

# Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

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*Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace*



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## Lenten Thoughts

*by Deacon Frank Thomas*

**A** young boy came late for religious education. His teacher knew that he was usually very prompt and asked him if anything was wrong. The boy replied no, that he was going fishing but his dad told him that he needed to go to church. The teacher was very impressed and asked the boy if his dad had explained to him why it was more important to go to church than to go fishing. To which the boy replied, yes he did, "Dad said he didn't have enough bait for both of us".

Well, we all have priorities; things that are important to us. Some are good; some are questionable. Even then, what we say is a priority may not coincide with what we actually do. This season of Lent might be a good time to examine our priorities and whether what we say is valuable is reflected in how we actually lead our lives.

Perhaps we say that prayer is important but "NCIS" or reruns of "Law and Order" are more appealing when faced with a choice. In Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46), Jesus says that we will be judged on how we care for the least of our sister and brothers. Although this is or should be a priority, I may find that rarely if ever does caring for the marginal make it to my real, lived priority list. I say that I'm a good Catholic and Mass is a priority unless \_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in the blank.)

(Cont'd on page 3, column 1)

## 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 Suzanne DeVito

My walk with God has truly been an ever-changing challenge, which amazes me every step of the way.

Seventeen years ago, my sister gave me a plaque when I moved here from Long Island. It read "Bloom where you are planted". It took a while for these words to truly sink in, because thus far, relocating was the most difficult thing I had ever done in my life. I grew up on Long Island and remained there for 7 years after we were married. My husband John, who is from Mechanicville, felt we could have a better life for our family in upstate NY. My mother told me that being a loving wife meant following my husband's plan. Being from a very close knit family and a wonderful group of friends, leaving them was much harder than I ever expected. I missed them terribly and I cried for 6 months. I never felt so sad in my life and I prayed for strength. My faith was tested, asking God why I had to move and feel so very alone.

These were difficult days for me and for my husband. He continually tried to console me to no avail. We both acquired new jobs, trying to get ourselves established. Because we took a big loss on our Condo in Long Island, we lived with my mother-in-law in Mechanicville. We already had our first daughter, Dominique, who was 2 at the time. I thanked God for her as she lifted my spirits each day. I soon got pregnant with our second daughter, Adriana, and she was another wonderful blessing.

One year later, we moved into our own apartment. Here we were a beautiful family, but I was still sad inside and missed my old life. One day, when I was working as a nurse in a Doctor's office, a patient was reading a book called, "Becoming A Vessel God Could Use." I asked her about it and she happened to have another copy in her trunk. She gave it to me. Looking back, I know it was Divine intervention. God knew how I was feeling and

wanted to give me answers. In one very important chapter it said, "We have to be emptied of our own private agenda and focus totally on God's agenda. It requires humbling yourself enough to recognize your total dependence on GOD." I know it sounds like a cliché that a book could change your life, but the Lord spoke to me that day and something changed inside of me. I realized that this is what I had to do in my own life. Once I did, I began to experience all of the blessings God had in store for me and our family. We were gifted with our third daughter, Maria, one year after we moved into our home in Ballston Lake. I was seeing that my move upstate was all part of God's plan, building a house, and becoming a member of OLG. I realized that the more I "Let Go and Let GOD", the more inner peace I experienced...an inner peace that the world could not offer.

My total dependence on GOD was never more evident than on 12/9/09 when I had a heart attack. I was 46 years old. Suffering agonizing chest pain in the ambulance, the only prayer I could say was, "GOD please don't take me now. I have three daughters to raise." He listened to my prayer and I had a full recovery. But then another jolt hit us. With recurring chest pain 1.5 years later, I was told that I had to have open heart surgery for a blockage that had developed.

Devastated and petrified, I relied on my faith once again. I prayed for strength and peace to get through the unknown. I had surgery on 6/27/10 with the summer to recuperate. I felt terrible that we had to cancel our trip to Mexico. Our summer was going to consist of not being able to do much of anything while I recovered. My family was the greatest support I could ever ask for. I walked every day per doctor's orders. I had a lot of time to think and pray during these walks. I remember feeling the warmth of the hot sun on my face, and feeling so incredibly blessed and grateful to the Lord for the gift of my life and the wonderful family and friends that we have all around us. Today I realize that *I have bloomed where I have been planted* and I will continue to do so as long as GOD allows.



(Deacon Frank Thomas -Cont'd from page 1)

If we are honest with ourselves, we will probably find that some realignment of our priorities is necessary. Alternatively, it may be that, while we pay lip service to some priorities, they are not reflected in daily life. None of this is unusual and hence each year we take this time during Lent to reflect on where we are in God's eyes and what our true, lived priorities are.

