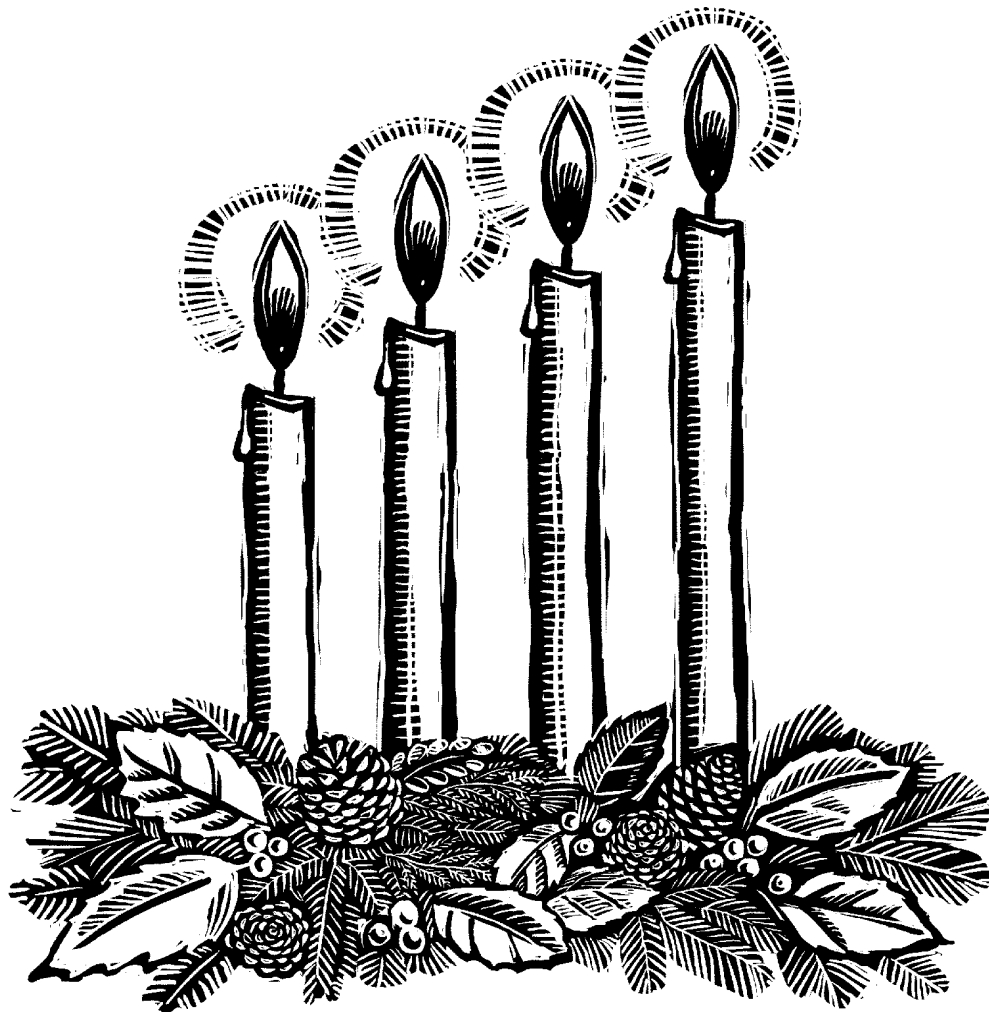


Our Lady of Lourdes • December 21, 2008

**“...and he will rule over the
house of Jacob forever,
*and of his kingdom there
will be no end.*”** Luke 1:31



Fourth Sunday in Advent



Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano

Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor



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: lkrol@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. John Asomugha

In Residence

Rev. Ambrose Cabildo

In Residence

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Tom Lucie

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Jennifer Gallagher

Childrens' 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

Stacie Baltrusitis

Lisa Cantalino

Sonia DaSilva

Nilo DeLeon

Jane Desthers

Jerry Esposito

Deacon Jack Meehan

John Muldoon

Bob Natale

Eileen Rega

Vita Scorgia

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Christine Volk

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.

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.

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



ADVENT

The Church gives us the beautiful season of Advent beginning on Sunday, November 30. This also marks the beginning of the new Liturgical Cycle. Get ready for a season of prayer, reflection and activity for you and your entire family!

