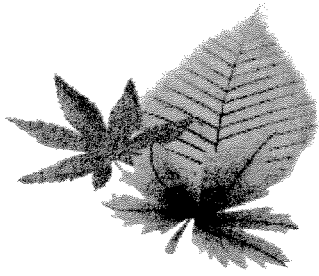
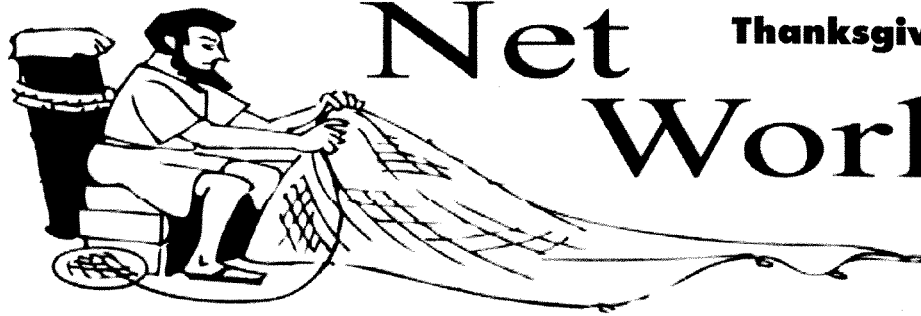


The

Net

Thanksgiving 2011

Worker



**Support Group For
ME/CFS/Fibromyalgia
LETS PEOPLE KNOW**

THEY MATTER

By Steven Citarella

On the third Sunday of each month I have the opportunity to be part of two communities which are life-giving to me as I attend both Mass at St. Peter's, and a meeting of the Bergen County Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS)/Fibromyalgia (Fibro) Support Group.

Despite the obvious difference in the gatherings, one being a group of Catholic Christians coming together to share the Mass, and the other being a group of people of all faiths coming together to share the struggles and successes of living with little understood disabling chronic illnesses, I feel and see Christ's presence in both communities. In many ways Christ's message that we hear at Mass, and His presence that we receive though the Eucharist is brought to life at the support group I attend, as well as at other support groups that let people know that they are not alone, that there is hope and that they matter.

I came to the ME/CFS/Fibro Support Group about two years ago after being diagnosed with both ME/CFS and Fibro. I had lived for about three years with a host of disabling symptoms and no clear diagnosis before finally being diagnosed with the illnesses. During that time my life had been turned upside down physically, financially and emotionally.

The strange thing about ME/CFS and Fibro is that for the most part people who have it usually don't look very sick. Blood tests for the most part appear normal. Yet the symptoms can literally be disabling.

According to the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, symptoms of ME/CFS include: incapacitating fatigue not improved by bed rest, difficulties with memory and concentration and problems with sleep. Other symptoms may also include muscle pain, joint pain, headaches, chills

FAMILY CHILDREN
PARENTS GRANDPARENTS SISTERS
BROTHERS UNCLAS AUNTS COUSINS
FRIENDS HEALTH FOOD HOME FAITH LOVE
PEACE YOU NATURE PETS SUN WATER PLANET
SCHOOL CLOTHES CARS MONEY JOBS NATURE
GOODWILL HUMANITY BABIES SIGHT HEARING TASTE
MOON STARS OCEAN BEACH SKY RAIN TEARS DOCTORS
NURSES TEACHERS PRIEST NUNS VOLUNTEERS FREEDOM
SPEECH COUNTRY WORLD JOBS HEAT AIR LIGHT SAND SNOW
HOPE KINDNESS GENEROSITY MUSIC KNOWLEDGE MIND
LAUGHTER HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNICATION HUSBAND WIFE
TREES PLANTS FLOWERS MEDICINE CURES RESEARCHERS
NUTRITION COMPASSION BODY FINGERS TOES EYES HEAD
HAIR NAILS LIPS STOMACH MILK COOKIES CANDY ICE FIRE
HUMILITY PATIENCE CONCERN GRATITUDE COMPASSION
ELECTRICITY PLUMBING TRAVEL BOATS PLANES
APPLES ORANGES NUTS SODA ICE CREAM PLUMS
BOOKS ART COLORS EXPRESSION AMERICAN
MY HERITAGE WISDOM KINDNESS
LAKES RIVERS OCEAN SEA
FATHER SON HOLY SPIRIT

THE NET WORKER

The Newsletter of St. Peter the Apostle Parish,
River Edge, New Jersey

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**GIVE
THANKS**

and night sweats, visual disturbances, allergies or sensitivities to foods, odors, chemicals, medications, or noise, dizziness and balance problems or fainting.

