

The Gazette Of Grace Winter Jan-Feb-Mar
 2019 Issue 20
 Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



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Once upon a time...a phrase which grabs us by the ear. These words, since childhood, meant you are about to hear a story which will hold your attention and make you eager to learn how it ends. The Bible begins with three famous words having the same effect. "In the beginning". The Book of Genesis starts the Bible on a whirlwind tour of salvation history, a story of violence and terror, joy and promise, sadness and death, but ending with hope.

The Bible is a witness to God's ever growing presence in human history. Humanity which we are told was made in God's image (Genesis 1:27), receives a series of revelations from God through words and deeds which save and redeem. Think of Noah's family and the flood; Abraham and Sara given a new lease on life; Moses and the Israelites escaping across the Red Sea. How does this story of God's revelation end? As Eucharistic Prayer IV states: "Again and again you offered a covenant to us and through the prophets taught us to hope for salvation...you so loved the world, you sent your only Son to be our Savior." Jesus is the final word in the story of salvation history, and the importance of believing that God has become one with humanity is the central message of the Christmas season.

This mystery of God becoming human is known as the Incarnation: and the moments recorded in the scriptures when it was first made known that Christ had arrived are called "epiphanies." An epiphany is a revelation, and in the case of Christ, it was a revelation of good news, like when you walk into a surprise party, the lights come on and everyone yells "surprise!" There is singing, laughter and joy at the unexpected moment of celebration. When God became human, the heavens and earth responded with great joy. Each of the four gospels look at the revelation of Christ from a different perspective, and each had an influence on how the Liturgical Year celebrates Christmas.

The most obvious influence from scripture upon the Christmas season is the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, celebrated December 25. Simply known as Christmas Day, this solemnity comes to us from Luke's gospel. There we hear of Joseph and Mary who is pregnant traveling to Bethlehem, but finding no room in an inn. The baby is born in a manger. Luke tells of unsuspecting shepherds surprised by an angel, being directed to Bethlehem. They rejoice at the Newborn Christ, but quickly disappear, while Mary keeps all these things in her heart. **A valuable lesson is found here for those who follow Christ beyond the initial joy of His coming to earth. (Luke 2:1-20)**

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 Paul Breton



I have been a member of Our Lady of Grace for a little over 20 years (where does the time go!!). I grew up in a small town in southern Connecticut, went to a Catholic grammar school and high school, and like every other kid my age - just did NOT like to go to church on Sundays. I guess we were lucky, though, because we went to the 12 noon Mass on Sunday so we could “sleep in” (only drawback to that was I never got to see the last 15 minutes of EVERY Abbott and Costello movie ever made because we had to leave at 11:45!).

We had an extremely close family when I was growing up... life wasn't always easy, but we were Blessed with many gifts. My father was a carpenter and worked very hard for us all year long, and my mother stayed home while my three sisters and I were still young - she had the most important job in the world and was great at it!

I would have to say that my first true journey in faith began on a weekend retreat when I was in high school. It was really the first time I was ever away from home, and I remember feeling “out of my element” with other teens I didn't know all that well. What struck me the most about the weekend were the speakers - most of them teenagers who were a year or two older, and the way they spoke about their experiences of faith opened up something inside of me. I was always a bit sentimental and introspective, but the way these peers of mine were able to express their walk with God was truly inspiring... I felt God, and met Him for the first time in such a beautiful and intimate way.

From that moment on, going to church meant something entirely different to me - it was an opportunity to take one hour out of my week to reflect on who I was and what I wanted to be; to think about what it was to be a person of faith; and to give thanks and praise to a God who has created us, given us life, and who loves us with infinite Grace.

When I went off to college in Boston, I was most certainly “tested”. I wanted to go into the Air Force after I graduated, and took a fairly difficult course load to compete for training slots that were highly sought after. It wasn't long before I was struggling to balance being away from home, making new friends, and being buried beneath a work load that seemed impossible. I still remember going to the library until well after midnight many evenings, and when the load felt particularly heavy, stopping at the chapel on campus to sit and pray before going back to my dorm. To this day, there is no doubt in my mind that it was those moments in the pew of the chapel that got me through those stressful years. As I sat in silence, deep in thought and prayer, God was there - guiding me, giving me strength, and when needed... carrying me.

