

**Third Sunday in Advent
Our Lady of Lourdes • December 16, 2007**



**“See how the farmer
awaits the precious
yield of the soil.”**

James 5:7



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.

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: info@ollschool.org

Religious Education Office

661-5440

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - Noon

1 PM - 5 PM

7 PM - 9 PM

email: ReligiousEd@ollchurch.org

Parish Outreach Office

661-9262

Monday-Friday: 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

S.A.G.E.

661-3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Dominic Armano

Youth Ministry

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Jennifer Gallagher

Children's Choir/Women's Chorale

Summer Program Director

Carol M. Goetz

Parish Music Director

Louise Jane Krol

School Principal

Sr. Diane Liona

Director of Religious Education

Mary McMahan

Director of Parish Social Ministry

Vita Scorgia

Ministry Spiritual Director

John Sureau

Coordinator of Worship

Sr. Betty Toohig

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Anthony Trombino

Business Manager

Pastoral Council

Salomon Acosta

Stacie Baltrusitis

Jane Desthers

Stephen Frodell

William Hurley

Anne Kerrigan

Maria Lucie (*co-chair*)

Deacon Jack Meehan

Vita Scorgia

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

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.*

*Our Lady
of Lourdes*

455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795



The Great Christmas Card Contest

Send our parish a homemade or family picture Christmas card. Prizes will be awarded for the most beautiful card, the most spiritual card, the funniest card, and the most unusual card. All entries will be displayed in our All Purpose Room bulletin board.

Simbang Gabi



Good Samaritan Prayer Group of Long Island in coordination with Our Lady of Lourdes Church presents **Simbang Gabi** (a *Philippine Christmas Tradition*) on **Saturday, December 22 at 7 PM in the Church.**

An evening full of Christmas Spirit! Mass will be followed by Christmas serenade and a fellowship-serving our finest Philippine delicacies. For more details, please contact Pete and Carlita DeRoxas at 661.0232 or email to goodsamofli@gmail.com.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

What's it all about?

IF you are an adult AND

- ... you were never Baptized
- ... you were Baptized in another faith and would like to become a baptized Catholic
- ... you never received Holy Communion (Eucharist)
- ... you never received your Confirmation

IF you are an adult *and* one or all of the circumstances above apply to you

IF you feel you would like to become a Baptized Catholic or become more fully initiated into your Catholic faith,

please contact John Sureau, S. Nancy, Fr. Stan or Fr. Bob at the Parish Office.

You can call 661-3224, option #1, and we would be happy to help you!



*Our Lady of Lourdes Sixth Annual
Family Christmas Pageant*

Friday, December 21

7 PM in the Church

*What better way to prepare for Christmas
than to share the Christmas story with our children!*

*We invite our entire parish family to come and
share this special evening with us.*

We'd like to involve many members of our parish community, especially all parish children!

It's easy...there are only two short practices and a dress rehearsal.

There's something for all ages:

Children

Pre-K through Grade 3

Angels and Shepherds

Grades 4 through 6

Three Kings and the Royal Servants; and Dancers

Grades 7 through 12

We need lots of help—musicians, singers, organizers and assistant directors!

If you can help with our pageant, please call Jennifer Gallagher at 661.3224 or email jengallagher@ollchurch.org.

Adults

We need help with costumes and supervision of the “angels and shepherds.” If you can help with any of these areas, please call Jennifer at 661.3224, or email JenGallagher@ollchurch.org.

Pageant Practices for All

Thursday, December 20 Dress Rehearsal from 6:30 PM until 7:30 PM in the Church

Advent 2007

This beautiful season of anticipation calls us to prepare well for the coming of Christ – not only at Christmas but in our own hearts. There is something for everyone this Advent – so please be sure to visit our parish web site, read the bulletin, listen to our announcements and make some time for you this Advent season!

The holy season of Advent calls us to prepare well – not for the feast of Christmas – but for the presence of Christ in our hearts. Here are some of the beautiful traditions and changes you'll see beginning today.

