

Spirit & Life

"Do This in Memory of Me"

May/June 2012

From the Desk of the Pastor

A Dream Comes True! New Catholic Store at St. Gregory's

Ever since joining our parish, I have envisioned the incredible blessing that it would be to have a Catholic store on our premises. Thanks to the generosity of many parishioners and the dedication of our staff and many volunteers, I am thrilled that this dream has finally come to fruition! This new addition to our property and parish community will be a great asset in spreading the word about our Catholic faith by having Catholic devotional materials available for parishioners and those in the northtowns area. Not only will it offer us the convenience of purchasing religious items, but it will also serve an evangelizing role in our broader community by having Catholic books, bibles and religious articles available as we strive to draw others closer to their faith.

Long-time parishioner Kathy Delaney will serve as store manager and is excited about the number of parishioners who have volunteered. Kathy explains that it is not just a "store" but a true ministry to parishioners and the community. In addition to Bibles, the store will carry children's items, patron saint cards, Catholic prayer cards, crucifixes, rosaries and Catholic books. Many of these items are not available in a typical non-Catholic Christian store; they will provide excellent gifts for religious occasions and Sacramental celebrations.

Adjacent to the store will be a café for meetings, speakers and other functions. The store and the café are expected to draw others in the community to visit our parish. It will be a place where people can feel comfortable browsing, talking and finding resources for their families' faith journeys. Fr. Francis will be available regularly to bless purchased items. A prayer intention book will also be available. Please see page two for store hours and page four for more information about our café.

For more information or to volunteer at the Catholic Store, please contact Kathy Delaney at 688-5678, ext. 320, or email kathydelaney@stgregs.org.



Welcome to our Catholic Faith! With great joy we welcomed our new Catechumens through the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. We congratulate and welcome the new members of our Catholic family (front row, from left to right): Jennifer Makin, Jaime Andrews, Stephanie Rhodes, Kathleen Stone, Charles Philleo, (back row) Carey Rehrauer and Randy Reed. Not pictured: Brittany Phillips.



ST. GREG'S HOSTS 17TH ANNUAL GREAT RACE - JUNE 15

Join us for the St. Gregory the Great Parish 17th annual Great Race on Friday, June 15. The party starts at 6:00 pm and the race gun is at 7:00 pm. All registrants will receive a free t-shirt and admission to the fabulous post-race party. The Great Race is a sanctioned 5K run and is one of the "Western New York Fabulous 5 Racing Series," which also includes the Ronald McDonald House Run, Loughran's Run, Lebro's Run, and the Moonlight Run. It is also one of the 12 major events on the local racing calendar which comprise the Buffalo News Runner of the Year Race Series.

The pre-race registration fee for runners is \$22 and \$27 on the day of the race. The One-Mile Fun Walk pre-registration fee is \$15 and \$20 on race day. On-line registration and payment will be available at the Parish website, www.stgregs.org. This Parish tradition marks the start of summer and is one of the most popular events in our community.



Taking the stage in the church parking lot for the post-race party will be Nik and The Nice Guys, a high-energy rock 'n' roll band whose credits include performances at past Super Bowls, numerous shows at past Winter and Summer Olympics, and corporate-sponsored events across the U.S. and Canada.

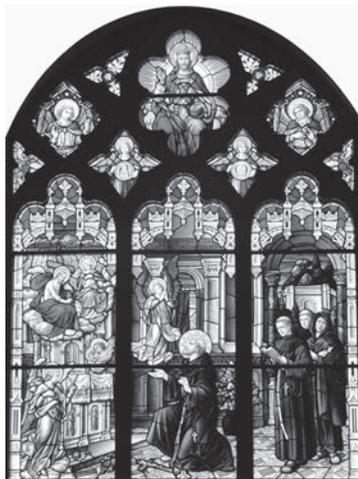
There is a \$10 admission fee for partygoers age 21 and over who do not participate in the race. The fee includes beer, wine, soda and coffee. There will be plenty of delicious food available for a nominal fee.

A variety of free activities will be available for children of all ages, including a rock-climbing wall, moonwalks and a putting green! Come and join us on June 15 and see what makes the Great Race GREAT!

Volunteers are needed! We have many opportunities including site set-up, race course set-up, registration and other race day activities. For information about volunteer opportunities, please call Elise Savattieri 626-0106.

Portiuncula: The Little Portion Church History in Stained Glass

Curious about the history and details of our beautiful "new" stained glass window? Fr. James McCurry, OFM, Minister Provincial of St. Anthony of Padua Province (Fr. Frances' Province), will be coming to explain all of the special meanings artistically displayed in glass. On Monday, May 7, at 7:00 pm in the Church, Father James will teach us about the giving of the Portiuncula Indulgence as it is portrayed in the window. Come join us as we uncover the "mystery saints" and other symbolism in this beautiful addition to our church!



