

OUR LADY OF LOURDES • THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT • DECEMBER 13, 2009

**"WHOEVER HAS
TWO COATS ...**



LUKE 3:11

**SHOULD SHARE
WITH THE PERSON
WHO HAS NONE."**



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.

Our Lady of Lourdes

*455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795*

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

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.

Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor

Rev. Patsy Amabile
Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback
Associate Pastor

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

Allegra D'Alo

Youth Minister/Social Action

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

Robin Reynolds-Brennan

Coordinator of Worship

Vita Scorcio

Ministry Spiritual Director

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 Scorcio

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Christine Volk

Parish Staff

Barbara Catuosco

Religious Education Office

Mary Anne Lettieri

Parish Office

Debbie Meyer

Bulletin Editor/Parish Office

Rosemary Multer

School Office

Rex Muro

Organist

Rita Spera

Religious Education Office

Lori Walsh

Parish Office



3rd Sunday
in Advent

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, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

9:30 AM - 3 PM

S.A.G.E.

661.3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Welcome...

to Our Lady of Lourdes!

We are so happy to welcome everyone who has come to worship with us today! Whether you have come a long distance or you live locally, we are glad that you have decided to spend some time with us as we worship our Lord together. Please know that your presence today is a blessing to our parish family.

Would you like to know more about our parish family?

All are welcome at Our Lady of Lourdes and we do our best to reach out to everyone.

If you would like more information about our parish or if you would like one of our team to be in touch with you, please fill this form out and place it in any collection or offering basket, mail it to us, or send an email to parishoffice@ollchurch.org

Welcome...

to Our Lady of Lourdes!



I would like information about:

Religious Education of my Children Becoming a Catholic or Adult Confirmation
 Marriage or Annulment / Remarriage Spiritual Direction or Counseling
 Our Parish Catholic School Adult Education Senior Services
 Joining the Parish Baptizing my Children Other _____

I would prefer to be contacted by:

Phone at: _____ Email at: _____

Mail at: _____

Your Name: _____

Advent '09

"I will be a candle in the darkness."

Come and be a part of "THE SIX"...

Sunday, 6 PM Mass

All 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Graders and their families are invited to please join "THE SIX" with your grade...



Grade 6 - 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 13

Prepare to be challenged to live your life in a different way!

Grade 5 - 4th Sunday of Advent, December 20

Discover the unexpected ways of God!

Come and be a lector, greeter, participate in the Presentation of the Gifts, lighting the Advent Wreath, and more...

We ask that you please bring an "un-food" item such as soap, shampoo, kleenex, paper towels, dawn, etc for our OLL Pantry.

Adult Faith Formation

Monday Mornings in Advent

Fr. Pat Amabile - Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Come to 8 AM Mass on Mondays in Advent. You will be able to pray the Rosary after Mass or just take some time for your own prayer. At 9 AM, we will gather in the Parish Center for coffee, rolls and a talk, with some time for discussion and reflection. *(If you can't make Mass, please join us at 9 AM.)*

Finding My Way to Bethlehem

An Advent Evening of Reflection

Fr. Pat Amabile

Wednesday, December 16

7:30 PM

Parish Center

During Advent, we journey as did Mary and Joseph. We bring the *joys* of preparing for Christ's coming, the *love* for one another along the way, the *peace* that waiting holds for us, and the *hope* that brings us beyond ourselves!

There is a \$5 fee for each session. No fee is required for those who have paid the Religious Education Family Fee or Our Lady of Lourdes School tuition. Registration is necessary and helpful. This will enable us to have enough reading material and refreshments for all those attending. To register, please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440, option 3 or email to religioused@ollchurch.org.



El Salvador 2009

When my daughter and I heard about El Salvador, we knew it was something we really wanted to do. We already had a sponsored child in Kenya who we exchange letters with, but actually going to a country and visiting the poor really sounded intriguing. Both my daughter and I have never left the country, actually we've barely been off the East Coast. This was an adventure, I have to admit.

