



Clarion

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ST. ANNE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



A LEPER came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you WISH, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, TOUCHED him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made CLEAN."

MARK 1:40-41

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Volume 5, No. 12 ~ This People is the House of God ~ February 15, 2009



St Anne Catholic Community

OUR MISSION

We, a Catholic Christian people rooted by Baptism, take as our challenge the mission of Jesus: to build the Kingdom of God, standing in solidarity with the poor. We are committed to:

Welcoming

- *Welcoming* all people and providing a sense of belonging to people at every stage of life.

Creating

- *Creating* a place of enjoyment, excitement and fun for people of all ages.

Healing

- *Healing, reconciling* and *reaching out* in caring service to each other.

Reaching Out

- *Serving* those in need, especially the broken, through generous gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Serving

Gathering

- *Gathering* at Eucharist and celebrating the Sacraments of the Church and the sacramental moments of our lives.

Sharing

- *Telling* and *sharing* the Living Story of Jesus.

So challenged, we pray that the Holy Spirit fills us and empowers us so that we may become the Living Presence of Jesus in our contemporary world.

CELEBRATING SACRAMENTS

Weddings

Saturday, February 21st, 3:00 p.m.
Inas Kaku and Paul Corty

Baptisms

Ainslie Elizabeth **Bradley** (Rebecca and Scott)
Ingrid Hanna **Wright** (Bethany and James)

Remembering...

Monday, February 16th, President's Day

8:15 St. Anne Perpetual Mass Society
Helen Zgonina—*Joe and Sandra Zgonina*

Tuesday, February 17th

8:15 Donald Begley—*Rebecca and Jonathan Hirsch*

Wednesday, February 18th

8:15 Donald Begley—*Rebecca and Jonathan Hirsch*

Thursday, February 19th

8:15 Robert James Gadowski—*The Francescatti Family*
Fernando Mardones—*Edith Decastro*

Friday, February 20th

8:15 St. Anne Perpetual Mass Society

Saturday, February 21st

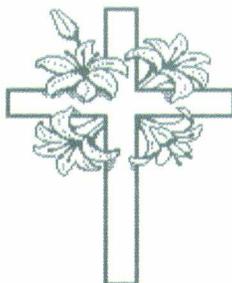
Mass of Anticipation
5:15 Leslie Suchman—*The Romeo Family*

Sunday, February 22nd

7:15 People of St. Anne
Maurice Fitzgerald—*The Gerak Family*
9:00 Leonard and Eleanor Loster—*The Thomas Family*
Lonna Kirkwood—*Erin Tangredi*
Angela Dentamaro—*Nick and Roseann Santoro*
William Moran—*Bobbie and John O'Brien*
Joseph Kalsch—*The Francescatti Family*

11:00 Dorothy Spolzino—*Sue and Skip Koch*
Roselyn M. Kingsley—*The Walt Family*
Michael Ryan—*Jo and Robert Ryan*
Mr. Illa Roman—*Denis Madigan*
Walter Mikosz—*The Family*

5:15 Our Country and Its Leadership—*Project Hope*



Resting in Peace

Maribeth Kennedy, *daughter-in-law of Jim;*

Dorothy R. Linder, *mother of Liz Brennan*

Stewardship of Treasure

Weekly Offering for February 8, 2009

Adult Offering (546 envelopes)	\$30,946.00
Loose Cash	\$1,326.00
Pro-rated "Parish Pay" offering	\$8,098.38
(Weekly share of Monthly "Parish Pay")	
Youth and Children Offering (0 envelopes).....	\$0.00
Grand Total	\$40,370.38
Amount needed to meet Operating	\$47,000.00
Expense <u>and</u> Loan Interest Payments	
Collection Shortfall	(\$6,629.62)
Sharing Contributions (24 envelopes).....	\$735.00

Building Debt as of February 9, 2009

Outstanding Loan Balance.....	\$1,856,268.00
with Archdiocese	
Less Pledged Funds	\$966,268.00
payable through 2009*	
*includes "Complete the Journey" and other pledges	
Total long-term Parish Debt	\$890,000.00
Monthly Interest Payment (5.92%).....	\$9,159.59
Monthly Debt-Reduction Collection (green envelope)	
Fiscal YTD (32 weeks).....	\$67,050.00

Past 4 weeks:

Average Weekly Offering	\$37,594.13
Average Weekly Shortfall	(\$9,405.87)
Total Shortfall	(\$37,623.48)
Fiscal YTD Shortfall (32 weeks).....	(\$141,928.56)

THANK YOU

A word of thanks to my good friends in the St. Anne community:

- ~ your thoughtfulness
- ~ your many sincere prayers for my recovery
- ~ your personal wishes and words of encouragement

All these have been a great blessing to me in what has been a difficult time. From the many prayers and Masses offered for my intentions to the many hundreds of home-made and often humorous cards made by our kids—all these have lifted my spirits. I offer you thanks from the bottom of my heart. Believe me — I hope to be with you very soon in all the ways we celebrate the Lord. I send you my blessing and my love!

Father Jack

PARISH TO HOLD "SPRING GALA" FUNDRAISER HELP IS NEEDED

After an absence of several years, St. Anne Parish plans to hold a "Gala" fundraising event later this spring. All proceeds will go to help make up the serious shortfall in weekly collection revenue that the Parish is presently facing. The following details have been finalized:

Saturday, May 30th

The Sanfilippo Estate, Barrington Hills

Theme: Casino Games

Parishioner help is needed to assist with the event details including soliciting silent and live auction items and coordinating the casino game activities with the professional gaming company. If you would like to be a part of the team to plan and manage this much-needed fundraiser, please call **Diane Augustine** or **Joe Kelsch** at **847.382.5300**. Your participation will be much appreciated by Fr. Jack.

St. Anne Catholic Community

Generations of Faith

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

For those of you who were unable to attend the session with our guest speaker, Judy Logue, this is a summary of her talk.

I. Forgiveness on a human level, what is it?

Forgiveness is misunderstood, and therefore avoided, by most of us. Drawing on the parable of the visit of Pope John Paul II to forgive his would-be assassin in prison, we can deduce that forgiveness is not approval, not the immediate restoration of trust, nor is it cancelling consequences. Forgiveness is us working with our very real and natural human responses to pain, anger and negative perceptions that occur inside us when we have been hurt or betrayed, or when something has been taken away from us.

Forgiveness A) addresses painful losses and grieves well. B) It summons the energy of good, clean anger at injustice in order to move on with life. C) It searches and prays for a wider horizon to place my pain, beyond the specifics of my immediate situation. This bigger perspective, or larger context, is ultimately the Paschal mystery, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is a decision to be healed, and there are no short cuts. Forgiveness is our human job. Reconciliation is God's job. We discover and receive reconciliation when we keep up our side of the bargain.

II. What can we say about the forgiveness of God?

We need to clearly know and understand that all of us have absorbed many negative and harmful images of God. These originate from stories in the Old Testament where God's love for God's people is seen as conditional. This understanding of God as a punishing and vengeful Deity gradually changed as time went on; culminating in the God of Jesus Christ, who is only Lover-Forgiver-Healer (God's real name), for everyone Jesus meets. God only loves and forgives, just as the sun only shines. All other God-images are false.

