

Dear Parishioners,

+JMJ

As further follow-up to my beginning marriage preparation in our parish, I want to explain why cohabitation is something unacceptable. **Forbidding cohabitation is not primarily a “no”; it is, rather, a huge “yes” to the beauty of married love and the truth of the body language of the marital-embrace.** Here are points to consider about cohabitation:

I. **God’s Laws** – Many biblical passages make it clear that the Lord does not allow cohabitation, i.e., the marital-embrace outside of marriage. For example: I Corinthians 6:9, “Do not deceive yourselves: no fornicators, idolaters, or adulterers... will inherit the kingdom of God.”; Ephesians 5:5 - “Make no mistake about this: no fornicator, no unclean or lustful person - in effect an idolater - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ.” But there is always a way back to the Lord. There is always mercy through the Confessional (cf. Luke 7:36-50, John 8:1-11). A couple want to say something positive to God as they approach Him asking for His blessing and the creation of a permanent sacramental bond between them. It makes no sense to approach Him asking for grace, yet actively to choose a life you know is contrary to His will and His design of the human person, a lifestyle that inhibits the grace that would otherwise pour out through the sacramental bond.

II. **The Couple’s Own Relationship - God’s Design/Human Nature** – The “body language” of the marital embrace can only mean “full gift of self to the other”; and therefore it can only be “spoken” truthfully after consent has been given in marriage; i.e., after the gift of self has been formally and truly made in a marriage ceremony. Before that point, sexual relations between a man and woman are somewhat of a lie. A couple should desire the body language to be true. Why speak a lie to one another, when you are claiming to love one another?

Various studies have shown that couples who cohabit before marriage tend to have a much higher rate of divorce. It has been suggested by experts that this is because cohabiting couples live with a “psychological out”: they know they are not committed, really, and therefore they do not communicate fully enough about difficulties. They know they could leave the relationship at any point. Patterns of non-communication develop, leading to underlying tensions that explode only after the marriage is finally ratified. I have heard jokes about such couples: “Now that they are 'tying the knot', the divorce will finally happen!”

Sex has a bonding power that is not appropriately experienced before the true gift-of-self is made at the wedding. Couples entering into the marital-embrace before marriage bond on a level that can prohibit true, rational thinking about whether God is really calling them to be together for life. [Cohabitation is actually a point that can be used to argue that full consent was not made in the marriage ceremony; i.e., cohabitation can be used to build the case for an annulment after civil divorce has happened.] They don't ask the right questions. It has been suggested that sometimes it is easier at this point for a cohabiting couple just to get married, rather than break up. The marriage partner is not discerned adequately. The “goodwill” part of love, the self-gift dynamic, is inhibited and deceived by the sensual part of love.

A couple should want to esteem their marriage enough to struggle for chastity beforehand. They should want to experience the newness and specialness of the married way of life after the wedding. It's odd after the wedding to go back to the “same-old” that they have been living already.

III. **Friends and Family** – A couple should want to say to family and friends, “This is a real marriage, not just a formality. We are serious.” Making the decision to separate before marriage for the months of immediate preparation with the priest or deacon makes it clear to all that something has truly changed in the couple's approach to marriage. The Church wedding is not shallow in their estimation. It is very odd for a cohabiting couple to expect the Church and friends and family to treat them as a married couple before the marriage, and then to expect friends to see that anything has changed. To all external appearances, nothing has changed.

A Catholic couple has a mission to show the world the beauty of married love – and even the beauty of a holy approach to it. The couple's relationship is never just a matter of themselves. By definition, their relationship involves the immediate society around them; and that society today is dying for lack of people who esteem and live pure love inspired by God Himself. A couple is called to evangelize their friends and family by their example.

