

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Our Lady of Lourdes • February 7, 2010



**“They caught a
great number
of fish.”**



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

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



The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

Thursday, February 11, is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Join us at 7:30 PM to celebrate a Healing Mass on this evening, devoted to Mary and the great healing tradition at Lourdes. We invite all to come to celebrate the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament may be received by anyone with a desire to receive God's healing in time of sickness, for age and infirmity, for healing of grief, anxiety, and other emotional suffering, for any healing you desire to receive from God.

LENT 2010

Distribution of Ashes

On Ash Wednesday, February 17, we celebrate the distribution of blessed ashes every hour on the hour from 7 AM until 9 PM.

Mass with distribution of ashes is celebrated at 8 AM and 8 PM.

Burning of the Palms

We are actively preparing for the season of Lent at OLL and we need your help!

Ash Wednesday, February 17, begins the Lenten season and the signing of ashes is a powerful reminder to us of this time of reflection, reconciliation and renewal.



We invite all parishioners to bring palm from last year's celebration of Palm Sunday. These blessed palm branches from last year's Holy Week will be burned outside church at all masses on February 13/14 to mark the beginning of Lent and to provide the ashes for Ash Wednesday.

The purpose of this action is twofold. First, it actively involves each of us in the celebration of Ash Wednesday and Lent. Second, it demonstrates the continuous work of our liturgical cycle/year. By connecting last Palm Sunday with this year's Ash Wednesday, we are reminded of the dying and rising of Christ – the Paschal Mystery - which the liturgy invites us to experience.

Mark your calendars...

Our own pastor, Fr. Mike Vetrano, will preach our Lenten Mission this year.

Mission 2010-Living Life in God's Friendship will take place Monday to Thursday-March 8 to March 11 at 7:30 PM in the church. Keep those dates open.

Living Life in God's Friendship

Our own pastor, Fr. Mike Vetrano, will preach



Monday through Thursday

March 8th through 11th

All evenings begin at 7:30 PM in our Parish Church

Monday, March 8

A Life in God's Friendship

*The first great truth that every Christian must know is that we
Walk each day in the presence of God and every relationship, every challenge
Every moment of joy or sorrow can be filled with God's friendship*

Tuesday, March 9

Being at Peace with God and Peace with Oneself

*Life is not easy. Things happen. Everyone has moments of failure or has made mistakes.
How can we discover a great truth in these moments: God always offers a new beginning.
Reconciliation*

Wednesday, March 10

Some things about God that we are not sure about

- or -

If I were God I would run things differently

Why do we die? :: Why do we suffer? :: Why do bad people win lotto?

Thursday, March 11

A celebration of healing and life

*For those who are in need of healing and those who have received it
Illness, grief, loss, emotional pain, depression, desire for children, infirmity....*

The Seminarian Sent Forth

1 February 2010

Today begins the second semester at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception. I am back “in the swing” of school, community life and all that the experiences here at the Seminary can bring.

As I wrote in January, I return to the Seminary a bit stronger and more hopeful after the Christmas Break. Part of this is due to all of you. I cannot tell you what a tremendous difference your care, concern and support make. It, at times, is a difficult reminder of what I miss the most – the people. Yet, it is also a source of encouragement knowing that all of you are a part of this journey as well.

Another reason for this renewed strength and hope is our pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Over two weeks, we experienced many places, individuals and moments. I cannot fully explain at this point what I have gained from the pilgrimage as so much still needs to be processed and absorbed. I gained a better understanding of the life of Jesus and the impact of that life for our lives today. I think it is something we all know. An experience like this pilgrimage certainly brings it to the forefront. Yes, we walked where Jesus walked but it is not on that level the deeper understanding takes place.



We met a Scripture scholar, Jerome Murphy O'Connor. He challenged us when reading the Gospels to focus on what is most important. He spoke about Jesus in the *Garden in Gethsemane* and sighted that as a tremendous example of Jesus' humanity – his fear, anxiety, worry, concern. Yet he went forth. Fr. Jerome stated that we are often afraid to admit the impact of the Jesus' humanity because it means that we can possibly do the same as Jesus – give our lives over to one another in loving self-sacrifice.