If it weren't for my parents bringing me to church as a young boy every week - giving me the chance to feel like it was a place I could be comfortable in and “belong” to - I would have never, as a young man, known that it could be a place I could walk into and receive those joyous gifts.

Now I am older (hopefully wiser), have four boys of my own, and have done my best to raise them in my faith. I do have some regrets, and looking back wish that maybe I did some things differently throughout the years. When I am home, I take them to church on Sunday because I want to impart on THEM that feeling of comfort and that sense of belonging to something greater than themselves (but please don't ever bring the subject up with them, we're still in that “sore” stage).

And I just have to share this - when my oldest went off to college for the first time a couple of years ago, he went through that same experience almost every college freshman does. On his own, HE went to seek the help that is so essential within the walls of his campus chapel; asking for, and being given, the solace, strength, and peace he so desperately needed, from his loving and all knowing God. His experiences, how he dealt with them, and how he shared with me has made our relationship blossom in ways that I never could have imagined.

I still have struggles - will always have doubts and regrets... and when I don't go to church, or pray very deeply, I notice that they usually seem quite insurmountable. But when I DO pray - when I ASK for help (which is not a very easy thing to do), I may not always get what I want, but ALWAYS get what I NEED!

Re-Igniting Our Faith

By David Cote



In the coming months, you will be hearing more about the Albany Diocese capital campaign titled: Re-Igniting Our Faith. The Bishop has developed this ambitious \$45 million dollar campaign to ensure that our parishes, programs and people are fully supported to meet the demands of the future.

This endeavor is a historical one that will allow us to care for our parishes at the local level and ensure the strategic vitality of our ministries and programs. It will become a thread that is woven into our rich history and one that allows us to further the mission of our local Church and build the Kingdom of God across the fourteen counties which make up our great Diocese of Albany.

The work of the Church must be steadfast. Our commitment to the faithful must be consistent with our long history of selfless service, tempered with an understanding of the future demands that we, as people of faith, must address. To insure the vitality of our Diocese well into the future, this campaign has been broken down into five strategic areas of investment:

Local Church: To prepare and nurture the next generation of Catholics, our parishes must be vibrant. As our parish communities grow and change they must be treasured and cared for. As such, each parish will receive 70 percent of funds raised during their individual parish campaign. The spiritual and capital needs that those funds will address will be determined by each local parish community. Through this campaign, parishes will not only address maintenance needs but mission needs. It is an opportunity to engage our brothers and sisters and bolster our faithful communities now and for future generations.

Vocations: A portion of the 30% of campaign funds raised will be used to provide the resources needed to undergo the extensive education and training that will allow seminarians to serve parishioners throughout the Diocese for many years to come.

Retired Clergy: 2017 marks the first year in which the number of retired clergy outnumber those in active ministry. As the number of retired clergy increases within our Diocese, so too does the need to care for them. Therefore, a portion of the 30% of campaign funds will be allocated to the Priest Retirement Fund.

Catholic Schooling Resources: Our schools are where students are taught to deepen compassion and express their spirituality. They are where we engage the next generations of Catholics. A portion of the 30% of campaign contributions will allow us to continue to provide access to innovative, flexible and traditional models of Catholic education, as well as, support for Beacon of Hope Scholarships that assist families of poor and modest means to afford a Catholic education, with the goal of doubling the current number of scholarships awarded.

Evangelization: A portion of the campaign funds will be used to re-invigorate our faith by providing evangelization support for parish leaders. Implementation will include, but is not limited to developing:

- Front-line ministries that support a welcoming atmosphere;
- Parish culture to more deeply build a relationship with Jesus;
- Opportunities to dynamically engage with youth, young adults, and young families; and,
- More meaningful prayer life.

With 70% of raised funds returning to Our Lady of Grace, this is a huge investment in the future of our parish community. You will be hearing more about the campaign in the coming weeks and we welcome you all to prayerfully consider your participation in the exciting program! For more information, please visit the Re-igniting Our Faith website at: www.re-ignitingourfaith.org



NEW YEAR'S NOISE-MAKERS

Ring in the New Year with these fun noisemakers!

