

Spirit & Life

Celebrating a Year of Faith! "Your Faith makes us Strong in Christ"

May/June 2013

"Let the Children Come to Me!" - Mark 10:13-16

Grace and peace in Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

When I read the newspaper, watch the news or talk to parents, I am overwhelmed and truly saddened by the circumstances and environment that bombard our children on a daily basis. I need not tell anyone what regularly affects and hampers our children's journey to Christ: school violence, bullying, sexting, internet pornography, manipulation of moral values from "Reality TV," and the diminishment of their self-worth, because they are not athletic, skinny or wearing the "right" label of clothing.

What is my responsibility as a pastor, your responsibility as a parishioner, parent, grandparent or disciple? Mark's Gospel is quite clear about Jesus' anger toward those things and persons who hinder access to Him! We must clear the way – there is only one other occasion when Jesus exhibits this type of indignation and that is in the Temple, when they marred the relationship with the Father. Jesus says: "Let the children come to me! Do not hinder them!" **DO NOT HINDER THEM AND CLEAR THE WAY!** – so He can embrace, bless and place His hands on them. It is not just an issue of us noticing all that prevents our young ones from finding and being loved by Christ – it is making the Journey to Christ the priority of our life for them. We are the trailblazers, responsible ones, to call things for what they are and **CLEAR THE WAY**. Our children will know their true identity and value when they experience the tender love of Christ through you and me. We must be like pit bulls to anyone and anything that tampers with their innate dignity, given them at birth, so that they mirror the image and goodness of God.

Praying with them, reading the Scripture, SUNDAY MASS – faith formation – discussions about life choices, priorities, sexuality – who to turn to in moments of confusion and need – youth groups – mission trips – being a parent, grandparent and priest who they know loves the Lord above all else. We have homework to do! Jesus says: "Let the children come to me!" It is **our** responsibility to **CLEAR THE WAY!** Not someone else! Please refer to pages 3-6 for various ministries that we offer to support our families and young people in their faith journeys.

Habemus Papam!

A Few Fun Facts about our new Holy Father

On March 13 we received an announcement "of great joy:" We have a new pope! Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, was elected supreme pontiff. The 76-year-old is the first pope from the Americas and the first Jesuit to be elected. A scientist, he has a master's degree in chemistry. Our Holy Father is in good health, though he has a partial right lung since an infection in his youth. Though fluent in fewer languages than his recent pre-



decessors, Pope Francis speaks Spanish, Italian and German, as well as some English, French and Portuguese. His motto, "Miserando atque eligendo," means lowly, yet chosen. He is called Pope Francis, not Pope Francis I, as there is no Francis II! "Babette's Feast" is the pope's favorite movie and "The White Crucifixion" by Marc Chagall is his favorite painting. As a native of Argentina, his favored beverage is yerba mate, which has had a recent surge in popularity in the U.S. due to its purported health benefits. He has prayed all 15 mysteries of the Rosary every day since 1985 (presumably omitting the Luminous, which were introduced by Pope John Paul II later). Before entering the Jesuit order, he loved to tango with his then-girlfriend, whom he even proposed to. Thanks be to God, she said, "no" and we are blessed with his priesthood and now his papacy. Long live Pope Francis!



18TH ANNUAL GREAT RACE SET FOR JUNE 21

Join us for the 2013 Great Race, which will start near the Ministry Center at 7:00 pm on Friday, June 21. More than 1,600 people are expected to participate in the 5K run or one-mile walk. The focus will be on fun, fitness and fellowship. Absolutely everyone is welcome. In fact, 3,000 people are expected to enjoy music and refreshments as the post-race party continues until 11:00 pm. Nik and the Nice Guys, a high-energy rock band, will perform in the church parking lot.

Pre-registration is \$25 for runners and \$15 for walkers (add \$5 to register at the Ministry Center on race day). Registration includes a T-shirt, post-race snacks and admission to the post-race party. All are welcome to join us for the post-race party, admission is \$10 for those over 21. To register, please go to www.strgregs.org/greatrace or visit our dedicated Facebook page at St. Gregory's Great Race.

We are grateful to our race sponsors and to our co-chairs, Elise Savattieri, Cheryl Bertovich, and Allegra Perna for their invaluable assistance in organizing this event.



St. Gregory's New Caregiver Respite Ministry ~ Coming Soon!

By Dena Alfieri, RN

Sometimes, four hours to yourself can be paradise, especially to those whose devotion to their loved one suffering dementia may limit their personal free time. New to St. Gregory's is an opportunity to give caregivers of a loved one with dementia that much needed time.

