



### **We're Back**

We took a summer vacation from sending out this newsletter, and lo and behold it started turning into a sabbatical.....how easy it is to get out of the groove. But we're back again with information we hope you'll find useful. Bethany Ministry is a vital part of parish life. We are all called to *care about* and *care for* one another, and we cannot serve one another unless we care for our own health as well.

### **Note from Fr. Eugene**

We'd like to get a count of how many parishes in the Archeparchy have an active Bethany Ministry. Please reply to this e-mail or call me at 412-461-1712 to let me know, and also include the name of your coordinator or parish nurse. This will help us to plan future programs.

### **Gospel Reflection ~ Taken from the homily of Fr. Frank Firko, Sunday, October 21**

Jesus often preached in parables, or stories, whose primary purpose is to convey a spiritual truth to be applied to our lives. This parable is especially relevant for those of us who serve in Bethany Ministry.

**Luke 16:19-31** - *"There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table....."*

*The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.'*

*But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.'*

We are supposed to make this message personal.....to seek out what this parable actually has to say about "me" and about how "I" could live the spirit of truth that Jesus wishes me to live.

Wealth without mercy for the poor is the great wickedness of the age. Jesus condemned the Pharisee because he had a love of money. Yes, it is true that many saints had money.....but they *shared* it. We hear it said that "Money is the root of all evil".....but rather it is the *love of money* that is the root of all evil, when you put money ahead of God and your neighbor.

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How does this apply to us? It is not only about sharing our money, but also anything we consider ourselves rich in. For example, we hear it said, "If you have your health, you have everything." So if you have health, you have *the richness of everything* and are like the rich man in the parable. We must share the richness of our health to help one another, those who because of their situation have become poor in their health.

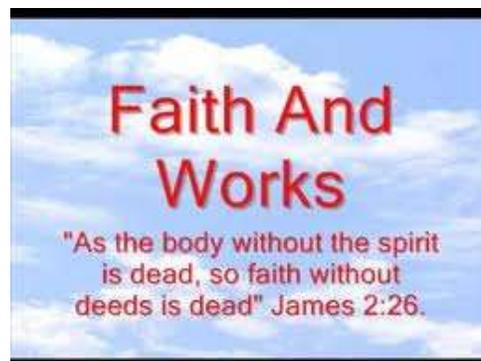
We must visit them, uplift them, pray with them.....doctors are saying how important it is for us to do these things because it affects the healing process of the body, and also the mind and spirit.....the whole person.

This parable tells us to share the richness of our time. It is often difficult to visit people.....the driving, the parking, the unfamiliar building, being out of our comfort zone and not knowing what to say to the person. But you know how it is if you were ever in a hospital or sick at home, like Lazarus in need of someone's richness. When someone came to visit you, didn't you feel uplifted?

There are those in nursing homes affected by dementia or other debilitating illnesses. Maybe you've heard comments like, "I don't go to see my aunt anymore because she hardly talks at all.....or she doesn't even remember who I am." But we don't visit to uplift our own selves. If it is difficult for you to visit, remember that the Lord will take care of you. We just don't know the good we can do for people, even if they don't seem to know that we're there. We can be certain that some part of their inner consciousness is touched and comforted because someone cared about them enough to visit them.

Those of us who have our health, we are like the rich man.

Are we able and willing to spend our time, which sometimes is more important than what we own? Let us uphold the dignity of life. Let us put our faith into action.



### **Divine Liturgy Broadcasts Keep our Homebound Connected**

Let's all remind our fellow parishioners to tell their homebound relatives and friends to tune in:

- **Holy Ghost Church in McKees Rocks, PA**  
**Sunday at 9 AM** on radio station 810 WEDO  
and live over the internet <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/holy-ghost-church>  
**Weekdays 8 AM** broadcast live over the internet <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/holy-ghost-church>
- **St. John Chrysostom, Greenfield, Pittsburgh, PA**  
**Sunday at 10:30 AM** <http://www.sjbcc.com/live.html>

~ Click on these websites at any time during the day to "visit" the church. ~

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## Health Notes: Diseases of Lifestyle

There are many diseases that we cannot prevent either because the cause is not known or we have risk factors that cannot be changed, like genetic predisposition, gender, and race.

However, many chronic diseases in our country today have been labeled as “diseases of lifestyle”. This means that we can bring them on ourselves over many years of unhealthy eating, lack of exercise, smoking, and excessive alcohol or drug use.

Diseases of lifestyle include: Heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some cancers, some lung diseases, type 2 (adult onset) diabetes, and obesity. One-third of Americans are overweight; another one-third are obese (30 lbs. or more overweight).

Overweight on its own is a significant contributor to health problems. It increases the risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, congestive heart failure, cancer of the colon, gallstones, sleep apnea, and degenerative arthritis of the knees, hips, and lower back.

Lifestyle habits like eating more junk food, more restaurant food, and getting less exercise have led to the obesity epidemic we are seeing more today in children and young adults. Type 2 diabetes used to be rare in those under age 40, but now people in their 20s and 30s are developing this condition.

