

SPIRIT AND LIFE

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH

Winter 2021

“No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town”

Our parishioners Jerry and Mary Jo Sheldon are a couple with a mission: they want to help provide as many beds as possible to the children of Buffalo who need them. The Sheldons and close friends, Rick and Betsy DiVita, lead the Buffalo chapter of “Sleep in Heavenly Peace,” or SHP. SHP is a non-profit organization based in Twin Falls, Idaho, with over 240 local chapters around the country. The Sheldons and DiVitas formed the Buffalo Chapter in May 2019 after attending the required training course in Idaho.

Research has shown that as many as 10,000 children in Buffalo lack proper sleeping conditions. Most people are not aware this problem even exists. Giving a child their own bed, their own space, provides so many benefits. Studies have shown that kids who regularly get an adequate amount of sleep have improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, and overall mental and physical health.

SHP beds are built through generous donations from the community. (It costs roughly \$200 to build a bed, equip it with linens, and deliver it.) All beds are hand-made and assembled by all volunteers.

Jerry and Mary Jo Sheldon

Parishioners and Leaders of
the Buffalo Chapter of SHP.



Continued ...“No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town”



SHP Buffalo started building beds in June and made their first delivery in August. “To date, we have delivered and set up over 150 beds”, Jerry told *Spirit and Life*. We have another 75 beds in our warehouse, all of which are slated for delivery. The waiting list of applicants is over 120 kids.

“The Western New York Community has embraced SHP and its mission. When we formed our chapter, we knew we could rely on family and friends. What has been most amazing to us is the vast number of people who came to help us that were neither friend nor family. We now have over 50 dedicated volunteers.

“Many stores and business have really stepped up to support SHP. We have been blessed by the support of the Transit Road location of Lowes. The owners of Xtreme Mattress heard about SHP Buffalo and donated 100 mattresses to us! Our location at Eastern Hills Mall has worked out great for our workshop.

“I was fortunate in having grown up in a family where we were always looking for ways to assist those who were in need,” he explains. “I am grateful that in my retirement, I have been able to be a community volunteer helping those in need through the great organizations I have been part of (SHP, FeedMore WNY, Habitat for Humanity, and the Jolly Boys of Williamsville).”



The Sheldons have been parishioners here since 1985. Mary Jo’s parents, Walt and Mary Ann Weber, are founding members of St. Greg’s. The Sheldons were involved when their three children were attending our school, holding leadership positions in the Home School Association and the School Board. For many years, Jerry was the chair of the St. Greg’s 5K race and Mary Jo continues to be part of the Adoration team and Collection Counters. Giving generously of their time and talent, in a spirit of faithful stewardship, is nothing new to them. They were named to the “St. Gregory the Great Twelve” several years ago.

Donations can be sent to SHP Buffalo, 60 Bryant Woods South, Amherst NY 14228. Please reach out to Jerry at jerrysheldon@shpbeds.org or 570-3449 for more information.



Theme for January 2021: It's About Time

"Some people spend time. God's people invest time." This is the theme of our parish's Stewardship of Time campaign set for the month of January. Stewardship is the recognition that God has given us countless gifts, and asks us to be generous in giving some of those gifts back to Him. Time is the first of His many gifts to us. Time can be not just something that we spend; it can be something we invest. Time is like money in that sense. Sometimes we just spend money, but sometimes we invest our money. We invest our money when we use it with the expectation that there will be some future benefit. We invest our time when we use it with the expectation of a future benefit. The more time we spend in prayer, the stronger our personal relationship with our Father and our Brother Jesus.

We are asking parishioners to make a decision to invest some time in improving their relationship with God, and to fill out a commitment form. You can use the form below or go online to www.stgregs.org/its-about-time/.



TIME COMMITMENT FORM

In gratitude to God for His many gifts to deepen my relationship with Him. I plan to...

_____ Spend _____ minutes each day in prayer

_____ Read the New Testament _____ minutes each week

_____ Take part in FIAT, the monthly Eucharistic Conference

_____ Attend the parish Lenten Retreat (Sunday, March 7 through Tuesday, March 9)

_____ Be a part of the 8-night Mission this Summer (Date in July TBD)

_____ Pray the Rosary each day

_____ Join a new ministry at St. Gregory the Great Parish

_____ Pray the Divine Mercy chaplet each day

_____ Other _____

Signature (optional) _____

Keep this copy for your bulletin board or refrigerator.



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Signature (optional) _____

Return this copy to the Parish Office.

