

Spirit & Life

Stewardship in Action: Serving God Through Time, Talent & Treasure

November/December 2012

Jesus, You Are the Christ!

In her book, "A Century of Catholic Converts," Lorene Hanley Duquin, one of our parishioners, states: "Like the proverbial pebble dropped in a pond, one person's conversion moves outward in little circles, touching the lives of many others. Each convert brings his or her own special gifts and talents to the Catholic Church. Each convert brings a new level of enthusiasm and commitment to the faith. Each person's conversion is a gift for us all." The Scriptures reaffirm for us and expand the importance of the conversion of two of the greatest converts, Peter and Paul.

Peter and Paul's declaration, that Jesus is the Christ, touches each of us and with the same testimony of faith in who Jesus is. Their conversion/pebble of faith ripples down to our day, and places before us the same question: "Who do you say that I am?" We, like so many countless others, are able to make that same declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Peter and Paul, by their statements and through their lives of sacrifice and apostolic leadership, fill the Church with enthusiasm of faith today and into the future. Peter and Paul are our ancestors in faith, sharing it down to the present day, so that all the holy ones declare together that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Soon we will embark on the Advent and Christmas season; we must come to see ourselves as heralds – town criers – of the question: "Who do you say that He is?" We must provide the question. God will, by grace, gently lead each of us to the answer. How? Easily! When we come together as a people immersed in a Eucharistic community and celebrate the life, death and resurrection of the Lord, we make that same declaration of who Jesus is for us and our "WESTERN NEW YORK WORLD." Our life takes on a new dimension, and we experience the depth of God's presence in us and among us. "Jesus you are the Christ, the Son living and moving in our midst today!" God with us! Emmanuel!

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



Are you looking for a way to use your God-given talents? Or maybe you are feeling a strong urge to give to those in need this Advent? We invite you to participate in our service opportunities this Advent as you and your families prepare for the coming of Christ! Our offerings range from "adopting" a family in our Family-to-Family Christmas program, simply donating a single gift to our Christmas Manger gift giving program, volunteering in our Living Nativity or offering food to our Thanksgiving Food drive. Please see pages 4 & 5 of this publication for a listing of dates, and be sure to visit our website at www.stgregs.org to see how you and your family can extend the love of Christ to those in need this Christmas!



Welcoming our New Youth Minister!

Spirit & Life welcomes Adam Jarosz, the newest addition to our Youth Ministry staff here at St. Gregory's!

Tell us a little about yourself, Adam. Are you a native of WNY? Where did you go to school? How did you end up at our parish?

First, I would like to thank everyone for welcoming me into the parish. The amount of support I've received from parishioners has been overwhelming. Thank you as well for having me in Spirit & Life. What a great publication. I grew up here in the Buffalo area, first in South Buffalo and later in Orchard Park. After high school I worked hard at a variety of jobs and was invited by Joe Chernowski to be a CORE member for the newly minted Life Teen ministry at Nativity of Our Lord in Orchard Park. I wanted to share my faith and be an example to teens who didn't have that in their life. I went to college for (a degree in) hospitality and I am continuing my education at Canisius for marketing and entrepreneurship. After years of serving the Church in different ministries and working in restaurants and events, I was recommended by Joe and a few others for the role of youth minister here.

Are there any specific projects or ideas you hope to implement?

I want to foster a community where everyone's gifts are being used. Everyone has a talent, and with a parish of this size, there's a lot of talent. I would love to be able to introduce untapped talent to youth ministry. I trust that God will send the right people at the right time. If you have a heart for ministry and feel a call to get involved, come and talk to me. I'll put you to work!



Why is Youth Ministry important?

Youth ministry can be so important to a teen. We help teens connect everything they learn about their faith and apply it to their life. Often, they start with zero faith, and that's OK. We love the teens where they are at and show them that they are special, that they are loved. Today's culture can be poisonous to the soul, so much so that it kills it. Sometimes we can feel alone out in the world and oftentimes our faith is trampled in the media. Our goal is to show that what the Spirit has built through the Church leads us to something greater than anything that the world can provide. By providing a strong faith community and with help from their families, teens can take back the culture. They are not alone, and we have their back in prayer. Jesus works in some really awesome ways, and we just need to let Him work through us.

