

# The Compass

... Pointing People toward Christ



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SUMMER 2018



## Satan's "Nothing" Strategy

Christian author Tony Reinke writes: "Today, tired after work, I opened Facebook on my phone, looking for a diversion. I flicked past a video of a cat that sounds like a crying child; then I saw a new study about gun control; then I saw an innovative new keyboard for tablets; then I read a story from the latest celebrity gossip; then I was offered twenty pictures of actors who have aged badly (which I ignored); then I saw a breaking news story about a rogue militia group in Oregon; then I read that North Korea apparently had detonated a test atomic bomb; then I watched a viral video of a 'monster shredder' that crushes refrigerators, couches, and cars with large metal teeth; and then I saw pictures of a friend and his wife on vacation in Iceland. On and on I flicked down a list of

disconnected and fragmented items, and most of them only barely important or interesting. I was not edified or served, only further fatigued because of missing a nap I should have taken or a walk I could have taken, and easily lured back to my phone for more. And then I remembered I skipped my personal [devotions] this morning. My battle against all the slothful smartphone tendencies I see in my own heart has only begun.

What I am coming to understand is that this impulse to pull the lever of a random slot machine of viral content is the age-old tactic of Satan. C. S. Lewis called it the 'Nothing' strategy in his *Screwtape Letters*. It is the strategy that eventually leaves a man at the end of his life looking back in lament: 'I now see that I spent most of my life in doing



neither what I ought nor what I liked.'

This "Nothing" strategy is 'very strong: strong enough to steal away a man's best years, not in sweet sins, but in a dreary flickering of the mind over it knows not what and knows not why, in the gratification of curiosities so feeble that the man is only half aware of them . . . or in the long, dim labyrinth of reveries that have not even lust or ambition to give them a relish, but which, once chance association has started them, the creature is too weak and fuddled to shake off.'

Routines of nothingness. Habits unnecessary to our calling. A hamster wheel of what will never satisfy our souls. Lewis's warning about the 'dreary flickering' in front of our eyes is a loud prophetic alarm to the digital age. We are always busy, but always distracted—diabolically lured away from what is truly essential and truly gratifying. Led by our unchecked

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digital appetites, we manage to transgress both commands that promise to bring focus to our lives. We fail to enjoy God. We fail to love our neighbor.

Amid these habits of nothingness, we find ourselves wandering half-awake in digital idleness, prone to leave our digital responsibilities to become digital busybodies and digital meddlers. We give our time to what is not explicitly sinful, but also to what cannot give us joy or prepare us for self-sacrifice. Satan's 'Nothing' strategy aims at feeding us endlessly scrolling words, images, and videos that dull our affections—instead of invigorating our joy and preparing us to give ourselves in love.

Technology makes life easier, but immaturity makes technology self-destructive. With my phone, I find myself always teetering between useful efficiency and meaningless habit. I am often reminded that my phone may be a lot of things, but it is not a toy. The magician and the wielder of a smartphone are close cousins, and this is because, suggests literary critic Alan Jacobs, our modern technology offers us a bewitching power not unlike the magic in the Harry Potter fantasy series: 'Often fun, often surprising and exciting, but also always potentially dangerous. ... The technocrats of this world hold in their hands powers almost infinitely greater than those of Albus Dumbledore and Voldemort.' Into our hands are placed these wands, these

smartphones, these powers of idolatry, freighted with redemptive expectations.

The digital age can bewitch and capture our hearts in unhealthy ways. Our advances in technology have a way of rendering God more and more irrelevant to our world and in our lives—the very definition of worldliness. And if our digital technology becomes our god, our wand of power, it will inevitably shape us into technicians who gain mastery over a dead world of conveniences. Aimlessly flicking through feeds and images for hours, we feel that we are in control of our devices, when we are really puppets being controlled by a lucrative industry.

While our techniques of control do not make us atheists, they do seem to make worship more and more irrelevant, as God is more and more displaced from our lives. We forget how to meet God, and yet we defend our smartphones, unwilling to admit that we are more concerned with controlling the mechanics of our lives than in worshiping the God whose sovereign power directs our every breath.

