

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Sept-Oct-Nov, 2012

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



Deacon Frank's Note

Deacon Frank Thomas

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This year we celebrate the 90th anniversary of Our Lady of Grace. As we begin a new decade in the life of this parish, perhaps it is also a time for personal reflection on where each of us are and where we are headed – a time to take inventory; size up the past; and set goals for the future.

Since our bible study has just concluded a period of reflection on the parables, I'm going to suggest that the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:1) could provide a framework for our reflection on what we have done or not done with the gifts God has given us.

Place yourself with Jesus looking out at diverse crowd of followers - no two the same; each with unique abilities. Surely, Jesus wanted them to share their gifts with others. To make the point, Jesus told the parable of the talents. Briefly, in this parable, three servants were given money (5,000 talents, 2000 talents, and 1000 talents) to invest and be multiplied. Now, you should know that even a single talent was an enormous sum, equivalent to 15 years wages. Two servants did invest their talents and were rewarded with Jesus calling them "faithful servants". The third, afraid of failure, worried about displeasing the master and doubting his ability, buried his talents and left them unused. For his inaction, the master severely reprimanded him.

Admittedly, we all have different talents. You are not going to hear me singing in the choir – at least I hope not for your sake. But, we do share a common talent, given by God, that far surpasses in value our individual abilities. Sister Joyce Rupp refers to this talent as our ability to give and receive love.

Love has the potential of growing in worth when invested in the lives of others.

However, like the fearful servant, we can easily hold back the treasure of our love and keep it to ourselves rather than investing it in others - someone who has deliberately hurt us, when there is no gratitude in return or simply because we doubt our ability to do one more thing. Perhaps this anniversary is the right time to consider our participation in the outreach activities of OLG such as "Helping Hands", SICM or visiting shut-ins.

Yet, even small investments of love – a smile, a hug, a "thank you" or friendly welcome - can make a difference and can begin here and now in our parish. Last October, Bishop Hubbard noted that among the reasons why there is a decline in the practice of faith was that newcomers, youth and young adults felt that they were not particularly welcome, and active parishioners sometimes felt taken for granted. OLG is a welcoming parish but we can never take that for granted. Our small investment of love as hospitality and inclusiveness to visitors and regulars alike ensures that we don't.

As we celebrate the past 90 years, the surest way to ensure that OLG will be a vibrant community 90 years from now is to take the treasure of our capacity to love and invest it in those around us. By doing this we can be confident that we too will be "faithful servants."

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My Walk With God

By Bill Goslin

When asked to write “my walk with GOD” it provoked some interesting thoughts. Your relationship with GOD, I believe, is a personal one. The word “walk” indicates a journey. My journey with GOD began early in life as our family spent every Sunday morning in Sunday school and church at Asbury Methodist Church in Watertown, NY. I had many years of religious instruction which began my walk with GOD. It was this foundation that helped me make good choices in life and also realize when I had made a bad choice.

When I was 12 years old, my parents separated and both eventually remarried. This was an unsettling event as I spent three of my four years in high school in different schools. Any religious activities, while present were not a priority as I started working at 16 continued to work my way through college then to establish a career. My relationship with God was really on hold, I felt that my religious instruction prepared me for adulthood and now I was kind of on my own.

I got married a bit late in life at 40 and we started our family. My wife Patti (McDermott), an Irish Catholic, wanted to be married in a Catholic church so we landed at OLG with Father Tony and spent our early years helping where needed. We were (and are) a pretty typical suburban family and this is where the story could end, you know, live happily ever after.

