

To Protect

Office of Victim Assistance
& Safe Environment



Special points of interest:

Holidays and Stress

True Meaning of JOY

News from the Director

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Holidays and Stress

For some, the holidays bring unwelcome guests - such as stress and depression. It's no wonder, in an effort to pull off a perfect Hallmark holiday, you might find yourself facing a dizzying array of demands: work, parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, caring for elderly parents or children on school break, and scores of other chores. So much for peace and joy, right? Actually, with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress and depression that often accompany the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would. (See **Holidays & Stress**, page 3)



A New Year, A New Commitment

With 2018 approaching, we look back on 2017 and recognize that being a Safe Environment Coordinator is a huge job! Many of you are not full time employees, only part time volunteers. We do recognize that we all have a full plate. We just ask for everyone to take the time during the New Year to re-evaluate their own lives. Ask yourself the following questions: Am I committed to the mission of this Ministry? Do I have the personal and emotional energy that it will require? Do I have the passion to help others? Praise God if you answered YES! We ask that you pray for our Ministry's continued support and strengthen your commitment in 2018. If you answered NO, to any of the questions, then we ask that you pray for guidance. The Lord will help you make the decision if this is the Ministry for you. You can even call our office and we will offer guidance. We ask those who are in this Ministry to "re-commit" to the mission of protecting children as we start a new year.

Our office will support each and every one of you in 2018 in any way possible. We will continue to be available by phone, email, or by personal visits. Whatever your needs are, we will do our best to meet them. That is our commitment to you this New Year!

The True Meaning of Joy

If we look at Galatians 5:22-23, it states, “but the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control.” This is the time of year when the word JOY is used freely and without thought. It is in songs, Christmas cards, and we often greet one another with “joy”. But with the Holy Spirit it can bring change in people with their ambitions, attitudes, action, affections and emotions—which includes JOY! God desires us to be joyful during the entire year, but it must also come from within. We must lead our lives in a deeper spiritual growth and wisdom as did Job. He was faced with many challenges,

losses, and physical pain. However, his solid foundation of faith to keep JOY in his life, he was able to build his life on trusting the Lord no matter what happened. Even when times are difficult we can still have JOY! We know this because of Psalms 30:5, “His anger lasts only a moment, his goodness for a lifetime. Tears may flow in the night, but *joy* comes in the morning.” We ask ourselves, what about all the people who are bitter? Why can’t they see the Joy in life? Although we know God desires us to all have joy. We also know that it can be lost from our lives. For example, the sin of selfishness. Always having the attitude of me, me, me, and not

others through the eyes of Jesus with love and compassion. The sin of judging and being critical of others takes away joy and peace of mind. Finding fault in everyone, or everything can create dissatisfaction in one’s own life. It will destroy JOY! Our joy can even be lost by not making an effort to spiritually grow. If we don’t read and study our bibles it can take away our joy. Not taking everything to God in prayer can also take away our joy. When we don’t trust in the Lord to help us get through those tough times in life and we struggle without his loving hands, we will lose joy. He will never leave us, remember he wants us to have joy in our lives always. If we take a good look at our lives we all have wonderful blessings to be joyful for this holiday season and everyday after. Our savior Jesus Christ has brought us great joy as he has healed the sick and made the blind see. This brought believers eternal and everlasting joy into our lives. The resurrection of Jesus alive again brought us joy, he proved he truly is the Son of God.

If you start your day praising the Lord and end it praising the Lord, then you have a good day. It doesn’t mean that you didn’t have heartache during your day, but that you praised the Lord in every instance, and that is real JOY!!

