



# Meeting Fear With Faith Allows Us to Truly Celebrate Our Lives

A Weekly Column From Members  
of the *Ministerial Associations*

By REV. DONALD K. HUMMEL

"Fear knocked at my door, Faith answered and no one was there."

What is it you fear? I mean really are worried to death about. The people, places and things that absolutely consume your time and attention. Chances are, if you are like me, most of our fears are that we will lose something we already have (or think we have) or that we will fail to get something we demand (or think we have a right to).

As we muddle through this life, we usually learn more through our failures than successes — that our possessions can all too easily possess us and we wake up one morning to the feeling that the light of freedom to celebrate life is greatly dimmed to the point where all spontaneity is lost, and we wonder why we were put here in the first place.

We're so afraid that we've built high, strong walls of fear — fear that has multiple faces and facets — walls

## Author Rebecca Libutti To Visit Local Library For Book-Signing

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library will host a book signing this Saturday, April 29, between 10 a.m. and noon at the library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue.

Scotch Plains resident Rebecca Libutti will be on hand to discuss her book, entitled "That's Unacceptable," which recounts her battle against a life-threatening brain tumor.

She will also sign copies for individuals who wish to purchase the book. The program is free and open to all residents.

## Rosarians Announce Annual Retreat Date

WESTFIELD — The Holy Trinity and St. Helen's Rosary Altar Society will celebrate their annual Retreat on Thursday, May 4, at St. Joseph's Shrine in Stirling at 9:30 a.m. A hot lunch will be served. The cost is \$20.

Sister Eleanor Mc Nichol of the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield will be the moderator.

For reservations or further information, please call Eleanor Pfaff at (908) 232-3374. Individuals needing transportation are asked to meet at 525 First Street in Westfield at 8:45 a.m.

that in keeping us "safe" are shutting out the light and pushing others away. We are isolated and profoundly alone and lonely. We feel empty, disconnected and maybe even dead inside. We wonder how we got this way and what we can do to change this sad state.

At this time of year, the major religious traditions celebrate some form of liberation from the "sins" and slavery that have tyrannized so many and offer hope and new life. We are invited to walk trustingly through the "valley of the shadow" of our particular and personal death or dying.

This trust is a basis for the faith that can drive away those nagging fears that plague our life journey and allow us to open the door confidently. As our friends in 12-step programs remind us, "Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell, spirituality is for those who have been there!"

If we accept the invitation of our respective religious traditions and their experience of God (as they may variously know and name that higher power), we can be spiritually alive once again, and by confronting and accepting — rather than avoiding or denying — our specific "givens" (good and bad), we can and will luxuriate in the light and freedom that is ours by design and destiny.

Religious expression will "give thanks and remember" and we — together — will celebrate, not just survive, life today and every day that we are blessed to have.

Is there a knock at the door of your heart? Is that fear knocking? Should you...can you ...will you open the door with gratitude and faith? Will you step out into the light of the freedom of an unconditionally loved child of your Creator? What have you got to lose except your fear? What are you waiting for?

Take a chance. You won't be sorry. Just open the door .

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*The Reverend Donald K. Hummel has served as a Roman Catholic priest for nearly 22 years in a variety of capacities. Until April 16, he was a Parochial Vicar at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield. He has just joined St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains as Pastor.*