The Advent Wreath

At all of our liturgies, we will bless, light and raise the Advent wreath. Listen carefully to the blessing and what it calls for from each of us. More than a symbol that is raised before us, may it be a reminder of a season of preparation, hope and transformation!

The Gospel of Matthew

We begin using the readings from Year A, with our focus on the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel community of Matthew wrote for Jewish Christians, among others. In these readings, we'll hear of our tremendous connection and link with our Jewish sisters and brothers.

Prelude

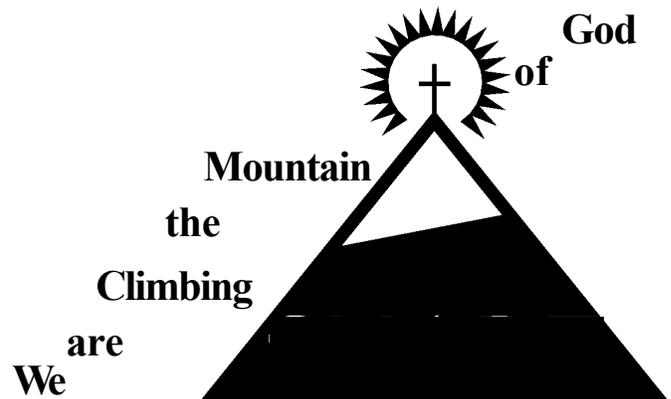
Our Music Ministry will begin our prayer before Mass with a prelude of music. This hymn, we hope, will focus and remind us of what this season is truly about!

Special Masses in Advent

“The Six” -

6 PM in the Church

This Advent –we're climbing the “Mountain of God”... getting higher and higher as Christmas approaches! What do we need to do to climb that mountain?



On **December 16**, we will look at how we need healing in our lives. Our liturgy will include a special healing service.

On **December 23** - a faith meditation! More to come...and hopefully you will too!

Something NEW this Christmas!

Young People's Mass

6 PM

Christmas Eve - December 24

This year, we invite all of our families and young people to a special Christmas Eve Mass at 6 PM in the Church.

This Mass will feature...

- a special Children's Liturgy of the Word led by our parish's fourth graders
- our wonderful Youth Choir
- some time for parents to catch some quiet time and enjoy Mass themselves
- a lighter crowd than our regular 4 PM Christmas Eve Liturgy

So...come and see...

and make our Young People's Mass at 6 PM a new Christmas Eve Tradition at OLL!

Youth Ministry

Come Spend Part of your Christmas Vacation with us...

Our Lady of Lourdes Youth Ministry Presents its

**First Annual Holiday Celebration Thursday, December 27
from 7 – 10pm in the OLL Parish Center / APR.**

All 7th – 12th graders are invited!

The night will include:

- o Great Dinner
- o Great Music
- o Great Friends...

and a whole lot more.



For questions or comments e-mail Dominic Armano at darmano@ollschool.org.
Hope to see you there!!

Christmas Parking

Don't forget that parishioners are able to use the Manetuck Elementary School parking lot on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This may save you some of the parking lot frustrations that the holidays can bring.

The entrance and exit to this lot is on the west side of the Rectory and a gate allows you to walk through our parking lot to the Church.

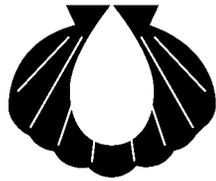
Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous:

Monday and Tuesday at
8 PM and Saturday at 2PM
and 7 PM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.

ALANON:

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



Baptisms

Kyla Cassandra Timpug

Christopher and Barbara

Julia R. Katsock

Richard and Denise

Amy Yurie Okano

Toshinobu and Carolina

Melissa Hiroko Okano

Toshinobu and Carolina

Ava Nicole Gabrell

Sean and Karen

Alexander Joseph Pitre

Gary and Angela

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

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.

