

# Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Spring

Mar-Apr-May 2014

*Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace*



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## Dorothy's Note

*Dorothy Sokol, Parish Life Director*

### Membership has its Privileges!

A quote from an ad but I'd like to use it here to ask everyone to register as a member of Our Lady of Grace.

Some people assume that when their children are enrolled in Faith Formation they are registered. That is not true. (We do have children from other parishes who attend our Faith Formation classes because the time or day works better for their family life.)

Others do not think it is necessary to register. Perhaps they think that being in the computer means they will be bombarded by requests for money. Not true, especially now that postage is up to 49 cents!

But we, in the Parish Office, find it extremely helpful to have you and your family listed in the computer. Someone left their purse on Christmas Eve and I was able to call her that night because her name and phone number were in the computer. Another person requested a sponsor's certificate so she could sponsor her niece for Confirmation. The Parish involved wanted a note from me that this person was a practicing Catholic. However, I did not know her and she was not in the database. It made things more difficult.

You are not required to have envelopes or a subscription to the Evangelist, but I ask you to be registered as a member so that we can contact you if the need arises. Your information is treated with the upmost confidence by the staff, but allows us to reach you in an emergency. Thanks for your help!

**Membership has its Privileges!**

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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 Journey into the Desert*

By Edward A. Razz

**H**ave you ever questioned if the bible is true or relevant today? Does the bible seem like this out of date book written a long time ago by a people less technologically advanced than our culture? Are you uncomfortable with some of the church's teachings or find them hard to defend? I found this to be my situation about the time my daughters needed religious instruction. I knew that I could not teach them the faith with such doubts and needed to find answers to my questions. This started me out on my personal faith journey.

Saint Paul presents a warning to the Church in the third chapter of his second letter. He states that in the "last days" people ("scoffers") will begin to doubt God created the world which was covered and created through water and later flooded as a result of God's judgment. These are all clear references to the book of Genesis and the account of creation and the flood of Noah. This is relevant today because it's not just the scoffers but those sitting in the pews that are having a tough time with these events. Interestingly, it has only been during the past two centuries that the Genesis record and flood account has come into serious doubt by scholars. Today, many either ignored this issue or attempted to reconcile it by appealing to the other senses (non-literal) of scripture. My thirst was not satisfied.

As I explored this issue I learned that book of Genesis is foundational to many Catholic teachings. For example, the teaching on the dignity of human life comes from the teaching that we are created in God's image. This is the literal teaching of Genesis 1:17. The doctrine that marriage is between a man and a woman and can only be dissolved by death comes from the early chapters of Genesis. Jesus actually quotes these scriptures to defend his view of marriage to the religious leaders of his day in Mat 19:4-6.

Did you know that Genesis records our need for a savior? The fall from grace experienced by Adam and Eve ultimately precipitated our need for God to send his son to restore our relationship with Him. How do you share the good news with friends about the saving work of Christ and not also believe in the historic bad news that set the stage to begin with? It seems that Adam and Jesus are linked from the beginning. Even the genealogies recorded in Luke's gospel go back to Adam and Eve. I find it stretches credibility to claim that Jesus descended from some mythical people unless you believe Jesus is a mythical person too. What I learned is that ignoring the literal sense of these scriptures undermines even New Testament teachings.

Returning to Saint Peter's warning, he states that the governing philosophy of the scoffers can be recognized because they will claim that "all things continue as they have from the beginning of creation." This could very well describe the philosophy used by many naturalists today.

Beginning in the 19th century a geologist by the name of Lyell developed his principles of geology by presuming that the slow sedimentation and erosional processes observed then must have required ions of time to form the geological features he observed. This approach concludes that many of the geological features of our planet such as the Grand Canyon would require millions of years to form and erode. Much of geology is influenced by his ideas to this day.

How many of you have been taught that the Grand Canyon was carved over millions of years by the Colorado River? Secular geologist today would deny there ever was a global flood and certainly not like the one described in the book of Genesis. The idea of geological gradualism was simply extended to biological gradualism by Darwin in his theory of evolution. It seems that according to the gradualists we descended from some primordial slime and not Adam and Eve and there was never a global flood. It is no doubt that my struggles with Genesis were causing me difficulties accepting Church teachings.

