

The Ameliorator

St. Amelia Church

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Tonawanda, NY

Author of "Three Cups of Tea" Speaks to School Children

by Lelaina Sullivan

Greg Mortenson is a humanitarian who helps the women and children of Pakistan and Afghanistan get a better life through education. As founder of the Central Asia Institute he has helped to build more than one hundred schools in these countries. Greg came to Buffalo recently as part of the University of Buffalo Distinguished Speaker Series. He was there to talk about his experiences in Asia and to discuss his books, Three Cups of Tea and Stones into Schools.



Greg Mortenson and some of his students.

I was one of a group of about thirty students who attended a special session with Mr. Mortenson to get a better understanding of his work. He talked about the great need

for education in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He believes that education, especially for girls and women, is the key to peace in the region. I asked him if he could give advice for people who want to do what he has been doing. He said that education leads to tolerance of other cultures and religions. Children in his schools learn a second language, math, geography, health, and nutrition.

Mr. Mortenson also gave some advice to people who want to make a difference. He said that first you have to make yourself strong in body and mind, before you can deal with other people's problems.

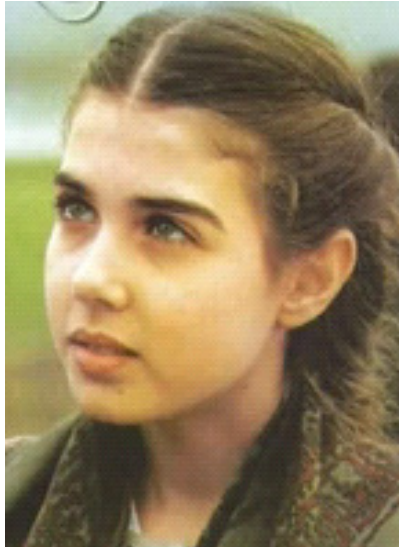
"Turn off your computers", he said. "Communicate with each other. Speak to your grandparents about their childhood, and their history. Americans are losing the tradition of storytelling because we do not share our oral history".

I asked him what we as children could do to help Asia. He replied that we need to ask people what they need and listen to their answers. One way children across America have been helping out is through the Pennies for Peace Program. This was started by a little boy with a piggy bank. The boy wanted to help and so he grabbed his piggy bank, and donated over a thousand pennies. Since then over 140 million pennies have been donated by 4000 schools all over the world. So in a very real sense, the children of the world are helping to educate the children of Asia.

Lelaina is a 2011 alumna of our school.

Grade 8 Students Venerate Relic of St. Maria Goretti

What exactly is a relic? What does it mean to “venerate” a relic, and why would anyone want to do that? These were questions members of our school’s eighth grade class were asking as they prepared to celebrate Mass in honor of St. Maria Goretti and venerate her relic. Maria is one of the patron saints of the eighth grade home-rooms, along with St. Paul and St. John Vi-
annee.



“In 1902, Maria was 11 years old, and a neighbor, twenty-year-old Allesandro Serenelli, was enthralled by her beauty. Inflamed by pornography, he sought to do impure things with her in the kitchen of her home”, Father Tom explained in his homily. “She said no, and resisted his advances. Allesandro struggled with her, and grabbed a knife, and stabbed her fourteen times. She died in the hospital a day later.

“Allesandro was sentenced to thirty years in prison, and when a priest came to visit him, he spat on the priest. One night though, he had a dream, and in the dream he saw Maria, who said to him, “Allesandro, I forgive you. I want you to be with me here in heaven”. He was shaken to his core. He repented of his sin, and vowed to lead a holy life. When he got out of prison, he went to see Maria’s mother to ask for forgiveness. She said, ‘My daughter has forgiven him; how can I not?’”

Pope Pius XII declared Maria a saint in ceremonies at the Vatican in 1950. In the front row were Maria’s mother and Allesandro. Also present was a priest from Buffalo, who obtained from the Vatican a relic of the new saint. He sent this relic to Msgr. McHugh, our founding pastor, and it has since been one of our parish’s most prized possessions.

A relic is something connected to a saint. It might be a piece of hair, or of bone, or a fragment of clothing. It is a way for us today to be connected with a long-deceased saint. When we venerate a relic, we kiss it, or touch it reverently, or make the sign of the cross with it. In doing this, we celebrate our connectedness with the saint, and we ask the saint to pray for us, to help us have the particular virtues that the saint had.