III. What about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Now that we understand what forgiveness demands on a human level, and who God really is for us, we are ready to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The purpose of all the sacraments is to hear God whisper, "I love you." So we come with ears to hear and with a willingness to be at least in the process of forgiving others. We come with clear and heartfelt ideas of what we wish we had not done (sorrow), and what we wish we could do or want to do (hope). And we come seeking an encounter with the God who healed Peter's mother-in-law, who countered the men who stood ready to stone the woman caught in adultery and who willed the leper to be made clean and whole.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is about receiving the compliment of God's love for me personally, and not hiding behind false pride or humility. It is about remembering again that I am God's beloved. I leave the sacrament blessed, empowered to repent and eager to discover reconciliation, the deep knowledge that God will always be for me and with me.

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St. Anne Catholic Community

CONNECTIONS

Join Us for Our Valentine's Day Bash!

(Featuring a Laser Show and D.J. Music of Woolson Productions)

Friday, February 20th

St. Anne Parish Center (Ela & Franklin)

7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10.00 per person

WHO: 6th-8th Grades



Welcome 6th Grade

ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE A CURRENT BMS or SAS PHOTO STUDENT I.D.

Refreshments will be available at an additional cost.

This is a lock-in event. All students must be picked-up by an adult at least 18 years of age or older. Students will not be permitted to walk home.

Questions? Call the **Hotline** at **847.382.5300 Ext. 400.**

Dance is for middle school students only.

WE NEED CHAPERONES !

SEARCHING FOR MORE

SEARCHING FOR MORE

St. Anne Adult Education presents

a Sacramental Lecture

Focusing on... Reconciliation and Healing

Monday, February 23rd

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Presenter: Fr. Fred Licciardi

Hospitality Room (lower level of church)

St. Anne Catholic Community

GOSPEL CHAMPIONS

A Catholic Video Game

A free gift for our children

(with many games and levels for ages kindergarten to eighth grade)

St. Anne parents and children,

We are happy to bring you a Catholic video game for your home computer, compliments of St. Anne Parish (*a license to share has been procured*).

Computer games are part of our lives. Why not use them to learn more about Jesus? The game recreates Gospel stories in an action-adventure arcade game that is fun to play and helps reinforce Gospel stories and Catholic teachings. Best of all, the game presents Gospel stories heard at Mass.

Gospel Champions It is fast and furious action for Zack and Mary Martha. Help them as they travel through adventurous Gospel stories using fun power-ups and ancient tools to perform works of mercy, solve problems, and outwit menacing adversaries. Score bonus points as you find Catholic prayers, saints and teachings. The game includes 15 Gospel story games, fantastic 3D game worlds, challenging puzzles, tools and adversaries; and **age settings for grades K-8.**

To get a free copy of the game for use on computer at home:

1. You will need this access code - **K3j – e0a – k6b** (Note: the 0 is a zero and not the letter o)
(According to our license agreement, we cannot post the access code on the internet, but can distribute it throughout the parish.) Should you misplace this information, **this code is listed on the back of the parish bulletin** under Audrey Taylor's name. You can also get it by calling the Faith Formation office at **847.620.3068** or by emailing dkelsch@stannebarrington.org.
2. With your access code, go to the Gospel Champions website, using the link:
www.GospelChampions.com/gamev2.asp
3. The first visit will take 15-20 minutes for a one-time installation, so to avoid frustration, parents will want to download it BEFORE the children are ready to play. After the initial download, playing can begin immediately with a click on the yellow cross icon.

Customer Support is FREE to you-and part of our parish license

Anytime you need technical support, email support@thirddaygames.com or call **866.663.5590** during business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Central time). **You will not be charged for this support. It is part of our parish license.**

System Requirements are Windows Vista, 98, ME, 2000, or XP;
128 MB RAM 800 MHz processor; 3D graphics card; and sound card.

Faith Formation * Faith Formation * Faith Formation

St. Anne Catholic Community

ST. ANNE SCHOOL

Catholic schooling...

lessons that last a lifetime!



There is probably never been a tougher time to be a parent. This is why there is never been a better time to choose St. Anne School for your child's education.

At St. Anne School, your child will receive an education that is second to none. Nationally recognized in 2006 with elite Blue Ribbon status, St. Anne School offers:

- 3 and 4 year old Preschool
- Full day Kindergarten
- Before *and* After School Care
- Smart Board Technology (all grade levels - Preschool to 8th Grade)
- Science Lab (Participation in Local, Regional, and State Science Fairs)
- No-Cut Athletic Programs
- Weekly Middle School Progress Reports
- Edline Communications
- In-District Bus Service
- Flexible Tuition Plans
- Music, Foreign Language and Art Programs
- Daily Religion Classes and Bi-Monthly School Masses

Just as important as academic achievement is the environment in which your child learns. St. Anne School teachers and administration share your beliefs and values. They reinforce the morals you instill in your child. When you make a Catholic school your choice for education, you will give your child a solid academic *and moral* foundation.

As an alumna of St. Anne School, I remember the presence and influence of the teachers, priests and sisters in my education. They allowed me to see and experience people "living their faith." They also reinforced, on a larger scale, the values I was learning at home and help to develop my own sense of Christianity.

As a family, we felt that a Catholic school would help to keep a focus on our faith and moral values while encouraging a sense of philanthropy as an integral part of our daily life. Our daughter is becoming more vested in her faith as she experiences and shares it with her friends as well as her family.

As a teacher at St. Anne School, I have the opportunity to help the children develop, deepen and share their own growing knowledge of God with each other in the classroom, playground and by helping others not as fortunate as them in the community.

Kathy Dioguardi and Phil Cunningham

Call **St. Anne School** or visit our website today.

You will see why a Catholic school is a school you can believe in.

(www.stanneschoolbarrington.org **847.381.0311**)

St. Anne Catholic Community

REFLECTIONS

By Sister Laretta Leipzig, Pastoral Associate and Director of Adult Education

A Shepherd-King

Who is Jesus for you? A king? A shepherd? Who is Jesus for you?

The story is told of the origins of a wonderful statue of Jesus the Christ that exists in the Cathedral of Copenhagen, Denmark. The sculptor was the master, Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen who died in 1844.

He chose to sculpt a monumental Christ that would reveal him in all his majesty. His hands would be raised as befitted his awesome power. His face would look out regally on everyone and everything. He would indeed be the King of Kings, the person in total control. And so it was done. "Jesus is the greatest figure in human history," he said, "and this statue will so represent him."

However, the statue was left in a shed near the water. The dampness had its way with the clay Christ statue. The upraised hands drooped, no longer commanding, but beseeching. The upturned face lowered onto the chest now revealing a person who knew many problems and understood compassion.

Obviously this depiction was no longer of a King but appeared more like a Shepherd, solicitous for every one of his sheep. At first, Thorvaldsen was bitterly disappointed by the accident, but he soon realized after reflection that this was a more accurate Jesus than the one he had originally planned. So, he left it the way it was.

Interesting that his original inscription at the base of the state was "Follow My Commands" but, because that was no longer appropriate he chiseled the message, "Come Unto Me." Without a doubt this new Christ figure represented the type of king Jesus would be for us. And his kingdom? Jesus spoke to Pontius Pilate saying "Mine is not a kingdom of this world." And again we read that Jesus wished to present to the Father "a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice and peace."

