

**"Master,
I want to see."**



**Jesus told him,
"Go your way;
your faith has saved you."**

Mark 10:51-52



Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor



Welcome to our Parish Family! New Parishioners are cordially invited to register as members of our parish family. Please call or visit the Parish Office.

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Jules O. A. Gagnon

Parish Outreach

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Regina Ann Cioffi

School Principal

Jennifer Gallagher

Director of Youth Services

Carol M. Goetz

Parish Music Director

Sr. Diane Liona

Director of Religious Education

Vita Scorcia

Ministry Spiritual Director

John Sureau

Coordinator of Worship

Sr. Betty Toohig

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Anthony Trombino

Business Manager

Pastoral Council

Michael Abbruscato

Salomon Acosta

Regina Ann Cioffi

Jane Desthers

Stephen Frodell

Jen Gallagher

Anne Kerrigan

Maria Lucie (*co-chair*)

Mary McMahon

Doreen Spiller

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Marie Yuliano (*co-chair*)

Parish Staff

Barbara Catuosco

Religious Education Office

Mary Anne Lettieri

Parish Office

Debbie Meyer

Bulletin/Parish Office

Rosemary Multer

School Office

Rex Muro

Organist

Rita Spera

Religious Education Office

Lori Walsh

Parish Office

Our Lady of Lourdes

455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795

Mission Statement

As stewards of all that God has given us, the Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes serves and ministers to all who come to this place. Regardless of a person's history, ethnicity, gender, orientation, age or race, we commit ourselves to open wide the doors of our Parish to provide a place of welcome and hospitality.

Parish Office

661-3224

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - 7:30 PM

Saturday: 9 AM - 3 PM

Sunday: 9 AM - 2 PM

email: ParishOffice@ollchurch.org

fax: 661-7143

website: www.ollchurch.org

Our Lady of Lourdes School

587-7200

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - 3 PM

email: rcioffi@ollschool.org

Religious Education Office

661-5440

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - Noon

1 PM - 5 PM

7 PM - 9 PM

email: ReligiousEd@ollchurch.org

S.A.G.E.

661-3224

**(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)**

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Vision...

so that all may know that they are a vital part of the Body of Christ, we further recommit and challenge ourselves to:

- ***Live** out our Baptismal call passionately by caring for all of God's people with justice.*
- ***Grow** in an understanding of God's role in each of our lives.*
- ***Respond** to the Gospel in a radical way, inviting and inspiring all to form the Kingdom of God in every moment of life.*
- ***Acknowledge** we are not complete without the willingness to grow, discern and discover the Spirit who moves and guides us.*

Celebrating Our Parish Life

Parish 50th Anniversary Mass
12:30 PM
November 19, 2006
Celebrant Bishop William Murphy



Empowering Our Minds and Spirits



Our Lady of Lourdes 50th Anniversary “Golden Jubilee Journal”

The *Golden Jubilee Journal* will portray Our Lady of Lourdes illustrious parish history of the past fifty wonderful years! We offer all parishioners and friends an opportunity to express their best wishes, congratulations, or to memorialize loved ones with a journal message.

If you are interested in placing an ad in our *Golden Jubilee Journal*, stop by the Parish Office or call 661.3224 and fill out the form with your journal message. Return it with payment to OLL Church no later than October 31.

(The deadline has been extended until the end of this month, October 31.)

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call Lori Walsh at 661.3224.

Celebrating Our Parish Life

Come Celebrate as a Parish Family 50th Anniversary Jubilee Dinner

Friday, November 17, 2006
7:00 PM-Midnight
Southward Ho Country Club

Price \$100 per person
Tickets are on sale now in the Parish Office
Seating arrangements will be accommodated

Jubilee Dinner tickets are now on sale
after weekend Masses in the
All-Purpose Room.

Our Lady of Lourdes GOLDEN JUBILEE

GRAND PRIZE:

Hawaii Vacation
Kaanapali
Lahaina, Maui
\$1,000 American Express Gift Card

FIRST PRIZE:

Rough Riders Landing (Montauk Vacation)
One week in a condo on the bay
(Excludes July-August)

SECOND PRIZE:

One Week in Williamsburg, Virginia
(Timeshare that can be exchanged for another location)

THIRD & FOURTH PRIZES:

One Week Stay in Orlando, FL Condo
(Airfare not included)

Donation: \$10.00 per ticket

Raffle tickets will also
be available for sale
after weekend Masses.