IV. **The Church Community** – It is a scandal to treat the cohabiting couple as if they have not been living together. And it's actually pretty selfish on the part of the couple to expect friends and family, even the Church, to “cave” on moral standards and put up with the couple's innovation (and these are moral standards that are objectively based on God's law and the design of the human person.... they are not random or whimsical!). How many times in my 17 years of priesthood have I listened to relatives of cohabiting couples agonize over whether they should even attend the ceremony, or what to do in light of their child's/friend's/sibling's cohabitation! Why would a couple put upright, moral, loving friends and family into such a predicament? Perhaps people witnessing will not get up and walk out of the ceremony, nor refuse to attend it. But we are still “dumbing down” the sense of moral rectitude for everybody in attendance. It is almost impossible for the priest or deacon in some way not to appear as if he condones cohabitation; which in turn leads to more cohabitation on the part of others, which perpetuates an evil that damages the institution of marriage. Why would a couple ask a priest or deacon to perpetuate an evil contrary to the good of the institution of marriage? The priest or deacon could make “the evils of cohabitation” the subject of the wedding homily; but nobody wants that either – least of all the priest or deacon. We love marriage. What a shame it would be to have to speak of cohabitation in the marriage homily in order to do “damage control”.

For all of the reasons above I am begging our parishioners never to enter into a situation of cohabitation as they approach marriage. And for those who have done so, perhaps not knowing this teaching, I am asking that they separate living situations (abstaining from sex, of course) for their own good and for the good of the community around them. Many couples who have separated before marriage express that this gave them a chance more deeply to consider the real meaning of marriage and the marital-embrace. It transformed their relationship. [*Caveat*: If there is a child involved already in the relationship, it could be that the rule of *epikeia* applies: Prudence could dictate the bending of such a rule for the health of the child.] That is the higher call. That is the way to say, “Married love is so precious that we are going to make the difficult decisions that exhibit our esteem for the bond into which we are entering.”

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, DON'T COHABIT!!!!!!!!!!

Have a blessed Lent!

In cordibus Iesu et Mariae,
Fr. Poggemeyer

Divine Mercy Parish Offerings

2014-2015 budget per week = \$ 9,540.00

Offertory – February 8, 2015 = \$ 9662.03
Children's Offertory – 11 envelopes = \$ 10.00
2nd collection Maintenance Fund = \$ 384.20

*Electronic Offertory Contribution is
an option to consider. For more information
Call Dianne at the Parish Office.*

Antwerp

Rosary Leader February 22: Rose Reinhart
Clean Church week of February 15:

Patty Wetli, Lee Becker, Cindy Herber

Feb. Visitors to Shut-in: Volunteer Needed

Feb. Communion to Shut-ins: Denny & Rita Brinkman

February Ushers: Paul & Matt Adams

Paulding

Church Cleaners February 16 – March 1:

Carmen & Lyssa St. John

Sacristan February 15 – 21: Nancy While

Payne

Rosary Leader February 21: Lucille Schmidt

February 23-24 Church Cleaner: Volunteer needed

ATTENTION - - - CLEANING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED at PAYNE AND PAULDING

Sign the sheet on the bulletin board in the back of church at Payne and in the Narthex at Paulding to clean the church. In Paulding you do **NOT** have to clean bathrooms, the basement or the Narthex, just the church. If you have any questions regarding the Payne location call Jeanette at 419-263-2655. Make a New Year's resolution and sign up for this "clean & shiny" ministry.

WEEKDAY MASS - WEATHER POLICY

For Fr. Poggemeyer's safety and the safety of those who attend daily Mass, it has been decided when a weekday Mass is scheduled in a school district that has delayed or cancelled due to inclement weather, the Mass will be cancelled. For Wednesday Mass and Adoration in Paulding, we **will** have Mass and Adoration when there is a delay, but **not** when Paulding school has cancelled due to extreme weather, such as snow and ice. With foggy or snowy mornings, please don't take unnecessary chances, make wise and safe decisions.

BULLETIN PUBLICATIONS

Dave Roth representing Diocesan Publications (our Bulletin Publisher) is in the process of seeking new advertisements. If interested, please call the parish office, or you may contact Dave directly at 614-715-3215 or droth@diocesan.com. This is an excellent service and the sponsors get good coverage with their advertisements. Thanks to you and Diocesan Publications, the bulletin is published weekly at no cost to the parish.