My search took an unexpected turn when I discovered there are a growing number of scientists who do not subscribe to these conventional theories. The reasons given are based on scientific objections and not on appeals to the bible. These scientists hold naturalism in a high regard for understanding how the universe operates but not necessarily how it originated. There are limits to our ability to extrapolate into the past. Real science operates in the present and can lead to technological innovations which improve our lives. However, theories about our origins are merely educated stories about the unobserved and non-repeatable past. The historical sciences are highly influenced by the bias and training of the observer. If a scientist is only permitted to provide naturalistic explanations of our origins then by definition - anything beyond nature is eliminated. God and the supernatural are eliminated as a potential cause as a starting premises (God only in the Christian sense but not pantheists who believe God is nature). What I learned gave me great faith in the bible and church teachings - and more skepticism of the ideas scientists have of the past.

My search culminated last summer when I had the privilege of traveling with Dr. Steve Austin (PhD Geology) to explore the Grand Canyon on a week long white water camping trip down the Colorado. Dr. Austin is well known for his research on the Mount Saint Helen's eruption and subsequent flooding of Spirit Lake back in 1980. The events at Mt. St. Helen formed the basis of Dr. Austin's theories on the formation of the Grand Canyon. Dr. Austin subscribes to a theory that the Grand Canyon was formed catastrophically by a breeched dam of an ancient lake. The lake covered a large part of the states of Northern Arizona, Utah and Nevada. He showed how a catastrophic explanation of the formation of the Grand Canyon better fits the observed data. The details are beyond the scope of this article but needless to say it is gratifying to be able to have my mind and heart behind the Church teachings.

If you would like to learn more about this issue from a Catholic perspective be sure and visit [www.kolbecenter.org](http://www.kolbecenter.org).

## Proclaiming The Word by Larry Chambers

I have always wondered how people are called to serve our Lord. What inspires them? How were they touched to become involved in the Church in whatever capacity. In the end, I suppose the reasons are many: some the same while others are unique. I believe we all serve the Church and our Lord by having faith in Catholicism, but more importantly faith in Christ. I also believe that it really doesn't matter how you find Christ – as long as you find him. I would like to share with you is why I chose to serve as a lector.

I didn't wake up one day, go to Mass, and say to myself "How cool would it be to nicknamed Larry the Lector". It actually took several weeks to decide (but not the nickname I joke about here. I worry that whenever you see me you will call me this – I beg you, please don't!).

When I finished RICA, I wanted to give something back. I had embraced this new life in my baptism (probably like many people do) but needed to figure out how best to do it. I had gone to school for radio broadcasting (I thought I would change the world through the music playlist I would do as a DJ). I had a flair for the dramatic with my involvement in theater arts as an actor and in musicals. Put a microphone in front of me and all my radio DJ days come flooding back and my voice drops about an octave. (*Normally, I speak like someone who has just swallowed a balloon-full of helium instead of the baritone/bass voice you hear when I lector. Just kidding!*)

Lectoring means many things to me. It is my own personal stewardship, all part of the 3 T's – time, treasure, and talent. At the Mass before Fr. Jack left for his annual desert vacation/enlightenment retreat, he joked about how the Lord takes care of his servants and that was why he was able to go away. Joking aside, there is a great deal of truth to that. The Lord has blessed me in so many ways. He has given me a good speaking voice and a desire to express myself with the written word.

These are my talents. The time commitment is a good deal of preparation before I share a reading for you. Lectors are provided with a workbook that helps us interpret the meaning behind the reading, the context that it was written in, pronunciation help, and other tips to help a lector be as effective as possible in sharing the Word of the Lord. It's an excellent tool. What I do is immerse myself in the reading. I attempt to put myself in the mind of the writer, and then imagine myself as that person conversationally speaking to a crowd. Readings from St. Paul are tough – he has a lot of run-on sentences. Ha. Ha. that you are reading last week's scripture." I was mortified!

In 1 Corinthians, Saint Paul said: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning." That is what sharing the Word is about.