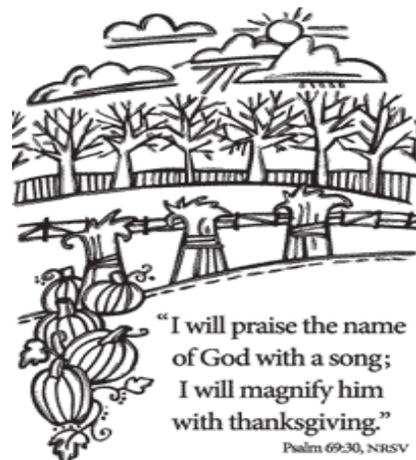
We realized, probably with some assistance from GOD, that we were very blessed. In the card game of life, how did we get dealt such a good hand? I have a great wife, healthy children, a good job, nice suburban home and a great career. We feel truly blessed: my wife and I came from humble beginnings, and although we work hard, we have everything we need. We now felt that it was time to give back, and of course GOD would play a role. I had been a volunteer firemen since I was 18, I rode ambulance for 10 years and I would always help out when asked, but GOD had bigger plans.

I went off to New Orleans, post Katrina, (at the suggestion of Joan Thornhill) and found myself living for a couple of weeks in the inner city at a church in New Orleans, face to face, with the destruction of Katrina, the poverty of the inner city and the people who lived there. God was at work there. As the months and years went by most of the work was being done by religious charities, literally one house/family at a time. I went there at least a half dozen times trying to make a difference, learning about service to those that really need our help.

My latest adventure was to try to help our country get back on track. I have done a great deal of reading and have attended many classes on how our country was founded. I believe our country was founded by deeply religious people and our constitution is divinely inspired. I find myself a town councilman learning about government, people and patiently waiting for GOD to guide me on my journey.

This is where my story ends but my walk with GOD continues (check back in 10 years). Along my walk, I have learned great things. GOD has a plan for each of us. If you follow GOD’s path the blessings will be many. Trust in GOD, follow your inner feelings and look for ways to serve your fellow man. Your reward is an inner peace, where you have no fears and enjoy life.

If you do not have this relationship with GOD, fear not, it took me 57 years to get here. If I can help you in your walk, let me know, I would be happy to help.



Summer Fun With OLG Kids

by Chris (and Allie) Bushee

On behalf of the **Kids' Events** committee, we would like to thank all the supporters of our children's activities scheduled during our 90th anniversary celebration. In addition to the church members who showed up each week to volunteer and the individual businesses who helped with each event, we'd like to thank the new Hannaford Supermarket at exit 11, who provided snacks and refreshments for *both* weekends!

Our first activity was a Pet Show, and we had a great turn out of dogs, stuffed animals and even a rabbit! We'd like to say THANK YOU to the local businesses that helped stuff our goodie bags, Milton Veterinary Hospital, Bark Avenue Salon and Boutique for Pets and Sloppy Kisses of Clifton Park, a Treat Boutique for Dogs! A special thank you to Deacon Frank who not only brought the sweetest dog ever, but performed a group blessing for all their pets and their owners!

Our second event was a Bike Rodeo held the following weekend. We owe a special THANK YOU to Jeff Pease of Freemans Bridge Sports! Mr. Pease did a wonderful job with all the children, teaching basic bike repair (see picture), displaying proper helmet fitting, teaching road safety and then wrapping it all up with a demonstration on his unicycle – thank you Mr. Pease!

We'd also like to thank the local businesses that helped fill those goodie bags, BikeWorld USA, Slice's Ice Cream Parlor & Mini Golf and Mama's Ice Cream. ...and of course, thank you to all the parents and grandparents who came out for both of our kids' events!

(Thank you Chris, Allie, et al committee members, for all you have done for our kids. We can see how much effort you put into these two successful events. The parish is very grateful)



Jeff Pease with Allie Bushee

Welcome to Sr. Cathy *Pastoral Associate Faith Formation*

Sr. Catherine Kruegler is a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet for 44 years.

She joins the staff of OLG, bringing with her a wealth of experience. She has served in inner-city and multi-cultural settings. She has served the disenfranchised along the Texas-Mexico border.

She loves people. She loves music. She loves life!

Most recently, Sr. Cathy has been sharing her gifts as Service Learning Coordinator at the Academy of the Holy Names in Albany. That has included individual and group service placements for 300 students grades 9 - 12, including accompanying them to Nicaragua.

We welcome Sr. Cathy to OLG!