We must watch for signs that our worship is veering off course. We can no longer simply worship God in admiration or pray to him without a compulsive fidgeting for our phones. We talk more about God than we talk to him. Our hearts are more interested in following empty patterns of worship than encountering the Spirit. Our worship on Sunday

seems flat, but our week is filled with an endless quest for Christian advice to fix what we know is wrong. We seek a mechanical relationship with God, searching for new techniques to fill the spiritual void in our lives. Signs such as these reveal how technology degrades our priorities. But worship calls for redirection in our lives.

Article taken from "12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You," by Tony Reinke, ©2017. It appeared in "Eternal Perspectives" Magazine, Spring/Summer 2018.

I reprinted this article because I found it relevant for our time. And having read it, I invite all of us, this summer, to consider a limited fast from our electronics— if only for one hour a day. Let's try replacing some of our phone, Internet, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TV, etc. time with a walk outside in God's Creation; a visit with an old friend; a nap; reading a book; or playing with a pet or a child. And in all of this, let's pay more attention to God and to those we love.

The Lord made us for relationships with *living beings*, not electronic ones. Yes, these are useful tools, and we can be thankful for them—but they are only tools. **Jesus** came to give us life, and life "more abundant" (John 10:10). May your summer be filled with *His* abundant life!

*Yours in Christ's  
love and service,  
Mother Nina +*



# OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

beyond the four walls of the church

**Joni and Friends**, a faith-based charity serving the disabled, is requesting donations of used mobility equipment (manual wheelchairs, walkers, crutches). The equipment is restored and then delivered to those in need in developing countries.



Donations are tax-deductible. For more information or to donate, please contact Larry Easton at 315-416-1716 or email him at [leaston78@gmail.com](mailto:leaston78@gmail.com).

**The Octorara Area Food Cupboard** serves families in the Parkesburg, Sadsbury, Wagon-town and Compass areas. We can help them by collecting the following items during the months of **June and July**. They have asked for:

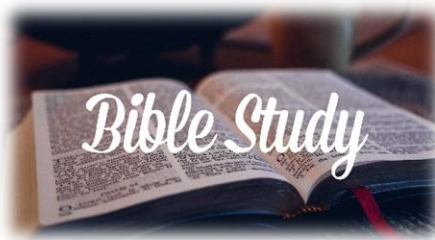
- Cereal
- Condiments
- Canned Fruit

When you do your grocery shopping each week, please think of **Octorara Area Food Cupboard**. The collection barrel is near the upstairs entrance to the church. **We will be delivering your donations the week of July 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Fremont, Pat Owens, Nancy Miller, Debbie Martin or Reid Heeren.

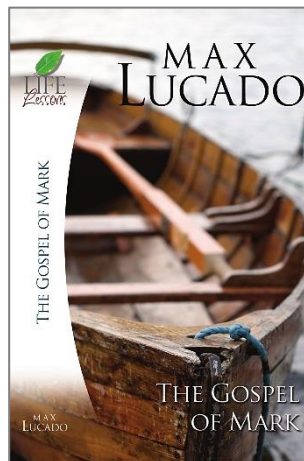
*Thank you,*

*St. John's Outreach Committee*



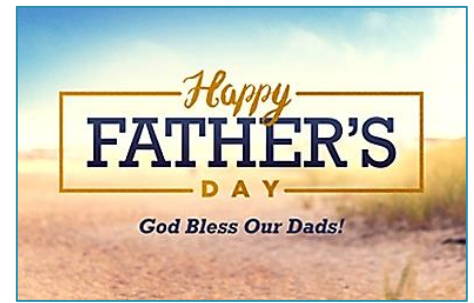
**Adult Bible Study** will resume on **Wednesday, September 12 at Noon**, and run through **November 28** (12 weeks).

We'll be reading and discussing the **Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Mark**, using Max Lucado's "Life Lessons" Series.



The workbooks will be ordered in advance, so that those interested in taking part in the class can get a head start.

This past spring, we had 8 to 10 participants for our 8-week study on "Resurrection: Living as People of the Risen Lord." A good time was had by all!



We will **honor all Dads and Grandads on Sunday, June 17, Father's Day**. Join us for a party in the Parish Hall, after Mass.