**Walk For Hunger**  
**"Schenectady Crop Walk"**  
*On your Mark, Get set, Pen Your Calendar!*

**Get ready to have fun and  
walk the walk!**

**Date: Sunday, May 4, 2014**

**Sign-up sheets will be available soon!**

**Gather family/friends for this great cause.**

**Last year, funds were sent to local Catholic  
charities senior meals, St. Luke's Food Pantry,  
The community crisis network and SICM  
(Schenectady Inner City Mission.)**

# Youth Ministry



Confirmation Candidates get to know each other during the Confirmation Day Retreat.




Youth Minister, Grace Fay, with the 7th/8th grade Peer Team (Jake Goslin, Deirdre Kelliher, and Liz Sammons).




Friendship picture frames decorated by the 7th and 8th graders at the retreat on January 18th.

# Kids Korner



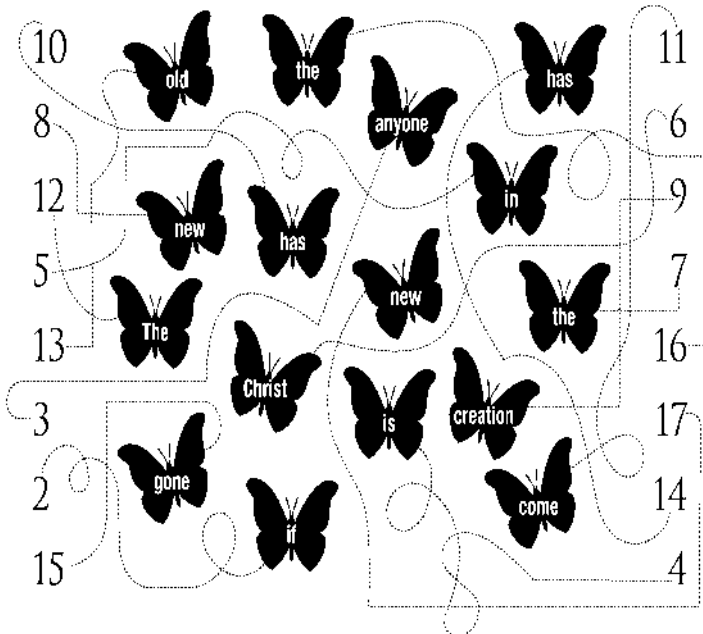
## A new creation

Just as spring brings beauty and renewal,  
in Christ we, too, are made new.



Directions: Follow each flying butterfly to its correct number. Then write that word on the line with the corresponding number to read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

10  
8  
12  
5  
13  
3  
2  
15



11  
6  
9  
7  
16  
17  
14  
4

"Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ is here!"

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV**

Answer: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV



**Dead Man Walking** by Sister Helen Prejean  
**Book Review** by Alison Norton

“The role of the religious community is to reconcile what seems irreconcilable: love for death row inmates and their human dignity, and love for murder victims and their dignity and compassion for the hurt of their family members. Our own spiritual energy can unite and combine what ideology alone can never bring together. We are lovers of justice and lovers of human beings.”  
 [quote by Sister Helen Prejean]

The book “Dead Man Walking” may not change the way you feel about capital punishment. I was not looking to change my mind when I read it. I first read “The Executioner’s Song” by Norman Mailer, which prompted me to read further on books with the same subject matter. Finding very few, I was lucky to find “The Execution Protocol” by Stephen Trombley, which I read shortly after. **Dead Man Walking** is eye opening, sad, thought provoking, enlightening and horrifying all at the same time. Sister Helen Prejean, a plainclothes Catholic nun had recently begun her ministry of social injustice in 1982, quite uneducated in the convoluted path of the criminal justice system and its rampant injustices and inequalities. She was approached by someone from the Prison Coalition in Louisiana, asking if she would agree to be a pen pal to a death row inmate, Elmo Patrick Sonnier, convicted rapist and killer. Sr. Helen communicates first by letters and then face-to-face, as she slowly becomes his spiritual advisor. The term dead man walking is what many in corrections refer to a person on death row; a person sentenced to the death penalty.