Maria’s relic

School Students Visit “Friends of the Night People”

by Connor Hudson and Aziz Shittu

Some members of the eighth grade class at St. Amelia School recently went to the Friends of the Night People Shelter in Buffalo near Kleinhan’s Music Hall. This is a shelter that provides food and clothing for people in need. The manager of the shelter also offers housing for a very low price. The time spent there impacted all our lives.

We all had different jobs to do at the shelter. Some served food, others prepared beverages, and many washed dishes and trays. Every person who comes in is able to get food and clothing. The diners are planned to provide everything a person would need for a healthy meal.



The visit to the shelter deeply affected all of us. Seeing the situations of the people we served taught us not to take things in life for granted. Most of these people had no job and almost no money. This experience taught us all to be thankful for what we have.

Connor and Aziz are members of the Class of 2011 at our school.

Proceeds from Golf Outing Benefit Needy Students

Sean Burke was a former pupil at our school who died in 2004 at the age of 29. In his memory, his five siblings now hold an annual Sean Burke Memorial Golf Outing, to raise funds for tuition assistance at our school. The Outing is sponsored by our Holy Name Society and our Group of Alumni Parents. Last year’s Tournament netted \$11,000.

This year’s Outing is set for August 15 at Rothland Golf Course in Akron, with registration at 10 a.m. The “shotgun start” tournament begins at 11. Lunch is provided mid-way through the 18 holes. Golfers and friends will gather 5:30 at Banchetti’s for cocktails, with dinner at 6:30. Dinner is followed by a Chinese auction and a live auction.



“What a great gift this is to our school!” exclaims Principal Jim Mulé. “We are now able for instance to reach out and offer tuition assistance to kids attending failing schools, in the City of Buffalo and elsewhere.”

Golfers can sign on for \$100. You can also sign up for the dinner only at \$35. Or you might want to be a sponsor. For information, send an e-mail to ReginaBurke6@aol.com or kbuirish@yahoo.com or pick up a brochure in the narthex of our church.

Dominican Preacher Presents Pro-life Message

Father Scott Daniels, O.P., came to St. Amelia's to preach at the weekend Masses May 21 and 22. Father Scott is associated with "Priests for Life", a national pro-life ministry.

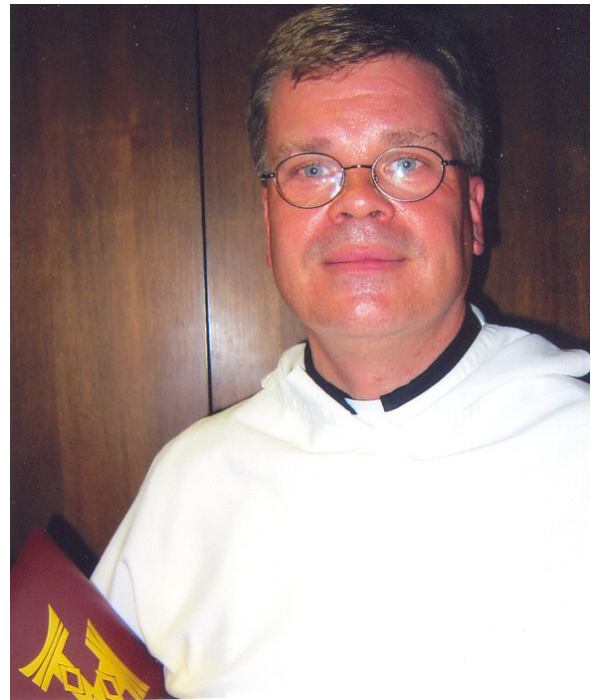
In his homilies, and in the literature he made available, he reminded us that

There are alternatives to abortion.

Any woman who is pregnant and in need can turn for help to the pro-life movement. She never has to feel that abortion is the only option. People anywhere in the country can find help by calling 1-800-395-HELP, 1-800-848-LOVE, or going online to www.PregnancyCenters.org.

There is forgiveness after abortion.

