

Our Lady of Lourdes

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time • January 28, 2007



“Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:21



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

Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano

Pastor

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

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 Scorgia

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 McMahan

Doreen Spiller

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Marie Yuliano (*co-chair*)

Parish Staff

Barbara Catusco

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.

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.*

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

Adult Faith Formation

Preparing for life ending decisions...

Reasons to hope...

Tuesdays, January 30 and February 6, 2007

7:30-9:30 PM

Parish Center

Presenters include *S. Diane Liona, Barbara Redmond,*

Deacon John and Anne DeGuardi... and more

As we journey through the seasons of life, we must move with them and become aware of these life ending decisions... challenges... sorrows...

How do I face walking with someone who is seriously ill?

How do I prepare for the loss of a loved one-as a spouse, an adult, daughter/son, a friend, a sibling?

Through the support of others, these evenings will guide us as we walk this journey.

Together we will discuss, reflect, share and pray. Please join us – don't miss it!

...Upcoming Courses

American Mystics: Thomas Merton and Jessica Powers

One Night Only!

Tuesday, March 20, 2007 from 7:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the Parish Center.

Our presenter is Kathleen Reid, MA, Director of Religious Education, St. Philip Neri R.C. Church.

We all need good role models! Here we will explore the life, legacy, and writings of these two 20th century Catholics and Mystics. Through presentation, discussion, and reflection... we will see what wisdom we can receive from these fascinating, creative, and gifted people.

The Eucharist: Gift and Call

One Night Only!

Tuesday, March 27, 2007 from 7:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the Parish Center.

Our presenter is S. Barbara Regan r.c. MA in Theology, Staff of Cenacle Retreat Center.

Each week, thousands come to receive the Eucharist at Our Lady of Lourdes...but are we going through the motions or do we really understand the awesome gift God gives us and how it can change our lives? As we look at the history of the Eucharist and understand it's role in our lives, let's find out!

Pre-Registration 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, between 9AM – 5 PM and 7PM – 9PM, at 661.5440 x3, or e-mail to: religiously@ollchurch.org. Fee: \$25 [No fee is required for those who have paid the Religious Education Family Fee or Our Lady of Lourdes School Tuition. Fees may vary appropriately.]

Night of Prayer and Reflection

The Ministry of Family Healing invites you to a night of prayer and reflection. This night we would like to introduce you to one of God's beloved angels, Herman. Come along on our journey as we discover along with Herman about the mirror of truth. Is it truth as we see it, or truth as God sees it?

We will be meeting on **Tuesday, February 13 at 7:30 PM in the Parish Center**. Please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440 to register. *(There is no fee for this night.)*
All are welcome. Please come and bring a friend.



Our Feast Day

We will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes...

Saturday, February 10, 2:30-4:30 PM in the Church.

Please join our Parish Family as we celebrate this great Feast which is *ours...*

- We will begin in Church and take a “good look” at OUR Church and learn more about OUR rich history which is OURS and... how “close” we are to the Shrine at Lourdes, France
- We will pray the Rosary and walk in procession as “pilgrims” do in Lourdes, France
- We will see a Virtual Tour of the Beautiful Shrine at Lourdes, France and... share pictures and memories of OUR Pilgrims who traveled in 1999 and 2006 to Lourdes, France

Coming to OLL Church West Islip...

Experiencing Lourdes, France...

Coming to celebrate together as a Parish Family.....*Priceless*

Eucharistic Devotion

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the month of February will be on **Saturday, February 3, following the 5 PM Mass** and conclude with Benediction at 9:50 PM. Come and spend some time in prayer with your parish family before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We will be praying for the Pope, religious vocations, and world peace. All are welcome!

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, January 30, in the Parish Center at 9 AM**. All older parishioners are welcome.

Support Catholic Education

Catholic Schools are an important part of the educational mission here at OLL and throughout the diocese. Here are some opportunities for you to support Catholic Education...

Special Gifts — Classroom Angels

For a gift of \$1000 from a person or group, you can become a classroom angel for a whole year. Your name or a memorial inscription will be placed over the door of one of our classrooms as a reminder of your generous gift.

