

**“THE
KINGDOM
OF GOD
IS AT
HAND FOR
YOU.”**

LUKE 10:9

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
OUR LADY OF LOURDES • JULY 8, 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@ollschoo.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 McMahon

Director of Parish Social Ministry

Vita Scoria

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 Catuosco
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:

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

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

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

A*cknowledge 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



F.L.I.G.H.T. Camp Fun Learning in God's Holy Time!

Our Lady of Lourdes
Sixth Annual Vacation Bible Camp
July 23-27, 2007
9 AM - 12:30 PM Daily
Don't miss the fun!

Meeting for all camp volunteers - Tuesday, July 10 at 8 PM in the Parish Center.

Where?

Right on the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes, which will be transformed into FLIGHT Camp!
(FLIGHT stands for Fun Learning in God's Holy Time)
Vacation Bible Camp runs daily from 9 AM-12:30 PM.

What will we do?

Our campers will participate in lots of fun daily activities: singing super songs, making cool crafts, participating in awesome flight-themed science activities (including a visit from a hot air balloon company!), and learning about God through different Bible adventures! And, of course, there'll be snacks!

Who can come?

Campers should presently be in Pre-K (age 4) through 5th grade.
Students in grades 5-12: we need you as volunteer counselors and assistants.

Who's running the camp?

The camp director is Dr. Jennifer Gallagher, the Youth Services Director at OLL. She'll be working with a volunteer team of adults and teens from our parish family.

How much does it cost?

The cost is \$65 per child. The fee includes all materials, snacks, crafts, an official camp T-shirt, and a closing camp celebration for all!

How do I sign up?

Fill out the registration form which can be found on our parish website at www.ollchurch.org or at the Parish Office. Please return it to the Parish Office or mail it to OLL at 455 Hunter Ave.(att. Jennifer Gallagher) with all fees.

Questions?

Email jengallagher@ollchurch.org.

Camp Volunteers Needed!

We need adults and teen volunteers.

If you can spare a week to help out at camp, email jengallagher@ollchurch.org

Great speakers!

SUMMER Evening Prayer 2007

Great food
each night!



Monday evenings
beginning
July 9
7:30 PM
Great Lawn



Great nights for
families and friends!

beginning July 9 with...

Monsignor Night!

-We welcome back and honor Msgr. James Vlaun -
our own Fr. Jim!

-What a great way to begin the summer!

-Family Dinner....

"Summer Sauce" from Fr. Jim's cookbook
beginning at 6:30 PM.

Guest speakers, so far, include...

- Sister Mary Alice Piil, Diocesan Director of Faith Formation
- Crossfire, the musical band
- Christian Sullivan, Campus Minister at St. Francis Prep High School, Queens
- Michael Chiappone, Social Worker at Hope House Ministries
-and more!

Fr. Joe Lukaszewski

“Walk of Life”

Preserve your name, or that of a loved one with a personalized brick paver.

There will be two upcoming placements of bricks. The first cutting of bricks will be July 31 with placement of bricks the second week of August. The second cutting of bricks will be September 30 with placement of bricks the second week of October.

Paver size is 4" x 8" and are \$150 per paver.

If you have any questions or are interested in ordering a brick, please call the Parish Office at 661.3224 or fill out the order form below and return to the Parish Office.

Preserve your name, or that of a loved one,
with a personalized brick paver .

Order Information:

Name	
Address	
City	State
Phone	

Paver size 4" x 8"

\$150.00 per Brick

Maximum of 13 characters per line. NOTE: Spaces are considered a character.

Make check payable to: Our Lady of Lourdes-Dedication

Mail or drop off check with order form to:

455 Hunter Avenue • West Islip, NY 11795

Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Awareness Trip 2007

Raising awareness and consciousness on a situation of poverty and commitment.



What is our sister parish commitment?

