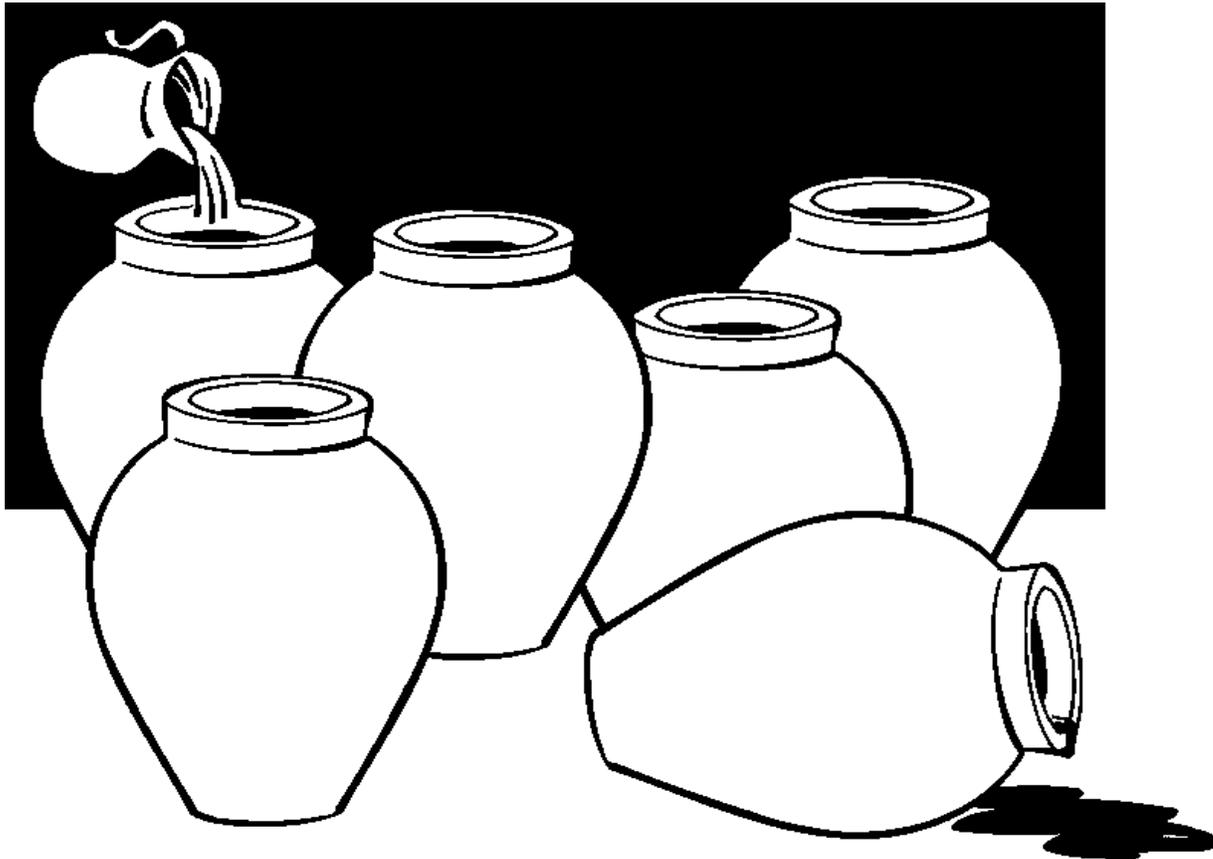


Our Lady of Lourdes

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time • January 14, 2007



JESUS turns
WATER
into
WINE

"Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him."

John 2:11



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

Adult Faith Formation

Preparing for life ending decisions...

Reasons to hope...

Tuesdays, January 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: religiously@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.]

Living Liturgy



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year from January 18 through January 25, we pray for unity and respect among all of the Christian churches!

Our own parish has made some efforts by joining the Babylon Clergy Cluster so that we can more fully learn from and share with other local Churches and communities.

The theme for this year, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is, "He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." Let's pray for the openness to see and to hear the powerful message of our own Church and other local Churches, too!