Whether it is for a lunch out, golfing, a movie with a friend, going to the salon, visiting family or just plain having "me" time, this new ministry will give back to those who give so much. As we read in Acts 20:35: "In every way I have shown you that by hard work...we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The St. Gregory's Health Ministry will carry out Jesus' command by providing respite care to those affected by dementia. The new Caregiver Respite Ministry will be held the first Saturday of each month, from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm, in the Gathering Room, beginning June 1. There will be a training by the Alzheimer's Association on May 8 at 6:30 pm in the Gathering Room for anyone interested in volunteering. Many volunteers are needed to provide adequate supervision. This social model respite for "memory impaired" recipients includes lunch, activities, fellowship and fun. All are provided free of charge.

What a great opportunity for volunteers to carry out our Lord's ministry! If you are a caregiver who deserves a much-needed break, or if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Maureen Couche, RN, Parish Nurse, at 688-5678, ext. 339 or at mcouche@stgregs.org, or contact Dena Alfieri, RN, at dena102966@yahoo.com.

Volunteers are needed to assist with supervising, providing lunch, socializing, helping to set up or organizing activities.



Looking for Special Gifts?

Now is the time to visit the St. Gregory the Great Catholic Store! Conveniently located in the Ministry Center, it is open every day except Mondays. May brings First Communions, Confirmations and Mother's Day and we carry a variety of gifts for all ages and occasions:

- **Religious Cards** – First Communion, Confirmation, Mother's Day, Weddings, All occasions.
- **Books for all ages** – Keepsake books for First Communion & Confirmation, books for teens, inspirational reading, daily prayers, missals, Bibles for all ages, books on saints, books for Moms.
- **Jewelry** – Communion & Confirmation bracelets, earrings, Rosary bracelets for all, wooden saint bracelets, precious stone necklaces & bracelets with antique holy medals, sterling silver or pewter patron saint medals, sterling silver crucifixes and crosses, Miraculous medals, rings.
- **Family Friendly DVDs and CDs for all ages** – Value oriented movies as well as animated movies for children; Christian artists for teens and parents.



- **Kitchen Items** – Cutting boards, mugs, glass plates, pie dishes – great for moms and grandmas!
- **Artwork, Crucifixes, Holy Water Fonts, Statues and More!**



COMING IN JUNE.....

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CATHOLIC STORE AND CAFÉ. CHECK THE BULLETIN AND OUR PARISH WEBSITE FOR SPECIFIC DATES AND ACTIVITIES!



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 New Jersey, working to restore impoverished neighborhoods): June 3 - 8

Steubenville Conference (High School Students): June 14-16

SPLASH (High School Students): June 24 - 28, see page 5 for further details

College Faith Community: Weekly meetings and events throughout the summer

Catholics in Action (High School service opportunities around the Diocese): June 30 - July 2

Vacation Bible School (Ages 3 1/2 - Grade 5): July 8 - 12, see page 5 for further details

Summer Mission Retreat (Adult/Young Adult): July 14 - 20

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 4 - 8

Disciple Camp (Grades 6-8): August 5 - 9, see page 5 for further details

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



Meet Jerome: St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Face of Christ

By Norb Warnes

Recent headlines proclaim, "Pope Francis Urges Protection of the Poor." To members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Christians everywhere, his message is an exhortation to serve one another and, in the words of St. Francis, to "embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important." Who or what is The Society of St. Vincent de Paul? It is an international Catholic lay organization, inspired by Gospel values, working to grow spiritually through person-to-person service to the needy and suffering. Vincentians' service is performed in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul, by witnessing God's love through works of charity and justice. We collaborate with others of good will, making no distinction in those served because in them we see the face of Christ.

Vincentians serve through visits to struggling individuals and families who have material and spiritual needs, through soup kitchens, food pantries, visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and many other ways. Each person we serve has their own unique story, but Vincentians strive to raise hopes for a better life by offering Help Which Honors. We do this by starting all service

by asking the Lord, who is wearing the face of someone in need, to give us an understanding of those whom we are visiting and knowledge of what we are hoping to give.

The demand for service is growing. Many requests come to the St. Gregory Conference. Serving is gratifying because it is given in Ozanam's hand-to-hand, face-to-face and heart-to-heart spirit. We come to know the

people we serve, and they come to know us. One such person, whom I will call Jerome, lives alone in a somewhat dilapidated house on Buffalo's East Side. Dear reader, you would shudder to see these conditions let alone live under them: no furniture, no food, and no hope amidst bleak and broken down surroundings. The large sums of money spent on our "social safety net" aren't reaching people like Jerome. Jerome is not without his problems; he has physical and mental



impairments and is an alcoholic. One can easily imagine Jerome, a soft-spoken, courteous person, being marginalized his whole life. The Society provided help in the form of food, consolation, appliances, and some furniture, including a bed, so that he wouldn't need to continue sleeping on the bare floor atop a pile of rags that he had fashioned into a mat. *(continued on page 7)*

Interested in helping to protect the poor?