School Scrip

Is sold throughout the year. Purchasing Scrip as gifts or for your own day to day purchases costs you nothing extra and benefits special programs in Our Lady of Lourdes School.

Here's What's Happening...

This year, Our Lady of Lourdes School had two winners for the 2006 Diocesan "Christmas is Christ's Birthday" Christmas Theme Poster contest. Congratulations are in order to 3rd grader Matthew Lamb, who won 2nd place and 5th grader Jaclyn Hahn who won Honorable Mention! They were selected among all entries in the 3rd and 5th grade from the Diocese. Trophies will be awarded to the winning contestants at a ceremony scheduled for Sunday, January 28 at SS Cyril & Methodius Parish in Deer Park.

Our Lady of Lourdes School 8th grade class attended the 2007 Technology Expo at the Crest Hollow Country Club on January 10. It is the only event of its kind that engages Long Island businesses, research organizations, universities and middle schools in an environment that focuses on creating exciting opportunities for collaboration. Our very own 8th grader, Richard Wilkinson, was interviewed on Channel 12 News by Ken Grimball. Hopefully you were able to catch our star on TV! Richard said in the interview, "I think it's good that they encourage students going into the field of technology and that they keep it on Long Island." Way to go Richard!

The Fashion Show Committee Needs You!

Our Lady of Lourdes School will be hosting a Fashion Show on Thursday, March 29, 2007. This event will be held at La Grange and includes dinner, dancing and, of course, many prizes and raffles – this is an event not to be missed! Tickets will go on sale in February and will be open to the parish and school on a first come, first served basis. The cost per ticket is \$50.00.

Our Lady of Lourdes School is reaching out to all parishioners and our school parents for donations of any kind to help support this important fundraising event. All donations can be dropped off in the school office labeled "Fashion Show – Attention Kate Newman." Make sure you include your name, address and phone number so we can properly thank you for your assistance. The show can't go on without your help! Whether you prefer to be out in the crowds or behind the scenes, we have an opportunity for you! Anyone interested in helping with the 2007 Fashion Show Event or if you have any questions, please contact Kate Newman at 587-6948 or e-mail at bounceusa@aol.com. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Living Liturgy

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday, this year, is February 21. OLL will once again have prayer services **every hour** beginning at 7AM with the last service beginning at 9 PM. Think of who you can invite back to Church this Lent. Get ready to invite them to come with you to an Ash Wednesday Prayer Service here at Our Lady of Lourdes on February 21.

Communion Bow

The procession to receive communion is a clear sign of our willingness to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Remember that we are called to make slight bow of the head before receiving the Body and the Blood of Christ. This bow should take place *as the person in front of you* is receiving Communion. This act is a good personal reminder to us of what we are about to receive (and hopefully become) and to those who are praying for us while we are processing.



The Dalmatic

You might notice that our deacons are vesting a little differently. They are now wearing a dalmatic. The dalmatic is the official vestment of the deacon and is worn over the alb and stole. It looks very similar to the priest's chasuble but is different in both shape and design. The article below from Paul Turner helps us to better understand its origin and background.

Dalmatic by Paul Turner

Today the dalmatic is not the sort of garment you expect to see outside of a church service, but when it first appeared in third-century Rome from Dalmatia across the Adriatic Sea (the same place credited with a breed of dog made famous when 101 of them barked across movie screens), the garment made quite a fashion statement and senators adopted it as a sign of their rank. A calf-length tunic, wide at the sleeves, worn without a belt, it caused some scandal before bishops and deacons started wearing it as well. By the 11th century, the church designated the dalmatic as a vestment proper to them.

Worn over the alb, the dalmatic looks a lot like a chasuble, the outer vestment worn by the priest when he celebrates the Eucharist. It adopts the same color and often the same material as the chasuble. Many early examples sported two stripes from front to back across the shoulders. But the big difference in these vestments is sleeves. A chasuble is completely open from hands to floor, but a dalmatic has sleeves. Many people don't notice the difference. For this reason, many deacons opt to wear the stole without the dalmatic because the deacon's stole, cutting across the body at an angle and dropping in a dogleg near the knee, is more visibly distinct.