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, February 14 – *Valentine's Day*

Sunday, February 15

Engaged Couples in Paulding Educational Center

10:30AM Mass – Liturgy of the Word

11:30AM Church & Family in Paulding

Noon Jr. High Youth Group at Center

12:30PM Retreat Teem meeting in

Paulding Educational Center

Monday, February 16

All items for the March calendar are due by noon

10AM Divine Mercy Prayer Group in Pldg

4PM Totus Tuus Prayer Group in Pldg.

7PM RCIA in Paulding

7PM Medjugorje Prayer Group in Payne

Tuesday, February 17

4:30PM Anima Christ Prayer Gr. in Pldg.

Wednesday, February 18 – *Ash Wednesday*

8AM – 6:45PM Adoration in Paulding

6:45PM Benediction in Paulding

PSR Schedule

No PSR classes this week
Attend Ash Wednesday Services
with your family.

Thursday, February 19

Theresa is out of the office

6PM Mystical Rose Prayer Gr. In Pldg.

7PM Pastoral Council Mtg. in Payne

Friday, February 20

11AM-1PM and 4-7PM Paulding

K of C Fish Fry at the Hall on US 127S

5-7PM Payne K of C Fish Fry

Saturday, February 21

Sunday, February 22 – *First Sunday of Lent*

10:30AM Mass – Liturgy of the Word

Rite of Elections

12:30PM Retreat Teem meeting in

Paulding Church Basement

3PM Diocesan Rite of Election

LOOKING AHEAD

Noon Lenten Luncheons are at the Presbyterian

Church in Paulding each Wednesday of Lent.

Wednesday, February 26

8AM-8PM Day of Grace in Payne

8AM-8PM Adoration in Payne – Please

stop in and spend some time with our

Lord in prayer.

SCHOOL NEWS

Wednesday, February 18, is Ash Wednesday, and the school staff has 2 hour Professional Development delay. Since this is Ash Wednesday we will be going to Mass at noon.

Divine Mercy School is currently taking registrations for the 2015-2016 school year. An incoming kindergarten student for next year must be 5 years of age on or before August 1, 2015. Come for a school visit or give us a call at 419-263-2114 for more information.

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

The Junior High Youth Group meets this Sunday, February 15, 2015 after the 10:30AM Mass at the Paulding Educational Center. Come join the fun, prayer and fellowship as we focus on "Face-Time". The students and leaders would like to thank the Chief Supermarket and the Paulding K of C for their donations for our service project of preparing meals for the sick & shut-ins of the parish on January 25.

ALWAYS REMEMBERING YOU

Fr. Poggemeyer, thank you for all the calls when Mom was sick and for the beautiful Mass and touching homily. Deacon David Laker, thank you for the Rosary Service and for the prayer at the luncheon after the funeral. Heather, thank you for your skill and assistance in choosing prayers and music for Mom's funeral Mass. To the choir, the music for Mom's funeral Mass was lovely and certainly Mom was pleased. To the ladies who prepared the meal, it was delicious and allowed for additional fellowship of friends and extended family. To all parishioners, thank you for prayers, comforting words and acts of kindness to Mom while living, and to her family in her passing.

The Family of Joan Buchman

CRAFT SHOW - - - BAKE SALE - - - LUNCHEON

Divine Mercy Parish of Paulding County is sponsoring their Spring Craft Show with all the trimmings of handmade crafts, jackets, purses, scarves, wood and glass items and many decorative items for the home, inside and out. The ladies of the parish go all out making their specialties for our bake sale, which features our famous HOMEMADE NOODLES!!! All of this is just in time for your Easter dinner. We have added a raffle this year which includes a quilt made by ladies of the parish and 5 other gift items totaling \$600. The winner doesn't have to be present to win, so come and purchase a ticket or two. Our luncheon includes homemade soups, sandwiches and pies. Join us; bring your friends and neighbors on Saturday, April 4, 9AM-2PM at the Antwerp Center. For information call Virginia at 419-258-0065 or Rita at 419-258-6361.

