

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Fall Issue 2014

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



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Dorothy's Note

Dorothy Sokol, Parish Life Director

Faith Formation is Life Long

A pharmacist studies for 5 years and has to put in many hours of work time for certification. After that, this professional has to earn 4 credit hours of continuing education yearly to keep the certification.

Just so for each of us and our faith. It is not enough to be baptized and receive Eucharist and Confirmation. Those are milestones in a life-long journey of coming to know God fully. Once we've received most of our sacraments, we then have our own responsibility to figure out how we will learn more about God. Often we use books to help us pray and understand some new aspect of the Catholic tradition. There is also bible study, retreat, talks, and Google!

This fall I'm choosing to take a course of the Classics of Christian Spirituality. It will include some heady stuff from St. Augustine, Thomas a Kempis and St. Ignatius. I feel I need something to "stir the pot" of my mind and see God from new perspectives.

What could you do to get closer to God this fall?

OLG Mission Statement

We are a welcoming community of believers, being disciples of Christ through worship, the Sacraments, ongoing faith formation, evangelization and Christian service to others!

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My Walk With God

By Arlene Peterson

Have you ever been angry with God?

When I was approached after Saturday Mass one evening, I was first complimented on my lector's reading and then taken aback by the question "Do you like to write?" I hesitated as I had to think about that. I've been writing a Christmas newsletter for almost 40 years. It's about a year's worth of life and life is not always good. Takes me hours to write. Some years, joyously memorable, invoking a smile and peace in one's heart while others, so firmly etched in our minds to bring tears and anguish all over again. I try to write it from my heart like a fireside chat and so, I guess I like to write. But I had one reservation before I consented to write this article. I knew my recent walk with God was a bit disastrous and that my writing would be colored by my present feelings. I guess that sounded like good subject matter and perhaps others could identify with how I felt.

Where to begin? I don't think I've ever been angry at or with God before. Not even when we lost our first grandchild to stillbirth. Jordan Ruth was born, though born still, and I got to hold her for a short while. How could a loving and merciful God cause such a tragedy? No, it just wasn't meant to be, but because of it I became an active volunteer for ANA - Angel Names Association- and try to give comfort and hope to young parents and grandparents each year who suffer the same tragedy. I walk in Jordan's memory each year at their Memorial Walk and her name is recalled at a service. I raise money for their annual Fall fundraiser which assists young families in need financially for end-of-life services and additionally aids in research efforts. So through this tragedy, some good has come. God has been most merciful to give Jordan a sister and a new baby brother, as well as a new baby cousin, and has made this Nana extremely grateful.

But for what has recently happened in my life, I am both sad and angry. I have been praying so hard and so long (years) for a special intention for our youngest of four sons. I solicited prayers from my Facebook friends...if you're reading this, you're probably one of them, prayers from our Church's prayer groups (if you're reading this, you're one too!), and prayers from family and friends. You see, Craig has been trying for years to "make it" in professional football as a kicker/punter. We knew his dream was a long shot from the beginning and he had so many things against him. Craig did not play football in college. He did not attend a Big Ten university. He did not have video footage of games to show interested parties when asked. But what he did have...NO! what he DOES have is natural God-given athletic ability, great determination and perseverance, and a strong work ethic.

At this point, some of you may be saying that this prayer is not very significant. A little background. Craig played soccer all his youth and was approached by many coaches to play for them. In college he ran track and broke records in a sport he had never played before. Then he decided to play football - too

late for college so he played semi-pro for the Albany Metro Mallers as their kicker and they became Super Bowl Semi-Pro Champs. As an All-Star he went to Las Vegas and was recruited there by a Pro Canadian Team. Craig had only one course to complete to earn his diploma and we encouraged him to finish school so he turned it down. Sometimes I wonder if he might be playing for the NFL today if he had accepted that contract. Only God knows. It was an upward struggle...trying to work and train. Finally his agent said that if he really wanted to pursue this goal seriously, he needed to quit work and train full time so Craig moved to Buffalo to train and pursue his dream.

As parents, you want to support your child's dream and we felt it was a potential goal as Craig certainly had the skill. Craig's first real chance came when Toronto called him in November to try out with two other players for a spot on the team. Well, during the tryout he injured his groin. It took months to find a specialist who performed the surgery and, once found, his Cobra insurance deemed it experimental and payed zero. At least we knew this surgeon to be reputable and experienced, having performed it on other NFL players. Disappointed but not devastated, Craig healed and came back even more determined than before. He moved to Florida where he could kick and train all year and began to get invited to minicamps by professional Canadian teams. But even though he may have been the stronger, more consistent kicker, lack of playing time and no college footage hurt him all along. He was listed in a news article as the "unidentified third hooper" or wasn't mentioned at all in others. All he wanted was to be given a fair chance to show what he could do.

