

OUR LADY OF LOURDES • FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT • DECEMBER 20, 2009



**"BLESSED ARE YOU
AMONG WOMEN."**



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.

Our Lady of Lourdes

*455 Hunter Avenue
West Islip, New York 11795*

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

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.

Pastoral Team

Rev. Michael A. Vetrano
Pastor

Rev. Patsy Amabile
Associate Pastor

Rev. Robert Scheckenback
Associate Pastor

Rev. Ambrose Cabildo
In Residence

Deacon John DeGuardi

Deacon Tom Lucie

Deacon Jack Meehan

Coordinator of Stewardship

Deacon John Teufel

Sr. Margaret Bickar

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Sr. Nancy Campkin

Director of Religious Education

Allegra D'Alo

Youth Minister/Social Action

Jennifer Gallagher

Childrens' Choir/Women's Chorale

Summer Program Director

Carol M. Goetz

Parish Music Director

Louise Jane Krol

School Principal

Sr. Diane Liona

Director of Religious Education

Mary McMahan

Director of Parish Social Ministry

Robin Reynolds-Brennan

Coordinator of Worship

Vita Scorcio

Ministry Spiritual Director

Sr. Betty Toohig

Senior Ministry-SAGE

Anthony Trombino

Business Manager

Pastoral Council

Stacie Baltrusitis

Lisa Cantalino

Sonia DaSilva

Nilo DeLeon

Jane Desthers

Jerry Esposito

Deacon Jack Meehan

John Muldoon

Bob Natale

Eileen Rega

Vita Scorcio

Mary Steck

Fr. Mike Vetrano

Christine Volk

Parish Staff

Barbara Catuosco

Religious Education Office

Mary Anne Lettieri

Parish Office

Debbie Meyer

Bulletin Editor/Parish Office

Rosemary Multer

School Office

Rex Muro

Organist

Rita Spera

Religious Education Office

Lori Walsh

Parish Office



**4th Sunday
in Advent**

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: lkrol@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, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

9:30 AM - 3 PM

S.A.G.E.

661.3224

(Senior Advocates for Growth
and Enrichment)

email: Sage@ollchurch.org

Welcome...

to Our Lady of Lourdes!

We are so happy to welcome everyone who has come to worship with us today! Whether you have come a long distance or you live locally, we are glad that you have decided to spend some time with us as we worship our Lord together. Please know that your presence today is a blessing to our parish family.

Would you like to know more about our parish family?

All are welcome at Our Lady of Lourdes and we do our best to reach out to everyone.

If you would like more information about our parish or if you would like one of our team to be in touch with you, please fill this form out and place it in any collection or offering basket, mail it to us, or send an email to parishoffice@ollchurch.org

Welcome...

to Our Lady of Lourdes!



I would like information about:

Religious Education of my Children Becoming a Catholic or Adult Confirmation
 Marriage or Annulment / Remarriage Spiritual Direction or Counseling
 Our Parish Catholic School Adult Education Senior Services
 Joining the Parish Baptizing my Children Other _____

I would prefer to be contacted by:

Phone at: _____ Email at: _____

Mail at: _____

Your Name: _____

We invite our entire parish family to come and share this special evening with us.



*Our Lady of Lourdes Eighth Annual
Family Christmas Pageant*

*Tuesday, December 22
7 PM in the Church*

*What better way to prepare for Christmas
than to share the Christmas story with our children!*



Marriage Preparation and Wedding Ministry

“Married Christians, in virtue of the sacrament of marriage, signify and share in the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church.”

(Rite of Marriage #1)

Our Lady of Lourdes has a well founded reputation of hospitality and welcoming.

The Wedding Ministry assists the Groom, Bride, their families and guests at the wedding rehearsal and at the Marriage Liturgy itself, so that they can pray well together and experience the hallmark warmth of our Parish. The Ministry consists of volunteer Parishioners; men, women and couples, who give their time to be present at the rehearsal and Liturgy.