What about we who are called to bring about the kingdom here on earth? Sometimes we can make the mistake of taking on the mindset that originally belonged to the artist. We tend to act as if we are in command and we alienate people from the shepherd whom we would have ourselves represent. Rather, in our dealings with others we have to have the effect that the benign and gentle Jesus of Copenhagen had on the people who entered the cathedral. That Jesus touched the hearts and spirits of all who witnessed the artist's work. Let us remember that it is important that if we want to create the kingdom of which Jesus spoke here on earth we must strive to practice the attributes of the kingdom (truth, life, holiness, grace, justice and peace) in our own Christian lives.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jamie **Colantino**

Mark **Frey**

Miriam and Vincent **Latragna**

Betsey and Brian **Pfaff**
(Haylie)

ASH WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

Wednesday, February 25th

8:30 a.m. Mass

12:15 pm Prayer Service

4:15 p.m. Prayer service

7:00 p.m. Mass

St. Anne Catholic Community

St. Anne Community Theater

announces

Our 10th Anniversary Musical



Opens

JULY 2009

www.stannetheater.com

CALLING ALL YOUNG AT HEART AND 50+

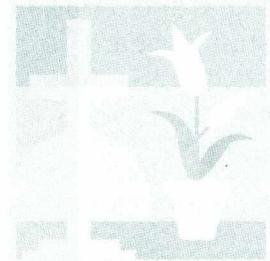
A LENTEN RETREAT

You are invited to a Lenten retreat with Father Tom Bishop on
Thursday, March 19th,
from to 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the hospitality room.

The program will be as follows:

- 9:15 a.m.—Continental breakfast
- 10:00 a.m.—Talk begins
- 10:45 a.m.—Break
- 11:00 a.m.—Mass
- 11:45 a.m.—Break
- 12:00 p.m.—Lunch

Cost: \$15.00 per person



LENTEN RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

Thursday, March 19th

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Number of reservations: _____ at \$15.00 each

Please make checks payable to *Young at Heart* and
mail to **Sr. Margaret**, 120 North Ela Street, Barrington, 60010.

Registration deadline: **Monday, March 9th**

St. Anne Catholic Community

NOTE: Reconciliation will not be available on the mornings of **Saturday, February 14th**, and **Saturday, February 21st**, due to the children's group reception of the sacrament. For more information, call the rectory office at **847.382.5300**.

ST. ANNE'S BOOK CLUB

All are invited to join in the discussion of this month's riveting book, "*Nineteen Minutes*," by Jodi Picoult. We will meet on **Tuesday, February 17th**, at 7:30 p.m., in the library. Following is a summary of the book:

Sterling is an ordinary New Hampshire town where nothing ever happens – until the day its complacency is shattered by an act of violence. Josie Cormier, the daughter of the judge sitting on the case, should be the state's best witness, but she can't remember what happened before her very own eyes – or can she? As the trial progresses, fault lines between the high school and the adult community begin to show – destroying the closest of friendships and families. "*Nineteen Minutes*" asks what it means to be different in our society, who has the right to judge someone else, and whether anyone is ever really who they seem to be.

URGENT HELP NEEDED!

St. Anne's Environment and Art team is looking for 2 members to join the 1st and 4th week of the month watering teams. There are 4 watering teams who rotate to care for the plants in the Chapel, Gathering Space, and Church. The task is done twice a week (usually Monday and Friday) and takes about 2 hours each time. If you can help with the gardening task, please contact **Peggy Sobolewski** at **847.382.5150** or rsobole@aol.com.



SHARING BOARD NEWS

We are excited to announce that Rev. Matthew Eyermann, the pastor of St. Columbanus Parish, which runs the St. Columbanus/St. Gelasius Food Pantry, will be coming to speak at all Masses the weekend of **Saturday, February 28th** and **Sunday, March 1st**.

Please plan on stopping by to meet him at our hospitality tables in the Gathering Space after all Masses.

Did you know that President Barack Obama came with his family to volunteer at the St. Columbanus Food Pantry before Thanksgiving? You can see footage of his visit by connecting to either of two links: <http://abclocal.go.com/wls/video?id=6527139> or <http://cbs2chicago.com/local/obama.food.needy.2.874585.html>.

WEDDING MUSIC and LITURGY FAIR

Monday, March 9th

Planning a wedding at St. Anne's or for a family member? Just want to get out for an evening of beautiful music? Brides and-grooms-to-be and their significant others are especially invited to St. Anne's Wedding Liturgy and Music Fair, to be held in the chapel on **Monday, March 9th**, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Our prospective wedding couples will receive the book *Celebrating Marriage* and a music planning sheet, and Rory Cooney will give a brief 'user's guide' to the book. Over an hour of our time together will be sampling parts of forty or so pieces of music as options for the wedding. Providing music will be Rory as well as some of our cantors, a string quartet, trumpet, and flute. It is an enjoyable and indispensable opportunity to prepare for the wedding ceremony. Prospective brides and/or grooms should R.S.V.P. to the liturgy office at **847.620.3064** or by email to rcooney@stannebarrington.org so that we can prepare enough handouts. There is no charge for this evening. All are welcome, even if you are not getting married!

St. Anne Catholic Community

NOTE for those attending the
Women's Club Day Retreat on
Wednesday, February 18th:

the address for the
Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House is
420 W. County Line Road, Barrington –
½ mile west of Barrington High School.

SHAWL KNITTING MINISTRY

May those who receive knitted shawls or baby items in hospitals and homes from the St. Anne Knitting Ministry be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be! Join us as we knit together on the **2nd Monday** of each month, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., in the conference room of the Parish Center. The next date is **Monday, March 9th**. For more information or to request items, call **Liz** at **847.381.8695** or **Joan** at **847.381.1409**.

THE RESURRECTION CHOIR

Music soothes a grieving heart. Please join us in singing with the Resurrection choir which sings at funerals held at St. Anne. There are no rehearsals, and it is not necessary to sing at every funeral to participate. For more information, call **Kathryn** at **847.639.1826** or **Sr. Lorraine** at **847.381.5721**.



RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Part of the **RCIA** process is all of us reaching out. St. Anne Parish is seeking all who may have even the slightest interest in getting to know Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church to come and get acquainted. Advertising in the *Clarion* will herald them in our evangelization effort, but you, the members of St. Anne community, are the best tools we have to invite a friend, neighbor, husband, wife, or even stranger to attend the inquiry sessions beginning in February. If you or someone you know is interested, call **Sister Anna Marie** at **847.381.5793**. You will be helping in the process of bringing about the kingdom.

ST. ANNE EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY

There are several ways to push your job search forward. St. Hubert's, Schaumburg, has a job listing blast you can subscribe to which pulls job postings from several job boards and compiles them into a daily email. To subscribe, email St_Hubert_Job_Ministry-subscribe@yahoo.com. Another great resource in the Barrington Career Center, 600 Hart Road, Suite 275, **847.304.4157**, www.barringtoncareercenter.com. Our parish provides a personal, one-on-one coffee meeting to discuss details and strategies unique for your search. If you would like to schedule a meeting to dissect your resumé and job search techniques, send an email to maria@marialarsen.com. Meetings are held early in the morning, late in the afternoon or on weekends.

ST. ANNE SCHOOL USED UNIFORM SALE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

St. Anne School will be collecting used uniform donations for its sale. Donations should only include school-approved pieces from Dennis, Cloz and Land's End which are in good condition. Items may be brought to the school office. For more information, call **Stacy** at **847.277.9947** or **Andrea** at **847.550.8464**.

