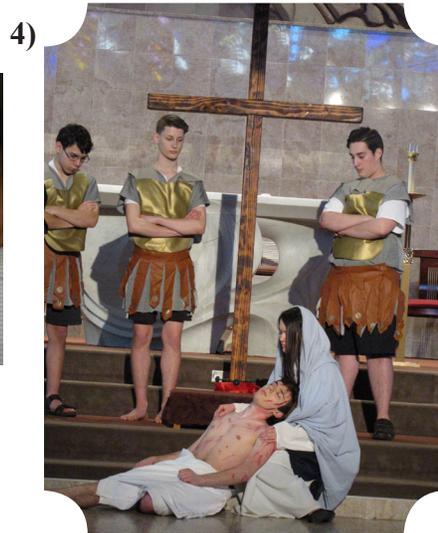


# Spirit & Life

*The Call to a New Evangelization: Go and make Disciples.*

*Spring 2018*

## Did You Miss This?



- 1) On Monday, April 9, the newly-formed St. Greg's Young Adult Ministry took an outing to the Anchor Bar. Over 29 young adults (18 yrs - 30s) came together for wings and trivia.
- 2) Team USA Women's Hockey Gold Medalist Emily Pfalzer stopped by St. Gregory the Great School to show off her Gold Medal won at the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.
- 3) Father Tom Mahoney washes the feet of a parishioner during the traditional Washing of the Feet at the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper.
- 4) St. Greg's Youth Ministry performs a live version of the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.
- 5) On Sunday, April 8, St. Greg's held a ceremony and reception for Divine Mercy Sunday.
- 6) St. Greg's Science Olympiad team competes at their regional competition. The team placed in 2nd and qualified for the State competition for the 13th year in a row.



## From the Desk of the Pastor

Is it really spring? The calendar says so, but – really – snow still even into the second half of April – really??!! It just seems like the dark days of winter are looming over us. We need the bright light and life of spring!

Is it really the modern and civilized year of 2018? The calendar says so, but – really – violence, especially in our schools, and threats of violence – really??!! It just seems like the dark days of some barbaric era or culture looming over us. We need the bright light of the Resurrected Jesus Christ!

If you pay attention to the news media, you do not have to look too far to see violence every day. We see footage from the Middle East and other areas and step back and think how barbaric! From our own nation and WNY community we can see news stories filled with murder-suicides, family members killing one another, violent outbreaks during a peaceful protest, daily reports of people (especially young people) dying from opioid overdoses, shootings in schools and lockdowns from threats and the list goes on and on.

In the midst of darkness we have the light spring forward. We have stories filled with someone risking their own life to save another in a burning home, families who have given their lives to serving others as Missionaries (as the Gehl family from St. Gregory's has done in Mexico), people trying to come to the table together to forge a path of compromise and peace, people being healed of addictions and diseases, students peacefully protesting and praying for an end to school violence and the list goes on and on.



Which culture do you wish to live within? Do you want to live in the culture of darkness and death or the culture of light and life? I suppose all recorded time has had both darkness and light; evil and good as opposing forces. The new twist that I see in our modern world is that some “good” people stray from totally following the “good.” Because of relativistic thought, some people choose to believe that some of the “evil” is okay or has a right to exist. For many generations within our nation there was an agreement between what people of faith and the secular culture agreed to be “good.” People of faith rooted their belief in the standard and truth of the Gospel. Secular individuals rooted it in a political or social ideology. Today we are treating each “issue” individually and often do not recognize that each issue does tie together.

Issues of human life are not individual issues, but tie together to the basic understanding that we are sons and daughters of God, created in His image and likeness. If we recognize this and abide within that truth we will also embrace the truth that God has also given us the framework of what is considered “dark” and “evil,” as well as what is considered “light” and “good.” The Creator has given His created human beings the instructions for life.

Perhaps the reason why our culture has so many issues today is the fact that we have amnesia. We have forgotten the fundamental answer to the question “Who am I?” I am a son of God. We are sons and daughters of God. We are created, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, in His image and likeness. We are not so much “subject to,” but freely abide within this relationship of love with God 24/7/365. Do you see your identity to be that of a son or daughter of God? Do you freely abide within a relationship with God, or do you see yourself “subject” to an unfair way of life from the Church?