“The Six” – Bringing LIGHT to the WORLD!

-Each week at “The Six,” we’ll look at the ways we can bring the Light of Christ to the world. Our liturgies will begin in darkness as we are reminded of the struggles of the world we live in and the light will grow as our prayers do throughout the Mass.

-This Advent and Christmas seasons our Six Committee is bringing Christ’s Light to the military by collecting supplies for a military base in Calverton, NY that will be sending care packages to a base in Iraq. One of the newly confirmed from the RCIA has been serving in Iraq and his wife is helping us to organize this effort. Beginning November 30 through the end of the Christmas season, we will be collecting any of the following items at “The Six” and at all of our Masses...*Prepaid Phone Cards + Body Wipes + Feminine Products + Chap Stick + Deodorant + Moisturizer + Foot Powder and Cream + Shampoo + Conditioner + Soap + Toothpaste + Q Tips + Nail Clippers + Gum + Beef Jerky + Oatmeal Packets + Instant Coffee + Healthy Snack Bars + Spray Water Bottles + Sports Equipment (soccer balls, etc.) + Instant Cameras + Socks + Air Mattresses + Pillows + Bed Linens*

These items will be collected throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons...so please remember our military service women and men as you carry out your Christmas shopping.

-Come and be a part of “The Six,” Sunday 6 PM Mass. All 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders and their families are invited to join “The Six.”

4th Sunday of Advent... Dec. 21... Grade 5

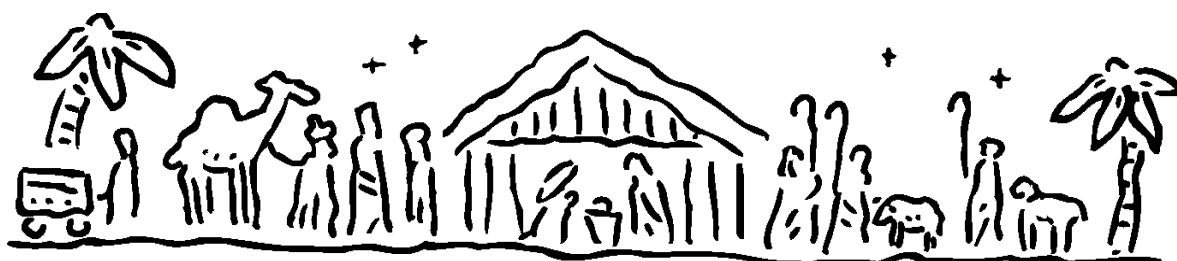
Advent Reconciliation

Tuesday, December 23 5 PM – 8 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!



Christmas



Our Lady of Lourdes Seventh Annual Family Christmas Pageant

*Monday, December 22
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.*

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

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous:

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

ALANON:

Each Wednesday at
10 AM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.
(Babysitters available)

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.



Rest In Peace

Robert K. Contacessa died on December 6 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was December 9. We extend our prayers to his wife, Mary Ellen, his children, grandchildren and entire family.

Mary Pazus died on December 5 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was December 9. We extend our prayers to her nephew, friends and family.

Catherine McDermott died on December 7 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was December 10. We extend our prayers to her son, friends and family.

Christ is the icon of the invisible God.

-Colossians 1:15

Looking at our Processional Cross

The icon Processional Cross offers all of us an opportunity to enrich our spiritual journey when experiencing the icon as a reflection of faith and Christian tradition. The icon can assist us in going beyond what can be seen with our physical eyes in to the realm of what could be experiencing the holy.

The icon is more than the personal meditation of an individual artist, but the fruit of many generations of believers uniting us as Christians. Icons are made according to age-old rules handed down from generation to generation. Icons are usually completed on wooden panels with images that are “frontal,” two-dimensional and the figure forms along with folds of clothing are usually outlined in black line. The icon of the Crucifixion does not reflect the reality of physical pain Jesus endured but reveals what led him to the crowds, giving his life for the other. The iconographer follows traditions of the past along with a personal prayer interaction during the process. It is important to note that the crown of thorns, although part of the crucifixion, was intentionally eliminated allowing us, the faithful, to place the crown when we are not “Christ-like.” This also applies to the wounds in the hands and the absence of the nails.