Upcoming Marriages

Terrienne Procita and

Joseph Messina, both OLL

Mass Schedule

Monday, December 17

8:00 AM Antoinette Connolly

Tuesday, December 18

8:00 AM Helga Myers

Wednesday, December 19

8:00 AM Peter Reehil

Thursday, December 20

8:00 AM Carmela Cioffi Parasole

Friday, December 21

8:00 AM Theresa Reardon and
Carmine Bucherelli

Saturday, December 22

8:00 AM Jean Claire Stout, Concetta Petrucci, Louis Prudenti,
Giuseppe Ingoglia, Donald Magsamen, Margaret Nutter,
Michael Levens, Angelina Nassaur, GiGi DePasquale,
Emilio Rivera, Ana Rodriguez, Sean Corcacus

5:00 PM Edward F. White

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Sunday, December 23

8:00 AM Anthony Alfieri

Fr. Stan Chukwube

9:30 AM Joseph A. Santangelo

Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

11:00 AM Marion Squillanti

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

12:30 PM Edward F. White

Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Robert Johnson, Rick Munkwitz,
Evelyn Kenny, Carol Karniewicz, Salvatore Dellaria,
Mariana, Vincenzo & Grazia Pisano, Bernardo Pistone,
Giuseppe Salerno, Adam Ippolito

Fr. Bob Scheckenback



Rest In Peace

Margaret Nutter died on November 26 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was November 28. We extend our prayers to her husband Nelson, children and grandchildren.

Joseph Ferrara died on December 3 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was December 6. We extend our prayers to his daughter, Louise, son-in-law Rocky and grandchildren.

Adam Ippolito died on December 4 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was December 8. We extend our prayers to his wife Marie, children, and grandchildren.

Advent Day of Reconciliation

Monday, December 17

3 PM – 9 PM

Our parish priests will be available to hear individual confessions. The Advent season brings us promises of transformation and renewal. This beautiful sacrament is one way this can happen. Be open to the healing forgiveness of Reconciliation!

Day of Reconciliation Schedule

3:00 - 3:45 PM	<i>Fr. Ambrose</i>
3:45 - 4:30 PM	<i>Fr. Mike</i>
4:30 - 5:15 PM	<i>Fr. Bob</i>
5:15 - 6:00 PM	<i>Fr. Stan</i>
6:00 - 6:30 PM	<i>Fr. Mike</i>
6:30 - 7:00 PM	<i>Fr. Ambrose</i>
7:00 - 7:30 PM	<i>Fr. Bob</i>
7:30 - 8:15 PM	<i>Fr. Stan</i>
8:15 - 9:00 PM	<i>Fr. Ambrose/Fr. Bob</i>

Feast of the Holy Family Special Family Celebration

Sunday, December 30

9:30 AM Mass

Come and celebrate the feast of the Holy Family by joining with your family after the 9:30 AM Mass for some great Christmas cookies and hot chocolate in the Parish Center. All are welcome!

Solemnity of Mary

Holy Day of Obligation

Monday, December 31 – New Year’s Eve
5 PM (*vigil*)

Tuesday, January 1 - New Year’s Day
8 AM and 11 AM

Saint Bernard League

(Saint Bernards are known for bringing people to safety in hazardous weather conditions!)

If you’re in need of help when it snows, members of our parish community will come to your home and shovel you out! If you think you can use this help, call the Parish Office at 661.3224 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org today so we can begin to match people up now. PLEASE: Sign up again this year even if you signed up last year.

We also need Saint Bernards...

Can you and/or your family shovel, snow blow or clear out another family or two in need within our parish community? We’d love to have all families matched up before the first snow of the season (assuming it hasn’t happened yet!) If you can help with this call the Parish Office at 661.3224, x. 135 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

This is a great way to help those in need (do some tremendous community service!)

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Monday, December 24

4 PM – Church

Family Mass with music led by our Contemporary Music Group
Christmas Carols to begin at 3:30 PM.

4 PM – Cafeteria

The Mass “Down Under” with quiet music and an intimate atmosphere.

6 PM – Church

Our new Young People’s Mass which includes a special Children’s Liturgy of the Word and our Youth Choir.
(A great way to avoid the rush of the 4 PM Mass while still having a great family experience on Christmas Eve.)