Golden Raffle tickets
(\$10 each ticket)

and

Silver Raffle tickets
(\$5 each ticket)

Raffle tickets will be
on sale at the
Jubilee Dinner,
as well.

Our Lady of Lourdes GOLDEN JUBILEE

GRAND PRIZE:

Marriott Windwatch Hotel
Overnight Stay

FIRST PRIZE:

Wine Tour
Martha Clara Vineyard Wine Tour for 10

SECOND PRIZE:

Wine Tour
Palmer Vineyard Wine Tour for 8
(with limousine)

THIRD PRIZE:

VIP Passes (4) for the
Air Show at Jones Beach (2007)

FOURTH PRIZE:

Fine Wine Basket
Donation: \$5.00 per ticket

Deacon Jules Gagnon

After many years as the director of Parish Outreach, Deacon Jules will be leaving us on November 10. In a meeting with his volunteers on October 10, Deacon Jules said that it was time for him to complete his work here, and that he was looking forward to spending time with his wife and family.

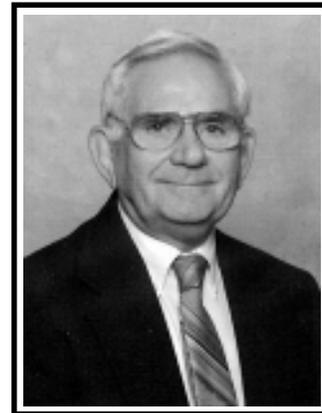
Jules is assigned as a deacon to St. Patrick's Parish in Huntington and he will continue to exercise his ministry as deacon in that community.

Here at OLL, Deacon Jules is known for his endless compassion and his Franciscan spirit of service. He has led our parish in developing a very large and active outreach ministry that offers many services to our neediest parishioners.

We are all sincerely grateful for his years of ministry here and for the care that he extended to all those in need.

Jules will be honored by the members of his outreach community and others who he worked with at a luncheon planned for November 11.

The Ministry of Outreach is an important part of our parish and it will not be easy to fill his shoes. Our Pastor and Parish Team are currently working with Catholic Charities to find a director for this important ministry.



Gospel of Luke...

**Tuesdays-November 14, 21, 28, December 5, and 12
7:30-9:30 PM in the Parish Center**

Presenter: Deacon Kevin McCormick, Principal, Xaverian High School, Brooklyn, NY

...Gospel of Compassion and Hope

This Advent, we'll read from the Gospel of Luke...but what are we hearing? Luke brings us a message of compassion, hope, and challenge. Throughout Luke, the Holy Spirit is active, guiding Jesus and empowering the church. In our busy lives, how can we be guided by Jesus? Empowered by the Spirit? Let's find out how the Gospel of Luke can help in this engaging experience.

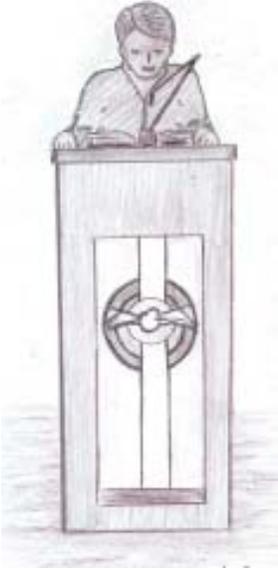
Gentle Reminder: Preregistration is necessary and helpful This will enable us to have enough reading material and refreshments for all those attending. Please call the Religious Education Office Monday-Friday from 9 AM until 5 PM at 661.5440, extension 3 or email to religioused@ollchurch.org. Fee is \$25 and may vary with each class. No fee is required for those who have paid Religious Education Family Fee or OLL School tuition.

“The Six”

Our Six Committee is always looking for people and ideas to make our Sunday night Mass even better! We are in need of not only ministers - lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers and ushers - but people who can come up with great ideas! Our next meeting is **Sunday, October 29 at 5 PM** (before “The Six”). Please come and join us-All Are Welcome!