What are the most important factors for a youth minister to really reach young people?

Every youth minister just needs to be authentic and needs to show that they care. God will take care of the rest.

Is there anything you would like parishioners to know about you?

I like long walks on the beach and puppies. I'm just kidding. Kind of. Really though, I look forward to serving you. Stop by the office sometime in the Ministry Center and say "Hi!"

Thank you, Adam, for answering God's call to serve Him through our youth. We are very blessed to have you here among us and hope you will be blessed in return!



Craft Show Coming up!

The St. Gregory's Annual Craft Show will be held on Friday, November 23, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday, November 24, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The emphasis continues to be on the show's hallmark of quality handcrafted items. We are grateful to be able to host a show with more than 140 vendors who have earned a reputation of quality among themselves and with shoppers as well.

To continue the tradition, we need YOU! Quality vendors and many shoppers are the keys to our success. The show is a great way to support the local economy while purchasing unique Christmas gifts or home décor. Come and see what is new! Admission remains \$2 with no charge for children 12 and under.

Prayer for Veterans Day

Heavenly Father,
Author and Giver of Peace,
We ask your blessing and mercy upon
Our soldiers, veterans,
Men and women protecting home
And country.

Answering the call to action,
Willing to fight even bitter conflict
Fighting for our lives and freedoms,
Prepared to give their lives,
In serving us they serve you well.

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your blessings,
Upon our veterans, our soldiers, upon us all.

Thank these, our heroes,
Reward abundantly their sacrifice.

Grant them peace of mind,
Comfort their hearts,
Heal all their wounds,
Give them strength.

Encourage them in all difficulties.
Guide and protect their travels.
Protect their family and loved ones.

Heavenly Father,
May your guidance and blessings
Be with them wherever they go,
Whatever they do.

When earthly life is over,
Bring our veterans home to heaven.

There to receive a rich reward,
Enjoy your blessed presence,
Rejoice in your eternal peace,
And be re-united with loved ones.

Heavenly Father, you promise,
No more suffering, death, and war.
No more hurt, doubt, confusion.

But only joy and happiness,
Reward, refreshment, and reunion,

With all the armies of heaven,
The angels and saints,

Our ancestors in the faith,
Our loved ones gone before us,

We ask you, Heavenly Father,
Welcome our veterans home,
To our true homeland country,
The Land of Peace and Rest

Forevermore.

Amen.

CALLED TO DUTY

It seems that every four years, Catholics struggle with voting for the lesser of two evils. This candidate stands for this, while that one stands for that. Usually, complete confidence in a candidate does not enter into the equation. But the reality is that some things are just not negotiable. Please see the excerpt below from the Faithful Citizenship resource provided by the USCCB for non-negotiables.

As Catholics, we have the power to make a difference. Seventy-eight million Catholics live in this country. If all 78 million voted with their well-formed consciences, the opportunity to create a godly society is possible. If the duty of our vocation is to lead our families to God, then it is our duty to vote. It is our duty to vote, not just because we are Americans, but because we are Catholic!

What Does the Church Say About Catholic Social Teaching in the Public Square? - Seven Key Themes

It is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (USCCB, Living the Gospel of Life, no. 33). The following themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life:

The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person... Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable.

Call to Family, Community and Participation... The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies.

Rights and Responsibilities... Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable... While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern.

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers... Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good.

Solidarity... We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences.

Caring for God's Creation... Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation.





Prepare for the Coming of Christ!