8 PM – Church

Our most solemn liturgy...a manageable crowd...and a solemn spirit of prayer and worship.

11 PM- Mass at Night

This Mass, which ends around midnight, begins the actual celebration of Christmas. The liturgy includes a beautiful candle light service and music led by our Adult Choir.

Christmas Day

Tuesday, December 25

(all Masses in Church)

8 AM

9:30 AM

11 AM

12:30 PM

(There is no 6 PM Mass on Christmas Day)

Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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



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

baked beans
boxed potatoes
boxed rice
canned meat
cookies
crackers
hot chocolate
mayonnaise

Donations

Outreach has received donations in memory of *Adam Ippolito* from Doris and Doug Cameron and Mr. and Mrs. Ken O'Connor.

Tai Chi

In September, Outreach started offering Tai Chi classes each Wednesday from Noon-1PM in the Parish Center. The offering for Tai Chi is a free-will donation. There has been a consistent turn-out each week, and the response from participants has been positive.

Starting in January, we will be adding a meditation period to the end of each class. If you are interested in either the Tai Chi class or the meditation time-please join us. Meditation will start Wednesday, January 9 at approximately 1 PM. Meditation sessions will be approximately twenty minutes.

We ask that if you participate only in the meditation session-to please remove your shoes before entering the Parish Center and to enter quietly.

MICAH: A Campaign to End LI Poverty

(Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger)

Poverty in the United States (and on Long Island) is a wound in the soul of our country (and our region).

A Moral Call to Create Affordable Housing

Could you afford to purchase your own home on Long Island today? Have your children or parents moved off the Island because of the high cost of housing? Are you planning to leave LI because you can't afford to rent or own a home here? Do you agree with former Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney who said that **the LI economy will unravel if we don't fix our shortage of affordable housing within ten years?**

To learn more about the MICAH campaign, contact Dr. Richard Koubek at Catholic Charities at Koubek.richard@catholiccharities.cc

I am writing this article at the persistent urging of my 7yr. old son, Edward.

Each of the past four Sundays, as Edward grabbed a bulletin; he looked at me and asked: "Is the article in here?" Each week, I would just shake my head "no" in response to his question. For Edward, it is simple: write the story! For me, the adult-it is more complicated, far more complicated-because it is about capitalism and conscience. However, during Advent-even adults wait to be led by a child.

So, here goes...

Evelina is nine years old and for the last four years she has desperately wanted a Bratz Doll. On every occasion which would warrant a gift, Evelina has requested a Bratz Doll-Christmas, Birthdays, good report cards, improved report cards-you name it, Evelina could find a reason to request a Bratz Doll. Honestly, I was against Barbie Dolls-and only reluctantly gave in when Evelina received one from an Aunt who decided Evelina would suffer irrevocable trauma and need years of therapy if she didn't get a Barbie Doll. So Barbie it was-the Bratz Dolls-I will not concede! I don't like the image of women which the dolls portray-I don't like the clothes the dolls wear, the make-up, the hair-they seem very sexualized and don't reflect the image of a woman which I would want for Evelina.

Evelina, it turns out-has been stashing away her allowance and she has quite a sum at this point. When her initial request to purchase a "Taco Bell Dog" was denied, her next request: that's right several Bratz Dolls! After all, it is her money-and she can decide how to spend it! Well, an "educated consumer is our best customer" isn't that the saying? Hopefully, in the case of the Bratz Dolls-an educated consumer won't be a customer! In addition to the image the doll portrays-these are the reasons, as I explained to Evelina, why I would not purchase these dolls-and hopefully, Evelina will make the same decision.

