

**They found him
in the temple,**

sitting among the teachers,



**listening to them and
asking them questions.**

Luke 2:46

Our Lady of Lourdes

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph • December 31, 2006



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 Scorcio

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 McMahan

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

Living Liturgy



Receiving Communion

So many people, particularly around the holidays, ask about receiving communion. First and most important, know that you're welcome here at OLL – whether you worship regularly or only when you can! So let's review how to receive communion to put you at ease...

If you're going to receive, the ushers will show you where to go. While on line, join in our Communion Hymn and sing. Our voices give such glory to God! Those who wish to receive should make a slight bow of the head while on line before receiving. When in front of the priest or Eucharistic Minister, you should come forward with hands extended (or mouth open if you want to receive on the tongue). When the minister says, "The Body of Christ," you say: "Amen!"

The Church tells us that the most complete form of the Eucharist is to receive it under both species – bread and wine. This is certainly your choice. If you wish to receive from the cup, make a slight bow of the head while waiting on line. When you come forward, the minister will say, "The Blood of Christ" and you should reply, "Amen" and take a sip of the wine. The minister will clean the cup after you have received.

When you return to your seat, take some time to pray quietly and then join in our beautiful Communion Hymns.



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!

Adult Faith Formation

Preparing for life ending decisions...

Reasons to hope...

Tuesdays, January 9, 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 2007

7:30-9:30 PM

Parish Center

Presenters include *S. Diane Liona, Barbara Redmond, Deacon John and Anne DeGuardi... and more*

As we journey through the seasons of life, we must move with them and become aware of these life ending decisions... challenges... sorrows...

How do I face walking with someone who is seriously ill?

How do I prepare for the loss of a loved one-as a spouse, an adult, daughter/son, a friend, a sibling?

Through the support of others, these evenings will guide us as we walk this journey. Together we will discuss, reflect, share and pray. Please join us – don't miss it!

...Upcoming Courses

American Mystics: Thomas Merton and Jessica Powers

One Night Only!

Tuesday, March 6, 2007 from 7:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the Parish Center.

Our presenter is Kathleen Reid, MA, Director of Religious Education, St. Philip Neri R.C. Church.

We all need good role models! Here we will explore the life, legacy, and writings of these two 20th century Catholics and Mystics. Through presentation, discussion, and reflection... we will see what wisdom we can receive from these fascinating, creative, and gifted people.

The Eucharist: Gift and Call

One Night Only!

Tuesday, March 27, 2007 from 7:30 PM until 9:30 PM in the Parish Center.

Our presenter is S. Barbara Regan r.c. MA in Theology, Staff of Cenacle Retreat Center.

Each week, thousands come to receive the Eucharist at Our Lady of Lourdes...but are we going through the motions or do we really understand the awesome gift God gives us and how it can change our lives? As we look at the history of the Eucharist and understand it's role in our lives, let's find out!

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 and 7PM – 9PM, at 661.5440 x3, or e-mail to: religioused@ollchurch.org. Fee: \$25 [No fee is required for those who have paid the Religious Education Family Fee or Our Lady of Lourdes School Tuition. Fees may vary appropriately.]

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, January 2, 2007** in the **Parish Center at 9 AM**. All older parishioners are welcome.

Holy Name Society

Our Holy Name Society meets on the second Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be on **Sunday, January 14, 2007**. We will begin with the **Rosary at 7:40 AM in the Church** and the **meeting will follow the 8 AM Mass at 9 AM in Room 16**. Come and join us!

Senior Circle

The Senior Circle meets on the last Monday of each month. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, January 29, 2007 at 12:30 PM in the Parish Center**.

Rosary Christian Mothers

The Rosary Christian Mothers meet on the first Monday evening of each month. The next meeting will be **Monday, January 8, 2007**. (*second Monday for the month of January*) We will begin with **Rosary at 7:45 PM** followed by **meeting at 8 PM in the Parish Center**.

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.

School News

Support Catholic Education and Become a Classroom Angel

A gift of \$1000 to Our Lady of Lourdes School will support programs of science, technology, and the arts in our award winning Catholic School. Your name will be engraved on a plaque over the door to the classroom of your choice for a whole year!



The new school newspaper, "*OLL Chronicles*" has just gone to press. In addition to giving a copy to each student, we will make copies available at the doors of the church.