After listening to him, many of the pieces of the pilgrimage came together. For sure, it is humbling and overwhelming to consider the challenges of Fr. Jerome and this entire pilgrimage put forth. Yet that's part of this journey – for each of us.

I'll continue to keep you updated about how “we” are doing at the Seminary and of course you can follow weekly at www.johnsureau.blogspot.com.

Thank you again, for all of your love and support. It makes all the difference in the world.

Peace –

John Sureau

It's time for

FAT

TUESDAY!



Outreach is hosting the
Second Annual

MARDI GRAS

Tuesday, February 16

7 PM - 9 PM

All-Purpose Room



FOOD ~ GAMES ~ PRIZES

HOT DOGS ~ ICE CREAM

and FUN! FUN! FUN!

Admission is \$5 per person - includes all the
food and fun your heart can hold as we prepare to
enter the great feast of Lent!

Call our Outreach office for more information.

Raffle Tickets \$5 for 25

Proceeds to benefit Outreach.

Adult Faith Formation

Images of Mercy - Icons of Justice*

**applicable for Advance Certificate*

Presenter: Tom Petriano, St. Joseph's College, Patchogue

Tuesdays, February 9, 23, 2010 from 7:30 - 9:30 PM Parish Center

The witness of the lives of prophetic figures from various cultures and traditions can be iconic for us, and studying their lives can be both illuminating and transformative. This course will look specifically at the lives of Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, Mohandas Gandhi, Oscar Romero and the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador, and Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks as examples of modern day prophets. Their writings, sermons, letters, speeches and the witness of their lives will be examined in order to understand the spirituality and theology that was the source of their prophetic witness.

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.

Adult Bowling Night

Saturday, March 13

Time to schedule some adult fun! This event is open to the public so pick your crowd and create your own party. Tickets are \$25 a person, the kitchen and bar will be open and ready to serve. Visit the OLL website, click on the "OLL School" link and go to "In the Backpack" for details. Committee Members Needed Contact: kharris@ollschool.org or lkennedy@ollschool.org if you can help.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

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

Join us...Wednesday, February 10 at 9:30 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.

OLL Golf Outing

Coming July 2010

Do you miss the outdoors? Do you miss the warm feeling of sunshine? Join us and swing ahead to summer! We are in need of committee members, volunteers, golfers, and donations (Local Merchants and Materials). For more information contact Rich Maher at rmaher@ollschool.org.

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.



A Night for the Men of Our Parish
Not Sure if Forgiveness and Mercy are
Manly Virtues?
Ask Detective Steven McDonald

Steven McDonald is the NYPD officer who was questioning three youths in Central Park one hot summer day in 1986 when one of them shot him three times—a brutal attack that he narrowly survived, but which left him paralyzed from the neck down, and dependent on a tracheotomy.

For the past twenty-four years, Steven McDonald, has been preaching the Gospel of Forgiveness. In doing so, Steven has changed his own life, the life of the young man that shot him and the thousands of people that have heard his message. McDonald focuses on his long road to inner and outer recovery - a remarkable journey through anguish and anger to peace, that began with a decision to forgive his attacker.

OLL Men's Spirituality Group invites the men of our parish (*high school age on up*) to
“An Evening of Forgiveness” with Detective Steven McDonald on Friday, March 19
at 7:30 PM in the Church

Come and experience how evil and violence can be transformed by the liberating power of faith. Please contact Jack Fitzgerald at 631.587.5548 for more information.



Our Lady of Lourdes
2nd Annual
St. Patrick's/St. Joseph's Day
Celebration
Saturday, March 20
8 PM until midnight
All-Purpose Room



The evening will include music, dancing, Italian and Irish buffet, beer, wine and soda.
The event is hosted by OLL Holy Name Society, OLL Rosary Christian Mothers and Parish Outreach.
Proceeds to benefit OLL Parish Outreach.

watch future bulletins for more details...

Shaking things up with OLL Youth Ministry!

*There are now a few ways for young people to have fun and to learn at Our Lady of Lourdes...
Now is the time when you decide who you will be. So who are you?*

Young Women's Prayer Group

Young Women's Prayer Group is the new way that young women and new mothers can come together to reflect on their faith, even in the midst of their busy lives. When you were a student, everyone was trying to get you involved and now it seems like you don't get a chance for anything but work! We meet on the second Thursday of each month and talk about what it is to be a Catholic Woman.



Peace and Justice Spotlight

Did you know that Our Lady of Lourdes has a Peace and Justice Club? We do!
Peace and Justice meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the school library.

There, the members of the club discuss current pressing social issues within the context of Catholic Social Teaching. We also think of ways that we can support those in our community who are in need. Below is a topic of discussion for the club. It is a statement released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops concerning their stance on the need for respect of natural death.

Scripture and the Death Penalty

In *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, the bishops explain the scriptural roots of Catholic teaching on the death penalty. This begins with the story of creation which teaches "that every life is a precious gift from God (see Gn 2:7, 21-23). This gift must be respected and protected. We are created in God's image and redeemed by Jesus Christ, who himself was crucified." The bishops also explain "some argue that biblical statements about 'life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth' (see Ex 21:23-25, Lv 24:17, Dt 19:21) require that the death penalty be used for certain crimes. A correct interpretation of these passages indicates, however, that the principal intent of such laws was to limit the retribution that could be exacted for an offense, not to require a minimum punishment. Furthermore, it is important to read individual passages in the context of Sacred Scripture as a whole. While the Old Testament includes some passages about taking the life of one who kills, the Old Testament and the teaching of Christ in the New Testament call us to protect life, practice mercy and reject vengeance.

-The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

What do you think? Come to Peace and Justice and talk it out!

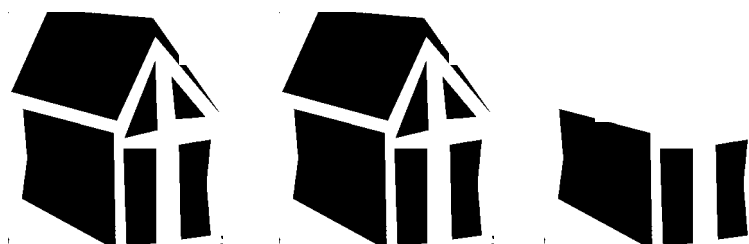


Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Awareness Trip 2010

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 Two Homes and Counting!



Through your generous donations, 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.

Youth Group Meeting Schedule



Middle School
February 22nd (PC)
March 1st, 15th (PC)
April 5th, 19th (PC)
May 3rd, 17th (PC)
June 7th

High School
February 18th (PC)
March 4th, 18th (PC)
April 8th (PC), 22nd
May 6th, 20th
June 3rd

**All meetings will be in Room 16 of the school unless otherwise specified.*

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 Covello died on January 20 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on January 25. We extend our prayers to her cousin, Debra, and entire family.

Robert F. Gross died on January 24 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on January 28. We extend our prayers to his wife, Carol, children, grandchildren, and entire family.

Florence Worysz died on January 25 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on January 29. We extend our prayers to her children, grandchildren, and entire family.

Alex John MacGregor III died on January 28 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on February 1. We extend our prayers to his parents, siblings, grandparents, 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, February 8

St. John of God, religious

8:00 AM Armand Porzio

Tuesday, February 9

Saint Frances of Rome, religious

8:00 AM Molly Sweeney

Wednesday, February 10

8:00 AM Carmela & Vincent Stumpo

Thursday, February 11

8:00 AM Nancy Bencivini

Friday, February 12

8:00 AM Lucille Harsch

Saturday, February 13

8:00 AM Ann Nardone, Robert Baxter,
Gustavo Garvalosa

5:00 PM Joseph Calderale, Sr.

Fr. Pat Amabile

Sunday, February 14

8:00 AM The Brennan Family
Fr. Pat Amabile

9:30 AM Tony Squeo

Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

11:00 AM Dec'd mbrs of McKeffery Family

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

12:30 PM Donald & Patrick Manning

Fr. Pat Amabile

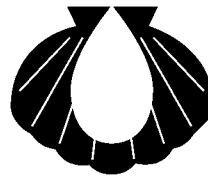
6:00 PM People of the Parish, Lucille LoBue, Lillian Cleary,
Howard Campkin, Thomas Yacono

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Altar Bread and Wine

In memory of

Charles Tibbetts



Baptisms

Kristen Nicole Cea

John and Christine



5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the old Walt Kelly comic strip "Pogo" every time things would get to be too much for the main characters you could bet on seeing the "Gone fishin'" sign posted on a nearby tree. It was a literary device that Kelly used, to bring a break to the previous action and change the story line. In a way, Luke does the same thing in Sunday's Gospel. After the press of the crowds, Jesus convinces Simon to let him teach from the boat. Then he tells him to head out into deep water to fish. We've changed the subject from Jesus healing and preaching. Suddenly, we've "Gone fishin'," and while initially that's what is literally happening, it doesn't stay that way for long. It's a setup for the greater point of the story: "From now on you will be catching men."

