

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

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Fall Issue 2015

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



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Dorothy's Note

Dorothy Sokol, Parish Life Director

A Farmer's Daughter

As a farmer's daughter, I grew up with a sense of caring for the earth. It was ingrained in me.

No, I didn't live on a farm, but my dad grew up on a farm and worked it until age 22. Our house was on 3 acres of land and we gardened most every year. As most farmers, Dad knew how to fix the plumbing and repair the lawn mower and renovate the house. He was a self-taught mechanic as well.

So when it came to recycling, reducing and reusing, my dad was King. Old clothes became rags for the garage. We had buckets of screws and washers, tin cans of rubber bands and nails, shoe boxes of various oils, lubricants and liquids. No broom handle was thrown out. Every fan was repaired.

We weren't tree huggers per say, but we sure did learn to make good use of everything.

So you can imagine how thrilled I was to read Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* about the care of creation. I haven't finished it yet, but here is one powerful quote:

"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crises which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature."

Read more by going to www.usccb.com.

73 Midline Road
Ballston Lake, NY 12019
Parish Office: 399-5713
Fax: 399-5761
[http://www.rcda.org/
churches/olgchurch](http://www.rcda.org/churches/olgchurch)

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!

My Walk with God

by Joyce Boice

My life has been one great gift. The youngest of 7 children, we were raised Catholic by wonderful parents. It is all I have ever known.

Blessed from the first, I was the youngest, and spoiled by both parents and siblings (God's love.) Due to Dad's illness, our family moved to southern California. One car 9 people!!!! There, I entered Catholic schools and grew in my love for the Lord each and every day. I was very indoctrinated with the teachings of the times. I was not close to God, but followed the rules, learning catechism by heart and rote. (Oddly, this has served me well. Not many rules have changed, but times have certainly changed). I accepted a healthy fear of Hell.

By the time I reached 7th grade, Dad was well enough to move back to New York. Some siblings had made their home in California. My brother, Bill and I returned to New York with Mom and Dad the last half of my Freshman year. I was a teen ager, full of spunk, without a great deal of love for God, but with much fear of God.

All that changed after I met my future husband, Bob, who taught me about real love, devotion and peace. Being in love at such a young age I learned many important things: how to know *real* love, thus becoming closer to my husband as well as Jesus. I knew how to follow the rules, but now I was learning the importance of closeness and communication. I learned to pray with thanksgiving and the importance of the nurturing relationships.

Marriage to a farmer, and 5 children drove me to seek extra guidance and help, to just exist and be happy. I spent years teaching religion lessons, guiding children and learning to read the Bible. This was a new adventure since we were not encouraged to read the Bible during my growing-up years! With two jobs to make a living, volunteering, attending college, I had little free time. I still tried to maintain a warm and vibrant relationship with Jesus. Although I attended church, I was feeling a bit empty in my friendship with Jesus.

In 1975 our home burned down completely: my material life destroyed. This trauma taught me how to receive instead of give. I felt the love of God in each and every person who helped to restore our home. We lost everything except that which was important: our children and our friends.

When my husband became ill, it was very difficult for me. I cried many hours, (I'm not Irish for nothing-just a little stubborn) and finally surrendered to the Holy Spirit. When I did, grace poured into my soul like a waterfall. I remembered how close my husband and I were, how often we talked. I decided I wanted that kind of love with Jesus. After Bob's death I tried to have more conversations with my Lord talking, telling secrets like Bob and I did many times. (Little secrets between just the two of us.)

I have been a member of Our Lady of Grace since I was 4 years old (original church). I made my First Communion in the old church, and attended the one-room school house on Lake Rd. (I remember many years ago when Fr Hogan took us to St. Marys' Ballston Spa on Saturday morning for religious education. Afterward, we all went to Stewarts for ice cream. He was a great influence on me, an ecumenical loving pastor way before his time. I learned more ways to love.)

Today I "know" Jesus in a new way. I pray more, attend Mass when I can. It has become a joy to know how much God loves me. One of the best decisions I ever made was to become a Eucharistic minister. The love that I see in the eyes of those receiving communion is so fulfilling. Every person strengthens my belief, and warms my heart.

This year I went on vacation to Hilton Head for two wonderful weeks. One daughter flew down with me and stayed four days and returned. I had 6 days alone and the other daughter flew down and stayed for 4 days. What a gift! Four days alone with each daughter. It was a delight getting to know them again one-on-one. We had barrels of fun.

During my six days alone I learned to be still and listen. I attended daily Mass at different churches. While there I had many special AH-HA! moments with Jesus, especially confession: such a sacred time. I felt His presence.

Another memorable moment was watching the sunrise every morn. Alone, I waited and watched the sky line when quickly, there it was! It took my breath away. His peace enveloped me.