Minister Schedule

Note: this schedule does not reflect recent "swaps" or changes made with other ministers either online or offline

Monday, February 16, 8:15 AM

L. Delisle Serv (1)
J. O'Connor Serv (1)

Tuesday, February 17, 8:15 AM

P. Roeckell Serv (1)
E. Doersching Serv (2)

Wednesday, February 18, 8:15 AM

N. Schubert Captain
M. Clifford Serv (1)
M. Levin Serv (1)

Thursday, February 19, 8:15 AM

C. Hirsch Serv (1)
E. Jagmin Serv (2)

Friday, February 20, 8:15 AM

C. Reeves Serv (1)
E. Murray Serv (1)

Saturday, February 21, 5:15 PM

Rick Weaver MC
Rita Weaver MC
J. Stack Captain
B. Seibt Serv (1)
C. Seibt Serv (1)
J. Graft Serv (2)
M. Wedinger Lector (1)
C. Laning Lector (2)
M. Barnett EM
D. Brown EM
B. Byrne EM
D. Grzelak EM
L. Kantroski EM
L. Lowery EM
L. Spinner EM
M. Spinner EM
A. Tuszynski EM
J. Tuszynski EM

Sunday, February 22, 7:15 AM

F. Kaminski MC
D. Lopez Captain
N. Horcher Serv (1)
M. Horcher Serv (1)
M. Koepke Serv (2)
D. Foster Lector (1)
M. Roeckell Lector (2)
M. Bartels EM
F. Garcia EM
H. Horcher EM
J. Huynh EM
S. Juip EM
Judy Nelson EM
K. Horcher Intercessor

Sunday, February 22, 9:00 AM

M. Schauer MC
B. Schauer MC
J. Trimberger Captain
D. Krout Serv (1)
J. Cardelli Serv (1)
N. Divito Serv (2)
F. Lolli Lector (1)
T. Serpento Lector (2)
M. Brindise EM
Clare Burke EM
Chris Burke EM
V. Caminiti EM
L. Gillogly EM
K. Goodwin EM
B. Groom EM
N. Jorgensen EM
A. Kalmes EM
P. Kalmes EM
M. Lesniak EM
Scott Pederson EM
Susan Pederson EM
C. Slack EM
D. Slack EM
M. Todd EM

Sunday, February 22, 11:00 AM

E. LeMonier MC
M. LeMonier MC
E. Tracy Captain
A. Rudolphi Serv (1)
K. Rudolphi Serv (2)
S. Nordgren Serv (1)
C. Wills Serv (2)
M. Moran Lector (1)
P. Kolasinski Lector (2)
J. Albanese EM
M. Albanese EM
S. Carlson EM
C. Condill EM
Carly Dwyer EM
E. Kendal-Ward EM
M. Kendal-Ward EM
K. Lynam EM
A. Meyers EM
A. Nordgren EM
P. Sobolewski EM
B. Sobolewski EM
M. Stanton EM
B. Stanton EM
E. Trausch EM
D. Trausch EM

Sunday, February 22, 5:15 PM

G. Farman MC
Amanda Hirsch MC
E. Hirsch Captain
S. Moran Serv (1)
E. Donoghue Serv (1)
C. Madden Serv (2)
A. McSorley Lector (1)
L. Clement EM
K. Donohue EM
S. Gupta EM
Charlotte Hamilton EM
Claire Hamilton EM
D. Hays EM
P. Hirsch EM
J. Hopkinson EM
D. Huntemann EM
Julia McSorley EM
B. Reed EM
M. Holtz Intercessor

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Monday: Genesis 4:1-15, 25/Mark 8:11-13
Tuesday: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Mark 8:14-21
Wednesday: Genesis 8:6-13, 20-22/Mark 8:22-26
Thursday: Genesis 9:1-13/Mark 8:27-33
Friday: Genesis 11:1-9/Mark 8:34-9:1
Saturday: Hebrews 11:1-7/Mark 9:2-13
Sunday: Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25/2 Corinthians 1:18-22/
Mark 2:1-12

St. Anne Catholic Community

A LETTER OF THANKS

Aid for Women
8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60603-3311
312.621.1101
infor@aidforwomen.org

Reverend John Dewes
St. Anne Parish
120 North Ela Street
Barrington, IL 60010

Dear Father Dewes,

On behalf of the Aid for Women Board of Directors and its Chair, Susan R. Barrett, I extend our grateful appreciation to you and the parishioners of St. Anne parish for the wonderful contributions your community donation to this organization. With your help, we raised \$3,183.08. I would also like to give a special thanks to James and Irene LaCesa and Patricia Daily for coordinating the fundraiser.

The generosity of your parishioners will enable the clients we serve to better care for and support their babies and themselves. For this generosity and on behalf of our clients, we give St. Anne parish our deepest thanks.

Together with support from churches and their parishioners, individual donors and support from businesses and foundations, Aid for Women has been able to maintain its presence in the community for 30 years. With continued support from these faithful contributors and outreach in the community to new supporters, Aid for Women strives to reach out to more women facing crisis pregnancies so that we may walk in solidarity with them to empower them to choose life for their unborn children.

Thank you, Father Dewes, and the parishioners of St. Anne, for being our partners in ministry to women facing crisis pregnancies. The essential ministry of Aid for Women is saving lives, one at a time. Thank you for helping us save lives today and in the future.

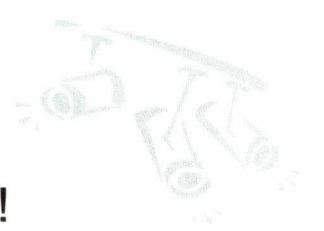
Peace and blessings,

Beth Georgopulos
Director

St. Anne Catholic Community

*St. Anne Parishioners,
you've got talent!*

and we would love for you to share it!



St. Anne's LaFarge Lifelong Learning program seeks to expand its course offerings for our active adult community. We invite you to share the talents you have honed, either as a hobbyist or by profession, with others. No prior teaching experience is required, just your enthusiasm! You choose your instruction schedule and meeting frequency (one class up to six classes). All courses are held in the St. Anne Senior Center (lower level of the Parish Center), and material costs are covered by enrollment fees.

Prior offerings have included technology, arts and crafts and languages. What ideas might you inspire? For more information, please call **Sr. Margaret Eisele** at **847.381.5799**.



LaFarge Lifelong Learning

Inspiration Through Continuing Education

Presented by the St. Anne Catholic Community

Mark Your Calendar! **Annie's Attic '09**



Volunteer • Donate • Shop

for St. Anne's Project Hope

June 25th, 26th and 27th

Can't wait to get started?

Project Hope needs your help now!

Volunteers are needed for merchandise sorting and restocking at House of Hope Resale on Thursday evenings between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Schedules are completely flexible - any assistance you can give makes a big difference for area families in crisis.

For more information, call **Colleen Dunkel** at **847.304.8651**.

Spring is just around the



corner

- ♥ **75% off** remaining winter gear including coats, boots and gloves
- ♥ **50% off** all Valentine's items, including selected jewelry items
- ♥ **50% off** all carry-on bags, duffle bags, laptop bags and backpacks
- ♥ Clearance pricing on selected décor items

Please Donate!

If you are getting a jump on spring cleaning, please consider donating the new and gently used items you don't use to Project Hope. All donations either go directly to needy families in our area or proceeds from their sale support Project Hope's mission to provide short term assistance, restore self-sufficiency and replenish hope. Your donation is made here, stays here and helps people right here in our own community.