With each Good Friday, there is Easter Sunday, which is imaged in the yellow area behind the cross. The feet of Christ are without wounds, enabling him to move to His resurrection. The resurrection can be seen in its entirety on the other side of the processional cross. When the cross is carried in procession, the faithful will be able to focus on both sides when processed.

Icons are meant to have a spiritual place in our sacred liturgy and as does the liturgy itself, icons try to give us a glimpse of heaven. Icons may not immediately speak to our senses. They do not intend to excite, stir our emotions or stimulate our imagination. At first glance, they even seem somewhat rigid, lifeless, schematic and dull. Be prepared. They do not reveal themselves to us at first sight. It is only gradually, after a patient, prayerful presence, that they start “speaking to us, and as they speak more to our inner than to our outer senses, they speak to the heart that searches for God.

-Deacon John



Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, 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-Church

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 Carols to begin at 10:30 PM.

Christmas Day

Thursday, 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)

Remembering . . .

Monday, December 22

8:00 AM Michael Torina

Tuesday, December 23

8:00 AM Anthony Alfieri

Wednesday, December 24

8:00 AM Anthony Ferrante

Wednesday, December 24

Vigil of Christmas

4:00 PM Steven Perone
(Church) Fr. Bob Scheckenback

4:00 PM Salegna & Paladino Families
(cafeteria) Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

6:00 PM Lillian LaRocca
Fr. Mike Vetrano

8:00 PM John J. Goode, Sr. & Joan Goode
Fr. John Asomugha

11:00 PM Nettie & John Pizzella
Fr. Mike Vetrano

Thursday, December 25

Christmas Day

8:00 AM Robert D. Colin, Loretta Yankel
and Kay Sullo
Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

9:30 AM All Souls of the Bruno Family
Fr. John Asomugha

11:00 AM Ethel Isola
Fr. Mike Vetrano

12:30 PM Herbert Gothard Olsen
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Friday, December 26

8:00 AM Dec'd mbrs Monroe & Shaddock Families

Saturday, December 27

8:00 AM Charles Homann, Blessed Virgin Mary, Herta Bonet,
Anna D'Elío, Ellen Fowler, Caroline Gentile, Michael J. Piegare

5:00 PM Heartt/Guider Families
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Sunday, December 28

8:00 AM Joseph Zotto
Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

9:30 AM Carol Karniewicz
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM Joseph Rizzo
Fr. John Asomugha

12:30 PM Marietta Greco
Fr. Mike Vetrano

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Rick & Ginny Munkwitz, Chris Hansen,
William Kuhlwillm, Roland & Wayne Van Acker, Anna D'Elío,
Ellen Fowler, Gladys Weber, Erlinda Tripon, Catherine McDermott
Fr. Ambrose Cabildo



St. Benedict

Fourth in our series on the saints

Tuesday, January 6

7:30 - 9:30 PM

Parish Center

Presenter: S. Diane Liona, CSJ

“Listen with the ear of your heart...”

When I first heard this core message of Benedict’s Rule, I knew I had found a home. I discovered a way to balance an active ministry with a rhythm of prayer which would provide a balance in my life which was essential.

Through the years, I have come to marvel at this saint whose spirituality is infused with Scripture, sanity and a deep appreciation of the nature of work.

This evening of reflection will not only introduce us to the wisdom of St. Benedict, but will give us some practical ways to incorporate the Psalms into our everyday prayer, leading us to mindfulness and reverence for the gift of each moment.

Feast of the Holy Family

Special Family Celebration

Sunday, December 28

9:30 AM Mass

Come and celebrate the feast of the Holy Family by joining with your family after the 9:30 AM Mass in the Parish Center for some great Christmas cookies and hot chocolate! All families are invited to bring a picture of their family or be ready to have your picture taken at the breakfast!

Celebrating New Year’s

The Church gathers on December 31 and January 1 to ring in the New Year and to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary (*a holy day of obligation*).

We’ll celebrate this holy day on Wednesday, December 31 at 5 PM and

Thursday, January 1 at 8 AM and 11 A.M.

Please come and pray with us!

New “Liturgical” Year Resolution

How about committing to coming to Mass better prepared. We are happy to provide a special resource, “At Home with the Word” that provides the readings for every Sunday along with some important suggestions and ideas for how to live the Word out for the week ahead. If you’re interested, e-mail John Sureau (jsureau@ollchurch.org) or stop by the Parish Office. The suggested offering for the book is \$10.