Stewardship 2006

When we love...



Renewing our Support for Our Lady of Lourdes

Dear Parishioners:

Each year our parish uses the weeks at the end of October and beginning of November to celebrate parish stewardship.

Stewardship is a way of life, an attitude of generosity and faith that allows us to use our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to do the work of the gospel. Our parish community would not exist without the generosity of our members. Please pay special attention to the message of stewardship on these upcoming weekends.

we serve.

Saturday and Sunday, October 28 and 29
Our Parish Annual Report

Our Pastor, Father Mike Vetrano, will speak at all weekend Masses and present the Annual Report from our Finance and Stewardship Committees.

Saturday and Sunday, November 4 and 5
Parish Commitment Weekend

Parishioners will speak at Masses this Sunday to explain the importance of the stewardship of time, talent, and treasure in their lives. Parishioners will also be invited to make or renew a commitment to support Our Lady of Lourdes. The commitment cards may be put into the collection baskets at this Mass or at Mass over the next several Sundays. In addition, the commitment cards can be dropped off at or mailed to the Parish Office in the Rectory.

Saturday and Sunday, November 11 and 12

Commitment Weekend

Parishioners will be invited to return their commitment cards if they did not do so last weekend. In addition, we will have cards available at the entrances of the Church over the next several weeks for your use. All cards can be returned in the collection baskets at Mass or they can be dropped off at or mailed to the Parish Office in the Rectory.

Daily Mass

8 AM

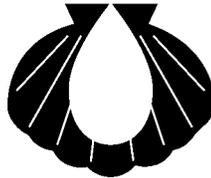
Weekend Masses

Saturday: 5 PM

Sunday: 8 AM, 9:30 AM,
11 AM, 12:30 PM and 6 PM

Reconciliation

Saturday: 4 PM - 4:45 PM



Baptisms

Jessica Lynn Belle

Christopher and Melissa

Upcoming Marriages

Janice Keith and

Thomas Young, OLL

Lauren Fogarty, OLL and

Thomas McGowan, St. Kevin's, Flushing



Rest In Peace

Carlos Oliveira

Joan Levesque

Carolyn Timmer

Rosary/Novena

Rosary:

Daily after 8 AM Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena:

Monday after 8 AM Mass

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults(RCIA):

A process to be embraced by the Catholic Church. For non-Catholics and for Catholics who have never received formal religious education. If interested, please call the Parish Office.

Anointing of the Sick

Throughout the liturgical year. If needed sooner, please call the Parish Office.

Baptism

Please contact the Parish Office to schedule an appointment.

Marriage

Arranged at least six months in advance, please call the Parish Office.

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous

Monday and Tuesday at
8 PM and Saturday at
7 PM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.

ALANON

Each Wednesday at
10 AM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.

Remembering...

Monday, October 30

8:00 AM Elizabeth Homann

Tuesday, October 31

8:00 AM Valentina Abrahams

5:00 PM John Natale

Wednesday, November 1

All Saints Day

8:00 AM Pat Fasano

7:30 PM Robert T. Beck

Thursday, November 2

All Souls Day

8:00 AM

Friday, November 3

8:00 AM Angelo and Felicia DeLeo

Saturday, November 4

8:00 AM Maureen A. Parson, Elizabeth Nedzynski, Connie LaDolce,
Charles Invigno, Mr. and Mrs. James Libretti & Family, Lela Mae Slusser

5:00 PM Catherine McNeill
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Sunday, November 5

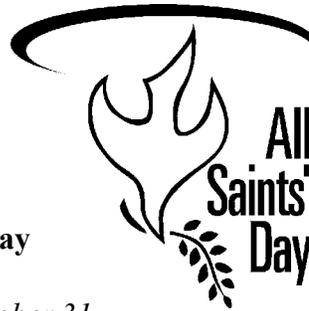
8:00 AM Cornelius J. Peterson
Fr. Ed Dowling

9:30 AM Tony Squeo
Fr. Mike Vetrano

11:00 AM Dolores O'Dea
Fr. Stan Chukwube

12:30 PM Frank Cafaro and Cafaro and Fortunato Families
Fr. Mike Vetrano

6:00 PM People of the Parish, In Honor of the Holy Spirit, Okurowski Family,
Douglas Maurer, Elinor Anzalone, Joseph Bittarelli, Louis Copertin, Marie Barraga,
Michael Clarke (L), Matthew McCloskey, Nicholas Alfano, Anthony Caggiano
Fr. Bob Scheckenback