Today our identity as a son or daughter of God is preempted with other characteristics or beliefs that become our primary identity, rather than that of being a son or daughter of God. What is your primary identity: a son or daughter of God or something else? Our primary identity informs every facet of our lives. Often today we make our primary identity that of being rich or poor; upper, middle or lower class financially; pro-life or pro-choice; gender or orientation and more.

When we get to the deeper issue to identify as a son or daughter of God then we will be able to correct the many issues confronting our society of the darkness of confusion, division, violence, abuse and more. We will bring an end to the darkness when we realize that “the issues” tie together and will be resolved by the consistent Truth of the Gospel of light and life!

As we look to the light and life of spring and summer, may we also look to the light and life that resides only in being a son or daughter of God. Consider how you define yourself and consider how you/we are training the next generation to define themselves. May God bless you, our Mother Mary watch over you and St. Gregory the Great intercede for you, always.



# Book Review - *The Tech-Wise Family*

By Father Thomas Maloney

Andrew Crouch has written an excellent little book to help parents understand both the positive and the negative effects of the technology devices children are so fond of.

Grandparents, too. Crouch says, “They see their grandchildren absorbed in their devices, preoccupied with popular entertainment and chatter with their peers, just when they could be having the time of their lives”.

A few “money quotes”:

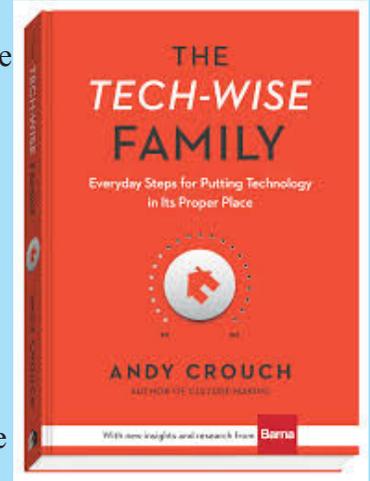
“Technology is in its proper place when it helps us bond with the real people we have been given to love. It’s out of its proper place when we end up bonding with people at a distance, like celebrities, whom we will never meet.”

“A fifteen-year-old overcome by anxiety late at night might once have had no choice but to turn to her parents, down the hall from her bedroom, for help and counsel. Now she can send out a blizzard of text messages to friends, who feel obligated to respond. But this text-and-emoji mediated social support is thin, an echo chamber of teenagers with their limited perspective. It keeps a whole circle of friends awake late into the night and robs the fifteen-year-old of an in-person conversation...that could be...transformative.”

“If we don’t put technology in its proper place, we will miss out on many of the best parts of life in a family.”

Andrew is definitely not a technophobe. And he admits his family became “tech-wise” after some years of trial and error. He offers a well-written coherent summary of his family’s experience.

The book is entitled *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in its Proper Place* (ISBN 978-0-8010-1866-4). At Amazon you can get in on Kindle for \$2.24, and you can also sample a few chapters before buying.



**On Tuesday, April 17, and Thursday, April 19, Most Reverend Richard Malone visited St. Gregory’s to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation.**

**Congratulations to all 140 young men and women recently Confirmed.**



# Ladies of Charity

## St. Gregory the Great Association of the Ladies of Charity Celebrate their 25th Anniversary

### ***“To Serve Rather Than Be Served in Humility, Simplicity and Charity”***

The Ladies of Charity (LOC) was founded by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac in France in 1617. Subsequently started in the USA in 1857, Buffalo, NY in 1941 and at St. Gregory the Great on June 21, 1993. The Mission of LOC is to “provide Vincentian leadership to women acting together against poverty,” to carry on the work of St. Vincent in service to those in need.

