

SPIRIT AND LIFE

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH

Fall 2021

“Mercy Reigns” at Middle School Retreat

You might not expect a group of middle school students to actually enjoy spending a weekend on the theme “Mercy Reigns,” but that’s what happened recently at St. Greg’s. Izzy Glamuzina, a Seventh Grader, said “Mercy Reigns was so much fun. We not only grew stronger in our own Faith, but we grew stronger in our Faith as a whole group. We learned about Jesus with our friends in a fun way.” Her brother Max, a Sixth Grader, was equally enthusiastic. “I thought it was an amazing retreat,” he said. “I really like connecting with the Core Team and

making new friends.” The 29 participants gathered on a Friday evening for four hours, then came back to spend all day Saturday, and finished on Sunday afternoon.



Max and Izzy Glamuzina love their T-shirts

The Retreat Director was Nicole Janacek, our Associate Director of Youth Ministry. “The retreat centered on God’s mercy,” she told *Spirit and Life*. “We explored how we have a merciful and loving God who is always chasing after us. We looked at Jesus who demonstrated the ultimate sign of merciful love when He sacrificed His own life on the cross.”

The weekend included talks, praise and worship, non-stop gagaball (which is a variant of dodgeball), small group discussion, Eucharistic Adora-

Eucharistic Adoration with Father Paul

tion, Reconciliation, and plenty of good food. “We generally have a weekend retreat at the close of the school year,” Nicole explains, “but last year we did not, because of the pandemic.” Nora Weil, whose son Jacob was a participant, noted that after a tough year and a half, it was wonderful that the

kids could have an in-person retreat. She added that “When we picked up our kids at the conclusion of the retreat, we could tell right away that they enjoyed it, and that there was a real sense of bonding.” For Jacob, the celebration of Reconciliation was a highlight. “Mercy Reigns: that’s what Confession is all about,” he said.



Michael Cygan leads praise and worship



"Gagaball", a variant of dodgeball is a big hit

Ministry Spotlight

Volunteer Sought for Home Visits

We all take our baptismal call seriously to care for the sick, and many of us have had the great privilege to work with the homebound. We remember that the homebound are still an integral part of our parish and are in communion with us, even though they are not physically present at the Eucharist.

Parishioners of St. Gregory the Great Parish who may be homebound because of age, surgery or other debilitating conditions, and are unable to come to Church to receive the Sacraments, are helped by the Homebound Ministry.



Reasons for the visits range from providing some spiritual support by distributing the Eucharist, reading various Scripture passages, information in regards to parish events, general conversation and social support.

The goal is to offer parishioners an encounter with other parishioners to experience God's goodness through the kindness of others.

Formal training is provided to all volunteers. Besides the training, an informal interview with Sister Shawn Czyzycki, program director, will be scheduled to ensure an understanding of what is entailed in each homebound visit.

If anyone is interested in this ministry, or needs a homebound, visit please contact Sister Shawn at 688-5678.

"St. Gregory Twelve" Nominations

Each year we recognize and express our appreciation of twelve individuals, couples or families who have contributed to our Parish life and ministries. If you know of parishioners whose voluntary efforts have enhanced our parish community, please nominate them for this award, which will be acknowledged at the 11:00 am Mass on Sunday, October 24. We look forward to having the opportunity to honor many in our Parish who unselfishly donate their time and abilities to fulfill our parish mission.

NOMINATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE PARISH OFFICE, DUE TO JO PIERINO BY SEPTEMBER 30.

Workshop Will Help People Discover and Use Their Gifts and Talents

Do you ever feel a nudge to serve more in the church or in the community? Do you feel you want to do something that would make your heart sing and help others as well? When you hear Our Lord speak, in Luke 10:2, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,” do you feel a prompting to do something for the Lord?

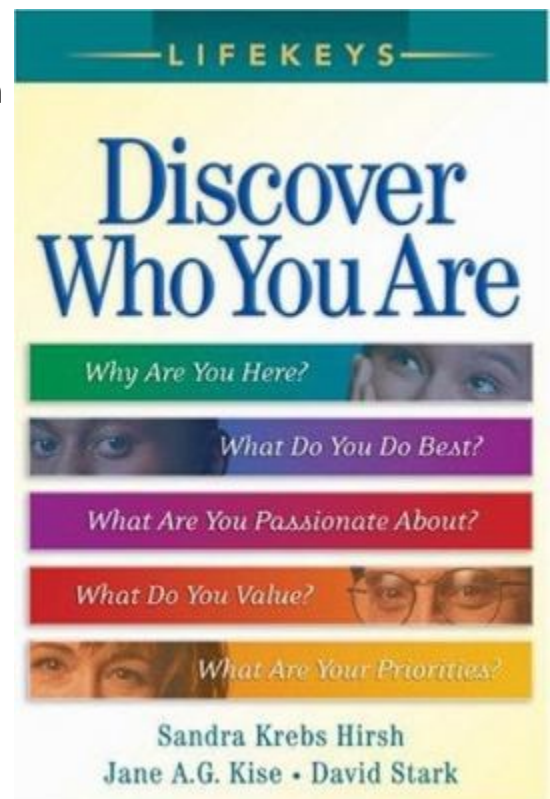
Often we feel the Lord may be calling, but rather than say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening,” we often come up with sincere and real excuses to say “Not yet.” We might be too busy, we might feel unworthy or unequipped, or maybe we just don’t know where to help. Perhaps we are not quite sure what gifts we have to give back to the Lord.