As diabetes becomes more prevalent in young people, the long-term complications – high blood pressure, high cholesterol, nerve damage, blindness, and kidney failure – are more likely to occur at younger ages too.

Another “disease” that may have a lifestyle component is loneliness. We are called to “love our neighbor”, cultivate meaningful relationships, and reconcile when needed. Stress and negative health effects can result from being estranged and disconnected from others because of misunderstandings, hurt feelings, or something that happened long ago that nobody even remembers what it was anymore.

One's spirituality plays an important role in changing whatever unhealthy lifestyle affliction we have. There is much motivation to be found in the teachings of the church.

## Church Teachings Promote Good Health

*“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10:10*

In today's world, “the abundant life” is defined by many as “having fun” and “living large.” This is contrary to the real meaning given to us by our Lord.

Jesus Christ is known to us as “The Great Physician.” He healed many people of illnesses of body, mind, and spirit. He desires us to be healthy.

Christ's teachings handed down to us by the Church describe how to live abundant, fulfilled lives.....lives of responsibility, self-restraint, doing what is pleasing to God because we are seeking the reward of eternal life with Him.

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**Some church teachings that relate to the health of the “whole person” are:**

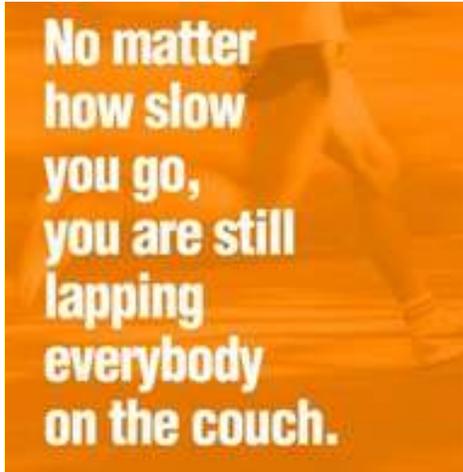
- 1) **The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment** is “Thou Shalt Not Kill”. We should not kill ourselves by unhealthy behaviors.
- 2) **The Seven Deadly Sins** are very detrimental to health:
  - Gluttony is over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink, or wealth items to the point of extravagance or waste, a misplaced desire of food or its withholding from the needy.
  - Sloth or laziness can cause a wasting of muscles due to lack of use. Combined with overeating, inactivity can lead to obesity, high cholesterol, and joint problems. Sloth can also be spiritual or emotional apathy, neglecting what God has spoken,
  - Wrath, or anger, is a stressful emotional state. Anger may have physical correlates such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of adrenaline that can put the body in a prolonged state of nervous tension. Adrenaline induces the fight-or-flight response that is useful when a grizzly bear is chasing you. But when there is no physical threat present, the elevated adrenaline levels circulating in the bloodstream contribute to heart disease, sleep problems, digestive problems, depression, obesity, memory impairment, and skin conditions like eczema.
  - Greed is the desire to acquire or possess more than one needs, either material wealth or social status. This too results in a stressful emotional state.
  - Lust can lead to sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy followed by either abortion or child abuse, domestic violence, and victimization of innocent children and vulnerable adults.
  - Pride is arrogance, the opposite of the virtue of humility. *Proverbs 16:18, “Pride comes before the fall.”* The words of country singer Dolly Parton hit this on the mark, “If you don’t humble yourself, the Good Lord will do it for you.”
  - Envy is said to be one of the most potent causes of unhappiness.
- 3) **Fasting** is a spiritual practice we learned from scripture. The church prescribes four periods of fasting during the year. Foods permitted are plain and simple, in less quantity but nutritionally sound. Fasting requires self-control: we learn to control our body rather than being controlled by it.
- 4) **Anxiety** is a problem for many people. Anti-anxiety drugs are not the answer, as they are addictive drugs which cause additional problems down the road. Coping with stress requires a relationship with a person who cares about us, and most especially a deepening relationship with God. *“Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6.*
- 5) **Solitude** was practiced by Jesus when he went into the desert alone to pray. We too should find some time and a special space to be alone and still, listening to God and reflecting on our life.
- 6) **Temperance** is the virtue in which we practice moderation in all things, a key to good health.
- 7) **Keep holy the Sabbath.** Does anyone remember when all the stores were closed on Sunday? If you started to use a pair of scissors, you were reminded, “Today is Sunday!” These days, some people are connected to their work 24/7 with iPhones and various internet gadgets. In *Mark 2:27: Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”.....we are to offer praises to God, then rest from toil and the cares and anxieties of the world.*
- 8) **The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** We must be good stewards of God’s gift of health.

~ Please share with us other church teachings that relate to health so this list can grow ~

**For Those Who are Able.....include physical activity in your daily routine**

**Take a 20 minute walk** in your neighborhood, or do some other form of exercise like gardening, yard work and weeding, raking leaves, swimming at the “Y”, dusting and vacuuming the house is exercise too, or try “marching in place” during the TV commercials or something fun like turning on the radio and dancing to a couple of songs.