At this time, we especially need items for our upcoming Bridal Faire, including men's suits and tuxedos, women's and children's formal wear, shoes, purses, jewelry, stationery and gift items. If you can help, please call right away and let us know you have items for the Bridal Faire.

For a complete list of items we can accept, to arrange a convenient drop-off time or schedule a pick-up for larger donations, please call **Project Hope** at **847.381.5721**.

Thank you!

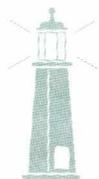
We Need Volunteers!

We are looking for some help at House of Hope Resale.

No experience needed! Any time you can give is greatly appreciated.

Have fun and meet new friends, all while helping area families in crisis.

To volunteer, contact **Peggy Sobolewski** immediately at **847.382.5150**. **Thank you!**



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6th Sunday of the Year, 2009 (77B)

First Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46 (USCCB)

- ¹ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
² "If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants.
⁴⁴ If the man is leprous and unclean, and the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head.
⁴⁵ "The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!'
⁴⁶ As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp."

Responsorial Psalm 32:1-2, 5 11.

I turn to you, LORD, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1 (USCCB)

- Brothers and sisters,
³¹ whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.
³² Avoid giving offense, whether to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.
¹ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45 (CCCB)

- ⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to Jesus begging him, and kneeling said to Jesus, "If you choose, you can make me clean."
⁴¹ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!"
⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.
⁴³ After sternly warning him Jesus sent him away at once,
⁴⁴ saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."
⁴⁵ But the man went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Living Story

Once again the social context of the story challenges our present day perspective. The setting for today's pericope is in the small rural communities away from Capernaum (vv.38-39, see last week) where Jesus' notoriety begins to spread so that confrontation seems inevitable with the scribes and priests who wield much power in the society. (It is yet early in this terse gospel; reading the first 3 short chapters will take us into Ash Wednesday!)

Last week we saw that for the Mediterranean mindset, the cure of the biomedical condition was less important than to be able to cross the boundary that society had erected to separate the unclean (those with no status) from the rest of the community. It is even more graphic here. Our own mindset would reason that any illness should separate that person from the rest of the community because it was a threat to the health of the community. Their mindset would say that such a person could not belong to the community because they were unclean, they were impure, they were sinful, they were deviant, they were polluted; therefore, they had to be ostracized or quarantined. This was a socially contrived "setting aside" of people, not a medical setting aside. For example, purity norms defined menstruating women as unclean and none dared come in contact with her lest they themselves become unclean – certainly a husband could not have intercourse with her until she became clean again and doubly certain she was not allowed to approach holy things such as Temple worship; contact with a corpse rendered one unclean and automatically segregated that now contaminated, unclean person from the community. This purity code was administered by priests and served to very strictly determine what was clean/unclean in order to maintain group boundaries. Dietary laws and circumcision, for example, maintained the boundary between Jew and non-Jew.

Debt or sin was still another code in the social map. The debt code, administered by scribes, was used to maintain individual and social responsibilities, and to regulate criminal behavior and economic status. The rules, for example, the Ten Commandments, determined *sins of commission* (stealing, or adultery) as well as *sins of omission* (failure to pay tithes or to observe the Sabbath). Recall that the legal code was found in the Torah.

These two mutually reinforcing codes were a very powerful combination that governed all behavior and

was maintained and adjudicated by the elite class, the priests and scribes who were associated with the Temple-state and who comprised less than 10% of the population. These elites were centered in the urban areas and from there they maintained the status quo by dint of religious power and privilege of class and not because of medical necessity. Little wonder that whenever Mark shows Jesus healing or preaching, there is increasing antagonism. When Jesus debates scripture, he is in reality involved in social criticism. When he challenges Temple authority, he is undermining political authority as well, and of course, poses a threat to those whose status (power) is bound to the Temple-state. When Jesus clashes with scribes and priests, he is opposing the front line administrators who, as spokespersons for the status quo, have a high interest in its continuation.

Reading today's pericope in light of the foregoing is revealing. It should be noted that leprosy is a larger term that encompasses *any* kind of skin lesion and not just what we identify today as Hansen's Disease; medical anthropologists say it was probably not Hansen. A leper, then, is the archetype of an outcast. Rather extensive regulations were imposed (see Leviticus 13 and 14) that governed their existence: for example, they were forced into total segregation at the outermost periphery of the inhabited area. There they were to declare their impurity by shouting "unclean" when clean persons approached; they could not leave their area until a priest examined them and declared them "clean." Here Mark shows Jesus as overturning both the codes: he **touches** the man, thereby breaking the purity code and thereby himself becoming ritually unclean; he declares the man "clean," usurping a prerogative reserved to the priests. He sends the man to the priests, in accord with Mosaic Law, as a testimony against **them!** Can there be a greater challenge to the authority of the system or to the self-made guarantors of order? After all, who is Jesus to subvert the basic codes of the society? Is there more to come as Jesus goes about preaching and healing? Note again that healing is not simply the taking away of the biomedical entity, but most importantly, it is the return of the individual to the state of honor in the society; the person is integrated once more, reconciled once more. Imagine, then, the impact of Jesus' action on the people, particularly on the power structure.

So What? Think of how recently we enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act! In what ways does looking through the lens of our own purity codes reveal how we respond to the desire of some to have society accept same gender marriage?

WORKS CONSULTED:

Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh; *The Cultural World of Jesus, Cycle B*, John J. Pilch; *Preaching the New Lectionary, Year B*, Diane Bergeant with Richard Fragomeni.

Other Happenings

Prayer Service for Peace

On **Sunday, February 15th**, at 7:30 p.m., a prayer service will be held at Lutheran Church of the Atonement, 909 Main Street, Barrington. For more information, call **847.381.0243**.

Mental Health Education for Families

NAMI Barrington Area invites you to attend a series of 12 weekly classes structured to help you understand and support individuals with mental disorders while maintaining your own well-being. Topics will include current research in the biology of brain disorders, information about medications, and acquiring strategies for handling crisis and relapse. There will be special workshops for problem management, listening and communication techniques, as well as gaining empathy by understanding the subjective, lived experience of a person with mental illness. There is no cost to participate in this program, but registration is necessary as class size is limited. Classes begin **Monday, February 16th**. These NAMI classes are for family members, partners, and friends of individuals with major depression, bipolar disorder (manic-depression), schizophrenia, schizoaffective and borderline personality disorders, major anxiety, panic attacks, and obsessive compulsive disorder; co-occurring brain disorders and co-occurring addictive disorders. For more information, call **Maryrose** at **847.496.1415**.

Mardi Gras Magic

An event to benefit the Sisters of the Living Word Mission fund will be held on **Friday, February 20th**, at the Cotillion, Palatine. Call **847.577.5972**.

Wine Tasting Event and Auction

St. Viator High School will present a wine tasting event and auction at the Meadows Club, Rolling Meadows, on **Saturday, February 21st**. For more information, visit saintviator.com.

Day of Reflection and Prayer

Fr. John R. Crocker, S.J. will direct a retreat on Ash **Wednesday, February 25th**, at Bellarmine Retreat House, Barrington. For more information, call **847.381.1261**.

