

God's LOVE has
been poured
into our
HEARTS



through
the
HOLY SPIRIT
that has been
given to us.

Romans 5:5

*Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
Our Lady of Lourdes · June 3, 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.

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

Parish Outreach Office

661-9262

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

S.A.G.E.

661-3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Rev. Stanislaus Chukwube

Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback

Associate Pastor

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

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 McMahan

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 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

Mission Statement

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



Vision...

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

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

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

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

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

*Our Lady
of Lourdes*

455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795

5th Annual El Salvador Mission Trip

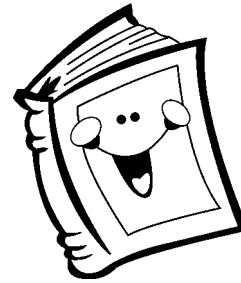
June 30-July 5, 2007:

Join us for a week-long retreat among the poor! This experience, which is especially geared for teens ages 12-18, will enable you to share your faith, culture, and hospitality with the people of our Sister Parish of Tacuba, El Salvador.

We will spend a week walking with the people, learning about their lives, and running a mini-vacation Bible camp for the children there!

The cost of the trip will be approximately \$850. For more information, email jengallagher@ollchurch.org.

Books for our Sister Parish OLL Mission Awareness Trip El Salvador 2007



Do you have a favorite children's book from when you were growing up? For so many children in our sister parish of Tacuba, El Salvador, they do not have access to the books we all loved to read growing up. This year, our group of missionaries would like to go down to Tacuba with suitcases full of books for the children in the town. We would like to ask your help in doing this.

We will be collecting donations of Spanish children's books (new or very gently used!), gift certificates to local book stores or monetary donations so that we can purchase as many children's book as we can hold to donate to our sister parish. Our goal is to bring down 327 books.

**Next
Two Weeks!**

Members of this year's mission trip will be at each of the masses the weekends of **June 10** and **June 17** to collect your donations.

Thank you so much for helping to bring the joy of reading to the children in our sister parish!

Sixth Annual OLL Vacation Bible Camp

Save the dates: July 23-27.

This year's theme is FLIGHT Camp!! (Fun-Learning-In-God's-Holy-Time) and rumor has it that OLL will be visited by all kinds of FLYING things that week!

Vacation Bible Camp is for students in nursery - grade 5 and runs daily from 9 AM-12:30 PM. Campers learn through interactive Bible stories, arts and crafts, games, super science center, and lots of those crazy camp songs! Students in sixth grade or older can serve as volunteer counselors.

Camp registration forms will run in the bulletin in June. Be sure to save the dates and plan to join us for a fun week. Up, up, and away!

OLL School and Parish honoring Mrs. Cioffi at the 5 PM Mass on June 9



Our OLL School community and parish community will gather at the 5 PM Mass on June 9 to honor Mrs. Regina Cioffi for her 13 years of service as principal of Our Lady of Lourdes School.

Mrs. Cioffi will be leaving our school this June and her present plans are to relax, catch up on reading, and make some plans for the future. *(Sounds good to us!)*.

So join us in celebrating her years of service and many accomplishments here at OLL not the least of which is our newly received Middle States Accreditation which designates OLL School as an elementary school of excellence!

Mrs. Cioffi will be succeeded by Mrs. Louise Krol who will become the 6th principal of our school.

Middle States Accreditation for OLL School!

The Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools is pleased to announce that Our Lady of Lourdes School has been awarded accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The award was announced by Dr. Thomas L. Seidenberger, Chair of the Commission and Superintendent of the Brick Township School District (NJ), following the Commission's April 2007 meeting.

MSCES accreditation signifies the educational community of Our Lady of Lourdes has engaged in a rigorous process of developing self-knowledge; has hosted an evaluation team of independently-appointed educators; and has created an on-going Strategic Plan to move school improvement forward. The process involved many elements of the OLL community, including faculty, parents, and students.

Accreditation also signifies that Our Lady of Lourdes School has met the MSCES Standards for a quality school. These Standards reflect current research and best practices from throughout the education profession. During the term of accreditation (2007-2014) the school community will engage in a Commission-directed series of reports and/or site visits to maintain the vigor of the accreditation process.