Although the dalmatic is generally identified with deacons, it remains a vestment which may be worn by bishops as well. When a bishop vests for a solemn service, he may wear the dalmatic under the chasuble and in fact was required to do so for almost the past thousand years. Today he may omit the dalmatic for a good reason, and many bishops have dispensed with it as unnecessary.

During the ordination ceremony, the deacon formally receives his dalmatic, and it is placed on him by an assisting deacon or priest. By this investiture, the garment becomes a symbol of his role within the community.

Copyright © 1998, Resource Publications, Inc. 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. Paul Turner, pastor of St. Munchin Parish in Cameron, MO, holds a doctorate in sacramental theology from Sant' Anselmo University in Rome.

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

Joseph Thomas Courtney

Joseph and Shannon

Nicholas Jerome Garelli

Jerome and Dianne

Olivia Grace Genovese

Dominick and Jeanne

Thomas Ryan Kerrigan

Sean and Sharon

Jennifer Rose Rogers

Peter and Christine

Joseph George Schierle

Eric and Carol

Alexandra Joan Winchester

Thomas and Susan

Joseph Daniel Carlino

Stephen and Megan

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, January 29

8:00 AM Peggy & Frank Fortunato

Tuesday, January 30

8:00 AM James Peter Olsen

Wednesday, January 31

St. John Bosco, priest

8:00 AM Aniello Bianco



Thursday, February 1

8:00 AM Jeremy Best

Rest In Peace

Friday, February 2

Presentation of the Lord

8:00 AM Robert Fitzgerald

Harry Proseri

Nicholas Curella

Saturday, February 3

8:00 AM John J. Goode, Sr. & Joan Goode, Walter Hess, James Neary,
Norah Williamson & Nicholas LoPorto, Dolores Borman,
Margarette Barker, In Thanksgiving, Jerry Ditolla, Florence Ito,
Thomas McGlynn

5:00 PM Dolores Regina Borman

Fr. Stan Chukwube

Sunday, February 4

8:00 AM Sam DePrisco

Fr. John Asomugha

9:30 AM Joseph & Josephine Zucco

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM Michael Worysz

Fr. Stan Chukwube

12:30 PM Nicola & Anna Santa Andriola

Fr. Ed Dowling

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Rose Fenimore, Edward McCarthy,
Carol Russack, Alger Kiceina, Lindsey Sangiorgio, Gene Turner,
Mary Reynolds, Antonia Agostinelli, Veronica Graf

Fr. John Asomugha



canned pasta, ravioli, etc.
 chili
 macaroni & cheese
 pasta
 tomato sauce

Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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

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:

“Quiet Times.”

Don’t forget to tune in!

Visit “Religion & Rock” on the web, www.religionandrock.com.

Also watch “Good News with Father Jim” on TELECare, channel 29, on Mondays and Fridays at 9:45 AM; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 7:45 PM; Sundays at 8 PM.

Financial Summary

January 21, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 18,070.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (2,930.00)

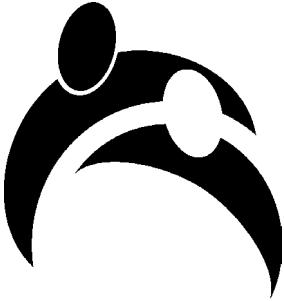
The estimated weekly collection needed to maintain and operate our parish buildings, ministries, programs and salaries is \$21,000.

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Joyce Petersen*.
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 to keep in your thoughts and prayers ...

*Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Elise Brenner, Jo Brogan, Christian Bullock,
Peggy Cornell, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Jason Fisher, Barbara Frank,
Diane Garretson, Barbara Guarino, Adam Ippolito, Brian Kaehne, Peggy Keegan,
Leonore Keller, Brigid Kinney, Janet Kohlenbush, Anthony Lombardo, Mike Loreto,
Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Robert Petersen,
Joe Radosti, Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, Loretta Vitale*

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month.
The next meeting will be held on **Monday, January 29, 2007** 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.