Here are the many ways you can volunteer with our St. Vincent de Paul Society:

- Food Drives to maintain the food pantry at our "White House" (Two times per year)
- Clothing Drives (Two times per year)
- Visit the sick at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital and Nursing Homes (2-4 Sundays per year)
- Furniture Pick-up (Can you bench press 20 lbs. or more? We are looking for young men (or women) who can help with some of the "heavy lifting" with our Furniture Ministry. Volunteers help out on a Saturday morning once every few months.)
- Summer Camp in Angola
- Client Visits
- Serve Meals at our Dining Room at our Main Street Headquarters

Please consider helping us to live out the Gospel call to minister to the poor. For further information, please contact Mike Heins at 626-0846, or at mjvheins@aol.com.



The Feminine Genius

By Mrene Corra

Anyone who has a daughter in middle school knows that navigating through these challenging years is no easy task - not for the parent and not for the child. There are hormones. There are iPods. There are cell phones. And then ... the drama. Oh, the drama.

It seems our daughters are continually bombarded with messages suggesting they don't own enough of the right things, or that they're not pretty enough, not popular enough, not thin enough, not good enough. These messages are, of course, completely antithetical to what our Catholic faith teaches us, let alone what we believe about our girls. The truth is, our girls are our treasure, the apple of our eyes. But more importantly, they are daughters of Our Father in heaven, and that makes

them royalty. Where can our girls go to receive and be supported in this truth?



St. Gregory's is thrilled to announce the formation of a new ministry for girls in grades five through eight: The St. Bernadette Club. Girls who join this club will enjoy fun activities, field trips, friendships and food, while finding out what the "Feminine Genius" is all about!

The next meeting will be May 17 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm (meet in the church) and will include a tour of the grotto, a bake-off for our priests, and some wholesome spiritual fellowship. For more information or to sign up, contact Kate Hahn at 818-3585 or kmhahn78@hotmail.com.

SUMMER FAMILY FAITH FORMATION ACTIVITIES

S.P.L.A.S.H. (Public High School Grades 9 & 10), June 24-28, Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

This summer program for 9th- and 10th-graders is a week-long high-impact program that fulfills the religious education requirements for the year. In addition to the curriculum, students are required to attend three JRevs (with our Youth Ministry) during the school year to complete this program. Registration available online.

DISCIPLE CAMP (Public Middle School Grades 5 – 8), August 5 – 9, Monday – Friday 9:00 to 4:00 pm

Our summer camp has 35 hours of instruction based on curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Buffalo in a summer camp-like setting with lessons enriched with music, prayer, speakers, outside activities and crafts. Students stay involved with our parish by weekly Mass attendance, service and ministry. Lessons are based on an "active learning" process in which religious knowledge is experienced in various ways to reach all styles of learning. The week includes a field trip for grades 5 and 6 to Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Lewiston. Grades 7 and 8 will attend "Kingdom Bound," a Christian music festival at Darien Lake. Registration available online.

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – "KINGDOM ROCK: WHERE KIDS STAND STRONG FOR GOD"
July 8 – 12, Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm**

At "Kingdom Rock" VBS, kids experience God's word in a fun and unforgettable way! Each day, a different religious point is reinforced through Bible stories, Bible verses, songs and hands-on activities. There is a closing celebration and ice cream social where students put on a show for their families. Registration available online.

WHAT IS CATECHESIS?

Catechesis is derived from a Greek word which means "to echo." As a catechist, you echo the Word of God. As a Family Faith Formation catechist at St. Gregory's, you must attest that you have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, that you attend Mass and receive Holy Communion regularly, that any school-age members of your family receive religious instruction (either in a Catholic school or a Family Faith Formation program) and, if married, that your ceremony conformed to the regulations of the Catholic Church. You must promise to teach in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and to give example and encouragement by your Catholic lifestyle to the students you instruct. *If interested, please call the Family Faith Formation Office at 688-5760.*



ST. DON BOSCO CLUB AT ST. GREGORY'S!

By Bill Grunert

The first meeting of the St. Don Bosco Club, a ministry for 5th- to 8th-grade boys, was held on March 15. Approximately 30 young men attended and, along with other activities, enjoyed the Friday night parish Lenten Fish Fry as a group.