Accreditation by MSCES is recognized around the world as an indication of trustworthiness, educational quality, and a commitment to on-going school improvement. F. Laird Evans, Ed. D., President of the Commission, offered his congratulations to the entire OLL community, adding: "MSCES accreditation is a recognition of both prior achievements and a commitment to greater future accomplishments."

Three cheers for Our Lady of Lourdes School!!

School News

Big Bucks Raffle!

We will be having a **Big Bucks Raffle on June 9**. First prize will be \$5,000 and each raffle will cost \$100. **Raffle tickets will be on sale after Masses this weekend, June 2/3.**

Or, if you prefer, raffle tickets can be picked up at the OLL school office.



School Mass

The School Mass for the month of June will be celebrated on **Thursday, June 7, at 9 AM**. All are invited and welcome!

Religious Education

Grade 6/7/8 Hang Out Nites continue...

Friday June 22 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM Parish Center

Don't forget...there's something for everyone!

All 6th / 7th / 8th graders of our Parish Family... come play volleyball, basketball. We have Guitar Hero 2, Dance Revolution, music and more... **DON'T MISS IT!**

Experiencing the Eucharist More Powerfully

Last week, we provided an excerpt from kiturgist Gabe Huck about the power of the Eucharist – and how our celebration of the Eucharist at Mass can help us recognize Jesus' presence more fully.

Let's continue that this week:



Holy Communion is obvious just listen to the word “communion” - something we do together. It is communal. And it is deeply personal. But it is not private. It must be clear as can be, that when the invitation is given to the table, the invitation is to the church, to all of us together. Holy Communion must look and sound and feel like that.

Here are five ways that is to happen:

First: Sing together everything that is to be sung through the whole time of Holy Communion. This is not an option. As much as the lector must read the scripture, the preacher give the homily, the cantor lead the psalm, so must this whole assembly sing the communion song. Not an option. By song we show and make strong our communion.

Second: Make it a procession not just a lining up. This isn't a theater or a bank. We don't get in line, we make a procession. There's a world of difference. It makes a difference how we walk, our posture, our movement, how we hold our hands, how we focus our gaze. It is a procession. Think about having your hands extended the whole time of the procession in the position for receiving the bread, and afterwards the hands folded together.

...to be continued next week.

Pastoral Council- New Leader Search

The **Pastoral Council** of Our Lady of Lourdes Church will have two vacancies this year. We are opening up nominations at this time to replace those whose terms are up.

Those nominated for the Council must be active, believing parishioners, who support the church through their time, talent and treasure.

The nominees should have the desire to be an active participant and supporter of all Council activities and be willing to speak on behalf of the needs and hopes of all parishioners. The Council term would be for three years and a member is eligible to serve no more than two consecutive terms.

*Anyone interested in being considered please notify Fr. Mike in writing **by June 5.***



Daytime Eucharistic Devotion

The afternoon adoration for the month of June will be on **Wednesday, June 6 from 1- 3 PM.** All are invited and welcome! We will be praying for world peace and our religious men and women.

Rosary Christian Mothers

The Rosary Christian Mothers meet on the first Monday evening of each month. The next meeting will be **Monday, June 4.**

We will begin with **Rosary at 7:45 PM in the Church** followed by **meeting at 8 PM in the Parish Center.**

“Spring Cleaning”

Please remember The Rosary Christian Mothers-we are sponsoring a **“White Elephant Sale”** on **Saturday, June 9 from 10:30 AM until 6 PM.** Any gently used or new items would be greatly appreciated. Please call 669.3178 for donations.

Summer Evening Prayer

Save the Dates...

Summer Evening Prayer

Mondays of Summer beginning July 9 at 7:30 PM on the Great Lawn (In case of rain or extreme heat on any Monday night, we will gather in the All Purpose Room) Come and be part of it all!

