

“You shall love the Lord,  
your God, with all your heart,  
with all your being,  
with all your strength,  
and with all your mind,  
and your neighbor  
as yourself.”

Luke 10:28



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Our Lady of Lourdes • July 15, 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](mailto:ParishOffice@ollchurch.org)

fax: 661-7143

website: [www.ollchurch.org](http://www.ollchurch.org)

### **Our Lady of Lourdes School**

587-7200

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - 3 PM

email:

### **Religious Education Office**

661-5440

Monday-Friday: 9 AM - Noon

1 PM - 5 PM

7 PM - 9 PM

email: [ReligiousEd@ollchurch.org](mailto: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](mailto: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

### **Louise Krol**

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

## *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.*

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## *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



## **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!*

### **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?**

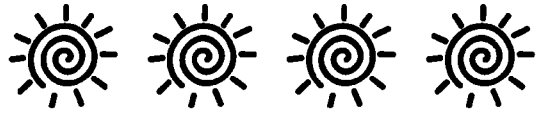
Fill out the registration form which can be found on our parish website at [www.ollchurch.org](http://www.ollchurch.org) or at the Parish Office. Please return it to the Parish Office or mail it to OLL at 455 Hunter Ave. (att. Jennifer Gallagher) with all fees.

### **Questions?**

Email [jengallagher@ollchurch.org](mailto: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](mailto:jengallagher@ollchurch.org)



# SUMMER

Evening Prayer

2007

Great speakers!

Great food  
each night!



Monday evening  
July 16  
7:30 PM  
Great Lawn

Great nights for  
families and friends!

Guest speaker:

**Michael Chiappone, Social Worker at Hope House Ministries**  
Mike will talk to us about the challenge of justice and courage needed  
to lift the burdens of life - our own and others!

**Come early - bring your dinner and be part of Family Game Night -  
beginning at 7 PM. This week we're playing BINGO!**  
**Come for some fun, some prizes and some laughs, too.**

**Hospitality this week will be Fruit Night! We ask everyone with the last  
name A-L to bring some type of fruit dessert (fresh fruit, fruit pies, fruit  
bars, fruit juice, etc.) to place on our Sharing Table!**

**Remember...if it rains or there is a heat warning...we will gather in the All Purpose Room!**

Around Our Parish

## **The OLL 23rd Annual Duffers Golf Classic**

**The OLL 23rd Annual Duffers Golf Classic at Timber Point Country Club in Great River.  
Mark your calendars-Thursday, August 23**

The event will start at noon with a 2 PM shot-gun. You can even work a half-day and still join us! We currently have both men and women golfers, as well as non-golfers who are joining us for dinner honoring Mrs. Cioffi for her thirteen years of service to OLL School. Please join us for what will be a fun-filled day! The cost is \$175 for golfers and \$75 for dinner-only participants. There will also be a live auction and raffle prizes! For further information or to make reservations, please contact Joe Macina at 587.0241, Frank Antonawich at 587.7988, or Rich Maher at 661.5478.

## **Living Liturgy**

Our liturgies and prayer services are definitely missing something these days – YOU! To keep the liturgy alive, we need you! There are so many ways for you to get involved. Take a look at the bulletin throughout the summer and discover a ministry that is calling you and/or your family to get involved. Summer is a good time to “think” about things and see how you can get even more involved in the year ahead!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask by stopping by in Church, sending an e-mail to [jsureau@ollchurch.org](mailto:jsureau@ollchurch.org) or calling John at 661.3224, x.135.

## **New Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist**

Extraordinary Ministers distribute communion at Sunday liturgy, weekday Masses and during holy days of obligation. Some ministers also choose to bring Communion to the Sick in our parish community.

*What's the commitment?*

There is a training offered by the Diocese of Rockville Centre in the Fall and a follow up training here at OLL. We try to schedule you based on the Mass you most frequently attend. Ministers sign up to serve on holidays, holy days and special occasions. We also offer opportunities for reflection and prayer that all are invited to and requested to be a part of throughout the year.

*I want more information....*

Ask one of our Extraordinary Ministers you might see at Mass, call John Sureau at 661.3224, x.135 or e-mail him at [jsureau@ollchurch.org](mailto:jsureau@ollchurch.org).

## **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 visit the Parish Office and fill out the order form.



## Mission Group Craft Sale

Come support our Sister Parish project by purchasing beautiful handcrafts brought back by our mission group from El Salvador. These items are gorgeous, handmade and make great Christmas gifts! The Mission Group Craft Sale will be held after all Masses on the weekend of July 21/22.