Fibromyalgia shares many of the same symptoms including widespread pain which can be extreme, abnormal pain processing, sleep disturbance, incapacitating fatigue not improved by bed rest and which may be worsened by physical or mental activity, tingling or numbness in your entire body, headaches (including migraines), vision problems, dizziness, other pain syndromes.

Most people have all of these symptoms at one time or another and have many on a daily basis. Most doctors know little about either illness and there are no magical cures.

When I walked into my first support group meeting at Englewood hospital I was looking for a magical cure. Many people come for that reason. Some leave after they realize that none can be found at the meetings.

While I did not find a cure for my illnesses, I found something just as important, a group of amazing people leading the group who, despite disabling illness, were committed to helping others see that life was manageable despite their ME/CFS and Fibro. Their message was to accept the changes brought on by the illness, come to terms with what you can't do and be aware of what you can. Most importantly they let people know that they were not alone and life could still be good despite the seemingly overwhelming challenges caused by the illnesses.

While there will be speakers at some meetings ranging from doctors to physical therapists to people from disability services, there is always a discussion portion of the meeting where people can talk about the symptoms or problems in



“preach the Gospel at all times...If necessary use words.”

their lives caused by their illness without fear of being labeled complainers. People come to the meetings feeling alone and wondering if anyone else in the world has a clue about what they are experiencing. They leave knowing that they are not alone and that others do care.

St. Francis of Assisi was reported to have once said “preach the Gospel at all times... If necessary use words.” That being the case there is a lot of preaching going on at Englewood Hospital on the third Sunday of each month. While the name of Jesus is not formally invoked at the support group's meetings I know He is there because the actions of those at the meeting follow His words of caring and concern for those who are in need.

The ME/CFS/Fibro Support Group also meets the first Wednesday of the Month at the River Edge Diner for an informal lunch meeting.

For information about the Bergen County ME/CFS/Fibro Support group you can go to www.NJCFSA.org or call the NJCFSA Helpline at 888-835-3677.



Always
give
yourselves
fully to
the work
of the
Lord ...



1 Corinthians 15:58

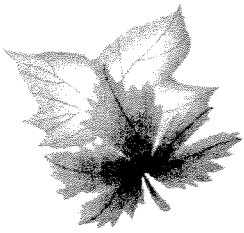


INFORMATION

For information about other support groups a good source to contact is the

**NJ Self Help Group
Clearing House**

**which can be found at
www.njgroups.org
and can be reached at
1-800-367-6274.**



GIVING AND RECEIVING LOVE

By Pam Lobley

My father has Alzheimer's, and my friends will often ask about him.

When I came back from visiting him this summer in North Carolina, they asked, "How is your father? Does he still know you?"

I think people ask this because it seems like my father knowing me and then not knowing me is some sort of dividing line. If he still knows me, that means he's OK, and once he doesn't know me anymore, then it's really bad. But it is so much more complicated than that.

Some days he knows me, some days he doesn't. Some days he can speak clearly, some days his words are totally garbled and made up.

Some days he is in a good mood, and jokes around. Some days he is totally disagreeable and angry. It's very difficult to classify him in any way. But, as my mother says, "he can still give and receive love."

And he can. He smiles warmly, he hugs, he kisses, he laughs, he looks at me with empathy.

How about the rest of us – on any given day? Can we give and receive love? Do we?

When we are healthy, we often take that for granted. We have families and friends, of course we love them. We're busy working, tweeting, making weekend plans, supervising our children, worrying about money, and trying to lose 10 pounds. You could argue that supporting your family and listening to a friend and folding the laundry and helping with homework are all ways to show love, and they are. But they have other benefits too, besides just sharing love. Chances are you do those things because you want a nice house, and you want your kids to get good grades, and you don't want to be sorting through the dryer at 7:30 a.m. looking for a pair of socks. We do those things

because we love, but also because we want a nice life.

But when life loses much of its dimension, and gets scaled back to almost nothing, giving and receiving love takes on a new size. When it is all you have, you realize how deep and comforting simple love can be. When you can't drive, when you have nowhere to go, when you can't read a book or knit a sweater, when conversation is too overwhelming, you can still sit and feel love. You might be able to hear the distress in someone's tone, and you can't help them, but you can give them love.

