

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish

Reverend Father Aron M. Maghsoudi – Pastor

Rectory Office

738 Sunshine Avenue
Central City, PA 15926
814-754-5224

April 29, 2018

**Fifth Sunday
of Easter**

Worship Sites

Church (Sacred Heart)

738 Sunshine Avenue

Chapel (St. John)

162 Wheeler Street

Holy Masses:

Daily

Church (Sacred Heart) 8:00AM

Saturday Vigil

Church (Sacred Heart) 4:00PM

Sunday Morning

Church (Sacred Heart) 8:00 AM

Chapel (St. John) 10:30 AM

Confessions

Church (Sacred Heart)

Saturday 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Chapel (St. John)

Sunday 10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Anytime upon Request

Mass Intentions

April 30	<i>Easter Weekday</i>
8:00 AM	Catherine Yakicic (Req. Lee & Debbie Bimle) - Chapel
May 1	<i>St. Joseph the Worker</i>
	NO MASS
May 2	<i>Saint Athanasius</i>
8:00 AM	John Kotus Family (Req. Estate of John Kotus) - Chapel
May 3	<i>Saints Philip and James</i>
8:00 AM	Margaret Matey (Req. Estate of Margaret Matey) - Chapel
May 4	<i>Easter Weekday</i>
8:00 AM	Albert McKolosky (Req. Mike & Lou Pribish) - Chapel
May 5	<i>Vigil of the Sixth Sunday of Easter</i>
4:00 PM	Steve Yantus, 13 th Anniversary of Death (Req. Children) - Church
May 6	<i>Sixth Sunday of Easter</i>
8:00 AM	Eleanor Kovak (Req. Family) - Church
10:30 AM	For the Parish (Missa Populo) - Chapel

THE CASE OF ALFIE EVANS – The case of Alfie Evans, a disabled toddler in Brittan, has gained much media attention. British authorities have ordered that his life support be removed and refused to let Alfie’s parents transport him to Rome where support would not be denied. Charles C. Camosy, an associate professor of at Fordham University, offered this article recently in *First Things* magazine. It is worth reading – pray for Alfie and examine your own conscience! – Physicians have many ways of influencing medical decisions made by the parents of children in their care. Certain studies can be cited in support of what the physician desires, and studies pointing in a different direction can be ignored. Directive, emotive, and exaggerated language can be used to manipulate, especially when the likely outcomes of various options are under discussion. Numbers can be used in a similar way: Should a consult focus on the two-thirds of patients who have poor outcomes—or on the one-third who have good ones? These forms of manipulation are a persistent concern in clinical ethics, and they present themselves in dramatic fashion when medical teams discuss disability. Sometimes the desire of a physician to achieve the outcome he wants is so strong that he will engage in deceptive practices called “slow coding” or “show coding.” The physician agrees with the parents that everything possible will be done for their child (“full