All proceeds of the sale will go towards helping our sister school in Tacuba purchase computers for their students. How wonderful it would be to provide the students of our sister parish with the opportunity to use some current technology!

## "Meet Your Counselor"

Vacation Bible Camp "Meet Your Counselor" Sunday: July 22, right after the 9:30 AM Mass. All campers are invited to come to mass for a special blessing, followed by a "Meet the Counselors" breakfast in the cafeteria. Get ready for a fun week at FLIGHT Camp!

## Parish Social Ministry

Outreach has received a donation in memory of *Lynn Hammburg*.

On behalf of the Parish Community, Outreach would like to extend a warm and sincere thanks to *West Islip Wine and Liquors on Union Blvd.* Thanks to the generosity of Rob and Rich DiStefano, Outreach now has a refrigerator/freezer! We are so grateful as we will now be able to offer dairy and meat products to our clients! Thanks.

## 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."

### *Why would I want a Spiritual Director?*

The desire for a Spiritual Director comes when one wants to develop a deeper relationship with God or when one's search for God seems to be at a crossroad. Perhaps someone would want a Spiritual director when one wants to explore new methods of prayer, or prayer becomes difficult, when one feels the desire for someone to help in discerning the call of the Spirit, or when one feels the desire for a companion on the spiritual journey to walk with them and listen.



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.)

## **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**

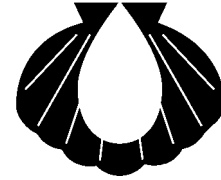
Arranged at least six months in advance, please call the Parish Office.

#### **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.

## **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



## **Baptisms**

*Paul Anthony Singh*

Nicholas and Angela

*Kevin John Ryan*

John and Terri

*Giavanna Battista*

Steven and Laura

*Emma Ann Carlson*

Erik and Kristy

*Anicia Maria Liriano*

Peter and Helen

*Kiara Marie Ramos*

Carlos and Solibel

*Nicole Marie Williams*

Michael and Donna



# Remembering...

## Monday, July 16

*Our Lady of Mt. Carmel*

8:00 AM Gailean Misner

## Tuesday, July 17

8:00 AM Diana Zotto

## Wednesday, July 18

*St. Camillus de Lellis, priest*

8:00 AM Loretta Yankel

## Thursday, July 19

8:00 AM George Shaddock

## Friday, July 20

8:00 AM William Fishlinger

## Saturday, July 21

8:00 AM Peter Reehil, Rosa Marrero, Joe Kolk,  
Margaret Rowland, Anthony Giancone,  
Salvatore Castaldo, Vincent Daddio,  
Nicholas Capozzi, Ann Horan

5:00 PM Patrick McCarthy

## Sunday, July 22

8:00 AM William Heartt

9:30 AM Peter Connolly

11:00 AM Tony Squeo

12:30 PM John Howrigan

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Louie Ruisi, William Habel,  
Dec'd mbrs. of Oliva & Cinquemani Families,  
Susan Fornatora, John Sheinhart, John Gibbons,  
Dorothy T. Cronin, Alice Fitzgerald, Margaret Polidoro



## Rest In Peace

*John Aspromanti*,  
died on June 30 and celebration of the  
Mass of Christian Burial was July 3.  
We extend our prayers to his wife, Jane  
and their family.

*Mary A. Schnepf*,  
died on May 4 and celebration of the  
Mass of Christian burial was July 6.  
We extend our prayers to her daughter,  
Marianna and her family.

## Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Pat Wissing*.  
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.

86%  
to goal!

PARISH GOAL \$103,000



—  
— \$ 88,335  
— Pledged  
— to Date

412 Pledges  
\$214 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](http://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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

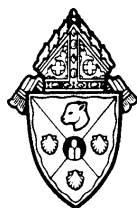
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.drvc.org/cma.html).

## Financial Summary

### July 1, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 16,734.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (4,266.00)

### July 8, 2007

Weekly Collection	\$ 18,538.00
Weekly Budget	-\$ 21,000.00
+/- for the week	\$ (2,462.00)

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



### Blood Drive Thank You

A Big Thank You to each and everyone who took time from their busy schedule to donate blood. There were 77 registered donors with 13 deferrals and we collected 64 pints of blood. Each donor saved from 1 to 5 lives. We could not have done it without YOU!!!

