

**“Love your
enemies.”**

Luke 6:27



Our Lady of Lourdes

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time • February 18, 2007



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 our Parish Office.

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

Mary McMahon

Director of Parish Social Ministry

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 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

Lent 2007

save the dates...

Monday, March 5 - Thursday, March 8

Parish Lenten Mission

“We Are God’s Work of Art”

beginning each night at 7:30 PM in the Church
led by Father Michael Vetrano, Pastor

Sunday Nights at the Six!

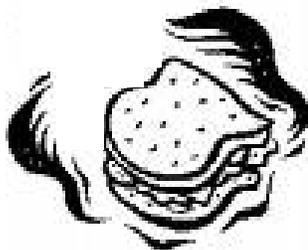
Come and pray with us!

Our Six Committee and Contemporary Music Group are working hard to make this a beautiful celebration for you...

Sunday, February 18

The Burning of the Palms

Following “The Six”, we’ll gather outside and burn the palms for ashes to be used this year on Ash Wednesday.



Sunday, February 25

Help the Homeless

Following “The Six”, we’ll gather in the cafeteria to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for local homeless shelters. This is a wonderful service project and a great way to begin the Lenten season.

We are also in need of donations of peanut butter and jelly. Bring them with you that night or drop them off any time before.

Lent 2007

Clean Up Your Act

Get ready to be challenged to “Clean Up Your Act” at “The Six” this Lent. We’ll look at areas of our lives – especially for middle and high school teenagers – that need some improvement.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 21

Come and pray throughout the day, and be sure to invite your family members and friends to come to Our Lady of Lourdes as well. Look for our special Ash Wednesday bulletin, which will be available at all of our Ash Wednesday services.



Prayer Services

Every hour on the hour beginning at 7 AM and the last one scheduled at 9 PM.

The schedule is as follows:

7 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 Noon*, 1 PM, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM*, 6 PM*, 7 PM and 9 PM.

Masses

8 AM and 8 PM

- On Ash Wednesday, we invite all in our parish family to fast and pray for ourselves and for one another. Lent is a such a powerful time for us to celebrate God's healing love for us – we can do that in prayer.
- Is there someone you know who has left the Church or is hurting? Is the day to invite them back home?
- Our Church will be open all day for you to come and pray privately.
- Our Hourly services are in place so that all have a time to come! Whether you work early or late, want to come during your lunch hour, or don't feel like going to work at all, there's a service for everyone.
- The Scripture readings used at our Prayer Services on this day speak to us of the challenges and benefits of this season...*Joel 2:12-18, 2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18.* Consider reading one or more of them throughout the day.

*The Lenten Fast

...*A Simple Meal on Ash Wednesday*



Our parish Social Action Group is sponsoring a simple soup lunch and simple soup dinner after the 12 Noon, 5 PM and 6 PM Ash Wednesday Prayer Services.

These simple meals are offered as a way to remind us of the power of fasting and of living simply.

If you would like to help prepare our simple soup lunch or simple soup dinner, contact John Sureau at 661.3224 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Directed Retreat Week

“The “Directed Prayer Retreat” was an opportunity of learning, praying, and sharing with someone deeply moving spiritually.” -J



All Are Welcome to our Second Annual Directed Retreat Week experience...right here at OLL!

Sunday, March 11 – Saturday, March 17

St. Ignatius Retreat House offers the opportunity for the experience of the Directed Retreat to the people of a parish, in their parish surroundings... as they live out their daily lives.

“My experience during the “retreat” was the feeling of renewal. It was a time of reflection and examination of my experiences of faith during my faith life. My spiritual director was wonderful to speak to each day. I found the retreat has enriched my faith journey.” -L

Who can go?

This “Directed Retreat” is for you! Many people cannot go away for a week or a weekend to experience a directed retreat. This is a wonderful taste of what it is like to have spiritual direction and to be on retreat without leaving your home.

“Being part of the “retreat” was a gift I gave to Me - of special prayer time and personal reflection. I found this time to be nourishing, comforting and spiritually invigorating, bringing me to a deeper level of understanding of my faith, family and community.” -D

How does it work?