All of my fears dissipated once we were greeted by Henry from the CFCA. He was cheerful, helpful and put everyone at ease. Henry and his crew did a great job driving us around, feeding us, taking pictures and always providing water bottles for us. They did this always with a smile. There are lots of stories that I wish to tell and I know you will hear many of them, but this one is actually about something that happened after the trip.

One day after we returned as I was putting something away in my daughter's room I noticed a piece of paper on her shelf off to the side. It just seemed out of place so I picked it up and I will now share with you what was written on it, with her permission. It was a list. A list she wrote on the flight home. What makes it so special is that she wrote this list for herself, not ever planning on showing anyone. I knew the trip had made an impression on her as it did me as well, but to see her thoughts and determination on paper was an affirmation of how important experiences like this are to young minds. We are grateful to have the opportunity to share this with you.

The List

1. I must always pray and think of all the people
2. Keep writing to Precious and Hugo – our sponsored children
3. Stay in touch with Jose and Su- our translators in El Salvador
4. Don't go back to "normal"
5. Never forget El Salvador
6. Get the Rosetta Stone and learn Spanish
7. Don't get sucked into teenage nonsense
8. Get a job and use most of my money to help Hugo and Precious
9. Always care
10. Don't waste food or money
11. Continue to be what this trip made me
12. Learn LaBamba & buy it on iTunes
13. Once again never forget
14. Change the World
15. Stay in touch with my El Salvador Family from OLL
16. Make a mural of El Salvador in my room

As you can see some things are more serious than others, but it is all good. Unfortunately because of family obligations we most likely will not be able to go again, but we do consider ourselves fortunate to have had the opportunity this year. But it doesn't end here. As you can see by her list a part of her has changed. She is more aware of others and their needs. When people ask "Why El Salvador"? I say, "why not, it's a good place to start".

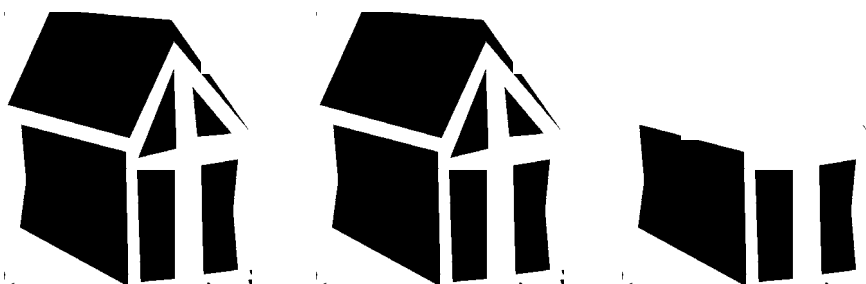
-Lori Gargaro

Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Awareness Trip

As many of you know, this past July, a team of 28 OLL parishioners traveled to El Salvador to pray and work with the communities of Mogotes and Tacuba. It is in keeping with Catholic Social teaching that we help others and share our faith with Catholics everywhere. With the help of the parishioners here at home, the El Salvador Team has been raising money through our CASA project to build homes for those belonging to our sister parishes. Through the support of Our Lady of Lourdes, our young people have been able to experience another culture and help people in need. Thank you OLL!

OLL CASA Project

Look What You Have Done!

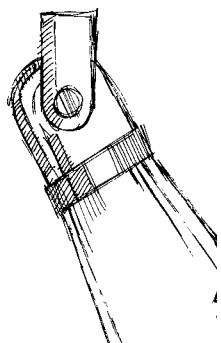


Through your generous donations we have received **\$4,365** so far. With the amount collected, we have been able to fund the building of two complete houses and we are well on our way to completing a third house!

Keep up the good work. Through your donations to the OLL Casa Project we will be able to continue to build homes for those belonging to our sister parishes.

