

# Spirit & Life

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

Summer 2015

## From the Desk of the Pastor

It is wonderful to see that we have finally hit our favorite season here in Buffalo, road construction. I mean the signs of summer! We do joke about that, don't we? The two seasons of Buffalo – winter and road construction? Recently, I was trying to avoid the Youngmann Expressway because of construction and, in doing so, I ended up turning around on two other routes to my destination because those roads were also closed for repairs and construction. It was a harsh winter and even the best of our roads needed repairs, especially from the many, many potholes that surfaced. Some of our roads needed complete reconstruction.

Are our lives the same way? Is your life the same as these roads? At times, we are new and fresh, and in great shape. Sometimes we experience the harshness of life and some potholes begin to surface in our lives (hurts, depressions, frustrations, overburdened feelings, etc...). We need to be repaired at times. Similarly, sometimes we need to be completely reconstructed. We allow the craziness of life and challenges of our career, family life, community life and social circle to overwhelm us to the point that we are exhausted. At times, I suppose, we all hit a moment where we need to reconstruct our lives.

As we approach this summer, what potholes need to be repaired in your life? I am not talking about the Youngmann; I am talking about your own heart, soul, life and relationship with God, others and self. We have many opportunities this summer for people of all ages to be fixed, reconstructed or to simply come and make a strong faith road in their life even stronger. For our young people, we have many offerings through our Family Faith Department, including opportunities such as Disciple Camp, Splash and Summer Vacation Bible School. For our high school teens, we have great things happening through our Youth Ministry, including joining with over 2,000 teens from across the country at the Youth Conference at Franciscan University in July, going to Kingdom Bound at Darien Lake and attending our Confirmation retreats, as well as our regular weekly activities.

*(continued on page 7)*

## PETER DONNELLY IS ORDAINED TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

*On May 23, Peter Donnelly was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate for the Diocese of Buffalo. Recently S&L caught up with Peter:*

### ***Was your faith always a large part of your life?***

Faith has always been important for me, but it hasn't always been easy. At some points in my life, I've struggled with living my faith. Even during difficult times, though, I've always felt God's presence acting in my life. That's a lesson that I've had to teach myself – God is always there. It's just a matter of my paying attention and listening to God's call.

### ***When did you first feel the call to become a Deacon?***

When I was in my early 30s I felt that there was 'something' I needed to be doing, but at the time I didn't have a clue what that should look like. I spoke with Fr. Bill Quinlivan, who was assigned to St. Gregory's at the time, and he really challenged me to live my faith. That conversation opened my eyes that true faith requires an active, loving response; it can't be an academic exercise. It requires getting dirty.

It was another seven years before my wife, Cathy, and I felt that the time was right to look into the diaconate. It was definitely not an instantaneous thing. *(Continued on page 3)*





# Sarah's Hope

By: Maria Papia & Maria Gehl

As seen in many stories throughout the Bible, infertility was a common theme for many couples. Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth, Rebekah and Rachel were all considered barren or sterile. Using the story of Sarah and Abraham as our inspiration, we are striving to provide a ministry that will meet the spiritual and emotional needs of couples experiencing infertility.

The cross of infertility has many difficulties. Why is it that we feel ashamed? Why is it so hard to talk about? Is this a punishment? How do we get through each day? Why can't God fix it? What does the Church teach about infertility treatments?

Our ministry is here to show that you are not alone. Many couples have walked and continue to walk this difficult journey. It is through prayer, spiritual reflection, messages of hope, guidance and marriage support that we can aid one another in finding the grace within our suffering. In a confidential and respectful environment, we hope that you will feel comfort and encouragement. Through the presence of Sarah's Hope, we pray that every couple experiencing infertility, regardless of whether you ever attend a meeting, will know that you are cared for and are being prayed for daily.

It is OK to be vulnerable and it is OK to be angry, but how do we find God amid the pain? Whether experiencing primary or secondary infertility, you can learn how to carry our cross with dignity and to grow deeper in our relationship with God. "For nothing will be impossible for God." - Luke 1:37

For more information, please check out the Bulletin under "Sarah's Hope." Our next meeting is Thursday, June 4 at 7:00 pm in the Ministry Center.

