

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Fall

Oct-Nov-Dec. Issue, 2017

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



Fr. Peter's Note

Rev. Peter Russo, Pastor

Inside this issue:

Our Walk With God **2**
By David Cote

Pastoral Council info

OLG Annual Report **3**

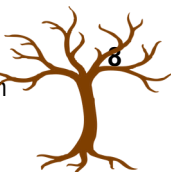
Kids Korner **4**
Forthcoming Holidays
Nurse Notes by Nancy
Michela
Mental Health by Grace Fay
Welcome New Parishioners

High Adventure **5**
By Aleksandr Lorenc
Women's Day of Reflection

Fall Concert **6**
Blessing of Animals
Ministry Fair
Other

Annual Report cont'd. **7**

Staff and Pastoral **8**
Council Information



Dear Sisters and Brothers:

"We give thanks to God always for all of you... calling to mind your works of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ..." 1Thessalonians 1:2-3

With these words St. Paul greeted the people of the Church in Thessalonica. As pastor of Our Lady of Grace for almost a year and a half I can share St. Paul's praise for the catholic community of the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake area. We have had our ups and downs and much more needs to be done, but the words of St. Paul do ring true.

The reports that follow will give you a view of what has been done over the last year of ministry, through your generous contributions of time, talent and financial resources. In order for the work of our Lord to continue I, along with our bishop urge you to reflect on your commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and the good stewardship of His gifts to you.

For most of us a life of stewardship represents an enormous transition from secular values. Some of the parishioners are very involved with the parish, others are striving to increase their commitment. We hope that you will please take the time to read and prayerfully reflect on this annual report. I pray that each member of the community will TAKE A STEP in their spiritual development.

I wish to thank each and every parishioner for your prayerful reflection on this report and for the commitment you plan to make.

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!

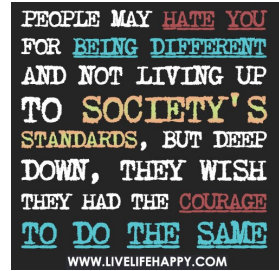
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OUR WALK WITH GOD

What Is Success?

By David Cote



I often have the reflection: “Aren’t I meant for SO much more than what I am doing right now.” This thought comes to me many nights, just prior to falling asleep. I ponder if this is what life is really about...working, paying bills, working some more, paying more bills. I wonder to myself: What makes other people so successful in life? Not in the sense of ‘financial success’, but the kind of success that makes a difference in this troubled world. I never seem to figure this question out before I fall asleep, only to wake up the next morning to go to work...and pay bills.

I then had an epiphany a few weeks ago. Maybe this ‘thought’ was actually Jesus talking to me? For, as the Scripture states in the 1st Book of Kings:

*Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD;
the LORD will be passing by.*

*A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains
and crushing rocks before the LORD—
but the LORD was not in the wind.*

*After the wind there was an earthquake—
but the LORD was not in the earthquake.*

*After the earthquake there was fire—
but the LORD was not in the fire.*

After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.

Maybe, in the silence of the night, when my mind was clear of the hustle and bustle of the day and there were no distractions...maybe the voice in my head was the ‘tiny whispering sound’ we are called to listen for? It then became clear to me. The way to a more successful life is not measured in financial terms, or popularity, or power, but in the Love of God. If I can spread the love of Jesus through my friends, family and community, when the last day comes, I will be able to look back and answer that tiny whispering voice in my head: Yes, I have led a successful life...thanks be to God.

New Pastoral Council Members

Are you looking to become more involved at Our Lady of Grace? Are you interested in becoming and integral part of its future? Prayerfully consider becoming a member of the Pastoral Council.

We have a number of vacancies coming up this year, as well as an opportunity for two young adults to join the Council (Grades 11 and 12). Nomination forms are in the gathering area. Please feel free to nominate yourself, or someone you think would be a great fit on the Council. Look to the bulletin for more information.

Note From Our Pastor: The following reports on page 3 and 7 encompass the activity of OLG, and your contributions of time, treasure and talent. In the entryway, you will find a current list of over 30 ministry opportunities. Look for the title sheet **OLG 90+years!** Hopefully you can find an opportunity to expand your spiritual journey by joining one of these ministries. We welcome your input, ideas, contributions!

