tickets are \$30 per person if purchased in advance through the parish office, and \$40 at the door. The day begins with Mass and offers talks, guided meditation, private prayer/Adoration, music, breakfast, lunch, and more. For more

information, contact Karen Burns at 410-414-8304 or religioused@jesusdivineword.org.

ST. MARY'S NEWPORT - GOOD SHEPHERD

FOOD PANTRY - In need of food? We are here to help. Come visit our Good Shepherd Food Pantry and one of our food pantry volunteers will assist you in gathering food for you and your family. We are open the 3rd Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. The next date Good Shepherd Food Pantry is open is on January 20, 2018. For more information, you may contact the parish office at 301-934-8825.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Loretta Hurysh & Anna Anstett, 10am Craig Hoover, 12N: Parishioners, **MON:** 8:00am Benjamin M. Edelen, **TUES:** 8am Don Pobst, **WED:** 8am Zelah Weberling, **THURS:** 8am Betty Ann Watson, **FRI:** 9:30am Jimmy Pfeffer, **SAT:** 9am Mary T. Edelen, 4pm Albert Venezzio.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Mary Bowes, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Maurice Long, Liz Marcus, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Brian Myers, Lenora Proctor, Joseph Quade, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Lisa Thompson, Beth Weise, Tim Welch, Brice Zimmer.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO GAVE TO OUR CHRISTMAS COLLECTION.

To date we have received \$36,121.65. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed. Thank you for your support of our parish!

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND,

\$11,335.00. The unidentified donations totaled \$513.00. We received \$937.26 for our School Support.