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,

Already, over fifteen people from our parish community have expressed an interest in becoming full members of the Catholic Church! What a great statement about our parish community.

We are in the process of planning out an extensive program that includes Baptism and full reception in the Church at the Great Vigil and Confirmation at our Pentecost liturgies in May.

Of course we still have room for you. Our meetings will begin next Sunday, January 21. If you or someone you care about is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, please contact Sister Nancy Campkin, Jennifer Gallagher, Fr. Stan or John Sureau at 661.3224. If you have already contacted us, look in the mail for upcoming information about meetings and gatherings!



Martin
Luther
King Jr.
Day

The Parish Offices will be closed on Monday, January 15 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The offices will reopen Tuesday at 9 AM.



What is a Pilgrimage?

Come and experience a special opportunity to travel on a parish pilgrimage with family and friends from the community of Our Lady of Lourdes Church...

...a pilgrimage is a travel experience that is fueled by a desire to move closer to the sacred, to encounter Christ or Our Blessed Mother, or a particular saint. This can be found in a special place such as Saint Anne de Beaupre' located in Quebec City and Saint Joseph's Oratory overlooking the city of Montreal –all wrapped up in a peaceful place with rolling hills and picturesque villages in Canada.

Departure date is set for Monday, July 9 returning on Monday, July 16, 2007. Come to a brief meeting on **Thursday, January 25 in Room 16 at 7:30 PM** and meet other interested travelers. Isn't this a great way to celebrate fifty-one years of our parish? For additional information call Deacon John in the Parish Office at 661.3224.

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 20 / 21

Next 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.

School Scrip

Is sold throughout the year. Purchasing Scrip as gifts or for your own day to day purchases costs you nothing extra and benefits special programs in Our Lady of Lourdes School.

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

A Catholic Education builds character, compassion and values

Our Lady of Lourdes School

44 Toomey Road
West Islip, NY 11795
631-587-7200

**We provide excellence
in academics
and spiritual growth**

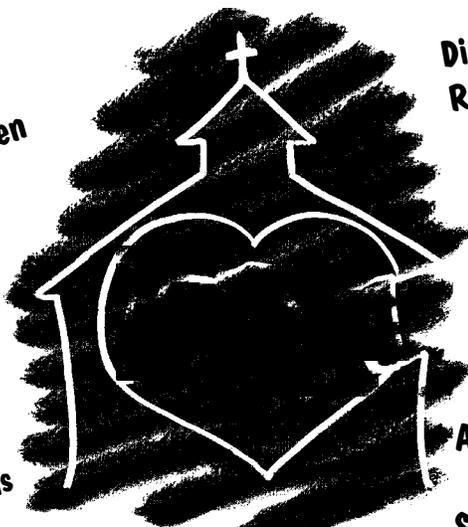
Multi-student discounts

**Diocesan Tuition
Reimbursement**

Full-day kindergarten

**Nursery
and
Pre-K programs**

Drama, Dance, Music



**Advanced research program
in partnership with
Stony Brook Medical School!**

**Middle School Sports Programs
basketball, soccer, baseball,
softball, and more!**

Open House

Sunday, January 21, 2007

10:30 AM-12:30 PM

Catholic School education affordable?

YES!

**Ask about our scholarships and
tuition assistance programs**

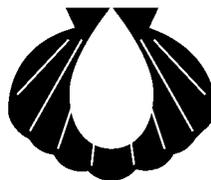
A school to believe in, a place to call home...

Let us show you why we are special!

*Now accepting registration for September 2007
For further information or if you have any questions,
please call Mrs. Regina Cioffi, Principal at 631.587.7200, option 2*

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***Baptisms****Heather Mary Casey*