We will meet initially on Sunday afternoon at 2 PM at Our Lady of Lourdes. Our first meeting will last about one hour and you will meet your retreat director/prayer guide. The Prayer Guides are a group of spiritual directors, affiliated with St. Ignatius Retreat Center, Manhasset who have been trained in leading prayers and spiritual exercises in the tradition of St. Ignatius.

After this meeting, each retreatant will meet privately with his/her prayer guide at our parish for approximately one-half hour each day, Monday through Friday. During these meetings, the retreatant and prayer guide will reflect together and will examine different ways to pray, including meditation and praying with scripture. Each retreatant commits to set aside a half hour each day for a prayer period on a scripture passage. On Saturday morning at 9:30 AM, there will be a group closing session at Our Lady of Lourdes.

*Brochures containing applications are available at the Religious Education or Parish Office. **Registration deadline is Friday, March 2.** For more information, call Vita Scorcia at the Religious Education Office at 661-5440 or email Religioused@ollchurch.org.*

Adult Faith Formation

...upcoming courses

American Mystics: Thomas Merton and Jessica Powers

One night only...

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

7:30 PM until 9:30 PM

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

7:30 PM until 9:30 PM

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 its 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: religiouse@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.]

Parish Pilgrimage

Come with Father Bob and Deacon John on a Parish Pilgrimage to Saint Anne DeBeaupre in Quebec, Canada travel beginning July 9, 2007.



People from all over the world come to this Shrine to ask the help of Good Saint Anne, to give thanks for answered prayers in the presence of a reality which transcends us. Experience Quebec City, a touch of Europe in the heart of orth America - cobble stone streets, historic sites – let the enchantment begin!

For additional information, come and meet fellow travelers on **Monday, February 26 at 7:30 PM in the OLL School cafeteria.**

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

Damiana Jo Beige

Joseph and Diane

Alyson Kim Carter

Anthony and Juanita

Evan Robert DiGilio

Thomas and Gina

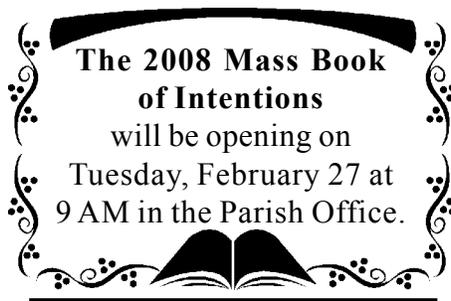
James Andrew Figueroa

Jonathan and Dawn

Ryan Christopher Foy

Justin and Melissa

PLEASE NOTE: The Parish
Offices will be closed Monday,
February 19 in observance of
President's Day.



**The 2008 Mass Book
of Intentions**
will be opening on
Tuesday, February 27 at
9 AM in the Parish Office.

Rosary/Novena

Rosary:

Daily after 8 AM Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena:

Monday after 8 AM Mass

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.

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.

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, February 19

8:00 AM Winifred Yasinovsky

Tuesday, February 20

8:00 AM Vee Vivo

Wednesday, February 21

Ash Wednesday

8:00 AM Robert Smith, James Smith, Oscar Killerbrew,
Melchora Aquino, and Basilio Aquino

8:00 PM Robert T. Beck

Thursday, February 22

8:00 AM Charles Leone

Friday, February 23

8:00 AM Michael Sanfilippo, Jr.

Saturday, February 24

8:00 AM Charles Homann, Joseph Lynch, Special Intention, Daniel Farrell,
Patrick Gracey, Antonio Dalomba, Colleen Webster, Lily Turano,
Carol McLoughlin, Emilio Mahoney, Rosemary Wrigley,
Genevieve Garoklanian (*Birthday Anniversary*)

5:00 PM Cornelius Guider
Fr. Ed Dowling

Sunday, February 25

8:00 AM Robert T. Beck
Fr. Mike Vetrano

9:30 AM Joseph Rizzo
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM Michael Worysz
Fr. Stan Chukwube

12:30 PM Madeline Hopper
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

6:00 PM People of the Parish, William L. LeComte, Rick Munkwitz,
Teresa Wright, Grace Cavalluzzo, Frank Dato, John Machi,
Edna Pareso, Patricia Dandrilli, David Clarke
Fr. Stan Chukwube



- detergent
- kleenex
- paper towels
- personal feminine products
- shampoo
- soap
- toilet tissue
- toothbrush
- toothpaste

Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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

Gentle Reminder: *We no longer have a Thrift Shop.*

Please do not leave household items and clothing. All donations can be dropped off at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Thrift Shop, 139 Bay Shore Road, Deer Park. You can call them at 242.6718 for further information.