Fr. Bob Unplugged

“Fr. Bob Unplugged” will take place on **Thursday, December 17 at 7 PM in the Parish Center**. If you ever had a question about the Church, about God or about Fr. Bob’s favorite food, now is the time to ask! All questions are anonymous and all questions will be answered! Come grab a snack and hang with your friends, too.



Youth Spotlight!

Our Lady of Lourdes Youth Program now has a FACEBOOK! Friend Bernie Soubirous and join the OLL Youth group and stay in the loop about all of the teen events that are happening at OLL. Awesome things are coming up so you don’t want to miss out.

Outreach Donations

November Donations

Outreach has received a donation from Frank and Paula Edwards in Thanksgiving for *Petey, Franklin and Lesley*.

Frances Hodgkins has made a donation to Outreach in memory of her late husband, *John*.

Lorraine and Bob Petito have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Maureen Darrell*, "Happy Birthday in Heaven."

Phyllis Diesso has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Charles Diesso*.

Mr. and Mrs. John Ninivaggi have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Hawkins*.

Outreach has received a donation from Angela and Francis Franzaone in memory of the *deceased members of the Franzanone and Carola Families*.

Outreach has received a donation in memory of *William Knoblick* from his daughter.

The McCormack Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Thomas Walsh and Thomas Walsh Jr.*

Marie LeConte has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *John and Mary Lynch*.

Outreach has received a donation in memory of *Elizabeth Durante*.

Jack and Celeste Meehan have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Firth*.

Regina Mirabella has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Firth*.

The Herringer Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Firth*.

Ken and Marcy Chapuisat have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Firth*.

Kenneth Andexer has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Firth*.

Linda and Jill Uher have made a donation to Outreach in memory of their grandmother, *Valerie Moscarelli*.

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

Parish Outreach

Office telephone:

661-9262, option 4

Office hours:

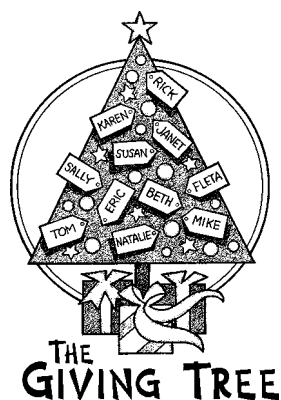
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

9:30 AM - 3 PM

Pantry Needs



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



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 gift.

Who is Better Than You? *No One!*

When the doors to the pantry opened at the start of November, the shelves were bare. In response to our plea, this community stepped forward and, today, as I write, the pantry is filled to overflowing. We have been blessed by so many acts of kindness and so much generosity from this Parish Family that I am going to make an unprecedented request: **STOP!!! NO MORE FOOD, PLEASE!** The pantry is bursting, the stage in the Parish Center is stacked with crates of food and we are confident that we will be able to meet the needs throughout December and January. On behalf of all the families and individuals we assist, a sincere **Thank You**.

Thanksgiving Distribution was incredible! To all who donated food, to all who assisted in the sorting and set-up on Saturday and Sunday; to the many people who helped load cars during the distribution-**Thank You**.

The number of people you assisted is staggering: 465 families.

The breakout of the numbers: 590 adults, 861 children, 70 seniors-a total of 1,521 people!

-Mary McMahon



Our Lady of Lourdes Eighth Annual Family Christmas Pageant

Tuesday, 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.*

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

Grades 4 through 6

Grades 7 through 12

Angels and Shepherds

Three Kings and the Royal Servants; and Dancers

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 Practice for All

Saturday, December 19 Dress Rehearsal at 11 AM in the Church

Mass for Bereaved Parents
Saturday, December 19
OLL Church – 10:00 AM



The holidays are often times of great celebration. But, for many, particularly those who have lost a child, the holidays are painfully hard. They are a reminder of our losses and a reminder of how our lives are perhaps a little less full. Whether you have lost a child in childhood or adulthood, to stillbirth or miscarriage, this Mass will be celebrated to bring you God's peace and consolation.