“...They are invited to understand the meaning of the responsible and mature love of the community of life and love which their family will be, a real domestic Church which will contribute toward enriching the whole Church...”

(Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage #2)

“FOCCUS” and “Pre-Cana” are used as our preparation program for the Sacrament of Marriage. They are also facilitated by volunteer Parishioners; married couples who have been trained by the Diocese so they can share the nature of Marriage as they have lived it out in their lives and in their faith. We hope you have benefited from these ministries and hope that you would consider sharing your gifts by being a part of them yourself.

Altar Servers

Starting in fourth grade, our young people, both girls and boys, are asked to consider being trained to serve the Altar for our Saturday, Sunday, Wedding, and Funeral Liturgies. This is a great opportunity to significantly contribute to the Parish as a young member, as well as a wonderful way to be involved in and learn about the prayer and faith-life of the Parish. We are grateful to the many boys and girls, some now men and women, who have been a part of this Ministry through the years. There will be training sessions this winter, spring, and fall.

Serving the Body of Christ...

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

We congratulate and welcome our Parish’s newest Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion- *Paula Dannhauser, Edna Levey, Theresa Moy, Corazone Smith, Dolores Tibbetts and Ted Turnasella*- who have been commissioned to serve as Extraordinary Ministers in our parish! Pray for them as they begin this important ministry in the life of OLL!

What does it take to be an Extraordinary Minister?

- participation in Sunday Eucharist
- commitment to serve two or three times per month
- attendance at a Diocesan training and parish training
- openness to bring Communion to the sick

If you have other questions or are interested in becoming an Extraordinary Minister, please contact Mrs. Mary . Borgs of our Parish Liturgy Committee at 665.2928 or you can email Fr. Pat at FrPat@ollchurch.org.

Advent '09

“I will be a candle in the darkness.”

Come and be a part of “THE SIX”...

Sunday, 6 PM Mass

All 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Graders and their families are invited to please join “THE SIX” with your grade...



Grade 5 - 4th Sunday of Advent, December 20

Discover the unexpected ways of God!

Come and be a lector, greeter, participate in the Presentation of the Gifts, lighting the Advent Wreath, and more...

We ask that you please bring an “un-food” item such as soap, shampoo, kleenex, paper towels, dawn, etc for our OLL Pantry.

Adult Faith Formation

Monday Mornings in Advent

Fr. Pat Amabile - Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Come to 8 AM Mass on Mondays in Advent. You will be able to pray the Rosary after Mass or just take some time for your own prayer. At 9 AM, we will gather in the Parish Center for coffee, rolls and a talk, with some time for discussion and reflection. *(If you can't make Mass, please join us at 9 AM.)*

Images of Mercy

Icons of Justice*

**applicable for Advance Certificate*

Presenter: Tom Petriano, St. Joseph's College, Patchogue

Tuesdays, January 19, 26 and February 2, 9, 23, 2010

7:30 - 9:30 PM

Parish Center

The witness of the lives of prophetic figures from various cultures and traditions can be iconic for us, and studying their lives can be both illuminating and transformative. This course will look specifically at the lives of Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, Mohandas Gandhi, Oscar Romero and the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador, and Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks as examples of modern day prophets. Their writings, sermons, letters, speeches and the witness of their lives will be examined in order to understand the spirituality and theology that was the source of their prophetic witness.

There is a \$5 fee for each session. No fee is required for those who have paid the Religious Education Family Fee or Our Lady of Lourdes School tuition. Registration is necessary and helpful. This will enable us to have enough reading material and refreshments for all those attending. To register, please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440, option 3 or email to religioused@ollchurch.org.

Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Awareness Trip

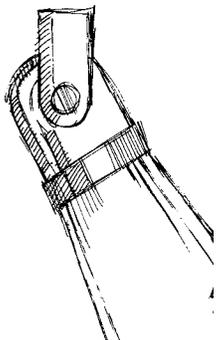
As many of you know, this past July, a team of 28 OLL parishioners traveled to El Salvador to pray and work with the communities of Mogotes and Tacuba. It is in keeping with Catholic Social teaching that we help others and share our faith with Catholics everywhere. With the help of the parishioners here at home, the El Salvador Team has been raising money through our CASA project to build homes for those belonging to our sister parishes. Through the support of Our Lady of Lourdes, our young people have been able to experience another culture and help people in need. Thank you OLL!

OLL CASA Project Look What You Have Done!



Through your generous donations, we have received \$ **4,365** so far. With the amount collected, we have been able to fund the building of two complete houses and we are well on our way to completing a third house!

Keep up the good work. Through your donations to the OLL Casa Project, we will be able to continue to build homes for those belonging to our sister parishes.



Youth Spotlight!

Our Lady of Lourdes Youth Program now has a FACEBOOK! Friend Bernie Soubirous and join the OLL Youth group and stay in the loop about all of the teen events that are happening at OLL. Awesome things are coming up so you don't want to miss out.

Parish Outreach

Office telephone:

661-9262, option 4

Office hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
9:30 AM - 3 PM

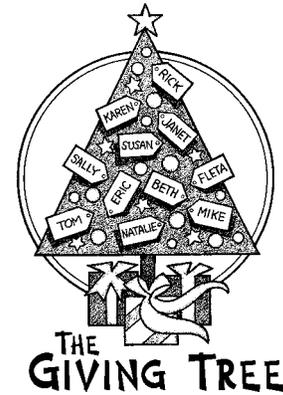


Pantry Needs

detergent
kleenex
paper towels
personal feminine products
shampoo
soap
toilet tissue
toothbrush
toothpaste

The Giving Tree

Each ornament on our Parish Giving Tree is a gift tag that represents something needed by a family in our parish. Help us to meet these needs by taking a tag from our tree and returning a gift. Your gift will help you to think about the real meaning of Christmas and will help a needy family in a very concrete way. You may also make a financial gift to Parish Outreach and they will use it to purchase a gift or to help a family who needs financial support. Please remember to attach the tag on the gift.



Outreach Donations

November Donations

- Phil and Concetta Ambrosino have made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Cono D'Alto*.
- Diane Garretson has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Philip Charron*.
- Outreach has received a donation from Christina Caferelli in memory of *Anna and Albert Gow*.
- Regina Mirabella has made a donation to Outreach *in thanksgiving for prayers answered*.
- The Giuffré Family has made a donation to Outreach in memory of *Megan Ann Anderson*.
- Sylvester Bonacci has made a donation to Outreach in memory of his late wife, *Alice*.

If you would like to make a donation to Parish Outreach in memory of a loved one, please call Mary McMahon, Director of Parish Social Ministry at 661.3224, option 4.

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous:

Monday and Tuesday at
8 PM and Saturday at 2 PM
and 7 PM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.

ALANON:

Each Wednesday at
10 AM in Lourdes Hall-
convent lower level.

(Free babysitting available)



Rest In Peace

Delia Soriano died on November 29 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 3. We extend our prayers to her children, grandchildren, and entire family.

John J. Ruvolo died on December 6 and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on December 10. We extend our prayers to his wife, Alma, children, grandchildren, sister, Marie Lanfair, and entire family.

Robert Reardon died on December 6 and Mass of Christian Burial was offered in Hicksville on December 11. We extend our prayers to his sister, Betty Fallon, and the entire family.

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.

Santa's Surprise Party

Mr. St. George, drama teacher for Our Lady of Lourdes School, along with the cast members of the Christmas play, "Santa's Surprise Party" which took place on December 10.



Ice Cream Party with the Principal

Every month a child from each grade gets to join in with the Principal, Ms. Louise J. Krol, for an ice cream party. The winners must correctly answer a trivia question based on their age group. A new question is posed every month and the kids really love the challenge...and the ice cream!