Then his big chance came when he was invited to the Ottawa Redblacks Training Camp. I could hear the excitement and hope in his voice when he called us with the news and the real potential for a job. Craig outlasted all the kickers the first week of camp, even the young man from Nebraska chosen over him at Winnipeg's tryout then cut, but still was offered to play in the Ottawa Redblacks' last preseason game over Craig, and then cut. Craig so wanted to play in that game, to prove he could do it. Then came the second week and he had to compete against two more kickers. All he needed to do was to continue to maintain his level of accuracy and consistency, and he could see a job that he loves with a contract in sight. But, It wasn't meant to be. My son couldn't call me with this devastating news, but rather messaged me a picture of himself on the trainer's table with a slight tear to his soleus muscle. He would not be better by tomorrow.....Dear God, this boy has worked so hard for so long.....helping others along the way....why couldn't you help him? were my words.....Instead, when Craig became injured, they called back the young man from Nebraska who was signed. All those prayers unanswered....How could God let this happen! Craig has had such an uphill battle with setback after setback.....he came so close...

BACK TO SCHOOL
for busy families
 By Alison Norton

“Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.” – Henry James

Barbeque season is winding down; the days are getting shorter and the sound of the neighborhood children playing outdoors just a little too late past dusk will soon be ending. The back to school season is descending upon us like a warm August rain. Whether you are a parent of pre-school child or a high schooler preparing for the final months of school before college, we all need some helpful hints for making those school days run smoothly and with less drama.

The following hints you may wish to consider:

Pick a consistent bedtime. According to the website *Kids Health*, most school age children need 10-12 hours of sleep per night and not getting it can really affect their ability to engage and perform at school. Pick a time so that your child gets an adequate amount of sleep per night so they wake with enough energy to get through a busy day full of school and after school activities.

Stop the electronic devices at least 30 minutes before sleep. The light from screens from your phones, tablets and handheld video games can affect the levels of melatonin, decreasing your quality of sleep, according to the website *Psychology Today*. Try a relaxing book or quiet time of prayer and reflection to relax before bed.

Read to your child before bed if they are younger or encourage your older child to read before sleep. Not only does this encourage literacy and strengthen your child’s word recognition, it is good parent/child bonding time.

Pick out clothes for school the night before. Not knowing what to wear to school can cause much unneeded stress for many children as well as parents. If you are fortunate enough to have a uniform, lay it out the night before or pick an appropriate outfit if you do not wear a uniform. This will help save time and get you out the door in time for the first bell.

Plan snacks and lunches in advance. If you are organized enough, try making lunches the night before, labeling them if you have multiple children. Snacks should always be healthy, school approved and something your child will eat and not toss in the trash. Talk to them about what they would like and add it to the shopping list!

Have an afterschool plan. Allow children of all ages some time to let off steam, run around and breathe in some good old fashioned fresh air before tackling homework or going to an afterschool activity.

Talk about your day...pray! The best place to discuss your day is the dinner table with all family members present. If this is not possible, make time for your child before bed to talk about the events of the day, encouraging open communication. Give thanks to God for each day, whether it was a good day or not, it is a chance to learn and grow and show your children that you are there to listen to them, no matter how small the problem. Encourage them by choosing a scripture reading that you can read and discuss together to show them that your family grows stronger in prayer.

God Bless and have a Happy Fall!



Women’s Day of Reflection

Wednesday September 17, 2014
 8:30-3:00 pm

Theme: "Are you an instrument of love and peace in the world", focusing on the Prayer of St. Francis.

Presenter: Claire L. Bradley

Personal and Spiritual Growth Counselor, Retreat Director and Educator

Location: 35 Lundy Lane on Ballston Lake, NY
 (Home of Janet Troidle)

Cost: Free Will Donation

Informal Start Time: 8:00am Group Prayer/Meditation
8:30 -9:00 Breakfast (Please Bring a Breakfast Food or snack to share.)

9:00-12:30 Presentation, Music, Meditation, Journaling
 12:30-1:15 Brown Bag Lunch

1:15-3:00 Personal Reflection, Sharing, Prayer and Closing.

Reservations required.

399-3861 or email jantroidle@gmail.com

Kids Korner



Graduating Seniors are recognized at the graduation mass!

OLG families enjoying Pyramid Life Center



Even the munchkins got slam-dunks at the great Pyramid Lake Basketball Championship game with Staff!



Vacation Bible School Crafters



Uh oh! Here comes the Staff! Is that Katie Gibson!? We don't have a chance!



Salamanders For Supper



Grace Fay is one-hoppin' music director! She had the kids flying off their heels by Friday of VBS week. What fun!



Do You See **That Shark** In the Lake?

Finding Joy in the Moment

By Janet Troidle

Evening Presentation by Sr. Anne Bryan Smollin, CSJ

I attended an evening of happiness given by Sr. Anne recently and the subject was feeling joy in the moment. Her first caveat was to take care of ourselves before we take care of others. She urged us to look in the mirror, think about the sense of balance in our lives, then seek joy for ourselves so it spills over to others.

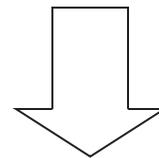
- Slow down to view the moment. What we have is NOW, seize it!
- Make a choice to "be a happy person". Negative thinking clogs the brain, is toxic. If you hang with negative people, studies indicate that down the road, such relationships will make you physically and emotionally ill.
- Review that which you have learned in the past about laughter and how it affected you, thus motivating you to enjoy whatever you are doing today (finding laughter in the moment.) Put laughter in your home, your church, your workplace. It provides energy.
- The side effects of laughter provide energy for 45 minutes after the event, 10 seconds of laughter is equal to 3 minutes of rowing a boat. There are multitude statistics to support the value of laughter in your life. And, it is free!!!! Even if you are alone, forced laughter has the same positive effects as spontaneous laughter.
- Keep your perceptual world as wide as possible. Remove your blinders.
- We do not need to agree with each other, we need to accept each other.
- Our attitudes are vital to our happiness. Laughter is like a vacation. If you do not plan it, it will not happen. Place a laugh note on your mirror!

Healing comes from laughing, crying, yawning and stretching, and touching. Besides laughter, tears are another way of releasing negative energy. We hold our memories in the cells of our bodies (e.g. old angers, abuse, failure, grief) and crying can be very therapeutic. Yawning and stretching relax the body, draw in more oxygen, loosen tight muscles, and move the mental and physical state into a better space of peace. It has been proven that untouched infants die. Touch is a basic need for life. Every time you kiss someone, you expend 13 calories!

On any given day, we typically live in our heads and miss out on the moment. Learn to relax (this is a *learned* response.) By not taking yourself seriously, you avoid carrying the world on your shoulders. It is too heavy a load! Find joy in the unexpected surprises of the day, 'the ones you miss by being in your head instead of your heart.' A butterfly, a chipmunk digging up your newly planted flowers, dirt smudges all over your face, a silly joke.... look for those joyful moments and record them in a journal. Reading about it reinforces the positive effects.

Our society is in much need of two skills: smiling, and keeping eye contact. When you look at someone, you honor their personhood. We are a resurrection people....when we maintain a sense of openness, we honor each other and become less judgmental. This is a gift to ourselves with widespread positive effect. When you smile, the frontal lobe of your brain lightens up and suppresses negativity. You can smile for no reason at all and benefit from it. It is the choice you make that governs the outcome. Control your space by keeping negative people away. **We do not know what is going on in other people's minds!** We can be present to them, but scrap the worries and judgments about what they are thinking/doing!

We are constantly affecting each other in daily life, both positive and negative. Pursue the positive effects of being different, of choosing joy moments, of playing, of being spontaneous, and reaping the healing happiness of creating and enjoying simple moments. There are 86,400 seconds in a day. You decide!



"But whatever his weight in pounds, shillings or ounces, he always seems bigger because of his bounces!"

(Winnie-the-Pooh in The House of Pooh Corner)

Youth Ministry by Grace Fay (Pastoral Associate, Youth Ministry)

Summer may have come, but that hasn't stopped Youth Ministry from continuing with service projects. Youth from OLG have worked on the grotto outside the church, volunteered at VBS, helped clean out the classrooms, organize our supplies, and helped serve lunches with SICM, just to name a few projects.

With the new school year quickly approaching, we are working to set up schedules and retreats for the upcoming year. This year, one of the biggest changes to Youth Ministry is that we will now be joined by the 6th grade. I am excited about this addition to the program and look forward to welcoming them into Youth Ministry.