Host Families

We are looking for "Host Families" to host Korean students who are coming to St. Cyril/Our Lady of Lourdes School at Deer Park/W. Islip Cultural Exchange Program in the beginning of January, 2007. The students will be staying for four weeks and the students range in ages from third grade through eighth grade. You must provide transportation, meals, and basic necessities. You will be paid \$600 a month. If you are interested in hosting a Korean student, please contact Ernest Yang at 917.579.7990 and/or email to ernestnsyang@gmail.com



OLL School Supports Outreach

The second graders, in Mrs. Fran Sullivan's class, sold stuffed animals, games and puzzles to the first and third graders. They began this project to sharpen their math skills - counting money, making change. The money earned was used to make a Merry Christmas for an Outreach family.

Saint Bernard League

The winter months can be a stressful and tough time for many in our parish community.

Our parish's youth community and Social Action Group have created a special group

-The Saint Bernard League-

to help with shoveling for our parishioners in need throughout the winter months.

How does this work?

When it snows – "your" Saint Bernard will call you to see if you are in need of help. If you need their services, you will set up a convenient time and your Saint Bernard will shovel for you and your family.

Do you need the services of our OLL Saint Bernards?

If you would like to be included on the list of parishioners who may need the services of our OLL Saint Bernard League volunteers, please call the Parish Office at 661.3224 or email to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Do you want to be a Saint Bernard?

We are in need of individual parishioners and parish families to be "Saint Bernards" to those in need within our parish community. If you want to become an OLL Saint Bernard, just call the Parish Office at 661.3224 and leave your name and phone number or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

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

*Donald Ferguson
Linda Froehlich
Raymond C. Hart*

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, January 1

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

8:00 AM People of the Parish

9:30 AM Bernardo Pistone (*birthday*)

Tuesday, January 2

Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, bishops, doctors

8:00 AM Joseph A. Santangelo

Wednesday, January 3

Holy Name of Jesus

8:00 AM Madeline Hopper

Thursday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, religious

8:00 AM Wesley D. & Paul Sweetser

Friday, January 5

St. John Neumann, bishop

8:00 AM Kevin Clyde

Saturday, January 6

8:00 AM Joseph Marro, Mark A. Polito, John DeBlasio, Robert Turner,
Anthony Macchia, Mary Jane Stewart, George Bukowski,
Hortensio Gomez, Salvatore Sciacca, Muriel & Anthony Walsh

5:00 PM Anthony & Josephine Paladino

Sunday, January 7

8:00 AM Lee Devlin

9:30 AM Reid Family

11:00 AM Dec'd mbrs of Sweeney & Primrose Family

12:30 PM Lucille & Ben Ingoglia

6:00 PM Vincent Galbo & Casertano Family, Nicholas Ambrosino,
Dennis Prichinello, Heddy Yuliano, Michael Buccino,
Deborah Barbaro, Muriel Walsh, Dorothy Kee, Loretta Cokasko,
Dorothy Leman, Dominic Cavallo, Mary Connelly

Petrino & Reinbold Families
Jean Stassi
Tom Shea
Marie Cominski
Rose Yondola
M/M Harold Wissing
Tom McGinnis
M/M Joseph Doldo
Catherine & Bernard Gordy
Wesley & Harrell Family
M/M John Sullivan
Isola McManus
Elizabeth & Martin Lichten
Dec'd mbrs Isola & Dixon Families
Gould Family
Frank & Marge Magri, Bill Lane
Michael Reilly
Glaser & Stevens Family
Irene Antkow
Pasquale DeVivo
JoAnne Wolffe
Rick Munkwitz
Louis & Angelina Bonacci
Anthony & Anna Belich
Troops Killed in Action
Joseph L. McPhail
M/M Michael Podhany
Joseph Stabile Family
Frances & Vincent Bivona
Rosalie Diamante
Francis A. Kosiczky
Josephine & Henry Busching
Eugene J. Langan
Anne Massaro
Domenica Carrasso
M/M Kenneth McIlwaine
Virginia & Joseph Beno
John McKeffery
Vera DeSantis
Russ & Mary Sweeney
M/M Joseph Belliveau
Terence McAdams
John D. Russo
Helen & William Small
Rose & Joseph McNamara
M/M Angelito Cruz
Josephine Geldmacher
M/M Thomas Ferrara
Ralph C. Padula
Caroline Fileccia
M/M Raymond Mascolo
M/M Alvin Osekavage

