SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION | FALL EDITION 2020 | Volume 15 Issue 1

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I once had a spiritual director who asked me, "Do you know how big God is?" At the time, I thought to myself... what a strange question. However, since that first meeting and throughout the years, I have come to realize how important it is to know the answer to that question. God is bigger than we can even begin to imagine. God has no beginning or end. He is utterly independent and everything that is not God depends on God. He is the same, "Yesterday, today, and forever." God is truth, beauty, and goodness. Now, after knowing and believing all of the above attributes of God, does one truly know how big God is?

The Scriptures teach us who God is and speak of the "Glory of God." Isaiah 6:2-3 "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! All the earth is filled with His glory." In Isaiah's vision, he saw the Lord and heard the heavens proclaim that God is holy and the earth is filled with his glory. He shows us that God's greatness and beauty are displayed in heaven and on earth. Once we come to know and experience the "bigness" of God and allow him to dwell in the core of our being, then we can see his glory bursting forth in all of creation. When we think about God's glory, we see his might, beauty, goodness, justice, and love in a greater quantity and quality than we can ever begin to comprehend.

The glory of God is steadfast and always present to us. We simply need eyes to see and hearts to feel His presence within. John 1:14 reminds us that the glory of God dwells within, "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory."

There are a few things that we might consider in order to heighten our awareness of the "Glory of God." Perhaps we could look, pray, prepare, and walk in search of the glory. Look. Have eyes that search for the physical manifestation of God's glory: a beautiful sunrise, a child at play, an encounter with a stranger. Pray that God's glory will be revealed to you and within you. Prepare your heart to receive the glory of God. It requires faith and an openness to love. The glory of God looks for a place to dwell. He dwells with us so that we can walk in celebration of His glory.

To know and love God is glorifying God. Every day and every second of the day God is present, longing to be glorified. "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)" Each day we have a new opportunity to glorify God. Let us praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Annual Appeal 2020

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2020-2021

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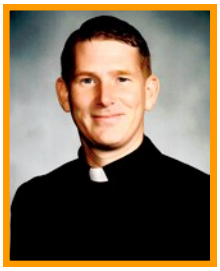
New Board Members

We welcome to the Board two new members. Michelle Capone, who will be the new representative from St. Anthony's parish. Michelle was appointed by Father Christopher Looby and will be attending her first meeting on October 14th.

Michelle is presently the Director of Reginal Development for the Development Authority of the North Country. With her background in business and economics, we look forward to her contributions which may enrich the Special Religious Education Program.

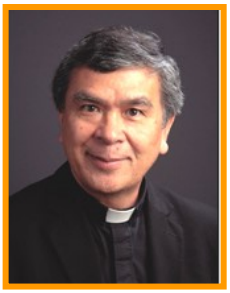


We also welcome Rev. Frank Natale, the new pastor at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Father was ordained on June 29, 2013. He comes to Watertown from Nazareth, Pennsylvania where he served as Parochial Vicar at Holy Family Parish. His youthful and energetic spirit will be a wonderful addition to our board.

Special Thanks

Once again, we must say farewell to three great men who have completed their term on the Watertown Catechetical Board. Randy Belina, Rev. Christopher Looby and Rev. Jonas Tandayu, we are grateful for the contributions you have made to Special Religious Education Program.

Randy served on the board for six year's representing St. Anthony's Parish. He also served as a catechist in our program and has supported many of our fundraising events. We are grateful for his willingness to share his time and talent which has enriched our program. We hope he is enjoying his well earned retirement.



We also want to thank Fr. Looby and Fr. Jonas who served on the board during their time as pastors of St. Anthony's and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parishes. We are grateful for the numerous times they celebrated Liturgy with us, enriched us during our retreat days, and celebrated with and supported us at the Thanksgiving dinners and Fundraising events. We will miss their presence in our program and wish them well as they continue to share the Gospel message in their new parishes. Fr. Chris is presently pastor at St. Mary's in Ticonderoga and Fr. Jonas is pastor at Holy Family parish in Nazareth, Pa.

