



Rejoice

IN THIS DAY

Behold

**YOUR REWARD WILL BE
GREAT IN HEAVEN.**

Our Lady of Lourdes

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time • February 11, 2007



Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor

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

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

Mary McMahon

Director of Parish Social Ministry

Vita Scorcia

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

Lent 2007

Save the Dates...

Parish Lenten Mission

Monday, March 6 through Thursday, March 9 beginning at 7:30 PM in the Church to be led by Father Michael Vetrano, Pastor

Sunday Nights at the Six!

Come and pray with us!

Our Six Committee and Contemporary Music Group are working hard to make this a beautiful celebration for you.

Sunday, February 18-The Burning of the Palms

Following "The Six", we'll gather outside and burn the palms for ashes to be used this year on Ash Wednesday.

Sunday, February 25 - Help the Homeless

Following "The Six", we'll gather in the cafeteria to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for local homeless shelters. This is a wonderful service project and a great way to begin the Lenten season. We are also in need of donations of peanut butter and jelly. Bring them with you that night or drop them off any time before.

Lent 2007- Clean Up Your Act

Get ready to be challenged to "Clean Up Your Act" at "The Six" this Lent.

We'll look at areas of our lives - especially for middle and high school teenagers - that need some improvement.



Directed Retreat Week



All Are Welcome to our Second Annual Directed Retreat Week experience...right here at OLL!

Sunday, March 11 – Saturday, March 17

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

Who can go?

This "Directed Retreat" is for you! Many people cannot go away for a week or a weekend to experience a directed retreat. This is a wonderful taste of what it is like to have spiritual direction and to be on retreat without leaving your home.

How does it work?

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

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

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

Registration deadline is Monday, February 26. For more information, call Vita Scorcia at the Religious Education Office at 661-5440 or email Religioused@ollchurch.org.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 21

Come and pray throughout the day, and be sure to invite your family members and friends to come to Our Lady of Lourdes as well. Look for our special Ash Wednesday bulletin, which will be available at all of our Ash Wednesday services.



Prayer Services

Every hour on the hour beginning at 7 AM and the last one scheduled at 9 PM.

The schedule is as follows:

7 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 Noon*, 1 PM, 2 PM, 3 PM, 4 PM, 5 PM*, 6 PM*, 7 PM and 9 PM.

Masses

8 AM and 8 PM

- On Ash Wednesday, we invite all in our parish family to fast and pray for ourselves and for one another. Lent is a such a powerful time for us to celebrate God's healing love for us – we can do that in prayer.
- Is there someone you know who has left the Church or is hurting? Is the day to invite them back home?
- Our Church will be open all day for you to come and pray privately.
- Our Hourly services are in place so that all have a time to come! Whether you work early or late, want to come during your lunch hour, or don't feel like going to work at all, there's a service for everyone.
- The Scripture readings used at our Prayer Services on this day speak to us of the challenges and benefits of this season...*Joel 2: 12-18, 2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2, Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18*. Consider reading one or more of them throughout the day.

*The Lenten Fast

...*A Simple Meal on Ash Wednesday*



Our parish Social Action Group is sponsoring a simple soup lunch and simple soup dinner after the 12 Noon, 5 PM and 6 PM Ash Wednesday Prayer Services.

These simple meals are offered as a way to remind us of the power of fasting and of living simply.

If you would like to help prepare our simple soup lunch or simple soup dinner, contact John Sureau at 661.3224 or e-mail to jsureau@ollchurch.org.

Adult Faith Formation

...upcoming courses

American Mystics: Thomas Merton and Jessica Powers

One night only...

Tuesday, March 20, 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 its 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.]

Night of Prayer and Reflection

The Ministry of Family Healing invites you to a night of prayer and reflection. This night we would like to introduce you to one of God's beloved angels, Herman. Come along on our journey as we discover, with Herman, about the mirror of truth. Is it truth as we see it, or truth as God sees it?

We will be meeting on **Tuesday, February 13 at 7:30 PM in the Parish Center.** Please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440 to register.
(There is no fee for this night.) All are welcome. Please come and bring a friend.

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

The Family Grows

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

Living Liturgy

The Liturgical Cycle...



Connecting the Seasons

Our preparations for Ash Wednesday involve the burning of the palms from last year's Palm Sunday. We can use your help! If you can please bring back any palm you have from previous years we would be so grateful. This palm will be burned on **Sunday, February 18 at the 6 PM Mass**. Come and be part of this celebration!