15th Annual Parent University

Parent University will be held on **Saturday, February 28th**, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Middle School North, Hawthorn Woods. Topics benefit parents and educators of children aged pre to high school. Cost of \$15.00 includes continental breakfast. Childcare is available. Information is available at <http://www.lz95.org/ParentU/ParentUhome.htm>.

PHD

PHD needs volunteers to help the mothers and families they serve. Different shifts and opportunities are available. For more information, call **Yvonne** at **847.359.4967** ext. **17** or email ygardner@sphd.org.

ATTENTION ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 13-30! The challenging message of World Youth Day 2000 in Rome is being spread throughout the United States by an initiative called *Bread of Life*. *Bread of Life* is responding to the call of Pope John Paul II to enable young people to live and proclaim the Gospel. You are invited to *Bread of Life* Retreat on **February 27th, February 28th and March 1st**, at St. Benedict Parish, 2215 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago. You will have the opportunity to gather with other young people your age for prayer, adoration, singing, and learning about our Catholic faith. For more information, call **773.588.6484** x **204**, email breadoflife@stbenedict.com, or visit www.breadoflifechicago.org. We hope to see you there!

NOTE:

Reconciliation will not be available on the mornings of **Saturday, February 14th**, and **Saturday, February 21st**, due to the children's group reception of the sacrament. For more information, call the rectory office at **847.382.5300**.

Community Offerings/Needs

Please note: St. Anne prints these offerings/needs as a service to its parishioners, and does not endorse them or accept responsibility for the information presented.

Roommate wanted. Looking for single female to share 2bd/2ba condo in Palatine. \$450.00 per month plus 1/2 utilities. Call **Pat** at **847.776.9313** or **847.997.4883**.

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House for sale. 207 North Avenue, 1/2 block from St. Anne. Call **224.234.8259** or email skeetrz@gmail.com.

Home preschool/day care in Barrington. 20 years experience. Loving environment for infant to school age. After school care for Roslyn students. Bright classroom with stimulating toys, preschool activities, large yard, excellent references and reasonable rates. Call **Diane Scardino** (parishioner for 10 years) at **847.277.0877**.

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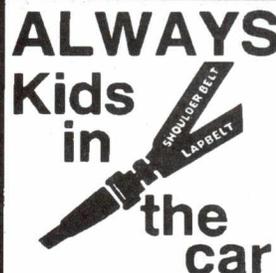
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Pastor

Fr. Jack Dewes

Associate Pastors

Fr. Fred Licciardi, C.P.P.S.

ffred@stannebarrington.org

Fr. Tom Bishop

frtom@stannebarrington.org

St. Anne Staff:

Deacon Couples

Bob and Helen Brauch

Jim and Ellen Condill

Jim and Mary Crane

Bob and Sue Powers

Rich and Kathy Seveska

Director of Liturgy and Music

Rory Cooney 847.620.3064

rcooney@stannebarrington.org

Associate Director of Liturgy and Coordinator of Scriptural Ministries

Clem Aseron 847.620.3065

caseron@stannebarrington.org

Director of RCIA, Evangelization and Adult Confirmation

Sr. Anna Marie Dressler 381.5793

sannamarie@stannebarrington.org

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Office for Youth Formation

Program Director for Pre-School
through 8th grade

Audrey Taylor 847.620.3067

ataylor@stannebarrington.org

Gospel Champions Code: k3j-e0a-k6b

Director of Generations of Faith

Susan Stengren 847.620.3071

[sstengren@stannebarrington.org](mailto:ssstengren@stannebarrington.org)

Program Director for High School

Ellen Nelson 847.620.3072

enelson@stannebarrington.org

Administrative Assistant for Pre-school through 5th grade

Doris Kelsch 847.620.3068

dkelsch@stannebarrington.org

Administrative Assistant for 6th through 12th grade

Darla Holtz 847.620.3072

dholtz@stannebarrington.org

Director of Development and Operations

Joe Kelsch

jkelsch@stannebarrington.org

Parish and School Counselor

Jeanette Egan

847.620.3055 (Parish)

847.381.0311 x232 (School)

Office Manager

Diane Augustine

daugustine@stannebarrington.org

Office Assistant

Cathy Faust

cfaust@stannebarrington.org

Computer Administrator

Carol Helmers

chelmers@stannebarrington.org

Receptionist

Carla Stobart

cstobart@stannebarrington.org

Maintenance Supervisor

Sarge Youkhanna

School Maintenance

Dave Rozycki

Parish Council

parishcouncil@stannebarrington.org

Campus Development Campaign

847.620.3051

Clarion Bulletin Editor

Kerry Miller 847.620.3070

kmiller@stannebarrington.org

St. Anne School

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Saturday: First Saturday of the month:
8:15 a.m.

Mass of Anticipation: 5:15 p.m.

Reconciliation: 9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday: 7:15, 9:00*, 11:00* a.m., 5:15 p.m.

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Reconciliation: Saturdays 9:15 - 10:00 a.m. and by appointment.

Registration: Please do not assume you are registered if you have been attending Mass here or have children in St. Anne School or our REP program. Registration includes meeting with one of our welcoming team members and filling out an official form for our parish records. To register, please call 847.382.5300.

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The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Celebrating God's Forgiveness



The Crosiers / Gene Platard, OSC

By Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M.

The well-known Parable of the Prodigal Son is perhaps the most strikingly powerful illustration of the human process of reconciliation, and of the theology inherent in the new Rite of Reconciliation. But many of us find it difficult to believe the story (see Luke 15:11-32). The father welcomes the son back instantly—doesn't even wait for him to get to the house. And he isn't at all interested in the young man's confession, only in celebrating.

This is not the way we Catholics have viewed the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Even with the new Rite, most of us tend to view this sacrament with the attitude of the older son in the story: Forgiveness comes only after you recite your list of sins, agree to suffer a bit for them, do something to make up for your offenses, give some guarantee you won't commit the same sins again, and prove yourself worthy to join the rest of us who haven't been so foolish!

But God really is like the merciful parent in this parable: not out to catch us in our sin but intent on reaching out and hanging on to us in spite of our sin. Reconciliation (and the new Rite is

careful to point this out) is not just a matter of getting rid of sin. Nor is its dominant concern what *we*, the penitents, do. The important point is what *God* does in, with and through us.

A journey home to God

God's reconciling work in us doesn't happen in an instant. Reconciliation is often a long, sometimes painful process. It is a journey not confined to, but completed in, sacramental celebration. It is a round-trip journey away from our home with God and back again that can be summed up in terms of three *C's*: *conversion*, *confession* and *celebration*—and *in that order*.

In the past the order was different: Receiving the sacrament meant beginning with a recitation of sins (*confession*). Then we expressed our sorrow with an Act of Contrition, agreed to make some satisfaction for our sins by accepting our penance, and resolved to change our ways (*conversion*). *Celebration* was seldom, if ever, part of the process.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son can help us understand the stages in our journey to reconciliation—and the order in which they occur. This helps us see why the theology of the new Rite of Reconciliation suggests a reordering in the pattern that we were familiar with in the past.

The journey for the young man in the parable (and for us) begins with the selfishness of sin. His sin takes him from the home of his parents—as our sin takes us from the shelter of God and the Christian community. His major concern in his new self-centered life-style—as is ours in sin—is himself and his personal gratification. None of the relationships he establishes are lasting. When his money runs out, so do his “friends.” Eventually he discovers himself alone, mired in the mud of a pigpen, just as he is mired in sin. Then comes this significant phrase in the story: “Coming to his senses at last....” This is the beginning of the journey back, the beginning of conversion.