This fall, our parish will offer a workshop that can help you discover your unique gifts. You will be able to answer: “What do you do best? What are you passionate about? What do you value and what are your priorities?”

Using the Lifekeys workbook Discover Who You Are, you will learn how God has an important part for you to play in His vineyard. Through a series of practical assessments, you will discover your life gifts, and spiritual gifts, your personality type, values, and passions, and how to use them in service to God and others.

Our parishioner Lori Hogg will conduct this four-hour workshop for a limited number of participants. Lori is a Career Coach with Step Forward Career Coaching, and has worked in recruiting and training personnel for several industries. We would like to hear from people who are interested, so we can set a date that will be convenient for them. Send an email before October 1 to bulletin@stgregs.org with your name, phone number and email address. We will contact you with further information.

The workshop is free, but there is a \$12 fee for the Lifekeys workbook.



Curè of Ars Award

As a parish staff, we are pleased to announce that Fr. Leon Biernat is one of this year's recipients of the Curè of Ars Award. This award honors those whose lives reflect the qualities of Christian dedication and service that marked the life of St. John Vianney. The award is presented annually to individuals and organizations who are committed to healing those in need of God's reconciling love, a willingness to contribute their gifts towards pastoral care, especially for the needy and poor, and a commitment to our Church as a primary instrument for the divine-human encounter.



We invite our parishioners to join us on September 30, (6:00 pm cocktails, 7:00 pm dinner) at The Atrium at Rich's (One Robert Rich Way, Buffalo, NY) to celebrate as Fr. Leon receives this award. The cost is \$175 per ticket and the proceeds from the dinner will be used for formation programs for seminarian, diaconate and lay ecclesiastical candidates. The Diocesan formation program remains robust, alive and vibrant! Currently there are 12 men in various stages of priestly formation, 21 aspirants for the diaconate and 6 lay students at St. Bernard's School of Theology.

If you would like to purchase tickets for the dinner please visit the Diocese of Buffalo's website at www.frddb.org/event/100026.

Share-a-prayer

This edition's prayer was reputedly found in the uniform pocket of a Confederate soldier killed during the Civil War. You can share your favorite prayer with our readers by emailing it to tfm210@hotmail.com with "Prayer" in the subject line, or you can send it to Spirit and Life, 200 St. Gregory Court, Williamsville NY 14221.



A Soldier's Prayer

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy;
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am among all men most richly blessed.

Meet our New High School Youth Coordinator

Sara Dworzanski has been named High School Youth Coordinator for our parish. She joins Nicole Janacek, who ministers to Middle School youth, and Adam Jarosz, who works with post-High School young adults. Sara is a graduate of St. Gregory the Great School and the Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart. She is continuing her education at Buff State and hopes to become a teacher.

A highlight of our high school youth ministry is the weekly Lifeteen program that takes place on Sunday evenings.

“This year we will be responding to the challenge teenagers face in regard to mental and spiritual health,” Sara told *Spirit and Life*. “This is often affected by technology, which they are inundated with. This can be detrimental to the health of their bodies, minds and souls. For instance, they are in contact online with people on social media known as influencers. These teens will often compare themselves to these influential peers, whom they perceive to have a ‘perfect life,’ and this can lead to feelings of depression about their own.”

“Our Lifeteen Core Team will help them understand that they don’t need to compare themselves to an unrealistic model, and that it’s not just their parents and their church telling them this but it is Jesus Himself, who assures us of our worth and dignity, and gives us our value, as we encounter Him in Word and Sacrament”.

“I want to help them experience the joy which the world does not and cannot give them”

Sara points out that this past year has been a difficult one for many of our high school teens, partly because the pandemic has greatly changed their lives in many ways ranging from schoolwork to sports to social life. She expects that the Youth Ministry programs available to them will help them to cope with what is new and different, while we hope for a rapid return to more familiar ways.

Sara previously was a Core Team member for both the Middle School and High School Ministry. In her own high school days, she excelled in soccer and at the violin, and edited the Sacred Heart Yearbook. We are pleased to welcome her to our parish ministerial staff.



The Mail Box

Dear Padre:

I am a senior citizen, and have been for several years. I am definitely in the December days of my life. I am plagued by the thought that there are sins I have not confessed. I am not sure if I confessed all of my youthful transgressions. I cannot remember if I did. I am memory challenged.