# NEW MINISTRIES

## AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS



*New Fun Ministry for Girls!*

American Heritage Girls (AHG) is an exciting new ministry starting at St. Gregory the Great for Girls ages 5-18. St. Gregory's Troop NY3129, the first AHG troop to be started in the Buffalo area, was started by a group of moms looking for a scouting alternative for their daughters. AHG is a Christ-centered scouting program whose mission is building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country.

The program emphasizes life skills through a badge program, leadership opportunities for girls, teamwork development through outdoor experiences, and spiritual and social development. AHG is committed to not only developing girls' character, but also teaching girls how to apply the truths of God's Word to every aspect of life.

This spring, the AHG leaders have been busy training and planning for the upcoming year with the guidance of Fr. Steve Jekielek, the troop's spiritual adviser. AHG will continue meeting over the summer for outdoor adventures and service trips. Regular troop meetings will take place twice per month starting in September. If you would like more information or would like to join, please call Jen at 572-1983, or visit [ahgonline.org](http://ahgonline.org).



(Deacon Peter Donnelly, continued from page 1)

**What has been a surprising fruit, for you and for your family, of the formation process?**

I think it has helped me become a better husband and father. Certainly not perfect, but more focused on making sure that we are all in sync and focused on what is most important.

**What has been the greatest challenge in formation?**

Figuring out priorities and time management have been the biggest challenges. Formation helped me sort out what was most important to me and my family. Additional ministry and master's level classes at the seminary allowed me to grow and learn much more about what I was capable of doing. I needed to learn that it is less about what I want and more about responding to what God wants of me.

**Where did you feel God's hand most strongly in this process?**

Wow, that's difficult to answer since I felt it at so many different times. Narrowing it down to a single thing, I'd say my ministry at the hospital. When I started, I knew nothing about ministering to the sick and helping those who are dying, so I had to rely completely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By giving up control, I saw firsthand the healing presence of God.

**Do you have an idea or a hope for where your ministry will be?**

Within the borders of St. Gregory's parish alone, there are thousands of Catholics who are completely disenfranchised from their faith. There are also many others who are only marginally connected to their faith. We see them at weddings, funerals, occasional Sundays, major holidays, but little else.

I find this incredibly sad because the Catholic faith is all about a community of believers. Without the participation of these people, we are less whole. These are the people to whom I'd like to minister; listening to their stories and hopefully helping them reconnect to their Catholic faith.

**What specifically would you like your parish family to pray for, for you and for your family?**

I'd ask for their prayers that I continue to be successful in my vocation as husband and father, as well as in my ordained ministry.

*Thank you, Peter and family, for all that you are doing to bring the light of Christ into the world! Please be assured of your parish family's prayers for you and your ministry. God bless you, and congratulations!*

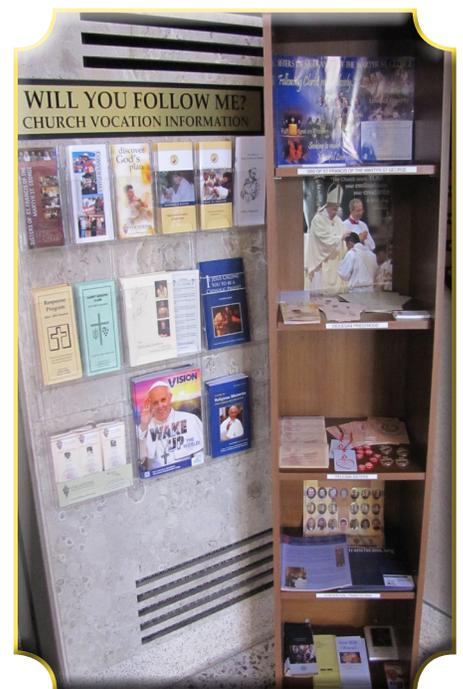
# WILL YOU FOLLOW ME?

By: Fr. Steve Jekielek

Have you ever wondered what God's plan is for your life? We often hear our young, and not so young, people say, "I want to do \_\_\_ with my life" or "I want to be a \_\_\_ when I grow up." But have we encouraged them, or ourselves for that matter, to ask God what He wants us to do with our lives? The answer may be something quite unexpected!

In order to encourage this way of thinking, St. Gregory's is offering a couple of things to help in our discernment! First, we have created a Vocations Corner in the narthex (main vestibule) of the church. You will find information on vocations for the diocesan priesthood, the diaconate, the Felician sisters, the OFM Conventual priests and brothers, Sr. Maria Christi's (our religious sister novice) order and others. Please check it out! You may be surprised and find yourself called to read up on these vocational opportunities. We never know what God has in mind for us if we don't pray about it and allow Him to speak to us!

