

**"THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE
WALKED IN DARKNESS**



HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT."

ISAIAH 9:1

**THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
OUR LADY OF LOURDES • JANUARY 27, 2008**



Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor

Welcome to our Parish Family! New Parishioners are cordially invited to register as members of our parish family. Please call or visit our Parish Office.

Parish Office

661-3224

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - 7:30 PM

Saturday: 9 AM - 3 PM

Sunday: 9 AM - 2 PM

email: ParishOffice@ollchurch.org

fax: 661-7143

website: www.ollchurch.org

Our Lady of Lourdes School

587-7200

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - 3 PM

email: info@ollschool.org

Religious Education Office

661-5440

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - Noon

1 PM - 5 PM

7 PM - 9 PM

email: ReligiousEd@ollchurch.org

Parish Outreach Office

661-9262

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

S.A.G.E.

661-3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Dominic Armano

Youth Ministry

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Jennifer Gallagher

Children's Choir/Women's Chorale

Summer Program Director

Carol M. Goetz

Parish Music Director

Louise Jane Krol

School Principal

Sr. Diane Liona

Director of Religious Education

Mary McMahon

Director of Parish Social Ministry

Vita Scorcio

Ministry Spiritual Director

John Sureau

Coordinator of Worship

Sr. Betty Toohig

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Anthony Trombino

Business Manager

Pastoral Council

Salomon Acosta

Stacie Baltrusitis

Jane Desthers

Stephen Frodell

William Hurley

Anne Kerrigan

Maria Lucie (*co-chair*)

Deacon Jack Meehan

Vita Scorcio

Doreen Spiller

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Marie Yuliano (*co-chair*)

Parish Staff

Barbara Catusco

Religious Education Office

Mary Anne Lettieri

Parish Office

Debbie Meyer

Bulletin /Parish Office

Rosemary Multer

School Office

Rex Muro

Organist

Rita Spera

Religious Education Office

Lori Walsh

Parish Office

Mission Statement

As stewards of all that God has given us, the Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes serves and ministers to all who come to this place. Regardless of a person's history, ethnicity, gender, orientation, age or race, we commit ourselves to open wide the doors of our Parish to provide a place of welcome and hospitality.

Vision...

so that all may know that they are a vital part of the Body of Christ, we further recommit and challenge ourselves to:

***Live** out our Baptismal call passionately by caring for all of God's people with justice.*

***Grow** in an understanding of God's role in each of our lives.*

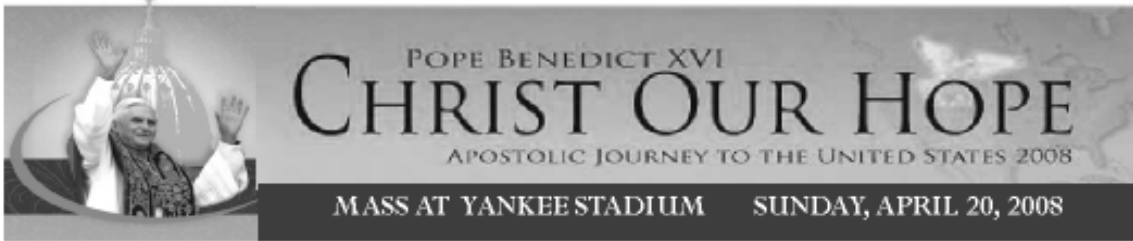
***Respond** to the Gospel in a radical way, inviting and inspiring all to form the Kingdom of God in every moment of life.*

***Acknowledge** we are not complete without the willingness to grow, discern and discover the Spirit who moves and guides us.*

*Our Lady
of Lourdes*

455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795

On Sunday, April 20, 2008, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate a Solemn Pontifical Mass at Yankee Stadium (sometime in the afternoon). Our diocese has been given a limited number of tickets to distribute to the faithful. They will be appointed by lottery.



I _____ if chosen to attend Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI, commit to attending and preparing spiritually for this graced moment in the life of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Due to increased security procedures, all who will be attending the Mass will be required to be seated 2-3 hours prior to the start of the liturgy.