Marion Squillanti
Dec'd mbrs Gagliano & Pizzella Families
Homann/Sabala Family
Edward Letscher
Fred Totans
M/M Edwin Kolkmeier
Lang/Weisser Family
M/M Peter M. Magliocco
John R. Hayes
M/M Carmine Telesca
Olga Krause
Dec'd mbrs Troiano Family
Philip DeVirgilis
Frank DiSarlo
Nancy & Jerry Esposito
Raymond & Agnes Hennessey
M/M George Bukowski
Daniel Thompson
William F. Kruger
George Wild
Gertrude Sullivan
Stanley Obremski
M/M A.F. Alaggio
M/M Philip E. Gervasio, Sr.
M/M Norman Schlosser
Mark Polito
Catherine & Declan Flynn
William L. LeComte
Tom Fitzpatrick
Ann Dwyer
Our Fallen Veterans
M/M J. Martucci
R & S Guastella
M/M Jerome Capoccia
Domenica Ruocco
Theodore Nadvornik
M/M John Bochicchio
M/M Vincent Fiust
Mariani & Luisi Family
Dec'd mbrs Watts, Aragona, Campella Family
Nitkiewicz & Szczecina Family
Charles T. Waag
M/M Joe Rosario
Angelina Sibilla
Marie Perez
Thomas D'Angelo
M/M Steven Troiano
M/M Russell Murphy
Joan Laverty
Nelson, Willmer, Carter & Kreuzburgs Family
Joan P. Hill
M/M Salvatore Depetro

Celebrating New Year's



The Church will gather on Sunday, December 31 and Monday, January 1 to ring in the New Year and to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary—a holy day.

We'll celebrate the Solemnity of Mary on **Sunday, December 31 at 5 PM** and **Monday, January 1 at 8 AM and 9:30 AM**.

PLEASE NOTE:

“The Six” Sunday night liturgy *will not* be celebrated on Sunday, December 31.

A Day with Fr. Carl Arico

Contemplative Outreach of Long Island/Queens presents “A Day with Fr. Carl Arico.”

Fr. Carl will speak about the four superstars of our tradition—Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Jean DeCausade, and John Cassian.

The presentation will be on Saturday, January 13, 2007 from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Center. We will gather at 9:30 AM for coffee and fellowship.

Please bring a bag lunch. Donation is \$30. For registration and further information, please call Betty Teufel at 631.586.6608.

Nocturnal Adoration

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament follows the 5 PM Mass and concludes with Benediction at 9:50 PM on Saturday, January 6. Make a resolution for the new year and spend some time in prayer with your parish family before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We will praying for our family and our priests. All are welcome!



Social Action Alert

The work of the Church calls each of us to work hard and work well for the good of those in need within our community. We do that in many ways and YOU can be part of that any time!

Social Action Food Baskets

Every time you come to Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes, please check our parish shopping list which appears in our weekly bulletin. These are some of the items needed for our parish's food pantry. Our food pantry services those in need within our own parish and in local organizations and parishes in the region including Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, Wyandanch, St. Anne's in Brentwood and PRONTO. Your food donation – whenever you come – is a big help!

Helping Local Charities

We are great cooks!! We serve meals at local soup kitchens and shelters when they're in need. Are you great in the kitchen? Dinner for 100 or so not a problem (with some help)?

Let us know...we'll call you when we're cooking! Call 631.661.3224 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Look for more info in upcoming issues of the bulletin about...

our ecumenical outreach to other faith communities in the area and our work with Habitat for Humanity.

Living God's Call for Charity and Justice in Political Life

An excerpt from *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), the first Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI
...to the Bishops, priests, and deacons, men and women, religious and
all the lay faithful on Christian love.

The Church's Political Responsibility

The Church's social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being. It recognizes that it is not the Church's responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life. Rather, the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest. Building a just social and civil order, wherein each person receives what is his or her due, is an essential task which every generation must take up anew. As a political task, this cannot be the Church's immediate responsibility. Yet, since it is also a most important human responsibility, the Church is duty-bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through ethical formation, her own specific contribution towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving them politically. The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.

Parish Outreach



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

Outreach Office Hours

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

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: **"New Beginnings."**

Don't forget to tune in!

Visit "Religion & Rock" on the web, www.religionandrock.com.

Also watch "Good News with Father Jim" on TELE CARE, channel 29, on Mondays and Fridays at 9:45 AM; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 7:45 PM; Sundays at 8 PM.

Financial Summary

December 17, 2006

Weekly Collection	\$ 20,676.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (324.00)

December 24, 2006

Weekly Collection	\$ 19,312.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (1,688.00)

December 25, 2006-Christmas

Weekly Collection	\$ 49,602.00
Budgeted Amount	-\$ 55,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (5,398.00)

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



Feast of the Holy Family

Luke 2:41-52

Christian comedian Jeff Allen successfully mixes his faith with his humorous look at everyday life. On his web page, he invites the public to relate funny family stories. One such story involved a boy at school and a homework assignment. On the board, the teacher wrote that the class should all read “Pg. 13” in their books that evening. The boy raised his hand and said he couldn’t do the homework because his parents don’t allow anything PG-13 in their home.