For the past 25 years St. Greg’s LOC members have contributed their time, talent and treasure to many parish and Diocesan ministries such as various WNY Food Pantries, the LOC “Lots of Clothes” Thrift Store on Broadway, Catholic Charities Fresh Start Program, Annual Back-Pack Program, Homebound and Layette Programs, Reading Enrichment, sewing wheelchair/walker bags, making Rosaries for St. Greg’s First Communicants, holding the annual St. Greg’s household-goods collection and assisting with the WNY Christmas Toy Partnership. St. Greg’s Ladies of Charity members also visit the sick and elderly, contribute to the St. Greg’s Scholarship program and Family-to-Family, care for church linens, change the Holy Water, straighten the books in the pews and many more Corporal and Spiritual Acts of Mercy.

### **NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Looking for a rewarding experience that allows you to serve the poor with concrete actions?

Join the Ladies of Charity!

Meetings scheduled the fourth Monday of the month at 1:00 pm in the St. Greg’s Cafe. Watch the Sunday Bulletin for more information





### Visit Us on Social Media!!!



**Twitter:** @StGregsBuffalo

**Facebook:** St. Gregory the Great Parish and School



Visit the App Store or Play Store and search  
"St. Gregory the Great"



## St. Greg's 23rd Annual Great Race

Join us for the annual Great Race on Friday, June 15. Sign up today as a 5K runner or 1 Mile Fun Walk participant. You may register online at [www.stgregs.org/great-race](http://www.stgregs.org/great-race).

The race begins at 7:00pm, with a post-race party in the Ministry Center parking lot. Buffalo's premiere party band, HIT n RUN, will entertain with great music throughout the evening.

Don't miss the summer's most family-friendly 5K and party.





## A plan for a better life for your children - and for you!

by Msgr. Thomas F. Maloney, Parochial Vicar

Parents and grandparents may be interested in a well-researched and statistically proven program that benefits children in these ways:

- Increases their average life expectancy by several years
- Significantly reduces their use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Dramatically lowers their risk of suicide
- Helps them rebound from depression 70% faster
- Provides them with a life-long moral compass
- Reduces their risk of rebelliousness
- Provides them with an extensive caring family
- Reduces the likelihood that they will binge-drink in college
- Improves their odds of living a very happy life

The program is not new. But until recently there was no scientific evidence that it actually produced these results. And – more good news – these same benefits accrue to adults as well as children. This age-old program is **weekly participation in a worship service**. You might expect to find articles on the benefits of regular church attendance in religious publications, but when you find them from secular, non-religious sources like The New York Times, The London Telegraph, Duke University, Indiana University, The Center for Disease Control, The Barna Research Group, The Gallup Poll, The Pew Institute, the National Institute for Healthcare Research, and the Journal of the American Medical Association, you tend to pay closer attention.

Check out these results of recent scientific studies:

1) High-school seniors who consider themselves religious have significantly higher self-esteem and hold more positive attitudes toward life than do their less religious peers, according to a study done by the National Study of Youth and Religion of the University of North Carolina. The study also found that religious youth were less likely to drink, smoke, or use drugs.

2) Students from poor neighborhoods who attend church are less likely to engage in violent behavior, and generally do better in school, according to Byron Johnson, director of the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society, citing a study of 10,000 pupils.

3) “One of the most striking scientific discoveries about religion in recent years”, writes Stanford Anthropology professor T.M. Luhrmann in The New York Times on April 20, 2013, “is that regular church attendance boosts the immune system and decreases blood pressure.”

4) “Church-goers live longer and enjoy better overall health than the general population”, according to Dr. Lynda Powell of Chicago’s Rush University Medical Center. She points to the positive lifestyle choices that churches promote. “Most religious organizations discourage habits like smoking, infidelity, and other risky behaviors. They also provide parishioners with positives like a social network – essential for emotional well-being – and promote habits like meditation and prayer.”

5) In the London Telegraph editions of December 26, 2004, Elizabeth Day reports, “A twelve-year study tracking mortality rates of more than 550 adults over the age 65 found that those who attend church services at least once a week were 35% more likely to live longer than those who never attend church. Research also found that going to church boosted an elderly person’s immune system and made them less likely to suffer clogged arteries or high blood pressure.”

6) Researcher and author Peter Haas reports on five statistical benefits for those who attend Church, including significantly lower risk of depression, better time and life management, better grades in school and longer life expectancy.