IMPORTANT

YOU MUST LIST THE NAME, ADDRESS, DATE OF BIRTH AND PHONE NUMBER FOR EACH PERSON FOR WHOM YOU ARE REQUESTING A TICKET. UNLESS THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, YOUR REQUEST WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE LOTTERY

I request: _____ 1 ticket _____ 2 tickets

Name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone number: _____

Name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone number: _____

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY JANUARY 31, 2008 TO:
CHANCELLOR
DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
POST OFFICE BOX 9023
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571-9023**

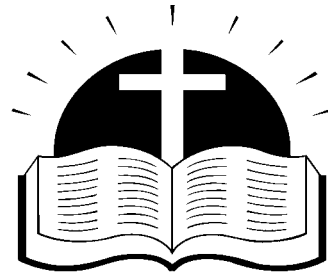
Adult Faith Formation

Directed Retreat Week

*All Are Welcome to our Third Annual Directed Retreat Week
...right here at OLL!*

Sunday, February 3–Saturday, February 9, 2008

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



**Register
now!**

Adult Faith Formation

How does it work?

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

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

Brochures containing applications are available at the Religious Education or Parish Office.

Registration deadline is Monday, January 28. For more information, call the Religious Education Office at 661-5440 or email Religioused@ollchurch.org.

Celebrating Life...

Beyond Breast Cancer

An evening to reflect on our journey through breast cancer. How have I been changed or healed physically, emotionally, spiritually?

Tuesday, February 12

7:30-9:30 PM

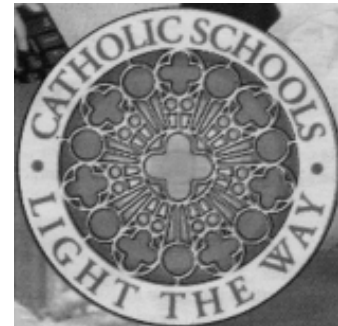
Parish Center

Presenters are Vita Scorcia, OLL Ministry Spiritual Director and Mary McMahon, Director of Parish Social Ministry

Pre-Registration is necessary and helpful. This will enable us to have enough reading material and refreshments for all those attending. Please call the Religious Education Office, Monday-Friday, between 9AM – 5 PM at 661.5440 x3, or e-mail to: religioused@ollchurch.org.

Catholic Schools Week

This Sunday, January 27 is the beginning of Catholic Schools Week, the annual celebration of Catholic schools and their contribution to their community and the nation. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools Light the Way," which highlights the mission of Catholic schools to provide a faith-based education that supports the whole child academically and spiritually and prepares students for future success.



Support Catholic Education

Catholic Schools are an important part of the educational mission here at OLL and throughout the diocese. Here are some opportunities for you to support Catholic Education...

January 26 / 27

This weekend a collection for the support of Our Lady of Lourdes School will be taken. Your generosity in this collection goes directly to the support of our Catholic School.

Special Gifts — Classroom Angels

For a gift of \$1000 from a person or group, you can become a classroom angel for a whole year. Your name or a memorial inscription will be placed over the door of one of our classrooms as a reminder of your generous gift. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Office at 661.3224.

Please be as generous as you can. Remember that our children are our future!

mark your calendar...

24th Annual OLL Golf Classic

Timber Point Country Club

Thursday, June 19 at 2:30 PM

This year's honorees are *Sister Nancy and Sister Diane*

- Singles, twosomes and foursomes are welcome
- Sponsorships ranging from \$50 to \$1,500 are now available
- Awards and prizes throughout the day (including a live auction with professional auctioneer)
- Includes barbeque lunch and gourmet dinner
- \$175 for golf and dinner or \$75 for dinner only
- All skill levels are welcome

Last year we had over 120 golfers and/or dinner guests. Please call Joe Macina at 647.7440 or Frank Antonawich at 587.7988 or the school office at 587.7200 for further information. Last year's event was a great success and key fundraiser for the school.