Conversion: An ongoing process

The conversion process begins with a “coming to one's senses,” with a realization that all is not right with our values and style of life. Prompted by a faith response to God's call, conversion initiates a desire for change. Change is the essence of conversion. *Shuv*, the Old Testament term for conversion, suggests a physical change of direction; *metanoia*, the term the New Testament uses, suggests an internal turnabout, a change of heart that is revealed in one's conduct.

The Gospel vision of *metanoia* calls for an interior transformation that comes about when God's Spirit breaks into our lives with the Good News that God loves us unconditionally. Conversion is always a response to being loved by God. In fact, the most important part of the conversion process is the experience of being loved and realizing that God's love saves us—we do not save ourselves. Our part in this saving action is to be open to the gift of God's love—to be open to grace.

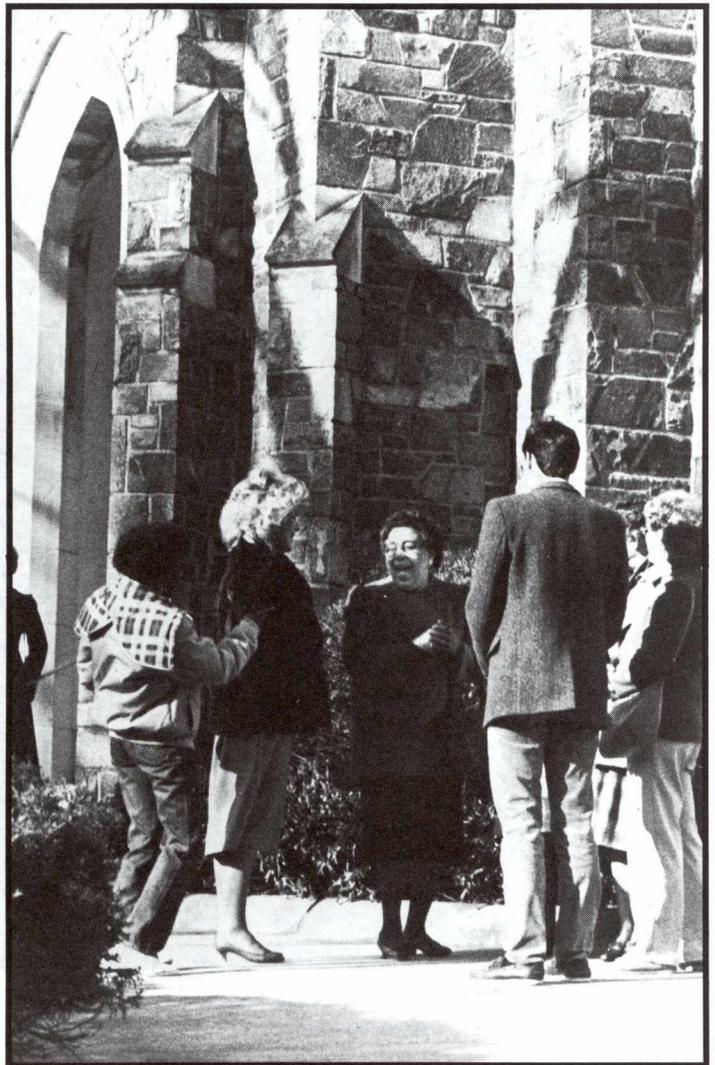
Moral conversion means making a personal, explicitly responsible decision to turn away from the evil that blinds us to God's love, and to turn toward God who gifts us with love in spite of our sinfulness.

Persons who turn to God in conversion will never be the same again, because conversion implies transforming the way we relate to others, to ourselves, to the world, to the universe and to God. Unless we can see that our values, attitudes and actions are in conflict with Christian ones, we will never see a need to change or desire to be reconciled.

The need for conversion does not extend only to those who have made a radical choice for evil. Most often *metanoia* means the small efforts all of us must continually make to respond to the call of God.

Conversion is not a once-in-a-lifetime moment but a continuous, ongoing, lifelong process which brings us ever closer to “the holiness and love of God.” Each experience of moral conversion prompts us to turn more and more toward God, because each conversion experience reveals God in a new, brighter light.

When we discover in the examination of our values, attitudes and style of life that we are “missing the mark,” we experience the next step in the conversion process—contrition. This step moves us to the next leg of our conversion journey: breaking away from our misdirected actions, leaving them behind and making some resolutions for the future.



Donna Jernigan

Let's look again at our story. The young man takes the first step in the conversion process when he “comes to his senses,” overcomes his blindness and sees what he must do. “I will break away and return to my father.” Before he ever gets out of the pigpen, he admits his sinfulness. And in this acknowledgment of sin he both expresses contrition and determines his own penance. “I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you.... Treat me like one of your hired hands.’”

Contrition means examining our present relationships in the light of the Gospel imperative of love, and taking the necessary steps to repent and repair those relationships with others, ourselves and God. The repentance step in the conversion process is what is commonly called “making satisfaction for our sins,” or “doing penance.”

For many people in the past penance connoted “making up to God” by punishing ourselves for our sins. But true reparation is not punishment. At its root, reparation is repairing or correcting a sinful life-style. In the past we were told to do penance as temporal punishment for our sins. Now, however, we understand that our real “punishment” is the continuing pattern of sin in our lives and the harmful attitudes and actions it creates in us. The purpose of doing penance is to help us change that pattern. Penance is for growth, not for punishment. “Doing penance” means taking steps in the direction of living a changed life; it means making room for something new.

Lillian Hellman provides a wonderful image of this process of reconciliation in her explanation of the word *pentimento* at the beginning of *Pentimento: A Book of Portraits*: “Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman’s dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called *pentimento* because the painter ‘repented,’ changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by the later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again.”

Confession: Externalizing what is within

Confession, one aspect of the sacrament which used to receive the greatest emphasis, is now seen as just one step in the total process. Confession of sin can only be sincere if it is preceded by the process of conversion. It is actually the external expression of the interior transformation that conversion has brought about in us. It is a much less significant aspect of the sacrament than we made it out to be in the past. This does not mean that confession is unimportant—only that it is not the essence of the sacrament.

Look again at the parable. The father, seeing his son in the distance, runs out to meet him with an embrace and a kiss. Through one loving gesture, the father forgives the son—and the son hasn’t even made his confession yet! When he does, it seems the father hardly listens. The confession is not the most important thing here; the important thing is that his son has returned. The son need not beg for forgiveness, he *has been* forgiven. This is the glorious Good News: God’s forgiveness, like God’s love, doesn’t stop. In this parable, Jesus reveals to us a loving God who simply cannot *not* forgive!

Zorba the Greek—that earthy, raucous lover of life created by Nikos Kazantzakis—captures this loving God when he says: “...I think of God as being exactly like me. Only bigger, stronger, crazier. And immortal, into the bargain. He’s sitting on a pile of soft sheepskins, and his hut’s the sky....In his right hand he’s holding not a knife or a pair of scales—those damned instruments are meant for butchers and grocers—no, he’s holding a large sponge full of water, like a rain cloud. On his right is Paradise, on his left Hell. Here comes a soul; the poor little thing’s quite naked, because it’s lost its cloak—its body, I mean—and it’s shivering.