We invite all who have lost a child to come and gather together for this special Mass on **Saturday, December 19 at 10 AM**. Mass will be followed by refreshments. Please feel free to invite family or friends. For more information, or to let us know you will be able to attend, please call the Parish Office at 661.3224.

Let's pray that through prayer and coming together, the challenges of the holidays can become a little lighter and that we may be strengthened by God's love and presence.

Did you notice The Giving PODS?

Our thanks goes to Terry Lacher , manager for PODS on Long Island, for donating the use of a POD to our Outreach Office for the Christmas Season.

The POD will be used to store your generous gifts and contributions until they can be distributed at Christmas. Terry has also offered a discount on a POD rental for any OLL parishioner! Contact the Outreach Office for details.



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.

(Free babysitting available)



Rest In Peace

Mary Tripi died on November 28 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 2. We extend our prayers to her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and entire family.

Deborah Quillan died on November 27 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 2. We extend our prayers to her parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, and entire family.

John Szczecina died on December 1 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 4. We extend our prayers to his wife, Cecilia, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and entire family.

Virginia Trimarchi died on December 2 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 5. We extend our prayers to her children, grandchildren, and entire family.

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.

Remembering . . .

Monday, December 14

St. John of the Cross, priest & doctor

8:00 AM LaRocca & Sweeney Families

Tuesday, December 15

8:00 AM Michael Pompilio

Wednesday, December 16

8:00 AM Jean Celluffo & John Lodespoto

Thursday, December 17

8:00 AM Frank Petrone

Friday, December 18

8:00 AM Muriel V. Olsen

Saturday, December 19

8:00 AM Dorothy Downs, Peter Reehil,
Alexander Longo, Loreto Longo,
Mary Pazus, Peter Schreiner,
Guiseppe Ingoglia, Alberta Firth-Hawkins,
Carmine Maiocco

5:00 PM Steven Perone
Rev. Pat Amabile

Sunday, December 20

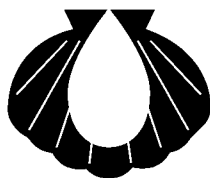
8:00 AM Ryan Schemering & Walter Fox
Rev. Mike Vetrano

9:30 AM Loreto & Benedetto Fantauzzi
Rev. Ambrose Cabildo

11:00 AM William Kuhlwilm
Rev. Pat Amabile

12:30 PM Carmella Parasole
Rev. Bob Scheckenback

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Fr. Bill Shean, Mary Occhiuzzo,
Helen & Bob Tryon, Virginia Feliciano, Marilyn Sauers,
John Timmer, William Kruger, Phillip Charron,
Lisa Cavalluzzo, Michael Pagnotta
Rev. Bob Scheckenback



Baptisms

Tessa Joy Lamirata
Michael and Jennifer
Jayden Vidal Assoon
Vidal and Elizabeth
Kayla Elizabeth Ernano
Greg and Geannine
Dominic Galatro
Joseph and Marlena
Daniel Ryan Murphy
Christian and Tara



3rd Sunday of Advent

Pretty practical advice from John the Baptist in this week's Gospel: if you have two cloaks, share one; if you have food, do the same; be honest, don't cheat; don't lie about others.

Practical advice is the kind of thing elders would dole out to children and grandchildren. Be polite; wait your turn; say "thank you"; wash your hands before meals; take a walk; have regular check-ups. You know the routine.

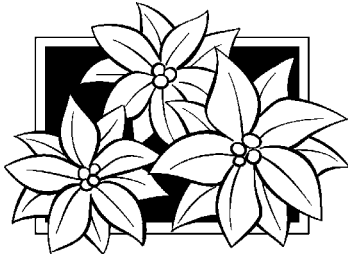
While the simple practical advice of our elders was meant to situate us in a wholesome life that was respectful of self and others, the practical advice of John the Baptist has a great end in mind. The actions he promotes are directed toward the coming kingdom of God. John's vision takes in the whole world and extends beyond his moment in time. He is foreseeing a day when God's justice will reign supreme. He is asking his listeners to begin now to make that justice happen.