There are many ways to get started with this process but the simplest might be to pray for the grace to be honest with ourselves and with God so that we can grow in integrity.

I then might ask who I am and who God calls me to be. You might consider the passage from Matthew noted above or the commandment to love God and neighbor to guide you. Others have found the words of Micah (6:8) helpful: "You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." Different passages from scripture appeal to each one of us at different times. Worry less about finding the perfect passage and just getting started; God will handle the details.

Where God is calling us and our relationship with God will determine what our particular priorities will be. Is it to be more loving, more patient, more forgiving? From these priorities, we can begin to reflect on the concrete actions that will reflect these values or priorities.

Expect this to be difficult. We are at home with our habits, our routines, and our life style. We protect them and resist the new and different. We convince ourselves we are just fine and besides, we know others who are in worse shape than us. At other times, particularly under stress, we may slide back into the old ways of acting.

Consequently, it helps that along the way we take stock of how we are doing even on a daily basis. With each examination, we need to thank God for the grace that has inspired us and sustains us as we reevaluate our priorities. It's impossible to grow without God's help but, you'll be surprised what you can do with God's help.

## Calling All Kids Calling All Adults....



Wouldn't it be wonderful if 30 people adopted a small section of OLG property to maintain/perhaps plant a drought resistant flower or two this summer? Our budget does not allow for a gardener.....**but the spiritual budget for the gardeners of grace is unlimited!**

Dave Pearce and his wife Ann spend much time maintaining the basics at the entrance of church. The Troidles have taken on the lightpole section next to the side entrance to the church. John Martucci has provided mulch. Peg DeFoe helped also. The youth group has taken care of the area around the daytime entrance on north side. I do not have all the names of those who have helped over the years, but we thank you. Now we need newcomers to join us ! Can you share 1-2 hours a week?

What a community builder. Mom or Dad and children taking it on as a ministry. A retiree who likes to dabble in the dirt, one hour per week . We could have a garden party to honor those who delight in welcoming new and old parishioners with beautiful, simple maintenance landscaping.

Please tell Dorothy right away of your interest so we can till the soil of OLG and weed out her garden sins!

# Kids Korner

**HEY KIDS, DO YOU WANT TO LISTEN TO AND WATCH THE HEART OF GOD? SPRING IS THE TIME WHEN MOTHER NATURE PERFORMS HER MOST IMPRESSIVE DANCE. TAKE 5 AND FORGET THE ELECTRONICS. ESCAPE OUTDOORS TO YOUR FAVORITE HIDING SPOT, USE YOUR SENSES TO LOOK, LISTEN, AND SMELL. NOTHING MATCHES THE WONDER YOU WILL FEEL WHEN YOU TAKE THE TIME TO "BE"!**

## PINK DOGWOOD

By Janet Troidle

The playground was four feet in diameter and just as tall

It enclosed ten spot-brown fledglings who delighted in the short chase... darting to and fro upon each branch stretching new feathers, reveling in freedom

Mother Bird gated the well-designed playpen from a distant plain, chirping approval

We pondered the songs of love.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2013

August 5-9th (8:45am-12:30pm)  
Immaculate Conception Church

Registration will be open from June 1st-July 26th.  
Cost will be \$20 per child with a max of \$60 per family.

People who are interested in volunteering are invited to an orientation meeting at ICC on June 5th. New volunteers are asked to come at 6:30, and returning volunteers at 7:15.

Questions? Contact Erin Fenton, Sr. Cathy or Christine Goss (VBS Director) 399-9023 or cicoyouth@nycap.rr.com



## FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection helps us live with gratitude every day.

Use the picture and number code to fill in the blanks for Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV.

1. Jesus 2. weary 3. endured 4. opposition	5. cross 6. endured 7. scorning 8. shame	1. Jesus 2. lose 3. pioneer 4. sinners
5. perfecter 6. him 7. faith 8. hand	1. eyes 2. us 3. joy 4. heart	5. right 6. grow 7. God 8. throne

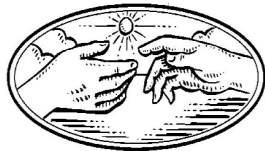
"... fixing our \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ For the \_\_\_\_\_ set before \_\_\_\_\_  
 he \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ its \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 sat down at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Consider \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ such \_\_\_\_\_  
 from \_\_\_\_\_ so that you will not \_\_\_\_\_  
 and \_\_\_\_\_" HEBREWS 12:2-3, NIV

Answer: "...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV



## Good Grief

by Janet Troidle



When I was a child, I recall the frequent use of the surprised expression, “good grief!” Now I’m thinking about it in a different context. Is there anything good, about grief?