Edward and Kristine

Riley Elizabeth Davies

Daniel and Denise

Connor Michael Dedcovich

Kevin and Lori

Madison Alexandra Erb

Jonathan and Dawn

Giavanna Madison Lazaro

Victor and Constance

Christian Louis Esperon

Hector and Danielle



There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." - *Jn 2:1-3*

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 15

8:00 AM Peter Reehil

Tuesday, January 16

8:00 AM Robert Fitzgerald

Wednesday, January 17

St. Anthony, abbot

8:00 AM Aniello (Al) Bianco

Thursday, January 18

8:00 AM Ann & Joe Nosarzewski

Friday, January 19

8:00 AM Connie Sasso Ragonese

Saturday, January 20

8:00 AM Sue Carlson, Mark A. Polito, Anna Lucchese, Katherine Sharkey,
Very Reverend Brother Shane Burke, O.S.F., Ed. D.,
Brother Donan Conrad, O.S. F., Eva Jacewicz, Marney Sabino,
Joseph Fiore

5:00 PM Tom Malcolm

Fr. John Asomugha

Sunday, January 21

8:00 AM Barbara McGarrity

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

9:30 AM Tony Squeo

Fr. Mike Vetrano

11:00 AM Joseph Rizzo

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

12:30 PM Henry Riedemann

Fr. John Asomugha

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Lisa Ann Valentino, Antoinette Baressi,
Veronica Graf, Antonia Hernandez, Fred Ruggio, Alberta Foley,
Ann Murray, Angela Russo

Fr. Mike Vetrano



Rest In Peace

Antoinette M. Manzi

Robert S. Frank

Joseph Fiore



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

Parish Outreach

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:

"Martin Luther King."

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.

Financial Summary

January 7, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 17,652.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (3,348.00)

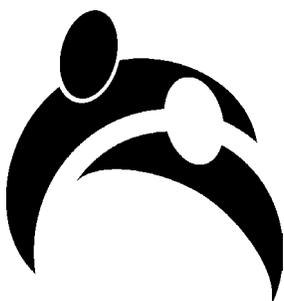
The estimated weekly collection needed to maintain and operate our parish buildings, ministries, programs and salaries is \$21,000.

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Janet Loehr*.
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, Jason Fisher, Patricia Funk, Diane Garretson, Barbara Guarino, Adam Ippolito, Peggy Keegan, Kathleen Kerrigan, Joseph Lehmann, 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, Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, Loretta Vitale

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.**

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.**



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

John 2:1-11

The young musical student stood in the wings of the auditorium, clutching his violin beneath his arm as he waited his turn. All of the hours of practice, the lessons with some very patient teachers, had come down to this — his first public recital. Still, though he felt ready, the flutter of his nerves began to increase. Could he do this? Should he? He took his place center stage, and pulling in a deep breath, caught sight of his mother. He played brilliantly.

Today's reading from the Gospel of John tells of Jesus' very first sign, or miracle. Though he had been preaching and had disciples, it wasn't until Mary urged him that he provided fine wine from water when a wedding party had run out. Wine was often used as a symbol of blessings from God in those days. For Jesus to give them much more good wine than they needed reflected that he, too, would offer blessings to all who would follow him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that the miracle at Cana is actually the announcement of the hour of Jesus' glorification, when on the last day the faithful will gather and drink endlessly the wine of the new covenant at the feast in the Father's kingdom (CCC 1335). Though he needed a bit of prompting from his mother, Jesus' decision to use the occasion of the wedding to replace water with wine was as carefully planned as every other sign, each with everlasting significance.

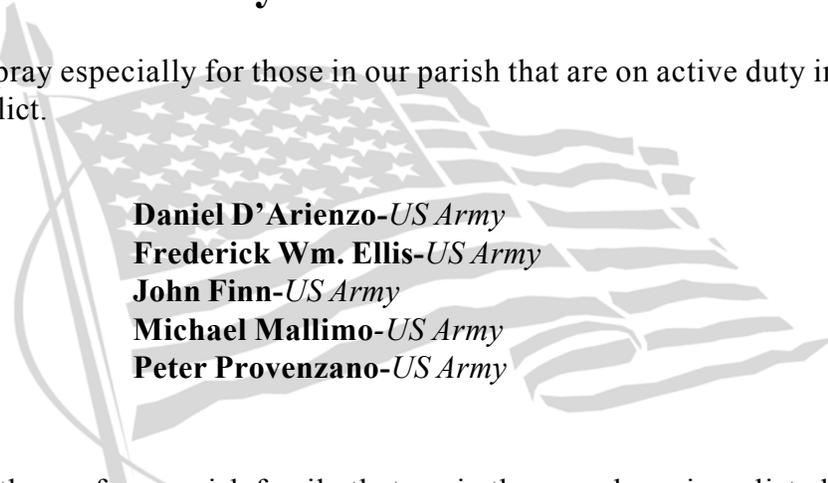
Readings for the Week of January 14, 2007

