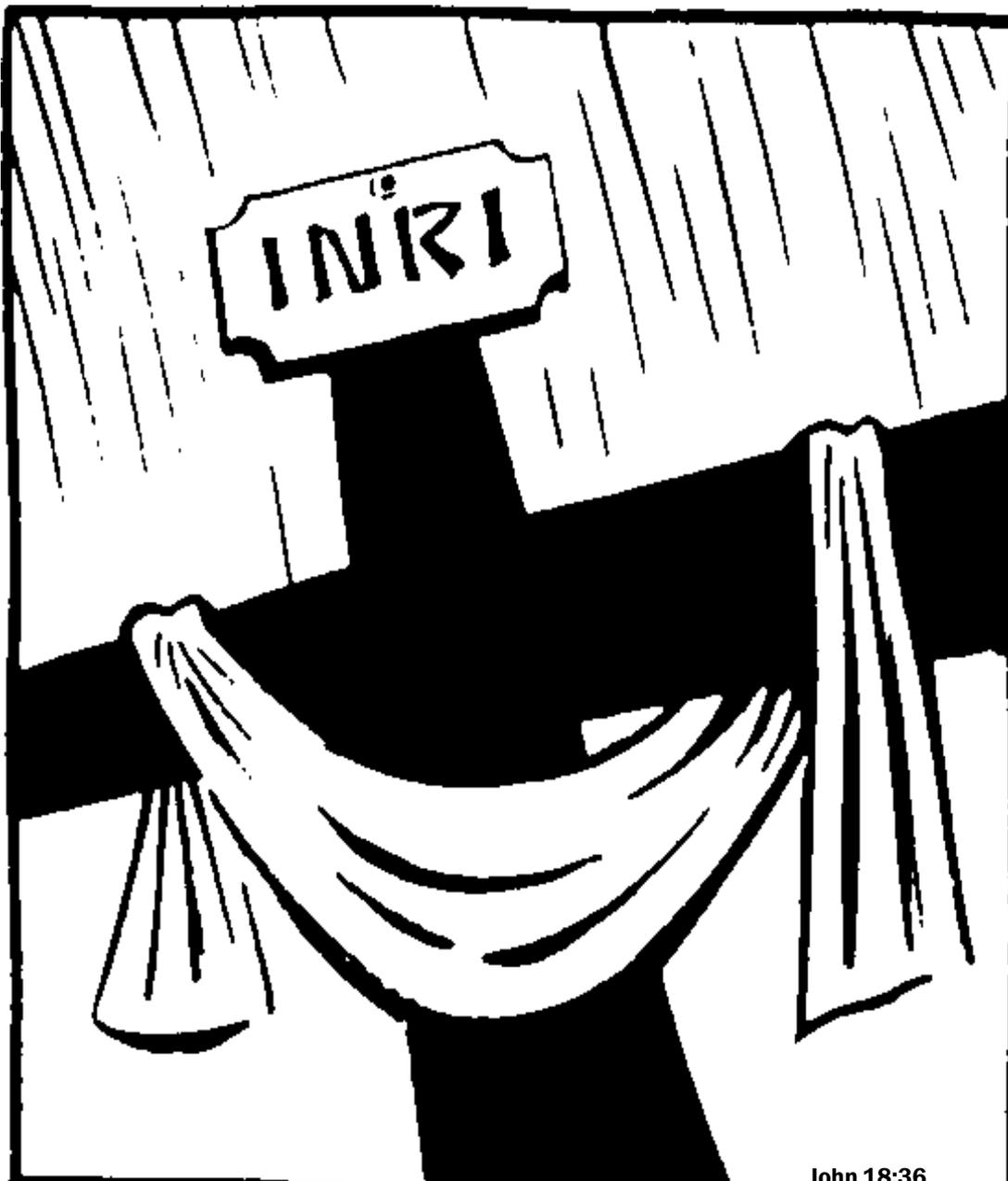


“My kingdom does not

Jesus answered,



belongs to this world...”

John 18:36

Feast of Christ the King

November 26, 2006

Our Lady of Lourdes



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.

Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano

Pastor

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Regina Ann Cioffi

School Principal

Jennifer Gallagher

Director of Youth Services

Carol M. Goetz

Parish Music Director

Sr. Diane Liona

Director of Religious Education

Vita Scorgia

Ministry Spiritual Director

John Sureau

Coordinator of Worship

Sr. Betty Toohig

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Anthony Trombino

Business Manager

Pastoral Council

Michael Abbruscato

Salomon Acosta

Regina Ann Cioffi

Jane Desthers

Stephen Frodell

Jen Gallagher

Anne Kerrigan

Maria Lucie (*co-chair*)

Mary McMahon

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

*Our Lady
of Lourdes*

455 Hunter Avenue

West Islip, New York 11795

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.*

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: rcioffi@ollschool.org

Religious Education Office

661-5440

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - Noon

1 PM - 5 PM

7 PM - 9 PM

email: ReligiousEd@ollchurch.org

S.A.G.E.

661-3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Children's Liturgy

Prophets and Promises

This Advent, our Children's Liturgy and Family Liturgy teams are going to help our young people focus on the prophets of Advents and the promises we are called to be a part of. Each week our young people will reflect on the promises of peace, forgiveness and service and encounter some people who have worked to bring that about both in the times of the Bible and our lives today. Be sure to take a look at our Prophets and Promises newsletter that will be given out at the end of each Children's Liturgy celebration.

If you have not been part of our 9:30 AM Liturgy, we celebrate the readings in a special way with young people from approximately age four to about fourth grade. After the Opening Prayer, they journey to the Parish Center to hear God's Word in a way that keeps the message but makes it a little more understandable for them.

If you have small children or are one yourself, consider coming to the 9:30 AM Liturgy one Sunday to find out more about this great experience for young people.

Advent at "The Six"

...Prayin', Preparin' and Servin'

This Advent, our parish's "Six Committee" is working to bring the readings to life for young people and for all in this community. The readings challenge us to *pray* well, to *prepare* well and to *serve* well for the coming of Jesus in our lives at Christmas.

This can be especially hard in the world in which we live.

December 3 – we'll invite all who come to participate in a special meditative experience hoping that our prayer during this first week of Advent will be a good start to a busy and challenging season. Take some time for you this night and get ready for the power of prayer to change you!

December 10 – we'll talk about how the message of John the Baptist in the Gospel of Luke speaks powerfully to the world we live in today. The message of John the Baptist has a lot to offer many of us! Get ready.

December 17 – we'll try to bring it together in our reflection on the power of service. We'll hear from people of all ages and ways of life and how they live out the call to justice and service. Prepare to be challenged to live your life in a different way!

Come and be part of it all and make Sunday nights during this busy time of the year, a special time for you!

Advent 2006

Advent at OLL

Next Sunday, December 3 begins the Church's celebration of Advent. The readings and prayers of the liturgy speak of anticipation and hope, especially as we begin to read from the Gospel of Luke. Our rituals speak of light coming out of darkness. Our music speaks of preparation for a new birth this Christmas.

Look for more information in the weeks to come about our...

- St. Nicholas Day Celebration on December 5 (*see below*)
- Parish Reconciliation Day of Prayer on December 18
- Advent Evening Prayer

Preludes in Preparation

Beginning next Sunday, our Music Ministry will offer a brief prelude before Mass begins. The hope of the Liturgy is that we can enter a real "sacred space" and in that time be transformed through the Eucharist. The prelude will help with that - encouraging us to be still, to settle down and to prepare well for the Mass that is about to begin. Listen for the prelude at all of our liturgies beginning next Sunday.

Blessing for the Advent Wreath

O God, by whose word all things are sanctified,
pour forth thy blessing upon this wreath
and grant that we who use it may prepare
our hearts for the Coming of Christ,
and may receive from thee abundant graces.
Through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

Let's hope and pray this Advent season will inspire in us a real sense of hope - a hope we can carry from this place to the world in which we live.

St. Nicholas Celebration



Monday, December 4

7 PM Church

St. Nicholas brought hope and joy to children—particularly to those in need. On this night, members of our youth community will tell the story of St. Nicholas so that all may know and work to be more like St. Nicholas. (*Please turn to page 19 for more information on St. Nicholas!*)

We invite all our children to come in comfortable clothes to the Church so that they may hear this powerful story...and meet a very special guest!