Now Open! St. Gregory the Great Catholic Store

Looking for a First Communion gift? Newlyweds setting up house and wanting some beautiful artwork to inspire? In need of a truly good read? Come check out our new Catholic Store in the Ministry Center! We are offering everything from books, Bibles, statues, DVDs, CDs, crucifixes, jewelry and lots more. Stop in; you'll be surprised by the wide selection and you'll be supporting St. Gregory's as you shop!

Store Hours:

Monday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm and 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Thursday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Friday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Saturday	9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Sunday	9:00 am - 2:00 pm



THANK YOU, FR. PAUL!

Though your ministry is moving you away from us, you will never be far from our hearts or our prayers. We are so blessed and grateful to have had these years to share in your love of God. May He bless you and may the Blessed Mother wrap you tightly in her mantle. Jesus loves you and so do we. You will be greatly missed!

Please keep an eye on the Bulletin for information on how to contact Fr. Paul and wish him well in his next ministry assignment.



Welcome, Jake Szoeki, to St. Greg's Music Ministry!

Jake Szoeki came to the St. Gregory the Great community from his hometown of Houston. At an early age he began singing in children's choir, under his mother's direction. During his late teen years, Jake felt an unyielding calling to pursue music in a spiritual manner.



The first song he learned to play on the piano was "Word of God Speak" by Mercy Me. After developing the ability to accompany his voice, he became more involved with a worship team and led music at over 15 retreats. Jake is proudest any time the congregation takes over the song!

Spirit & Life recently asked Jake for a few words:

First of all, I want to thank the community of St. Gregory the Great parish for welcoming me with open arms. It has been a wonderful month, and I'm very excited about what the future holds. I thank God every day for the opportunity that He has given to me.

How will you be adding to St. Gregory's music ministry?

I will be leading contemporary music at St. Greg's. I've worked with many different types of bands and will be organizing music teams to lead worship for many

different ministries throughout the parish.

How do you see music as ministry?

Music is a ministry in that it aids in the constant longing for closeness to our God.

How does music bring us closer to God?

My only goal in coming to Buffalo is to use the gifts God gave me to help bring His people closer to Him. Music can elevate our soul and energize us all to spread the Gospel to everyone we meet through our actions as well as our words.

Tell us about your favorite kinds of worship music/musicians.

There's no way for me to keep this list short, but if I had to choose favorites, they would be Matt Maher, Kari Jobe and Starfield. Matt is an amazing songwriter; Kari has this effortless voice that is so soothing, and Starfield has been one of my favorite bands since I first felt the call to lead contemporary worship.

Have you ever lived through a Northern winter?

No. But I've lived through a bunch of Houston summers! I'm looking forward to something new. I think.

Thank you, Jake, for coming to St. Gregory's to share your talents with us and to help us give praise to God!



Summer Mission

Looking to be revitalized and refreshed in your faith this summer? We invite you to join us for our seven-night Mission beginning Sunday, July 22. Mission consists of seven nights of inspiring talks and liturgies and an opportunity for fellowship. The first evening begins at 6:00 pm, weeknights begin at 7:00 pm and Saturday will begin at 3:30 pm, going to about 10:00 pm each

evening.

Each night builds on the preceding, so we ask that you commit to attend all seven nights. Reservations are necessary and space is limited. To reserve a spot at this summer's Mission, call Jo Pierino at St. Gregory's Parish Office at 688-5678. For more information call Deacon John or Laraine at 689-2924.



COMING SOON: ST. GREGORY'S CAFÉ!

Join us for coffee and conversation – with old friends or if you are looking to make new friends – in our new café. Once open, the hours will be:

Monday	7:30 am - 2:00 pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	7:30 am - 2:00 pm and 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Thursday	7:30 am - 2:00 pm
Friday	7:30 am - 2:00 pm
Saturday	8:30 am - 2:00 pm
Sunday	8:30 am - 2:00 pm



There will be some evening hours that will be announced as well as evenings with specific themes and ministries in mind. Items that will be served include: coffee, decaf, tea, cappuccino, water, soda, juice, yogurt, bagels, muffins, pastries, soup and some type of panini or sandwich, cookies and desserts.



As you make your summer plans...