Don't miss it...sign up today!



Visit our classes in session:
Monday, January 28 -
Wednesday, January 30
9 AM - 11 AM

Open House

Sunday, January 27

following Family Liturgy at 9:30 AM
Curriculum Fair 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM
in the School Cafeteria

What makes us different?

Come and see...

State of the art, new **Science Lab & Media Center**

The Lourdes Academy of Arts & Sciences-grades 6, 7, 8

Listen to our eighth graders describe their projects
with Stony Brook Medical School

Early Childhood Programs beginning at 2 years old!

Somebody Special & Me! 2 years old

Nursery 3 years old

Pre-K 4 years old

Kindergarten

(three or five days-full or half days available)

2008-09 registration applications
will be accepted beginning
Catholic Schools Week.

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous:

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

ALANON:

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



Rest In Peace

Mike Loreto died on January 11 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was January 14. We extend our prayers to his wife Amy and their children Michael, Jr. and Candace.

Paul Daddio died on January 8 and celebration of the Mass of Christian burial was January 12. We extend our prayers to his children and grandchildren.

Jennie Salomone died on January 9 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was January 14. We extend our prayers to her son Robert and her family.

Andrew Joseph Brennan died on January 8 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was January 14. We extend our prayers to his parents Martin and Melissa, his brother Logan, his grandparents and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Vito Adamo died on January 13 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was January 14. We extend our prayers to his son Michael and his family.

Daily Mass

8 AM

Weekend Masses

Saturday: 5 PM

Sunday: 8 AM, 9:30 AM, 11 AM, 12:30 PM and 6 PM

Reconciliation

Saturday: 4 PM - 4:45 PM

Rosary/Novena

Rosary:

Daily after 8 AM Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena:

Monday after 8 AM Mass

Anointing of the Sick

Throughout the liturgical year.

If needed sooner, please call the Parish Office.

Baptism

Please contact the Parish Office to schedule an appointment.

Marriage

Arranged at least six months in advance, please call the Parish Office.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults(RCIA):

A process to be embraced by the Catholic Church. For non-Catholics and for Catholics who have never received formal religious education. If interested, please call the Parish Office.

Mass Schedule

Monday, January 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest, doctor

8:00 AM Elinor Shaddock

Tuesday, January 29

8:00 AM John Weiss

Wednesday, January 30

8:00 AM Lily Turano

Thursday, January 31

St. John Bosco, priest

8:00 AM Nancy Proctor

Friday, February 1

8:00 AM Mark A. Polito

Saturday, February 2

8:00 AM John Lovari, Anna Lettieri, Adam Ippolito,
Michele Kern, Julianna Davis, Robert Herr,
Robert Hayes, Mary & Tom Kennedy,
Grace Valda Ambat

5:00 PM Michael Worysz

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Sunday, February 3

8:00 AM PFC Daniel Fuentes

Fr. Stan Chukwube

9:30 AM George A. Wild

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM Dixon Hunter

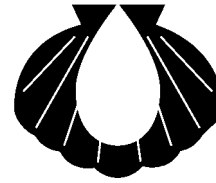
Fr. Mike Vetrano

12:30 PM Carmella Parasole

Fr. Stan Chukwube

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Dolores Borman, Richard J. Wilkinson,
Gerry LaMattina, Robert Herr, Joseph Dorilio, Michael Taggart,
Mrs. Poblete, Debbie Nastasi, Yvonne Manning

Fr. John Asomugha



Baptisms

Christopher Robert Hawkins

Dean and Kristen

Nicholas Joseph Hawkins

Dean and Kristen

Avery Gail Conrad

Micah and Monica

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 6

Invite your friends and loved ones to come back to Church this Lent beginning on this day. Come before work, after work, during work, during the day, at night, whenever!
There's a time and place for everyone at OLL!