After our first Mission Awareness Retreat five summers ago, the young people who participated returned from the trip with an idea: why don't we at OLL "adopt" Esquipulas, one of the small communities we had visited? These young visionaries put together a proposal and presented it to our pastoral team and pastoral council, who enthusiastically supported it. We made a three-year commitment to a relationship with Esquipulas, a relationship that involves both fund-raising and consciousness-raising. The young people from that original group have continued to be part of our Sister Parish Team, along with other OLL parishioners who want to help make a difference! Now, three years later, we are happy to have raised

almost \$10,000 for Esquipulas, allowing them to construct a hanging bridge over the river which they must cross each day to get to work, school, and farm areas.

As we come to the end of our commitment to Esquipulas, our young missionaries have again identified a community in need of our help. Tacuba is a community in the west of El Salvador, an area that has been particularly devastated by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The church in Tecuba, St. Mary Magdalene, is the heart of the community, and people literally walk hours down from the mountains each Sunday to have mass with their pastor, Fr. Servio Tulio. The school there educates almost 300 children (almost exactly the same size as OLL!) and there are many needs in the community.

At least ten families in the community are in need of simple homes of sheet metal and mud brick. We would like to make Tacuba our Sister Parish for the next three years.

Visit our website, www.ollchurch.org/elsalvador,
to follow the progress of our mission group
as they share their experiences of visiting our sister parish.

Spiritual Direction

...for those who want the companionship of a director to journey with them in finding God's desire for them in their daily life.

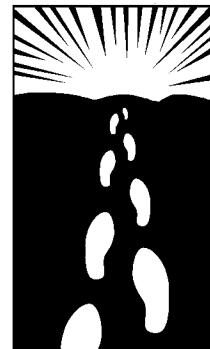
Follow these articles each week, for the next several weeks,
as we explore and explain "Spiritual Direction."

What is Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual Direction is a specialized ministry in the church. It is a graced way of serving another believer, helping the other to grow in intimacy with God and to live out the consequences of this intimacy.

The focus of a spiritual direction relationship is the directee's experience of God and how communication happens between God and the directee. Trained spiritual directors have a background in ministry, communication skills, personality dynamics and various resources in prayer, spirituality and scripture. Both director and directee agree to meet regularly so that the directee might pay closer attention to God.

If you have any questions, or you would like to make arrangements to meet with a Spiritual Director, please call Deacon John DeGuardi at the Parish Office at 661.3224. (It is recommended that you make a three month commitment of one meeting per month.)



F.L.I.G.H.T. Camp

Attention all camp volunteers!

There will be a meeting for all camp volunteers on
Tuesday, July 10 at 8 PM in the Parish Center.

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, July 10**, in the **Parish Center at 9 AM**.

Food Pantry Needs

Please, please, please continue to donate food to our Food Pantry through the summer months. We are desperately low on all food items including-coffee, cereal, juice boxes, peanut butter/jelly, pasta sauce, canned vegetables, crackers, small cans of soup...Thanks for your generosity

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.

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 **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.

Celebrating Sacraments

Remembering...

Monday, July 9

8:00 AM Cornelius J. Peterson

Tuesday, July 10

8:00 AM James Celiberti

Wednesday, July 11

St. Benedict, abbot

8:00 AM John J., Sr. & Joan Goode

Thursday, July 12

St. Anthony Zaccaria, priest

8:00 AM LaRocca & Sweeney Family

Friday, July 13

St. Henry

8:00 AM Kathleen Petersen

Saturday, July 14

8:00 AM Joseph Intoci, Charles Homann, James Celiberti,
Louis Montanino, MaryJane Perotta, William Heim,
Vincent McCarthy, Danny Miranda, Robert McCann,
In Thanks to Blessed Mother

5:00 PM Rose Guider

Fr. Stan Chukwube

Sunday, July 15

8:00 AM Carmela Stanziani

Fr. Mike Vetrano

9:30 AM Joseph B. Buccola

Fr. Mike Vetrano

11:00 AM Joseph Rizzo

Fr. Ed Dowling

12:30 PM Franciso, Felizberta, Ruperto & Ramon Dimaculangan
and Asuncion Castro

Fr. Stan Chukwube

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Philip Puleio, Louis Montanino,
Eileen Brien, Wayne & Roland Van Acker, Sharon Albert,
Edward Arikian, Angie Cinquemani

Fr. Stan Chukwube



Rest In Peace

Susan Fornatora,

died on June 26 and celebration of the
Mass of Christian Burial was June 29.