As part of this night, we ask all families to bring a new, unused toy for a family in need.

Our Journey continues...



Family Pilgrimage to Catholic Canada

Come with us on a pilgrimage to Montreal and Quebec! Among the many wonderful places in Canada you will experience is St. Joseph's Oratory, a Roman Catholic Basilica on the northern slope of Mount Royal. This is the largest Church in Canada where more than two million visitors who come experience some healing. A wonderful experience for your whole family!

Our second meeting is open to everyone in the parish. This meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 30 in Room 16 at 7:30 PM**. For additional information please call Deacon John at the Parish Office.

Saint Bernard League

If you're in need of help when it snows, members of our parish community will come to your home and shovel you out!

If you think you can use this help, call the Parish Office at 661.3224 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org today so we can begin to match people up now. Please RE-SIGN UP - even if you signed up last year.

... we also need Saint Bernards!

*(Saint Bernards are known for bring people to safety
in hazardous weather conditions)*

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

Peanut Butter and Jelly

Our "Peanut Butter and Jelly Gang" will meet **Sunday, November 26, after "The Six" in the OLL school cafeteria**. We are in need of volunteers to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for local shelters and soup kitchens. While the Thanksgiving holiday is often cause for tremendous donations – help and support are often needed more after the holiday. If you can come, please do. If you can't come, please support our work by dropping off jars of peanut butter, jelly, or loaves of bread at the doors of the Church during the weekends of November 18/19 and November 25/26. Thank you for your continued support.

“When We Love, We Serve”



A big “50th Anniversary”
thank you to the
356 families who completed
stewardship pledge cards this year!
Won’t you join them in
pledging support to the
parish family of
Our Lady of Lourdes?

Stewardship 2006

Stewardship Pledge Card

We are called by God to be one, a family whose love for His Son is evident in all that we do. As members of the Parish Family of Our Lady of Lourdes, I/ we realize that our parish is our Spiritual Home.

We affirm the good that is accomplished here by our gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure. I/ Our family has prayerfully decided to make a regular weekly offering to further the work of our parish.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

I / we pledge an offering of: \$ _____ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ Other ___

- Please check here if you would like us to send periodic reminders for your pledge.
- Please check here if you would like information on options for direct debit or credit card contributions.

Stewardship 2006



Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

What's it all about?

IF you are an adult **AND**

... you were never Baptized

... you were Baptized in another faith and would like to become a baptized Catholic

... you never received Holy Communion (Eucharist)

... you never received your Confirmation

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

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

Please contact John Sureau, S. Nancy, Jen Gallagher or Fr. Stan at the Parish Office. You can call 661-3224, option #1, and we would be happy to help you!



Children's Liturgy of the Word

Help Needed!

Our Family Liturgy and Children's Liturgy of the Word ministries **need you!**

We are looking to add to our teams. If you are interested - you would become part of a team that leads Children's Liturgy once every five weeks. Team members can be presiders, lectors, help "behind the scenes", or help supervise. High school teens, parents and adults are all needed and welcome. To find out more – please contact us at 661.3224, ext. 135 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.



Gospel of Luke...

**Tuesdays-November 21, 28 December 5, and 12
7:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the Parish Center**

Presenter: Deacon Kevin McCormick
Principal, Xaverian High School, Brooklyn, NY

Gospel of Compassion and Hope

This Advent, we'll read from the Gospel of Luke....but what are we hearing? Luke brings us a message of compassion, hope, and challenge. Throughout Luke, the Holy Spirit is active, guiding Jesus and empowering the church. In our busy lives, how can we be guided by Jesus? Empowered by the Spirit? Let's find out how the Gospel of Luke can help in this engaging experience.

Finding Peace in a Busy Season...

**Mondays-December 4, 11, and 18
9 AM - 10 AM in the Parish Center**

Presenter: Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes



Advent Morning Mass Reflections

Come to morning Mass on Mondays in Advent. Our homily that day will introduce a theme for you to reflect on in the time after Mass. You will be able to use our morning rosary and prayer after Mass or just take time for your own reflection. At 9 AM, we will gather in the Parish Center for a talk and time for discussion. Coffee and rolls will be available.
(If you can't make 8 AM Mass-please feel free to join us at 9 AM.)

