



Teaching From The Heart



Editor: Rev. Laurie Garramone-Rohr
Christian Education Coordinator
E-Mail: LGRohr@AlbanyDiocese.Org
Phone:(518) 465-4737

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Episcopal Diocese
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One Is Nearer God's Heart In A Garden...

Upcoming Events (details on pp. 2 and 3)

Sept 18, 2003	\$69-
Barna Seminar	\$89
Syracuse, NY	
Sept. 19-20, 2003	\$69-
Women of Faith Conference	\$99
Pepsi Arena, Albany, NY	
Sept 27, 2003	\$29-
Children's Ministry Magazine LIVE	\$49
Schenectady, NY	
May 1, 2004	
Christian Education Conference	
Location: TBA	

Laurie's Links

- www.Barna.org
Statistics and trends for the contemporary Christian Church
- www.CMMag.org
Children's Ministry Magazine
- www.samaritanspurse.org
Operation Christmas Child information
- www.womenoffaith.com
Information about the conference in September.

Weeds everywhere. I sighed and began the process of clearing my garden of the incredibly healthy crop of weeds that had sprouted up in the past month. Yes, I've been ignoring the spread of choking weeds for a long time.

On my hands and knees for hours, I was amazed at all the life teeming in the rich, black dirt that my work revealed. Spiders with legs as fine as the webs they wove wobbled up and down dirt hills, hampered by enormous white egg sacs. Centipedes slunk liquidly around my gloved hands. I felt like I was paying attention for the first time in a long time.

Something else began to reveal itself as I methodically tore out clumps of clover and crabgrass: I realized that I was in the presence of God.

"These weeds," I thought in frustration, "They're just snapping off at the surface and I know the roots will produce new growth."

God watched, and listened. "I know," He said,

"Not much different than the weeds in your life. Weeding out sin is tough work and the longer you let it go, the stronger the hold it has on your life."

I continued to weed, pulling out splayed clumps of crabgrass with a satisfying spray of dirt as the entire root system easily came out.

God continued, "And then there are habits or sins that may look formidable, but they release themselves easily from the soil of your soul."

I sat back on my heels, looking at the dirt but not seeing it anymore. What sorts of things were digging into my soul? Casual impatience, wasted time watching inane TV shows, gossiping with my neighbor, not being silent long enough for God to speak.

Recently I went to confession and I remember telling the priest, "I don't have any major sins to confess..." and now I felt ashamed. My 'garden' was full of small, deep-rooted weeds which effectively choked off growth in other areas before I even realized it.

Continuing with the job of

weeding, I began to say prayers of confession, of thanksgiving and prayers asking for guidance in my life. Somewhere along the way, I had gotten too busy to weed the garden, but God, as always, had given me another chance.

Dangling one small weed in the air, I looked at the feathery root system attached and knew that I had also received a powerful and relevant teaching tool. Finding the sacred in the everyday helps keep me closer to God, and also provides me with the tools I need to spread His word more effectively.

By Rev. Laurie M. Garramone-Rohr



George Barna Seminar 2003: "Leading Your Church Forward"

George Barna will lead us through a day-long seminar of research-based information focused on four major areas:

1. Intentional Development of a Biblical Worldview.
2. Emerging Trends Affecting Your Ministry
3. Deft Handling of Common Leadership Challenges
4. Turning Children Into Spiritual Champions (includes a discussion of how winning educational and moral strategies can be applied in

any church to develop more effective children's ministry programming.)

When: Thursday, September 18, 2003

Cost: \$69—\$89 depending on the number of people

Where: Syracuse, NY
(we plan to carpool)

Deadline: August 22, 2003

Contact: Laurie at
LGRohr@albanydiocese.org
(518)465-4737



A Book Every Sunday School Teacher Should Read...

...other than the Bible of course!

Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church and How to Fix It

by Thom and Joani Schultz is an excellent book that not only tells us what may be going wrong in our Sunday Schools, but the Schultzes also provide concrete ways to fix them. Every chapter includes a section called "Do It!" that gives a wide

variety of practical applications for each main topic.

To order this book, visit their website at www.GroupPublishing.com or www.Amazon.com

The LA Times said: "Provides a roadmap for energizing lagging Christian Ed in an age of boredom and ineffective teaching." Sounds like a challenge, doesn't it?

Topics include:

- ◆ The Lost Art of Learning
- ◆ Know the Goal
- ◆ Using Interactive Learning
- ◆ Using Curriculum that Produces Learning

This is a good resource to share as part of a study group with your teachers!