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Food Collection after all Masses November 17 and 18

Join us for Fellowship: Polenta Dinner

Saturday, December 1: 6:30 pm in the School Gym

Donate to those in Need this Christmas

Parish Christmas Gift Collection after all Masses December 8 and 9

Family-to-Family Christmas: December 11

Advent Celebration for Children

Saturday, December 8: 12 noon in the Ministry Center Gym

An Evening of Prayer and Adoration for Life

Saturday, December 8 in the Church

Holiday Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 9: 6:30 pm in the Church

Family Faith Formation Children's Advent Pageant

Saturday, December 15: 9:15 am in the Church

Blessing of the Baby Jesus from your Manger

During each Mass on December 15 and 16

Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with us

Parish Service: Monday, December 17, at 7:00 pm

Celebrate Christ's Birth with a Walk-Through Living Nativity

December 26 and 27: 7:00 pm beginning in the Gathering Room



Grief & Loss during the Holidays

The Grief and Loss Ministry is offered to all who are struggling with the death of loved ones, loss of marriages through death, separation or divorce, loss of job or any other of life's losses. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:30 pm in Gathering Room 1. Christmas is often an especially difficult time to cope with loss while the world is telling you to be happy. Please join us for "Coping with Grief/Loss during the Holidays" at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, December 5, to find the support you need and deserve.

Living Nativity

Continue your family's celebration of Our Lord's birth by joining us December 26 and 27 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Gathering Room. From there you will be guided through scenes in the Church and School. Refreshments and activities will follow in the Gathering Rooms.



Our director, Jeff Criden, needs many volunteers! From children to seniors, people are needed to act, sew costumes, direct lighting and sound effects, place decorations and act as greeters. *If you are interested, please contact Jeff at 207-4878 (cell) or jeffrcrd@aol.com.*

Join us for Mass during this Holy Season of Advent & Christmas

Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 22: 10:00 am

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Saturday, December 8

Friday, December 7: 7:00 pm Vigil Mass

Saturday, December 8: 7:00 am, 8:00 am, and 12 noon

Parish Advent Penance Service

Monday, December 17: 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve Masses

4:00 pm in the Church, 4:00 pm in the Ministry Center and 4:00 pm in the School Gym

6:00 pm in the Church

Midnight Mass in the Church

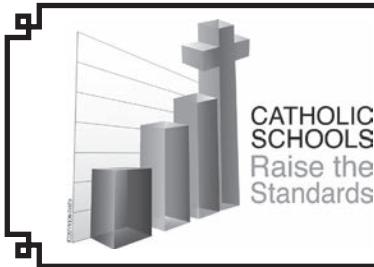
Christmas Day Masses

Regular Mass Schedule: 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 12:30 pm, 4:30 pm

New Year's Masses

Monday, December 31: 5:30 pm Vigil Mass

Tuesday, January 1, 2013: 7:00 am, 8:00 am, 12 noon



SAVE THE DATE:
Celebrate Catholic Schools Week!
St. Gregory the Great School Open House:
January 27, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm



In this Year of Faith, bring Christ into Christmas and your home with gifts for the whole family from our Catholic Store!

Advent wreaths and candles

Manger sets

Artwork, Statues

Great Stocking Stuffers – prayers cards, novena books, pocket statues, pocket prayer books, Christmas ornaments

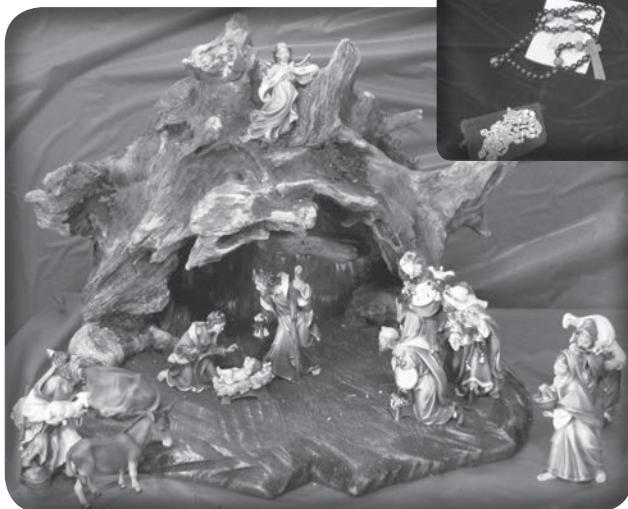
Religious Cards – Boxed religious Christmas cards, single Thanksgiving and Christmas cards

Family Friendly DVDs for all ages – Value oriented movies as well as animated movies for children

Music CDs for everyone – Including many contemporary Christian artists

Books for all ages – prayer, daily meditation, missals, Bibles, inspirational reading, books on Saints

Jewelry – precious stone necklaces and bracelets with antique holy medals; Rosary bracelets, wooden saint bracelets, rings, sterling silver or pewter patron saint medals



“Year of Faith” and a Creative Catechist!