All Saints' Day

Vigil

Tuesday, October 31

Mass: 5 PM

Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday, November 1

Masses: 8 AM and 7:30 PM

Celebrating Sacraments



30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today, we work fifty and sometimes sixty hours a week. Many work more than one job. Our “free time” is spent maintaining our homes, and if we have children, our responsibilities multiply. After-school activities turn the family dinner into a sack from the drive-through window. Unfortunately, some choose Sunday morning to catch up on their sleep. Some would say that they’ve lost sight of what is truly important.

Bartimaeus had heard of the one they called the Son of God, though he had never seen him. The blind man would spend his days in the same spot in the dusty streets of Jericho, begging for money. When a crowd passed by where he sat, Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was among them. This day, he begged for something different. Having never seen Jesus, he still believed. Jesus granted his wish because of his faith, for with faith, we will clearly see what is truly important.

Despite others trying to quiet him, he made a request. The simple request of a blind man - for mercy - has become part of the formulation for what is known as the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” (CCC 2616) When we offer our prayers, whether in words or in silence, as long as we offer them in faith Jesus Christ will respond. He will open our eyes and open our hearts.

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Readings for the Week of October 29, 2006

Sunday: Jer 31:7-9/ Heb 5:1-6/ Mk 10:46-52
Monday: Eph 4:32-5:8/ Lk 13:10-17
Tuesday: Eph 5:21-33 or 5:2a, 25-33/ Lk 13:18-21
Wednesday: Rv 7:2-4, 9-14/ 1 Jn 3:1-3/ Mt 5:1-12a
Thursday: Wis 3:1-9/ Rom 5:5-11 or 6:3-9/ Jn 6:37-40
Friday: Phil 1:1-11/ Lk 14:1-6
Saturday: Phil 1:18b-26/ Lk 14:1, 7-11
Next Sunday: Dt 6:2-6/ Heb 7:23-28/ Mk 12:28b-34

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Janet Loehr*.
If you would like to help care for our altar needs, please call the
Parish Office at 661.3224.

Communion Calls

Communion brought to those who are homebound.
Contact the Parish Office at 661.3224.



Pastoral Care of the Sick

Please call the Parish Office at 661.3224 to leave the names
of parishioners who:

- are homebound and would like to receive the Eucharist
- are in Good Samaritan Hospital and would like to be visited
by a member of our Pastoral Care Ministry.

Pray for Our Sick

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers ...

*Pat Bonavita, Patrick Bowers, Thomas Brennan, Elise Brenner, Jo Brogan,
Christian Bullock, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Nicholas Curella, Kelly Doan,
Jason Fisher, Abelardo Gelabert, Mary Hudson, Kathleen Kerrigan,
Anthony Lombardo, Mike Lorento, Benjy Margulies, Diego Marino,
Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Dorothy O'Grady,
Rose Paladino, Freda Perry, Gene Perry, Joe Radosti, Fred Ruggio,
Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, Loretta Vitale*

Members in the Military

We ask that you pray especially for those in our parish that are on active duty in the
Middle East conflict.

They are:

Daniel D'Arienzo-US Army

John Finn-US Army

Paul McEvoy-US Army

Michael Mallimo-US Army

Peter Provenzano-US Army

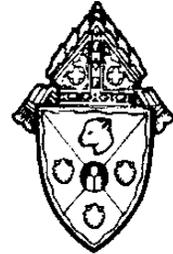
James Stultz- US Army

John Thompson-US Marines

...and remember those of our parish family that are in the armed services, listed in our
Parish Book of Intentions.

2006 Catholic Ministries Appeal

“Touching the lives of many through Diocesan and Parish Ministries and services.”



Parish Status as of October 16, 2006

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Parish Goal | \$118,600 |
| Pledged Amount | \$ 95,647 |
| # of Pledges | 421 |
| Average Pledge | \$ 228 |

We are closing in on our parish goal! Thank you to those parishioners who have participated in the 2006 Catholic Ministries Appeal. Your participation provides support to the many programs and services that help further the mission of Jesus Christ here on Long Island.