What you need:

- Wooden craft sticks
- Metallic paint (gold and silver)
- Paint brushes
- Jingle bells (gold and silver)
- Hot glue gun
- Metallic ribbon
- Scissors
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Paint half the sticks gold and half silver. Let dry.
2. Glue three bells to each stick.
3. Cut a six-inch piece of ribbon for each stick. Tie a bow and glue it to the noisemaker. Celebrate!



PUZZLE

A NEW CREATION

The apostle Paul says everyone who believes in Jesus becomes brand new.

Directions: Cross out every third letter. Then write the remaining letters in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV.

THIEROEFQORXEIDFAMNYAON
 SEILSITNCVHRKISDTTBHEWNE
 QWCDREYATMIOC�HFASWCOR
 MEGTHWEOFLDXHASSGZONL
 ETJHEWNEQWIDSHREROE

_____!
 _____!
 _____!
 _____!
 _____!

_____! 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

**IS SPRING
 'Peeking' AROUND THE
 CORNER YET?**

Lent begins on

ASH WEDNESDAY: March 6

HOLY THURSDAY: April 18

EASTER: April 21, 2019

SPRING FESTIVAL: June 1, 2019

Laff-a-Little!!!

How do you make holy water?

Get regular water and boil the devil out of it!

Spiritual nudges, what are they and how do we see them?
Women's Day of Reflection 9-20-18

In September, 24 women from parish (with friends) gathered to hear how the Holy Spirit speaks to us. Our speaker, Claire Bradley, emphasized that there is frequently an interference that takes place when we plan to meet Jesus. She invited us to be aware of negative blocks that hit you when you plan or consider doing something in God's name. Following are notes (taken by Janet Troidle) during the presentation.



There are many types of nudges:

- nudges that you do and do not respond to
- nudges that crash you over the head (slow down, take care of yourself). When I don't listen, I get knocked down, so I will then listen.
- tragic nudges
- the internal voice (call so and so), or (someone's face comes into your mind). It is an urge out of the blue. This is how the Holy Spirit works within us.
- a request nudge (don't want to do it, but you listen to it)

Sometimes a nudge comes into your mind, a thought, a memory, a dream. It can open a door for you, a new approach to your life. E.g. I can make a wrong right. You allow yourself to be gently guided in life. It can build a dream, a thought that builds on itself to fruition. Nudges provide insight into yourself. (If you deny them, you may regret it).

How we might block nudges:

- fear
- pride
- self-centeredness
- plain laziness
- I don't listen
- lack of confidence, low self-esteem



Be aware of your personal roadblocks when the Holy Spirit is trying to guide you. Pray about them to the God who will help you open yourself up to (His call.) He says, "when you need someone to love you, here I AM!"

An exercise: Write down all the times you felt as though you blocked nudges! What do they tell you? This is not designed to make you feel poorly about yourself. Its purpose is to develop awareness of what you did or did not do in your past so you can let it go, and recommit to the nudges that arrive from this day forward.

Regrets have a tremendous effect upon us, and how we interact with each other. Be aware of how they erode the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Be aware of how the mind wishes to escape if you believe to distract us from everything good to wrong. **Meditation is the single most important avenue to responding to the nudges of the Holy Spirit** fair and compassionate with yourself. If you cannot let them go? Pray about it. Know thyself. (e.g. I was taught to be perfect.....). Make room for the NEW nudges, discard the old (unanswered) ones. Discernment about your co-dependent self helps as you respond to the nudge:

Unanswered nudges:

- are you willing to let go of the shame or guilt, and if not why not? Take the first step to freedom by making a decision to let them go. Have your own personal ritual by ripping up your list of unanswered nudges. Why? Because God is nothing, or God is everything!!

- do I respond because I want to look good (vs. doing it as gift from Holy Spirit)?
- my co-dependent self does something for others even when it harms me or my family. (Was I trying to feed my empty soul.)
- examine your motive when you respond to a nudge. The Holy Spirit won't give you a prod that does harm to you or your family.