She discusses in refreshingly candid language, her journey through understanding the justice system, especially when it pertains to the poor and uneducated. We follow her through the slew of emotions she feels upon meeting someone who had committed such a vile, heinous crime. She leaves no stone unturned and does not glamourize or sugarcoat the experience. Instead of encountering a cold, hard hearted monster in Patrick Sonnier, she gets to know the complex man, capable of terrible crimes yet yearning for friendship, love and understanding during this most tumultuous time in what remained of his life. Sr. Helen expresses the desire to be a loving face for Patrick, the “face of Christ” and continually counsels him to face his crimes and take responsibility for what he did and the pain he caused so many people. She urges him to seek forgiveness from his victims’ families, which he does receive from one family.

Sister Helen attended the execution by electric chair of Patrick Sonnier; accompanying him from his last moments in his jail cell to viewing his death in the gallery, surrounded by witnesses including his victims’ family members. She chronicles the experience and all it’s raw emotions. She helps Patrick’s family cope with the devastation of losing someone to an execution. Sister Helen went on to be spiritual advisors to many other death row inmates and eventually also getting involved in advocacy for victims and their families as well.

Before I read this book, I had no real educated opinion about the death penalty, just an emotional reaction. I never thought that I would feel differently. I have no idea what kind of horror it is to lose a loved one to violent crime and I am sure that I would want justice when it came to punishment for the criminal involved. I found myself asking if I would feel less pain and agony over my loss if the perpetrator were sentenced to death? Would this happening bring me peace? The world of death row is a dark world in which few are familiar. Sister Helen, her book and her message has inspired me to open my heart to the opportunity for a greater understanding of love.

This book took me out of my comfort zone and opened my eyes, prompting me to read more, become educated and form a new opinion on where I stand in regard to capital punishment. This way of thinking is not easy, not popular and makes people uncomfortable. It challenges me but makes me realize that I do not need to feel pity for a criminal to feel compassion for that person. ***It is that complexity of forgiveness, love and compassion that Jesus teaches us that I strive to understand.*** I challenge those who are interested and willing to explore the themes of love, compassion and forgiveness to read this book and be open to a different perspective.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

**There are countless volunteer opportunities at Our Lady of Grace. Check the Service Ministries Sheet on the wall located in the entry way to the Church. For example, In April the Gardeners of Grace will be rolling out their knee pads! Can you join them for 1 hour a week to spruce up our grounds? Contact Dorothy if you are interested in any volunteer opportunity!**

## Lenten Pretzels by Fr. W. Saunders

The pretzel has its origins as an official food of Lent. However, much of the information available is based on tradition handed down through the ages.

In the early Church, the Lenten abstinence and fasting laws were more strict than what the faithful practice today. In 604 AD, Pope Gregory issued the following rule: "We abstain from flesh, meat, all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs. Also, everyone can eat only one meal per day at 3:00 p.m., and smaller snacks to maintain strength." So a need arose for a simple food which would fulfill the abstinence and fasting laws.

According to pretzel maker Snyder's of Hannover, a young monk in the early 600s in Italy was preparing a special Lenten bread of water, flour and salt. To remind his brother monks that Lent was a time of prayer, he rolled the dough in strips and shaped each strip in the form of crossed arms, mimicking the then popular prayer position of folding one's arms over each other on the chest. The bread was then baked as a soft bread, just like the big soft pretzels one can find today.

These breads were called *bracellae*, the Latin word for "little arms." The Germans derived the word *bretzel* which has since mutated to the familiar word *pretzel*. Another possibility for the origins of the word is that the young monk gave these breads to children as a reward when they could recite their prayers. The Latin word *pretiola* means "little reward," from which *pretzel* could also be reasonably derived.

Apparently this simple Lenten food became very popular. They became a symbol of good luck, long life and prosperity. They were also a common food given to the poor and hungry. Not only were pretzels easy to give to someone in need, but also they were both a substantial food to satisfy the hunger and a spiritual reminder of God knowing a person's needs and answering their prayers.

Here we find another "fun" tradition of our faith, just like Easter eggs or hot cross buns. A good Lenten family activity would be to make pretzels, explaining to the children their significance.