Pastoral Council Appointed

Dear friends,

Just a few weeks ago, I wrote in the bulletin about the need for Pastoral Council members. I was gratified to receive more than twenty-five nominations for the eight open positions.

About half of these nominees were able to express their willingness to serve and our nominating committee made recommendations to me for a Council that would reflect the diversity of ages, genders, cultures, and service to our parish.

I am happy to report to you that the following members have accepted appointments to serve on our pastoral council.

Current members:

Deacon Jack Meehan, Vita Scorcia, Stacie Baltrusitis, Jane Desthers, Mary Steck

New Members joining the council:

Lisa Cantalino, Sonia DaSilva, Nilo DeLeon, Jerry Esposito, John Muldoon, Bob Natale, Eileen Rega, Christine Volk

Our new council will have its first meeting early in January. One of the most important tasks for this council will be to conduct a pastoral needs assessment of our parish community to help discover the most important directions for our community.

Fr. Mike



OLL Students Pray for Our Troops

During Advent, third graders from OLL school wrote to Specialist Danielle DiLapi who is serving in Afghanistan as a Medic. The Battalion she trained with will go to Afghanistan in February. However, they needed a Medic much sooner, so she was deployed alone less than a month ago.

Danielle is a proud graduate of Our Lady of Lourdes School and is also proud to be serving our country. Our prayers go out to Danielle and all others serving our country.

OLL School Night at the Races

“Night at the Races” will be held on Saturday, January 17. Doors open at 7 PM. Admission is \$10 and no pre-registration is necessary. Bring Your Friends! Come have a wonderful time and cheer on your favorite horse!

For more information, please contact Frank Antonawich at 587.7988.

Save the Date...

**Our Lady of Lourdes 25th Annual Duffers Classic
Monday, July 20, 2009**

Look for more information in future bulletins...

Pantry Needs

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

Parish Outreach

Office telephone:

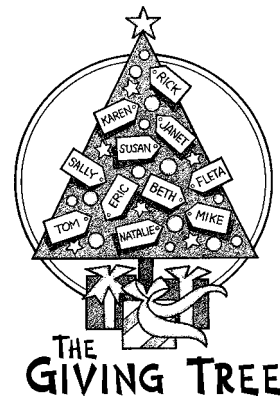
661-9262, option 4

Office hours:

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

The Giving Tree

Each ornament on our Parish Giving Tree is a gift tag that represents something needed by a family in our parish. Help us to meet these needs by taking a tag from our tree and returning a gift. Your gift will help you to think about the real meaning of Christmas and will help a needy family in a very concrete way. You may also make a financial gift to Parish Outreach and they will use it to purchase a gift or to help a family who needs financial support. Please remember to attach the tag on the unwrapped gift. The last day for gift collection is today - Sunday, December 21. Gift distribution will be tomorrow, Monday, December 22.

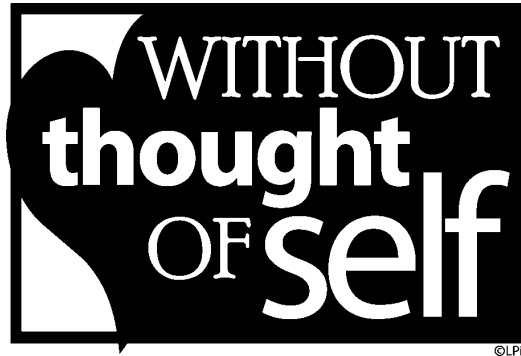


Outreach Memorial Donations

Parish Outreach has received the following donations:

- The Giuffré Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Charles Plumer* and *Denis Thompson*.
- A donation has been made to Outreach in gratitude for the successful surgery of *James Reilly*.
- Kathleen and Dan Smyth and Pat Heithaus have made a donation in memory of *Catherine McDermott*.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of a loved one, please call Mary McMahan, Director of Parish Social Ministry at 661.3224, option 4.



4th Sunday of Advent

In Mother Teresa's speech before the National Prayer Breakfast in 1994, she related a story of how she had been told of a starving Hindu family. Quickly, she gathered as much rice as she could spare from her orphanage and went to see the family. There were several children, their eyes "shining with hunger" as Mother Teresa put it. The children's mother left the house for a short time; when she returned, Mother Teresa wanted to know where she had gone. "They were hungry, too," she told her, referring to a neighboring Muslim family.