December 4 :: *What can we hope for?*

The ancient prophets hoped for a messiah who would bring a peaceable kingdom. What can we hope for in our own lives as we prepare for Christmas.

December 11 :: *What do I want for Christmas?*

Often we spend our advent thinking about what gifts we need and what gifts we will give. What, however, do we really need? And what can we really give? We find surprising answers in the advent scriptures.

December 18 :: *"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."*

Lessons about Christmas from a modern day prophetic book - A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens.

Gentle Reminder: Preregistration 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 from 9 AM until 5 PM at 661.5440, extension 3 or email to religioused@ollchurch.org. Fee is \$25 and may vary with each class. No fee is required for those who have paid Religious Education Family Fee or OLL School tuition.

Nocturnal Adoration

Nocturnal Adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament will take place **following the 5 PM Mass on Saturday, December 2.**

Celebrate the presence of the Lord Jesus dwelling in the Most Blessed Sacrament by spending some time in prayer with us between 6 PM and 10 PM. We will end with Benediction. Let us pray for world peace and for all priests.



Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, November 27,** at **12:30 PM in the Parish Center.**

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, November 28,** in the **Parish Center at 9 AM.** All older parishioners are welcome.

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.

Big Screen TV

OLL School is once again having a raffle for a Big Screen TV raffle! The raffle drawing will be held on January 21, 2007 - just in time for the Superbowl!

Raffle tickets will be sold after all Masses this weekend, the weekend of **November 25/26**.

Be sure to stop by and purchase your tickets so you can have a chance to win this great prize...last year's winners are glad they did!

Breakfast with Santa

Our annual "**Breakfast with Santa**" will be held this year on **Sunday, December 3** in the **OLL School cafeteria**.

This is a wonderful event that includes a delicious hearty breakfast consisting of eggs, sausage and pancakes plus lots and lots of breakfast goodies! There will be fabulous prizes to be won, a 50/50 raffle and some really great grand prizes which value over \$700 in total! Let's not forget the special holiday crafts for the kids to make and a visit from Santa!

This event sells out fast and is a great way to start the holiday season with christmas spirit that will warm your heart! Ticket prices, which include a photo with Santa, are \$8 per adult and \$4.50 per child over 2 yrs old. There will be 2 sessions: **Session 1- 8:45 AM until 10:45 AM** and **Session 2 - 11:15 AM to 1:15 PM**. (Tickets will not be sold at the door.) Please contact Christina Macina to purchase tickets at 631-587-0241.

We look forward to seeing you at this exciting event and Merry Christmas to all!
Thank you for your support.

Our Lady of Lourdes School Parents Club

Please help support OLL School Parents Club.

OLL School Parents Club will be selling car magnets that proudly displays the jubilee emblem with our parish name "Our Lady of Lourdes". What a great way for our parish family to unite by using them on our vehicles, front doors and homes! We will be selling them after most masses through the holiday season for \$5.00 each. Please stop by to get yours right away, as supplies are limited.

Many thanks for your support and God Bless!

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



Rest In Peace

Kathleen T. Hilgreen

Evelyn D. LoPresti

Rosary/Novena

Rosary:

Daily after 8 AM Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena:

Monday after 8 AM Mass

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.

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.

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous

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

ALANON

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

Remembering...

Monday, November 27

8:00 AM Cornelius J. Peterson

Tuesday, November 28

8:00 AM Wilfredo Colon-Lopez

Wednesday, November 29

8:00 AM Harold & Edna Gannon

Thursday, November 30

St. Andrew, the apostle

8:00 AM Kenneth Meyer

Friday, December 1

8:00 AM Charles Homann

Saturday, December 2

8:00 AM Vincent McCarthy, Maureen A. Parson & Thomas Nedzynski,
Peter Schreiner, James Sweeney, Ellen & Roland Razon (*living*),
Maria Cacciatore, Ernestine Gallagher, Michael Kostalos,
Richard F. Kaider, Daniel Stone

5:00 PM Nancy Acquista
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Sunday, December 3