Women of Faith Conference: The Great Adventure

Thousands of women are gathering for a life-changing experience...and so can you!

Join Women of Faith Friday and Saturday, September 19 - 20, 2003 at the Pepsi Arena for "The Great Adventure" conference. We're traveling to 29 cities across North America and bringing our amazing new conference to Albany, NY.

What is The Great Adventure?

You'll See: Thousands of women from all ages and stages of life uniting together to hear God's liberating message of grace.



You'll Hear: Powerful personal stories, gut-level honesty, and inspirational humor from America's most popular speaker team.

You'll Meet: Speakers and musicians who are the most-loved in North America, and powerful motivators who have overcome life adversities, each providing a unique message of encouragement and hope.



Children's Ministry Magazine "Unshakeable Faith" Workshop

Celebrate your calling to teach with others who share this ministry!

- UNCOVER 3 keys to open a child's heart to God.
- NEW, creative prayer activities to use with children, volunteers and families.
- IDENTIFY 4 kinds of questions to get kids to think biblically.
- DESIGN relevant and meaningful service projects
- TAKE HOME tons of ideas for object lessons, scripture memory. Crafts, bible studies and more.

- FREE one-year subscription to Children's Ministry Magazine with every registration—a \$29 value!!

When: Saturday, Sept. 27, 2003

Cost: \$29-\$49 depending on the number of people.

Where: Calvary Tabernacle Assembly of God,
Schenectady, NY

Contact: Laurie at
LGRohr@albanydiocese.org
(518)465-4737



Help kids develop an unshakeable faith that will withstand the world's pressures!

New Christian Ed Web Page

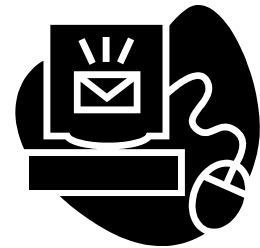
Would you like to see back articles on Christian Ed from the Albany Episcopalian? Do you want to see the Web version of this newsletter (it looks snappier in color!)?

Check out the new Christian Ed web page!

- Go to www.AlbanyDiocese.Org
- Click on "Ministries" on the left side of the page.

- Click on "Christian Ed", and you should open a new page that will allow you to choose to browse through archived materials.

Be patient—it's new and we're still learning! But feel free to submit suggestions or ideas at any time; we're also flexible!



www.AlbanyDiocese.Org/Ministries/ChristianEd.html

Operation Christmas Child—Can You Fill a Shoebox with Love and Toys?

Operation Christmas Child sends a message of hope to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoe boxes and Christian literature. This program provides an opportunity for individuals of all ages to be involved in a simple, hands-on missions project that reaches out to suffering children while focusing on the true meaning of Christmas—Jesus Christ, God's greatest gift. In 2002, OCC collected over 6

million shoe boxes worldwide and distributed them to children in more than 95 countries.

Headed by Franklin Graham (Billy's son) Samaritan's Purse is a non-denominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world.

OCC is an excellent inter-generational mission activity that gets your church

in the spirit of Christmas. Typically boxes are filled and collected during October/November—before Advent even begins—and it helps prepare your hearts and congregation to minister to others during the holidays.

Visit their website or call the Christian Ed office for more information.

www.SamaritansPurse.org



Did You Know That...

- ◆ 22% of women compared to 14% of men attend Sunday school in a typical week. (2000)
- ◆ 33% of born again Christians and 60% of evangelicals attend Sunday school in a typical week. (2000)
- ◆ Married individuals are more likely than are single adults to attend a Sunday school class in a typical week (22% to 15% respectively). (2000)
- ◆ Roughly one out of ten adults is currently involved teaching a Sunday school class, a catechism class or another type of Christian education class at their religious center. This has remained relatively constant over the past decade. (1995)

Statistics are from Barna Research, Ltd., Ventura, CA
Visit their website at www.Barna.org

We are always looking for great Christian Education ideas and stories from the missionary outposts within the Diocese. Please send an e-mail to LGRohr@AlbanyDiocese.Org and we will work to share your successes!

To subscribe to this newsletter by e-mail or US Post, send a note to LGRohr@AlbanyDiocese.org or to Christian Ed, Episcopal Diocese of Albany, 68 S. Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210

Episcopal Diocese of Albany

68 South Swan Street
Albany, New York 12210

Phone: 518-465-4737 ext 251

Fax: 518-436-1182

Email: LGRohr@AlbanyDiocese.org



Disciples Making Disciples