The kind things we do at this time of year are to be more than simple acts of charity. Donating food, bringing gifts for the poor, contributing to agencies that help those in need are all good things. But if we see our actions for what they can be—giving from what has been given to us to the many who have less—we then begin to understand our place in the kingdom of God. If we have more than someone else, it is always incumbent on us to share. That is the practical advice that John lays out for his listeners as preparation for the coming of the Messiah. And just to make it clear, John adds that this Messiah is coming with his winnowing fan to separate wheat from chaff. God's justice will not be denied.

2009 Liturgical Publications Inc

Readings for the Week of December 13, 2009

Sunday:	Zep 3:14-18a/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18
Monday:	Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Mt 21:23-27
Tuesday:	Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Mt 21:28-32
Wednesday:	Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25/Lk 7:18b-23
Thursday:	Gn 49:2, 8-10/Mt 1:1-17
Friday:	Jer 23:5-8/Mt 1:18-25
Saturday:	Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Lk 1:5-25
Next Sunday:	Mi 5:1-4a/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45



Christmas Flower Offerings

Christmas Flower offerings received by **Sunday, December 13** will be published in the Christmas bulletin. Offerings received after that date, will be published in subsequent bulletins.

Men's Group

An Invitation to all men from OLL and beyond...

We invite all men of the parish to meet for prayer and reflection after 8 AM Mass on **Thursday, December 17, in the Parish Center**. We meet once a month to read and discuss the Scriptures for the following Sunday. Come with your ideas and suggestions. We'll gather for conversation and fellowship. Join us in this pioneering experience for men. Call Jack Fitzgerald at 587.5548 for more information.

Save the date....

Advent Day of Reconciliation

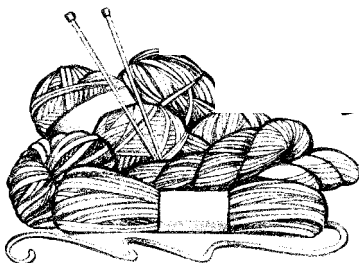
Monday, December 21

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!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Bring your prayer and creativity together in a gift of love.



Join us...

Wednesday, December 16 from 9:30 AM until 11:30 AM in the Parish Center. All you need to bring is scrap yarn, knitting needles or crochet hooks (patterns and instructions will be given to you) and your gifts of love and prayer.

To register or for more information, please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440, option #3 during office hours (9 AM - 12 Noon and 1 PM - 5 PM.)

Financial Summary

December 6, 2009

Weekly Collection	\$ 21,976.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 19,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ 2,976.00

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

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*
Christopher Florca-*US Marines*
Michael Mallimo- *US Army*
Anthony Mannino-*US Marines*
Peter Provenzano-*US Army*
Frank Sliva-*US Army*

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

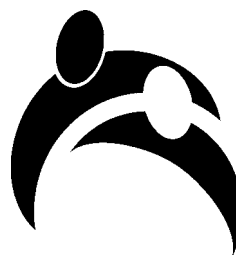
Altar Society

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.

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.



Pray for Our Sick

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

*Roy Anderson, Susan Aviza, Matthew Badamo, Deacon Dick Barry, Ben Bellotti,
Nicholas Buscemi, Jr., Veronica Byrne, Howard Campkin, Nicholas Cibelli,
Michael Ciotkosz, Regina Cranor, Jeanne DellaRagione, Pat DeRosa, Ann Donlon,
Marge Flem, Ed Hawkins, Edward Herger, Brian Hinkelman, Lili Hinkelman,
Mary Kaval, Veronica Kenny, Kathleen Kerrigan, Joseph Lehmann, Kara Lobasso,
Vicky Massaro, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Dorothy Meloni, Rick Mirabella,
Brenden Muldoon, Evelyn Nonnon, John O'Brien, Aiden Pinto-Hawkins, Arthur Petrino,
Joanne Popper, Laura Prichard, Joe Radosti, Frank Raimo, Carol Randazzo-Hopkins,
Michael Savino, Ann Marie Schiraldi, Jayna Schmidt, Dorothy Shiavone, Joe Shields,
Albina Sipplak, Derek Stahl, Mary Clair Stephen, Stephen Straub, Sr.,
Baby John Tramazzo, Nancy Turano, Vera Vieni, Pat Wallace, Flo Worysz*