Sunday: Is 62:1-5/1 Cor 12:4-11/Jn 2:1-11
Monday: Heb 5:1-10/Mk 2:18-22
Tuesday: Heb 6:10-20/Mk 2:23-28
Wednesday: Heb 7:1-3, 15-17/Mk 3:1-6
Thursday: Heb 7:25-8:6/Mk 3:7-12
Friday: Heb 8:6-13/Mk 3:13-19
Saturday: Heb 9:2-3, 11-14/Mk 3:20-21
Next Sunday: Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10/1 Cor 12:12-30
or 12:12-14, 27/Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

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
Michael Mallimo-US Army
Peter Provenzano-US Army

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

Our whole parish family rejoices with the McEvoy family in gratitude for the safe return of their son from active duty.

Paul McEvoy-US Army has returned to the United States safe and sound. Thank you, Paul, for your generous service to our country!

The McEvoy family would like to thank Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family for all of their prayers.

more good news...

Our whole parish family rejoices with the Stultz family in gratitude for the safe return of their son from active duty.

James Stultz-US Army has returned to the United States safe and sound. Thank you, James, for your generous service to our country!

The Stultz family would like to thank Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Family for all of their prayers.



Members
Serving
Our
Country



The parish family of Our Lady of Lourdes would like to list those in the armed forces on active duty so that we can include them in our prayers. If you would like to include a family member on active duty to our prayer list, please fill out the following:

Name: _____

Branch of Service: _____

or email information to bulletin@ollchurch.org

Social Action Alert

Social Action Meeting

Our next Social Action Meeting is **Thursday, January 18, at 7 PM in the Library**. Come and be part of this group that works to raise awareness and involvement in local, national and international issues of peace and justice. We are always looking for new members. Come and bring a friend!

March for Life

Our Lady of Lourdes' Social Action Group invites anyone interested in going to the March for Life to join with the Peace and Justice Group of St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School! The March for Life will take place on Monday, January 22. The bus will leave at approximately 4:30 AM from St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School and return at approximately 9 PM. To reserve a space, please contact John Sureau at 661.3224, x. 135 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Life After Abortion

This time of the year, particularly with the March for Life, calls us to focus on the morality and legality and damage of abortion. Our faith also calls us to compassion and reconciliation not condemnation. There are a number of prayer opportunities and retreats being offered in our area for those who have had abortions and are seeking ways to work through this. For more information, look at the Rachel's Vineyard website – www.rachelsvineyard.org. In our own diocese, you can contact the Respect Life Office at 516.379.8292, x. 215 for more information.

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 Uniqueness of Christian Charity

....The Church can never be exempted from practicing charity as an organized activity of believers, and on the other hand, there will never be a situation where the charity of each individual Christian is unnecessary, because in addition to justice man needs, and will always need, love. Following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.

The Church's charitable organizations, beginning with those of *Caritas* (at diocesan, national and international levels), ought to do everything in their power to provide the resources and above all the personnel needed for this work. Individuals who care for those in need must first be professionally competent: they should be properly trained in what to do and how to do it, and committed to continuing care. Yet, while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient. We are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern. Those who work for the Church's charitable organizations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity.

Diocese of Rockville Centre Turns 50!

Our parish has just celebrated its Jubilee and now it's our turn to join with our Diocese as it turns 50 this year!

Bishop Murphy, who prayed with us at the Closing of our Jubilee Year in November, will open the Diocesan Jubilee Year with a special Mass at 11 AM at St. Agnes Cathedral. On this weekend, all parishes in the Diocese will celebrate the Feast of St. Agnes the patroness of our Diocese.

Look for more information in the weeks to come in our bulletin, on the Diocesan web site and in the pages of *The Long Island Catholic*.