Both my mother and brother died last fall within 5 weeks. Although expected, it felt like a one-two punch. Frequently I would gaze at both of their pictures and wonder, “which one am I crying for?” Each tear was a nano second of love fired from my heart, each memory a reminder of what I no longer had.

I am aware that many people have not experienced a deep connection with parents, or sibling(s), or even a spouse. For them there is also grief, perhaps a deep longing for that which they never had, regrets, anger, apathy, any number of emotions which accompany an unfulfilled relationship. But for all of us, the stream of love that hovers over earth becomes our resource. We drink of it in desperation. We hold onto loved and unloved ones with a feverish might and reluctantly recognize the ultimate reality----there is very little we can control in this life!

Death “seems” like such a harsh reality. We tiptoe around its shadow, push it off into the woods until it reappears, and then, IT IS. Out of control, we deal with the loss like a preschooler who does not yet know numbers and letters. We become learners grappling for a syllabus to tell us how to feel, how to respond.

All of us know that the journey has its hills and valleys: twists and turns become the expected pathway. Countless authors have analyzed the grief process to death (hmmm, a little play on words), but indeed when it happens, it is impossible to describe the turmoil.

Thus we plod through the forest of memory and denial. The thicket is often too dense to slog, so we “numbify” ourselves with a transparent protective sheath. It allows us to see but not feel. It helps us to live day by day, like a daddy-long-legs crawling one precarious step at a time.

Focus became a challenge. Tears erupted at inopportune moments. I viewed and rejected my own immortality. I fought death with an anger and

agitation that had a mind of its own. I would swim in deep emotional pain, until my frustration and exhaustion moved me to pray 2 Cor 5:7 “I walk in faith and not by sight.”

Every day I watched my mourning. I became an observer of its presence in the bleachers. It moved from seat to seat while I volleyed the basketball of my life. It had form, but I could not touch it. It called me to move, change and grow.

Eventually the path opened up, ever so slowly, leading me to new ways of thinking. Sad memory became a peaceful commemoration. All negative emotion finally resigned itself. Denial evolved into acceptance. Faith filled up the bucket of loneliness. The sky was brighter. God was and is with me.

Because we “know” God, we believe that springtime is stirring to grow flowers again. Sometimes adversity or loss leaves one feeling useless. I was caretaker of my mother for 11 years...now what will I do. Loss of employment, health, divorce, death, financial devastation, countless life events bring us to what scripture describes as the fallow season. In the garden of life we have both fruitfulness and fallow times (when we do not grow.)

*Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 “There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; A time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; A time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; A time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; A time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; A time of war, and a time of peace.”*

My Advent season was so fruitful this year. I yearned for my God. I pined in silence and drew Him into my breast. Time and again, I asked for His love, and time and again, He was reborn in my heart. I am a more peaceful person now. Suffering is inevitable, but I see more clearly that misery is optional. My mother and brother were heroic in showing me that in their painful struggles, God’s love carried them to the end. Their new wholeness and happiness reaffirms God’s promise of eternal life without pain or sorrow, **where all things will be made new**. So again I ask, “Is there anything good, about grief?”

## Easter Around The World



### Eggs

The egg is a universal symbol of fertility, used to mark the coming of new life. In Germany people dye eggs green (new life) on Holy Thursday. Greeks use red to decorate their eggs, symbolizing the blood of Christ. In Bulgaria, people crack their brightly colored eggs during Easter as a sign of luck. The first egg is cracked on the wall of the church after the Easter Vigil. This is the first food to break the paschal fast.

### Cakes and Breads

Easter cakes and breads named with dough raised by yeast symbolize the Resurrection, while special desserts provide a festive element to family meals. In Poland, people eat *babka* (*grandmother cake*), a sweet spongy yeast cake, traditionally filled with dried fruit. The Russian Orthodox eat a nut and fruit filled yeast cake called *kulich*. It is shaped like a pyramid in remembrance of Christ's tomb, and served with a sweet curd called *paskha*. Lambropsomo is the Greek Easter bread and means "bright light". It is often decorated with red Easter eggs. Ukrainian Christians feast on paska, an enriched bread made with butter, eggs, and sugar. In Netherlands, you would enjoy an Easter yeast bread filled with almond paste and decorated with raisins and candied lemon.