Prayer Shawl Ministry has Benefitted Thousands

St. Gregory parish has provided close to 4,000 prayer shawls, thus far, to people experiencing difficult times. “The Prayer Shawl Ministry began some fifteen years ago with Sr. Maureen Fanning, and was an offshoot of her Bereavement Committee,” explains Chris Urbanski, who is the current leader. “It began with three or four widows, and gradually expanded over the years. Today there are about twenty parishioners taking part.”

The prayer shawl is a physical reminder for the recipient that they are in the regular prayers of our parish community in their time of need. The recipient could be someone in some crisis, someone who is chronically ill, or simply someone who feels the need for prayer support for any reason.

“We meet every week on Wednesday mornings from 10:00 am until noon, in the Ministry Center,” Chris says, “but you don’t need to attend these meetings. To be a provider, you need to know how to crochet, or knit, and be able to dedicate some time to this project.” Chris can be reached at 688 2495. To request a shawl for yourself or a loved one, you can enter the vestibule doors located near Gathering Room 1. The free shawls are now located in this vestibule. You can also call the Parish Office at 688-5678.



“It began with three or four widows, and gradually expanded...”

Stay Connected to Your Parish!

Earlier this year we completed a Parish-wide census. We updated over 1200 parishioner records. We have over 5000 families in our Parish Community. If you have moved, locally or out of the area, or if you are no longer a parishioner at St. Gregory the Great, please email bulletin@stgregs.org with your updated contact information. We are working diligently to update our records so our mailed communications, emails, and phone system are updated properly. With the all the changes in WNY related to Covid, it is more important that ever to **STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR PARISH!**

Receive spiritual quotes, learn about upcoming events, closings, cancellations and updates within the Parish, School, Family Faith Formation and Youth Ministry:

◇ Download the St. Gregory the Great Parish Mobile App.

Iphone users text: *ParishApp1* to 555888, Andriod users text: *ParishApp2* to 555888, follow prompts.

◇ Follow us on Social Media: @StGregsBuffalo, @stgregsthegreat, @stgregsyouth, @stgregsyounadults

◇ Subscribe to our YouTube Channel: @stgregswilliamsville





SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021
AUCTIONS - HOME VIDEOS - AWARDS - AND MUCH MORE!

*Join us for a fun-filled evening of fundraising,
Funniest Videos of St. Greg's Awards and more ...*

WHAT IS A VIRTUAL EVENT?

A virtual gala is where we can all come together on the internet from our own homes to help celebrate St. Greg's.

DINNERS, SPONSORS AND MORE ...

We can't gather in large groups, but you can put together small parties with sponsored gourmet dinners and pizza parties in your home and enjoy our award show and fundraising to benefit St. Greg's.



Giancarolo's
WEDDING, BIRTHDAY & PRIVATE EVENTS



OUTLAW
POPCORN

ST. GREG'S FUNNIEST VIDEOS

Kids ages 3-14 of the Parish and School community can submit videos for our Funniest Videos contest. Categories will be: best school spirit, best use of a pet, best use of family, best teacher/staff, best use of a priest, best sports and best dance.

*Watch our Parish and School websites in
January for more information.*

Father Baker Comes to St. Gregory's

Father David Baker is the new Diocesan Director of Vocations. He will be residing at St. Gregory's and helping with Masses when he can. He spoke recently with *Spirit and Life*.



Where did you grow up?

My sister Carolyn and I were raised in Clarence, in Our Lady of Peace Parish, where our pastor was Msgr. Leo Hammerl. I had a good number of relatives whose faith and devotion made a positive impression on me. I attended Ledgeview Elementary School and Clarence High School, where I was a member of the Class of 1989. Then I pursued a degree in mechanical engineering at Alfred and Utica. I worked for Cooper Turbocompressor Corporation in Cheektowaga, and then at the University of Buffalo in the Engineering Research Department.

What led you to the priesthood?

The jobs I had were good, but I had a desire they were not fulfilling. I wasn't helping people. I wanted to have a positive impact on the world. I was praying about this over a period of time. Gradually this message came to me: If you want to help people, if you want to change the world, be a priest.

At the same time, I got involved in a young-adult ministry program called QUEST. It was a combined program by a number of Northtown parishes. It involved about 150 young people in their twenties. I found my involvement more fulfilling than the work I was doing on the job.

One day I stopped in for Mass at Our Lady of Peace and the guest celebrant was Father Rob Wozniak, who was the Diocesan Director of Vocations. It was one of those little "coincidences" that fit into God's plan. We had a chat after Mass, and I began to take part in a "Response" group, which is for people considering the priesthood. I also went to see my uncle, Father Joe Janiszski, who is a Third Order Regular Franciscan in Pennsylvania.