A mother is presented with an unexpected gift, and without thought of self immediately sets about to share it with the world. Gabriel has proclaimed that Mary not only is pregnant, but that she will give birth to the Savior of the world. Talk about unexpected gifts! We have a tendency to sometimes take this story matter-of-factly, but perhaps during this final week of Advent, we might take a few moments to quietly reflect on Mary and how she immediately knew and freely accepted her role in being part of God's greatest gift.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that Mary most perfectly embodies the definition of faith. From her humble acceptance of the angel Gabriel's news to her trust as her son-God's Son-was led to his death, reveals to us that a mother's faith and love can be perfect (CCC 148-149). In these last few days before Christmas, share in the joy of the season with your mother, even if it is only in her memory. If there has been a falling out, know that she has never stopped loving you; reach out to her, tell her you love her and that life begins today.

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Readings for the Week of December 21, 2008

Sunday:	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38
Monday:	1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56
Tuesday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66
Wednesday:	<i>Morning:</i> 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-79
Thursday:	<i>Vigil:</i> Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 <i>or</i> 1:18-25 <i>Midnight:</i> Is 9:1-6/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 <i>Dawn:</i> Is 62:11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20 <i>Day:</i> Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 <i>or</i> 1:1-5, 9-14
Friday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22
Saturday:	1 Jn 1:1-4/Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Next Sunday:	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 <i>or</i> Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/Col 3:12-21 <i>or</i> 3:12-17 <i>or</i> Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/Lk 2:22-40 <i>or</i> 2:22, 39-40

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 Sacrament of the Sick.



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.

**“When you give food to the poor, they call you a saint.
When you ask why the poor have no food, they call you a communist.”
– Dom Helder Camara, Brazilian Archbishop**

Ending Hunger - A Call to Action

MICAH*: An Interfaith Campaign to End Poverty on Long Island
(*Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger)

“Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.” *Micah, 6:8*

More and more of our neighbors are turning to soup kitchens and emergency food pantries for help, especially during the holiday season. One study estimated that the nation pays \$90 billion a year- that’s \$800 per household- to shoulder the effects of hunger. Hungry people have more health problems, are more likely to be undereducated and are less productive at work. One in six children is undernourished, which affects health, behavior, school performance and brain development. Hungry children are more likely to be poor as adults than those who are not. What do we do about this?

Communities of faith on Long Island have a rich history of caring for the poor and the hungry. As they have the experience of operating the majority of food pantries and soup kitchens, we need them now, to push for policy reforms aimed at ending hunger. One in every 10 U.S. households does not have regular and reliable access to nutritious food. Because more people are requesting help than ever before here on Long Island, MICAH is focusing part of its advocacy efforts in getting more food to pantries and soup kitchens rather than wasting it- and not just at the holidays, but all year-round.

The strategy for reducing hunger shows signs of shifting. Hunger is linked to poverty and the lack of affordable housing and health care. When organized to put more emphasis on public advocacy efforts that address the root causes of hunger, the faith community can be a powerful voice for those who don’t have a voice. For example, hand-written letters to government officials are viewed as one of the most effective public advocacy tactics.

Just imagine - one hand-written letter represents 100 people. What if just 10 people in your congregation wrote letters to their town supervisor or town board asking them to create a plan that would offer more housing options that people can afford? Those ten letters, would represent 100,000 people. This is one way of exerting pressure on the powers-that-be, to listen and make positive changes. And this is one way we can all ask for structural change that will help to end the cycle of hunger and homelessness that exist in our communities.