### Pray for Our Sick

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

*Pat Bonavita, Thomas Brennan, Baby Drew Brust, Joseph Calderale, Sr., Howard Campkin, Lynn Castellano, Regina Cranor, Joseph Cristallo, Bernadette DeVirgilis, Jason Fisher, Elizabeth Fredriksen, Samantha Hil, Adam Ippolito, Wade Kromhout, Evelyn Lang, Richard Lang, Nancy Letsch, 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, Zack Sawers, Carol Scheid, Dorothy Schiavone, Dorothy Sullivan, Marie "Amy" Turano, Loretta Vitale*



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## Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Nearly six years after the tragic Sept. 11 events in New York City, most of us can still recall countless stories of heroism where ordinary people did extraordinary things to try to help their fellow men and women. The same is true for natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc. While some are shouting on television about failure to act quickly enough, others are already on the scene, performing rescues or simply providing comfort.

The parable of the Good Samaritan comes at a point in Jesus' life where he had recently been rebuked by a town of Samaritans who would not allow him to stay with them because he was a Jew. Still, he chose a Samaritan as the example of the compassionate stranger in his story. Jesus wants us to know that there is good in everyone regardless of their background, and it is that goodness that leads us to help others without questioning the circumstances of their situation.

We are taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that through the sacraments of healing, we are continuing the work begun by Jesus Christ. (CCC 1421) Like that Good Samaritan, Jesus came upon us, found us broken, hurt, and in need and gave us comfort, never giving thought to our background or what brought us to this point. He did not raise his voice and demand that something should be done by someone. He simply gave his all.

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### Readings for the Week of July 15, 2007

<b>Sunday:</b>	Dt 30:10-14/Col 1:15-20/Lk 10:25-37
<b>Monday:</b>	Ex 1:8-14, 22/Mt 10:34-11:1
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Ex 2:1-15a/Mt 11:20-24
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Ex 3:1-6, 9-12/Mt 11:25-27
<b>Thursday:</b>	Ex 3:13-20/Mt 11:28-30
<b>Friday:</b>	Ex 11:10-12:14/Mt 12:1-8
<b>Saturday:</b>	Ex 12:37-42/Mt 12:14-21
<b>Next Sunday:</b>	Gn 18:1-10a/Col 1:24-28/Lk 10:38-42

## **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:

**“Having a Positive Attitude.”**

Don’t forget to tune in!

Visit “Religion & Rock” on the web, [www.religionandrock.com](http://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.

## 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.

## 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](mailto:heimann.linda@catholiccharities.cc) or fax resume to 516.733.7038 or call 516.733.7009.

## Help Wanted

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Parish in Deer Park is looking for a part-time receptionist. If interested, please contact Deacon Phil Mills, Administrator at 667.4044, ext. 110.

## 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.

## 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.

## **Sisters of Charity-Halifax**

Tickets are now on sale for the **7th Annual Sisters of Charity-Halifax Golf Outing to be held on Monday, August 6 at the Cherry Valley Club in Garden City**. The day includes brunch, links fees, evening reception and dinner. Tickets for dinner only are available. For further information or to make reservations, please contact Adam Szczepanski at 718.424.1813 or email to [aszczepanski@schalifax.org](mailto:aszczepanski@schalifax.org).

## **2nd Annual Car Wash**

**OLL Cub Scout Pack 330** is having its **2nd Annual Car Wash on Sunday, July 29 from 10 AM until 3 PM**. (Rain date is the following Sunday, August 5)

The location is at the West Islip Senior Citizen Center on Higbie Lane in West Islip just north of the W.I. High School. The cost is \$5 for cars and \$10 for SUVs/Vans. All proceeds benefit the Cub Scout Program. As always, thank you for your continued support.

## **Dominican Village**

*We would love to show you our home...*

Please join us for one of our upcoming Open Houses.

The next Open House will be on **Saturday, July 28 from 1 PM until 3 PM**.

Upcoming Open Houses will also be held on August 11 and August 26. 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](http://www.dominicanvillage.org).

## **“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 Mother Tongue

*Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI*

Hans Urs Von Baltasar once wrote: "After a Mother has smiled for a long time at her child, the child will begin to smile back; she has awakened love in its heart, and in awakening love in its heart, she awakes also recognition."

Awakening love and recognition within a child's heart is a result of more than just the mother's smile, her voice is also important. Mothers don't just cuddle babies and smile at them, they also speak to them. It's this, hearing the mother's voice beckoning the child to come outwards towards a bigger world even when there isn't yet any real understanding of what's being said, that's vital in bringing a child to self-awareness and speech. We come out of the darkness and chaos of infancy precisely to the extent that we are called out by voices that cajole, caress, reassure, and keep forever luring us beyond ourselves.

During the early critical months of a child's life, it's the mother's voice that does most of this. That's why the first language we learn is called our "mother tongue". There are no "father tongues". It's the mother's voice that first caressed us and lured us out of unthinking, inarticulate darkness. Rainer Marie Rilke says that an infant's journey into human awareness depends upon the mother's voice displacing "the surging abyss."