Kids Korner

St. Francis of Assisi

Patron Saint of the Animals

Feast Day: October 4
Born: (around) 1181 :: Died: 1226



St. Francis was born around 1181 in Assisi, in Italy. As a young man he loved parties and good times. Handsome and rich, he bought himself fine clothes and spent money freely. Francis had no wish to study or to learn his father's business, as he was having too much fun. He dropped out of school after three years. *(This is something we would NOT encourage!)*

After he fell ill twice, Francis realized that he was wasting precious time, and that he should be serving Jesus. He began praying more and making sacrifices to grow strong in spirit.

While riding his horse one day he saw a leper and quickly turned his horse to ride away. Then he thought to himself, if Jesus saw a leper he would not turn the other way. So he kissed the horrible-looking leper, and gave him money.

Often he gave his clothes and money to the poor. He served the sick in hospitals. Still he felt he must do more. He fasted and began to go around in rags to humble himself. It is not hard to imagine how his rich friends must have looked at him now! His father was so angry that he beat him and locked him up at home. Francis bore all this suffering for love of Jesus.

When his father took everything from him in disgust, Francis put all his trust in his Father in heaven. He said that he was married to "Lady Poverty" and he began to live as a beggar. He had no shelter. His food was what kind people gave him. Everywhere he went, he begged people to stop sinning and return to God. Many men began to see how close to God this poor man really was, and they became his followers. Francis followed the example of Jesus closely by living a life of simplicity and teaching the Gospel message with great joy.

That is how the great Franciscan order of priests and brothers began. They helped the poor and sick and preached everywhere. Even after the order had spread all over Italy, Francis insisted that they should not own anything.

St. Francis had the power of working miracles. He loved all creatures and it has been said he preached to the birds and animals; they happily obeyed his commands!

As a reward for his great love, Jesus gave him his own wounds. Two in his hands, two in his feet and one in his side but the humble Francis tried to hide them from people.

He advised his brothers to love God, to love being poor, and to obey the Gospel. "I have done my part," he said. "May Jesus teach you to do yours." Francis died on October 3, 1226.



Back To School Prayers

(For Kids Who Don't Like School)

Dear Lord:

I don't want to go back to school. The kids are mean to me, and I have a hard time learning. I'm different and they make fun of me. Sometimes I feel frustrated, angry, and helpless, like a nobody.

Please Lord, be with me, and help me to "Trust in God, no matter what!"

(For Kids Who Do Like School)

Dear Lord:

I can't wait to go back to school. I'm bored and miss my friends. I love learning new ideas and reading. Math is hard for me God, but I will try my best to learn it too. Help me every day in my new school year to improve myself and help anyone else who may need a friend. Help me to be strong in standing up for what is right, and to not be afraid to always

"Trust in God, no matter what!"

(For Kids Who Are Anxious About School)

Dear Lord:

I'm worrying about school again. I feel irritable and edgy. When I think about new teachers, new work, new friends, I wonder how I can handle it all. Help me, Lord, to remember how you take care of the birds, all of nature, and me. I want to give You all my worry, and to "Trust in God, no matter what!"

OLG In Bloom by Janet Troidle

In this, our 90th anniversary year, I noticed how mother nature teaches us how to experience oneness with God in community.

I purchased a tropical bromeliad plant without bud. Thick multi-colored leaves developed upon a single stalk, one growing atop another, each leaf unique to the whole plant. I was told that the plant survives best in a humid environment. When that is inadequate, watering is only at the juncture of leaf to stalk. Only then does its center pop a single striking bloom.



Like the bromeliad, the Christian community evolves one by one, flowing upward, growing and becoming. Like each leaf, ninety years of parishioners have matured along the OLG stalk, watered by the Holy Spirit at each juncture.

As community, we have grown together, but separately, along the stalk of faith. We are goal-oriented, drinking up Spirit's grace and strength. Indeed, ninety years of God's faith-filled people have produced the most beautiful bloom of Our Lady of Grace.