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

Kyle Charles Alicea

Jason and Jessica

Victoria Xutiantian Mueller

Edward and Robin

Gabriella Isabel Stein

James and Julia

Upcoming Marriages

Kristine Sokolowski, OLL and

1Lt. Christopher Buscaglia,

St. Peter & Paul, Williamsville, NY

Rosary/Novena

Rosary:

Daily after 8 AM Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena:

Monday after 8 AM Mass

Anointing of the Sick

Throughout the liturgical year.

If needed sooner, please call the Parish Office.

Baptism

Please contact the Parish Office to schedule an appointment.

Marriage

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

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults(RCIA):

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

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, June 4

8:00 AM Paul Sasso

Tuesday, June 5

St. Boniface, martyr

8:00 AM LaRocca & Sweeney Families

Wednesday, June 6

St. Norbert, bishop

8:00 AM "D-Day" Veterans

Thursday, June 7

8:00 AM Catherine M. Peterson

Friday, June 8

8:00 AM Jeanne Clifford Withers

Saturday, June 9

8:00 AM Jo Brogan, St. Anthony & St. Jude,
In Honor of Blessed Virgin Mary,
Christian Bullock, Phyllis Conforte,
Rose Stankowick

5:00 PM John Lovari

Sunday, June 10

8:00 AM Joseph & Christina Kollmer

9:30 AM Fortunato & Carmela Maggi

11:00 AM John Cunneen

12:30 PM Nicola & Anna Santa Andriola

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Catherine McNamara,
Evelyn D. LoPresti, David Justin Lehner,
Virginia Adamo, James Quinn, Teresa Brady,
Henry (Ski)Kloszewski

Altar Bread & Wine

in loving memory of ...

Edward DeMatteo



Rest In Peace

Christian Bullock, died on May 23 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was May 26. We extend our prayers to his wife, Mary and their children.

Phyllis Conforte, died on May 24 and celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial was May 29. We extend our prayers to her husband, Robert and family.

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**.

Catholic Ministries Appeal

The key ingredient to the success of our appeal is participation. In order to reach our goal, we need to have every family participate in the appeal to the best of their ability.

If you have not had an opportunity to make a gift to the appeal or have been waiting to make a pledge, please complete the pledge card below and place it in the collection basket.

PARISH GOAL \$103,000



\$ 80,135
Pledged
to Date

367 Pledges
\$220 Avg. Pledge

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL • DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
PO Box 4000 • ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK 11571-4000 • 516-379-5210 EXT 2 • www.drvc.org/cma.html

2007 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

Supporting the Community Around Us

TO PROVIDE FUNDS I/WE AGREE TO MAKE A GIFT OF:

PLEDGE \$ _____ INITIAL PAYMENT \$ _____ BALANCE \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PARISH OF DONOR _____

SIGNATURE OF DONOR _____



A GUIDE TO GIVING

PLEDGE	10 PAYMENTS
\$5,000	\$500
2,500	250
1,500	150
1,000	100
500	50
300	30
150	15
OTHER \$ _____	

EVERY GIFT COUNTS!

Please make checks payable to:
Catholic Ministries Appeal
Thank you for your support

For more information, please call 516.379.5210, extension 2 or email to www.drvc.org/cma.html.

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Rose Grant*.

If you would like to help care for our altar needs, please call the Parish Office at 661.3224.

Signing at Mass for the Hearing Impaired

We have contracted with a sign language interpreter to provide our deaf parishioners with an opportunity for deeper participation in our Sunday liturgies. Her name is Kelly Cardosa. Kelly will be signing at the 11AM Mass on Sundays. Parishioners who will be using this service are asked to use the first few rows near the Baptismal font. Please feel free to contact anyone who may benefit from this service.