It is a whole new life that I have with the love of my life, Jesus. I am now living and will continue to live and follow the advice of Mother Angelica, "Do not just sit there and watch your arteries harden". I will move forward, every hour, every day, held in His hands, until He calls.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
A glimpse at the results of our parish survey...
By Dorothy Sokol

In June, the Pastoral Council with the magic of technology, designed a survey and asked the parish to respond. The Council is hoping to develop a vision for the future of OLG and wanted your help.

There were 119 responses, although two or three of them were not from parishioners.

Who Responded?

84% of responders were 50 years old or older and

77 % of responders have been members of OLG for 10 years or more

What Mass do you attend?

29 attend 5pm 44 attend 8:15 am 44 attend 10:15 am

What keeps you coming to Mass? 67% marked the Music Program, 61% said the Worship Style and 72% listed the church community. There were many other reasons, but these were by far the most significant choices.

The survey's verbal responses occupy 25 pages. As expected, people's personal preferences were all over the place. One person wants less music, while another wants more praise music. One person wants pews and a more traditional atmosphere, yet someone else says, "Don't change a thing."

There are over 3 pages of answers to the question, "How can we better meet your spiritual needs?" The comments fall into three general categories: more relevant homilies, adult education (with many program ideas), and social time, especially after the Masses.

The most interesting answer to me was: "You are doing a good job. I'm the one who needs to get motivated to be more active." We can have multiple programs, but people have to make time to participate.

Currently, the Council is calling for social time after the Masses at least once a month. Name Tag Sundays will continue to be quarterly. And the many and varied suggestions for Adult Education will be reviewed by the staff for future programming. There is an interest in scheduling programming on Sunday between the Masses or in the evening for those who work.

We will try to keep you informed of programs and issues through this publication and through our weekly bulletin. Please make use of them, and as always, we welcome your suggestions and ideas! I wish to thank the Parish Council for their hard work and success as they try to meet your future spiritual needs!

Kids Korner

BACK TO SCHOOL THOUGHTS— IF YOU NOTICE BULLYING

When kids are bullied, there are two kinds of hurt:

- The first comes from the mean-spirited bullying itself.
- The second, perhaps deeper hurt may be the silence of everyone else.

The one being bullied is stunned that no one will help. The bully is thus made more powerful and perhaps intensifies the bullying. And it heightens the embarrassment and loneliness of the victim,

It is so important for others to speak out against bad behavior and support the intended victim. Jesus was abandoned and bullied in the garden. He knows how it feels. When we see others being hurt, we can ask Him for the courage to speak up! Also, talk to your parents about this very important subject.



Back to School means
Back to Faith Formation/
Youth Ministry Classes!
Check the bulletin for the
date and time that your
Grade level meets!

Questions? Contact the Faith Formation/Youth Ministry
Office for details!
(Contact Information located on Page 8)

STAY NOURISHED

Eating nutritious foods such as apples helps keep our bodies healthy. But Proverbs tells us about other important sources of "nourishment."

Directions: Use the words in the apples to complete Proverbs 3:7-9, NIV.

all body eyes evil crops fear health Honor wise Lord your with

Do not be in your own ;
 the and shun .
 This will bring to your
 and nourishment to bones.
 the LORD your wealth,
 with the firstfruits of your .

PROVERBS 3:7-9, NIV

Answer: Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.



Women's Day of Reflection

Bring a Friend!



WOMEN'S DAY OF REFLECTION

Date: Tuesday
September 22, 2015 8:30-3:00 p.m.

Theme: The Walk Through Fear to Faith

Presenter: Claire L. Bradley, personal and Spiritual Growth Counselor, Retreat Director and Educator

Cost: Free Will Donation

Location: Janet Troidle's Home
35 Lundy Lane, Ballston Lake

*Informal Start Time 8:00 Group Prayer
8:30-9:00 Breakfast (Please bring a breakfast food or snack to share).
9-12:30 Presentation, music, meditation, journaling
12:30-1:15 Brown bag lunch
1:15-3:00 Personal reflection, sharing, prayer and closing.*

Reservations please asap! Call or email:
jantroidle@gmail.com or 399-3861

November 26, 2015 Thanksgiving Day

All of our prayers start with gratitude, and on this special day, OLG will have Mass at 10:00 a.m. We have been rotating the celebration with Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's, and will probably do so again in the future. This year, join us at OLG to thank God for all our blessings!

Women's Spiritual Book Club (Maranatha—Oh Lord Come!)

Our book club resumes this fall on Wednesdays and continues with HERE AND NOW by Henri Nouwen. We stopped on page 58 last fall and will resume by welcoming previous participants as well as newcomers! If you would like to receive email notes from the first chapters, or have questions, contact jtroidle@gmail.com, or 399-3861.

Start Date: September 9, 2015

No meeting on September 23

Time: 9:30-10:45

Facilitators: Susan Carbone and Janet Troidle



Arlene Peterson (far left), parishioner and lector, shared a picture of her mom's 100th birthday summer celebration. Congratulations to Helen Wasko who still lives independently in NJ and enjoys regular visits from her family!