8:00 AM Margaret Varley
Fr. Stan Chukwube

9:30 AM Saunders & Wilson Families
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM Joseph Scalia & Eugene DeCanio
Fr. Mike Vetrano

12:30 PM Lydia Ann Olsen
Fr. Ed Dowling

6:00 PM People of the Parish, James J. Werner (*5th anniv.*), Charles Werner,
Michael Buccino, Mark Anthony Polito, Mildred DeFreitas,
Dominick Infurna, John Palumbi, Sr.
Fr. Mike Vetrano

Social Action Alert

Counseling and Intervention Service

Our work to begin a counseling and intervention service is well underway. We have approximately ten volunteer counselors, social workers, and psychologists who are helping with this process.

However, more help is needed- your help!

We are still in need of additional counselors, mental health professionals, psychologists and more who are willing to offer their services to make this a helpful and effective ministry! If you are able to be a part – please contact John Sureau at 661.3224, x. 135 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Helping Others in Need

The Mercy INN Soup Kitchen is in need of our help!

Mercy INN is in need of cooks – people who will cook 5 to 6 large turkeys and then bring the cooked turkeys, in aluminum pans, to the Soup Kitchen the next day. The turkeys would be supplied for you. For more information contact Mr. Tom Russo at 631.587.6422 or e-mail to russop1@jump.com.

In this season of gratitude and stewardship, let's help those who are in need.

NYSCATHOLIC.ORG

Find out more about the Church's Social Justice teaching – and most importantly – how you can be a part of it by going to www.nycatholic.org. Register there for free e-mail updates about important social justice issues!

Financial Summary

November 19, 2006

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

(due to a change in the bulletin deadline-the collection amount for November 19 will appear next weekend.)

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

Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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

Our Lady of Lourdes Bereavement

Our parish support group for those who have lost a loved one—
If interested, please call the Parish Outreach Office at 661.9262.

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

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Those of us at Parish Outreach would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of those who made our Adopt-A-Family such a success! Your generosity and kindness enabled so many people in our area to say “Happy Thanksgiving,” who would not have been able to otherwise. Again, thank you for caring and sharing!

The Giving Tree

It’s that time of year! Christmas is on its way...

In order that we may give those less fortunate in our area a “Merry Christmas,” Parish Outreach along with other ministries here at OLL are putting together our annual “Giving Tree.” Our “Giving Tree will go up on Saturday, December 2.

Our “Giving Tree” has tags that ask for gifts of toys, clothes, food certificates and clothing certificates. This year we will use color coded tags to make our giving and sorting a little easier for our “elves.”

The blue tags are requests for donations of clothes,

the white tags are requests for donations of toys,

the yellow tags are requests for donations of food store certificates and

green tags are requests for donations of clothing store certificates.



You can help by:

- taking a tag from our “Giving Tree”,
- place the requested item in a box, with the tag attached, under the tree no later than **December 17**,
- all items should be left unwrapped, but feel free to provide wrapping paper and bow,
- if you are giving a gift certificate (food or clothing), you may return them by putting them in the collection basket, dropping them at the Parish Office or Parish Outreach during business hours. (Please, do not leave certificates under the tree.)

We are sure that you will join us in making this a Merry Christmas for all, and we thank you for your continued generosity. We wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas!



Feast of Christ the King

Our judicial system is designed so that anyone accused of a crime may present evidence in his or her defense. The accused is also afforded an opportunity to be judged by an impartial jury of their peers. As we have seen, however, even the most innocent can be wrongly convicted and punished, and the guiltiest may be set free. It is not a perfect system, but see how it compares to the “trial” of Jesus Christ!

“Are you the King of the Jews?” Pilate is repeating the charge of blasphemy made by the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus’ answer that his kingdom is not of this world only further serves to confuse Pilate; he does not understand the concept of God and heaven. Instead of passing judgment on false charges, he allows a jury to decide which man should be released, Jesus or the murderer Barabbas. Barabbas’ peers make up the jury, and pronounce the sentence.