We extend our prayers to her son, Henry Mattia
and daughter, Vivian Minkoff and their families.

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.



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.

Catholic Ministries Appeal

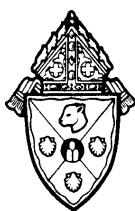
The key ingredient to the success of our appeal is participation. In order to reach our goal, we need to have every family participate in the appeal to the best of their ability.

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



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.

Financial Summary

July 1, 2007

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

Due to a change in the bulletin deadline this week, the collection amount for the week of July 1 will appear in a future bulletin.

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

There will be no summer vacation this year!

Well that got your attention, didn't it. But don't worry - we are not suggesting that you cancel your plans - summer vacation is far too important. It is a time for rest, relaxation, and renewal.

But we are reminding you that our parish never takes a break. We are here day by day ministering to the needy, celebrating sacraments, reaching out to our parishioners in so many ways. Our need for your support is just as important, maybe even more important, during these summer days.

So don't forget us when you are away on vacation. Please continue to provide your generous support to our community. Many parishioners find that using the mailing envelope that we send with your weekly envelopes to be a wonderful and thoughtful way of continuing their support during these summer months.

Pray for Our Sick

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

*Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Baby Drew Brust, Howard Campkin,
Lynn Castellano, Peggy Cornell, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo,
Bernadette DeVirgilis, Jason Fisher, Elizabeth Fredriksen, Samantha Hil,
Adam Ippolito, Evelyn Lang, Richard Lang, Anthony Lombardo, Mike Lorento,
Diego Marino, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Bryan Monahan,
Jimmy Murphy, Gertrude Parine, Frieda Perry, Gene Perry, Joe Radosti,
Delphine Reynolds, Jeanne Roccaro, Zack Sawers, Carol Scheid,
Dorothy Schiavone, Dorothy Sullivan, Marie "Amy" Turano, Loretta Vitale*



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Much has been made in the media in recent years regarding what some perceive as the growing effort to remove Christianity from the public's eye. From nativity scenes on government property at Christmas to simple crosses, some people just do not want to see them. But is this really new? Can we really say that images and activities representing a Christian life have always been accepted in public until now?

Today's Gospel reading from Luke puts into perspective Jesus' attitude toward those who choose not to believe in him. He tells his 72 disciples that they are to fan out across the countryside, but he does warn them that they will indeed face opposition and scorn in their evangelization efforts. The best they can do, he tells them, is to keep on trying, to move on and continue to proclaim the good news of saving grace.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that going out to proclaim Christ's good news on his behalf is an apostolic duty or mission of the Church. When explaining the presence and goodness of God in the lives of non-believers, we are to have a respectful dialogue with them. (CCC 856) Just as we are to understand free will and the consequences of our decisions, so too must we understand that not everyone will choose to share our beliefs. Still, we must never give up trying!

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Readings for the Week of July 8, 2007

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sunday: | Is 66:10-14c/Gal 6:14-18/Lk 10:1-12,
17-20 <i>or</i> 10:1-9 |
| Monday: | Gn 28:10-22a/Mt 9:18-26 |
| Tuesday: | Gn 32:23-33/Mt 9:32-38 |
| Wednesday: | Gn 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a/Mt 10:1-7 |
| Thursday: | Gn 44:18-21, 23b-29; 45:1-5/Mt 10:7-15 |
| Friday: | Gn 46:1-7, 28-30/Mt 10:16-23 |
| Saturday: | Gn 49:29-32; 50:15-26a/Mt 10:24-33 |
| Next Sunday: | Dt 30:10-14/Col 1:15-20/Lk 10:25-37 |

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.