School Family Mass

The FIRST Sunday of every month will be our School Family Mass

Next Mass - January 3, 2010

**9:30AM Mass
in our Church**

Please join us and let's pray together with Father Mike and our parish then join us for bagels!

Yearbook Committee

8th grade members of the yearbook committee get together every other Tuesday to work on their school memories.





Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24

4 PM All Souls of the Maggi Family

(Church) Fr. Mike Vetrano

Family Mass with music led by our Contemporary Music Group Christmas Carols to begin at 3:30 PM.

4 PM Salegna, Paladino & Ardolino Families

(cafeteria) Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

The Mass "Down Under" with quiet music and an intimate atmosphere.

6 PM Edward DeMatteo

(Church) Fr. Bob Scheckenback

Our Young People's Mass which includes Children's Liturgy of the Word and our Youth Choir.

8 PM Virginia & Joseph Beno

(Church) Fr. Pat Amabile

Our most solemn liturgy, a manageable crowd, and a solemn spirit of prayer and worship.

11 PM Mary D. Walsh

(Church) Fr. Mike Vetrano

This Mass, which ends around midnight, begins the actual celebration of Christmas. The liturgy includes a beautiful candle light service and music led by our Adult Choir.

Christmas Carols to begin at 10:30 PM.

Christmas Day

Friday, December 25

(all Masses in Church)

8:00 AM Dec'd mbrs of Isola & Dixon Families

Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

9:30 AM Lillian LaRocca

Fr. Bob Scheckenback

11:00 AM John J., Sr. & Joan Goode

Fr. Mike Vetrano

12:30 PM Herbert Gothard Olsen

Fr. Pat Amabile

(There is no 6 PM Mass on Christmas Day)

Remembering . . .

Monday, December 21

St. Peter Canisius, priest & doctor

8:00 AM Theresa Reardon

Tuesday, December 22

8:00 AM Michael Torina

Altar Bread and Wine

In memory of

Baby & Richard Joseph Shaddock

Wednesday, December 23

St. John of Kanty, priest

8:00 AM Laura Abela

Thursday, December 24

8:00 AM Colin & Yankel Family and Kay Sullo

See Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Mass Schedule on previous page...

Saturday, December 26

8:00 AM Larry Gentile, Albert Hawkins-Firth, Eileen Wurster,
John Szczecina, Mary Lopez, Virginia Trimarchi,
Patrick J. Leandro, Henery & Edena Levy,
Raymond & Helen Kelly, Raymond Kelly, Jr.

5:00 PM Dec'd mbrs of Monroe & Shaddock Families
Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

Sunday, December 27

8:00 AM Stephen Perez
Fr. Bob Scheckenback

9:30 AM Patrick & Donald Manning and Dorothy & Joseph Boening
Fr. Mike Vetrano

11:00 AM William Kuhlwilm
Fr. Pat Amabile

12:30 PM Charles Homann
Fr. Ambrose Cabildo

6:00 PM People of the Parish, Joseph Zotto, Rick Munkwitz,
John Timmer, Jr., Lisa Cavalluzzo, Fred Arlotta,
Santa Quevedo, Carl Pagnotta, Thomas Frascinella
Fr. Pat Amabile



4th Sunday of Advent

For some reason Christmas seems to bring out stories of the underdog-the unseen, unpretentious, almost unknown, who suddenly breaks on the scene. There's the little drummer boy, who has nothing, but shows up to play for the newborn king. There's the fictional story of the fourth magi, who was delayed in getting to the meeting place and so didn't make the journey to Bethlehem but found Jesus later in life. And then there's Charlie Brown's Christmas tree, that forlorn sprig that at the end of the show is shown as a glorious tree.

As we hear in the first reading from Micah, Bethlehem is much the same. A tiny backwater village that isn't even big enough to be numbered among the clans of Judah. Add to the story a young, pregnant girl from a remote town in Galilee and you don't exactly have the makings of fame and fortune.