Second, our Youth Minister, Adam Jarosz, will be redeveloping and coordinating the Don Bosco group into our Youth Ministry going forward. This ministry is for our boys to prayerfully consider if God is calling them to priesthood, diaconate or religious life. The St. Bernadette group for girls continues to flourish! Keep your eye on the Bulletin...details are forthcoming!





# AN INVITATION TO MISSION XXXIV

Here we are again...Happy Warm Weather! We are writing to extend a “special, spiritual invitation” to attend St. Gregory the Great’s 34th Mission Retreat, to be held the week of July 12 to July 18. Consider this week a beautiful “spiritual summer vacation” right here at St. Gregory’s, consisting of seven evenings of Catholic speakers, music groups, liturgies, food and fun! Also, you will get to meet and know other Catholic Christians from St. Gregory’s and other parishes. This is a very special part of the Mission retreat week!

For more information, call Jo at 688-5678 and check the St. Gregory’s website and Bulletin in the coming weeks. We hope you will join us!

- Jack and Debby Marshall



## St. Gregory’s 20th Annual Great Race

Join us for the annual Great Race on Friday, June 19. Sign up today as a 5K runner or 1 Mile Fun Walk participant. You may register online at [www.stgregs.org/greatrace](http://www.stgregs.org/greatrace).

The race begins at 7:00 pm 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.





# Mission Trip 2015: Jamaica

On July 25, thirteen members of our parish, led by Jen and Kevin Kilo, will be flying to Montego Bay, Jamaica, to spend their summer vacation on mission, serving Jesus through some very special people in a Mustard Seed Community.

Mustard Seed Communities began in 1978 as a home for a handful of abandoned and disabled children.



Today, they serve over 500 children, young adults and families who belong to the most vulnerable groups in Jamaican society. The populations of the homes include children and young adults with disabilities.

Mustard Seed’s vision is to create a loving and caring environment to aid in the physical, mental and spiritual development of its residents. Our fellow parishioners will have work projects to help improve the living conditions for these individuals, while also connecting with them through faith and spiritual guidance. The work will be done in

a setting of prayer, adoration and reflection, which will allow for everyone involved to embrace God’s Love.

Prayers would be greatly appreciated for those participating in this year’s mission trip. If you are interested in joining the “home team” to pray the Rosary at St. Gregory’s while they are gone, please contact the Parish Office at 688-5678, or [eastridge@stgregs.org](mailto:eastridge@stgregs.org). Financial support for this year’s trip is also welcomed. Checks may be made payable to St. Gregory the Great Church. Please indicate “Jamaica Mission” on the check or envelope.



For more information on Mustard Seed Communities visit <http://www.mustardseed.com>.



## 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:

SPLASH (High School Students): June 26 - July 2

Vacation Bible School (Ages 3 1/2 - Grade 4): July 13 - 17

Summer Mission Retreat (Adult/Young Adult): July 12 - 18

Kingdom Bound (High School and College Students): July 22 - 25

Disciple Camp (Grades 5-8): July 20 - 24





# Classic Car Show

Come and join us for some summertime fun at St. Gregory the Great Parish's 2nd Annual Car Show on Labor Day, September 7.



The show, sponsored by Joe Basil Chevrolet, will be held in the St. Gregory's Ministry Center parking lot from 12:00 - 5:00 pm. It is a great opportunity for people to view cars from past eras, visit with fellow parishioners and friends, listen to music from the '50s and '60s, and to have some summertime fun.

Admission is free. There will be food, beverages and a 50/50 split club raffle. The registration fee to enter a car in the show is \$13 before the event and \$15 the day of the event. Twenty-five Best of Show and Top 100 trophies will be awarded, as well as five \$100 cash prizes.

Funds raised will support the next parish Mission Trip and Catholic Education.

Come enjoy the camaraderie of the day with fellow parishioners and those we welcome to our parish campus as we enjoy the blessings of summer.