Prayer and Worship

The administration of the Sacraments and celebration of the Eucharist each weekend are the source and summit of all we are and all we are called to be. We've enjoyed weekly Masses with our Sacramental Minister, Fr. Jack Varno, myself, Fr. Peter Russo, and Deacon Frank Thomas. We have welcomed dozens of new parishioners, baptized 14 new children, administered First Eucharist for 11 students, witnessed 3 marriages, and celebrated 18 funerals. Everyone's use of their Name Tags has been a great resource for building our faith community.

Faith Formation and Youth Ministry

We strive to provide a stimulating and joyful environment in which to teach the values, heritage and traditions of the Catholic Church. Within this educational framework, we try to guide our youth to become lifelong witness to the reality of the Risen Christ through the Sacramental life, personal and communal celebrations and charitable works.

During the school year, we served 149 students. Our programs, assisted by your much-needed volunteer services, are under the direction of Roberta Quinn, and Grace Fay. Some of their programs last year were Children's Stations of the Cross, Retreat day for Reconciliation, Retreat day for First Communion, Breakfast with Santa. Youth Ministry held a number of workshops covering a number of topics including: discipleship, mental health, and faith in Africa, just to name a few. We had students involved in a number of service projects both within the community and beyond. We held 6 separate retreats for our young people, along with our monthly "Open Door Thursday." We had one student attend the Christian Leadership Institute and one of our Young People attended the St. George Trek in New Mexico. We look forward to the coming year and all it will bring. We have young people attending the Diocesan Middle School Youth Rally and the National Catholic Youth Conference. Keep your eyes open for more updates on Youth Ministry as the year progresses.

Helping Hands End of the Year Statement July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Balance	July 1, 2016	\$ 9,597.83
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Income

<i>OLG donations, fundraising and OLG operating budget</i>	<i>\$ 9,921.92</i>
<i>BH-BL Summer Lunch Program from 6 local churches and OLG</i>	<i>3,998.70</i>

Expenses

Rent/Security deposit (57families)	\$ 6,308.66
Utilities, including telephone (16 families)	1,877.47
Car repairs/payments/insurance/gas (4 families)	375.15
Groceries (gift certificates & extra food)	4,713.22
Misc.: wreaths, gifts, funeral, etc.	2,725.30

Balance as of June 30, 2017	\$ 7,518.65
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Helped **40 families** for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

Can you help us trim costs by receiving your quarterly Newsletter via email? Please call or email Janet Troidle. Thanks for your help!

THE NURSE'S CORNER by Nancy Michela, RN

GRAB N'GO..... With the recent weather events, we are encouraged to prepare for emergencies natural, man-made or terrorist). Keep a hard copy as well as a flash drive with the following information:

- *Contact information- next of kin with addresses, phone numbers (home + cell); religious affiliation, with contact information (if pertinent).
- *Address/phone number of the closest American Red Cross-33 Everett Road, Albany, NY 12206. 1-800-RED-CROSS
- *Name and location of the closest Police Department
- *Names and phone numbers of your health care providers
- *Copies of Medicare/Medicaid, other health insurance, Pacemaker/defibrillator cards
- *Personal and spouse/family health histories
- *Living will or advance directives/health care proxy
- *List of current medications/local pharmacy address and phone number
- *Eye glass prescription (extra pair of glasses) and hearing aid batteries
- *Pet information- food/medications and local shelter address and number
- *A smile!

Keep information in a loose-leaf binder with plastic sleeves for documents and flash drive.

Go to the website: www.ready.gov for more information on getting ready, making a plan and being informed. A Readiness Quiz is used to guide your degree of preparedness.

Good luck!

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

By Grace Fay, Pastoral Associate for Youth Ministry

Mental Health is something that affects us all, regardless of who we are, where we are from or how old we are. With this in mind the diocese has created a Mental Health Awareness Committee. The diocese has blessed the week of **October 15-22** as Mental Health Awareness Week. In the spirit of that week, here are some mental health resources and information. Remember that everyone is somehow effected by mental illness, don't be afraid to start the conversation about mental illness in your family. It can be started by simply asking "How are you?" and sitting to listen to the answer. If you have questions for the committee, feel free to contact Grace Fay, olgsjym@gmail.com

Did you know? (From the National Alliance on Mental Illness)

- 1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness
- ½ of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14, ¾ by the age of 24
- 42 million American adults live with anxiety disorders
- 16 million American adults live with major depression

Ways to get help

Don't be afraid to **talk to your doctor**

Connect with **other individuals and families**

Learn more about mental illness

Visit NAMI.org

The Diocesan Consultation Center: 518-489-4431

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

**Halloween in Heaven**

By Janet Troidle

Hey Kids! Can you imagine what it would be like to celebrate Halloween in Heaven. Billions of spirits wearing their given God-made masks, each with a different nose, different hair, different color, different ears, different heights! Different tricks, different accents and languages that everyone understands, different howls of laughter, different types of love given and received.