Fr. Dave Richards, leader/adviser for the Don Bosco Club, was delighted with the initial turnout. The group will meet on one Friday each month for about two hours (6:30-8:30 pm). Meeting location may vary, depending on the particular activities that are planned for that evening. Fr. Dave noted: "The focus of our meetings will be on the Four F's – Faith,



Fellowship, Fun and Food." In addition to the usual activities (sports, presentations, video games, etc.), some tours and field trips are also being considered.

Fr. Dave added: "The goal of this ministry is to help these young men to continue to develop as good Christians, good students and responsible members of the community." He believes that a key to success of the Don Bosco Ministry is strong parishioner support in the form of prayers, ideas, and, in some instances, direct involvement. You can contact Fr. Dave at 688-5678, ext. 310, or at drichards@stgregs.org.



Women's Enrichment Ministry Hosts its First "Women's Day" Retreat

By Joycelyn Bila, Ministry Chairwoman

The ministry's inaugural retreat day offers a look at what to expect. White-lace tablecloths with pink lining, bouquets of red, white and pink balloons, red roses and glittering hearts were the first things guests noticed upon entering the Gathering Room last February 9.

This "Women's Day" of spirituality featured prayer, music, fun activities and two special guest speakers. Aptly titled "Nurturing Our Hearts through the Love of Christ," the day began with a beautiful blessing and prayer by Father Sibby. Amy Vukelic, the down-to-earth program director of the Catholic Charities Service Corps and topic speaker, used visuals, vibrant humor, wit and audience interaction to let everyone truly feel Christ's love.

Dawn Curazzato delivered a no-holds barred talk on the "Year of Faith and the Importance of Evangelization." Dawn was on point and dynamic while weaving her self-proclaimed "Irish sense of humor" into the mix. Dawn graciously provided a table with resources for everyone. The guests were warmly attended to throughout the day by Women's Enrichment facilitators. Positive feedback for this retreat day was tremendous.

The next Women's Enrichment Ministry retreat day will be held in late September. Don't miss it!





Meet Jerome: St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Face of Christ (continued from page 4)

One morning I received a call from a soft voice, almost sobbing, who uttered these simple words: "Thank you, man, for all that you've done for me. I love you." It was Jerome calling to say thank you, not just to me but to the Society and to you, our benefactors. It was a touching moment, but not unique. We wish you, our benefactors, could hear these expressions. There are no demands or confrontations, only simple, humble requests for help. In many cases an enduring relationship is formed. It is a joy to serve!

I included a picture of Jerome so that you will see the face of Christ in this Ministry. Those we help are real and they are many. We ask for your continued prayers, thoughts and love as we carry on this important work. Thank you.

For further information, including how you can get involved, please contact Mike Heins at (716) 626-0846, or at mjvheins@aol.com

"Help honors, when to the bread that nourishes it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up the sinking courage; when it treats the poor man with respect, not only as an equal but as a superior; since he is suffering what perhaps we are incapable of suffering; since he is the messenger of God to us, sent to prove our justice and our charity, and to save us by our works." - Blessed Fr  d  rick Ozanam

Summer Mission Retreat

Looking to be revitalized and refreshed in your faith this summer? We invite you to join us for our seven-night Retreat beginning Sunday, July 14. Mission retreat consists of seven nights of inspiring talks and liturgies and an opportunity for discussion and fellowship. The first evening begins at 6:00 pm, week-nights begin at 7:00 pm and Saturday will begin at 3:30 pm, until 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.

The 15th Annual Great Dinner Auction will be held on Saturday, October 26!

If you would like to get involved, please contact the Auction Office at 688-5678, ext. 337 or dinnerauction@gmail.com.

200 St. Gregory Court

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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

- 4 - Mulch Sale
- 5 - Parish May Crowning at 9:30 am Mass
- 6 - School May Crowning
- 9 - Ascension Thursday
- 11 - First Communion
- 11, 12 - Baby Item Drive for St. Gianna Molla Ctr.
- 13 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 17 - School Father/Daughter Dance
- 17 - ABCD's of Medicare Presentation
- 18, 19 - FFF Teacher Recruitment Weekend
- 19 - Ladies of Charity Household Goods Collection
- 21, 22 - Confirmation
- 29 - School Band Concert
- 31 - School Walk-a-Thon

June

- 2 - Blood Drive
- 10 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 13 - Kindergarten Graduation
- 19 - 8th Grade Graduation
- 21 - Great Race
- 24-28 - SPLASH

July

- 8 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 8-12 - Vacation Bible School
- 12 - Wine Tasting Party
- 13 - Family Disabilities Picnic
- 14-20 - Summer Mission Retreat

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.