### Bunnies

The rabbit has been a symbol of new life since before Christianity. Some say the ancients celebrated a spring festival to worship the goddess Eastre, who took on the earthy guise of a rabbit. Perhaps Christians adopted some aspects of that festival, or perhaps the rabbit was, like the egg, a universal symbol of fertility.

The American tradition of the chocolate Easter bunny comes from the Germans, who brought their custom of candy rabbits with them to the New World. Australians have a problem with rabbits. They consider them pests because they destroy crops. So the Australians rely on the Easter Bilby (it looks like a rabbit) to deliver their Easter eggs.



## A Personal Greeting

by Marianne Shields



I am a new parishioner and here is my short story!

My spiritual journey began at Baptism, St. Theresa of Avila church in Queens, New York. At six, I was enrolled in Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Richmond Hill, New York. This was a very nice experience for me. The Dominican nuns helped all of us appreciate our faith as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. I believe that this early development has helped me stay true to my God. To this day, many people comment on my penmanship. Good penmanship was stressed and I credit mine to this period of my schooling at OLPH. Since it was my hometown, I went to school with many of my neighbors and developed many new friendships that lasted for years.

For two years at Commercial High School, the Dominicans continued to nurture our faith path but they also developed our work skills to prepare us for life. I then transferred to The Assisium in Manhattan, taught by the Franciscan nuns. They truly stressed all the skills necessary to prepare us for the work world as well as reinforce my journey with God. All of the sisters had a very positive influence on my faith formation.

My life's journey included marriage, raising four children and living in several new places. Now my children are grown, I have three beautiful grandchildren, and I find myself in a completely new place and a new church parish. Somehow I was guided to join Our Lady of Grace and I rejoice in this decision. I find everyone here very kind and welcoming.

As I continue my journey, I offer the prayer that I learned in Sr. Avila's first grade class. There was a large painting in the back of the classroom. We would turn to the rear of the classroom and say this prayer to the Guardian Angel who was protecting small children crossing over a bridge.

*Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side to light, to guard, to rule and to guide. Amen.*

I ask all of God's angels to protect your family and mine, and the wonderful community of OLG!

# Important Dates To Remember

## Holy Week/Easter Season



**Palm Sunday-March 24**

**Holy Thursday-March 28**

**6:00 p.m. Mass**

**Followed by parish potluck**

**Eucharistic Adoration**

**Good Friday-March 29**

**12:00 noon Stations of the Cross**

**7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service**

**Easter Vigil-March 30**

**8:00 p.m. Mass**

**Easter Sunday-March 31**

**8:15 a.m. Mass**

**10:15 a.m. Mass**

**First Communion- April 13 & 14**

**5:00PM, 8:15 AM, 10:15 AM**

**Confirmation- April 20**

**2:00PM St.Peter's, Saratoga**

**Pentecost Sunday- May 19**

**8:15 a.m Mass**

**10:15 a.m Mass**

Life is not about waiting  
for the storm to pass;  
it is about learning to  
dance in the rain!

### Waiting for Spring

By Alison Norton

As I step outside to bitter cold  
It feels as if this world  
Is frozen in time  
Bare trees, blankets of white snow  
Dark days and long nights  
Frost covered mornings give way  
To bone chilling nights  
Layered in icy solitude

Wondering if and when warmth will return  
I am reminded in subtle ways  
Of God's constant presence  
Even in the darkest coldest hour  
In the bright glow of the full moon  
In the flutter of winter bird's wings  
The delicate beauty  
Of the old oak dusted in fresh snow  
Brings a calm to my heart  
While awaiting the fresh start of spring!

### Crop Walk For Hunger

**Sunday, May 5, 2012**

This year the CROP Walk (CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty) will be held on Sunday May 5th in Schenectady. Would you consider participating by joining the OLG walkers or by supporting us with a financial contribution of any size? Could this be your way "to feed the hungry?" Sign-ups will begin in April. If you would like to find out more now, contact Barbara or Peter Notch at 393-7712.



Father Jack, Dorothy, Deacon Frank, Sr. Madeline, Sr. Cathy, Lucille, Erin, Patty and Pat send warmest wishes for a very blessed Easter to each of you!  
 May you *know* the deep love of our Risen Christ!

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

You can access the weekly bulletin and this newsletter with all current parish activity at:  
<http://www.rcda.org/churches/olgchurch>

***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 all the membership of Our Lady of Grace.***

Our Cluster Parishes:

Saint Joseph's Website:  
<http://stjosephschurchscotia.net>

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