

**Did you know that...**

...the Bible is made up of 73 distinct books?

...there are 46 Books in the Old Testament (the time period before Christ) and 27 Books in the New Testament (this time period begins with the birth of Christ)?

...the Church definitively decided during two Church Councils in the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century that these 73 books were the inspired writings of the Holy Spirit working through fallible human beings and made official pronouncements that listed them in the Canon of the Church?

...you can still join our “Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible” session that starts this Sunday at 10:45 AM in the cafeteria?

...March 11<sup>th</sup> is Parents Night Out/Kids Night in?

...of course you knew about all these things!!

Dear Parents:

Last Fall I introduced the concept of the Year of Mercy convoked by Pope Francis. He called for this special moment of grace because he believes that we, the Church and society need to be more open to mercy and that we need to share this aspect of faith with others.

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

In order to bring to your child more of an awareness of the importance of the daily practice of mercy we will give each child a wrist band this Sunday that will say on it “Random Acts of Mercy” – in other words this will serve as a reminder that they should be merciful towards others at various times of the day, week and month and throughout this special Jubilee Year.

Below is a list of the traditional Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Obviously some are more accessible than others for your children. Try and encourage what seems reasonable. They don't have to do all of them. We are just trying to raise the consciousness in our Parish family in this area of faith development!

Have a great weekend and see you on Sunday!

We will start “Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible” at 10:45 in the cafeteria this Sunday!  
There is still time to join in.

God bless,

Tony

- ***Lenten Adult Bible study will begin in February (this will be done in a combination video and discussion format). You will learn within a few weeks the main story of salvation history from Adam and Eve through to Christ, the 14 Narrative books of the Bible, 68 key***

*events, and the key events in world history that coincide with Bible history. Check the bulletin or send me an email [amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org) if you want to know more.*

- <http://ascensionpress.com/t/category/study-programs/catholic-bible-study/adult-bible-study/unlocking-the-mystery> . Check out this two minute promo video for this Lent's special family formation sessions: Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible!
- **February 28<sup>th</sup> is Hospitality Sunday for seventh grade parents/students and their teacher**
- Basketball clinic begins March 5<sup>th</sup> , 12<sup>th</sup> , 19<sup>th</sup> , 26<sup>th</sup> and continues on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to register contact Sal Auricchio at (914) 227-0209

# Discipleship

- *Sunday's readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/022116.cfm>*
  - *Please share with your children; so when they go to Church they will be able to follow the Mass closer.*

Dear Parents

Question: "Why should we read the Bible / study the Bible?"

Out of all the adult formation programs I have offered in the last five years in the parish there has never been as much interest in a program as this – “Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible”. If you have not considered joining an existing group, starting your own or doing it on your own time please reconsider and send me an email ([amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)). This will be a great initiative for you during Lent which begins real soon - February 10<sup>th</sup> (see sessions and start dates below)

Answer: We should read and study the Bible because it is God's Word to us. The Bible is literally "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). In other words, it is God's very words to us. There are so many questions that philosophers have asked that God answers for us in Scripture. What is the purpose to life? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? How do I get to heaven? Why is the world full of evil? Why do I struggle to do good? In addition to these "big" questions, the

Bible gives much practical advice in areas such as: What do I look for in a mate? How can I have a successful marriage? How can I be a good friend? How can I be a good parent? What is success and how do I achieve it? How can I change? What really matters in life? How can I live so that I do not look back with regret? How can I handle the unfair circumstances and bad events of life victoriously?

## Lenten Bible Study

So this Lent we are providing you, your family and friends with the opportunity to **Unlock the Mysteries of the Bible**. Check out this two minute promo video.

<http://ascensionpress.com/t/category/study-programs/catholic-bible-study/adult-bible-study/unlocking-the-mystery>.

A very professional and engaging video presentation/discussion in combination with your fellow parishioners will help us all, to better understand the key books/events and story in the Bible - unlocking the meaning of scripture!!