- **Prayer Services** on the hour, as we pray together as a parish family:
7 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 Noon, 1 PM, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM, 6 PM, 7 PM and 9 PM.
- **Mass** will be celebrated at 8 AM and 8 PM.
- On Ash Wednesday, we invite all in our parish family to fast and pray for ourselves and for one another. Lent is such a powerful time for us to celebrate God's healing love for us – we can do that in prayer.
 - Our Church will be open all day for you to come and pray privately.
 - The Scripture readings for the day speak to us of the challenges and benefits of this season...*Joel 2:12-18*
2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2
Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18
 - We are challenged to fast, limiting food to one full meal with minimal food at the other two meal times and abstain from meat. (This is required of all adults from ages 18-59 and only of those whose health would not be at risk by doing so.)
We fast and abstain - not as punishment - but to focus our prayer, unite with the less fortunate, and reflect on the ways God's love can change our hearts.

save the date...

Parish Lenten Retreat

Monday, **March 3**, Tuesday, **March 4** and Wednesday, **March 5**
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
7:30 PM



Fr. Bob Lauder
Columnist for The Long Island Catholic and professor at St. John's University.

Look in the bulletin and our parish web site for more information!



Burning of the Palms

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

Ash Wednesday, February 6 begins the Lenten season and the signing of ashes is a powerful reminder to us of this time of reflection, reconciliation and renewal. The ashes come from burned palm – preferably the palm distributed last Palm Sunday.

Please bring back any palm you have at home. You can bring it to church this weekend, January 26/27 and next weekend, February 2/3 and place it in the baskets at the doors of the Church. This palm will be burned at the beginning of “The Six” on February 3.

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.

Ashes

by Paul Turner

“You’ve got dirt on your forehead.”

We’re likely to hear those words from thoughtful friends who display their intimate concern as well as their religious absentmindedness when we go out in public after Mass on Ash Wednesday.

The distribution of ashes replaces the penitential rite at the beginning of Mass. Instead of merely “calling to mind our sins,” we receive a very public reminder of our sinfulness.

“Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel,” we hear. Or, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return.”

But it wasn’t always that way. In the early church, only public sinners wore ashes. These sinners convened regularly to prepare for their reconciliation at a parish service they formed – well, what we now call “support groups.” As penitents, they used to wear ashes on their heads or in their clothes. Symbols of human mortality, ashes represented their complete dependence on the mercy of God. In the middle ages, the support groups dwindled but sinners remained strong in numbers. So Pope Urban II ordered up the first Ash Wednesday in 1091. Ashes were for everybody, and we’ve been rubbing dirt on our foreheads ever since.

Dirt is something we’re constantly washing off children and ourselves. Only in church do we deliberately put dirt on the most public part of our bodies, our foreheads. The symbol of Christ’s glory has become the symbol of our sin.



Copyright 1997 Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408)286-8505. Paul Turner, pastor of St. John Regis Parish in Kansas City, MO., holds a doctorate in sacramental theology from Sant’ Anselmo University in Rome. His e-mail is PaulTu@aol.com.



**Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Pilgrimage
Rome, Florence, Assisi and Milan
October 16 - 25, 2008**

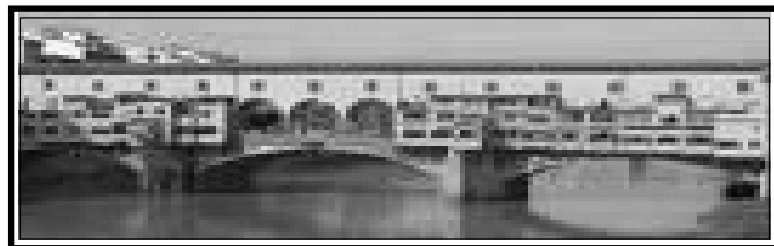
Come and join us for this opportunity to journey with Fr. Mike and members of our Parish Family to Italy in October 2008.

Imagine yourself in St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel and strolling through the streets of Florence, the center of the Renaissance and the heart of Tuscany. You will find yourself walking in the footsteps of St. Francis in Assisi and being in the presence of da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper.