...be sure to consider many of the events and ministries that we are offering here at St. Gregory's: College Mission Trip (to Alabama, working on tornado recovery and rebuilding): May 26 - June 2

SPLASH (High School Students): June 25 - 29

College Faith Community: Weekly meetings and events throughout the summer

Catholics in Action (High School service opportunities around the Diocese, lodging at the Gonzaga Youth Center): July 1 - 3

Vacation Bible School (Ages 3 1/2 - Grade 5): July 9 - 13

Junior High Adventure Week (those entering Grades 6-8, a week of fun, learning & community): July 16 - 20, 12 noon to 3:00 pm each day

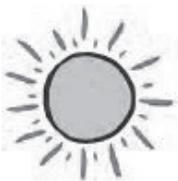
Covecrest in Tiger, GA (High School Students, join hundreds of teens from around the Nation in a week of outdoor adventure fun, and growing in faith): July 22 - 29

Summer Mission Retreat (Adult/Young Adult): July 22 - 28

Kingdom Bound (High School and College Students, camp at Darien Lake for four nights, enjoy the park along with hundreds of bands and speakers all week): August 5 - 9

Disciple Camp (Grades 6-8): August 6 - 10

Mass in the Grass (Youth/Young Adult - for the whole family): Mid-August





14th Annual Great Dinner Auction - Saturday, October 20



Pictured from left to right: Lori Leone, Ellen Gruttadauria, Annette Landi, Kristin Vaccaro

Save the date and join us at our new destination...Samuel's Grande Manor...for the 14th Annual Great Dinner Auction on Saturday, October 20. This year's theme is "Dinner at Tiffany's." Chairwomen Ellen Gruttadauria, Annette Landi, Lori Leone and Kristin Vaccaro have begun plans for the grand event. Initial meetings and early planning have begun and committees are being formed for the largest parish fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the entire parish family. Be part of making it a great success! If you would like to help or get involved, please contact the Auction Office at dinnerauction@gmail.com or 688-5678, ext. 337.

Thoughts from our young students on First Communion and Penance

By Joan Rischmiller

Each spring our young students prepare and receive the sacraments of First Penance and First Communion. We have asked the Seventh-graders in our Family Faith Formation program to write prayers to our current First Communion students. Here are a few excerpts from their prayers:

- "Dear First Holy Communion students, The world you are about to enter is amazing. You may think it just means a "snack" at church, but it's more than that. You now are able to participate in a treasured event that will help you grow further in your faith. It has been four years since my First Communion, but I still am happy to receive Communion and by the time I'm grown up, I can't imagine how close our faiths will be. Best of luck on your big day!"
- "My thoughts are with you on your special day. God loves you and your family. God is always in

your heart."

- "Have a great First Communion! Don't be afraid, God will be with you. I will be thinking of you on your special day."

Thoughts on Reconciliation...After one of our penance services, one of our current third-graders shared these thoughts with his catechist, Mrs. Chris Schober:

"After penance, I felt so good that all of the sins I once had were removed. I didn't have to worry about them anymore. I had that feeling like God had come and erased or wiped away all the sins from my soul. It's a really good feeling....Maybe if others would try it, they would feel the same. For those who think it's not so pleasant, you should know that the priest will not get angry with you. Trust me; it's a good thing to try."

- Jackson Kustell, Grade 3 Family Faith Formation

2011 - 2012 Sacraments: Facts & Figures

177 children from our parish made their First Penance in March

183 children will make their First Communion on May 12

152 High School Students will make their Confirmation in May

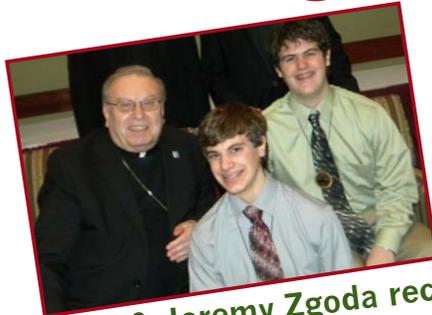
Thank you to all our Catechists for their time and dedication!



Fr. Joe's Distinguished Pastor Award Reception in Boston



Grade 5 Career Day



Andrew & Jeremy Zgoda recieved the Altar Server of the Year Award



Marriage Preparation



Easter Celebrations



SAVE THE DATE!

**National Speaker Johnnette Benkovic
September 8, 2012**

Beginning with 8:00 am Mass in the Church and continuing until 3:00 pm in the Ministry Center

To learn about Johnnette and her ministry check out www.womenofgrace.com



Church History - A Tale of Grace

By Donna Callaghan

Catholics believe that history is not a series of events, rather, it is the story of God working in the world through the Church and His people. In a small upstairs room amid 12 disciples and Mary, the Holy Spirit appeared and the Church began – Pentecost. What took place in that tiny room laid the foundation for our faith as we know it today.

Two thousand years later, with the divine help of the Holy Spirit and God's Grace, the Church has survived. The road to survival has been rocky, uneven and at times unclear. The intentions of those few people at Pentecost were noble. However, as the years passed, carrying out those intentions became dangerous and many lives were lost for the cause.