code”)—but in reality the physician and medical team will not engage in aggressive treatment. This practice is defended by some ethicists today, and is often justified by the physician’s personal judgment that the life of a particular child is not worth saving. Most often it is done on the down-low. Physicians are good at avoiding public scrutiny of their actions generally, and in these kinds of cases in particular. Decisions to refuse to treat a child because of a disability are distorted by euphemistic references to “mercifully” removing or foregoing “burdensome” or “extraordinary” treatments. To be clear: The distinctions between life-sustaining treatment that is morally required and that which may be foregone—pioneered by the Catholic moral theology in the late Middle Ages and early Modern period—are essential in these cases. Personally, I take a wide view of what kinds of things might make life-sustaining treatments extraordinary, even arguing that Catholic social teaching requires expense to be one of the factors considered. But the principle of never aiming at the death of an innocent person—whether by action or omission—must remain absolutely exceptionless. This is what the dignity of the person requires, especially if one wishes to protect vulnerable populations who are at risk of being marginalized by those who find them inconvenient. And given the checkered history of Western medicine when it comes to the value of the disabled, we must take care to be certain that this principle is enforced in the clinic. Enter the current row over Alfie Evans. At first glance, it may seem that this case has much in common with last year’s debate over Charlie Gard. And indeed, there are important similarities. Like Charlie, Alfie has what appears to be a neurodegenerative disease, from which his UK doctors believe he will never recover. Like Charlie’s doctors, Alfie’s doctors believe that the damage to his brain means that his life is no longer worth sustaining, and they have recommended that his ventilator be withdrawn so that he can die—in his own best interests. Like Charlie, Alfie has the support of many people around the world, including Pope Francis, who wants his life to be sustained. Indeed, Alfie has been made an Italian citizen, and Italy has volunteered to transport him to the Vatican’s Bambino Hospital—at no cost to the UK’s National Health Service. (This afternoon, a British judge dismissed the parents’ latest appeal of the court order preventing Alfie’s departure to Rome.) There are some important differences between the cases, however. Charlie’s disorder, though rare and poorly understood, was actually diagnosed. Alfie’s has not been. Charlie had been treated comprehensively by multiple kinds of medical teams, but Alfie has been seen almost exclusively by an acute care medical team. Physicians generally rate the value of the lives of their disabled patients lower than the patients do themselves, but acute care physicians, with their near-constant exposure to horrific conditions without seeing longer-term outcomes, are particularly prone to this kind of bias. But perhaps the most important difference between the cases is that when UK authorities ordered Alfie’s life support withdrawn, he did not die. At the time of this writing, he has been breathing on his own for nearly two days. In response to this remarkable turn of events, it appears that Alfie’s medical team is giving him some water and oxygen (not enough, according to some reports), but they are also apparently denying him typical levels of nutrition. This procedure can in no way plausibly be described as foregoing burdensome or extraordinary treatment. Making sure that a disabled child has proper nutrition and hydration, especially when he cannot get it on his own, is not a medical act. It is basic human decency. Let us not mince words. As with Charlie Gard before him, Alfie Evans’s death is being aimed by the very people whose vocation it is to help and protect him. The difference in Alfie’s case is that, because he has continued to breathe, the pretense of “removal of burdensome treatment” is patently absurd. In a situation that was no doubt distressing to those who hoped he would die, Alfie’s continuing to breathe has clarified the true object of the act of removing his ventilator. Of course, as with Charlie before him, we had more than enough evidence to make such a judgment, even before Alfie was extubated. The primary judge who refused to allow Alfie to travel to Italy was concerned with Alfie’s brain damage, not with the burden of treatment. Alfie’s disability is likely to be profound, and thus, according to the judge, it is in Alfie’s best interests to die. Given all that we still have to learn about the brain and its relationship to the functioning of a person, the judge may simply be wrong. In a separate case, a baby born with only 2 percent of normal brain tissue now, inexplicably, has a fully functioning brain. Case studies show that patients who lack a cerebral cortex may still know who they are, crack jokes, and recognize themselves in photographs. Some children born with hydranencephaly can laugh and cry, understand the difference between familiar people and strangers, and prefer certain kinds of music. It may also be the case that the drugs in Alfie’s system have suppressed thalamic connections in the brain, thus giving the false impression that much of his brain is gone. But even if we suppose the judge is correct, he and others are making the case that certain profoundly disabled children are unworthy of life. And when one combines Alfie’s case with that of Charlie Gard, the UK has now established the clear and frightening precedent that parents who have a different understanding of what kinds of lives are worth living may have their children taken from them and left to die—in the children’s own best interests. As bad as this trend is, when it is combined with other trends in the developed secular West, one can see a clear logical path to its getting even worse. We already see systematic ableism at work in the abortion rates of prenatal children with Down syndrome, with most Western countries eliminating these disabled individuals at a rate of between 70 and 90 percent. Belgium and the Netherlands have developed legal protocols to kill children after birth, often because of judgments about their quality of life. Many secular bioethicists have argued for actively killing disabled patients—a natural next step, since we are already aiming at their deaths by forgoing treatment. Do the math. What logical impediment keeps a state from deciding that various kinds of disabled children are unworthy of life, taking them from their families by force, and aiming at their deaths—in the children’s own best interests? The developed secular West now finds itself at one of the most serious crossroads we can imagine. Will we follow the logic of the moral and legal principles laid out in countries like the UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands? Or can we muster the moral will to challenge such principles directly and forcibly? One of the most glorious moments for the Roman Catholic Church during the previous century was the direct and