Our departure date is Thursday, October 16 on a direct flight to Milan and return on Saturday, October 25 on a direct flight home from Rome.

Information concerning booking your flight accommodations will be discussed at our next meeting scheduled for **Monday, January 28 at 7:30 PM in the Parish Center.**

If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please call Deacon John at 661.3224, extension 132.





R.C.I.A.-The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Family Grows

This week began our parish's work with the candidates and catechumens of the R.C.I.A. They are gathering every Sunday for Mass and every Monday for catechesis and reflection. Please pray for them as they continue on this journey of new life and hope!

Altar Society

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



Pastoral Care of Our Sick

Please call the Parish Office at 661.3224 to leave the names of parishioners who:

- are homebound and would like to receive the Eucharist
- are in Good Samaritan Hospital and would like to be visited by a member of our Pastoral Care Ministry.
- would like to receive the sacred anointing.

Pray for Our Sick

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

Susan Aviza, Stacie Baltrusitis, Deacon Dick Barry, Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Baby Drew Brust, Howard Campkin, Josephine Carrano, Lynn Castellano, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Karen DellaVecchia, TJ Devlin, Josephine DiBenedetto, Charles Diesso, Jean Dobson, Kim Ecker, Jason Fisher, Samantha Hil, Vincent Iacopelli, Kathleen Kerrigan, Wade Kromhout, Evelyn Lang, Richard Lang, Nancy Letsch, Anthony Lombardo, Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Marguerite Mooney, Jimmy Murphy, Joseph Ortiz, Arthur Petrino, Baby Conner Pietras, Louise Posanti, Joe Radosti, Dorothy Schiavone, Derek Stahl, Dorothy Sullivan, Loretta Vitale



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The people we consider to be the truly great ones of our lives, those who have accomplished things of which others could only dream, almost all came from very humble beginnings. Doctors, statesmen, even writers who experienced ordinary early lives went on to do extraordinary things. They were answering a call to use their talents and potential to better the lives of others. They understood their gifts, and they shared them.

In today's reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus begins his earthly ministry by calling on not the wealthy or famous but simple, ordinary men within whom he saw a potential for greatness. And he makes an extraordinary request, that they leave behind their families and possessions and follow him. Are we prepared to answer such a call? Is it possible for us to put aside such things to follow a life of Christ? He recognizes our potential; we only need answer.

As parents, we are first and foremost catechists in passing on the faith to our children by living Christ-like lives. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that to catechize is to "reveal the person of Christ ? to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him" (CCC 426). To properly accomplish this, we must first and foremost walk with Jesus ourselves. We must put aside anything that distracts from his unending love, and answer his call.

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Readings for the Week of January 27, 2008

Sunday: Is 8:23-9:3/1 Cor 1:10-13, 17/Mt 4:12-23
or 4:12-17

Monday: 2 Sm 5:1-7, 10/Mk 3:22-30

Tuesday: 2 Sm 6:12b-15, 17-19/Mk 3:31-35

Wednesday: 2 Sm 7:4-17/Mk 4:1-20

Thursday: 2 Sm 7:18-19, 24-29/Mk 4:21-25

Friday: 2 Sm 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17/Mk 4:26-34

Saturday: Mal 3:1-4/Heb 2:14-18/Lk 2:22-40
or 2:22-32

Next Sunday: Zep 2:3; 3:12-13/1 Cor 1:26-31/Mt 5:1-12a

Financial Summary

January 20, 2007

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Weekly Collection | \$ 18,010.00 |
| Weekly Budget | -\$ 21,000.00 |
| +/- for the week | \$ (2,990.00) |

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

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

Jeremy deRoxas-US Air Force

Frederick Wm. Ellis-US Army

James J. Ferrara-US Marines

John Finn-US Army

Christopher Florca-US Marines

Donnie Frank-US Marines

Armand J. LeComte-US Marines

Anthony Mannino-US Marines

Peter Provenzano-US Army

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

MICAH: A Campaign to End LI Poverty

(Mobilized Interfaith Coalition Against Hunger)

“Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8

Do You Need Health Insurance for Your Children?