Bratz Dolls are manufactured in China, imported into the United States and in some cases are sold at a 400% mark-up. That is a very large profit for some very large retail chain stores. The dolls are manufactured in factories in China which routinely pay the workers 17 cents a doll. The workers are forced to work 7 days, 94 ½ hours a week for a pay of approximately \$4.13 a day. Workers have set production goals; they must meet a certain quota before they can end their day. A sick day results in the loss of three days pay. If a doll breaks, while being manufactured, the worker must pay the factory the equivalent of 5 hours pay. The factory provides living accommodations-a dormitory which houses ten workers to a room. There is no shower or TV. The monthly cost for

the room is \$3.83. The factory also provides food-workers can buy one small meat dish and one small vegetable dish daily averaging 51 cents to \$1.02 a day. There is no health, injury or retirement insurance. These working conditions violate United States labor laws. They violate China's labor law also-but no one is looking and the dolls keep selling. Now they even have Baby Bratz and Bratz Pets.

I understand that Bratz Dolls aren't the only products sold in the United States manufactured under such dire circumstances. I know this firsthand, only too well. The clothing we wear, the food we eat, the cars we drive, the appliances we purchase-many, if not all, have international roots. I am passionate about justice and I do have a conscience. There is a wonderful letter which the U.S. Bishops wrote in 1986 titled: "Economic Justice for All-Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy." In this letter the Bishops call United States Catholics to be mindful of the poor, not only in the United States; but in developing countries as well. The bishops remind us that we have a responsibility to build a just world order with an emphasis on safeguarding human rights.

Do I really think the protest of one parent against a doll manufacturer in China will make a difference? Not really-but if I become aware of an injustice and do nothing about it-than, am I not as guilty as the perpetrator? And who is the victim in this story-after all, the Chinese are at least working and getting some money for their labor. Am I being unfair to Evelina?

I would like to tell you that Evelina picked up my cause and refused to spend her allowance on Bratz Dolls. I can't tell you that. All I know is, as of this writing, Evelina's money is still stashed safely away. My daughter has hopefully learned, on some level what it means to be part of a larger community and that our decisions do impact others. I hope if, I, as her mother can model this, maybe she will understand as she matures. She has yet to make a decision on how she will spend her money.

Edward is more passionate about this issue and did take the 'message' of the Bratz dolls to the girls in his class. He did not get the response he had hoped to hear-maybe it needs to come from the parents first. (For more information: The National Labor Committee: www.nlcnet.org)

*Mary McMahon, Director
Parish Social Ministry*

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:



Lorenzo Bacchi-*US Marines*
Bryan R. Dempsey-*US Marines*
Jeremy deRoxas-*US Air Force*
Frederick Wm. Ellis-*US Army*
James J. Ferrara-*US Marines*
John Finn-*US Army*
Christopher Florca-*US Marines*
Donnie Frank-*US Marines*
Armand J. LeComte-*US Marines*
Anthony Mannino-*US Marines*
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 Mallimo Family in gratitude for the safe return of their son from active duty. **Michael Mallimo** -*US Army* has returned to the United States safe and sound from his second tour of duty. Thank you, Michael, for your generous service to our country! The Mallimo Family would like to thank Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family for all of their prayers.

Update!



Walter Reed Army Medical Center officials want to remind those individuals who want to show their appreciation through mail to include packages, letters, and holiday cards addressed to ‘Any Wounded Soldier’ or ‘A Recovering American Soldier’ that Walter Reed cannot accept these packages.

In addition, the U.S. Postal Service is no longer accepting “Any Service Member” or “A Recovering American Soldier” letters or packages. Mail to “Any Service Member” that is deposited into a collection box will not be delivered.

Instead of sending an “Any Wounded Soldier” letter or package to Walter Reed, please consider making a donation to one of the more than 300 nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping our troops and their families listed on the “America Supports You” website, www.americasupportsyou.mil Other organizations that offer means of showing your support for our troops or assist wounded service members and their families include: <http://www.usocares.org/> <http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/tooursoldiers/> or <http://www.redcross.org>



Altar Society

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



Pastoral Care of Our 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.
- would like to receive the sacred anointing.

Pray for Our Sick

Please remember to keep in your thoughts and prayers ...