MYSTERIUM CHRISTI SESSION

Father Poggemeyer is presenting a diocesan Mystery Christi program on *Morality*, Saturday, May 2, 9AM-2:30PM at the Educational Center in Paulding. Please join us as we learn about the foundational Truths of the Catholic Faith. The program is free to anyone who wishes to attend, so mark your calendar for this upcoming educational program.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

World Meeting of Families, 2015, in Philadelphia

- Join Bishop Daniel E. Thomas as he leads the Diocese of Toledo on a Pilgrimage to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September 2015! This year's theme is "*Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*" emphasizing the impact of the love and life of families in our society. For news, and to learn more about the pilgrimage led by Bishop Daniel, contact Monica Martinez at mmartinez@toledodiocese.org or 419-244-6711 ext. 715 or sign-up for updates at toledodiocese.org/page/marriage-and-family. If you are interested in helping Divine Mercy Parish plan a trip to this inspirational event, please call the parish office at 419-399-2576.

A Workshop for Cantors will be held on Saturday, March 7, 9:30AM-Noon, St. Mary, Defiance. Cost is \$10 person. Register by Monday, March 2 to Paul Monachino at 419-244-6711, ext. 716 or at pmonachino@toledodiocese.org.

Toledo Diocese Fertility Seminar - Saturday, February 28, St. Michael the Archangel, Findlay, 10AM-3PM. You will hear from leading authors, medical experts and clergy surrounding such topics as: fertility, infertility, miscarriage, polycystic ovary syndrome, PMS and other gynecological health issues and how to approach these practically, faithfully and pastorally. \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Free for clergy and religious. Lunch included. Register at tdfertilityseminar.eventbrite.com or contact Monica at 419-244-6711 mmartinez@toledodiocese.org.

"Joy-Filled Marriage" Engaged Couples Workshop. If you are engaged to be married, you'll want to register for this interactive, enjoyable and comprehensive workshop for engaged couples. This workshop will delve into practical "life skills" as well as the sacramentality of marriage, guided by a dedicated team of married couples and individuals. This workshop fulfills the "marriage class" component, which is part of the requirements for marriage in the Catholic Church. Divine Mercy will host a workshop on April 25 & 26, 2015. To register or for further information contact Monica Martinez at 419-244-6711, email mmartinez@toledodiocese.org or visit www.jfmdtoledo.eventbrite.com.

Weekly Schedule of Services

February 14 - 22, 2015
St. Maximilian Kolbe Deanery

“The Pastor’s Daily Scripture Inspirations
on Twitter: @frdivinemercy”

SATURDAY, February 14 - St. Cyril & Methodius
4PM Mass in Payne – John & Delores Baumle
and the Intentions of Steve Hall
5:30PM Mass in Paulding – For the Parish

SUNDAY, February 15
8:30AM Mass in Antwerp – Jim Becker and
Tom Marlin
10:30AM Mass in Paulding – Mary Lou Mandly
and Living & Deceased of Louis Savieo Family

MONDAY, February 16
No Services Today

TUESDAY, February 17
Holy Founders of the Servite Order
8AM Mass in Antwerp –
Basil, Mike & Theresa Hertel

WEDNESDAY, February 18 – Ash Wednesday
8AM Mass in Antwerp – Robert Swick and
Dale Bowers
Noon Mass in Payne – Mary Litzenberg and
Viola Dobbelaere
7PM Mass in Paulding – Charles & Mike Johanns

THURSDAY, February 19
8AM Mass in Paulding – Robert Rister

FRIDAY, February 20
9AM Mass in Payne – Bill Gonya

SATURDAY, February 21 - St. Peter Damian
4PM Mass in Payne – For the Parish
5:30PM Mass in Paulding – Betty DeLong and
Dorothy Phlipot

SUNDAY, February 22
8:30AM Mass in Antwerp – Ron Jackson and
Walter Heitkamp
50AM Mass in Paulding – Harry Phlipot and
Ed & Mary Ruth Clark

Follow Bishop Thomas on Facebook at Bishop Daniel E. Thomas, on Twitter@BishopDEThomas and on Instagram at BishopDEThomas. The Diocese is on Facebook at Diocese of Toledo, on Twitter @DioceseToledo and Instagram at DioceseToledo.