Your Children May Qualify for Free or Low-Cost Health Insurance

Enroll Now By Calling
New York State Child Health Plus (CHP)

1-800-698-4543
8:00AM to 8:00 PM Monday-Friday
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Saturday

You will speak to a counselor (in English or Spanish) who can help you:

- Obtain an application for Child Health Plus (CHP)
- Receive a resource guide and instructions on how to apply for CHP
- Contact a local enroller near your home who will help you to apply for CHP.

IMPORTANT: If you are not eligible for this program, but cannot afford to pay all or part of your hospital bill, you may qualify for assistance: Contact your hospital billing office for a financial aid care application

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

Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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



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

Donations

Donations have been made to Outreach *In Memory of...*

Stephen Anglin from the Camerons
Adam Ippolito from the Ambrosino Family
Robert (Robbie) Avella from Marie Ricigliano

Outreach would like to thank all those benefactors who contribute monthly and have asked to remain anonymous. Your generous contributions have helped many families in need during these winter months. Thank you.



Nocturnal Adoration

Nocturnal Adoration will follow the 5 PM Mass on Saturday, February 2. Benediction will follow at 9:50 PM. Please come and pray with us. All are invited and welcome! Bring a friend.

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, January 28, at 12:30 PM in the Parish Center.**

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.**

The Miracle of Existence

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

While doing my doctoral thesis, I had the privilege of having as a mentor the distinguished Belgian philosopher-theologian, Jan Walgrave. One day, while discussing a point in philosophy, he asked me: "Do you ever sit on a park bench and ask yourself: Why is there something instead of nothing?" I had to admit that I didn't, at least not very often.

"Then you are not a philosopher!" he gently commented. "A true philosopher asks that question every day for it's a miracle that anything exists at all."

Having met occasionally persons like Walgrave who are true philosophers, I know better than to claim real citizenship inside that circle. True philosophers, like true mystics, true poets, and true artists, are rare. My natural temperament is a bit too pragmatic to be numbered among them. The fault in this is that, like most other non-philosophers, I generally take the world and most everything in it for granted. However, in order to stand correctly in this world, we may not take existence for granted but rather need to live with the sense that all is gift - and is a very precious and precarious gift too. It's a miracle that we are here at all!

One of the things that can help us grasp this is contemporary science, particularly what it says about the origins of our universe. Science, like theology, tells us that we weren't always here and it we shouldn't take for granted that we are here. Why not?

When one examines the current scientific hypothesis regarding the origins of our universe (the Big Bang theory) one realizes that it is a miracle, something beyond the human imagination, that there is something instead of nothing.

Science today tells us that our universe had a birthday. Roughly 15 billion years ago there was a time-zero, a time when everything in our universe as we have it now did not exist. Everything that is now in our entire universe began about 15 billion years ago with an explosion (the "big bang") from something which was probably tinier than a single atom. Moreover, for our universe, our world, and human life to have come about a mind-boggling combination of factors had to be just right. I say "mind-boggling" because it's when we examine these factors that we are left with the philosopher's wonder as to why there is something at all instead of nothing. Let me list just a few of these mind-boggling things:

18•Our Lady of Lourdes•#439

First off, as Stephen Hawking writes, "If the rate of expansion one second after the Big Bang has been smaller by one part in a hundred thousand million it would have all re-collapsed" and we would have no universe. On the other hand, if it had been greater by one part in a million, the universe would have expanded too rapidly for planets to form. That equilibrium (upon which depends the existence of our universe) is, even today, still balanced on that same razor's edge.

Second, if the nuclear force caused by this great explosion had even been slightly weaker we would have only hydrogen in the universe. If it has been even slightly stronger, all the hydrogen would be converted into helium. In either case, we would not have the present universe, the planet earth, and human life. Moreover the explosion was just strong enough so that carbon could form; yet if it had been any stronger all the carbon would have been converted into oxygen. Again, had there been a variation within a millionth of a part, we'd have no earth and no life.