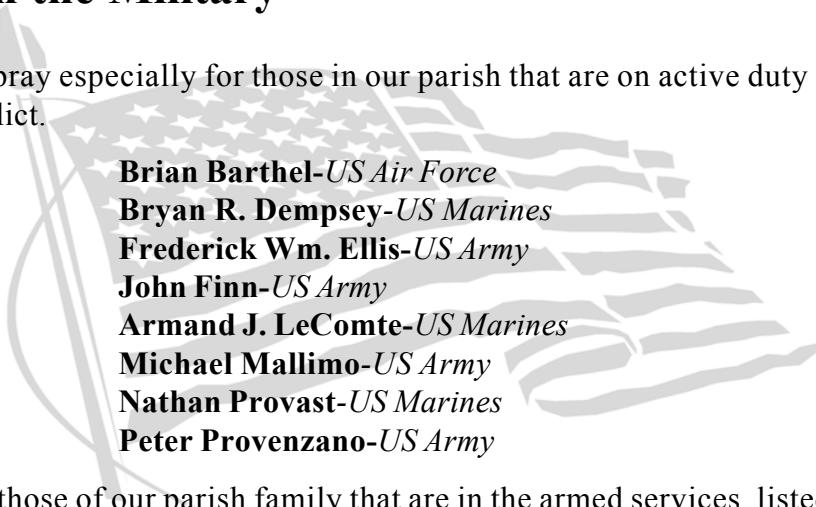
Jesus, King of All Nations Prayer Group

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.**

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
Nathan Provast-US Marines
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 Msgr. 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:

“Staying Cool.”

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.

Healing Mass

Charismatic Prayer Groups in Nassau County will sponsor a Healing Mass on Monday, July 9 beginning at 8 PM in the St. Barnabas Holy Family Chapel, Bellmore. The celebrant shall be Fr. Philip Tah. Everyone will have the opportunity to be prayed with. For further information, please call Charismatic Prayer Groups in Nassau County at 516.785.0054.

St. Joseph Prayer Center, Patchogue will sponsor a Charismatic Healing Mass on Saturday, July 14 at Our Lady of The Island Shrine on Eastport Manor Road in Eastport. Praise and worship will be at 1 PM and the Mass will begin at 1:30 PM. Prayer teams will be available for healing after Mass. For further information, please call the St. Joseph Prayer Center at 631.730.6210.

Direct Care Counselors

Catholic Charities is seeking Direct Care Counselors who are committed to our mission of "Care with Dignity, Life with Hope" in working with developmentally disabled adults in group homes. Full time, part time and per diem hours are available. Valid NYS driver's license and HS Diploma/GED required. Please email resume to heimann.linda@catholiccharities.cc or fax resume to 516.733.7038 or call 516.733.7009.

Free Health Screening

The Tzu Chi doctors are all Buddhists who donate time to help the poor/vulnerable. They are involved with the Doctors without Borders Program. Tzu Chi International Medical Association-TIMA will conduct a free health screening on Sunday, July 15, 2007 from 10 AM ~ 2 PM at St. Anne's Church, 88 Second Ave., Brentwood. For more information, please call Tzu Chi Long Island Office at 516.873.6888 or St.Anne's Church at 273-8113.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Telephone Reassurance Program

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

Friendly Visitor Program

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

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

“Mega” Garage Sale

St. Anne’s Parish, Brentwood is having a “Mega” Garage Sale on Saturday, July 28 from 9 AM until 5 PM.

Items have come from all over parish homes, attics, and garages. There will be furniture, dishes, toys and more! Refreshments include home baked items, hot dogs, hamburgers, soda and snacks.