From the Desk of Sr. Cathy
Pastoral Associate For Faith Formation

My Dad taught me to be contemplative. Let me explain.

Dad was a skilled carpenter, building homes all of my growing-up years. He would leave our home at six in the morning and if he was lucky he would arrive back home at six in the evening. I know now as an adult that as he sat on the couch, he was just thanking God for getting through another day. But as an eight year old I wanted my Dad to play with me: board games, pitch n catch, anything. One day my Dad said: "You don't need a three-ring circus all the time. Sit down and watch the sunset." And so we did. ***It became our ritual. I would sit next to my Dad on the couch and we would watch the sunset together.*** I share this because from his example I have learned to value this "down" time, quiet time, prayer time.

As the new school year begins, it might be good as parents to reflect on how much your children's days are structured. Coming from a high school ministry I know many students go from a full day of classes, to sports, to evening away games, to homework, then supper. If the student is into music and drama the schedule is often the same. I found them saying over and over how tired they felt.

Students' bodies, minds and spirits pay a cost for this kind of back to back living. Children and youth do not have the time to be creative, to imagine, to pray, **to just be.** Our natural world is suffering from lack of appreciation and care. Encourage your children to play and be outside in nature, not just while playing sports but to walk and really look deeply at nature and **to just be.** Your encouragement just might be the gift they will remember and value for a lifetime.





New Faith, New Life

by Alison Norton

Someone recently asked me how I feel about being a recent convert to the Catholic Church. Prior to becoming Catholic, I was not practicing any faith. In fact, I really didn't feel that God was a part of my life. My only real experience in a structured religious setting was limited to weddings and funerals. As far as spirituality is concerned, I have always felt a presence but lacked a concrete way to explore. I read books on meditation, philosophy and even bought a Christian Bible but nothing ever came of it. Religion and religious observance was not a part of my immediate family and upbringing so I had no basis for belief.

I began attending mass at Our Lady of Grace Church shortly after I began dating my now husband. It wasn't until I had a family that attendance at Church and becoming Catholic became important to me. My husband and I had agreed to raise our children in the Catholic faith so this was a logical step for me. I didn't want my children wondering why I didn't receive communion with the family and felt it was the right thing to do to solidify our family unit. Unifying my family and setting a good example for my children prompted my exploration into the RCIA program. I was told about the RCIA program that would prepare me for baptism, confirmation and communion at Easter Vigil. The wheels were set in motion for embarking on the year long journey toward becoming Catholic.

Mary Salm, Dorothy Sokol and many others volunteered their time and experience to me and the other candidates over the span of the year and were instrumental in my participation in this program. I was ready to take the leap. I learned how to pray, read scripture and what to do during Mass. All of these things were new to me. I was encouraged to read, reflect and ask questions regarding the Catholic faith and the sacraments that I would soon be celebrating in the spring. The different ministries of the Church were explained and volunteers shared their personal stories of faith with me without judgment. I am very grateful to each and every one of the people who were there for me and my family with support and encouragement.

After a year, I became Catholic, and received the sacraments at Our Lady of Grace Church. What a special place. Both I and my daughters were welcomed to the faith by Father Jack. It makes me feel so proud and happy that our family is journeying together. Our Lady of Grace has always had a welcoming homey feel to me. I feel relaxed here; not intimidated and overwhelmed as I often have in other churches. The parishioners of all ages and backgrounds have always been friendly. If any one doubts this, they should attend a potluck supper or a special event. Even with a crying baby or a fussy toddler pulling on my sleeve, I have never felt the glare of disapproving eyes or judgment from anyone if I've had to scoot out during Mass.

Now, I am comfortable settling into my place amongst the people of Our Lady of Grace. No longer am I an outsider looking in or just mouthing the words with no feeling. As a new convert, I have so many questions and thoughts about our faith. Every day I try and build upon what I have learned so far. I now know that this faith really is about the journey and it has no clear cut beginning or end. I couldn't be happier exploring and learning what God can teach me and how I can be an example of faithfulness for my family and those around me.