The God Who is Revealed in Christmas

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Christmas is God's answer to human longing, God's response to the centuries of prayers that lay hidden in our groaning, our sighs, our frustrations, and our religious efforts, each of them a plea, mostly silent, for a divine intervention, all of them asking God to come and rid the world of injustice and our hearts of loneliness and heartache.

But God's answer didn't exactly meet our expectations even as it surpassed them. What was born with Jesus' birth and what still lies seemingly helpless in manglers all around the world wasn't exactly what the world expected.

What the world expected was a superstar, someone with the talent, sharpness, and raw muscle-power to out-gun everything that's bad on this planet, someone charismatic enough to make everyone who opposes him slink away in defeat. God's answer to that: A baby lying helpless in the straw!

Why? Why would God choose to be born into the world in this way?

Because you can't argue with a baby! Babies don't try to compete, don't stand up to you, don't try to best you in an argument, and don't try to impress you with their answers. Indeed, they can't speak at all. You, on your part, have to coax everything out of them, be it a smile or a word, and that effort, which demands great patience, usually draws out what's best in you. Moreover, you can't push at a baby too hard, it will begin to cry and the session is over.

And that is the Savior who was born in Bethlehem, and that is too how God is still basically in the world. Like a baby, God does not outgun anyone, out-muscle anyone, threaten anyone, or overpower anyone. The power of God revealed in Christmas is the power of a baby, nothing more, nothing less: innocence, gentleness, helplessness, a vulnerability that can soften hearts, invite in, have us hush our voices, teach us patience, and call forth what's best in us. We watch our language around a baby in the same way as we watch our language in a church, with good reason.

The power of Christmas is like the power of a baby, it underwhelms in such a way so as to eventually overwhelm. There is a greater power than muscle, speed, charisma, unstoppable force: If you were to put a baby into a room with the heavy-weight boxing champion of the world, who ultimately would be the stronger? The boxer could kill the baby, but, no doubt, wouldn't, precisely because something inside the baby's powerlessness

would overwhelm the boxer. Such is the way of God, the message of Christmas.

But we have always been slow to understand this; we want our messiahs to possess more immediate power. And we are in good company here. The messiah that people longed for during all those centuries leading up to Jesus and Bethlehem was precisely conceived of as a human superhero, someone with the earthly muscle to bang heads together and purge the world of evil by morally superior muscles.

Even John the Baptist expected the messiah to come with that kind of power. His concern was justice, repentance, asceticism. He warned people of an approaching time of reckoning and expected the longed-for messiah to come precisely as a violent fire, a winnowing fan that would separate the bad from the good and burn up the former with a righteousness that came straight from God. When he heard reports of Jesus gently inviting sinners in rather than casting them off, John was scandalized, that kind of a messiah didn't fit his expectations, or his preaching. That's why Jesus, in sending a response to him, invites John not to be scandalized in him. John hadn't wanted a gentle, vulnerable, peace-preaching messiah. He wanted bad people punished, not converted. But, to his credit, once he saw how Jesus' power worked, he understood, accepted a deeper truth, stepped back in self-effacement, and pointed people in Jesus' direction with the words: He must increase and I must decrease. I'm not even worthy to untie his scandal strap!

We too are slow to understand. Like John the Baptist, our impatience for truth and justice makes us want and expect a messiah who comes in earthly terms, all talent and muscle, banging heads together so as to rid the planet of falsehood and evil. We want the kind of messiah we see at the end of every Hollywood thriller, Mother Theresa turned into Sylvester Stallone or Bruce Willis, beating up the bad guys with a violence they can only envy.