There is still time to participate in this year's CMA. Please consider supporting this important initiative, as it will help us continue to do the work of the Lord here on Long Island. To show your support for our parish and Diocese, please contact our Parish Office at 661.3224.

Financial Summary

October 22, 2006

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Weekly Collection | \$ 14,484.50 |
| Weekly Budget | -\$ 21,000.00 |
| +/- for the week | \$ (6,515.50) |

World Mission Sunday

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Collected Amount | \$ 2,975.00 |
|------------------|-------------|

The estimated weekly collection needed to maintain and operate our parish buildings, ministries, programs and salaries is \$21,000.



Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM.
For information/assistance call 661.9262.

Our Lady of Lourdes Bereavement

Our parish support group for those who have lost a loved one—
If interested, please call the Parish Outreach Office at 661.9262.

Our pantry is running low on the following items...
cereal, coffee, soup, and tea.

canned fruit
canned vegetables
jelly
peanut butter
pudding/jello

Respect Life Month 2006

In the field of stem cell research, the genuine and growing promise of treatments using adult stem cells is often downplayed or ignored, while exaggerated or even fraudulent claims are made for avenues that require destroying early human lives. A “Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative” offered for the November ballot in Missouri makes the usual irresponsible claims for “miracle cures” from embryonic stem cells, and adds its own cynical twist: While claiming to ban human cloning, it would actually elevate the cloning of human embryos for destructive research to the status of a constitutional right. In 1973 the Supreme Court ignored the facts of human life in the womb, as well as the facts about abortion’s negative effects on women, to find a constitutional “right” to abortion. Today, in the same way, powerful groups in our society would ignore basic facts to promote a narrow and divisive view of the human person – a view in which human life is a mere problem, or even an object of research and exploitation, rather than the divine mystery it truly is. Let us educate and motivate ourselves to ensure that truth – the scientific and medical truth, and the profound truth about the dignity of each human person – will increasingly inform and guide our society’s decisions about human life.

*Cardinal William H. Keeler
Chairman, Committee for Pro-Life Activities
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Social Action Alerts

NYSCATHOLIC.ORG

We would like everyone in our parish to visit the New York State Catholic Conference’s website at www.nyscatholic.org and register today. By doing this, you’ll receive regular e-mail updates about important issues and learn ways you can make a real difference in the life of the Church and the world.



Nocturnal Adoration

Nocturnal Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament **follows the 5 PM Mass** each first Saturday of the month. Nocturnal Adoration for the month of November will be held on **Saturday, November 4**, ending with Benediction at 9:50 PM. Please come and pray with us. We will be praying for our families. All are invited and welcome! Bring a friend.

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, October 31**, in the **Parish Center at 9 AM**. All older parishioners are welcome.

All Saint's Day – Eve

Tuesday, October 31- Halloween

A special **5 PM Mass** for our young people – and we invite them to come in costume.

All will receive a special gift for their trick or treat bags too!

Night At The Races

Friday, November 10 at 7 PM in the OLL cafeteria

Come with your friends & family ...you will have an enjoyable evening. Donation: \$5 advance sale & \$7 at the door, includes frankfurters, salads, cake, coffee/tea.

Tickets are available at the Outreach Office M-F 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM. For further information please call Parish Outreach at 661-9262.

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, October 30**, at **12:30 PM in the Parish Center**.

Good Samaritan Prayer Group of L.I.

The Good Samaritan Prayer Group of Long Island holds their **meetings every Friday (except the first Friday of the month) at OLL School in Room 16 from 8 PM until 10 PM**.

All are welcome to experience singing, praying and fellowship each evening.

Jesus, King of All Nations Prayer Group

The Jesus, King of All Nations Prayer Group meets each **Thursday afternoon** in the **Church**. The meeting is from **3 PM until 4 PM in front of the Blessed Sacrament**.

Golden Wedding Jubilee

On **Sunday, November 19**, couples married 50 years or more are invited to a special Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Paul Walsh at **Christ the King, Commack at 3 PM.**

Please pick up your registration card at the OLL Parish Office before October 31. If you have any questions, please call 516.678.5800, extension 242.