Pastoral Care of Our Sick

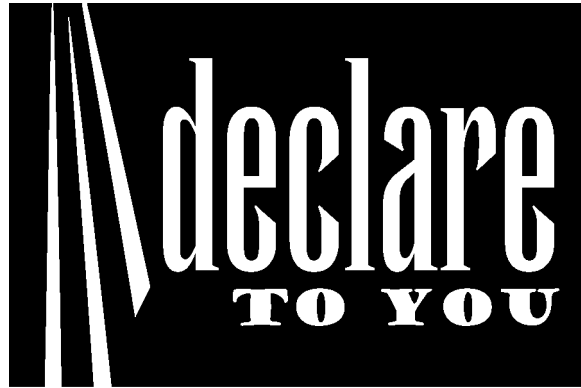
Please call the Parish Office at 661.3224 to leave the names of parishioners who:

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

Pray for Our Sick

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

John Aspromanti, Christopher Bartley, Kassidy Belcher, Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Baby Drew Brust, Lynn Castellano, Dawn Coughlin, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Edward Doyle, Anthony Ferrante, Jason Fisher, Cathy Gries, Kevin Hahn, Samantha Hil, Adam Ippolito, Brigid Kinney, Anthony Lombardo, Mike Lorento, Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Adam McFarland, Dot McNamee, Bryan Monahan, Jimmy Murphy, Frieda Perry, Gene Perry, Joe Radosti, Delphine Reynolds, Felix Rivera, Carol Scheid, Dorothy Schiavone, Dorothy Sullivan, Marie "Amy" Turano, Loretta Vitale, Betty Walsh, Grace Weidner



©LP

The Most Holy Trinity

As children, we were often afraid to enter a darkened room, even in our own home. We were afraid of what might be in there. As we grow and become more and more familiar with our surroundings, we can begin to navigate a darkened room because we know where the floor ends and the furniture begins before we find it with our toes. We've learned the truth - slowly and surely, but we've learned.

Today's brief but powerful Gospel reading from John relates Jesus' promise to us that the Holy Spirit, sent from God, will reveal to us everything that is the truth. How powerful is the truth? Jesus relates that there is so much that we 'cannot bear them now.' But rather than flipping on a light to a darkened room, the Spirit will guide us into the truth, slowly, gently, receiving the gift of God's grace.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that God set out a joint, divine mission for Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. To witness Jesus was to witness God in the flesh; to believe is to enjoy the truth given to us as a gift of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 689) Belief in the Word, the truth, may come slowly and surely, as if we are being led from the darkness into the light. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the way, the truth, and the life.

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Readings for the Week of June 3, 2007

Sunday: Prv 8:22-31/Rom 5:1-5/Jn 16:12-15
Monday: Tb 1:3; 2:1a-8/Mk 12:1-12
Tuesday: Tb 2:9-14/Mk 12:13-17
Wednesday: Tb 3:1-11a, 16-17a/Mk 12:18-27
Thursday: Tb 6:10-11; 7:1bcde, 9-17; 8:4-9a/Mk 12:28-34
Friday: Tb 11:5-17/Mk 12:35-37
Saturday: Tb 12:1, 5-15, 20/Mk 12:38-44
Next Sunday: Gn 14:18-20/1 Cor 11:23-26/Lk 9:11b-17

Financial Summary

May 27, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 14,957.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (6,043.00)

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

Members in the Military

We ask that you pray especially for those in our parish that are on active duty in the Middle East conflict.

They are:



Brian Barthel-*US Air Force*
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.

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:

"Graduation."

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.



Food Pantry Needs

detergent
kleenex
paper towels
shampoo
soap
toilet tissue
toothbrush
toothpaste

The Gift of Married Love

This is a workshop on the spirituality of marriage presented by the Office of Faith Formation and is designed for all parish staff and volunteers currently working in marriage ministry, all couples preparing to work in parish marriage preparation programs and individuals teaching in high school and college settings. Some of these ministries include pre-cana, wedding ministry and music—even those who are currently married and would like to enrich their marriage. All are invited!

The workshop will be held here at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Center from 7:30 PM until 9 PM on Wednesdays beginning June 20 through July 25. The cost is \$25 per person (OLL parishioners attend for free) and includes sandwiches and refreshments beginning at 6:30 PM.

Some of the topics to be discussed include: Human Sexuality and its Relationship to Marriage, The Sacramentality of Marriage and so much more. If you have any questions or you would like to register, please call the Parish Office at 661.3224.

