

Did you know that...

...this Sunday is Hospitality Sunday for all grade 7 parents/their children and the teacher.
Meet in cafeteria at 10:45

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

...March 11th is Parents Night Out/Kids Night In? Are your children signed up yet?

...<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/022816.cfm> - Sunday Mass readings – please share with your children!!!!!!

...your kids can do random acts of mercy anywhere?

...you can sign up for Catholic Underground (Saturday, March 5th) and reserve a spot on the bus up until March 2nd

Contact Tony at amacdonnell@arcol.org

...the second grade will receive their First Confession tomorrow - please pray for them and their parents peace of soul!

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

Discipleship

Dear Parents

During Lent we are challenged to think about our relationship with God. Typically we give up chocolate so we can get closer to God; however I think a better thing to give up would be gossip, judging others, or a short temper with your children. Turn these things around and try and be more patient with your spouse/children, keep your voice lowered when you correct your child - fill in the blank with what you do that tends to light unnecessary fires in your home or workplace - these types of actions would be the best thing to give up for Lent!

Take Matthew Kelly's challenge and get motivated each day during Lent and experience your Best Lent Ever! Here's the Link from Dynamic Catholic.

<http://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever/>

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.

Above 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!

- **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 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 28th is Hospitality Sunday for seventh grade parents/students and their teacher**
- Basketball clinic begins March 5th , 12th , 19th , 26th and continues on April 2nd and 9th to register contact Sal Auricchio at (914) 227-0209
- <http://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever/> Sign up and reserve a short message each day to motivate you for Lent

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 17th 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)

God bless,

Tony MacDonnell
Religious Education Director
(914) 668-9815
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. 13th 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) 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/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

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