

Spirit & Life

"Your Faith makes us Strong in Christ"

Living our Faith this Summer

Fall 2017

On June 4 we celebrated Fr. Leon's 25th Anniversary of Priesthood Ordination



Disciple Camp students donated food to the St. Vincent De Paul Society and had a SockHop with residents at Elderwood Assisted Living Facility.



The 3rd Annual Car Show was held on Labor Day



Vacation Bible School fun!



Another successful Great Race on June 16!



From the Desk of the Pastor Forgiveness and Mercy is the Key

The weekend of September 16 and 17, I preached about mercy and forgiveness. I will not recap the homily here. If you are interested in hearing that particular homily, I direct you to our parish website (www.stgregs.org) where we archive all of our weekend homilies for you to be able to replay for yourself. The salient point of that homily was to say that we belong to Christ Jesus. If we belong to Christ Jesus it also requires that we have mercy and forgiveness at the center of our heart and being. We cannot say that we belong to God and at the same time be dedicated to revenge, vengeance and retribution.

In this article I wish to go a little further than I did in that particular homily. I received great feedback from that homily both at the Church doors and by way of e-mail. I heard some wonderful stories of people calling relatives who they have not spoken to in decades and I heard painful stories of separation from family and friends. I heard wonderful stories of reconciliation over the years and I heard of many failed attempts to reconcile. Why is forgiveness so hard? How do we know we have forgiven even if we have not forgotten?

Why is forgiveness so hard? This is the easier question. On one hand there is something in our human condition that drives many of us to want to "settle the score" and to give payback. Some are driven by the "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" approach of the Old Testament. Some find it difficult to live by Jesus' teaching "if someone slaps you on one cheek, turn and give them the other." Our society as a whole fosters a mentality of not letting go. If you were to think for a moment, would you say that society as a whole forgives and moves on, or that society holds onto hurts and demands reparation? I think the latter is true. Read the editorial pages on a regular basis and we will see, among other things, an inability to "let it go." This is nothing new. Jesus dealt with a society that found it hard to forgive and so did the prophets of old. Forgiveness is hard because it is part of our "original sin" or our imperfect human condition. Also, forgiveness is hard because it is often a process and not a simple thing. Forgiveness is not a simple "light switch" that can be easily flipped and it's all over. Forgiveness is hard work and may take a long time to achieve.

What is needed is an attitude of forgiveness. Our basic disposition must be one to always forgive even though it may be difficult. We all have had someone hurt us. That is a basic human experience. When we are hurt by someone do we wait for them come to ask for forgiveness or do we go out of our way to forgive, not only in our heart, but to contact them and personally extend it? I use to live by the waiting-for-them game, but now, when I have a disagreement with someone, I try to extend myself to them. I am not perfect at it yet, but I am working in that direction. The best any individual can do is to extend forgiveness. Once you extend forgiveness or ask for it, it becomes the other person's moral responsibility to respond.

One of the stupidest things we ever learned is "forgive and forget." I say it is stupid because we will probably always have a memory of a deep hurt, but the memory does not mean we haven't forgiven someone. To remember is like a scar. A scar is a reminder of a past wound, but it is also a reminder that the wound healed. We may be a little different, but we are healed. Look at forgiveness as something that helps heal and helps shape who we are as a person.

Look at your life and see if there is some past hurt that is unresolved. Look to see if there is a family or friendship estrangement, and if you recognize one take some time to forgive. Begin by praying for the person daily. Then take a deep breath and write a healing note or make a well-placed loving phone call. Even if you believe you were hurt and the other person is 100% to blame; call them and apologize and forgive and invite them to move forward with you in life. In the end it does not matter who was originally right or wrong. It matters that in the present someone needs to be like Christ and begin the process of healing, and probably admit that it does take "two to tango" and some fault goes both ways. Do not focus on the past, but focus on the present moment to heal, forgive and to live in mercy.

May God bless you, our Mother Mary watch over you and St. Gregory the Great intercede for you, always.





Youth Ministry: Dates To Remember



Middle-School Nights

October 20 - Ultimate
November 17 - Ultimate
December 8-9 -Middle-School Mayhem

EDGE:

October 5, 12, 19, 26
November 2, 9, 16, 30
December 7, 14, 21

College Nights

November 6
December 4



High-School Nights

Life Teen:

October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
November 5, 12, 19
December 3, 10, 17

XLT

October 27
November 17
December 15

CRAFT SHOW

Visit our annual Craft Show on Friday, November 24, and Saturday, November 25.

The show will feature over 150 crafters and artisans with many unique, handmade gifts. It is a great way to start your Christmas and holiday shopping while avoiding the crowds and chaos at local stores and malls.





- * **Preschool, Early-Kindergarten & Grades 1 - 8**
- * **Enrichment & Accelerated Programs**
- * **Top 10 School for Student Excellence by *Business First***

St. Gregory the Great School Open House

*Tuesday, October 17,
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm*

www.stgregs.org | 716.688.5323

250 St. Gregory Ct., Williamsville, NY 14221



*You Are Invited to the 19th Annual Great Dinner Auction
“Around the World”*

*Saturday, November 4, 6:00 pm at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens
\$100 Per Person*

Join us on November 4 at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens for a spectacular dinner event with a silent and live auction. It will be a great evening of cocktails, hors d’oeuvres and a grand silent auction beginning at 6:00 pm. A gala dinner follows with a live auction and live music and entertainment.

Check out our great auction items online at:

<http://stgregthegreat.maestroweb.com/>

Come together for an evening of fellowship, socializing and fundraising for our School and Parish. The Auction benefits our entire parish family. We hope you will be a part of making it a success!