The Kingdom of God, the very kingdom Jesus spoke of, belongs to the poor and the lowly. This means those of us who have accepted it with humble hearts. (CCC 544) His time on Earth did not reflect the life of a king; born and raised in humble surroundings, he experienced hunger, thirst, ridicule, torture and finally death. In living our lives in dedication to loving and helping those of similar experiences, we proclaim our love for Christ the King and wait to share in his Kingdom!

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Readings for the Week of November 26, 2006

Sunday: Dn 7:13-14/ Rv 1:5-8/ Jn 18:33b-37
Monday: Rv 14:1-3, 4b-5/ Lk 21:1-4
Tuesday: Rv 14:14-19/ Lk 21:5-11
Wednesday: Rv 15:1-4/ Lk 21:12-19
Thursday: Rom 10:9-18/ Mt 4:18-22
Friday: Rv 20:1-4, 11-21:2/ Lk 21:29-33
Saturday: Rv 22:1-7/ Lk 21:34-36
Next Sunday: Jer 33:14-16/ 1 Thes 3:12-4:2/
 Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

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.

Communion Calls

Communion brought to those who are homebound.
Contact the Parish Office at 661.3224.



Pastoral Care of the 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.

Pray for Our Sick

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

*Deborah Barbaro, Pat Bonavita, Patrick Bowers, Thomas Brennan,
Elise Brenner, Jo Brogan, George Bukowski, Christian Bullock, David Calogero,
Sr. Nancy Campkin, Dawn Coughlin, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo,
Nicholas Curella, Kelly Doan, Jason Fisher, Veronica Graf, Mary Hudson,
Marty Kerrigan, Joseph Lehmann, Anthony Lombardo, Mr. & Mrs. Michael
Lombardo, Mike Loreto, Benjy Margulies, Diego Marino, Michele McCann,
Peter McCann, Sr., Donato Miranda, Bryan Monahan, Julian Parra,
Robert Petersen, Joe Radosti, Dan Rodriguez, Fred Ruggio, Rose Serragano,
Dorothy Sullivan, Juli-Jo Vingo, Loretta Vitale*

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:



Daniel D'Arienzo-US Army
Frederick Wm. Ellis-US Army
John Finn-US Army
Paul McEvoy-US Army
Michael Mallimo-US Army
Peter Provenzano-US Army
James Stultz- US Army
John Thompson-US Marines

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

Feeling God in Vulnerability

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Sometimes we understand things through their absence. The experience of loneliness teaches us about love. Sometimes too the more painful the absence, the more we're opened to what we're missing. The more fierce and raging the loneliness, the bigger the cavern for love it creates inside of us. That's true too for our understanding of God and what it means to draw life from God. If loneliness is what we feel when love is absent, what do we feel when God and grace are seemingly absent? And if loneliness stretches our hearts for deeper love, what does a feeling of God's absence create inside of us?

We feel the seeming absence of God whenever we feel these things: anxiety for no apparent reason, feelings of guilt we can't explain, a helplessness we can't do anything about, fear of death, a nagging sense that something isn't right, a feeling that somehow we aren't good enough, a restless drive to make a name for ourselves, a greedy need to drink in as much life as we can, and the inchoate feeling that nothing's enough, that we aren't enough, that life isn't enough, that we're standing on the edge of nothingness.

At one level, these feelings can all be explained away as nothing more than neuroses, hang-ups, signs of immaturity, lack of robust health, lack of resiliency, over-sensitivity, as signs that we're weak, over-timid, out-of-sorts.

That can be true, but sensitivity also indicates life, humanity, depth, feeling, faith. What's alive is sentient, tender to feeling. It's what's inanimate and dead that's never crippled by feelings. Brute things don't suffer anxiety, rocks don't worry about betrayal, and self-centred egoists aren't concerned about sin. To be anxious, uneasy, haunted by the unseen, and worried that somehow we aren't good enough, can also be a sign of being in touch with something deeper, namely, of being sentient and attuned to the fact that we're creatures and not God and we must, therefore, be graced and justified by God in order to receive life and salvation.

What does that mean?

Catholics and Protestants have used different languages to explain this, though, in the end, we've both had the same concept.

Those of us who were raised Roman Catholics, grew up with the notion of "grace". For us, the key to living was to be always "in the state of grace". The big worry was to die "outside of grace". Negatively, we understood grace as the opposite of sin. Positively, we defined it as being alive inside the Body of Christ.