TELECARE Telethon

The Telecare Telethon will be held on Saturday, January 13 and Sunday, January 14 from noon until 10 PM. It will be hosted by Fr. Jim Vlaun along with Fr. Frank Nelson and Fr. Joe DeGrocco - featuring special guests, entertainment, local choirs, and many surprises. Please support your diocesan television station. For more information or to watch live at anytime, go to www.telecaretv.org.

Being and Building the Body of Christ

St. Patrick's, Bay Shore, invites you to attend the series of adult faith formation talks presented by Jim Philipps during the month of January. Jim Philipps has been a catechist and professor of theology on the secondary and collegiate levels for twenty-five years. Jim has written three books and numerous articles exploring the nature of the Bible and the Church. He is actively involved in adult faith formation on the parish level and through the Diocesan Pastoral Formation Institute. For further information or to register, please call Susan at 631.661.4157 or email to susan@delucamaisto.com.

Maria Regina Residence

Maria Regina Residence is a skilled long term care facility located on the property of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood. It provides Adult Day Health Services offering a wonderful day program including transportation and meals, as well as a loving atmosphere provided by an inclusive staff. If interested, or for further information, please contact Veronica Anderson, Director at 631.299.3045.

Reading and Math Tutoring Program

Our parish, along with many other parishes in the Diocese, will host the Children's Learning Services Spring Reading and Math Tutoring Program for 12 Saturdays from February 4 through May 19. There will be five or fewer children in a group with one NY State Certified Teacher. There are two programs-one for children with learning disabilities and one for children without. To register or for further information please call 631.243.2503.

Against An Infinite Horizon

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Does belief in life after death have an impact on how we live our lives right now? Should it?

Several years ago I watched a panel of theologians discuss this question on national television and was surprised by their conclusions: All of them, theologians who professed to believe in God, without a dissenting voice, stated that it shouldn't make any difference whatsoever whether or not there is life after death in terms of how we actually live our lives. Belief in life after death, they said, shouldn't affect really our daily lives.

I have problems with that: First of all, it isn't true, whatever our protests to the contrary. If we say that belief in an afterlife does not (and should not) affect how we live our lives, we're simply out of touch with some of the deeper things that motivate us. It makes a huge difference, unconsciously, as to how restless or peaceful we are. When we no longer believe in a life hereafter we will, one way or the other, put unfair, restless pressure on this life.

There is a tendency today, both in church circles and in everyday life, to deny this. This, I suspect, is based on an over-reaction to the old punishment-reward system, which played too big a part in the religion of our youth. For too many of us, the idea was that we were supposed to live good lives so that, when we die, we'd go to heaven and not to hell. Part of that view too, over-simplified in the critique of religion made by Karl Marx ("Religion is the opium of the people"), was the idea that, if we believe in life after death, we were more likely to be unhealthily passive and not fully creative in this life.

Our instincts are right in wanting to reject this. However in our proclivity to be more liberal and open-minded, we generally lose sight of something else: Belief in life after death is important, not because it can affect our present lives with fears of hellfire or with the promise of a heaven that can be a soothing narcotic when life can't deliver what we want, but because only the infinite can provide the proper horizon against which to view the finite.

Our lives our better understood, and more peacefully lived, when they are viewed against the horizon of eternity, against an afterlife.

Whether we believe in life after death consciously and unconsciously colours how we feel minute to minute inside our daily lives. If, for example, we don't believe in life after death and don't view our lives against the horizon of the eternal, how do we keep the demons of restlessness, disappointment, sadness, jealousy, self-pity, and cynicism at bay?