*Stacie Baltrusitis, Deacon Dick Barry, Benedict Bellotti, Pat Bonavita,
Thomas Brennan, Baby Drew Brust, Howard Campkin, Lynn Castellano,
Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Karen DellaVecchia, TJ Devlin,
Josephine DiBenedetto, Daniel V. DiMonda, Joann Fasano, Jason Fisher,
Samantha Hil, Wade Kromhout, Evelyn Lang, Richard Lang, Nancy Letsch,
Anthony Lombardo, Mike Lorento, Denise Mannino, Diego Marino,
Rosemarie Marmo, Charles Matushefske, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr.,
Joseph Menite, Bryan Monahan, Jimmy Murphy, Joseph Ortiz, Maria Pereira,
Mary Petersen, Arthur Petrino, Baby Conner Pietras, Joe Radosti,
Delphine Reynolds, Felix Rivera, Dorothy Schiavone, Derek Stahl, Linda Stasio,
Dorothy Sullivan, Loretta Vitale*

faith
was all he
needed



©LPI

Third Sunday of Advent

A patient slowly regains consciousness in the recovery room of a hospital after major surgery. The doctor stands over him, monitoring his vital signs, reassuring him that although the procedure was difficult, she was able to save his life. Although he didn't see, hear, or even feel the operation, he knows that he was in good hands with this doctor. His faith in her skills was all that he needed, and because of it, he will have a new outlook on life.

John the Baptist, the last prophet of the covenant of the Old Testament and the first martyr of the new covenant, sits in a prison cell, his fate already determined by King Herod. His one last request is for his own disciples to assure him that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah he had long been promising would arrive. Although this may be perceived as a bit of doubt on John's part, it is merely a request for the calming hand of Christ on his shoulder in his hour of need.

Though John was imprisoned, in his faith he was completely free. Such is the example that when we believe in Jesus Christ and the One who sent him, we receive salvation and freedom. Our conversion to faith is a free act as well and must be maintained to the end (CCC 160-161). This Advent season, examine your faith and the room for it in your heart. With faith, you will find that there is not much room for any other earthly desires. But then, what else would you need?

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Readings for the Week of December 16, 2007

Sunday: Is 35:1-6a, 10/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11
Monday: Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17
Tuesday: Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25
Wednesday: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25
Thursday: Is 7:10-14/Lk 1:26-38
Friday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45
Saturday: 1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56
Next Sunday: Is 7:10-14/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

Financial Summary

December 9, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 18,947.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (2,053.00)

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

School News

save the date...

Night at the Races

Our Lady of Lourdes School will present a Night at the Races on Saturday, January 19, 2008 at 7PM – 10PM. Races will be held in the cafeteria, child care will be available in the All-Purpose Room.

“ALL ARE WELCOME”

NOTE: OLL School Families-this is a Mandatory Fundraising Event.

details to follow...

“Special Snack Bags for the Troops!”

Students in grades Pre-K through 8th from Our Lady of Lourdes School, have collaborated with teacher, Lisa Kennedy and Project Homefront to supply “Goody Bags” to the American troops overseas.

The students were issued a gallon size bag to fill with easy to open items such as pop-top cans of tuna, individual size cereals, as well as granola bars, snacks and drinks that can be easily mixed with water; flavor mixes, instant coffee, tea, cocoa, etc. The students were so excited; they managed to fill over 200 bags and sent over several boxes to the troops.

In addition, each grade is making cards for Christmas to be sent anonymously to the troops. Project Homefront is a non-profit organization based in Staten Island, whose coordinators are mothers of soldiers.

Faith Means that God is with Us

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

If Christ was born into the world to redeem it, why doesn't our world look more redeemed? Why is our world still full of loneliness, anxiety, betrayals, sickness, poverty, violence, war, and death? What did Christ's birth into our world really change?

These aren't irreverent questions; they're the right questions. Only in struggling to answer them do we begin to understand more deeply the mystery of Christ. What is that mystery?

In the gospels, one of the angels who announces Jesus' birth, tells us: "They shall name him Emmanuel" (which means "God is with us.") What do those words mean?