forceful condemnation by the German Bishops of the Nazi euthanasia program for the disabled. It is not a perfect historical analogy, but today the Church finds itself on the cusp of a similar moment. Will we once again be direct and forceful in defense of the vulnerable disabled who are at risk of being killed? Or will we capitulate to powerful institutions pushing a violent and ableist agenda that is at odds with our fundamental commitment—one required for our salvation—to see the face of Christ in disabled children? Pope Francis has admirably been on the side of both Charlie Gard and Alfie Evans. The broader Catholic hierarchy, the UK bishops, and the men around Francis, however, seem cold and complacent, deferring to a medical and legal establishment that refers to the application of Catholic moral theology to these cases as “ridiculous emotive nonsense.” Perhaps those who are not infected with the ableism of the developed secular West are in a better position to respond to such a charge. The Brazilian bishops, interestingly, have put out a video insisting that the UK government has a duty to use its resources to support those who most need it, and that Alfie’s life must be protected. Indeed. Enough with the deference to the medical and legal establishment and its judgements about which lives are worth living. Now is a time for choosing. The most vulnerable require our clear and uncompromising support.

CAMP ZACCHAEUS - The diocese is once again offering students ENTERING grades four through nine this fall an opportunity to attend Camp Zacchaeus. Activities include hikes, games, swimming, arts and crafts, canoeing, tower and zip lines, with Mass and prayer each day. The camp is held during two sessions (July 22 through July 27 and July 29 through August 3) at Camp Sequanota in Jennerstown. Multi-child discounts and scholarship opportunities available. Any students who meet the age requirements and are members of our parish but cannot afford the full amount should contact the parish office - we are happy to help. For an application or more information please see Fr. Aron.

SUPPORT THE WORK CREW - The West Virginia work crew from our area will be hosting an All You Can Eat spaghetti dinner on Saturday, May 5th from 3:00 PM until 7:00 PM at St Francis Church Hall, 120 Barron Avenue in Johnstown (West End). Prices - Adults \$8.00, Children 4-12 \$5.00 and Kids 3 and under eat free. There will be baskets and other drawings available as well. Take outs are available. Please see Maryann Zubek for tickets.

SANCTUARY CANDLE INTENTIONS - The Sanctuary Candle, at the Sacred Heart site, burns in loving memory of John Kotus, by Estate of John Kotus, The Sanctuary Candle burns at the St. John’s site for the deceased members of the Dydo Family.

PRAYER LIST - Jennie Sielczak, Constance Gruca, Lillian Koleszarik, Marie Metsker, Sandy Wechtenhiser, Ethan Rohlf, Rachel Moslak, Ann Guyer, Alice Zelenski, Shirley Taylor, Carol Hancharik, Kay Hintosh, Charlie Field Jr., David P. Bonus, Lauren Barnes, Andrew Straka, Fern Lasut, Agnes Palya, Trish Rullo, Stanley Carl Tomaszewski, Patrick Munro, Tom Hudak, Quincy Oglie, Charles Field Sr., Mike Dixon, Mya Polito, Madelain Mauger, Sue Frank, Caroline Amato, Shirley Roman, Mary Ethel Sanzo, Leon Bonus, Joyce Delasko, Larry Krestar, Andrew Muha, Andrea Sesack, Ricky Gerena, Shelly Delasko, Lionel Berkebile, Mary-Ann Sgavoo, Mary Ann Naret, Barry Stuft, John Harchick Jr., Vincent Bestvina, Izzy Bihun, Jeff Yanosky, Mary Clark, Rhonda Bittner, Kara Palumbo, Dave Andolina, Mary Ann Stavlo, Jeff Naugle, Debra Farley, Eugene Topka, Carla Ayres, Zoe Taylor, Rodney Shaffer, Adrian Popig, Casey Duffield, Mike Stefanik, Georgianne Matava, Rose Maga, Michelle Moore, William Sunderhaus, Dale Berkey Jr., Allen S. Berkey, Cathy Lasut Weaver, Bill Conlin, Amanda Berkey, Savannah Tranovich, Danielle Christopher