### LENT

**Ash Wednesday**, March 5, 2014

Noon—service      Mass—7 p.m.

Sunday, March 9, 10:15 a.m.

**Rite of Sending for Terry Hynes**

### **Communal Sacrament of Reconciliation**

March 12, 7 p.m. St. Joseph's

April 8, 7 p.m. ICC

April 12 & 13 **Palm Sunday**

Normal weekend Mass Schedule



### HOLY WEEK

April 17 **Holy Thursday**

6 p.m. Mass followed by a Potluck Dinner

April 18 **Good Friday**

7 p.m. Passion of the Lord

April 19 **Easter Saturday Vigil**

8 p.m. Mass

April 20 **Easter Sunday**

8:15 & 10:15 a.m. Masses

April 26 & 27 **First Communion Week-end**





### OLG Book Club 2013

Look at these beautiful wise women who met weekly for 6 months, to discuss *THE GIFT OF YEARS*, by Joan Chittister. Sadly, we could not gather everyone at the same time for a group pic, but 8-14 of us poured into the OLG living room area every Wednesday at 9:15 a.m. We decided that beverages and snacks were a bother. This was our first good decision, as it reaffirmed our committed approach to living our senior years with grace, without guilt or fear! Small steps bring big accomplishment!

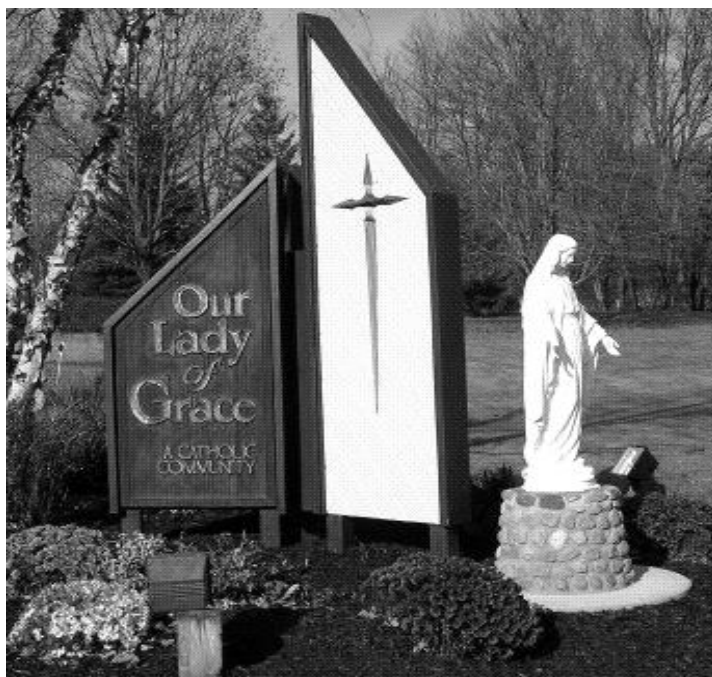
So, in a wide circle, we brought our heads together to discuss thoughts, share musings, and bare souls. This book became our bible as we integrated the author's thoughts with scripture and our hearts. Disagreements were nonexistent. Everyone respected each other's opinion. One might ask what we gained and/or reinforced from the experience.

- Laughter is balm for the heart and soul.
- Community is comfort, companionship, joy. Sharing is gift from both giver and receiver.
- Aging is exploration, and its success depends entirely upon our perspective.
- Creativity enters our lives as we follow our intuition.
- Retirement means freedom to move into new realms.

*The comments from our weekly discussions were recorded and can be obtained online by emailing [jantroidle@gmail.com](mailto:jantroidle@gmail.com). For those without email, hard copies are also available. Their insights are a great resource to accompany the book as you read it.*

This spring, look for news about our next gathering. All women are welcome. Bring a friend.





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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>**

Our Cluster Parishes:

Saint Joseph's Website:

<http://stjosephschurch@albany.twcny.com>

Immaculate Conception Website:

<http://www.ic-glenville.com/>

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

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Deacon Frank Thomas, ex-officio

**The entire staff of Our Lady of Grace wishes you a very blessed and spiritually uplifting Easter.**

**HE HAS RISEN....  
ALLELUIA!**

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