To learn more about the MICAH campaign, contact Rev. Thomas Goodhue at the LI Council of Churches (licchemp@aol.com) or LICC Advocacy Director Neelofer Chaudry (liccmicah@aol.com)

Pray for Our Sick

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

Connie Altadonna, Lucas Anderson, Susan Aviza, Deacon Dick Barry, Deacon Steve Behar, Claire Beierle, Nicholas Buscemi, Jr., Howard Campkin, Michael Ciotkosz, Regina Cranor, Karen DellaVecchia, Josephine DiBenedetto, Janet Eifler, James, Jr. & Julia Florio (infants), Susan Gigante, Brian Hinkelman, Lili Hinkelman, Kathleen Kerrigan, Nancy Letsch, Kara Lobasso, Baby Josephine Mahan, Vicky Massaro, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., David McCarthy, Eleanor McGee, Dorothy Meloni, Brenden Muldoon, Frances Parine, Arthur Petrino, Joanne Popper, Joe Radosti, James Reilly, Patricia Salimbene, Patricia Santangelo, Dorothy Shiavone, Joe Shields, Gloria Shukal, Derek Stahl, Joseph Sullivan Diana Marie Taveras, Charlie Tibbetts, Baby John Tramazzo, Jean Virgilio, Pat Wallace

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:

Bryan R. Dempsey-US Marines

Danielle DiLapi-US Army

James J. Ferrara-US Marines

Thomas W. Ferrara -US Air Force

John Finn-US Army

Christopher Florca-US Marines

Donnie Frank-US Marines

Armand J. LeComte-US Marines

Michael Mallimo- US Army

Anthony Mannino-US Marines

Trent Narra-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.

Searching for Bethlehem in the Soul

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Nearly twenty years ago, the renowned educator, Allan Bloom, wrote a very provocative book entitled, *The Closing of the American Mind*. As its title suggests, this isn't a book that flatters contemporary culture. Part of our mind is darkening, he suggests. Our sophistication is making us smarter but less wise. Something inside of us is narrowing. What? What's narrowing inside of us? How are our minds closing?

His basic idea can be captured in one image, this autobiographical piece:

When he was a young, undergraduate student in University, one of his professors walked into class on the first day and said this to the students: "You come here from your parochial backgrounds, full of your childish beliefs; well, I am going to bathe you in the great truths and set you free!"

Bloom wasn't impressed. He remarks that the professor reminded him of a little boy who had solemnly informed him at age seven that there was no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. However, Bloom adds, he wasn't bathing me in any great truths, just showing off, like the professor. But still the lesson wasn't lost on him. From this, Bloom resolved to teach in the opposite way. He would, on the first day of his classes, walk into the lecture room, look at his young students, and begin his class in words to this effect: "You come here with a lot of experience, already having tasted life, having been to a lot of places, and seen a lot of things, so I'm going to try to teach you how to believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny again - then maybe you'll have a chance to be happy!"

This invitation, to learn how to believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny again, is one of the many challenges of Christmas. And the challenge is not so much to come back to the innocence of a child (something we could never do, even if we tried) but to see the knowledge and maturity that we've gained from all our years of learning and experience not as an end but as a stage, a necessary one, on the journey to a still deeper place, wisdom, fuller maturity.

What that means is that it is not just important to learn and become sophisticated, it is equally important to eventually become post-sophisticated; it is not just important to grow in experience and shed naivete, it is equally important to eventually find a certain "second naivete"; and it is not just a sign of intelligence and maturity to stop believing in Santa and the Easter Bunny, it is a sign of even more intelligence and deeper maturity to start believing in them again.

An old philosophy professor of mine used to express this in a series of adages: If you ask a naive child, if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say yes. If you ask a bright child if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say no. But if you ask even a brighter child if she believes in Santa and the Easter Bunny, she will say yes, for a deeper reason.

Almost everything about Christmas, from its deep real meaning to the piety and even (ironically) the commercialism we surround it with, invites us to be that third child.

But that's not easy. To be an adult is precisely to be experienced, complex, wounded. To be an adult is to have lost one's innocence. None of us, unless we die very young, carries the dignity of our person and of our baptism unstained through life. We fall, we compromise, we sin, we get hurt, we hurt others, and mostly we grow ever more pathologically complex, with layer after layer of emotional and intellectual complexity separating us from the little girl and little boy who once waited for Christmas in innocence and joyful anticipation. And that can be painful.

Sometimes, if we're sensitive, the innocence of children can be like the stab of a knife to the soul, making us feel as if we've fallen from ourselves. But, in the end, that's an unhealthy over-idealization, the false nostalgia of J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. We're not meant to be children forever and innocence will always be lost.