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 4:21-30

Parents are frustrated. For years, they try to teach their children right from wrong and all of the little lessons life has to offer, only to watch their offspring roll their eyes and say, “Yeah, right.” Conversely, children will come home from college and practically repeat back to you all of the wisdom you tried to impart on them years before, only this time it stuck because Professor So-and-So talked about it in sociology class, so it must be true!

Today’s Gospel reading from Luke is a perplexing story at first read. Jesus is speaking before the people of his hometown. Luke tells us that “all spoke highly of him and were amazed at (his) gracious words.” Yet Jesus almost rebukes them, proclaiming that no prophet is accepted in his home town. In fact, in the days of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, Gentiles seemed to receive greater assistance from God than the Jews. This only caused those listening to angrily march him out of town.

However, perhaps Jesus was giving a first glimpse of his eventual persecution by his own people. He had reached an acceptance of his mission and its consequences. And that mission entailed gathering his flock and imparting upon them his Word. This flock became his family, whose acceptance of him and his teachings transcended their origins (CCC 764). Today, strive to accept the Word. Accept the fact that you are part of that early family, the foundation of the kingdom of heaven.

Readings for the Week of January 28, 2007

Sunday:	Jer 1:4-5, 17-19/1 Cor 12:31—13:13 <i>or</i> 13:4-13/Lk 4:21-30
Monday:	Heb 11:32-40/Mk 5:1-20
Tuesday:	Heb 12:1-4/Mk 5:21-43
Wednesday:	Heb 12:4-7, 11-15/Mk 6:1-6
Thursday:	Heb 12:18-19, 21-24/Mk 6:7-13
Friday:	Mal 3:1-4/Heb 2:14-18/Lk 2:22-40 <i>or</i> 2:22-32
Saturday:	Heb 13:15-17, 20-21/Mk 6:30-34
Next Sunday:	Is 6:1-2a, 3-8/1 Cor 15:1-11 or 15:3-8, 11/Lk 5:1-11

He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" - Lk 4:21-22



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
Bryan R. Dempsey-US Marines
Frederick Wm. Ellis-US Army
John Finn-US Army
Michael Mallimo-US Army
Peter Provenzano-US Army

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

Our whole parish family rejoices with the Stultz family in gratitude for the safe return of their son from active duty.

James Stultz-US Army has returned to the United States safe and sound. Thank you, James, for your generous service to our country!

The Stultz family would like to thank Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family for all of their prayers.



Members
Serving
Our
Country



The parish family of Our Lady of Lourdes would like to list those in the armed forces on active duty so that we can include them in our prayers. If you would like to include a family member on active duty to our prayer list, please fill out the following:

Name: _____

Branch of Service: _____

or email information to bulletin@ollchurch.org

Social Action Alert

Life After Abortion

This time of the year, particularly with the March for Life, calls us to focus on the morality and legality and damage of abortion. Our faith also calls us to compassion and reconciliation not condemnation. There are a number of prayer opportunities and retreats being offered in our area for those who have had abortions and are seeking ways to work through this. For more information, look at the Rachel's Vineyard website – www.rachelsvineyard.org. In our own diocese, you can contact the Respect Life Office at 516.379.8292, x. 215 for more information.

Our Diocese offers a number of residences for young people who are pregnant and seeking shelter and resources to begin life as a parent.

For more information about these services contact:

Regina Maternity Services – 516.223.7888

Mother of Good Counsel Home – 516.223.1013

Momma's House – 516.781.8637

Bethany House – 516.868.6866

The Mercy INN

The Mercy INN Soup Kitchen of Wyandanch needs volunteers to help prepare and serve food one day a week, Monday-Friday. The hours are 10 AM until 2 PM. If you can help, please call Kathy at 631.422.1420.