Evening of Prayer for Liturgical Ministers

We are humbled and honored to welcome Msgr. Christopher Heller to a special Evening of Prayer for Liturgical Ministers on **Monday, February 12 at 7:30 P.M. in the Church**. Fr. Chris has written numerous articles on the liturgy and is the pastor of our neighboring parish to the West – St. Joseph's in Babylon. While this night is geared primarily for all liturgical ministers all are certainly welcome to come and pray with us!

Parish Pilgrimage

Come with Father Bob and Deacon John on a Parish Pilgrimage to Saint Anne DeBeaupre in Quebec, Canada travel beginning July 9, 2007.

People from all over the world come to this Shrine to ask the help of Good Saint Anne, to give thanks for answered prayers in the presence of a reality which transcends us. Experience Quebec City, a touch of Europe in the heart of North America - cobble stone streets, historic sites – let the enchantment begin! For additional information, come and meet fellow travelers on **Monday, February 26 at 7:30 PM in the OLL School cafeteria**.

Communion Bow

The procession to receive communion is a clear sign of our willingness to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Remember that we are called to make slight bow of the head before receiving the body and the blood of Christ. This bow should take place *as the person in front of you is receiving Communion*. This act is a good personal reminder to us of what we are about to receive (and hopefully become) and to those who are praying for us while we are processing.

Daily Mass

8 AM

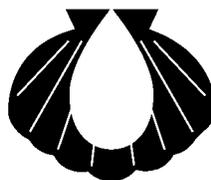
Weekend Masses

Saturday: 5 PM

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

Reconciliation

Saturday: 4 PM - 4:45 PM



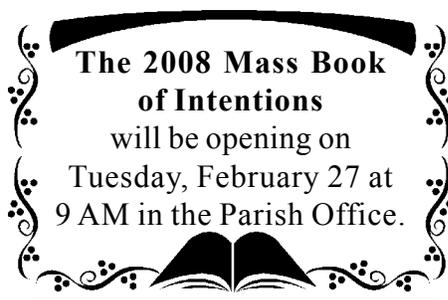
Baptisms

Mia Ann Czarnecki

Vincent and Ann Marie

Jaciana Maureen Hitchen

Danielle



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, February 12

8:00 AM Mary Walsh

Tuesday, February 13

8:00 AM John Flynn

9:00 AM Teresa Wright (*School Mass*)

Wednesday, February 14

Ss. Cyril & Methodius, bishops

8:00 AM Steven Perone

Thursday, February 15

8:00 AM Theresa Reardon & Carmine Bucharelli

Friday, February 16

8:00 AM William Heim

Saturday, February 17

8:00 AM Sue Carlson, Peter Reehil, Peter Schreiner, Joseph Lazzara,
Michael Bevilacqua, Mary Clifford, Cicearelli Family, Paul Stegemann,
Tommy Tammaney, Lily Turano, Rose & Jerry(L)Fabozzi (*70 anniv.*)

5:00 PM Mary Walsh

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Sunday, February 18

8:00 AM Barbara McGarrity

Fr. Stan Chukwube

9:30 AM Madeline Hopper

Fr. Ed Dowling

11:00 AM Alexander Thomas Girgenti

Fr. Stan Chukwube

12:30 PM John Lovari

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Margaret Homann, Lindsey Sangiorgio,
Susan Kelly, Frank Dato, William Raimo, Teresa Wright, Lily Turano,
Joan Maietta, Joseph Volavka (L), Teresa Linakis

Fr. Stan Chukwube



Parish Outreach

Outreach Office Hours

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

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

Financial Summary

February 4, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 18,664.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (2,336.00)

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

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, February 13**, in the **Parish Center at 9 AM**.

All older parishioners are welcome.

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Angela MacDermott*.
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, Christian Bullock,
Lynn Castellano, Peggy Cornell, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Jason Fisher,
Barbara Frank, Diane Garretson, Brian Kaehne, Leonore Keller, Brigid Kinney,
Anthony Lombardo, Mike Lorento, Ruth Mahoney, Diego Marino, Michele McCann,
Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan, Jackie Paeggel, Adelaide Panzarella,
Joe Radosti, Rose Serragano, Dorothy Sullivan, Connie Telesca, Loretta Vitale*

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.



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 6:17, 20-26

A popular television format that has emerged over the past few years is the make-over show. From daytime talk show hosts to prime time programs, average people are plucked from society and given star treatment, receiving new wardrobes, hair styling, even cosmetic surgery, all in the name of transforming them from plain to beautiful. This glamorous transfiguration will make the recipients happy, they say. But what about their hearts and their souls? Can anyone provide these with a makeover?