7) The Los Angeles Times for June 29, 2016, has an article titled “Church Attendance Linked with Reduced Suicide Rates.” It reports on a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

For documentation, and further information, search these sites: “The Life Benefits of Going to Church” by the Presbyterian minister Rev. Neil McQueen, from whose writings I have borrowed extensively, and to whom I am greatly indebted; “The Surprising Benefits of Going to Church” (with readers’ comments); “4 Hidden Benefits of Church Attendance”; “The Jaw-dropping Benefits of Church Attendance” by Peter Haas; the scholarly “Is Religion an Answer?” from the Center for Marriage and Families of the Institute for American Values; “The Secret of a Long Life...Go to Church” from the London Telegraph, and “5 Benefits of Attending Church” at familyshare.com.



# St. Gregory the Great School

## Seventh Graders Prepare for International Competition



*Caroline May and Christian Lee discuss their plans with Principal Julie Gajewski.*

Two Seventh Grade students at St. Gregory the Great School are preparing to compete with young kids from around the world in the near future. This spring, Caroline May will journey to France and Italy with her hockey team, West Coast Select, representing the United States in games against teams from Europe. Meanwhile, Christian Lee is preparing to travel to Shanghai, China, to take part in the World Yoyo Contest 2018 this summer.

Caroline has been playing hockey since she was four years old and hopes to one day represent her country in the Olympics.

For Christian, this will be his second trip overseas for a yoyo competition. Last summer, he competed in Reykjavik, Iceland.

## St. Greg’s Students to Perform in All-County Band

This March students from Erie County gathered to play at the ECMEA Elementary Music Festival. Each student that participated was chosen from over 4,500 who auditioned at the January ECMEA Solo Festival. Of all these participating students, two were chosen from St. Gregory the Great School to perform in the 150 piece Elementary All-County Band. Quinn Robinson, a Sixth Grade bassoon player who began playing bassoon this past fall, and Lily Withiam-Leitch, a Fourth Grade flute player who began playing two and a half years ago. Of all the schools in the county, St. Gregory the Great was the only parochial school represented in the Elementary All-County Band. Congratulations to these students, their Band Director Miss Valerie Villa, and all their teachers and family members who support them!



*St. Greg’s Principal, Julie Gajewski, (left) stands with Quinn Robinson (bassoon), Lily Withiam-Leitch (flute) and St. Greg’s Band teacher, Valerie Villa.*

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Join us for the Official  
Kick-Off to Summer!  
Great Race: Friday, June 15



Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

## Save the Date!

**19th Annual Great Dinner Auction: Saturday, November 3, at Salvatore's Italian Gardens**

### Mark Your Calendar For These Upcoming Events:

#### June

- 1 - School Walk-a-thon
- 2 - Respite for Caregivers
- 6 - Grief & Loss Ministry Meeting
- 8 - Homeschool Graduation
- 10 - Parishioner Social
- 11 - Senior Citizens Meeting
- 14 - Kindergarten Celebration
- 14 - 8th Grade Graduation
- 15 - Great Race
- 17 - 9:30am Family Mass
- 25 - FFF High-School Summer Program Begins

#### July

- 4 - Independence Day - Parish Closed
- 7 - Respite for Caregivers
- 8 - Parishioner Social
- 9 - Vacation Bible School Begins
- 11 - Grief & Loss Ministry Mtg.
- 9-13 - Vacation Bible School
- 14 - Families with Disabilities Picnic
- 14 - 21 - Jamaica Mission Trip
- 16-20 - Disciple Camp
- 22 - Disciple Camp Car Wash

#### August

- 1 - Grief & Loss Ministry Meeting
- 3, 10, 17 - Middle-School Movie Night
- 4 - Respite for Caregivers
- 6, 13 - Y.M. Mass, Lunch & Games
- 7, 14, 21, 28 -High School S.W.A.T.
- 12 - New Parishioner Social
- 14 - National Pilgrim Virgin Statue Of Our Lady of Fatima Visiting St. Gregory's
- 15 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Spirit & Life Staff:** Greg Smith, Joe Deck, Fr. Leon 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.