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New Look for 2020 Program

For the past seven month the Special Religious Education Program has taken a pause due to the Covid-19 virus. Our sessions ended in March with hopes that we would be able to resume this September. Fortunately, we will be able to continue our program but with a whole new look. Since the participants who live under the care of ARC are not permitted to gather in large groups, there has been a need to look at other creative options for sharing our faith. I have decided to continue our sessions using ZOOM. This will be a new adventure. The ZOOM sessions will only be held for the participants in the Interfaith program. These sessions will allow us to continue this component of the program in spite of the restrictions that prevent us from gathering together.

The students in the Catholic program will be meeting on Saturday mornings at St. Anthony's Church. This will allow us to keep a safe distance from one another and still have the chance to pray and study our faith together. It will be an adjustment for our participants since they are used to meeting in small groups to share faith and work on activities. Wearing masks and keeping at a distance from one another will be a challenge for everyone. Over the past fourteen years, our meetings have been conducted in quite a different environment. Everyone looked forward to the small group sessions and our time of fellowship together. However, we all agree that we are going to meet the challenges of the pandemic and continue to nurture and celebrate our faith .

Unfortunately, the people we visit in the Outreach component of the program are the only group that we are unable to service this year. ARC is under the restrictions set by the Department of Health and they are not allowed to have our catechists visit the houses during this time.

The theme of our sessions for 2020 will be *Growing in Faith Together.* Please keep the program participants in your prayers. They will miss the routine we have had for many years. This year even our social events will need to be cancelled. I know they will adjust to the new look of the program. "All things are changing, God alone endures."

Autumn Quotations to Ponder

Autumn carries more gold in it's pocket than all the other seasons.

- Jim Bishop

Everyone must take time to sit and watch the leaves fall.

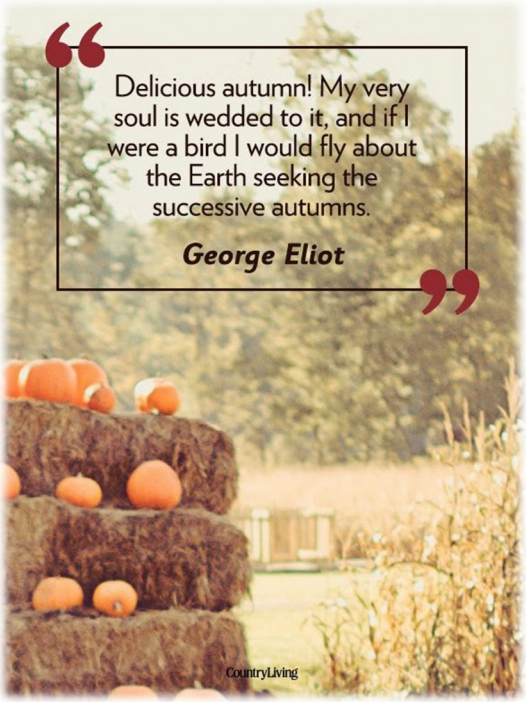
- Elizabeth Lawrence

Autumn show us how beautiful it is to let things go.

- Unknown

I hope I can be the Autumn leaf, who looked at the sky and lived.
And when it was time to leave, gracefully it knew life was a gift.

- Dodinsky



a Harvest of Memories

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 virus, we will not be able to hold any of our Fall Fundraising events this year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your amazing support over past events. With your help and participation we have raised thousands of dollars which have allowed us to provide a viable and enriching program.

There are so many who donated beautiful baskets, auction items and food. Your interest in the well-being of our people with disabilities has brought a whole new level of awareness to the importance of our program for these special members of God's family.

This page is dedicated to all of you who have become active members of the Special Religious Education Program. We say "Thank You!" for all that you do and I know will continue to do to keep this ministry alive and well.

A picture can bring back many memories. Enjoy some of the pictures of our past Fall Events.

Thank you! God bless you all!