Preaching to a large crowd of his disciples and others, Jesus provided answers to the questions of their hearts. Are you poor in spirit? Welcome me and the kingdom of God is yours. Are you hungry for wisdom and peace? Welcome me and you will never hunger again. Do you cry at the sadness around you? Welcome me and your joy will know no limits. Welcome me into your hearts, and those who ridicule and insult and hate you because of me will never matter again.

The beatitudes are God's response to the natural desire for happiness he placed in our hearts (CCC 1718). As the Ten Commandments clearly outline how we are to live our lives in God's favor, the beatitudes clearly outline what it will take for us to find joy and happiness in our hearts. There is only one path to such happiness, and that is through the acceptance of Jesus Christ's love for us. This makeover of our hearts and our souls reveals everlasting glory.

Readings for the Week of February 11, 2007

Sunday:	Jer 17:5-8/1 Cor 15:12, 16-20/Lk 6:17, 20-26
Monday:	Gn 4:1-15, 25/Mk 8:11-13
Tuesday:	Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Mk 8:14-21
Wednesday:	Gn 8:6-13, 20-22/Mk 8:22-26
Thursday:	Gn 9:1-13/Mk 8:27-33
Friday:	Gn 11:1-9/Mk 8:34—9:1
Saturday:	Heb 11:1-7/Mk 9:2-13
Next Sunday:	1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23/1 Cor 15:45-49/Lk 6:27-38

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:

"Relationships."

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.

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*

Bryan R. Dempsey-*US Marines*

Frederick Wm. Ellis-*US Army*

John Finn-*US Army*

Armand J. LeComte-*US Marines*

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.



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

School News

To my OLL Parish friends,

I wish to express my deepest appreciation for all the support you gave us when my Mom passed away.

I want you to know how much it meant to me and my family. Your constant concern and prayers during her illness gave me so much strength and was the true OLL spirit that is always there for me!

*From the heart,
Regina Cioffi
School Principal*

School Mass

The School Mass for the month of February will be celebrated on **Tuesday, February 13, at 9 AM.** All are invited and welcome!



Father/Daughter Dance

Our Lady of Lourdes School recently had our first annual **Father Daughter Dance** on Friday February 2. It was a **huge** success and a great time was had by all! There was music, dancing, food and lots of super raffle prizes.

Thanks are in order to all the parents who helped out and donated to this wonderful event. We cannot forget the culinary talents of *Erica Gandiosi* and *Joanna Francis* - thank you for preparing and donating some truly delicious dishes. Also, a **big thank-you** to *Pauline Cimaszewski* for believing in this event and leading it to its great success!



The Fashion Show Committee Needs You!

Our Lady of Lourdes School will be hosting a Fashion Show on Thursday, March 29, 2007. We are reaching out to all parishioners and our school parents for donations of any kind to help support this important fundraising event. All donations can be dropped off in the school office labeled "Fashion Show – Attention Kate Newman." Make sure you include your name, address and phone number so we can properly thank you for your assistance.

The show can't go on without your help! Whether you prefer to be out in the crowds or behind the scenes, we have an opportunity for you! Anyone interested in helping with the 2007 Fashion Show Event or if you have any questions, please contact Kate Newman at 587-6948 or e-mail at bounceusa@aol.com. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

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.

Pastoral Visitor

Are you that special person who is called to be a Pastoral Visitor?

Would you like to visit people in our parish who are patients at Good Samaritan Hospital?

Our Lady of Grace Parish will present a series of classes for the education of Pastoral Visitors visiting patients from their parish who are in Good Samaritan Hospital.

A five session course will be conducted by Sister Dorothy Monks and start on **Saturday, March 3, from 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM at Our Lady of Grace Parish in West Babylon, Room 118.**

A registration fee of \$25 plus a phone call to Our Lady of Grace Stewardship Office at 661-9077 will reserve your place. For additional information call Deacon John at 661.3224.

Retrouvaille

You can help your marriage now. Do you feel alone? Do you argue? Have you stopped talking to each other? Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult time in their marriages. For confidential information about the Retrouvaille program, or to register for the upcoming weekend, please call 1.800.470.2230.

Social Action Alert

The Mercy INN

The Mercy INN Soup Kitchen of Wyandanch needs volunteers to help prepare and serve food one day a week, Monday-Friday. The hours are 10 AM until 2 PM. Also, they are in need of two volunteers to pick up produce one Monday a month. If you can help, please call Kathy at 631.422.1420.

Raise the Roof

Come and hear the sounds of "Tommy Polito and Sweetwater" on Friday, February 16 from 8 PM until midnight at St. John of God. Tickets are \$30 per person which includes full bar, hero sandwiches and salads. There will also be raffles and 50/50. For reservations, please call Winnie at 631.859.0477 or Maureen at 631.412.3099.