This kind of love doesn't solve anyone's problems - it can't change circumstances. But in the absence of all else, it becomes immense. It



swells like a current and lifts us up to an easier place. Love will go on and on, throughout suffering, after death - amidst all confusion.

This simple, mystical love doesn't just show up when someone is hurt or sick or in danger. It is always there. It's hard to notice it, though, in the clamor of daily life. It feels too weird and idle to just sit and love.

Alzheimer's strips you of everything, little by little. But our busy world has its own way of stripping you also. Tired, anxious, inadequate, petty, angry, broke or in debt, scared ... our world knows just how to take you down. Still, you can give and receive love. When all else fails, there is still love. Nothing in this world can take that away from you.

This love is a gift from God, and perhaps a small preview of the love He feels for us. When I think about my father, it is shattering to think of all that he has lost. But when I remember that he can still give and receive love I can see his full humanity, and the place we all have in the larger scheme of things.



NEWS FROM ST. PETER'S PARISH LIBRARY

BY ELEANOR GRybowski

HOO HOO LOOK WHAT'S
NEW IN OUR LIBRARY



GOOD NEWS! FATHER JAMES MARTIN HAS A NEW BOOK OUT AND WE HAVE A COPY IN OUR LIBRARY.

The title of the book is "Between Heaven and Mirth." Why Joy, Humor and Laughter Are At The Heart of the Spiritual Life. You will find the book on the shelf with the books that have a yellow tape.

If you have never read any of Fr. Martin's books, you don't know what you are missing. He is a Jesuit, a teacher, a writer and a very funny man.

Fr. Martin's other books in our Library are:

- THE JESUIT GUIDE TO ALMOST EVERYTHING (GREEN TAPE)
- MY LIFE WITH THE SAINTS (GREEN TAPE)
- LOURDES DIARY (BLUE TAPE)
- IN GOOD COMPANY (YELLOW TAPE)



Another bit of news is that we have moved the bookcase that was next to the closet in the Library. It is now straight ahead of you as you enter the Library, near the other bookcases. You will find two categories of books on these shelves:

HEALING (PINK TAPES)

For example, under HEALING you will find such books as:

- WALKING WITH GOD IN A FRAGILE WORLD
- WHEN YOUR SOUL ACHES
Help for Women Who Have Lost Their Husbands.
- COPING WHEN YOUR SPOUSE DIES
- HELPING CHILDREN GRIEVE
- WHEN GOD SAYS NO



SOCIAL CONCERNS (AQUA TAPE)

Under SOCIAL CONCERNS such books as:

- ROMERO: THE ESSENTIAL BIOGRAPHY OF A MODERN MARTYR AND CHRISTIAN HERO
- SAINTS OFF THE PEDESTAL
REAL SAINTS FOR REAL PEOPLE
- CARE FOR CREATION
- LEFT TO TELL
- LED BY FAITH
DISCOVERING GOD AMONG THE RWANDAN HOLOCAUST

REMEMBER THE TURKEY DRIVE -- SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19th!!

The Annual St. Peter's Thanksgiving Turkey Drive will be Saturday November 19th. Originally started 14 (!) years ago by Sheridan and Dottie Ogden, this is one of our parish's most successful undertakings of the year. It is now run by the Men's Cornerstone Team 11, and last year they collected a record 673 turkeys. Every year the Community FoodBank of New Jersey collects about 2,100 turkeys from 18 New Jersey counties. Our parish typically contributes approximately one-fifth of that number. The people of St. Peter's can be proud that we are such a big part of the FoodBank's donations.

Here's what to do to – it could not be easier! Make sure you read your Shoprite coupon carefully and don't forget to pick up your turkey. You can drop it off SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The truck will be waiting in the St. Peter's parking lot, and there are always ample volunteers from the Youth Group and local Boy Scout troops, to help you remove the large, chilly bird from your trunk.

Check with your friends to make sure they've used their Shoprite coupons – make sure no one leaves a turkey unclaimed. Times are truly tough for many people now, so let's make sure all New Jersey families can feel the warmth and comfort of a big meal, and the compassion of their fellow man.

Thank you!

Please come to the Library and see for yourself the books that are waiting for you to read.

The Library is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is open on Sundays after the 8 a.m. Mass, the 9:30 a.m. Mass and the 11 a.m. Mass. There will be someone in the library to assist you on Sundays.

By the way, we could use more help in the Library on Sundays. You are only needed for about 20 minutes about every three weeks. Someone will instruct you on what your responsibilities are. If you are interested, please call Eleanor at 262-0306 or Marge at 262-3022.