Please consider joining us during one of the following times:

Option 1: Tuesdays, starting February 16th at 10:45 AM in the Church Conference Room

Option 2: Sundays, starting February 21st at 10:45 AM in the school cafeteria

Option 3: Wednesday, starting February 17<sup>th</sup> in the evening at 7:30 PM in the Old Convent – Men only

Option 4: If you would like to do this course on your own or with a group of friends in your home on another day contact Tony ([amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org))

God bless,

Tony MacDonnell  
Religious Education Director  
(914) 668-9815  
[amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)

## *Areas of Interest and Upcoming Events*

- Here is a good Lenten reflection link from a friend of mine who is a seminarian in the Archdiocese of New York: Eric Wandrey: <http://godlights.me/2016/02/04/an-idea-for-lent-more-leisure/>

Video about Lent in two minutes <http://bustedhalo.com/video/ash-wednesday-in-two-minutes>

<http://godlights.me/2016/01/13/david-bowie-shakespeare-death-and-hope/>.

The Holy Doors associated with the Jubilee Year of Mercy officially opened in our Archdiocese on Sunday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at St Patrick's Cathedral and at Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in Lower East Manhattan.

<http://archny.org/mercy>

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtBsI3j0YRQ>

David Steindl-Rast: Want to be happy? Be grateful

Published on Nov 27, 2013

The one thing all humans have in common is that each of us wants to be happy, says Brother David Steindl-Rast, a monk and interfaith scholar. And happiness, he suggests, is born from gratitude.

An inspiring lesson in slowing down, looking where you're going, and above all, being grateful.

Catholic Underground in Manhattan, <http://catholicunderground.net/> (First Saturday of month)

Children's Choir sign up - please reach out to me if you have any questions ([amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)) meets at 8:50 am in the choir loft.

Pflaum Publishing is the main program our teachers use for your child's Sunday lesson.

The two exceptions are the classes on the Sacraments: First Communion and Confirmation.

All parents, no matter the grade will find that the link below is a complimentary resource for

the work we do with all of the parish children.

[http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new\\_page/parent\\_guide.php](http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new_page/parent_guide.php)

[http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new\\_page/index.php](http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/new_page/index.php)

This part of the Pflaum website also gives you access to more resources to reinforce the weekly lessons done by the Catechist.

<https://youtu.be/ZcXX9A2W3jQ>

Two 3 minute videos on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

<https://youtu.be/IYv4BUwytA0>

<http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2015/11/05/kids-technology-addiction/>

Short Article: My kid, the Ipad Junkie

<http://whispersintheloggia.blogspot.com/>

All of Pope Francis' US talks are found on this website with YouTube channel links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx447QYpwF8>

(4 minute video about how to be aware of the reality that God is acting in your life... so that you can hear his voice)

Fr. Albert Haase's short video link will give you some insight about how we can become aware of God's presence in our daily life.

<http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/article/afraid-to-celebrate-halloween-dont-worry-its-very-christian-5862367938215936>

Short article on some Christian links with Halloween

<http://www.aleteia.org/en/religion/video/video-jesuit-priest-talks-about-real-life-exorcism-5832751722790912>

A Jesuit priest reflects (3minutes & 45 seconds) on the actual person possessed in the movie the Exorcist

### **Reminder about a basic "God Plan" for the New Year:**

So what's your plan for the New Year? It's that time of year when we make new diet plans, exercise plans, spring vacation plans and maybe a new house budget. How about a God plan? I know you are intentional about all of the areas above, otherwise nothing new would ever happen in your family. I would like to invite you to consider putting some New Year's energy into a God plan. God waits patiently for us to take steps towards Him in response to the many graces he presents to us in our daily lives. Grace is all around us; assuring us that one of the characteristics of God is his omnipresence(He is everywhere). In other words we are never not in the presence of God. The challenge to each of us is to recognize these ongoing daily encounters and their meaning for our lives and families!

Here are a few simple steps I personally use each day. They may help you and your children become more aware of God's presence in your daily life:

1. Morning: when you get up encourage yourself and your children to say hello to God and to be grateful for something or someone! Encourage yourself and children to say something complimentary to others before they go to school – build up a habit of thinking positively of others!
2. Gospel for the day: Usccb.org it takes a minute to read the daily Gospel. Here's an online link. <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/011716.cfm>

3. At night thank God again for your day, food, good results at work, a moment of fellowship etc. Review your various encounters with others and any insights you had during the day. Take a look at the next day's Gospel passage (will just take a minute). This could be done on your own and/or with your children.
4. Next day – Repeat.
5. Bonus points: consider reading a Catholic book (a little at a time) or joining or beginning a discussion group focused on some aspect of the faith or spirituality. I am happy to offer suggestions for resources. I am just an email away: [amacdonnell@arcol.org](mailto:amacdonnell@arcol.org)

The fruit of regular daily reflection is: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness” **Galatians 5:22**