Finally, in the first seconds that followed this great explosion, for every one billion antiprotons in the universe, there were one billion and one protons. The billion pairs annihilated each other to produce radiation, but one proton was left over. A greater or smaller number of survivors (or no surviving protons at all if they had been evenly matched) and, again, we would not have a universe. And, to accentuate this anomaly, normally there is a perfect symmetrical balance between particles (a billion protons for a billion antiprotons). Why the billion and one?

And then the complexity that is ultimately produced by this big bang! For example, there are a hundred trillion synapses (points at which a nerve impulses pass from one neuron to another) in a human brain and the number of possible ways of connecting them is greater than the number of atoms in the universe.

Looking at all of this, the chance coincidence of so many trillion possibilities that had to be exactly right for a universe and life to emerge, even Stephen Hawking admits, "there are theological implications."

Jan Walgrave used to define these "theological implications" this way: "The next time you are sitting on a park bench and looking at a tree or into the eyes of someone you love there should flood through you gratitude for the marvel of it all and you should ask yourself: Why is there something instead of nothing?"

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.

Pancake Breakfast

Boy Scout Troop 179 of West Islip, sponsored by Our Lady of Lourdes Church is having its annual Pancake Breakfast on **Sunday, February 10 following the 8 AM, 9:30 AM and 11 AM Masses in the OLL school cafeteria.** The hearty breakfast served by the Scouts will include pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee. There will be a donation of \$5, children under 3 are free. Please come and enjoy a great breakfast and support Troop 179!

Annulment Information Meeting

“The Church’s annulment process offers the divorced person a vehicle for healing and closure of what is, many times, a painful period in one’s life.”

Presenter Fr. James Pereda, Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Rockville Centre will explain the annulment process and will follow that with a question and answer period-some of the questions to be addressed are: How long does the process take?, How much does an annulment cost?, How do I go about getting started?. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 29 at St. Joseph’s Parish, Kings Park at 7:30 PM.** The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, please contact Kathleen Logan, Associate Director of Family Ministry at 516.678.580, extension 236 or email klogan@drvc.org.

Girl Scout Silver Award

Do you love to sing or play an instrument? Are you interested in helping to feed those less fortunate than you are, right here in our own neighborhood?

If you answered yes to both of these questions, then we think you will want to help two West Islip Girl Scouts earn their silver Award by performing a concert at **Our Lady of Lourdes Church** which will benefit the church’s food pantry, The concert will be held on **March 14.** If you would like to participate and help Marissa DeMarzo and Caitlin Dolan earn their Silver Award, please call Marissa at 669.1551 or Caitlin at 422.1068. Thank you.

Religion & Rock

Tune into “Religion & Rock” with Msgr. Jim Vlaun on Sunday from 7 AM to 8 AM on WBAB 102.3 FM or 95.3 on the East End of Long Island. Listen on Saturdays at 11 PM on *Sirius Satellite Radio, Channel 159, or the Catholic Channel.* This week’s theme is: **“Searching for Meaning.”** You can visit us anytime to listen or download a show at www.religionandrock.com. For more information about our television shows go to www.TelecareTV.org.

Dominican Village Open House

Dominican Village invites you to an Open House on **Saturday, February 9 from 1 PM until 3 PM**. Conveniently located on a sprawling 13 acre campus on Albany Avenue, Amityville. Dominican Village is a non-sectarian, not-for-profit independent and assisted living rental retirement community that offers outstanding programs, all-inclusive services and bountiful amenities. For further information, please call 631.842.6091.

Valentine Evening for Married Couples

Come and spend a romantic evening celebrating the gift of love with a candlelight dinner and renewal of vows in the context of the Eucharist. The Valentine Evening will be on **Thursday, February 14 at the Ronkonkoma Cenacle**. Registration begins at 5:30 PM and dinner will be at 6:30 PM. The program will conclude by 10 PM. The presenters are Marcia and Brant Johnson. For further information, please call The Cenacle at 588.8366.