Dear Memory Challenged:

When a person has made a good confession, all his sins are forgiven, even the ones he forgot to confess. A good confession is one that includes an honest examination of conscience, sincere contrition, and a desire to avoid sin and the near occasions of sin. Failure to confess a mortal sin one is aware of would render the sacrament invalid. Confession is not about how good your memory is. It is about the sincerity of your sorrow. You may, of course, always include a sin from your past life in any confession. Simply end with “I am sorry for these and all the sins of my life, especially for...” You can also end with, “I am sorry for these and all my sins, especially those I cannot remember.”

The Padre

Stewardship Update

Hundreds Respond to Stewardship of Talent Appeal

Over 200 parishioners returned response cards indicating interest in various ministries this past summer, in response to an appeal in mid-June for Stewardship of Talent, with the theme “Using God’s Gifts to Do God’s Work.” The reply card listed 15 ways parishioners could become more active in carrying on the work of God in our time and place. The top five ministries chosen were “Beds for Kids,” Eucharistic Minister, Lifechain, Respite, and Vincentians. In all, we received over 400 requests for more information, since most response cards indicated interest in two or more ministries.

In September we will focus on Stewardship of Treasure. In a homily and a letter from the Pastor, we will review the financial year that ended August 31. The parish ended the year with a balanced budget and a modest surplus, which is no small achievement in a time of pandemic. Parishioners will be asked to continue their loyal and generous support, and to return a Response Card, which will help parish leaders to ensure that expenditures are in line with projected income.

*Ministry Spotlight****Parish Food Ministry Expands to Embrace Western New York***

Jesus once told His listeners about the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, yet grows into a tree so large that the birds come and build their nests in its branches. That image came to this writer's mind when he learned recently about the Food Shuttle of Western New York.



Back in 1989, our parishioner Anne Klocke saw a problem. In parts of our community many were going hungry, while in other places good leftover food was being thrown away. Ann and a few others proposed a simple solution: get people to move the excess food to where the hungry people are. Today the Food Shuttle of Western New York involves hundreds of volunteers. In a typical year, about 10,000 deliveries are made.

"I like the fact that this is a simple solution to a profound problem," explains Mary Ellen Goergen, a St. Greg's parishioner. "It is simply volunteers picking up food that is surplus and delivering it to people who are hungry. For me as a volunteer, I get to be a conduit – an instrument – to enable people who are willing to help Panera's or Tops, say, to actually do so."

There are about sixty providers from whom food is picked up on a regular schedule, and others that call whenever excess food is available. The donated food is transported directly to places that feed the hungry, such as soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, and low-income housing locales. The Shuttle does not pick up from or deliver to private homes. Drivers donate the use of their vehicles and gasoline, as well as their time. Directors, officers and staff all work from their homes. Visit foodshuttlewny.org for more information or call 688-2527 to volunteer.

Great Happenings for our Faith Community

- ⇒ September 25 - Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge
- ⇒ September 30 - Curè of Ars Dinner - Diocese of Buffalo
- ⇒ October 2 - The Great Oktoberfest and Cornhole Tournament (See page 8)
- ⇒ October 3 - Respect Life - Life Chain
- ⇒ October 9 and 10 - Flu Shot Clinic
- ⇒ October 9 - FIAT - "Patience", Speaker Linda Paolini
- ⇒ October 10 - SVDP Clothing Drive
- ⇒ October 16 and 17—SVDP Food Bag Distribution
- ⇒ October 23 and 24—SVDP Food Bag Collection
- ⇒ October 24 - St. Gregory the Great 12 Mass and Reception (See page 2)
- ⇒ November 14- Bills Day (See page 8)



PLEASE DELIVER BY SEPTEMBER 18

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Buffalo, NY

Permit No. 4869

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

Spirit and Life is a quarterly publication of St. Gregory the Great Parish. Publisher: Rev. Leon J. Biernat, Pastor. Editors: Msgr. Thomas F. Maloney (tfm210@hotmail.com) and Marisa Piazza (mpiazza@stgregs.org). Your comments, questions, and suggestions are invited. Our Winter edition will appear in late December. Deadline for submissions is November 15. We are grateful to Liturgical Publications, whose benevolence enables us to provide this service to our Parishioners.



**LET'S GO
BUFFALO** **BILLIEVE!**

Join our Parish Community on **November 7, 12**
noon - 4:00 pm in the **Ministry Center** to watch the
Buffalo Bills vs. the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Sponsored by Family Faith Formation.

*Stay tuned for
more information!*



To register and learn more visit
www.stgregs.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 2, 2021 at 2pm

ST. GREG'S GREAT
OCTOBERFEST



CORNHOLE
Tournament

SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

To register and learn more visit
www.stgregs.org.