There are a lots of opportunities for youth to get involved in the life of our parish. I encourage each of our youth to find a way to be active in the Church. It could be joining the choir, becoming an altar server, joining the peer ministry team, helping with service projects, or many other things. If you are interested in being more active in the Church, please let me know. We, also, say a fond farewell to our youth who are going to college or are moving for work. Remember that we are always here and you are always welcome! If you have a youth who is leaving for college, please send us their address so that we can stay in touch with them.

Here are pictures of the OLG/ St. Joseph's Peer Team working on the grotto space from their retreat in June.



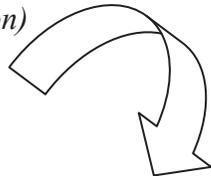
THANKSGIVING DAY
November 27,2014

The first American Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621 to commemorate the harvest reaped by the Plymouth Colony after a harsh winter. In that year, Gov. Wlm. Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving. The colonists celebrated it as a traditional English harvest feast to which they invited the local Wampanoag Indians.

Days of thanksgiving were celebrated throughout the colonies after fall harvests. The 13 colonies did not celebrate at the same time until October 1777. George Washington declared the day a holiday in 1789.

By the mid-1800's, many states observed the holiday. Meanwhile, poet and editor Sarah Hale began lobbying for a national holiday. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln, seeking ways to unite the nation, discussed the subject with Ms. Hale. In 1863 he gave his Thanksgiving Proclamation declaring the last Thursday in November the day of Thanksgiving.

In 1939, 1940-41, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, seeking to lengthen the Christmas shopping season, proclaimed Thanksgiving the third Thursday in November. Controversy followed and Congress passed a joint resolution in 1941 decreeing that it should fall on the fourth Thursday where it remains. *(by Michele Mason)*



Thanksgiving is a treasured family day, slowly being eroded by commercialism and materialism. This erosion will continue to flatline our special holidays if we do not take a stand by refusing to shop on those days.

Please join us for Mass on Thanksgiving Day as we join hands in thanksgiving for our blessings. The church bulletin will provide up-to-date information.

*(Continued from page 2) (My Walk With God)
By Arlene Peterson*

My anger toward God is gone now. I felt I had to be a positive example to our son when he was at his lowest. God is testing you once again...show your strong character and rise above this setback. Look at the wonderful experiences you DID have and learn from them. Know that there are those who believe in you and will help you. Craig has a new NFL Agent he met in Florida through the man's son. I feel I must share how this came about. Craig just happened to be practicing at a public field where a high school kicker was also working out. The boy asked for some pointers and Craig is always willing to share his skill. The boy said I'm going to tell my father about you. So he brought his Dad with him next time and his Dad just happens to be an NFL agent. He speaks very highly of Craig and has sent letters to NFL Teams on Craig's behalf but generally NFL Teams will not even look at you unless you've played in college. So, here we go again. As I write, Craig's leg is healing and getting stronger. He is kicking again. His dream continues. Have I given up on prayer? Never!

I could never go through life without my God. I am only human; Jesus was human too. So I know He understands when I get angry and want to blame Him for things out of my control. I also know He is forgiving and will forgive my mistrust and lack of faith. My walk with God is continuous and every day I thank Him for all the wonderful things He gives and does for us....a hummingbird's amazing flight, a beautiful stargazer lily at bloom, a baby at rest, finding my car keys, a safe journey, good health, breath itself....I try to THANK Him more often than ASK for things, but He knows I will continue to pray that He answer this single prayer for my son, Craig. Will you walk a bit with me and say a prayer for both Craig and me? ...for me that I have greater faith and trust in the Lord, and for Craig to open his heart to receive God's loving care and guidance to find his niche in this world.



Hospitality For Families of Confirmation Candidates:
Thank you to all who bake and work tirelessly
To fulfill our commitment to create a
"welcoming community!"



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Note From Editor:

We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions. We would like to use this newsletter to share the faith and Christian action of our parishioners. Please send stories about your ministry, e-mail photos; tell us about a person, or bible passages which have had a positive influence on you or your family, your poetry, your journey.

We are published quarterly, with deadlines as follows:

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Dec-Jan-Feb /winter	Nov 5
Mar-Apr-May /spring	Feb 5
Jun-Jul-Aug /summer	May 5
Sept-Oct-Nov /fall	Aug 5

Our Cluster Parishes
Saint Joseph's Website:
<http://www.stjosephschurchscotia.net>

Immaculate Conception Website:
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November

This Thanksgiving season, we thank God for all that is good and pleasant in life, and for the day that sadness will evolve into gladness.

Dorothy and all the staff of Our Lady Grace extend their blessings, prayers and gratitude to you, our parishioners, who make this parish such a warm and inviting community!

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