Family miscommunications have been taking place for as long as there have been families. Thinking they had lost their son, Joseph and Mary searched for three days, only to find him with the teachers in the temple, listening and asking questions like a young man much older than his 12 years. Jesus was surprised at their concern, explaining that he was in the house of his Father. Though the Gospel of Luke says they did not understand what he meant, it also says Mary kept these things in her heart, as mothers always do.

We are taught in The Catechism of the Catholic Church that the Christian family is considered a community of faith, hope, and charity. Our family community is both a sign and an image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit (CCC 2204-5). By having children and raising them in a holy and prayerful home, we are reflecting God’s work of creation. A strong family will remain that way with the love of God.

Readings for the Week of December 31, 2006

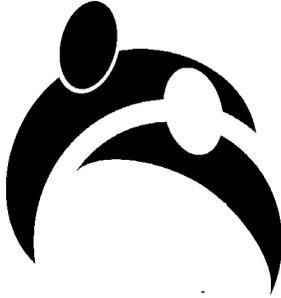
Sunday:	Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 <i>or</i> 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Col 3:12-21 <i>or</i> 3:12-17 <i>or</i> 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/Lk 2:41-52
Monday:	Nm 6:22-27/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21
Tuesday:	1 Jn 2:22-28/Jn 1:19-28
Wednesday:	1 Jn 2:29—3:6/ Jn 1:29-34
Thursday:	1 Jn 3:7-10/Jn 1:35-42
Friday:	1 Jn 3:11-21/Jn 1:43-51
Saturday:	1 Jn 5:5-13/Mk 1:7-11 <i>or</i> Lk 3:23-38 <i>or</i> 3:23, 31-34, 36, 38
Next Sunday:	Is 60:1-6/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Monenna Kennedy*. 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 ...

Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Elise Brenner, Jo Brogan, Sr. Nancy Campkin, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Nicholas Curella, Irene D'Auria, John Eifler, Joseph Fiore, Jason Fisher, Patricia Funk, Barbara Guarino, Kathleen Kerrigan, Anthony Lombardo, Michael Lombardo, Millie Lombardo, Mike Lorento, Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Freida Perry, Gene Perry, Robert Petersen, Joe Radosti, Dan Rodriguez, Fred Ruggio, Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, 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

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

Commandments for the Long Haul

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Daniel Berrigan once wrote a wonderful little book entitled, *“Ten Commandments for the Long Haul”*. It was intended as spiritual sustenance, sustaining food, for those who walk the lonely, long road of faith and often find themselves discouraged and running out of gas. Berrigan doesn't offer a quick fix, but points out the right direction within which we should be walking and where, at key junctures, if we cast our eyes at the right spot, we might find Elijah's jug, God's food for the journey.

As we begin a new year, filled with new hope and new resolutions, here are ten such commandments that might serve us well as we walk the long road:

1) Acknowledge your contingency, your helplessness. You are a creature, not the creator.

You are not God, but a creature. Only God is “*ipsum esse subsistens*”, self-sufficient being. Like all creatures, you're dependent and interdependent. Life works when you acknowledge this, when you accept that you can't give yourself life. All is gift. If you try to live the illusion of self-sufficiency and try to guarantee your own immortality, you mimic the sin of Adam and Eve, complete with all the futility of effort, the lording-it-over, and the alienation from nature that ensues. Proper living begins with the words: “I am not God!”

2) Pray, prayers of helplessness, gratitude, and praise.

Pray always! Also pray formally each day. By your baptism you're a priest. Pray as priest: Hold the world up each day to God. Hold up both its wonders and its pain. Pray in gratitude, thanking God, not just for “this or that”, but for life itself, for light, for this earth, for those who love you. Pray from your weaknesses and helplessness: “Lord, hang on to me lest I slip away from you. Do for me what I cannot do for myself.”

3) Welcome and accept the present moment.

Life is what happens to you while you're planning your life. Don't let the busyness, pressures, and heartaches of life steal the present moment from you. Only it is real. Drink it in, with all it carries. It's the only place you will experience love and joy. If not now-when? If not with these people-with whom? If not here-where?

4) Give yourself permission to be inadequate.

Both God and nature give you permission not to be perfect. Don't be too hard on yourself and, especially, on others. Everyone falls short. God doesn't keep you from falling and failing, but redeems you when you do fall. You're loved as you are. Fear not, you are inadequate!