If you have any questions or would like to purchase a ticket to the event, please contact the Parish Office or Auction Office (688-5678 x 337 or email us at dinnerauction@gmail.com).



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the Great Parish and School



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Mobile App!](#)

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“St. Gregory the Great”**



[Food Shuttle of WNY](#)

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY: Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead.

The Western New York Food Shuttle began at St. Gregory’s more than 20 years ago and has since branched out to Kenmore-Tonawanda and the Southtowns. This



amazing ministry transports about 50,000 pounds of surplus prepared and perishable food weekly. Members collect food from supermarkets, bakeries, restaurants and businesses and take it to soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters throughout Western New York.

This food would be thrown out if no one transported it. That’s where you come in! Please contact David & Cindy Miller at (716) 735-4106 to volunteer as a driver.



How to fall in love with Jesus: 5 practical tips

By: Maria Suchyna, St. Greg's Parishioner



1) **Silence:** Jesus often comes to us in the most quiet moments. This world is very loud, aggressive, and pushy. Jesus is in the stillness; He is gentle and inviting. Sitting in the quiet is very difficult for many of us. I found that starting with five minutes a day and then increasing in little increments gradually over time helped me a lot. This doesn't mean your mind needs to be completely blank. For some it may mean sitting in the car with no music on for a bit or meditating on Jesus in the Scriptures. In order to truly love someone we must learn how to listen.

2) **Write Letters to Him:** Sometimes my mind runs a million miles a minute, and I need to structure my thoughts out on paper. Perhaps you could try writing letters to Jesus. Tell Him how you're feeling, ask Him questions, let Him know how much you want to love Him, or even thank Him for all the beautiful gifts He's given you! Think of it as a letter to your best friend or possibly a love letter.

3) **Apologize:** When someone has hurt us, and they come back to apologize, doesn't that make you feel better? When we've sinned and hurt Jesus, the whole reason He's so sad is because ultimately we've hurt ourselves. A sign of a healthy relationship is knowing how to apologize. In Confession, we speak directly to Christ Himself through the priest. Speak your sins as if you're apologizing to your best friend. It will bring you and Jesus so much closer!

4) **Frequent Mass and Adoration:** St. Greg's has three daily Masses and Perpetual Adoration, which means that Jesus is always exposed and waiting for you. When we want to be healthier we need to start working out two or three times a week, at least, to help boost our metabolisms. If we want a healthier relationship with Jesus, come to Him multiple times a week, if possible, instead of once. The Mass and Adoration may be "boring" for someone who doesn't fully understand what's actually taking place. Study up! Talk to a priest! Mass and Adoration changed my life so drastically.

5) **Love EVERYONE around you:** Loving and serving others around you is loving Jesus. When you help a hurting friend, restrain from gossip, treat your parents well, or do extra little tasks for others, remember you are doing all that for Jesus! He is in every single person you meet throughout your day. When we hurt others, we hurt Him. When we love others, we love Him. If you want your relationship with Jesus to flourish, start by loving the people its hardest to love. Sometimes this means we need to start with our own families.



A Year in Family Faith Formation: Learning to be Christ's Disciple



First Grade Last Supper

Learning to make Rosaries



Gr 2 Pumpkin Lesson



Gr 4 Saints Fair



Making Prayer Pillows



Grades 5-8 Class Field Trips



Gr 6 Seder Meal Lesson

Preparing for Sacraments



Retreats and Workshops



Disciple Camp: Car Washes and Food Drives



Christmas and Easter Pageants



200 St. Gregory Court

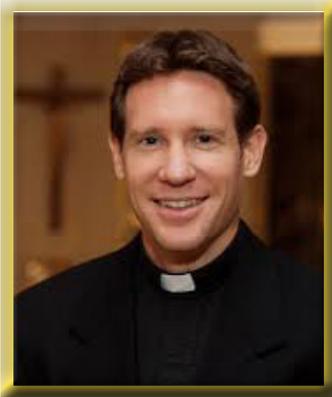
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Fr. Michael Gaitley, author of *33 Days to Morning Glory*, will speak at St. Gregory's on October 20-21



Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

What's Inside This Issue?

- Important Youth Ministry Dates
- Family Faith Students Learn to be Disciples
- St. Gregory the Great School Open House
- 5 Tips To Fall In Love With Jesus

Mark Your Calendar For These Upcoming Events:

October

7 - Knights of Columbus District Soccer Challenge
7 - Caregivers Respite
7 - FFF Coffee Break with God
8 - New Parishioner Social
9 - Columbus Day (Parish Closed)
13 - Our Lady of Fatima Mass
15 - Clothing Drive
17 - School Open House
20,21 - Fr. Michael Gaitley Retreat
27 - MOMS Meeting

November

2 - Grief and Loss Remembrance Mass
4 - Great Dinner Auction
4 - Caregivers Respite
4 - FFF Coffee Break with God
5 - Pancake Breakfast
10, 11 - Veterans Day (Closed)
12 - New Parishioner Social
17 - MOMS Meeting
23-26 - Thanksgiving (Closed)
24, 25 - Craft Show

December

2 - FFF Coffee Break with God
4, 5, 6 - School Book Fair
8 - Immaculate Conception
9, 10 - FFF Christmas Gift Collection
8, 9 - Youth Ministry Middle-School Mayhem
9 - Children's Advent Celebration
16 - FFF Children's Advent Pageant
26, 27 - Living Nativity

Spirit & Life Staff: Greg Smith, Rev. Leon J. Biernat, 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.