Sometimes it's helpful to proceed by the via negativa, namely, by explaining what something doesn't mean. In this case, the fact that Christ is born into our world does not mean that those who believe in him will be spared the pain, loneliness, seasons of sickness, heartaches, betrayals, anxieties, fears, and humiliations that afflict everyone else. Faith offers no one an escape from pain. Moreover, believers, just like unbelievers, will suffer too the darkness of doubt, the painful fear that the heavens are empty. Faith in Christ doesn't remove any of the pains inherent within the human condition, including the pain of doubting God's existence. Faith promises no magic pass-cards.

What it does promise is that God will be with us so that we do not have to walk through loneliness, sickness, violence, anxiety, fear, and death alone. We have a hand to grasp, a love to embrace, a truth to cling to, and a power to sustain us (even through death itself). We walk in the same world as everyone else, but, like a young child holding on to her mother's hand as she walks into school for the first time, we are not alone, a trusted, sustaining, guiding love walks with us. God doesn't remove us from what can hurt us, but walks with us amidst it all.

But that explanation too can feel pretty empty on any given day. If God is walking beside us, hand in ours, why don't we feel that more really? Why does God often seem non-existent, not with us at all?

Because believers, like everyone else, are not exempt from the trial of faith, from the darkness of doubt, from those emotional and spiritual dark nights that can crush us, bring us to our knees, and can make us cry out in fear that God has abandoned us, as happened to Jesus on the cross.

Part of being human (and faith isn't some magic bullet immunizing us against the human condition) is the experience of God's seeming absence.

So how can we say that "God is with us" when mostly it feels like God isn't there for us? That's a complex question and a full answer would necessitate a discussion on why, in the nature of faith, God's reality is often felt more like an absence than a presence. But, without entering into a full-blown discussion on this, allow me to give just one perspective:

In the Jewish scriptures there's a famous incident where Moses asks God to see his face. God answers that this is impossible because nobody can see God's face and live. When Moses persists in his demand, God offers a compromise: He tells Moses that he will place him in a cleft in the rocks, put his hand over Moses's face, and then pass by, so that Moses will get to see his, God's, back, though never his face.

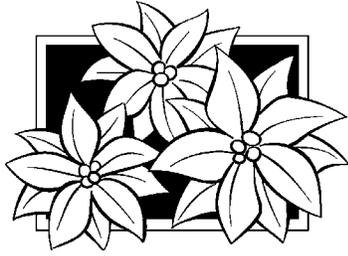
What's meant by this? Among other things, that we are wise not to be overly naive about the powerful, sacred, archetypal energies that flow through us. Even when something is beautiful and good, like sex for instance, it doesn't mean we don't have to treat with sacred caution. We're wise to accord things their proper respect, to keep our shoes off before the burning bush.

But there's a wonderful sub-text here too which can help explain why we so often think that God is absent in our lives. Generally we struggle to feel God in the present moment, to see God's face in the here and now. In the present, God often seems absent. Yet, when we turn around and look back in our lives, when we look back on our story, we more easily see how God has been there all along and how we have walked in a divine presence, protection, guidance, and love that were imperceptible at the time but are clear in retrospect. We see God more clearly in our past than in our present. We see God's back more than we see God's face.

This can be helpful in understanding how Christ is present to us, even when it doesn't always feel like it.

Faith doesn't promise us a ladder to crawl out of the pains of life, it promises a friend to walk with through those pains. Mostly though it's only when we look back in our lives that we see that this friend has always been there.

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.



Christmas Flower Offerings

Christmas Flower offerings received after December 9, will be published in subsequent bulletins.

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**.

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, December 17, at 12:30 PM in the Parish Center**.

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, December 18, in the Parish Center at 9 AM**.

Adult Faith Formation

mark your calendars for these upcoming events...

MOMS-Ministry of Mothers Sharing-an opportunity for women to get together to share and nurture each other through the journey of motherhood-beginning January 3.

Old Testament-this five week journey will bring us back to our heritage. Come to know more about our roots and traditions through learning, prayer and sharing-beginning January 8.

Directed Prayer Retreat-our third annual Directed Prayer Retreat to be held during Lent, from February 3 -9, 2008.