It's not just Simon and the sons of Zebedee that get led into this convenient little scenario. Gospels are not just quaint stories. They are good news for us as well. Jesus gets into life with us, much like he got into Simon's boat. He tells us to go out a little farther, that is, to stretch our faith a little more. And even when we want to give up ("we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing") he tells us to cast into the deep. Trusting in him, we find that wondrous things happen as we witness to the meaning of Jesus in our lives. In the end, the example of our faith is to lead others to Jesus. That's where instead of fish, we'll be catching men and women.

It wouldn't be the worst thing in the world if we hung a little "Gone fishin'" sign somewhere where we would see it every day, as long as we remember that our faith is the net, and from now on we're out there fishing to bring others to Christ.

2009 Liturgical Publications Inc

Readings for the Week of February 7, 2010

Sunday:	Is 6:1-2a, 3-8/1 Cor 15:1-11 <i>or</i> 15:3-8, 11/Lk 5:1-11
Monday:	1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13/Mk 6:53-56
Tuesday:	1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30/Mk 7:1-13
Wednesday:	1 Kgs 10:1-10/Mk 7:14-23
Thursday:	1 Kgs 11:4-13/Mk 7:24-30
Friday:	1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19/Mk 7:31-37
Saturday:	1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34/Mk 8:1-10
Next Sunday:	Jer 17:5-8/1 Cor 15:12, 16-20/Lk 6:17, 20-26

Parish Outreach

Office telephone:

661-9262, option 4

Office hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

9:30 AM - 3 PM

In December, I wrote that Outreach had enough food and asked that people stop donating for awhile. Well, the time has come to request assistance again.

Outreach is in need of specific food items:

Pantry Needs

- peanut butter
- jelly
- canned pork and beans
- spaghetti sauce
- hand soap
- hot cocoa
- cookies
- crackers



Thank you for your ongoing support to Outreach.

A Great Loss

Outreach lost a faith filled woman last week. Flo Worysz died. As people of faith we believe that she is now united with God. Her work on earth completed, she has been called to her place among the saints. Many hearts have been made heavy by her death-most notably Flo's devoted sister, her four children, her grandchildren-and the many friends she made throughout the years.

Flo was a faithful presence here in Outreach. To clients approaching Outreach for assistance, Flo offered a sympathetic ear, and a compassionate heart. Many were the times that Flo had to be reminded not to reach into her own wallet to offer aide to families with children.

Flo was stubborn in her desire to teach Polish to anyone willing to learn. She delighted in sharing her memories of the Polish fundraisers she and her husband Michael organized for Our Lady of Lourdes. Flo was devoted to our Parish, serving on the Liturgy Committee, was a member of the Senior Circle, sang in the Choir and served faithfully in Outreach.

Flo was an 'old fashioned' Catholic-pre-Vatican II,-she believed strongly in prayer, was devoted to Mary and quietly offered her lifelong physical affliction the result of polio-for the glory of God. Flo was a strong woman-strong in her faith, strong in her love for her family and strong in her beliefs about the Church. Monday and Fridays will not be the same in Outreach without Flo.

Financial Summary

January 31, 2010

Weekly Collection	\$ 17,808.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 19,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (1,192.00)

Catholic School \$ 3,733.00

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:

Bryan R. Dempsey-*US Marines*

Christopher Florca-*US Marines*

Michael Mallimo- *US Army*

Anthony Mannino-*US Marines*

JD Montefusco-*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 Sliva Family in gratitude for the safe return of their son, Frank from active duty. **Frank Sliva**-*US Army*, has returned to the United States safe and sound from his second tour of duty in Iraq. Thank you, *Frank*, for your most generous service to our country! The Sliva Family would like to thank Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family for all of their prayers.