Many times the Church has been threatened, only to have the grace of God sustain her. The atrocities suffered by Christians for their beliefs are too gruesome to mention.

The schism, or break, establishing the Eastern and Western forms of the church permanently hurt the unity of the faith. Centuries of crusades to regain the Holy Land caused needless bloodshed. The Protestant Reformation left the world with 33,000 different sects of Christianity! And yet the Catholic Church prevails.

Today's society of modernism, affluence and greed is posing a new and unique challenge to the Church. Washington lawmakers are trying to interfere with what Catholics believe. Let us pray that the same Holy Spirit that permeated that upper room at Pentecost will prevail today as we struggle with the issues at hand. It is our hope that the Church continue to flourish with her "Tale of Grace."

DEFEND OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY!

THE HHS MANDATE FOR CONTRACEPTION/STERILIZATION COVERAGE - AN ATTACK ON THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE

By Mary Toerne

On January 20, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reaffirmed a rule forcing virtually all private health care plans to cover sterilization, abortifacients and contraception. These are listed among "preventive services for women" that all health plans will have to cover without co-pays or other cost-sharing – regardless of whether the insurer, the employer or other plan sponsor, or even the woman herself, objects to such coverage. An exemption provided for "religious employers" was so narrow that it failed to cover the vast majority of faith-based organizations – including Catholic hospitals, universities and charities – that help millions every year.

Then, on February 10, the Obama administration made this rule final "without change" and delayed enforcement for a year against religious non-profits that were still not exempted (our charities, hospitals and colleges). They promised to develop more regulations to "accommodate" them by the end of that additional year. But that promised "accommodation" still forces them to pay for "services" that violate their religious convictions. In this regard, the president invited bishops to "work out the wrinkles."

"We have accepted that invitation," wrote Cardinal Dolan (Archbishop of New York), on March 2, 2012, to fellow bishops. "Brothers, we know so very well that religious freedom is our heritage, our legacy and our firm

belief, both as loyal Catholics and Americans. There have been many threats to religious freedom over the decades and years, but these often came from without. This one sadly comes from within. As our ancestors did with previous threats, we will tirelessly defend the timeless and enduring truth of religious freedom."

We urgently need legislation to correct the mandate's threats to religious liberty and conscience rights. The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act has been introduced in Congress (H.R. 1179/S. 1467) to ensure that those who participate in the market for health insurance "retain the right to provide, purchase or enroll in health coverage that is consistent with their religious beliefs and moral convictions."

Get Informed & Take Action Now!

Write to Congress...urging support for the **Respect for Rights of Conscience Act** (H.R. 1179, S. 1467)

There is lots of confusion about what the HHS edict involves. For a quick summary, see a 2-page **FAQ** called **The HHS Mandate for Contraception/Sterilization Coverage: An Attack on Rights of Conscience**, which can be found at: <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/conscience-protection/upload/preventiveqanda2012-2.pdf>.

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www.stgregs.org

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Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

Mark Your Calendar For These Upcoming Events:

May

- 6 - Parish May Crowning at 9:30 am Mass
- 7 - School May Crowning
- 7 - Presentation on Stained Glass Window
- 8, 9 - Confirmation
- 12 - First Communion
- 12, 13 - Respect Life Collection for St. Gianna's House
- 14 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 18 - School Father/Daughter Dance
- 19, 20 - FFF Teacher Recruitment Weekend
- 19, 20 - Ladies of Charity Household Goods Collection
- 23 - Health Care Proxy Presentation
- 31 - School Band Concert

June

- 1 - School Walk-a-Thon
- 3 - Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast
- 11 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 14 - Kindergarten Graduation
- 15 - Great Race
- 16 - Courageous Movie Showing
- 19 - American Red Cross Blood Drive/Catholic Health Screenings
- 20 - 8th Grade Graduation

July

- 1-3 - Youth Ministry Service - Catholics In Action
- 11 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 9-13 - Vacation Bible School
- 13 - Wine Tasting Party

Spirit & Life Staff: Elizabeth Astridge, Trish Beagle, Suellen Brewster, Mrene Corra, Donna Callaghan, Dawn Curazatto, Fr. Joseph Gatto, Bill Grunert, Jacqueline Hanley, Felix Labaki, Carla Mangone, Mike Pesarchick, Camille Pontrello, Rick Reinhart, Joan Rischmiller, Mary Toerne and Eileen Warner. Published bi-monthly by St. Gregory the Great Parish. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Parish Office at 688-5678 or write the *Spirit & Life* Newsletter c/o St. Gregory the Great Church, 200 St. Gregory Ct., Williamsville, NY 14221. We are grateful to Liturgical Publications, whose generosity and benevolence allow us to provide *Spirit & Life* at minimal cost to our parishioners.