Perhaps, just perhaps we can duplicate this party on Earth!

**THANKSGIVING**

We hope you will join us for our annual Mass on Thanksgiving Day! Watch the bulletin for more info.

**CHRISTMAS**

At this writing, we do not have Christmas schedules. Watch for info in bulletin which can be seen online at

www.olgchurchbl.org

**WELCOME NEW PARISHIONERS!**

Anthony and Lindsey Wolcott
Elizabeth Atkinson
Bill and Margaret Paulsen

High Adventure with God and My Fellow Scouts

by Aleksandr Lorenc

I am Aleksandr Lorenc and I had the tremendous opportunity to go to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico in July. I was one of two Catholic Boy Scouts from our Diocese who were chosen to participate in the St. George Trek at Philmont.

The Saint George Trek is The National Catholic Committee on Scouting's® high adventure leadership program for older Boy Scouts and Venture Crew members at Philmont Scout Ranch. To be qualified, Boy Scouts and Venture Crew members must be actively involved in their faith. The program brought Catholic high school youth, male and female, from around the country, together with selected priests, a religious brother and sister, seminarians, and a married woman for eleven days of backpacking through the unchanged lands of Philmont Scout Ranch. The trek put an emphasis on finding our vocation.

We all met up at the Madonna Retreat Center in Albuquerque. There we got our name tags and our polo t-shirts. After we had lunch, we played games on the field next to the Saint Pius X Ben Rios Field. We had our introductions of the people who would be responsible for us over the next couple of weeks. We spent two days at the retreat house and had Mass each night. Crews rotated responsibilities of Mass, prayer services and Adoration. The day before we left to go to Philmont we had talks on crew dynamics, with team-building exercises, how to setup a stove, building a first aid kit and more. The most important was the one on conflict resolution because we had to learn how to deal with people who we just met the day before. We also had a talk on discerning our Vocation while we were on the Trek and after we returned home.

I had great fun exploring the Philmont base camp. There were many things to do while our leaders were getting instructions from the staff. My favorite activities were shopping and branding things. Our first night there we had to sleep in trail tents as opposed to the nice canvas tents because, I heard at the end of the trek, the staff had thought that the St. George Trek was one crew as opposed to eight different crews. While in New Mexico my crew celebrated Mass every day, both on the trek and when we returned to Albuquerque. While on the trek we built our own altars at our campsite. Together we climbed Baldy Mountain, and went over very large and steep hills (aka mesas). At the midway point of our trek, all of the crews met up at Cimarroncito and we celebrated Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament together. It was during Adoration that I clearly heard my calling to a vocation of Holy Orders. I was a little nervous about this calling, as usually I am very shy and quiet, especially around new people. But while before the Blessed Sacrament, I felt courage to do what others in my life have done.

My advice to the young people is find good friends. Not just friends you hang out with but friends that you know will have your back just as you have theirs. If you want to discover your calling surround yourself with good people and spend quiet time before God, just listening to Him. I want to thank everyone, both my family and the OLG parishioners, for all their prayers and support. I also want to thank the Dioceses for sponsoring this incredible opportunity to explore my vocation. I look forward to serving my community in many different ministries in the future.

(The community of OLG thanks Alek for all his help and loyal commitment to our parish!)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Women's Day of Reflection

Friday, October 13, 2017

Presenter:: Claire Bradley

Location: Home of Janet

Troidle

Theme: Finding joy and peace living in the present moment!

See Bulletin/flyer for details.

Make reservation by calling Janet Troidle 518 -399-3861 or jantroidle@gmail.com



Speaking on behalf of myself and our many past and present choir members of the Junior, Youth, and Adult Choirs:

We are grateful to the church for allowing us to share our faith through the gift of music. There is no doubt that our faith has grown and strengthened with our participation in the music ministry here at OLG. In gratitude and love, we would like to celebrate our faith and carry out our call to serve with a Concert for you this fall. Join us on Sunday afternoon, October 15, 2017, 3:00 p.m. Together, let's build the spiritual life of this community that this parish is known for as we present, "Singing to the Seasons Of Love and Grace".