Joy TO THE
World
THE LORD IS
Come



CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

Holidays and Stress (continued from page 1)

Holiday stress and depression are often the result of three main trigger points. Understanding these triggers can help you plan ahead on how to accommodate them. Here are the three areas that commonly trigger holiday stress or depression: 1) relationships, 2) finances, 3) physical demands. Relationships can cause turmoil, conflict and stress at any time. But tensions are often highlighted during the holidays. Family misunderstandings and conflict can intensify—especially if you're all thrust together for several days. Conflicts are bound to arise with so many needs and interests to accommodate. On the other hand, if you're facing the holidays without a loved one, you may find yourself especially lonely or sad. Like your relationships, your financial situation can cause stress at any time of the year. Overspending during the holidays on gifts, travel, food and entertainment can increase stress as

you try to make ends meet while ensuring that everyone on your gift list is happy. And finally, the physical demands caused by shopping, attending social gatherings and preparing holiday meals can wipe you out. Feeling exhausted increases your stress, creating a vicious cycle. Once you identify these triggers, you can try some of these tips to help minimize the stress.

- **Be realistic:** As families change and grow, traditions often change as well. Hold on to those you can and want to. Understand in some cases that may no longer be possible. Perhaps your entire extended family can't gather together at your house, instead find new ways to celebrate together from afar, such as sharing photos, emails or video chatting.
- **Set differences aside:** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Be understanding if others get upset or distressed

when something goes awry. Chances are they are feeling the effects of holiday stress too.

- **Stick to a budget:** Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.
- **Plan ahead:** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your shopping trips, to prevent driving in circles. Allow extra time for travel so that delays won't worsen your stress.
- **Take a breather:** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone without distractions may refresh you enough to handle all your holiday needs.
- **Say a Prayer!**



Thank You for your Patience

As we continue to operate our offices without telephones. Be sure that we diligently check our messages and return phone calls as promptly as we can. Please note that we do not have Caller ID functionality and cannot return phone calls if you call and hang up. It is best if you leave a voicemail. We are all available via email as well!

Scheduled Training

Please contact your Safe Environment Coordinator at your Parish for a list of Scheduled Training.

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

This has been an amazing year for OVASE. It started off with hiring Storie Arredondo as my new Associate Director. She has fit in nicely into our OVASE family. She is outgoing, smart, and always has a smile on her face. Her work can be seen throughout this newsletter. She's still learning the ropes, but she is catching on quickly. Please pray for her to continue her growth and leadership in this difficult ministry.

Another great thing to happen to OVASE this year was that we moved buildings. Our new location is a small house that has been converted into office space. We are located on the campus of St. Peter Prince of the Apostle. The staff and the pastor at St. Peter have been welcoming and accommodating to our needs. We are extremely grateful for their help during this transition.

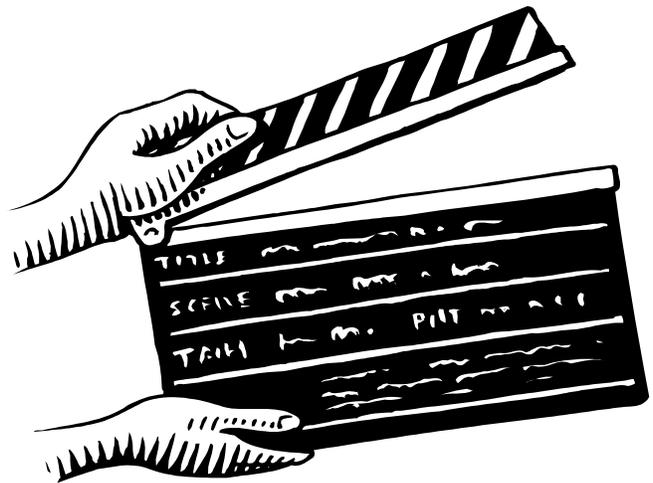
Sadly, not every transition goes smoothly. As you may have read, we still do not have phones. Calls can still be made to our office but we do not answer. Please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. The best

way to reach us is through our cell phones or our emails. This has been the most frustrating part of this move but we ask everyone to be patient. We should have full functioning phones by the start of the new year.

We will be having an open house soon, so keep your eyes open for an invitation.

I would like to thank all those who have worked hard during this year to ensure that children are protected from harm. Your continued dedication towards this ministry is an inspiration. Thank You!!!

Merry Christmas and have a blessed new year.





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