Social Action Alert

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. Also, they are in need of two volunteers to pick up produce one Monday a month. If you can help, please call Kathy at 631.422.1420.

Financial Summary

February 11, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 19,250.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (1,750.00)

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 *Pat Wissing*.
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 ...

Gabrielle Azzarelli, Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Elise Brenner, Jo Brogan, Christian Bullock, Lynn Castellano, Peggy Cornell, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Millie Durkin-Barrera, Jason Fisher, Barbara Frank, Adam Ippolito, Brian Kaehne, Leonore Keller, Brigid Kinney, Anthony Lombardo, Mike Loreto, Ruth Mahoney, Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Anna Nieroda, Jackie Paeggel, Adelaide Panzarella, Frieda Perry, Gene Perry, Joe Radosti, Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, Connie Telesca, Loretta Vitale, Michael Walsh

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**.



Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 6:27-38

At times, it may seem as if there is more hatred in the world today than ever before. From countries battling over centuries-old ethnic and religious differences to the neighbors down the block fighting over the most petty of matters, there is no lack of examples of hatred. But what as Christians are our responsibilities in the face of such hatred? Can we deal with the seemingly growing feeling of animosity toward each other, both here and around the world?

In today's Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus presents to us what seems to be the most impossible of tasks — love those who hate. But it is not impossible at all. Think of how easy it is for you to love someone close to you; a parent or a child or a best friend. Love is so natural, so easy, so perfect it cannot be contained. Jesus tells us that there will indeed be times when our hearts will be tested by others who exhibit hate. He only asks us to love that person who deep down, after all, is also a child of God.

Why is this important? Very simply, we cannot love with all our hearts the God we cannot see if we are unable to love the person we can see. In the Lord's Prayer, we daily ask for forgiveness of our sins. But that is not all; we only ask for forgiveness if we have indeed forgiven those who have sinned against us (CCC 2839-40). This is the very basis of Jesus' teaching of the importance of loving each other unconditionally, as he loves us unconditionally.

Readings for the Week of February 18, 2007

Sunday:	1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23/1 Cor 15:45-49/Lk 6:27-38
Monday:	Sir 1:1-10/Mk 9:14-29
Tuesday:	Sir 2:1-11/Mk 9:30-37
Wednesday:	Jl 2:12-18/2 Cor 5:20—6:2/Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday:	1 Pt 5:1-4/Mt 16:13-19
Friday:	Is 58:1-9a/Mt 9:14-15
Saturday:	Is 58:9b-14/Lk 5:27-32
Next Sunday:	Dt 26:4-10/Rom 10:8-13/Lk 4:1-13

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:

"Lent."

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.

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*

Armand J. LeComte-*US Marines*

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.



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



2007 Catholic Ministries Appeal

The Hands of Christ-Supporting the Community Around Us

The Catholic Ministries Appeal Kicks Off

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Diocese of Rockville Centre and as we kick off this 2007 Catholic Ministries Appeal we continue the tradition of helping all those in our community who look to our Church to be the beacon of hope. Our appeal helps to fund the different ministries and agencies throughout Long Island. As stewards of God's gifts, you are invited to respond by sharing those gifts to help others in our communities.

A Letter from Bishop Murphy

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

Our 2006 Catholic Ministries Appeal was a remarkable success. Thousands of people from Nassau and Suffolk Counties joined together to raise more than \$10.4 million to help support the vital and critical ministries of our Church.

We thank you so much for your extraordinary generosity, as you have truly helped us to serve as "the Hands of Christ" supporting the community around us.