Living God's Call for Charity and Justice in Political Life

An excerpt from *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), the first Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI
 ...to the Bishops, priests, and deacons, men and women, religious and
 all the lay faithful on Christian love.

Living Charity with Humility

The one who serves does not consider himself superior to the one served, however miserable his situation at the moment may be. Christ took the lowest place in the world—the Cross—and by this radical humility he redeemed us and constantly comes to our aid. Those who are in a position to help others will realize that in doing so they themselves receive help; being able to help others is no merit or achievement of their own. This duty is a grace. The more we do for others, the more we understand and can appropriate the words of Christ: “We are useless servants.” We recognize that we are not acting on the basis of any superiority or greater personal efficiency, but because the Lord has graciously enabled us to do so. There are times when the burden of need and our own limitations might tempt us to become discouraged. But precisely then we are helped by the knowledge that, in the end, we are only instruments in the Lord's hands; and this knowledge frees us from the presumption of thinking that we alone are personally responsible for building a better world. In all humility we will do what we can, and in all humility we will entrust the rest to the Lord. . . . To do all we can with what strength we have, however, is the task which keeps the good servant of Jesus Christ always at work: “The love of Christ urges us on.” (2 Cor 5:14)

Annual Service and Goods Auction

St. John the Baptist D.H.S. is proud to announce the Eighth Annual Service & Goods Auction which will be held on Friday, February 9 at 7 PM in the Cougar Café. Many items to bid on, door prizes and raffles including one month's tuition, vacations, camps and dinners, to name a few. Please join us for a fun evening where the proceeds will benefit the students of SJB. We thank you for your continued support.

The Four Greatest Stories Ever Told!

St. Patrick's, Bay Shore, invites you to attend "The Four Greatest Stories Ever Told! The Portraits of Jesus in the Bible" presented by Vicki Toale, O.P. The sessions run from 7:30-9:30 PM beginning February 5. Sr. Vicki is a member of the Dominican Sisters of Amityville. She was a Pastoral Minister and the Director of Religious Education in the Parish of St. Francis of Assis in Astoria. She is an Associate Professor of Theology at Molloy College and is currently Adult Formation Director at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish. For further information or to register, please call Susan at 631.661.4157 extension 500 or email to susan@delucamaisto.com.

Maria Regina Residence

Maria Regina Residence is a skilled long term care facility located on the property of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood. It provides Adult Day Health Services offering a wonderful day program including transportation and meals, as well as a loving atmosphere provided by an inclusive staff. If interested, or for further information, please contact Veronica Anderson, Director at 631.299.3045.

Pasta Night

Our Lady of Grace Columbiettes #11968 are sponsoring "Pasta Night" on February 9 from 7 PM until 10 PM in Father Shanahan Hall. Dinner will include pasta, meatballs, bread, salad, coffee, tea and dessert. The cost per person is \$9. For further information call 631.884.4219. Mangia!

Reading and Math Tutoring Program

Our parish, along with many other parishes in the Diocese, will host the Children's Learning Services Spring Reading and Math Tutoring Program for 12 Saturdays from February 4 through May 19. There will be five or fewer children in a group with one NY State Certified Teacher. There are two programs-one for children with learning disabilities and one for children without. To register or for further information please call 631.243.2503.

In Praise of Silence...

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Many of us could use more silence in our lives. I say this cautiously because the place of silence within a healthy spirituality isn't easy to specify.

We have an ambiguous relationship to silence. There are times when we fear it and try to avoid it and there are other times when we are tired and over-stimulated and positively long for it. Generally, though, we have too little of it in our lives. Work, conversation, entertainment, news, distraction, and preoccupations of every kind seem to fill up our every waking minute. We have become so used to being stimulated by words, information, and distraction that we feel lost and restless when we find ourselves suddenly alone, without someone to talk to, something to watch, something to read, or something to do to take up our attention.