Wedding Ministry

How do you feel when you get to share in the most special days of a couple's life? Excited? Joyful? Blessed? Nostalgic? These are words we use to describe our feelings about being a part of the Wedding Ministry. We are there for the couple on the day of their wedding rehearsal to go through the steps of the ceremony and answer any last minute questions they may have. More importantly, we are there to calm, reassure, and offer our support. On the "big day" we are at the Church early to prepare and welcome the couple and their guests to OLL. In the wedding ministry it is all about the little things. We hope to help make their day as beautiful as they dreamed it would be!

-Theresa Moy

Our Wedding Ministry is growing and changing and looking for some new members. If you are interested in finding out how this ministry works and "shadowing" a present wedding ministry member, please contact Linda Kucala at 277-5324 or email lkuchem@optonline.net or Ann Munkwitz at 666.4756 for more information. All are welcome!

Mother-Daughter Tea

The Diocesan Respect for Life Office is sponsoring a Mother-Daughter Tea on **Saturday, June 30 from 11:30 – 2:30 at St. Agnes Cathedral**, 29 Quealy Place, Rockville Centre. Topics to be discussed are: The Virtue of Chastity, Physical and Emotional Development, God's Gift of Fertility and The Importance of the Mother-Daughter Relationship. Tickets are \$15 for each family. If interested, please call the Respect for Life Office: 516.379.8292: ext. 915 or respectlife@drvc.org

Centering Prayer Retreat Weekend

Sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of LI/Queens, our next Centering Prayer Retreat Weekend will be held **Friday, June 22 through Sunday, June 24 at the St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset**. For further information please call Diane Garretson at 587-0966.

Bereavement Workshops

Bereavement workshops for those working with the bereaved sponsored by Catholic Cemeteries, Diocese of Rockville Centre will be held on Friday, June 8 at St. Matthew Parish Center, Dix Hills. Nurturing self-care tips with Jane Malone, Ph.D., LCSW from 9:30 AM until noon with a fee of \$10. Call Diane to register at 516.334.7990, extension 119.

Diocesan Liturgy

A Diocesan Liturgy celebrating the gifts of persons with special needs will be celebrated with Msgr. Robert Brennan on Sunday, June 10 at 3 PM at St. Frances de Chantal Church, Wantagh. Family and friends are welcome! Light refreshments to follow in the parish center. For more information, call Mary Anne Russo at 516.678.5800, extension 540. Come celebrate with us!

Retrouvaille

YOU can help your marriage now! Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue? Have you just stopped talking to each other? Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. This program has helped thousands of couples experiencing all types of marital difficulties. For confidential information about the Retrouvaille program, or to register for the upcoming weekend beginning on Friday, June 22 please call 1.800.470.2230.

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.

A Prodigal God

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

A couple of years ago, Barbara Kingsolver wrote a book entitled *Prodigal Summer*. It tells the story of a young woman who got pregnant during a summer within which everything seemed to be dangerously fertile. From the plants, through the insects, through the animals, to the people, everything seemed to be teeming with fecundity, overactive, overabundant in seed. Life seemed to be bursting forth everywhere. The title of the book is a good metaphor for what she describes, a summer overabundant in fertility.

Nature is like that, teeming with everything, prodigal, fertile, overabundant, wasteful. Why else do we have 90% more brain cells than we need and why else is nature scattering billions of seeds, of virtually everything, all over the planet every second?

And if life is so prodigal, what does this say about God, its author?

God, as we see in both nature and in scripture (and know from experience), is over-generous, over-lavish, over-extravagant, over-prodigious, over-rich, and over-patient. If nature, scripture, and experience are to be believed, God is the absolute antithesis of everything that is stingy, miserly, frugal, narrowly calculating, or sparing in what it does out. God is prodigal.

Dictionaries define "prodigal" as "wastefully extravagant and lavishly abundant." That certainly describes the God that Jesus incarnates and reveals.

We see this in the parable of the Sower. God, the sower, goes out to sow and he scatters his seed generously, almost wastefully, everywhere - on the road, among the rocks, among the thorns, on bad soil, and on rich soil. No farmer would ever do this. Who would waste seed on soil that can never produce a harvest? God, it seems, doesn't ask that question but simply keeps scattering his seed everywhere, over-generously, without calculating whether it is a good investment or not in terms of return. And, it seems, God has an infinite number of seeds to scatter, perpetually, everywhere. God is prodigious beyond imagination.