Because of the Catholic Ministries Appeal, more than 500,000 of our neighbors received support and assistance from us last year. We were able to reach out to those who were underserved and disadvantaged, provide for the poor and the struggling, address local parish needs, enhance our children's religious training and their elementary and high school educations, encourage and support vocations, strengthen all levels of faith formation and support the many good and compassionate works of our Diocese.

Through your generosity, you have helped us develop a powerful network of dedicated professionals, compassionate volunteers, and outstanding programs that provide critical services and hope to hundreds of thousands of people.

This year marks our 50th Anniversary as a Diocese and together with our 133 parishes we are re-committing ourselves to God's work and to serve all of the people of this Diocese and the Long Island Community. We know that with your continued help, we will be able to meet this goal.

Our CMA brochure provides many examples of the ministries, activities and programs that assist so many people throughout the Diocese of Rockville Centre – from the western border of Nassau County to Orient Point and Montauk on the East End – your support will allow us to carry on God's work.

As you consider your donation to this year's Appeal, we ask you to please be as generous as possible so that we can continue to serve all of the people of this Diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ William Murphy

Bishop of Rockville Centre

For More Information, please call 516-379-5210, Ext. 2 or e-mail us at www.drvc.org/cma.html

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.

Pastoral Visitor

Are you that special person who is called to be a Pastoral Visitor?

Would you like to visit people in our parish who are patients at Good Samaritan Hospital?

Our Lady of Grace Parish will present a series of classes for the education of Pastoral Visitors visiting patients from their parish who are in Good Samaritan Hospital.

A five session course will be conducted by Sister Dorothy Monks and start on **Saturday, March 3, from 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM at Our Lady of Grace Parish in West Babylon, Room 118.**

A registration fee of \$25 plus a phone call to Our Lady of Grace Stewardship Office at 661-9077 will reserve your place. For additional information call Deacon John at 661.3224.

Retrouvaille

You can help your marriage now. Do you feel alone? Do you argue? Have you stopped talking to each other? Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult time in their marriages. For confidential information about the Retrouvaille program, or to register for the next upcoming weekend, please call 1.800.470.2230.

Chinese Auction

Our Lady of Grace Columbiettes will be hosting a **Chinese Auction on Saturday, March 10 at Our Lady of Grace Church, West Babylon.** Admission is \$5 plus 15 tickets, coffee and cake included. The auction will be from 12 PM until 4 PM in the Father Shanahan Hall. For ticket information, please call 631.888.7938.

Communion Breakfast

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Bishop McDonnell #1403 invites you to their **61st Annual Communion Breakfast on Saturday, March 3.** Call Trish at 321.6833 to reserve your \$25 ticket for the buffet breakfast at **Captain Bill's Restaurant in Bay Shore.** Guest speaker will be Deacon Joe Fitzgerald, who will be ordained to the priesthood in May, will share his life path stories.

Compassion and Truth

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Back when I was still teaching full-time, I was, for a period of time, the Acting Dean at a Theological College. In that role, I received one day a phone call from one of the local parish priests. The conversation went something like this: “Are you the Dean of theology at the College?”

“Well, I’m filling in for the dean who’s on sabbatical.”

“God, your students are a pain in the ass! They take a couple of courses, come back, and terrorize the parish! Nothing’s ever right for them. They roll their eyes at everything: how we do liturgy, my preaching, the parish’s priorities, at our ecclesiology in general. I don’t doubt they’re right most of the time, but that’s not the point. It’s their arrogance that’s destructive. Don’t you teach them any compassion?”

There’s a challenge: Don’t you teach them any compassion?

Truth must always be yoked to compassion. Growth in our lives (be it intellectual, spiritual, psychological, professional, or moral) should not lead to arrogance, elitism, or the false judgement that we, now so free and enlightened, are stuck among the ignorant and unwashed. Rather any genuine growth should lead to a concomitant growth in compassion, respect, gentleness, and the capacity to be more understanding of what’s in opposition to us.