Gift & Craft Fair

St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School is hosting its **Annual Holiday Gift & Craft Fair on Sunday, November 5 from 10 AM until 4 PM.**

Join us for a fun filled holiday shopping experience with over 150 gift and craft vendors. There will also be great food and great raffle prizes-plenty of parking.

Sisters of Charity-Halifax

Each year the Sisters hold a luncheon and recognize those who most exemplify the spirit of the founder of the Sisters of Charity through the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award. We invite you to participate in supporting the Sisters' healthcare and retirement needs and honoring this year's award recipients by purchasing a ticket to the luncheon, taking a chance on a raffle, or making a donation.

This year's luncheon will be on **Sunday, November 12 in the Milleridge Cottage at Milleridge Inn, Jericho from 1 PM until 4 PM.** For more information or to register please call Carrie Flemming at 1.800.247.6509. Thank you for your participation and generosity.

St. Edward School Reunion

St. Edward the Confessor School, Syosset is hosting a **reunion and celebration** in honor of the **school's 45 Anniversary on Saturday, November 4.** For further information call Allison Murray Morris at 516.921.8030, extension 135.

Immigrants on Long Island

Please join us as friends and families gather for **Mass at St. Agnes Cathedral on Sunday, November 5 at 2 PM.** Come celebrate and honor immigrants on Long Island from yesterday and today. Reception to follow. Please call Margarita at 631.789.2317 for reservations or more information.

Religion & Rock

Tune into "Religion & Rock" with Fr. Jim Vlaun on Sunday from 7 AM to 8 AM on WBAB 102.3 FM or 95.3 on the East End of Long Island.

Next Sunday's theme is: **"Who are the Saints in Our Lives."** Don't forget to tune in! Visit "Religion & Rock" on the web, www.religionandrock.com. Also watch "Good News with Father Jim" on TELE CARE, channel 29, on Mondays and Fridays at 9:45 AM; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 7:45 PM; Sundays at 8 PM.

Unspeakable Loneliness

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

When Kim Campbell was Prime Minister of Canada she gave a very candid interview to MACLEAN'S magazine within which she spoke of the ups and downs of being a public figure. You are surrounded by people, she said, but sometimes you live in "an unspeakable loneliness."

"Unspeakable loneliness". What is that?

There is a lot of loneliness, as we know, that can be spoken about. When you are lonely in certain ways, no matter the pain, you can still put out a hand and someone will take it, hold it, offer empathy, and the loneliness itself can lead to a deeper sense of being loved and valued.

That is often the case with the loneliness you feel when you lose a loved one in death, with the loneliness you feel when you lose a special intimacy with your children as they grow up and into their own lives and interests, with the loneliness you feel as you age and lose the taut health and attractiveness of a young body and the place that gives you in the world, and even with the seemingly inarticulate loneliness you feel in adolescence, when you are so blindly driven by the need to make contact that a certain desperate loneliness is choreographed by virtually every movement of your body and attitude.

There is a loneliness that can be spoken of because its pain is greater than its shame. It drives you to your knees, but also more deeply into humanity. Nature equips you to deal with this. This kind of loneliness hurts you but it does not damage you. It can be talked about, no small thing: Anything can be borne if it can be shared.

But there is a loneliness that cannot be shared, which is "unspeakable" because it is experienced in a way that is so private and humiliating that, were you to speak of it, you would further damage an already over-fragile sense of self that has been made so fragile by the loneliness itself.

You experience this kind of loneliness whenever you are alone in something in a way that you cannot share with anyone else because the loneliness itself feels like a private sickness, like a thing of shame, which makes you so vulnerable that any attempt to share it with someone would only make things worse and be a further humiliation.

You experience this especially in rejection, betrayal, abuse, powerlessness, and the feelings you have when you doubt your own attractiveness, intelligence, goodness, strength, and emotional stability. Not only are you then alone and outside of something or someone you want, but you are left with a wound, a humiliation, a sense of not measuring-up, an insecurity, and a shame, that is only deepened should you

talk of it. There is a pain that is "unspeakable".