WEEKLY OFFERING - April 21st & April 22nd - Adult Envelopes - \$2,760.50; Loose - \$235; Fuel - \$15 Student Offering - \$26.50; Miscellaneous - \$110; Total - \$3,147 - Thank You!

SERVER SCHEDULE

May 5 - 4:00 PM - T. & M. Mabon, J. Bihun
May 6 - 8:00 AM - L. L., & L. Mincek
May 6 - 10:30 AM - E. Spinelli, C. Coleman, A. Knapp

MOTHER’S DAY - The parish will be having their monthly breakfast next month on Mother’s Day (May 13th). All mothers who wish to attend will have their cost covered by the parish. Please come out and support this great celebration of food (and motherhood) in our community next month. N.B. There will be no breakfast on the Third Sunday of May due to it being transferred to Mother’s Day.

PARISH BUS TRIP - A GREAT EVENING GET AWAY - Our parish will be sponsoring an evening at the theater with dinner and Mass on Saturday July 14th. Traveling via Bollman motor coach we will travel to St. Vincent College for their Summer Theater’s performance of *Nunsense*, a musical comedy that is the second-longest-running Off-Broadway show in history. Now in their 50th season, St. Vincent Summer Theater is composed of an all-star cast of some of New York and Pittsburgh’s greatest professional stage performers. Departing at 3:15 PM from St. John’s parking lot, the motor coach will first stop at the newly restored Holy Family Church in Latrobe for their 4:30 PM Mass (fulfills obligation). The historic church was lovingly restored last year to its former glory after a dramatic renovation in the 1960s removed much of its art. Following Mass will be treated to dinner at Rizzo’s Malabar Inn in the tiny town of Crabtree. Rizzo’s is regarded by many as one of the finest authentic Italian restaurants in Western Pennsylvania. Dinner includes salad, pizza, chicken parmesan, sausage and meatballs, meat ravioli, homemade spaghetti, tiramisu, coffee and tea. Following dinner and a brief tour of St. Vincent Basilica, the group will attend St. Vincent Summer Theater’s performance of *Nunsense*. The play has been described as a little vacation from the chaos of life - an invitation to a few hours of silly, sentimental and sublime entertainment. Following the show there will be a

chance to relax a bit at the theater's Cabaret. Unique to Saint Vincent Summer Theatre, the Cabaret provides an opportunity for patrons to enjoy a summer evening after taking in a performance. Held directly after the show, Cabaret serves food and drinks to theatergoers and allows them to sit at tables inside and outside of the theater area, all while enjoying live music. The bus will arrive back in Central City about 11:00 PM. The cost is \$69.00 per person and includes transportation, the show, and dinner. If you are looking for a great evening out with some friends, family, spouse, or significant other, phone the rectory to sign up.

LUTHERAN BASKET PARTY - Graef Lutheran Church will sponsor a basket raffle on Sunday June 3rd beginning at Noon at the Carinbrook Club. Entrance is \$10.00 and includes 25 basket tickets and a light lunch (hot dogs). All proceeds benefit their Good Samaritan Fund. Any patron who brings 5 non-perishable food items, soap, or toilet paper will receive 25 tickets for free! For tickets call Hope at 619-9293 or Savannah at 659-3528.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE - There will be a meeting of the Cemetery Committee TODAY April 29th at 6:00 PM at the St. John site. All members are asked to be present.