Mass Book of Intentions

The 2011 Mass Book of Intentions will be opening on **Tuesday, February 23** at **9 AM in the Parish Office.**

As always, we will do our best to accommodate your Mass Intention requests.

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Marie Cirone*.

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 ...

Phil Ambrosino, Roy Anderson, Susan Aviza, Deacon Dick Barry, Ben Bellotti, Antoinette Bongiorno, Theresa Buffa, Nicholas Buscemi, Jr., Frances Ceribelli, Nicholas Cibelli, Michael Ciotkosz, Regina Cranor, Tom Courtney, Jeanne DellaRagione, Ann Donlon, Debbie Eichen, Edward Herger, Brian Hinkelman, Lili Hinkelman, Mary Kaval, Veronica Kenny, Kathleen Kerrigan, Joseph Lehmann, Kara Lobasso, Louise Malcuit, Vicky Massaro, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Dorothy Meloni, Rick Mirabella, Rae Morris, Brenden Muldoon, Ruth Murray, Evelyn Nonnon, John O'Brien, Robert Petersen, Arthur Petrino, Joanne Popper, Laura Prichard, Theresa Quinn, Joe Radosti, Carol Randazzo-Hopkins, Jenny Rocchio, Domenica Ruocco, Michael Savino, Ann Marie Schiraldi, Jayna Schmidt, Dorothy Shiavone, Joe Shields, Derek Stahl, Mary Clair Stephen, Stephen Straub, Sr., John Tramazzo, Nancy Turano, Vera Vieni, Pat Wallace, Joseph Walsh, Sr., Kyle Williams

Fidelity-Our Greatest Gift to Others

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

After the funeral of Martin Luther King, one of the newsmen covering the event stopped to talk to an old man standing at the edges of the cemetery. The reporter asked him: "What did this man mean to you? Why was he special to you?" The old man, through tears, answered simply: "He was a great man because he was faithful. He believed in us when we had stopped believing in ourselves, he stayed with us even when we weren't worth staying with!"

That is a testimony to a life well-lived. If, at your funeral, someone says that of you, then you have lived your life well, even if there had been many times in your life when things weren't going well. What this old man defines so accurately in his testimony to Martin Luther King is what faith means. To be full of faith means precisely to be faithful. That is more than a play on words.

In the end, faith is not simply the good, secure feeling that God exists. Faith is a commitment to a way of living beyond good and secure feelings. To have faith means to sometimes live our lives independent of whatever feelings may come. Ultimately faith is not in the head or the heart but in the action of a sustained commitment. Faith is fidelity, nothing more but nothing less.

And, perhaps more than anything else, that gift is what is needed today in our families, in our churches, and in our world in general. The greatest gift we can give to those around us is the promise of fidelity, the simple promise to stay around, to not to leave when things get difficult, to not walk away because we feel disappointed or hurt, to stay even when we don't feel wanted or valued, to stay even when our personalities and visions clash, to stay through thick and thin.

Too often what happens is that, in our commitments, we subtly blackmail each other: We commit ourselves inside of family, church, community, and friendship but with the unspoken condition: I will stay with you as long as you don't seriously disappoint or hurt me. But if you do, I will move on!

No family, friendship, church, or community can survive on this premise because it is simply impossible to live or work with each other for any length of time without seriously disappointing and hurting each other.

Inside of any relationship - marriage, family, friendship, church community, or even a collegial relationship at a workplace - we can never promise that we

won't disappoint others, that we won't ever mess-up, that our personalities won't clash, or that we won't sometimes hurt others through insensitivity, selfishness, and weakness. We can't promise that we will always be good. We can only promise that we will always be there!

And, in the end, that promise is enough because if we stay and don't blackmail each other by walking away when there is disappointment and hurt, then the disappointments and the hurts can be worked through and redeemed by a faith and love that stay for the long haul. When there is fidelity within a relationship, eventually the hurts and misunderstandings wash clean and even bitterness turns to love.

Many is the man or woman who, on celebrating the anniversary of a marriage or the commitment to religious life, priesthood, friendship, or work at a certain job, looks back and no longer feels the countless hurts, rejections, misunderstandings, and bitter moments, that were also part of that journey. These are washed clean by something deeper that has grown up because of fidelity, namely trust and respect.