But that's not the Christmas story, nor the power revealed in it. An infant lying in the straw in Bethlehem didn't outgun anyone. He just lay there, waiting for anyone, good or bad, to come to him, see his helplessness, feel a tug at his or her heart strings, and then gently try to coax a smile or a word out of him. That's still how God meets us.

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.

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, December 14, at 12:30 PM in the Parish Center.**

Rosary Christian Mothers

The Rosary Christian Mothers meet on the first Monday evening of each month. The next meeting will be **Monday, December 14.** We will begin with **Rosary at 7:45 PM in the Parish Center** followed by **meeting at 8 PM, also in the Parish Center.**

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, December 15, in the Parish Center at 9 AM.**

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.**

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.

Wanted: Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who have been commissioned by the Diocese are needed to bring the Eucharist to patients at Good Samaritan Hospital.

You may schedule whatever mornings are convenient for you. Even one day per month will help a great deal. If interested, please call 631.376.4103.

Rebuilding Together

Volunteers are needed any time, Mondays to Fridays. Rebuilding Together Long Island is a volunteer group that performs free repairs to low-income seniors and handicapped homeowners in both Nassau and Suffolk.

Volunteers with minor skills are needed. Come join us and feel the joy of helping others in an atmosphere of fun. Call 516.541.7322.

Coat and Blanket Drive

The West Islip Fire Department is collecting gently used (or new) coats and blankets for children and adults in need of warmth this winter. OLL Parish Outreach will be able to send people to the Fire Department for these coats and blankets after January 1.

If you have coats and blankets you would like to donate, please bring these to the West Islip Fire Department on Union Blvd. For more information please call Lt. Dan O'Neill at 559.7951.

Good Shepherd Hospice

Volunteers needed! Do you have a few hours a week to spare? Are you that special person who is willing to walk along with our patients and families during their final journey? Find out! Please call the Good Shepherd Hospice Volunteer Department at 631.465.6355 for more information on volunteer opportunities.

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 Radio, Channel 159, the Catholic Channel and at 11 PM on XM Satellite, channel 117. Next Sunday's theme is "**Consumersim/Shopping.**" Don't miss it! To listen online or receive more information regarding "Religion & Rock" go to www.religionandrock.com or at "Religion & Rock" on ITUNES. Don't forget to tune into TELE CARE, Cablevision 29 or Verizon FIOS 296 for the Best in Catholic Television!

Sharing the Gospel

"How can you show you love God? Instead of keeping all of your clothes and food, share some with people who don't have any. Be happy and thankful for all God has given you. When you love God more than money, you'll be happy to share."



Prayer

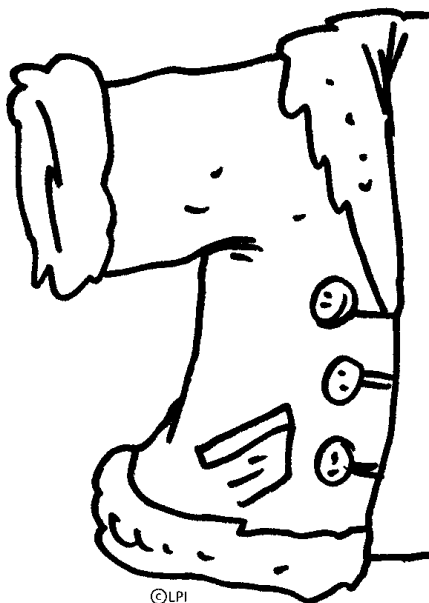


Dear God,
help me to share happily with others.



Puzzle

Complete the picture.



Something to Draw



Draw a picture of yourself sharing a snack with a classmate who has none.

Mission for the Week



The next time you go grocery shopping with your parents, ask if you can pick out some foods to share with the poor. As a family, talk about how thankful you are for the many ways God takes care of you.