Yet by God's grace, the underdog triumphs. Mary's kinswoman, Elizabeth, recognizes the greatness when Mary shows up at her doorstep. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb," exclaims Elizabeth, using words that we now pray every time we say the Hail Mary. Elizabeth points out, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

When we're in the lowly position, it can be hard to imagine that we can see our way out. But God does raise the lowly, as Mary said in reply to Elizabeth's greeting. Conversely, when we're on top of the world, we might do well to recall the rest of Mary's prayer: "[The Lord] has cast down the mighty from their thrones." A humble spirit can help us act upon God's will for us.
2009 Liturgical Publications Inc

Readings for the Week of December 20, 2009

Sunday:	Mi 5:1-4a/Heb 10:5-10/Lk 1:39-45
Monday:	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45
Tuesday:	1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56
Wednesday:	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66
Thursday:	<i>Morning:</i> 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-79
Friday:	<i>Vigil:</i> Is 62:1-5/Acts 13:16-17, 22-25/Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 <i>Midnight:</i> Is 9:1-6/Ti 2:11-14/Lk 2:1-14 <i>Dawn:</i> Is 62:11-12/Ti 3:4-7/Lk 2:15-20 <i>Day:</i> Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Saturday:	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59/Mt 10:17-22
Next Sunday:	Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/Lk 2:41-52



Christmas Flower Offerings

Christmas Flower offerings received by **Sunday, December 13** will be published in the Christmas bulletin. Offerings received after that date, will be published in subsequent bulletins.

Save the date....

Advent Day of Reconciliation

Monday, December 21

3 PM – 9 PM

Our parish priests will be available to hear individual confessions. The Advent season brings us promises of transformation and renewal. This beautiful sacrament is one way this can happen. Be open to the healing forgiveness of Reconciliation!

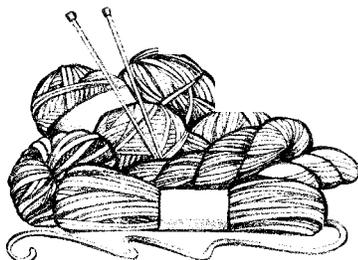
Men's Group

An Invitation to all men from OLL and beyond...

We invite all men of the parish to meet for prayer and reflection after 8 AM Mass on **Thursday, January 21, in the Parish Center**. We meet once a month to read and discuss the Scriptures for the following Sunday. Come with your ideas and suggestions. We'll gather for conversation and fellowship. Join us in this pioneering experience for men. Call Jack Fitzgerald at 587.5548 for more information.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Bring your prayer and creativity together in a gift of love.



Join us...

Wednesday, January 13 from 9:30 AM until 11:30 AM in the Parish Center. All you need to bring is scrap yarn, knitting needles or crochet hooks (patterns and instructions will be given to you) and your gifts of love and prayer.

To register or for more information, please call the Religious Education Office at 661.5440, option #3 during office hours (9 AM - 12 Noon and 1 PM - 5 PM.)

Financial Summary

December 13, 2009

Weekly Collection	\$
Weekly Budget	-\$ 19,000.00
+/- for the week	\$

Due to a change in the bulletin deadline, the collection amount for December 13 will be published in a future bulletin.

The estimated weekly collection needed to maintain and operate our parish buildings, ministries, programs and salaries is \$19,000.

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:

Bryan R. Dempsey-*US Marines*

Christopher Florca-*US Marines*

Michael Mallimo- *US Army*

Anthony Mannino-*US Marines*

Peter Provenzano-*US Army*

Frank Sliva-*US Army*

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

Our whole parish family rejoices with the Bacchi Family in gratitude for the safe return of their son Lorenzo active duty. **Lorenzo Bacchi**-*US Marines*, has returned to the United States safe and sound from his second tour of duty in Iraq. Thank you, *Lorenzo*, for your most generous service to our country!

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

Altar Society

Altar linens this week will be cared for by *Nancy Trujillo*.
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.
- would like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick.