If this life alone has to carry everything, how tragic then to be poor, to lack opportunity, to not be healthy, to not have a perfect body, to lack the talent to adequately express ourselves; how tragic then to not regularly experience ecstasy in love, to not find a perfect soulmate, to have to sleep alone; how permanently tragic then to have been the victim of some accident, to have been abused, to be wounded, less than whole; how tragic then to be in a marriage that cannot fully take our loneliness away; how tragic then to be caught up in duty, in circumstance, in family, in history in a way that limits our freedom; how tragic then to not have a job that is fully satisfying, to not have a career that properly honours our gifts; how tragic then to find ourselves aging, losing our physical beauty and becoming marginalized; how tragic then to have face death with our lives still incomplete; how tragic then to have to miss out on any of life's pleasures; how tragic then to find ourselves always in lives too small for us, small-time, small-town, unknown, our dreams reduced to ashes, nostalgia, jealousy, frustration; how tragic then to contemplate what might have been, to have made wrong choices; how tragic then simply to be alone on a Friday night; how tragic then to have to spend a holiday without someone special to share it with; how tragic then to live in a body, a family, a marriage, a home, a world, and a life which can never give us the full symphony nor ever take away our deepest restlessness and longing

There is no other horizon, outside of eternity and afterlife, against which we can view the human condition in a way that doesn't produce undue restlessness, disappointment, sadness, and cynicism.

Belief in a life after this one isn't meant to make us live in fear of hellfire or in the infantile hope that if we're good we'll get a reward for it after we die. Belief in life after death is meant to give us proper vision so that we can, precisely, enjoy the real joys of this life without perpetually crucifying ourselves because of them, and we, aren't perfect.

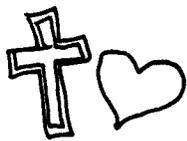
Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Sharing the Gospel

Mary had great faith in God. She also knew that God could do anything. So when the wedding servers ran out of wine, she knew Jesus could help. She said, "Do whatever Jesus tells you to do." That's the smartest thing any of us can do.



Mission for the Week

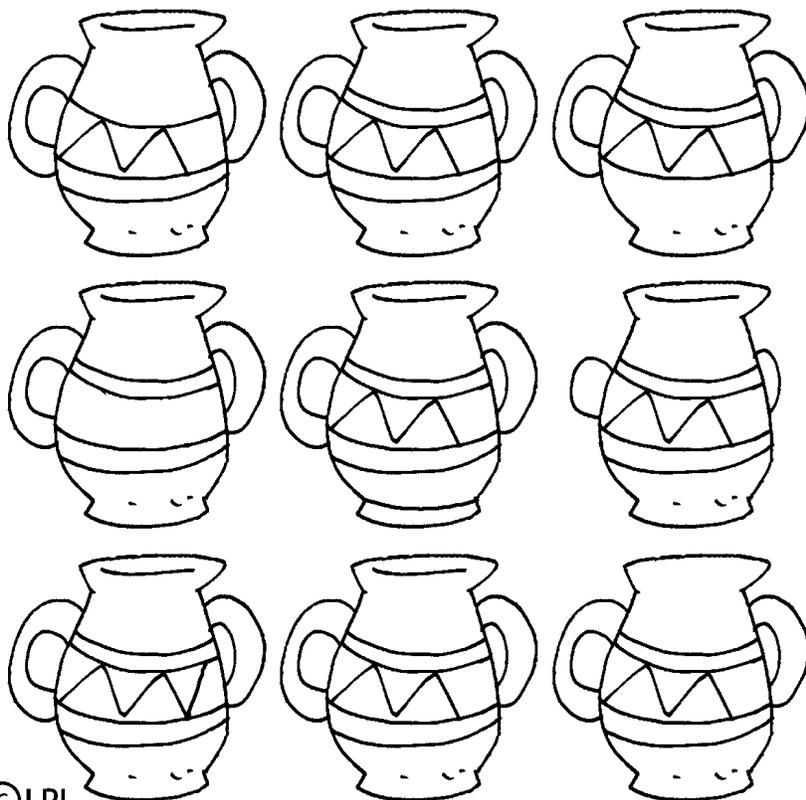


What does Jesus tell you to do in his Word, the Bible? Find out by reading the Bible for 15 minutes a day with your family. You could start by reading Luke.



Puzzle

Find the two identical jars.



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ANSWER: NUMBERS TWO AND EIGHT

Prayer



Dear God,
 help me to do
 everything you say.
 I know you can do
 anything.

Something to Draw



Draw a picture
 of the wedding
 servants listening
 carefully to Jesus.