Women of OLG

Join Together for a Day of Reflection

Theme: When Life Challenges Your Faith (Join us as we focus on our faith and how the ups, downs and unwanted circumstances of life may cause us to lose our connection with God. This day will focus on how to *use our senses* to reconnect with God. We will journey through meditation and prayer to *awaken our senses* and perhaps learn to listen in a different way to what God has to say.)

Presenter: Clare Bradley, Personal and Spiritual Growth Counselor, Retreat Director and Educator

Date: Tues., September 18 (Raindate 9-19)

Location: Home of Janet Troidle 35 Lundy Lane, Ballston Lake. Time: 8:15 breakfast, bring dish or goodie to share: formal start 9:00 am. to 2:45 pm. (Brown Bag Lunch) Cost: Free Will Donation

Reservations necessary asap:

Janet Troidle 399-3861 or janetroidle@gmail.com

COME ONE, COME ALL

Our Lady of Grace Church Fall Retreat



A precious cornerstone for a sure foundation (Is 28:16)

Sunday, September 9, 3-5:00 p.m.

Presenter: Fr. Bob Longobucco

Fr. Bob will challenge us to consider all that God has done for us as a community in Ballston Lake for 90 years!

Monday, September 10, 7-8:30 p.m.

Presenter: Deacon Frank Thomas

Deacon Frank will reflect with us on the current times we find ourselves in this 90th year!

Tuesday, September 11, 7-8:30 p.m.

Presenter: Sr. Katherine Arseneau, CSJ

Sr. Kate will focus us on our future. What is OLG called to be in year 91, 92 and beyond?

Fellowship with coffee & cookies will follow.

Please plan to attend and bring your parish friends.

Questions? Sue Cafariella(399-3189) or Janet Troidle(399-3861)

The Golden Rule

by Ilene Cooper (a Children's Book)

Whatever their religion, people find the Golden Rule in their holy books.

Christianity says: "You should love your neighbor as you love yourself"

Judaism says: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow humans"

Islam says: "Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you"

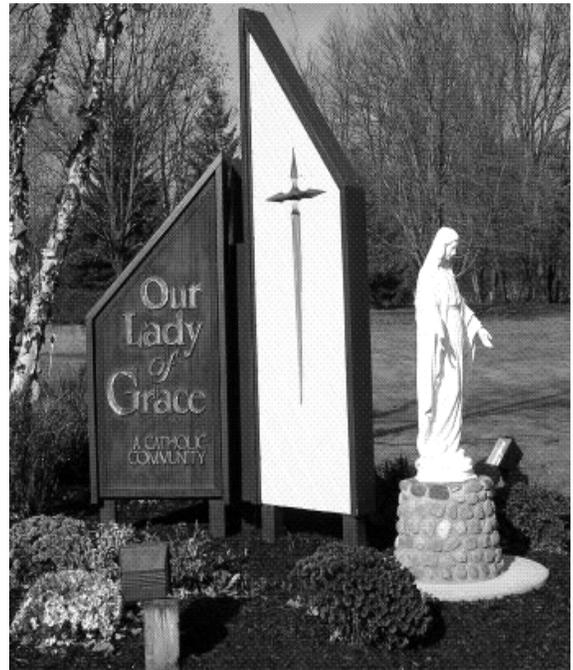
Hinduism says: "This is the sum of duty: to do nothing to others which would cause them pain"

Buddhism says: "Do not do to others what would hurt you"

The Shawnee

Tribe says: "Do not kill or injure your neighbor, for it is not he or she that you injure; you injure yourself."

All of us, God's people, seeking the way, the truth, the light!



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We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions. Please email or call Janet Troidle.

You can access the weekly bulletin with all current parish activity and this newsletter at:
www.olgchurch.com

Do you have questions or suggestions you wish raised at the pastoral council meeting? Contact one of the members listed at the right. They represent the membership of Our Lady of Grace.

Our Cluster Parishes:

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<http://www.stjosephschurchscotia.net>

Immaculate Conception Website:
<http://www.ic-glenville.com/>

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