Cont'd on pg. 6

-You can develop excuses for not doing things: I don't have time, or I'll look silly. There is a clarity that comes from the H.S., a clarity you will KNOW. Based on

Cont'd from pg. 5

-You can develop excuses for not doing things: I don't have time, or I'll look silly. There is a clarity that comes from the H.S., a clarity you will KNOW. Based on loving goodness, not self interest. Who is in charge: The Holy Spirit. He/she is within!

(Be aware that our daily distractions block it). Are you stuck trying to please others? People pleasing = codependency. We need to graduate out of it into freedom! If I'm acting out of goodness, I don't care if I get anything in return.

Our Five Senses, *helping us to respond!*

Use ears and listen to God's call, His nudges, the Holy Spirit's voice. We tend to listen but do not hear.

Use your eyes to really SEE another, the worry, the frown... that's the Spirit in me seeing you, so I may smile and ask "how are you today?" I don't want anything from you.

TOUCH, gentle touch means soooo much. Opening a door for someone makes such a difference: giving someone a chance to get in line in front of you: buying someone a cup of coffee: these opportunities mean you have said YES to God. The nudges are SIMPLE. Listen with your soul.

Watch out! There is always the other part of you that is in conflict with giving over to the Spirit. Your humanity, your ego, your pride, always climbs in when there is opportunity, so be aware of how it blocks the whispers of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer and discernment help to clarify the difficulty in responding to a nudge. We often KNOW the answer but we don't listen! When you reach out, people reach in.

Talking less and listening more is the path to peace.

Consider the value of bringing your mind and body together, embracing both as one. "Be still and know I am God". Looking at others with the eyes of God is a rewarding habit. As we interact with others, remember that no one needs criticism. It is not from God! Honor others with legitimate compliments. We all need to hear how we affect the world in a positive way.

In closing, consider that a painful situation in life can be enlightening. As you receive strength and encouragement from others, you realize you are stronger than you think! Humility is acknowledging our gifts and being grateful for them. When you have gratitude for your gifts, it naturally follows that in Christ, you wish to use them to His honor.

Nurse's Corner

by Nancy Michela, RN



Brain Health

Aging well depends upon your genes, environment and lifestyle. To keep your brain healthy, you can do the following:

Take care of your health- Monitor and treat your blood pressure, diabetes, take medications as prescribed.

Eat healthy foods (balanced diet)- Eat fruits & vegetables; whole grains; lean meats, poultry and fish; adequate fluids and watch portion size.

Be active - Exercise! Walking is the best start. 30 minutes a day can be divided into 10 minutes morning, afternoon and evening.

Learn new things- Accomplish stimulating brain exercises: puzzles, math problems; volunteer. Do everyday tasks with opposite hand/foot.

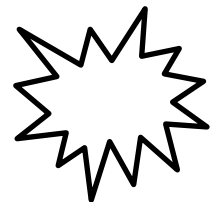
Connect with others- People with social support (friends and neighbors) and those who perform meaningful activities are happier and healthier. Join social organizations.

Start small but start today: walk 10 minutes, try the crossword puzzle in the newspaper and/or visit your neighbor. Check with your health care provider for examination.

Contact your local Office on Aging. Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov/aging

WELCOME!

To our New Parishioners



Mike and Theresa Dell'anno

"We are empty nesters who have recently moved to Ballston Lake from Clifton Park where we raised our three sons. We attended Mass at OLG after we moved in and were so impressed with the community and warm welcome we received, we knew we wanted to be a part of OLG."

Denise Pelletier-Hoblock

Denise and her daughter, Claire, come from a Methodist background. "Claire is in the process of converting to Catholicism. She is very excited to be receiving her First Eucharist at OLG this Easter."

SAVE THE DATE

OLG Spring Festival

JUNE 1, 2019

Join OLG for our annual Spring Festival. Every year, this event has grown in size and popularity! Our mission is to tell the outside community that OLG is a welcoming place to be on this day!

Crafters/Vendors – Food – Kid’s Activities – Demos – and MUCH more!

****WE NEED YOUR HELP****

Your ideas, connections, any time or talent you can offer to enhance this day!

**This event takes a great deal of planning. If you can be a part of this exciting OLG happening , please contact David Cote at:
dcote5@nycap.rr.com**



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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:
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<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:

<http://www.olgchurchbl.org>