You sometimes see this, wonderfully, in the mutual, begrudging respect that eventually develops between two people who, while both sincere and committed, are for years at odds because of differences in personality, politics, religion, or history. The simple fact of having to deal with each other over many years eventually leads to a rich understanding and a respect beyond differences.

This also holds true for prayer. All the great spiritual writers give only one ultimate rule for prayer and that rule has nothing to do with method, style, or content. It is simply this: Show up! Don't ever give up! Don't ever stop going to prayer! As long as you persevere in going to prayer, eventually God will break through. Don't ever stop trying! That's true for all of our relationships.

The greatest gift that we have to give is the promise of fidelity, the promise that we will keep trying, that we won't walk away simply because we got hurt or because we felt unwanted or not properly valued.

We are all weak, wounded, sinful, and easily hurt. Inside of our marriages, families, churches, friendships, and places of work, we cannot promise that we won't disappoint each other and, worse still, that we won't hurt each other. But we can promise that we won't walk away because of disappointment and hurt. That's all we can promise - and that's enough!

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.

Donations: January 2010

Diane Garreston has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Gertrude Teufel* and *Mabel Barbieri*.

Margaret Cassiano made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Gertrude Teufel* and *Alberta Firth Hawkins*.

The O'Shea Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Msgr. James Kissane*.

Jerry Esposito has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Gina Trimarchi*.

Outreach has received a donation in memory of *Howard Campkin* from Helen Bukowski.

Outreach has received a donation from Regina Mirabella in memory of *Howard Campkin* and *Lillian Gerkin*.

Marie Ricigliano has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

In gratitude for special friendships, Marie Ricigliano has made a donation to Outreach: *The Meehan Family, Jerry Esposito, Fr. Stephen, John Sureau and the DeGuardi's*.

Loretta Cannon made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Angelo Lombardo*.

Carmine and Connie Telesca have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kopelakis have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Andrew Arena*.

The Spera Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

Betty Goode has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

The Jennings Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Alberta Hawkins-Firth's generous heart and spirit*.

Mary Anne & Dom Lettieri, Lori Walsh and Debbie Meyer have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

Anne Basso has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Flo Worysz*.

The Hawkins Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Gertrude Tuefel* and *Howard Campkin*.

Robert and Joyce Petersen have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Howard Campkin*.

Vera and Joe Vieni have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Flo Worysz*.

Helen and Joe Lehmann have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Flo Worysz*.

Dottie Perdue has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Flo Worysz* and *Howard Campkin*.

Quest for the Male Soul

Saturday, February 13 from 8 AM until 9:30 AM Michael Dunne and team will present Men's Gathering "Quest for the Male Soul." The offering will be \$20 and includes breakfast. The program will be held at St. Joseph Renewal Center, 1725 Brentwood Road, Brentwood. Call for reservations at 631.273.1187, extension 23.

Dominican Village

Please join us for an Open House on Thursday, February 11, 2010 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.

Life Center of Long Island

Life Center of Long Island is a pro life organization, made up of mostly volunteers and located at 1767 Deer Park Ave in Deer Park. The phone number is 631.243.2373.

Donations are needed at the Life Center of Long Island. Specifically needed are baby items for children up to 2 years old including clothing, diapers, wipes, formula, jars of food, bath and layette items, cribs, car seats, pack'n plays, strollers, and high chairs. There are volunteers who do pick ups, if there is furniture involved. Receipts are given for tax purposes.

Life Center is also looking for volunteers, the jobs vary. Please call for further information or if you have any questions.

Parish Outreach Programs

Fundraiser for local Parish Outreach Programs at the **Division 2 Hall, Babylon on Friday, February 12 from 8 PM - 12 Midnight.** Music will be provided by Tommy Polito and Sweetwater.

Tickets are \$25 per person-reservations are a must-includes full open bar and snacks. Bring a bag of non-perishable foods and be entered into a special raffle. For reservations or further information, please call Kathleen Henry at 631.271.1091, Colette Kavanaugh at 631.277.0759 or Pat Rattigan at 631.957.6426.

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 "**Renewal.**" 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 TELECARE, Cablevision 29 or Verizon FIOS 296 for the Best in Catholic Television!