When Feeling Down and Out

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

In 1946, with the memory of war still fresh and the ruins of bombed buildings all around him, Karl Rahner preached a series of Lenten sermons in Munich. He reminded the people of the war and their fear:

“Do you remember the nights in the cellar, the nights of deadly loneliness amid the harrowing crush of people? The nights of helplessness, of waiting for a meaningless death? The nights with the lights out, and horror and powerlessness gripping our hearts? When we were just playing at being brave and relaxed? When our own pleasantries and brave expressions sounded so strangely wooden and empty and seemed to have died on us even before they reached the other person? When we just gave up, when we were quiet, when we were just waiting without hope for the end, for death? Alone, powerless, empty.”

Rahner then extends this image, of being “blocked-up” in a cellar, to the way we feel “blocked-up” in our hearts. What’s to be done when we feel like that, lonely, frustrated, our words sounding empty even to ourselves? Here’s his advice:

First, don’t be surprised to feel so lonely and shackled:

“Don’t be shocked at the loneliness and desertedness of your inner prison, which seems to be filled only with powerlessness and hopelessness, with tiredness and emptiness! Don’t be shocked!”

To feel shocked and abnormal at the chaos of our own loneliness and complexity is to not yet have been properly introduced to ourselves. To sometimes feel emptiness and near-despair is normal, a sign of sensitivity and emotional health.

Second, stay inside of that emptiness. Don’t run from it.

The natural temptation is to try to get out of loneliness by plunging ourselves into busyness, distractions, amusements, and social life with the hope of fooling ourselves about our own despair. Part of that too is the tendency to see our emptiness and frustration as a sign that there isn’t any God. Emptiness and chaos can easily cause us to doubt.

But, says Rahner, in this kind of despair we are confusing the true God with the God of our own imaginings. The God of our imaginings, rightly, does not exist. But God is not as we imagine him to be, namely, *“the God of earthly security, the God of salvation from life’s disappointments, the God of life insurance, the God who takes care so that*

children never cry and that justice marches upon the earth, the God who transforms earth’s laments, the God who doesn’t let human love end up in disappointment.” That God doesn’t exist.

Tough words, but true. When we break down, it’s not the real God we despair of, but only God as we imagined him. What we feel in emptiness is not the death of God but rather the space within which God can be born. What loneliness and despair deprive us of is not God, but our illusions about God. The finite, not the infinite, is what’s taken from us.

Rahner goes on to say that, if we stay inside of our loneliness, we eventually become aware that our *“emptiness is only a disguise for an intimacy of God’s, that God’s silence, the eerie stillness, is filled by the Word without words, by Him who is above all names, by Him who is all in all. And his silence is telling us that He is here.”*

At the end of the day our task is to recognize that God is in the silence, the frustration, the loneliness, the emptiness. Our job is to become aware of this.

“Be aware that for a long time He has been waiting for you in the deepest dungeon of your blocked-up heart. Be aware that He has been listening for a long time, to see if you - after all the busy noise of your life, all the talk that you call ‘illusion-free philosophy’ or perhaps even your prayer, noise and talk in which you are only talking to yourself, after all the despairing, weeping and silent sighing over the need in your life - He has been listening to see if you might finally be able to be silent before Him and let Him have the word, the word that appears to the person you were up till now only as a deathly silence.”

We should never be shocked at our own emptiness, nor should we run from it and think that God is dead. God is in the emptiness. But the God who is found there is not God as we imagine Him. The God we find in loneliness and emptiness is the real God, the God that nobody can look at and live because that God is too real, too ineffable, too infinite, too unnameable, too wild, and too much pure fire to be captured in any concepts, words, imaginations, or even feelings. That God, of course, can be met and known; but, this side of eternity, perhaps that God is most easily met precisely when our own words sound flat and empty.

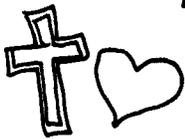
Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.

Sharing the Gospel

One day in heaven, God will reward you for all the loving things you do. When you clean up the dishes without being asked, God sees. If other people are mean to you because you love Jesus, God sees. God will be so happy to see you in heaven!



Mission for the Week



Are any of your neighbors lonely? Go out of your way to show Jesus' love To those people.



Puzzle

Can you draw this angel from heaven identical to the first drawing?



©LPI

Prayer



Dear God,
help me love you
with my whole
heart.
Help me do
things that will
make you smile.

Something to Draw



Draw yourself
playing with a
classmate who does
not have many
friends.