Catholic Daughters of America

The Golden Age Club meets every **Wednesday from 12:30 PM until 2 PM** in the **O'Connell Room at St. Joseph's Church, Babylon**. Seniors are invited to play cards or bingo and enjoy desserts and friendship with us.

Christmas Presepio

Come visit the traditional Neapolitan Nativity and enjoy some quiet Advent moments. This year's display is located in the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Valley Stream and contains thousands of figures, buildings and miniatures. Fr. Jerry Cestare, pastor invites everyone to share in this wonderful depiction of the true Gift of Christmas. The Presepio is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM - 9 PM and weekends after morning Masses until 8 PM.

Wanted:

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who have been commissioned by the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Good Samaritan Hospital is looking for you to bring Holy Communion to patients. The availability would be a day or any days you are available, according to your schedule.

If interested, please contact Sr. Mary Anna, director of Pastoral Care at 631.376.4103.

Harvest Houses

Harvest Houses, Residences for Well-Elders are affordable, gracious living alternatives offering seniors both privacy and companionship, security and quality of life. Every Harvest House is home for eight independent elders who want the fullness of living in a family atmosphere, the continuity of "a home away from home." An opening is now available in the Syosset and Floral Park residences. If you are interested in finding out more information or visiting one of our Harvest Houses, please contact Sister Jeanne A. Brendel, O.P., CSW, Executive Director at 516.496.9796.

Religion & Rock

Tune into "Religion & Rock" with Msgr. 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. Listen on Saturdays at 11 PM on *Sirius Satellite Radio, Channel 159, or the Catholic Channel*. This week's theme is: "**Consumerism/Shopping.**" You can visit us anytime to listen or download a show at www.religionandrock.com. For more information about our television shows go to www.TelecareTV.org.

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus was the Messiah that the prophets said would come. The blind could see. The lame could walk. The deaf could hear. The dead were raised to life. Jesus performed many miracles to show that he was the Messiah. He was the one sent to save the world from sin. John expected Jesus to save himself. But Jesus knew that he had to die, be buried, and rise again to save you and me from our sins.



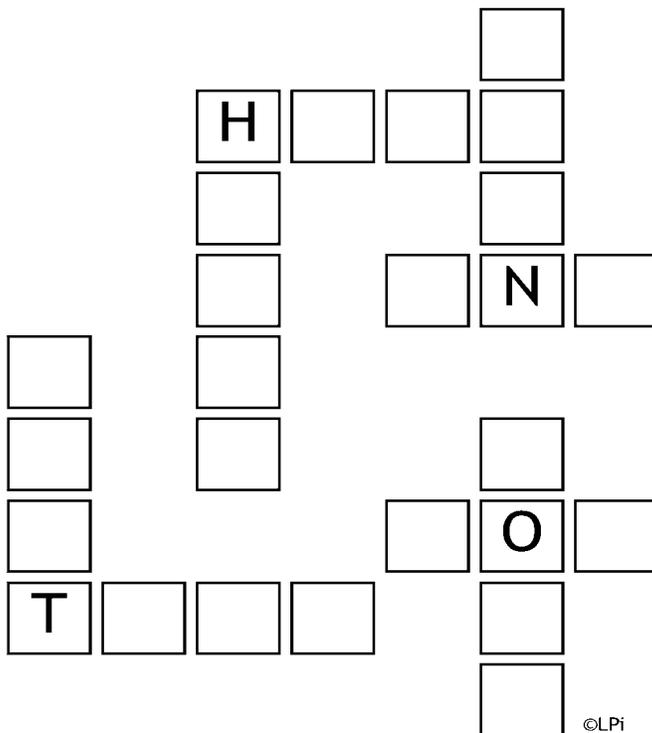
Mission for the Week

I will find ways to make things easier for the blind, lame, and deaf.

Puzzle

Fit this Gospel message into the empty squares:

Tell John what you have heard and seen.



Prayer



Lord,
thank you
for dying on the
cross for me.

Something to Draw



Draw a crippled girl dropping her crutches and walking to Jesus.