Language philosophers agree. In their view, language structures consciousness and creates the very possibility of thought and feeling. Before we can use a language, we're trapped inside a darkness and chaos that leave us unable to think or speak as human beings.

We see this illustrated in the case of Helen Keller, who was born blind and deaf and was taught to speak only by the extraordinary efforts of a gifted teacher, Annie Sullivan. In a real sense, Annie Sullivan, Helen's teacher, broke open the world for her. By teaching her language, Annie Sullivan precisely brought Helen Keller out of darkness and chaos and opened up for her the possibility of freedom, thought, deeper feeling, self-expression, and the awareness of love.

Perhaps no image is more valuable than this to help us understand how the Word of God is meant to work in our lives. All preaching, teaching, theology, and pastoral practice is really in function of letting God's voice become the smiling, beckoning, caressing, cajoling, luring voice of the mother, calling us out of fear, darkness, chaos, and muted frustration to freedom, thought, self-expression, and the awareness of love.

The purpose of God's word is not, first of all, to challenge us towards charity, social justice, morality, or even to the worship of something higher or to form community among ourselves, important though these are in themselves. Christ came, as God's incarnate Word, to bring us life, light, and love. This means that Christ came to do what our mother tongue does, namely, to call us out beyond the fear, darkness, and chaos that prevents us from entering the world of self-expression, thought, and conscious love.

Christ, as Word, is analogous to Annie Sullivan trying to help Helen Keller break through the chaos of being trapped inside herself, unaware of deeper consciousness, unable to speak, and blocked from fully entering human life. It's no accident that the gospels speak of Christ as "the Word" because Christianity is more a particular kind of language (a "mother tongue") than it is a religion.

Religion doesn't always understand itself in that way. In our theology schools, in our church circles, and in our preaching and religious teaching, in general there is too little of Annie Sullivan and too much a using of God's word for every other kind of purpose. If we look at a sampling of religious literature of any persuasion (the preaching, teaching, and writing of liberals and conservatives alike within any denomination) or at the language that drives social justice spiritualities, academic theology, devotional literature, new age spiritualities, or the theologies of other world religions, we will find, with few salient exceptions, too little that sounds like a "mother tongue". For the most part, we will search in vain for an Annie Sullivan who with infinite patience, understanding, and gentleness, is trying to coax us out of the darkness, inarticulateness, deafness, and chaos into which we were born.

That's not to say that what passes today for preaching, theology, and pastoral practice is not full of valuable truth, interesting insights, and prophetic challenge. There's lots of good theology around. But what's more absent are the loving sounds and coaxing words, along with the gentle cadence, that we first heard from our mothers when they lured us into self-awareness. What's needed in theology, spirituality, and church circles are caressing, gentle, beckoning voices that, with the patience and love of an Annie Sullivan, try to teach us how to speak and to enter a world whose complexity and hugeness dwarfs and frightens us. It's not easy to be led out of darkness.

The search for God is very much the search to hear the divine in our "mother tongue".

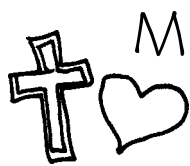
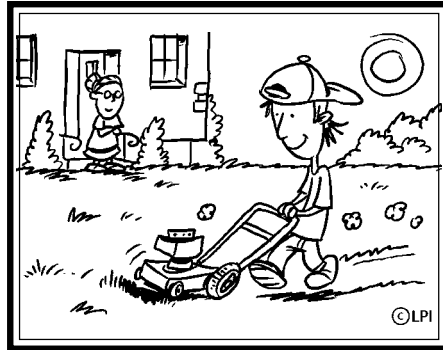
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*Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. Father Rolheiser is a theologian, teacher, and award-winning author and is currently the President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his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



# Sharing the Gospel

Jesus wants you to love your neighbors. He wants you to help your neighbors. You could help the people who live next door, or the people that go to your church. But Jesus wants you to think bigger than that. Jesus wants you to help people all around the world - no matter where they live, and no matter what they believe.



## Mission for the Week

Ask your parents if your family could give money to help the missions in another country.



### Puzzle

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel:

CARE  
ROBBERS  
ATTACKED

LEAVING  
PRIEST  
WALKED

SAMARIA  
TREATED  
NEIGHBOR

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

### Prayer



Dear God,  
Show me  
how to  
help others  
around the world.

### Something to Draw



Draw a picture  
of people holding  
hands all around  
the world.  
They are all our  
neighbors.