Protestants mostly used a different language (even as

they wrote the timeless hymn, Amazing Grace). They spoke of "justification", a concept they took from St. Paul. For them, life ultimately had meaning or not and one entered heaven or not on the basis of being justified by God.

But what does that mean?

This isn't an easy concept to grasp or explain. The biblical language is clear, but concept, like most deep things, is not something we easily get our minds around.

"Justification" (which can also be translated as "Righteousness") is, first of all, something inside of God. What?

We can only dance around its meaning. It refers to a substantiality, a wholeness, a goodness, a perfection, and an immortality that we can't imagine but can partially intuit through our experience of its absence. What are we missing that God has?

Classical theology defined God as "Ipsum Esse Subsistens", self-sufficient being. Only God does not need anything outside of Self in order to come into existence and remain in existence. Everything else, including every human person and humanity itself, needs someone or something outside of itself to be born and to stay in existence. Alone, all by ourselves, we lack a substance, a meaning, and a goodness that we're powerless to give ourselves. Alone we do stand on the brink of nothingness - and, when we're sensitive and attuned to things, we know it!

And what we lack is what's inside of God - substance, life, meaning, beauty, goodness, community, love. Only God can give these to us. Classically, for Roman Catholics, God gives them to us through grace; for Protestants, God gives them through justification. Either way, there's no life, no meaning, and no future outside of this gift.

And though we can deny this to ourselves, our experience belies that. We feel our vulnerability, our mortality, our powerlessness in every breath we take. We can't give ourselves life and we can't even protect ourselves in the life we're living. Nobody is invulnerable.

No matter our achievements, no matter how strong our self-image, no matter how blessed we are in body, mind, and possessions, in the end, we're all insubstantial - and we feel it! We aren't *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*.

We can't give ourselves life, meaning, love, immortality; and, when we feel this, we're opened, soul, mind, body, to the gift of life and salvation that can only come from God. God can give to us what we can't give to ourselves.

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.

Catholic Brownie Religious Awards

The *Ave Maria* and *Family of God* Religious Medals are available for all Catholic Brownie Girl Scouts. Working with a parent or guardian, the Brownie can learn about Mary, the Mother of God, her family and do things to help people. She then receives a special medal in recognition of her work. For information call the Diocesan Catholic Scouting Office at 516.678.5800, ext. 245.

Elder Care

Confused by Medicare part D? Come to St. Patrick's Senior Advocacy Program workshop "**Seniors have Options...**" on **Tuesday, December 5 from 10 AM until 12 Noon**. Topics to be discussed will include 2007 prescription plans, retiree planning and more. The workshop is free. There will be refreshments and door prizes. For more information please call 665. 7216.

Legendary Patron

December 6: Saint Nicholas

St. Nicholas was actually a bishop in the 4th century. He was born in Patara, and as a layman became bishop of Myra. His holiness and generosity were legendary and many stories of his goodness were passed on after his death, at times embellished by overly-enthusiastic supporters and admirers. Through a series of historical twists and turns, the beloved figure of Santa Claus was based on him. But what makes St. Nicholas even more interesting is that he is the patron of many different groups of people including pharmacists, bankers, judges, businessmen, butchers, pilgrims, firemen, newlyweds, poets, and many more. He is the patron of many cities and countries, and from his name are derived many others. He is recognized around the world and is indeed one of the most popular and well known saints, rivaling even St. Peter! His feast is celebrated on December 6.

Religion & Rock

Tune into "Religion & Rock" with Fr. 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.

Next Sunday's theme is: "**Thanksgiving.**" Don't forget to tune in!

Visit "Religion & Rock" on the web, www.religionandrock.com. Also watch "*Good News with Father Jim*" on TELECare, channel 29, on Mondays and Fridays at 9:45 AM; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 7:45 PM; Sundays at 8 PM.

Christmas at Sagtikos

Go back in time and observe Christmas customs from past eras of the Manor - Dutch Colonial, American Revolution, and Victorian. Tours will be given on **Saturday and Sunday, December 9 and 10 beginning at 11 AM.**

Space is limited and reservations are required. Reservation forms can be obtained by downloading them from the website: www.sagtikosmanor.org or by calling 631.661.5169.