All proceeds will benefit St. Anne’s Parish Fundraising. St. Anne’s is located just south of the Brentwood Train Station or two blocks east of Brentwood Road.

The Beginning Experience

Help for the heartache of divorce, separation and widowhood. A weekend away for a lifetime of change. The next weekend is August 10 - 12. For information and reservations, call Connie at 516.735.1720 or Mike at 516.812.6417.

Dominican Village

We would love to show you our home...

Please join us for one of our upcoming Open Houses. The Open House will be on Sunday, July 15 from 1 PM until 3 PM and again on Saturday, July 28 from 1 PM until 3 PM. We have a Summer Special - If you sign your lease by Labor Day your first month's rent is free! For more information, please call 631.842.6091 or visit us at www.dominicanvillage.org.

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.

Vendors Needed

Vendors are needed for the 25th Annual Our Lady of Perpetual Help International Feast, So. Wellwood Avenue, Lindenhurst - July 11 to July 15, 2007 and the OLPH International Street Fair, Wellwood Avenue from West Gates to Hoffman Avenues on Sunday, July 15, 2007. Limited space available at the feast! Call Rich 631.539.4942 or visit us online at OLPHLindenhurst.org.

Helping Create a Symphony of Prayer

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Theologians make an important distinction between what they call "devotional" and "liturgical" prayer. "Devotional" prayer, they tell us, is private in nature and is meant to help sustain us personally on the spiritual journey. "Liturgical" prayer, by contrast, is public by nature, the church's prayer (not our own), is universal in scope, and is intended for the needs of the world.

We don't always grasp this, to the detriment of both kinds of prayer. Perhaps we might understand this better if we put different names to these. What helps clarify things for me are the terms "affective" and "priestly" prayer. "Affective" prayer refers to private prayer, prayer that's about us, focused precisely on bringing us and our feelings to God. "Priestly" prayer, on the other hand, is not about us, is about the world, is public in nature, and it doesn't have to be meaningful personally to be of value. But how can this be? How can prayer be of value if it isn't personally meaningful?

An analogy might be helpful: Imagine you're part of a symphony orchestra, playing an instrument that contributes to an overall musical score. Night in and night out, you're playing the same piece in the same theatre, helping to create a beautiful symphony for the audience.

The public prayer of the church, priestly prayer, works exactly like that. It's a symphony intended for the benefit of everyone and open to everyone.

This has a number of ramifications: First of all, it clarifies some age-old questions about who benefits from our prayer and who doesn't. Are people who have others to pray for them more lucky than those who don't? Imagine two people, both in pain and in need of prayer. The first is a very well-loved individual, part of a big and loving community, perhaps even a public figure, and he has many people praying for him. The second person isn't as lucky. She's alone, without family and friends, unknown to the world, with nobody to pray for her. Are we to believe that the first person has drawn a lucky straw and will benefit from all the prayers offered for him, while the second will languish alone, without the benefit of prayer since she has nobody to pray for her?

No. That's not the way prayer works, at least not the "priestly" prayer of the church. It creates a symphony that's intended for everyone, includes everyone, and benefits everyone, the loved, the unloved, the

lucky, and the unlucky, all equally. When a symphony is being played it's not selective or discriminatory, the music is for everybody. Granted, in its explicit expression, our "priestly" prayer might sometimes be directed towards the needs of one particular person ("Let us pray for Martha who's ill and in the hospital"), but everyone, Martha included, is given the benefit of the symphony. Indeed, such an understanding of "priestly" prayer should challenge us precisely to continually stretch ourselves in terms of the universal intent of our public prayer when we gather as church. Our public prayers on a Sunday are not so much intended for some individual Martha who's ill and in pain, as for the whole world in all its ills and pains, Martha and her pains included.

This analogy of public prayer as a symphony sheds light on another issue as well, namely, on why our public, priestly prayer does not have to be meaningful to us personally to be valuable.