You experience this, "unspeakable loneliness", in those areas of life where shame and insecurity seep in, where your relationships become one-sided, where you get walked-on, walked-away from, get dumped, suffer abuse, get bullied on the playground, are the one who is never asked out, get chosen last, are too weak to defend yourself, where your body and feelings aren't right, where you aren't bright enough, aren't attractive enough, have bad skin, varicose veins, are overweight, have an over-bearing mother you are ashamed of, where you end up being the one who has to beg, who needs to ask, who has to sit by the phone hoping it will ring, where you are the one who is pushed away because you are too obsessed, too needy, too desperate, too different, too weak, too angry, too compromised, too wrapped up in some private wound, weakness, sickness, or history to be that wonderful, normal, resilient, irresistible person everyone is looking for.

Loneliness of this kind can drive you into fantasy where, in your daydreams, you get to live out what is denied you in reality. Mostly this is harmless, little more than private little cassettes with perfect endings that you play internally to make life more bearable. Sometimes though "unspeakable loneliness" produces a restlessness and chaos that is suicidally painful and acts out in very bitter and destructive ways.

Nobel Prize winning novelist, Toni Morrison says: "There is a loneliness that can be rocked. Arms crossed, knees drawn up, holding, holding on, this motion, unlike a ship's, smooths and contains the rocker. It's an inside kind-wrapped tight like a skin.

Then there's a loneliness that roams. No rocking can hold it down. It is alive, on its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound of one's own feet going seem to come from a far-off place."

There is a solution to "unspeakable loneliness": it needs to be spoken, to be shared, to be made public. To speak the unspeakable is a risk, an anguish, an irony, but, when the unspeakable is spoken, what once felt shamefully private and sick can become a badge of courage and a distinguishing mark of healthy citizenship inside the human condition.

Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Bartimaeus may have been poor and blind, but he sure was smart! He had the kind of faith that made Jesus smile. Bartimaeus knew exactly who Jesus was - the Messiah. And Bartimaeus knew Jesus had the power to make him see. When Jesus called him, Bartimaeus left everything behind - even his coat - just to follow Jesus.



Mission for the Week

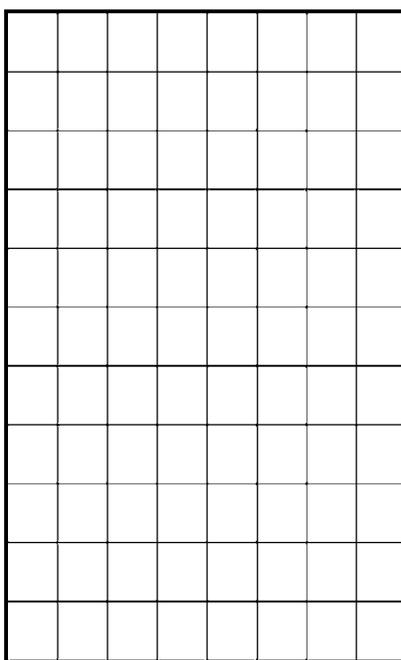
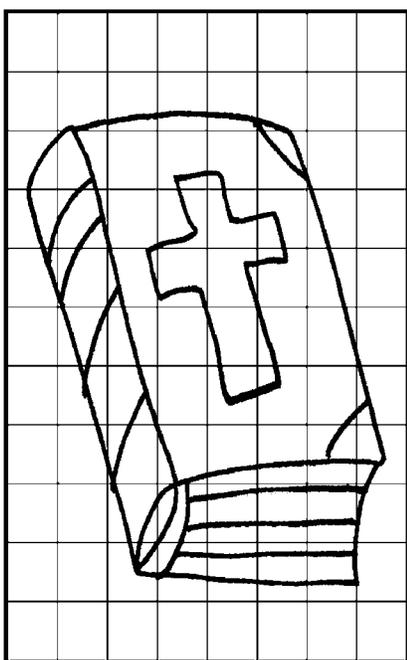


Wear a blindfold at home, and ask your family members to talk to you as usual. Just by the sound of each voice, you know who is talking, right? Talk about how being blind did not stop Bartimaeus from recognizing Jesus, either.



Puzzle

Copy the picture square by square.



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Dear God,

thank you for
helping
Bartimaeus see
you and follow you.
Help me to follow
his example.