Merry Christmas New York City!

A concert for Christmas featuring Tony Melendez-born without arms in a small village in Nicaragua, he learned to play the guitar with his toes and is one of the best loved of all Catholic musicians. Also, OneVoice-an outstanding choir of talented singers from community and professional theatre. Fr. Charles and Laurie Mangano will bless their audience with inspiring songs that lead the soul to Christ, and Jon Kelley of the Prayer Channel will emcee. The concert will be on **Saturday, December 16 at 2 PM in the Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center.** For tickets call Center Charge at 212.721.6500, purchase online at www.LincolnCenter.org or from the Lincoln Center Box Office. Buses will be leaving from St. John Nepomucene in Bohemia and St. Patrick's in Bay Shore. For bus information, contact Sadie at 631.567.2676.

Model Train and Toy Show

St. Vincent's Famous Model and Toy Show in Elmont will be on **Sunday, December 3 between 10 AM and 3 PM.** Featuring Lionel, LGB and American Flyer trains and more. \$5 at the door for Adults children under 12 free when accompanied by an adult, Seniors \$4. For more information, please call 516.352.2127.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Telephone Reassurance Program

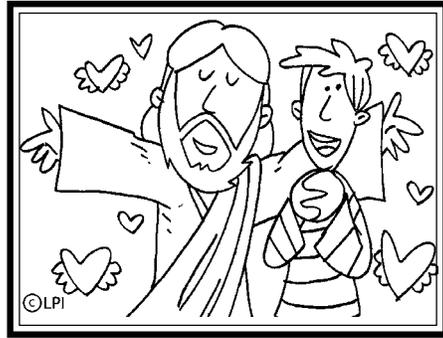
If you live alone and would like a **daily phone** call from a volunteer, just call the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program** at 631.979.9490.

Friendly Visitor Program

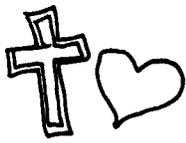
If you live alone and would like a **visit** from a volunteer, just call the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program** at 631.979.9490.

If you are 55+ and would like to volunteer to call and/or visit a homebound senior, call the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program** at 631.979.9490.

Today is Christ the King Sunday. Instead of using his power selfishly to get whatever he wanted, Jesus used his power to free people from sickness, from death, and from evil. Jesus came to tell us the truth about God. Now we need to listen to Jesus' voice and follow his example.



Mission for the Week

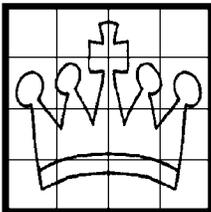


We "listen to Jesus" when we follow his example.

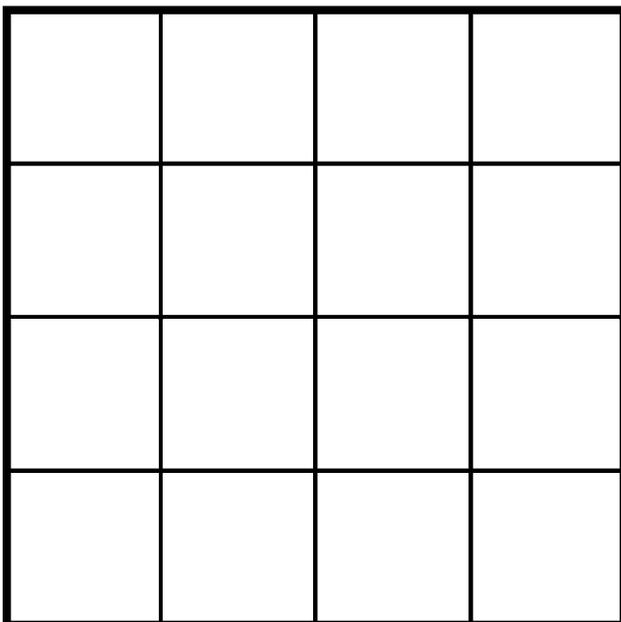
This week, let others go first when you play a game.



Puzzle



Enlarge the picture square by square.



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Dear God,

thank you
for sending Jesus
to be our
loving King.