Father's Day started in 1909. A young woman named Sonora Smart Dodd was at church on Mother's Day. When she listened to the sermon, she thought about how they were celebrating the life of her Mother.

But Sonora's mother had died in childbirth, and her father, Henry Jackson Smart, a Civil War veteran and farmer, was raising Sonora and her five siblings as a single parent. Sonora wanted to find a way to celebrate and thank her Dad with a day that was as special as Mother's; to honor her Father and his sacrifices for their family.

It wasn't until 1924 that U.S. President Calvin Coolidge officially urged Americans to celebrate a national Father's Day. In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a Presidential Proclamation designating the third Sunday of June as Father's Day. Then, in 1972, President Richard M. Nixon signed a bill making Father's Day legal, official and permanent.

*"Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families ..." (Psalm 68:5-6)*

*"Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him." (Psalm 103:13)*



**JUNE**

- 6/2 Brittany Trofe
- 6/9 Olivia Cipollini
- 6/11 Barry Baldwin
- 6/15 Kathy Trofe
- 6/16 Ron Zynn
- 6/18 Andrew John Tritz
- 6/25 Tracy Miller
- 6/30 Richard Gilfillan

Paul & Mary Lou Weaver  
June 3

Chris & Sharon Fremont  
June 6

Glenn & Debbie Martin  
June 7

John & Faye Oberholser  
June 18

Mike & Tina Zurcher  
June 27

Ron & Linda Zynn  
June 27

**JULY**

- 7/1 Mia Eileen Baldwin
- 7/7 Kurt Gansauer
- 7/11 Robin Baldwin
- 7/18 David Skiles
- 7/20 Katelyn Wilkinson
- 7/20 Neven Zurcher
- 7/23 Don Faix
- 7/26 Sharon Fremont
- 7/29 Jennifer Kirchhofer

- Grier & Jen Hoskins July 1
- Bob & Leslie Yarnall July 23
- Richard & Fran Gilfillan July 25
- Ron & Joyce Kelly July 25

**AUGUST**

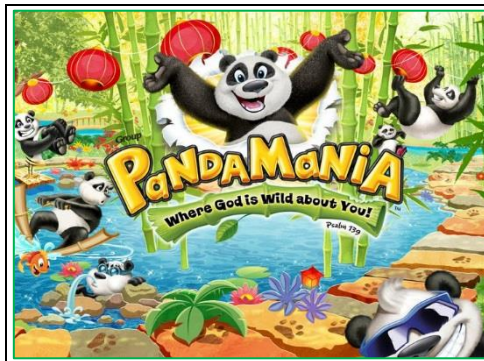
- 8/4 Naleea Zurcher
- 8/6 Michael Zurcher
- 8/8 Theresa Feiler
- 8/16 Ellie Baldwin
- 8/21 Niya Zurcher
- 8/28 Paul Weaver
- 8/30 Mallori Baldwin

Lou & Joan D'Aloisio

August 17

Ralph & Jennifer Kirchhofer

August 23



**Saturday, July 14**  
**10 am to 3 pm**

**"PandaMania!"**

**Vacation Bible School**  
**For Kids ages 5 to 12**  
**(older youth can help out)**

**Registration is available**  
**online now at:**  
<https://vbspro.events/pl/events/stjohnscompass>  
**(click on "Participant Registration").**

**You can also call St. John's**  
**Church at 717-442-4302,**  
**or email us at**  
[stjohnscompass@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnscompass@gmail.com)

**before July 1<sup>st</sup>**

**to register your children or**  
**grandchildren for this life-**  
**changing adventure!**



**Sunday, July 22**

**At the Garden Spot Pavilion**  
**in New Holland**

**Holy Eucharist at 10:30 am**

**Potluck Picnic following**

*Bring a friend!*

*Invite a neighbor!*

**Vestry News**

In May, Kaye Lee resigned from the Vestry and stepped down from her position as Clerk of the Vestry. A special election was held, appointing Debra Martin to fill Kaye's unexpired term until our parish's next Annual Meeting. Sharon Fremont agreed to serve as Clerk of the Vestry.

Many thanks to all three of these faithful women for their dedicated service to St. John's Church. There will be NO Vestry Meetings in July and August, to permit our Wardens, Vestry, and Rector some time off.