A light heart lives long!

Irish Proverb



Pictures from this year's Vacation Bible School!
We had an awesome time this year at G-Force VBS!
If you would like to see pictures, you can find us on Facebook.
Just search "BH-BL Summer VBS".



The ecumenical churches in the area have sponsored VBS for years and it was our turn to host this event. Children learned about God through science, crafts, music, bible stories, and games. 117 children participated with 55 teens and 14 adults. Thank you to ALL of the VOLUNTEERS who made this AMAZING week possible!!....and thank you God for beautiful weather!

Thoughts On Prayer

By Lucas Fekete

When I was asked to write a short article for this issue, the concept of prayer kept filling my mind. It is such an important part of our Christian faith.

Frequently, one hears another say, "God loves you." But unless you have actually "felt" the love of your family and/or friends, you cannot experience the love of God. The love of God comes through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in your Christian family/friends, and even within strangers who extend their love.

"My house is a house of prayer", says the Lord. Therefore, when we gather to worship the Lord, part of that worship can be devoted to prayer for each other. In and through each other, we find the gift of love, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of our loving God.



Building Spirituality in My World

By Alison Norton

When I wake up first thing in the morning
I am sometimes ashamed to admit
Thanking the Lord for a brand new day
Is often last on my list
The children need breakfast
The dog needs a walk
Laundry, shopping and household chores
So much I can barely talk
To Jesus except for a whisper of help!

How do I show Him how much I care
How much his words unspoken are there
Always to show me unending love
So I give extra kisses and hugs
Take time out for a chat over coffee
Lending an ear to a friend in need
Keeping His words in my mind with deeds
My story is repeated time and again
So many echoed stories
Trying to read God's subtle signs
Prove that I can read them
And be the best me.





Our Christian Walk Contacts:

Janet Troidle, Editor
399-3861 or jantroidle@gmail.com

Jacob Goslin, Technical Advisor
jmgoslin@gmail.com

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:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Dec-Jan-Feb /winter	Nov 5
Mar-Apr-May /spring	Feb 5
Jun-Jul-Aug /summer	May 5
Sept-Oct-Nov /fall	Aug 5

Do you have questions or suggestions you wish raised at the next pastoral council meeting? Contact one of the members listed below.

Pastoral Council Members

-Shauna Bryk 393-6655
sbryk@gmail.com

-Chris Bushee 952-7348
cbushee@saratogapublishing.com

-Morgan Cooper (Y) 228-3282
mcooper@mjels.com

-David Cote 399-4511
dcote5@nycap.rr.com or

-Geoff Cramer 877-6073
geoffrey.cramer@ssa.gov

-Susan Daly 428-8830
dalyfuneralhome@hotmail.com

-Tad Darling 399-7229
harrydarling@verizon.net

-Suzanne DeVito 384-0121
sdevito@nycap.rr.com

-Chris Dobson 399-5995
cdobson@nycap.rr.com

-Judith Gibson 899-6105
judygibson9@aol.com

-Marina Jerry (Y) 384-2514
Marinajerry@hotmail.com

-Mike Lupe 399-7348
mlupe@nycap.rr.com

-Robert Mestemaker 885-0714
rmestemaker@nycap.rr.com

-Steve Zarelli 399-8919
stevezarelli@gmail.com

-John Lorenc, ex-officio 399-2973
john.lorencphd@gmail.com

-Donna Merchant, ex-officio 399-7542
merchant@ge.com

-Deacon Frank Thomas, ex-officio
fjtnok@verizon.net

-Dorothy Sokol 399-7969
sokold@nycap.rr.com

Imperfection is the very framework inside of which God makes the God-self known and calls us into gracious union.

It's what allows us—and sometimes forces us—to fall into the arms of the living God."

Therese of Lisieux

Our Lady Of Grace Contacts

Parish Office
399-5713

Dorothy Sokol ext.1
sokold@nycap.rr.com
Parish Life Director

Rev. John Varno
Sacramental Minister

Deacon Frank Thomas
fjtnok@verizon.net

Lucille Feeser ext.0
feeserl@nycap.rr.com
Parish and Financial Secretary

Faith Formation Office
384-0109

Susan Carbone ext.2
carbonesm@nycap.rr.com
Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation

Grace Fay ext.3
olsjym@gmail.com
Pastoral Associate for Youth Ministry

Patricia Mahoney ext.4
mahonevp@nycap.rr.com
Faith Formation Secretary/Helping Hands

Music Ministry
399-6316
Patricia Neumann
Director of Liturgical Music
fourkids@nycap.rr.com

Our Cluster Parishes:
Saint Joseph's Website:
<http://www.stjosephschurchscotia.net>
Immaculate Conception Website:
<http://www.ic-glenville.com/>