Not all of this is bad, mind you. In the past, spiritual writers were generally too one-sided in extolling the virtues of silence. They tended to give the too-simple impression that God and spiritual depth were only found in silence, as if the joys of human work, conversation, celebration, family, and community were somehow opposed to spiritual growth. Former spiritualities, in speaking of the place of silence, generally penalized extroverts and let introverts off too easily. They didn't sufficiently take into account that all of us, extroverts and introverts alike, not only need silence but also the therapy of a public life. Silence can sometimes be an escape, an avoidance of the stinging purification that often can happen only through the challenge of interacting within a family and a community.

Moreover, silence is not always the best way to deal with heartaches and obsessions. Ultimately these are a form of over-concentration and sometimes when a heartache is threatening our sanity the best thing we can do for it is not go to the chapel but rather go to the theatre or to the pub with a friend. Preoccupation with work or a healthy distraction can sometimes be just the friend you need when your heart is fighting asphyxiation. There is a story told about the famous philosopher, Hegel. Immediately after finishing his monumental work on the phenomenology of history, he realized that he was on the edge of a major

breakdown because of the intensity of his concentration over so long a period of time. What did he do to break out of this? Go on a silent retreat? No. He went to the opera every night, dined every day with friends, and sought out every kind of distraction until, after a while, the strangling grip of his inner world finally let go and the sunshine and freshness of everyday life broke in again. Sometimes distraction, not silence, is our best cure, even spiritually.

But there is still a need for silence. What great spiritual writers of all ages tried to teach on this can perhaps captured in a single line from Meister Eckhart: "There is nothing in the world that resembles God as much as silence."

In essence, Eckhart is saying this: Silence is a privileged entry into the realm of God and into eternal life, there is a huge silence inside each of us that beckons us into itself, and the recovery of our own silence can begin to teach us the language of heaven. What is meant by this?

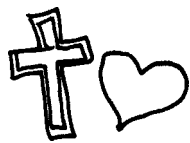
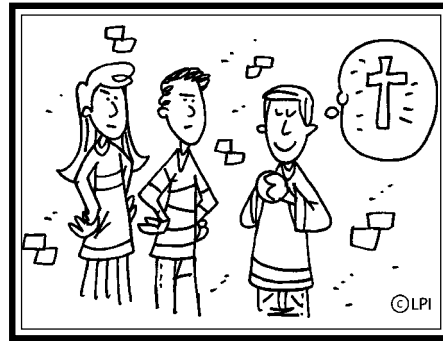
Silence is a language that is infinitely deeper, more far-reaching, more understanding, more compassionate, and more eternal than any other language. In heaven, it seems, there will be no languages, no words. Silence will speak. We will wholly, intimately, and ecstatically hold each other in silence, in perfect understanding. Words, for all their value, are part of the reason why we can't do this already. They divide as much as they unite. There is a deeper connection available in silence. Lovers already know this, as do the Quakers whose liturgy tries to imitate the silence of heaven, and as do those who practice contemplative prayer. John of the Cross expresses this in a wonderfully cryptic line: "Learn to understand more by not understanding than by understanding."

Silence does speak louder than words, and more deeply. We experience this already now in different ways: When we are separated by distance or death from loved ones, we can still be with them in silence; when we are divided from other sincere persons through misunderstanding, silence can provide the place where we can still be together; when we stand helpless before another's suffering, silence can be the best way of expressing our empathy; and when we have sinned and have no words to restore things to their previous wholeness, in silence a deeper word can speak and let us know that, in the end, all will be well and every manner of being will be well.

"There is nothing in the world that resembles God as much as silence." It's the language of heaven and it's already deep inside of us, beckoning us, inviting us to deeper intimacy with everything. *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.*

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus did not expect everybody to like him. Jesus chose to follow God's plan, no matter what other people said. Even though some people wanted to hurt Jesus, he always spoke the truth. He always did what was right, no matter what.



Mission for the Week

Has anyone ever hurt your feelings because you love God? Pray for that person, and keep doing what is right.



Find the right shadow.

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ANSWER IS NUMBER FIVE

Prayer



Dear God,
help me to keep on
doing what you
want, no matter
what other
people say.

Something to Draw



Draw Jesus
walking away from
people who didn't
like him.