- Just 20 minutes a day of extra activity has a positive impact on the health of body, mind, and spirit:
- helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol
  - conditions heart & lungs
  - feel more relaxed
  - controls weight
  - tones muscles and improves circulation
  - have more energy
  - can also use this time of physical activity to pray for a special intention



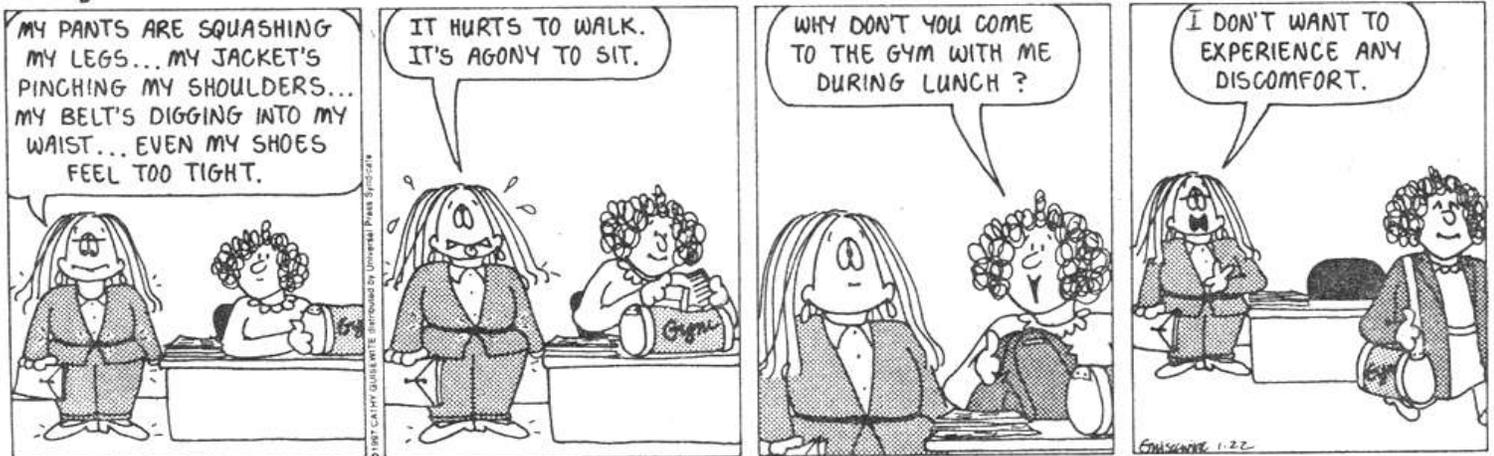
**For Those Who are Unable to Exercise.....due to back problems, knee problems, etc.**

**Low impact exercises done sitting in a chair** can also strengthen the body and uplift the mind and spirit. The “Health Bag” program was developed by Pittsburgh Mercy Health System’s Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program for volunteers to use when visiting the elderly. It combines prayer, soothing music, low impact chair exercises, and upper body stretching exercises using stretch bands, plus the benefit of a friendly visit to decrease the isolation of those who are homebound. This may be a ministry to include the teens in. If you want a copy of the exercises, send an e-mail to [dorothymavernik@comcast.net](mailto:dorothymavernik@comcast.net) or call (c) 412-310-0521.

**Excuses for Not Exercising.....can anyone top this one?**

**Cathy**

By Cathy Guisewite



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## November is American Diabetes Month

The Allegheny County Health Department joins the American Diabetes Association and numerous other organizations in raising awareness that the risk for diabetic complications can be reduced through quitting tobacco, having a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables, and participating in regular physical activity.

Their annual **Diabetes EXPO is on Saturday, November 10, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the David Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh.** The Diabetes EXPO, which is free and open to people of all ages features free health screenings, healthy cooking demonstration, a wealth of information, and fun, engaging activities for families and children. Find more EXPO information at <http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/expo/2012/pittsburgh-expo-2012/> or 1.800.DIABETES (1.800.342.238)

### Christmas Gifts

for our

Homebound



This is a good time to start planning a small Christmas gift or gift bag of cookies, a church calendar, and a few thoughtful and useful things that our homebound parishioners will appreciate. It really doesn't take much to make someone's day. From past experience, we know the visit itself is a wonderful gift. Maybe visit in pairs, wear a Santa hat, and sing a Christmas Carol while you're there.

### Seeking Parishioners to Get Involved in Bethany Ministry

For a copy of the Bethany Ministry manual and DVD, contact Fr. Eugene Yackanich at 412-461-1712.

### To Read More on What's Happening in Health Ministry

- **The Faith Connection newsletter** from Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Pittsburgh [http://www.pmhs.org/pdf/PNP\\_Faith\\_Connection\\_November\\_2012.pdf](http://www.pmhs.org/pdf/PNP_Faith_Connection_November_2012.pdf)
- **Bethany Ministry newsletter** back issues are posted on <http://stgregoryusc.org/>
- **Church Health Reader**, Church Health Center, Memphis, home of the International Parish Nurse Resource Center <http://chreader.org/healthMinistry.aspx>

**Contact Us** for information or assistance with your parish Bethany Ministry

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- Becky Johnen, PhD, Educator  
Health and wellness presentations 304-904-3501 [palfys@verizon.net](mailto:palfys@verizon.net)

*Glory to Jesus Christ!*

*Glory Forever!*