5) Be sufficiently loving and critical, both at the same time

If you're critical without being loving, you're destructive. If you're loving without being critical, you're weak. Your loved ones, your church, and your community need you to be loving and critical, both at the same time. Don't blackmail community by constantly threatening your withdrawal. Love, be critical, and stay. Pull from your bag the new as well as the old.

6) Be post-ideological, post personal-history, post-conservative, post-liberal, post-naive, and post-sophisticated.

Be non-classifiable. Have an unlisted number as regards being liberal or conservative. Admit that the right and left have both run out of imagination and that their sympathies are highly-selective. Don't be naive, but don't be sophisticated either. See both as phases to pass through. Forgive your past.

7) Bless what's good and beautiful, even as you stand where the cross of Christ is erected.

Bless what's good in the world. Never, for the sake of cause, orthodoxy or justice, denigrate beauty. All that's good and beautiful has God as author. Honour it, before speaking any word of challenge to the world. Imitate Christ: First bless the world and its goodness and, only then, go stand where the cross is perennially erected, where the excluded ones in the culture find themselves.

8) Be shockingly “Catholic” - earthy and wine-drinking.

Bask in the goodness of life. We have divine permission to be happy. God invented wine. Jesus scandalized people with his capacity to enjoy life. He drank wine and let his heart be warmed by friends. Don't confuse John the Baptist with Jesus. John was the ascetic, not Jesus.

9) Accept aging.

Rely more on the paschal mystery than on cosmetics. All that dies brings rich new life, even our own bodies. Paschal wisdom will do more for your joy than a face-lift. Aging needs to be defined aesthetically. Your soul must be properly aged before it leaves and your body, like an old wine-barrel, takes on a different function and beauty as you age. Aging is an art form.

10) Serve the right God!

God, as Julian of Norwich assures us, “is completely relaxed and courteous, himself the happiness and peace of his dear friends, his beautiful face, radiating measureless love, like a marvellous symphony.” Don't serve any other God than this One. Don't bow to any molten calf, created in the image and likeness of our own tensions and bitterness.

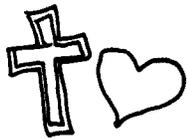
Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Sharing the Gospel

When Jesus traveled to Jerusalem as a 12-year-old young man, he felt completely at home in the temple. He enjoyed talking to the teachers about his Father in heaven. His questions and his answers showed how much he loved God.



Mission for the Week

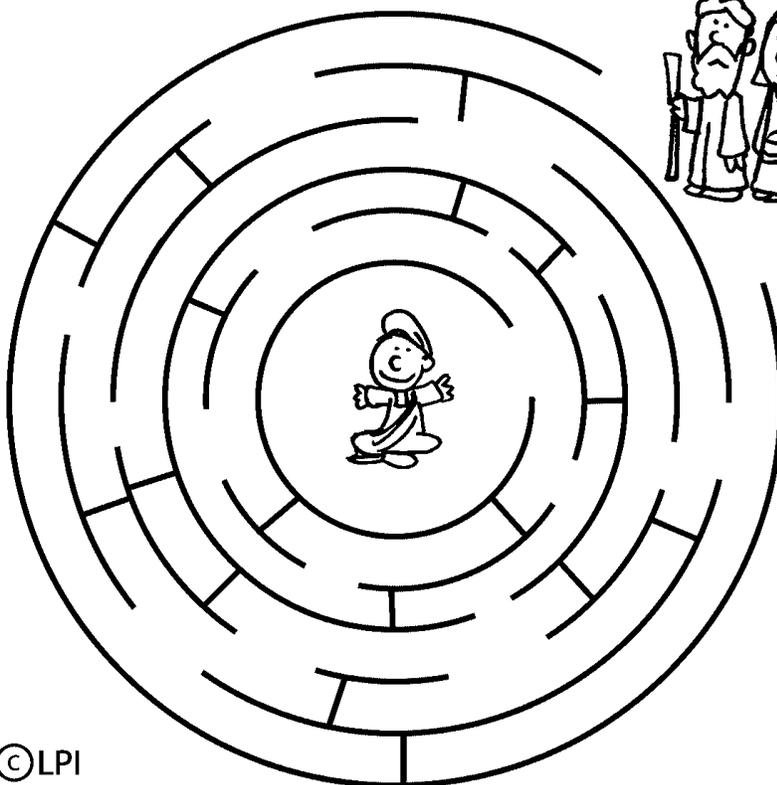


Help visitors to your church feel welcomed.
As a family or as a class, make cards for visitors, asking them to come back.



Puzzle

Help Mary and Joseph find Jesus.



Dear God,

help me
to feel at home
in my church
like Jesus did.