We who reject abortion do not reject those who have had abortions. Counseling, forgiveness, and healing are readily available. To access these services, call 1-877-476-3463, or 1-866-482 LIFE. You can also go online to www.RachelsVineyard.org or www.NationalHelpline.org.



Parish Pro-Life Committee Reports on Year's Activities

"It's because we have a prayerful and passionate group, and we are blessed with the support of our priests". This is the answer Joan Owczarczyk gives to Pro-Life Committees members of other parishes when they marvel at the work of the St. Amelia Pro-Life Committee. In a report to the Parish Council, Joan listed ten events or activities the group has been involved in this past school year.

In October they participated in Life Chain Sunday; in November they sponsored a pro-life Christmas Card contest for children; December saw them organizing the National Night of Prayer. Members took part in the March for Life in Washington in January. The March 25 Feast of the Annunciation was marked with a Night of Prayer for the Unborn.

A parish-wide baby shower for unwed mothers took place in April, and in May, a Mothers Day card sale. Also in May the Committee arranged for a speaker from Priests for Life to preach at weekend Masses.

In June, a Fathers Day card sale was held. In addition, the group maintained stocks of reading material and prayer cards in the narthex throughout the year.

"Father Ryszard and Brian Ruh have been really helpful and supportive", Joan added.



Dear Msgr. Maloney:

My returning from months in Nicaragua seems the best time to let you know how much a part of our efforts there you have been for us.



LETTERS

The retired bishop of Granada, Bernard Homback, dedicated a new housing project - named Sancta Emilia - which will accommodate 670 persons in 133 residences. We put your funds there to help build homes for those who had nothing but shacks and lean-tos to live in.



There is no way that I can adequately thank your parishioners, nor any way for you to truly realize how much your caring has meant for others. May our Lord continue to fill your hearts with his loving grace.

Ann Marie Zon
Missionary to Nicaragua.

Dear Father Tom,

I know that the school provides tutoring services for children who need them, whether they are in grammar school or high school. My problem is my grandson, who is in college, and needs some help. Can the school help him in the subjects he is having trouble with?

Gramma
Tonawanda, NY

Dear Gramma,

Absolutely! The school does not have a formal tutoring program for college kids, but the parish can help your grandson. We can meet with him, and find out where he needs help. Then we can connect him with a parishioner who has expertise in that subject. Many of our parishioners are quite willing to share their talents, but don't know how to do it. Our task is to connect kids who need help in a particular area, with parishioners who have tons of knowledge and experience in that area. We would be happy to do it. Give me a call.

Father Tom

Kids Look Forward to Bible School in August

The first week of August is Vacation Bible School time. The annual event takes place this year from Monday thru Friday, August 1 thru 5. Each day is filled with fun activities - music, games, snacks, crafts - specially designed for children from Pre-K(4) through Grade 5.



Sessions begin at 9 a.m., and end at noon. For applications, go to www.stameliared.com, and click on "Forms". You can also pick up an application in the Church narthex, or call the Religious Education Office at 833 8647. The fee is \$15 per child.

Trust Traveling Titans to Trounce Toronto Team!



The legendary Bronx Bombers take on the Toronto Blue Jays in a matinee game on Saturday, September 17, and you can be there to cheer for the Yankees and watch them trounce the Blue Jays! Buses leave here at 10 a.m., in plenty of time for the opening pitch at 1:00 p.m. After the game, we return to our church, with a 7:30 p.m. estimated time of arrival. Tickets are \$40 and include bus transportation and admission to the game. You will need proper documentation to cross the border. Call Joe Hayek (834 3224), Mike Streer (832 4626), or Doug Berger (877 4439) for information or reservations.

Kids Gear Up for Bike Trek to Canada

“It’s been over thirty years that kids have been coming to my cottage on their bikes”, Father Tom said at the June meeting of the Parish Council. “This tradition began when I was pastor at St. Joseph’s University Church in the early 1980’s, then continued when I was pastor in Elma in the late eighties, and perdured when I came to St. Amelia’s in 1995. We began to call it the “Tour de Niagara” after the noted French race, the Tour de France, because the journey really does give the kids an expansive and different view of the Niagara River as they pedal from the City of Tonawanda down past the Grand Island Bridges to the Peace Bridge”.