## Save the Date!

### 17th Annual Great Dinner Auction Saturday, November 7

Save the date and join us at Salvatore's Italian Gardens for the 17th Annual Great Dinner Auction on Saturday, November 7. This year's theme is "Under the Sea." Chairpersons Melissa & Kevin Deakin, Diane & Ryan DenHaese, Stephanie & Thomas Grillo and Sue & Ed Militello have begun plans for the grand event. Initial meetings and early planning have begun and committees are being formed for the largest parish fundraiser of the year. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the entire school and parish family. Be a part of making it a great success! If you would like to help out or get involved, please contact the Auction Office at dinner-auction@gmail.com or 688-5678, ext. 337.





## FATHER LEON NAMED SCOUTING COMMITTEE CHAPLAIN



Father Leon Biernat was recently appointed by Bishop Richard Malone to a three-year term as chaplain of the Buffalo Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting. In addition to his duties as pastor of St. Gregory the Great Church, Father Leon will assist the Scouting committee in giving guidance, vitality and leadership in the spiritual phase of Scouting to all Catholic Scouts and adult leaders in the diocese.

The committee oversees many religious Scouting activities throughout the year, and Father Leon will be involved. These activities include Scout Sunday in February, an annual retreat, and arranging Masses at summer camp and other events. The committee also works in conjunction with the Protestant Committee on Scouting and Jewish Committee on Scouting to promote the Duty to God aspect of the Boy Scout Oath to all Scouts.

One of the most high-profile events the committee sponsors is the annual Religious Award Ceremony at St. Joseph's Cathedral, which takes place on Palm Sunday weekend. The ceremony recognizes Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venture Scouts, Girl Scouts and

adult leaders who have earned religious emblems in recognition of how they live their Catholicism through Scouting faith development programs.

As chaplain of the Scouting committee, Father Leon will promote vocational opportunities, a task at which he will be a natural, given his previous position as director of vocations for the Diocese of Buffalo. As chaplain, he will help promote events at Christ the King Seminary and assist in picking out a Scout from the diocese to send to the St. George Trek at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

We congratulate Father Leon on his appointment and wish him success in preparing young men and women to assume roles of leadership, responsibility and service in the community and the Church.



*(Fr. Leon, continued from page 1)*

For the adults, we have our week-long parish Mission in July, as well as the annual parish mission trip to Jamaica to learn as we serve the needs of others. These opportunities, along with great parish celebrations, such as Peter Donnelly's ordination to the permanent Diaconate this past May and Sam Giangreco's expected ordination to the transitional Diaconate in September, and his priesthood ordination next spring, are all signs of life and avenues of great joy to celebrate as a parish family.

As you drive around this season of road construction, I mean summer, take time to drive around your life of faith and reflect upon the potholes and needs for reconstruction. Do not stop there; actually do something about it here at St. Gregory's.

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

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[www.stgregs.org](http://www.stgregs.org)

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Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church

## What's Inside This Issue?

- Our newly ordained Deacon Peter Donnelly
- Ministries: Sarah's Hope & American Heritage Girls
- Summer at St. Gregory's
- Vocations Corner

## Mark Your Calendar For These Upcoming Events:

### June

- 3 - Grief & Loss Ministry Meeting
- 5 - School Walk-a-thon
- 7 - Household Goods Collection
- 13, 14 - SVDP Food Drive
- 14 - New Parishioner Social after the 9:30 am Mass
- 17 - Kindergarten Celebration
- 19 - Great Race
- 24 - 8th Grade Graduation
- 26 - SPLASH Begins
- 28 - Red Cross Blood Drive

### July

- 1 - Grief & Loss Ministry Meeting
- 10 - Wine & Beer Tasting Party
- 11 - Family Disabilities Picnic
- 12 - New Parishioner Social after the 9:30 am Mass
- 12-18 - Summer Mission Retreat
- 13-17 - Vacation Bible School
- 20-24 - Disciple Camp
- 25-01 - Jamaica Mission Trip
- 26 - Disciple Camp Car Wash

### August

- 5 - Grief & Loss Ministry Meeting
- 15 - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Not a holy day of obligation in 2015).
- 16 - New Parishioner Social after the 9:30 am Mass

**Spirit & Life Staff:** Elizabeth Astridge, Fr. Leon Biernat, Suellen Brewster, Mrene Corra, Donna Callaghan, Dawn Curazatto, Sr. Shawn Czyzycki, Bill Grunert, Jacqueline Hanley, Felix Labaki, Carla Mangone, Mike Pesarchick, Camille Pontrello, Rick Reinhart, Joan Rischmiller, and Mary Toerne. Published bimonthly 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.