Pray for Our Sick

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

*Roy Anderson, Susan Aviza, Matthew Badamo, Deacon Dick Barry, Ben Bellotti,
Nicholas Buscemi, Jr., Veronica Byrne, Howard Campkin, Nicholas Cibelli,
Michael Ciotkosz, Regina Cranor, Jeanne DellaRagione, Pat DeRosa, Ann Donlon,
Marge Flem, Ed Hawkins, Edward Herger, Brian Hinkelman, Lili Hinkelman,
Mary Kaval, Veronica Kenny, Kathleen Kerrigan, Joseph Lehmann, Kara Lobasso,
Vicky Massaro, Michele McCann, Peter McCann, Sr., Dorothy Meloni, Rick Mirabella,
Brenden Muldoon, Evelyn Nonnon, John O'Brien, Aiden Pinto-Hawkins, Arthur Petrino,
Joanne Popper, Laura Prichard, Joe Radosti, Frank Raimo, Carol Randazzo-Hopkins,
Michael Savino, Ann Marie Schiraldi, Jayna Schmidt, Dorothy Shiavone, Joe Shields,
Albina Sipplak, Derek Stahl, Mary Clair Stephen, Stephen Straub, Sr.,
Baby John Tramazzo, Nancy Turano, Vera Vieni, Pat Wallace, Kyle Williams, Flo Worysz*

Reflections on a New Year's Eve

by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

When I was a child, New Year's Day was very special. Our family always had a big celebration, complete with a number of rituals.

The rituals began already on New Year's Eve. We didn't go out that evening, but stayed in and celebrated together as a family. Everyone stayed up until midnight and, just before twelve, whatever else we were doing was stopped and my father would lead us in a brief prayer.

This prayer never strayed far from a basic theme: My father thanked God for the year that had just passed, for, in the words of his generation, "the graces that we had received." He thanked God for having protected us, that we were still alive and together in faith and in family. Then he would, very simply, ask for God's blessing and protection for the coming year. Finally, exactly at midnight, when the old year ended and the new one began, we would sing together the hymn, Holy God We Praise Thy Name. After this there would follow the "Happy New Year" greetings, the hugs, handshakes, drinks and the food.

New Year's Day, itself, was, after church, given up mostly to visiting and receiving friends. At the door of each house, everyone was expected to greet each other with a formal New Year's greeting (about 10 lines in length, in German) that had to be memorized and recited, even if you no longer knew German. After this ritual greeting, you were given food, a drink, sweets, and (if you were a child) some money. When you finally completed the round of houses and returned home, you were loaded with treats and money and so, of course, as a child this was a day that rivaled Christmas.

My parents have now been dead for over 36 years. Within those 36 years most of these rituals have died. Mobility, the death of most of my parents' generation, the breakdown of the immigrant sociology of our district, and the natural changes that the passing of time brings, has made for an almost altogether new situation in our old district and in the world at large. Few persons still do the old rituals, and the heart has gone out of them. About the only real continuity lies with the drinks, that ritual survives the changes of time and the breakdown of any sociology. My own family has regrouped around new rituals, but the description and prescription of these is not my purpose here since this is reminiscence, not a homily.

As I get older, what I remember most about those

New Year's celebrations, what lies inside of me as a set of sturdy roots that I use to steady myself and to draw a certain sustenance from, is that New Year's Eve prayer by my dad at midnight and the singing of Holy God We Praise Thy Name. Our new rituals still include that. Socrates once said that "the unexamined life is not worth living." That could be recast to say: A blessing that is unasked for, unrecognized, and for which thanks is not given, is at best only a half-blessing.

When my father prayed his end-of-the-year prayer in which he thanked God that we were all still alive and within which he asked for God's providence and protection for the coming year, Socrates would have been proud. My father was not living the unexamined life, nor was he neglecting Christ's request that we ask for blessings and the Holy Spirit.