More details to follow.....volunteer assistance is needed!

If you are a former member or have never been a member and want to participate in the concert, or can just help make it a success, please email: Patty Neumann, Director of Music

lvmusik@nycap.rr.com



Blessing of the Animals, Saturday, October 7, 2017 3:00 p.m.

On October 4, people all over the world will be celebrating the feast day of the Patron Saint of Animals, Saint Francis of Assisi. It's customary that in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures, animals are led to churches for a special ceremony called the "Blessing of the Animals." Every year, millions of animals are blessed by priests in a ceremony that touches the hearts of most of those in attendance.

We assume that the animals in attendance are not terrified by unfamiliar surroundings. If your animal is terrified of crowds, please leave it at home and bring a picture. Quite simply, this is for the animals, not for us, so we shouldn't sacrifice their welfare for the ceremony. Join Father Russo with your animal(s) for a special blessing at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, October 7, 2017.

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**Can you add \$1.00, \$3.00, \$5.00, or \$10.00
to your weekly donation so we can meet expenses?
Your prayerful consideration is most appreciated.**



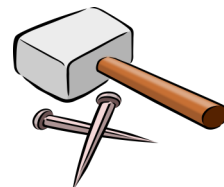
Ministry Fair November 4-5, 11-12, 2017

A ministry fair will be held in the gathering area on the week-ends of November 4-5 and Nov 11-12.

Now that the fall schedule has slowed down a bit, we invite you to take the time, before or after Mass, to visit the representatives of each ministry and learn about what they do!

This is a golden opportunity to discover the right match for your desires/skills to "make a difference" at OLG! Please take the time on one of these 2 week-ends to support our team of ministry representatives. Imagine the possibilities for our community if each member of our parish committed to one ministry that works with their time constraints! **HELP!**

Seeking to create a 2-3 person committee, skilled volunteers who can walk through our building quarterly, with Jim, our industrious maintenance man, to create a timeline for the repair and upkeep of our facility. If interested, contact Tad Darling 518-399-7229 harrydarling@verizon.net



OLG other statistics - July 2016-June 2017

Baptisms - 14
 Rite of Christian Initiation - 0
 First Eucharist - 11
 Confirmation - 19
 Marriage - 3
 Funerals - 18
 Homebound/nursing home - 14

Registered households - 649

Faith Formation Program
 Grades 1-5 - 52
 Grades 6-11 - 97

Average 5 p.m. Mass - 110
 Average 8:15 a.m. Mass - 110
 Average 10:15 a.m. Mass - 168

Our Lady of Grace Church Financial State of the Parish for the period July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2015-2016</u>
Summary of Operating Income		
Collections	\$334,012	\$371,568
Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings	2,250	1,620
Interest, Parish House Rental	12,374	11,809
Bulletin Advertising Income	957	765
Faith Formation Fees	5,560	6,575
Mass Stipends, Evangelist Receipts	2,251	2,157
Gift Cards & Coffee Sales, Misc.	12,250	19,024
Donations (restricted & non-restricted)	4,112	8,055
Reimbursements	8,486	8,623
Total Income	\$382,252	\$430,196
Summary of Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	\$236,866	\$278,009
Church Expenses	103,932	121,008
Outreach Expenses	8,542	7,836
Parish House & Rectory Expenses	10,527	4,787
Faith Formation Expenses	11,889	22,584
Additional Payments to Diocese	12,000	5,000
Total Expenses	\$383,756	\$439,224
Net Operating Total for OLG	\$ (1,504)	\$ (9,028)
Annual Diocesan Collections		
(Catholic University, Rice Bowl, Holy Father, etc.)	\$8,255	\$12,123
Bishop's Appeal		
Assessment	\$ 90,917	\$ 91,835
Payments	\$ 90,505	\$ 81,573
	\$(412)	\$(10,262)

A big "Thank You" to all who pledged or donated to the 2017 Bishop's Appeal ~ We are only 412.00 short of our goal. If you have not donated yet, please consider helping us meet our goal. When you read page 5 about Aleksandr Lorenc, you will see how your \$ are being used!



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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:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Jan-Feb-Mar	Nov 25
Apr-May-Jun	Mar 1
Jul-Aug-Sept	Jun 1
Oct-Nov-Dec	Sept 1

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

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

www.olgchurchbl.org