Jesus said as much when he instructed us to speak our truth in parables, lest our speaking causes more harm than good. In essence, what Jesus tells us is that truth is not a sledge-hammer, and simply having the truth is not enough. Our truth must be right, but so too must be our energy. For the truth to set us free it must come with an equal dose of compassion, otherwise our being right will only lead to more divisiveness inside the community and lots of personal bitterness.

An example might be helpful: Imagine a marriage within which, at a point, one partner begins to grow in ways that the other partner cannot share. Often this leads to divorce or, more commonly, to a lot of resentment and bitterness in the partner who is trying to grow in a new way and now is left with the feeling: “I’m stuck with someone who doesn’t understand or support what I’m doing and is an obstacle to my growth and happiness.”

What’s true inside a marriage is true inside all families, religious communities, parishes, and circles of friendship. At a certain point, one member or the other, begins to grow in a way that becomes a threat to the others.

What’s to be done? Stop going down that path for the sake of peace in the family? Plough on ahead, regardless of consequences?

There is no fully happy solution here, but some of the tension can be undercut if there is an equal effort to grow in compassion. A little learning can be a dangerous thing. That’s true for all of us and sometimes (perhaps most times) our personal quest for achievement, enlightenment, holiness, justice, or straightening-out the church, is fraught with more than a little illusion and grandiosity and we need precisely the type of grounding that a partner, a family, a parish, or a circle of friendship is so willing to provide. And, while that’s true, it’s not the whole story.

Each of us too hear deep personal calls which, if not responded to, will leave both ourselves and our Creator frustrated. We are being called always by God, personal charism, circumstance, injustice around us, and the demons inside us to grow in ways that will not always please our partners, our families, our parishes, our communities, and our friends. To not respond is to incur the biblical wrath reserved for those who hide their talents; but, conversely, to respond badly, with less than proper compassion, is to make our truth a sledge-hammer which drives the community apart. It’s a tough choice and we risk a certain bitterness either way.

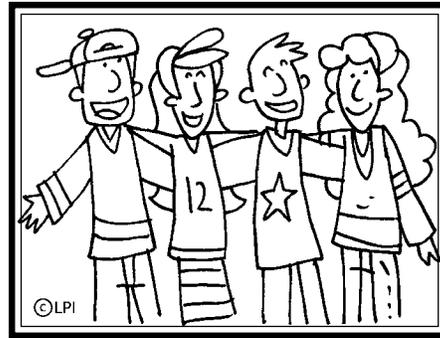
A marriage partner, a family, a parish, a community, or a circle of friends functions in a double way: On the one hand, it’s a floor, a certain safety net that keeps us from ever falling too low. It protects us so we can’t free-fall into any kind of major degeneracy. In every family and community there’s a certain unconscious support that won’t let you fall too low. But, there’s also a certain ceiling, a roof, that defines how high you can grow. In all but the very best marriages, families, parishes, communities, and friendships, there’s an unwritten, unspoken, unalterable law: “You may grow this far, but no further!” And that’s not always bad. While it threatens us with being levelled to a common denominator, it also, as we saw, challenges us not to grow in ways that are one-sided, half-baked, and self-delusionary.

It’s not easy to grow and not cause tension. And so it’s important that any new growth in truth radiates an equally new growth in compassion. We must, as Jesus says, speak our truth in parables.

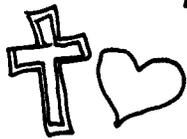
Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Sharing the Gospel

Treat others the way you want to be treated. God doesn't want us to treat other people the same way they treat you. Choose to be kind, even when other people are mean. Choose to forgive, even when someone has hurt you.



Mission for the Week



When someone hurts your feelings this week, instead of getting even, pray for that person.

Puzzle

Unscramble these words from today's Gospel:

love
good
bless

pray
give
kind

lend
reward
pity

lvoe	<u>l</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>e</u>	
gvie	—	—	—	—	
ptyi	—	—	—	—	
ldne	—	—	—	—	
bests	—	—	—	—	—
godo	—	—	—	—	
pary	—	—	—	—	
rwrdea	—	—	—	—	—
knid	—	—	—	—	

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Prayer



Dear God,

help me to love other people the way you love me.

Something to Draw



Draw a picture of yourself helping someone who has hurt your feelings in the past.