By Joan Rischmiller

Chris Schober, one of the creative catechists in the Family Faith Formation program, decided that a meaningful way for her students to learn the prayers that are expected at the elementary level was to pray the rosary with her class. The Rosary is the simplest and one of the most profound ways to pray in our Catholic tradition.

All the prayers (the Sign of the Cross, Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Hail Holy Queen) that the students are expected to memorize are all located on the Rosary beads.

Throughout the fall, Chris prays a decade of the Rosary with her class for their special intentions. By Thanksgiving, each family is given a “Family Rosary

Prayer” booklet, a Rosary, a bottle of holy water, and a small statue of the Blessed Mother. Each family is asked to set aside a time each week to pray the Rosary together. When a family participates in the weekly family Rosary, the parent provides a note to Chris and in return she gives the child a box of popcorn as reinforcement of this family prayer experience.

Chris said that the family Rosary was prayed in her home each Friday evening when she was growing up. The Rosary was followed with a popcorn party and meaningful family conversation on this special evening of the week.

Upcoming Health Ministry Events

Mark your calendar for our upcoming Health Ministry Events:

- Bootcamp for Successful Aging: Saturday, November 3 & 10, 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Upstate NY Transplant Services (UNYTS) blood drive November 11, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm
- Depression and Anxiety Support Group: Tuesday, November 20 and December 18, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Attention Veterans!

St. Gregory's wishes to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our veterans. God bless you for your service in defending our country and preserving the freedoms we are privileged to enjoy. We encourage all veterans to utilize the Veterans Service Agency. Every veteran in the country should register in the VA system so they can be made aware of all of the benefits that they have earned. Do you know where your DD214 is? Your discharge papers are valuable and necessary documents to have in order to access VA benefits. Don't wait until you need them to find them! Track it down now, tell your family where you keep it and file a copy with your County Clerk's Office.

Stay Tuned...

New Youth Minister!

Breaking news from the St. Greg's Youth Ministry Facebook Page: Welcome aboard Jennifer Belock Kilo to SGYM! We are blessed to have you on our team! Learn more about Jennifer in the next issue of Spirit & Life!

DINNER AT TIFFANY'S SUCCESS!



Thank you to all parishioners, friends and family who joined together at Samuel's Grand Manor on October 20 for the Great Dinner Auction, "Dinner at Tiffany's." Everyone enjoyed our silent and live auctions, dinner and dancing. The night was a wonderful success! Stay tuned to the Bulletin for more details and photos as they become available.

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Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

What's Inside This Issue?

- Special Veterans Day Prayer
- Upcoming Service Opportunities
- Advent Opportunities to Grow in Your Faith
- Holiday Mass Schedule

Mark Your Calendar For These Upcoming Events:

November

- 3, 10 - Bootcamp for Successful Aging
7 - Mass of Remembrance
11 - UNYTS Blood Drive
11 - Amherst Men's Glee Club Concert
17, 18 - SVDP Thanksgiving Food Drive
19 - GBYSO Concert
23, 24 - Craft Show

December

- 1 - Polenta Dinner

- 5 - *Grief and the Holidays Presentation*
8 - *Advent Celebration for Children*
8 - *Waiting with Mary: An Evening of Prayer and Adoration*
9 - *Holiday Candlelight Service*
8, 9 - *Parish Christmas Gift Collection*
11 - *Family-to-Family Christmas Donations*
15 - *Children's Advent Pageant*
17 - *Advent Penance Service*
26, 27 - *Living Nativity*

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