Sometimes, more positively, we get to experience our old innocence and youthful wonder vicariously in the eyes of our own children, in their joyful anticipation and gleeful celebration of Christmas. Their belief in Santa and the wonder in their eyes as they look at the baby-Jesus in the crib help us find a certain softness inside again; not at the same place where we once felt things when we were children and still believed in Santa (because that would only bring the painful stab of nostalgia) but at a new place, a place beyond where we defined ourselves as grown-up (because that's the place where wisdom is born).

That's also the place where Jesus is born. That's Bethlehem in the soul.

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.

Financial Summary

December 14, 2008

Weekly Collection	\$ 21,378.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 19,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ 2,378.00

The estimated weekly collection needed to maintain and operate our parish buildings, ministries, programs and salaries is \$19,000.

Did you notice our new budget amount- \$19,000 vs. \$21,000 (last year)? This reflects the difficult economic times and our attempt to adjust our budget to meet that.

CMA Update

Our Lady of Lourdes would like to thank all those who have made a sacrifice by making a gift to the *2008 Catholic Ministries Appeal*. We appreciate your generosity and thank you very much for your contribution.

One of our goals is to have every family participate in this Appeal by responding with a YES. We are hopeful that every family in our parish and diocese has responded to this call for sacrifice. Our goal has been based on every family making an equal sacrifice, not an equal gift. Look at what God has given to you and your family and consider the gift you can give to help those in need here on Long Island. Only you can decide what that gift will be.

If you have not yet responded, please consider what you can do to the best of your ability to help our parish reach those in need. If you have not had an opportunity to make a gift to the Appeal or have been waiting to make a pledge, please do so now. Your sacrifice will help us towards reaching our parish goal.

Mass Attendance

Beginning with this new liturgical cycle, we will publish Mass attendance figures for each of our Sunday liturgies. In the same way that we pay attention to the amount of money donated to the support of our parish, let's now pay closer attention to the amount of people praying with us each week. May this be a good awareness raiser for our parish community and for each one of us!

December 14, 2008

5 PM	423
8 AM	237
9:30 AM	427
11 AM	374
12:30 PM	271
"The Six"	287
Total	2019

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.

The Beginning Experience

The "Beginning Experience" is help for the heartache of divorce, separation and widowhood. Come experience a weekend away for a lifetime of change. The next weekend is February 20 through 22, 2009. For information and reservations, please call Carmen at 516.739.0973.

Holy Innocents Parish

Attention former parishioners of Holy Innocents Parish, Brooklyn!

We will begin celebrating our 100th Anniversary in 2009. We are seeking former parishioners and graduates of the parish/school. We'd love to see you at the celebrations which are being planned - a Mass in the Latin rite in the Spring and future parties. We'd love your assistance as a volunteer or donor. To be on the contact list or for further information, please call Louise Perrotta, class '66 at 631.412.3831 or Holy Innocents at 279 E 17th Street, Brooklyn

Dominican Village

Please join us for an Open House on Saturday, January 10, 2009 from 1 PM until 3 PM. Dominican Village is an independent retirement community that offers assisted living and respite care, outstanding programs, all-inclusive services and bountiful amenities. For more information, or to schedule a tour at your convenience, call 631.842.6091.

Religion & Rock

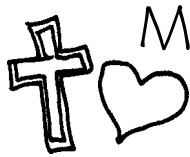
Tune into "Religion & Rock" with Msgr. Jim Vlaun on Sunday from 7 AM to 8 AM on WBAB 102.3 FM or 95.3 on the East End of Long Island. The show is also available on Sirius Radio, Channel 159 at 11 PM on Saturday.

Next Sunday's theme is "**Christmas Special.**" Don't miss it!

To listen online or receive more information regarding "Religion & Rock" go to www.religionandrock.com. Don't forget to tune into TELECARE, Cablevision 29 or Verizon FIOS 271 for the Best in Catholic Television!

Sharing the Gospel

Think of the people you trust. These are people you can count on, no matter what happens. Both Mary and Elizabeth were amazed to learn that they were pregnant. God had surprised each of them with a special miracle - a baby. God trusted them both to take care of their babies. Mary and Elizabeth trusted God to help them. You can trust God, too.



Mission for the Week

Name three reasons you can always trust God.

Puzzle

Find the matching shadow.



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Prayer



God,
help me to trust
you like Mary and
Elizabeth did.

Something to Draw



Draw a picture of
three people you
trust.