“...The naked soul throws itself at God’s feet. ‘Mercy!’ it cries. ‘I have sinned.’ And away it goes reciting its sins. It recites a whole rigmorale and there’s no end to it. God thinks this is too much of a good thing. He yawns. ‘For heaven’s sake stop!’ he

shouts. ‘I’ve heard enough of all that!’ Flap! Slap! a wipe of the sponge, and he washes out all the sins. ‘Away with you, clear out, run off to Paradise!’ he says to the soul....Because God, you know, is a great lord, and that’s what being a lord means: to forgive!”

Our attitude toward the Sacrament of Reconciliation is intimately related to our image of God. We need to really believe that our God, like Zorba’s, is not some big bogeyman waiting to trip us up, but a great Lord who is ever ready to reach out in forgiveness.

The Rite of Reconciliation reflects this image of a God of mercy. Formerly, it was the penitent who began the encounter in confession—“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned”—not unlike the way the sinner of Zorba’s imagination approached God, or the way the son in our parable planned to greet his father. But both Zorba’s God and the parent in the parable intervened. In the same vein, now in Reconciliation it is the confessor who takes the initiative, reaching out, welcoming the penitent and creating a hospitable environment of acceptance and love before there is any mention of sin. Thus, the sacramental moment of confession—just one of the sacramental moments in the whole Rite—focuses on God’s love rather than our sin.

Celebrating God’s mercy

The most natural thing for a reconciled sinner to do is to be happy about the mercy of God. This is not like leaving a courtroom where one was barely acquitted and perhaps subjected to humiliation. Rather it is the celebration of the family, especially the reunited members. No longer does it matter what I was or what I did. Shame and scandal are forgotten. Joy comes from what I *am*: loved to life by God.

—Leonard Foley, O.F.M.
Believing in Jesus

Of course the new Rite does concern itself with the confession of sins. But one’s *sinfulness* is not always the same as one’s *sins*. And, as a sacrament of healing, Reconciliation addresses the disease (sinfulness) rather than the symptoms (sins). So, the sacrament calls us to more than prepared speeches or lists of sins. We are challenged to search deep into our heart of hearts to discover the struggles, value conflicts and ambiguities (the disease) which cause the sinful acts (the symptoms) to appear.

A question that often arises is: Why confess my sins? And why confess to a priest? Why not confess directly to God, since God has already forgiven me anyway? From God’s point of view, the simple answer is: There is no reason. But from *our* point of view, the answer is that as human beings who do not live in our minds alone, we need to externalize bodily—with words, signs and gestures—what is in our minds and heart. We need to see, hear and feel forgiveness—not just think about it.

We need other human beings to help us externalize what is within and open our hearts before the Lord, which puts confessors in a new light. They are best seen, not as faceless and impersonal judges, but as guides in our discernment, compassionately helping us experience and proclaim the mercy of God in our lives. As the Introduction to the Rite puts it, the confessor “fulfills a parental function...reveals the heart of the Father and shows the image of the Good Shepherd.”

Another of the confessor's roles is to say the prayer of absolution. Contrary to what we may have thought in the past, this prayer, which completes or seals the penitent's change of heart, is not a prayer asking for forgiveness. It is a prayer signifying God's forgiveness of us and our reconciliation with the Church—which is certainly something to celebrate.

Celebration: God always loves us

Celebration is a word we haven't often associated with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But in Jesus' parable, it is obviously important and imperative. "Quick!" says the father, "let us celebrate." And why? Because a sinner has converted, repented, confessed and returned.

Celebration makes sense only when there is really something to celebrate. Each of us has had the experience of going to gatherings with all the trappings of a celebration—people, food, drink, balloons, bands—and yet the festivity was a flop for us. For example, attending an office party can be such an empty gathering for the spouse or friend of an employee. Celebration flows from lived experience or it is meaningless. The need for celebration to follow common lived experiences is especially true of sacramental celebrations. All of the sacraments are communal celebrations of the lived experience of believing Christians.

Perhaps what we need to help us feel more comfortable with the idea of celebration in relation to Reconciliation is a conversion from our own rugged individualism. Let's face it—there is something about believing in a bogeyman God from whom we have to earn forgiveness that makes us feel good psychologically. It's harder to feel good about a God who loves and forgives us unconditionally—whether we know it or not, want it or not, like it or not. In the face of such love and forgiveness we feel uncomfortable. It creates a pressure within us that makes us feel we should "do something" to deserve such largess—or at least feel a little bit guilty.

The older brother in our story expresses this same discomfort. Upon witnessing the festivities, he appeals to fairness and legalism. In a sense, he is hanging on to the courtroom image of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, suggesting that there is no way everyone can feel good about the return of the younger brother until amends have been made.

But this older son is far too narrow in his understanding of life, of God and of the sacrament. He is too calculating, too quantitative, not unlike the butchers and grocers that Zorba refers to in his description of God. This son finds it difficult to understand that we are never *not* forgiven. The Sacrament of Reconciliation does not bring about something that was absent. It proclaims and enables us to own God's love and forgiveness that are already present.

The older brother's problem is a universal human one. It's tough for most of us to say, "I'm sorry." It is even tougher to say, "You're forgiven." And it is most difficult of all to say gracefully, "I accept your forgiveness." To be able to do that we must be able to forgive ourselves. That, too, is what we celebrate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The community's liturgical celebration of Reconciliation places a frame around the picture of our continual journey from sin to reconciliation. Only someone who has never experienced or reflected on that journey will fail to understand the need and value of celebrating the sacrament.

The older son in our story may be such a person. When the father calls for a celebration, everyone else in the household responds. Not only do they celebrate the younger son's return, they celebrate their own experience of forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation as well. They, like us, have been on that journey from which the young man has returned.

So there *is* something we can do about the unconditional forgiveness we receive from God: *forgive as we have been forgiven*. Having been forgiven, we are empowered to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another, heal one another and celebrate the fact that together we have come a step closer to the peace, justice and reconciliation that makes us the heralds of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

A communal celebration

Sacramental celebrations are communal because sacramental theology is horizontal. Sacraments happen in people who are in relationship with each other and with God. In the area of sin, forgiveness and reconciliation this is particularly evident. Our sinfulness disrupts our relationship in community as well as our relationship with God. And since the sacrament begins with our sinfulness, which affects others, it is only proper that it culminate with a communal expression of love and forgiveness that embodies the love and forgiveness of God.

Unconverted "older sons" will always be out of step with the Christian community. When we celebrate the sacrament, we celebrate with joy and thanksgiving because the forgiveness of the Christian community and of God has brought us to this moment—and that is worth celebrating. There is no room for the attitude that forgiveness comes "only when you have recited your list of sins, agreed to suffer a bit for them and proven yourself worthy to join the rest of us who haven't been so foolish."

Such "older sons" are looking for what theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace"—grace without discipleship, without the cross, without faith, without Jesus Christ living and incarnate, and without the conversion necessary to live reconciliation within the Christian community. Such a person is hardly ready to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as it is understood today.

Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M., lectures and writes on various religious topics like RCIA, parish ministry, the family and the sacraments. She lives near Minneapolis and is the author of *RCIA: The Rites Revisited* (Winston Press), and *Re-Treat Your Family to Lent and Reconciliation: Sacrament With a Future* (both by St. Anthony Messenger Press). This article is an abridged version of a chapter from the last-mentioned book.

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