Among other things, this speaks of God's infinite riches, love, and patience. For us, there is both a huge challenge and a huge consolation in that. The challenge, of course, is to respond to the infinite number of invitations that God scatters on our path from minute to minute. The consolation is that, no matter how many of God's invitations we ignore, there will always be an infinite number of others. No matter how many we've already ignored or turned down, there are new ones awaiting us each minute. When we've gone through 39 days of lent without praying or changing our lives,

there's still a 40th day to respond. When we've ignored a thousand invitations, there's still another one waiting. God is prodigal, so are the chances God gives us.

Sr. Margaret Halaska once captured this wonderfully in a poem she entitled, *Covenant*:

*The Father knocks at my door, seeking a home for his son:
Rent is cheap, I say I don't want to rent. I want to buy, says God.
I'm not sure I want to sell, but you might come in to look around.
I think I will, says God.*

I might let you have a room or two.

I like it, says God. I'll take the two.

You might decide to give me more some day.

I can wait, says God.

I'd like to give you more, but it's a bit difficult.

I need some space for me.

I know, says God, but I'll wait. I like what I see.

Hm, maybe I can let you have another room.

I really don't need that much.

Thanks, says God, I'll take it. I like what I see.

I'd like to give you the whole house but I'm not sure -

Think on it, says God. I wouldn't put you out.

Your house would be mine and my son would live in it.

You'd have more space than you'd ever had before.

I don't understand at all.

I know, says God, but I can't tell you about that.

You'll have to discover it for yourself.

That can only happen if you let him have the whole house.

A bit risky, I say.

Yes, says God, but try me.

I'm not sure - I'll let you know.

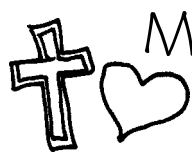
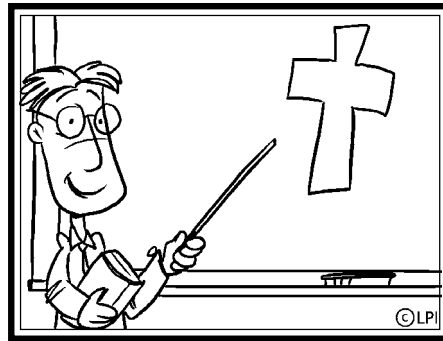
I can wait, says God. I like what I see.

If we look back on our lives and are truly honest, we have to admit that of all the invitations that God has sent us, we've probably accepted and acted on only a fraction of them. There have been countless times we've turned away from an invitation. For every invitation to maturity we've accepted, we've probably turned down a hundred. But that's the beauty and wonder of God's richness. God is not a petty creator and creation, itself, is not a cheap machine with barely enough energy and resources to keep it going. God and nature are prodigal. That's plain everywhere. Millions and millions of life-giving seeds blow everywhere in the world and we need only to pick up a few to become pregnant, fecund, capable of newness, maturity, and of producing life.

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

The disciples learned a lot from Jesus, but he knew they still needed to learn more. That's why Jesus asked God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to his friends. Jesus knew that the Holy Spirit would stay with them, to teach them everything Jesus wanted them to know.



Mission for the Week

As you read a Bible story tonight before bed, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what Jesus wants you to learn.



Puzzle

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel:

UNDERSTAND
SPIRIT
SHOWS

GUIDE
TRUTH
SPEAK

GLORY
MESSAGE
FATHER

I H A V M U C O R M O
 A S P E A K H M T E H
 Y P T O Y U B R I S G
 N I W L D S H O W S E
 T R U T H A E M N A B
 Y I O C U L F D U G N
 G T H S P I A R I E T
U N D E R S T A N D S
 I H O W A U H W I L O
 D C M E N D E G U D Y
 E U R G L O R Y S T A

Prayer



Dear God,
I want the Holy Spirit to teach me more about Jesus, too.

Something to Draw



Draw a picture of a large triangle. Inside of it, write these words: Father, Son, Spirit.