The end of one year and the beginning of a new year are a naturally reflective time. Anthropology wonderfully conspires with spirituality in almost forcibly highlighting a significant transition. Our society rightly makes a big deal out of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

If you come to the end of a year and are still alive, then you haven't had a bad year. If you are still within the family of faith, then you've had a good year, irrespective of personal sickness, economic misfortune, lost relationships, or any other tragedy. Moreover, if there's gratitude in your heart and you can ask God for providence and protection for the coming year, you've entered that year on the right note. If you can follow this by expressing sincere love and best wishes for those around you (the words and embraces that say "Happy New Year") well, that's all a human being can do to welcome a new year properly.

2009, I suspect, was for all of us a year of mixed blessing. It had its cold bitter moments and more than enough heartaches and headaches. But, for all of us too, I am sure, it had its joys and its newness, its extraordinary blessings and providence. Each of us, in our more lucid moments, knows exactly how many bullets we dodged. If we are still alive and we still have faith, it was a good year. It deserves to be celebrated with expressions of gratitude, affection, and a doxology... and even with another old ritual, drinks!

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.



Nocturnal Adoration

Nocturnal Adoration will follow the 5 PM Mass on **Saturday, January 2**, concluding with Benediction at 9:50 PM. Please come and pray with us. All are invited and welcome! Bring a friend.

Rosary Christian Mothers

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

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

SAGE

The SAGE Group (Senior Advocates for Growth and Enrichment) will meet on **Tuesday, January 5**, in the **Parish Center at 9 AM**.

Daytime Eucharistic Devotion

The afternoon adoration for the month of July will be on **Wednesday, January 6 from 1- 3 PM**. All are invited and welcome! We will be praying for our children, our country, our men and women in the military and our clergy.



Holy Name Society

The Holy Name Society meets on the second Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be on **Sunday, January 10**. We will begin with the **Rosary at 7:40 AM in the Church** and the **meeting will follow the 8 AM Mass at 9 AM in Room 16**.

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**.

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.

Blended Families

An upcoming program at the St. Joseph Renewal Center, Brentwood on Sunday, January 3, 2010 from 6 PM until 8 PM. Presented by Michael & Valerie Dunne, Greg & Grace Dugre and Mary & Bob Freudenburg. The offering is \$30 per couple and includes supper. Please call for reservations at 631.273.1187, extension 23.

Holy Innocents Liturgy

On Monday, December 28 at 7:30 PM, Monsignor Joseph K. Curley, Pastor will celebrate a Mass of the Holy Innocents at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Centereach for the Pro-Life community. All are invited to the Mass and to the refreshments and fellowship that will follow in the Parish Center Hall. For more information, please call 631.585.8760.



Coat and Blanket Drive

The West Islip Fire Department is collecting gently used (or new) coats and blankets for children and adults in need of warmth this winter. OLL Parish Outreach will be able to send people to the Fire Department for these coats and blankets after January 1.

If you have coats and blankets you would like to donate, please bring these to the West Islip Fire Department on Union Blvd. For more information, please call Lt. Dan O'Neill at 559.7951.

Men's Winter Retreat

"*Your Spiritual Self*" presented by Fr. Joe Costantino, SJ, former director of St. Ignatius Retreat house and currently pastor at St. Francis Xavier Church, NYC and Marie Bannister, spiritual director and staff associate at St. Ignatius Retreat House. The retreat is January 7-10, 2010 at St. Ignatius Jesuit Retreat House, Manhasset and costs from \$250 - \$360, based upon accommodations. Please call 516.621.8300, extension 15 for information ad reservations.

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. Listen on Saturdays at 11 PM on Sirius Radio, Channel 159, the Catholic Channel and at 11 PM on XM Satellite, channel 117. Next Sunday's theme is "**Christmas Special.**" Don't miss it! To listen online or receive more information regarding "Religion & Rock" go to www.religionandrock.com or at "Religion & Rock" on ITUNES. Don't forget to tune into TELE CARE, Cablevision 29 or Verizon FIOS 296 for the Best in Catholic Television!