Imagine again that you're part of an orchestra that, night in and night out, plays the same musical score. You've played the same piece many times over and, most evenings, are bored with it. You'd love, for your own stimulation, to play something else which would give you more energy. But the symphony isn't yours, isn't intended for you, and depends on many things beyond your tastes and preferences. Your participation is in function of something else. You're replaying this for somebody else. So you play the same piece, night in and night out, not for your own benefit, but for the audience. You contribute your efforts to the symphony for the benefit of others, even as you yourself would prefer to be playing something else.

That's how "priestly" prayer works, it makes a symphony of prayer for the benefit of everyone. That's the intent of all Sunday services and all liturgical prayers of the church.

What constitutes "priestly" prayer? It's the public prayer of our churches, the Eucharist, the Sacraments, Services of the Word, Sunday worship. It's also the Office of the Church (the Liturgy of the Hours, the Breviary). All of these, by essence and definition, are public prayers, intended first of all not for the private nourishment of those praying them, but as a symphony of prayer for the benefit of the whole world.

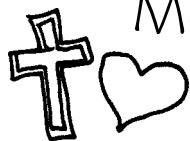
The next time you're at a church service and telling yourself that this isn't nurturing you, remember that the function of an orchestra is, first of all, not to entertain itself but to make music for others.

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.

Growing with the Gospel

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus sent out 72 of his followers to spread the good news about God. They were not to bring anything with them - no food, no extra clothes or shoes, not even money to spend. They were to visit strangers and completely depend on God to give them what they needed. That took a lot of faith!



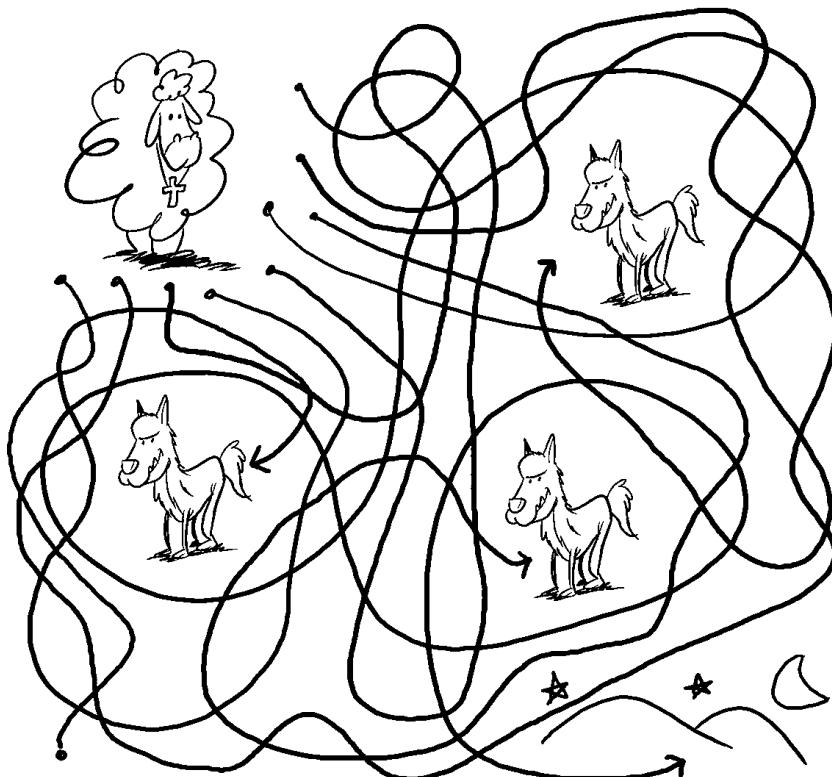
Mission for the Week

Make a card for one of your neighbors,
and tell that person, "Jesus loves you!"



Puzzle

Find the safest way to get to the mountain.



Prayer



Dear God,
help me
to remember
that you will give
me what I need.

Something to Draw



Draw a picture
of yourself
telling a friend
about Jesus.