This year’s Tour de Niagara takes place July 23 and 24, under the direction of Youth Minister Kathy Waite. The trek begins at 9 a.m. Saturday in the City of Tonawanda, across the street from Mississippi Mudd’s. Cyclists wend their way down the river to the Peace Bridge. On the Canadian side, they pick up the Friendship Trail, leading to the cottage at Thunder Bay. It is a 20 mile trip, with frequent stops of rest and rehydration.

“What’s not to like?” asks Kathy Waite. “A challenging bike trip, afternoon at the beach, home Mass in the evening, campfire, and lots of good food”. Trekkers arrive back at Mississippi Mudd’s around 1 p.m. on Sunday. Crossing the border is relatively simple for young people in organized excursions. They need only a copy of their birth certificate and a signed parental permission slip. Youth entering grades six thru twelve are welcome. Information has been mailed to kids entering grades 6-9. Registration forms are also available at the Rectory. Or you can go online to

www.stameliayouthministry.webs.com





Perhaps imitating Mary Magdalen, children check out the empty tomb at Church on Easter Sunday morning. The tomb is a gift from Lauren and Ed Melber.



Thru the Lens



Polish Heritage dancers pose with Father Ryszard at the Polish Folk Mass on April 30. The Mass was part of the third annual Polish Festival, which included dinner for 300 in Don Millerski Hall, folk dancing, and music by the Eugene Jarembek band.

Dan Spors, a fifth grader at Thomas Edison School, celebrates the end of the religious education year with his classmates at an ice cream social in the cafeteria.



Samantha Hare, shown here with Father Tom, was one of 90 third-graders who made their First Communion May 14 and 15.



Father Ryszard baptizes Terry Burns at the Easter Vigil. In all, six persons received Easter sacraments at the Vigil this year: Terry, Robert McLellan, Daniel Nowinski, Emma Tomaka, Alisha Byrne, and James Van Schoonhoven.

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The Ameliorator is the bi-monthly publication of Saint Amelia Church. We mail it to members of our Saint Amelia Family, that is, registered parishioners, adult alumni of our school, and parents of children who attend our school. We also send it to people who live in the geographical area served by our Church, in order to keep them informed about who we are and what we are doing. If you do not wish to receive The Ameliorator, you can have your name deleted from our mailing list by simply calling 716-836-0011.

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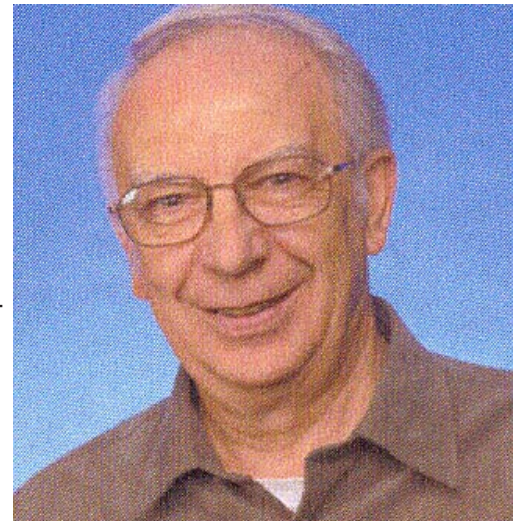
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Miracle in Dunkirk: Hear About it From WBEN's John Zach

On the evening of January 4, 1983, Lillian Halasinski of Dunkirk was suffering excruciating pain in her left leg, due to what doctors had diagnosed as incurable diabetic neuropathy. She had been sent home from the hospital some days earlier, since there was nothing more the doctors could do. That evening she invoked the intercession of Sr. Mary Angela Truszkowska, foundress of the Felician Sisters, who was a candidate for beatification.

Her healing was instantaneous and complete. After some years of study, the Vatican approved the miracle as authentic, and Sr. Mary Angela became Blessed Mary Angela, at beatification ceremonies at the Vatican on April 18, 1993, with Lillian in attendance.



John Zach

The dean of Western New York radio journalists, John Zach, host of WBEN's "Buffalo Early News", did an exhaustive investigation of this miracle. He comes to our Men's Emmaus Spirituality Group on Saturday, July 9 to speak about his findings. A continental breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. in the Rectory meeting room, followed by Mr. Zach's presentation. All men and their sons are welcome to attend.