Retrouvaille

Retrouvaille is a peer ministry. Couples who have had problems in their own marriages and have recovered from those problems, share their experiences with troubled couples in the hope that they too will see that their marriage can be saved.

For more information about the upcoming Retrouvaille weekend that begins on **Friday, February 1 at the Montfort Retreat Center, Bay Shore**, please call 1.800.470.2230 and you will be connected to a couple that can help.

Did you know?

Every Catholic household in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is entitled to receive a subscription to The Long Island Catholic, the diocesan newspaper.

The parish pays for subscriptions for our parishioners, with discounts based on the number of subscribers. We thank all the parishioners who contributed to last week's Long Island Catholic Sunday collection.

If you missed the collection, it's not too late. You can drop your Long Island Catholic envelope at the Parish Office. All contributions will help defray the cost of the parish subscriptions to our diocesan newspaper.

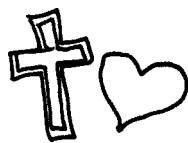
If you are not receiving The Long Island Catholic, write your name and address on the back of the envelope and we'll add your name to the subscription list. To add or change an address call 516.594.1000, extension 32.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Are you living the beatitudes in today's Gospel in your marriage? Learn how to live the way God wants you to in your marriage. Let go of your worries and responsibilities for one weekend to enrich and renew your marriage and bring Christ into the center of your marriage. Please visit the website at www.wmme.org to find out the next scheduled Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend.

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus was the light in the darkness that was mentioned in the Scriptures. He told people to repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. Jesus was a good teacher. He explained things so that people understood about God's two greatest commandments. He told stories. Today his word is like a flashlight lighting your path to heaven. If the batteries in your flashlight need recharging, prayer will light up your flashlight again.



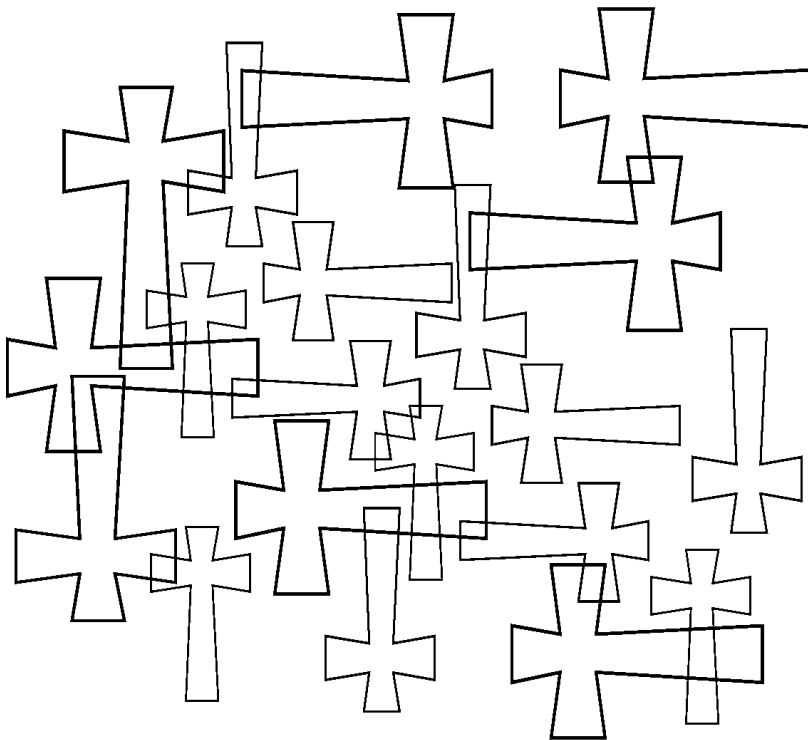
Mission for the Week

I will ask my parents how I can help them today.



Puzzle

How many crosses can you count?



©LPI

THE ANSWER IS TWENTY CROSSES

Prayer



Lord,
I want to be a flashlight leading others to you.

Something to Draw



Draw Jesus shining a flashlight on the road to heaven in front of you.