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Due to the new bulletin publication process, the deadline for bulletin items submitted to the Parish Office is **Noon on Mondays**, effective immediately.

Saints on the Eucharist

“How I loved the feasts!...I especially loved the processions in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. What a joy it was for me to throw flowers beneath the feet of God!...I was never so happy as when I saw my roses touch the sacred Monstrance...”

From St. Therese’s Autobiography: Story of A Soul

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

The diocese has sent letters to all parishioners concerning the Annual Catholic Appeal. If you do not receive a letter by the end of the month, please contact the parish office at 419-399-2576.

DONUTS & DRINKS

Coffee, juice and donuts are available after 8:30AM Mass at the Antwerp campus on Sundays. This is a free-will offering. Donuts and Drinks are provided by Payne K of C. All proceeds will be donated to the food pantry in Antwerp. Please join us!

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS=

If you would like a copy of your annual contribution statement for tax purposes, please fill out this form and place it in the collection basket or bring it to the Parish Office.

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

TEN REASONS TO MAKE A RETREAT

- 1.** To solve your personal problems. Nothing works as a greater spur to resolving problems than getting away from one's ordinary environment for a period of time to see and meditate on God's will, while looking over your own life from a distance. Private; personal desires begin to look very unimportant. God's will and God's love gradually appear to be what really are: the most important goals in the world.
- 2.** To get away from worldly distractions. Because the world around you bombards you constantly about material things, you must get away from it once in a while. Never in history was the world's voice louder than it is today—in television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, social gatherings, business contacts and advertising. At a retreat, you're reminded that you can only really enjoy the good things of the world if you are living for something bigger than this world—and that is God.
- 3.** To renew your lifetime goals. You constantly need new ideas, more knowledge and deeper convictions about your primary goal in life, and an effective way of attaining them us through making a retreat. A retreat accomplishes the feat of increasing your knowledge and convictions about your spiritual goals better than any other means.
- 4.** To open your heart to God's love. You are granted an extraordinary store of special graces for good Christian living through the exercises of a retreat. Extraordinary miracles of conversion have been effective through retreats, chiefly because of the great graces God bestows on those who make them well.
- 5.** To get advice about personal concerns. During a retreat, you are given an opportunity to discuss personally, with an expert in spiritual matters, the special problems that have come up in your life.
- 6.** To meet people who share your faith. You will meet and mingle with other men and women from various walks of life. Their example will encourage and inspire you, and their common prayers and sacrifices will help you. Some of your greatest encouragement will be derived from a few words with a fellow retreatant who has already met and solved problems like your own.
- 7.** To strengthen your concern and zeal for others. You will be prepared and fortified by your retreat to help others in temptation or trouble whom you are bound to meet in your daily life. Those who make retreats find themselves eager to speak of supernatural realities, even to worldly minded people.
- 8.** To examine your faults and plan progress. You owe it to your family to check up on your faults by healthy self-examination away from the family circle— during a retreat. You can find out what kind of a person you are only by getting away from your present situation once in a while, and looking carefully at the ideal you should be working toward and the reality you have actually been.
- 9.** To get some rest and relaxation. You will actually *enjoy* making a retreat. It can be a new, refreshing, relaxing and restful experience. With the tremendous spiritual good that is done for your soul, there usually comes a sense of relaxation and rest for the body. That makes a retreat worthwhile—even in the purely physical order.
- 10.** To talk with people who regularly make retreats. Tens of thousands of men and women testify to the incalculable good that has come to them through their retreat. If you have any lingering doubts about whether you will get any good out of it, ask friends who make regular retreats. Chances are you will be given such an enthusiastic pep talk that all your doubts will be swept away.

The Annual Parish Retreat will be held at the Paulding Educational Center on Friday evening, March 6 and Saturday, March 7, 2015. If you are interested in attending this retreat, would like more information, or if you have any questions please call Sonya Herber at 419-258-4977.