In the fall of 2000, I went to Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg, where I spent two years in a pre-theology program. I began at Christ the King Seminary in 2002 and was ordained on May 19, 2007.

What assignments have you had?

First I spent a couple of years at Queen of Heaven in West Seneca. Then Bishop Kmiec decided to send Father Baker to Father Baker's! So I spent several years at Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna, providing material for many a joke. Then I moved on to St. Amelia's, where Msgr. Maloney was pastor. In January 2016 I became pastor of St. Theresa's Parish in Akron.

"If you want to help people, if you want to change the world, be a priest."

What are some of your goals in your new job?

First and foremost, we need to pray. Jesus said, "Ask the Master of the harvest to send out workers." All of us need to pray for the priests we need. I also want to increase the Church's presence in the digital world. Jesus went to where the people were. Young people today are on Instagram. The message of the Church, and the call to become priests and religious, should be there too. I hope to promote a culture of Vocation Awareness throughout the Diocese.

The Question Box **Distractions in Prayer**

Dear Father: Can you help me deal with distractions in prayer? It seems the older I get, the more trouble I have keeping my mind focused when I pray. My mind keeps wandering in a thousand directions. Thanks. - Distracted

Dear Distracted: The first gift we return to God when we pray is the gift of **time**. And sometimes that is the only gift we give Him. Yes, of course, we want to also give Him our intentions, our thought, our feelings, etc. But sometimes our thoughts and intentions and feelings don't go where we want them to go. But we can always give the gift of time. I would encourage you to be faithful in prayer, dedicating a given period of time to God on a daily basis.

Chose a **place** for your daily prayer that is less likely to be distracting. It should be a comfortable spot, where you can have at hand your Bible, your Rosary, perhaps a candle, etc. Some find it helpful to use religious pictures or statues as a way of focusing attention; others find praying aloud a useful practice. And remember that God is pleased with our prayer, even when it is not perfect.

FAITH ~ ACADEMICS ~ STRUCTURE ~ COMMUNITY

St. Gregory the Great School is committed to four distinct pillars which are the foundation for all that we do. These pillars are: faith, academics, structure and community. As we educate our students during these unprecedented times, we hold steadfast to these pillars. Take a look at how we are doing this:

Faith - A Celebration of All Saints took place on our campus from November 2 through 6. On "Election Day" our students voted for their favorite saint, and the schoolwide favorite was St. Francis of Assisi. Students watched videos on a variety of saints and the process to sainthood. Our week culminated with "Dress Like a Saint Day."

Academics - St. Gregory the Great continues to provide a premier education to the WNY community, both on and off campus. We are extremely proud of the Family-led Distance Learning Plan that several families have chosen for themselves during this time. We are also so thankful for the 53 days we've shared together in the building. Our students, while all currently remote, continue to shine. Of course, we cannot mention academics without mentioning our incredible faculty. They've adapted to teaching in a pandemic in so many thoughtful and creative ways. Their commitment to providing a rigorous academic program is remarkable.

Structure - Both our remote learning plan and our in-person academic program have provided consistency in academics, but also in structure. Our teachers have created remote learning schedules that allow for rigor and mimic in-person learning. In addition, students are also expected to be in gym uniforms while participating in online learning.

Community - The SGS HSA hosted a fantastic Covid-safe "Trunk or Treat" and they continue to host Covid-compatible fundraisers to support the mission of our school. Yet more importantly, we have the greater faith community that includes each of you, the parishioners of St. Greg's. Through your prayer and support our school community has been lifted up during these difficult times. St. Gregory the Great School could not be more grateful for your love and support. Thank you!



PLEASE DELIVER BY DECEMBER 30

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

200 St. Gregory Court
Williamsville, NY 14221
716-688-5678

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Winter 2021

HOLY DAY MASS SCHEDULE

New Year's Eve: Thursday, December 31 - Daily Mass Schedule as normal - 7:00 am., 8:00 am and noon Mass. **Vigil Mass at 5:30 pm only.**

New Year's Day: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God—Friday, January 1: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, and noon Mass.

Share-a-prayer

Thomas More was an English lawyer, author, statesman, and humanist. He served King Henry VIII as Lord High Chancellor. He opposed the King's separation from the Catholic Church, refusing to acknowledge him as head of the Church of England and the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He was convicted of treason and wrote this prayer shortly before his execution in 1535. Share your favorite prayer with our readers, email it to tfm210@hotmail.com with "Prayer" in the title line, or mail it to the Parish Office.



Prayer for Good Humor

by St. Thomas More

Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it. Give me a simple soul that knows how to treasure all that is good, and that doesn't frighten at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place. Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumblings, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called 'I'.

Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke, to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.

~Amen



St. Gregory the Great
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH