

Our Lady Queen of Peace

4696 Notre Dame Lane, House Springs, Mo 63051 636-671-3062

www.olqpparish.org

January 13, 2013



PASTOR

Reverend Michael Murphy

ASSOCIATES

Reverend James Beighlie, C.M.

Reverend Donald F. Molitor, Retired

DEACONS

Reverend Dr. Thomas Gerling

Reverend Mr. Paul Turek, Sr.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Mr. Bob Ellison

GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/PRESCHOOL

Ms. Renée Chauvin

PSR COORDINATOR

Mrs. Debra O'Donnell

YOUTH MINISTER COORDINATOR

Mrs. Terry Ostlund

PARISH COUNCIL

Thomas Broadbent, Jacob Bufka, Sandee Burkemper,

Joanne David, Bev Gregory, René Heibeck, Dave Mills,

Denise Ortmann, Rebecca Pigue, Jan Schultheiss,

Linda Weber

Parish Office

671-3062

School

671-0247

Cafeteria

375-5335

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Saturday Evening 5:00 pm

(Rosary before Mass - Fatima Prayers included on 1st Sat.)

Sunday 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am

Holy Days as announced

Weekdays 8:00 am

PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS

Tuesday after 8:00am Mass

ROSARY FOR VOCATIONS

2nd Monday of each month after 8:00am Mass

ROSARY FOR PEACE

Every Monday evening at 7:30pm

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

First and third Sunday of the month after 11:30am Mass

Make arrangements by calling Parish Office

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturday 4:00 - 4:45pm or by appointment

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

As soon as marriage is contemplated, contact one of the parish priests.

Welcome to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

We rejoice to have you with us, whether a long-time resident or newly arrived in our parish! Please fill out this form and return it to the Parish Office or place it in the Sunday collection basket if you would like to be a registered member of our parish. If you have recently changed your status, married, moved out of your parents' home or graduated from college, you need to re-register. Please help us keep our records in order.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ Phone _____ # of people registering _____

email address _____

Please circle one: New Registration Address or phone number change Moving out of parish

Upcoming OLQP Parish Events

2013

January

Wed 30 Fr. Joe Kempf Presentation

February

Sat 23 Daughters Antique Tea

March

Sun 10 Red Hat Bingo, KC Hall

Sun 31 Easter Sunday

April

Sun 14 First Communion

Sat 20 Daughters Tailgate Sale

May

Wed 8 Confirmation

June

Sat 8 OLQP Picnic

July

Sun 7 Hope Builders Summer Service Week

September

Sun 22 OLQP Quilt Social

October

Sat 12 Harvest Moon Auction

Winter Weather

Since winter is approaching, please be reminded that our office sometimes closes in the event of bad weather.

**The Parish Office will be closed
Monday, January 21st,
in observance of
Martin Luther King Jr. Day.**

**Young
at
Heart**

On Monday, January 14th, we will meet at Peg's on High Ridge Blvd. for lunch at 11:30 am.

Hope to see everyone there!

**FROM the
PASTOR**

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Thank You!

A special thanks to the **Daughters of Isabella** for their gift of \$500 to the parish. The Daughters of Isabella is an international Catholic women's organization that promotes spiritual, social and charitable events. We are blessed to have a local chapter here at our parish. Any Catholic woman 16 years of age or older is welcome to join. The "Daughters" sponsor Tailgate sales, Antique Appraisal Teas and other events in order to raise money and they also promote the Catholic faith through various events. The Daughters meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Cafeteria. Thank you for your support!

Another Thank You!

On behalf of Fr. Beighlie, Fr. Molitor and myself, I want to thank our parishioners for the Christmas cards, gifts, cookies, cheeses, nuts, various breads made out of fruits and vegetables, wines...etc. Both Fr. Beighlie and myself have cardiologists who might object to some of these gifts, but what they don't know won't hurt *them*. We shall eat responsibly! Thank you for the many expressions of your love.

Another, Nuther Thank You!!

I would also like to thank God, Santa Claus, my orthopedic surgeon and the gazillion people who were praying for me when I had my right hip replaced on December 11th. The recovery process was phenomenal. I was able to return to the parish on Thursday, December 20th and I carefully got right back to work. It has now been four weeks since surgery and my doctor has lifted all restrictions. It feels so good to be walking without pain. There is still some healing that needs to take place along the muscle seam in my leg but that gets better every day. Maybe next year I can get the neck transplant that I've always wanted!

Mark Your Calendars....What Calendars?

At the end of each year we make calendars available to our parishioners. This year, most of the calendars disappeared before Christmas and all of them were gone by the time New Years Day arrived. We have ordered some more, but it will take a couple of weeks before they arrive. Please remember to take one calendar per family. Next year the calendars will not be made available until after Christmas Day.

fr. mike

School News:

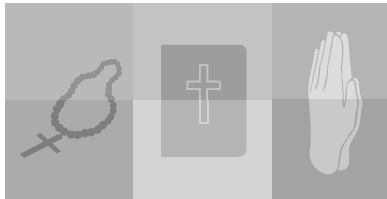
School is back in session as of January 3rd.



On January 8th the 6th, 7th and 8th graders took a trip to the Sheldon Music Hall arranged by their music teacher, Ms. Boneau.

The 4th graders presented their class play on January 10th. They did a wonderful job! Encore!

Catholic Schools' Week is coming up soon. Watch the bulletin for more details.



School Scholarship

Interested in applying for a scholarship for next school year? The Alive in Christ 2013-2014 Scholarship Program will launch for next school year over Catholic Schools' Week (January 27 - February 2, 2013). Be looking for information in the school office, bulletin, or school newsletter if you are interested in applying for this scholarship at the end of January. Scholarships will be available for new families entering our school Kindergarten - 4th grade and for existing families entering grades 1 - 8.

Youth Council News

Upcoming Youth Activities

January

- | | | |
|-------|---------|---|
| 11-13 | Fri-Sun | Young Adults attend Marian Conference in St. Louis |
| 15 | Tue | Boy Scout 553 Meet at 7pm |
| 17 | Thu | All high school youth are invited to a "Life Night" faith sharing 6:30-8pm in basement room |
| 18 | Fri | Junior High Trivia Night
Register your team now! |

Winter weather

Please call before you leave home for a meeting or event if the weather is dangerous. We will not have an event or meeting if there is bad weather.

Junior High Trivia Night, Friday, January 18th

This event is open to 6th through 8th graders of the parish. Cost is \$8 for an evening of fun, snacks, soda and prizes. Register your team of 4-6 by calling Mrs. Heibeck at 314-637-1203.

Mark your calendars for our summer events:

Hope Builders Summer Service Week

Evening of July 7th through July 11th, 2013

This is an annual Youth Council Event. The High School youth and young adults work the entire week and partner with the Hope Builder adults to do much needed work for homeowners in our area.

Venture Crew Summer Camp

June 16th through the 22nd, 2013

Venture Crew is open to youth who have completed the 8th grade through age 20. A down payment of \$25 holds your spot for camp. This leaves a balance of \$215. For more information call Julie Miller at 314-803-5299.

Thanks

Thanks to Mrs. Carbone and James Ostlund for helping chaperone the High school youth lock-in on December 27th, we had 22 youth attend. Thanks to the faith sharing group for hosting this event.

OLQP Jr. High Trivia Night Friday, January 18th

Fun-Prizes-Fun-Refreshments-Fun

Doors open at 6:45 pm

Game begins at 7 pm

4 to 6 students per table

Get your friends together now!

Fun-Prizes-Fun-Refreshments-Fun

For more information, please contact

René, 314-691-1203 or

Robin, 636-274-2665.

Select a team of 4 to 6 students in grades 6th - 8th. Complete the registration form and send in fees to the school office marked René Heibeck, Jr. High Trivia Night.



St. Vincent De Paul

We thank you for the donations this past year. You have helped 203 of the less fortunate families in our area. May God's Blessings be with you in this new year.

SVDP-OLQP Volunteers

2013 OLQP

K of C Fishing Tournament

Set the date: April 27th and 28th

Our annual OLQP - Knights of Columbus Fishing Tournament will be held again at the Kon Tiki resort just outside of Camdenton, at the Lake of the Ozarks. It will be a "Blind Buddy Draw" format with trophy hats awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place partners. A Big Bass Kitty will be had to sweeten the pot. The cost again is only \$50 and includes a Saturday night dinner with bass and crappie filet appetizers.

Kong Tiki is holding 7 cabins and 10 boat slips for us, but only until February 28th.

To make your reservations, their information is:

Web site: www.kontikiozarks.com

Email: kontikisort@sbcglobal.net

Phone: 1-800-873-5320

If you have any questions please contact: Jeff Littrell, 314-607-4121 or Deacon Paul, 314-954-0378.

Attention: Eucharistic Ministers

We have now gone low-tech in the process of scheduling EMS for Mass. There is now a sign-in book in the Church lobby, on the counter (west side entrance) with sheets for February and March 2013. Please get your name down for the Masses for which you are volunteering. Be generous with your time; we only have about 60 EMS on the list and we need 30 for each weekend - so you can see how the "math" works out.

It was decided several months ago that this stewardship should be voluntary, giving each member the choice of when he or she would serve and also instilling a sense of ownership of the process. Now it is not simply "when was I scheduled" but rather "when have I committed to serve." If all the slots aren't filled by your volunteering there will be shortages at Mass.

I highly recommend each of you to check the book weekly when you come to Mass. See if there are any available slots in the coming weeks and decide whether or not you can "jump in". Additionally, you can refer to the list before Mass and, if not, you can be ready to serve at Communion without waiting for the "one (or two) more needed" universal signal we are all familiar with.

We have already added a much higher level of solemnity (dress code, working in unison) to our service and I look forward to us raising that even more in the future. As we do, more and more of our fellow parishioners will see the spiritual benefits of this stewardship and choose to join us. Service as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist will become a much sought after position in our parish family. It will no longer be "...those EMS do a wonderful job..." but rather "We Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist make the celebration all that more special."

As always, thank you for your service.

Joe and Barb Nenner

**Knights of Columbus Clown Club
Workshop - January 26
9 am to 2 pm**

"And in my final moment, may I hear you whisper, when you made my people smile, you made me smile." What better way to go through life, than to have God smiling on you because you are bringing joy to others! Bringing joy to others, does that sound like something you would like to do? Well, the Knights of Columbus Clown Club is having an "Introduction to Clowning Workshop" on Saturday January 26, 2013 at Sacred Heart Church in Eureka. We have limited space; please make your registration by January 19th, 2013. This workshop is open to everyone; you need not be Catholic, male or any certain age. We encourage families to do this together; YOUNG clowns go over quite well. What a great way to get the whole family involved while having fun.

For more info contact Joe "PapaJo" Moses at

**Peace Pantry Food Collection
January 26th and 27th**

This month we are collecting breakfast food items, baking items or whatever food items you wish to donate for the Peace Pantry. Please bring your food items to Mass with you the weekend of January 26-27 and place them in the containers in the gathering area. Thanks for all you do to share with those in need.

**Seasons of Hope
Beginning February 16th**

Our Lady Queen of Peace will host "Seasons of Hope", a unique support group for the bereaved. This program, rooted in Catholic tradition, conveys God's consolation through scripture, prayer, reflecting and sharing our faith. We will meet for 6 consecutive Saturday mornings beginning February 16 at 9:30 am. If you or any members of your family are mourning the loss of someone you love, please prayerfully consider this invitation to come. Please let us know of your interest. Contact Judy Holmes, 314-650-0508 or email momholmes@hotmail.com.

**The Most Reverend Robert J. Hermann
Lay Eucharistic Conference - February 16**

The Archbishop's Committee on Eucharistic Adoration will hold a **Lay Eucharistic Conference** on Saturday, February 16, at **The Cardinal Rigali Center** with **Bishop Robert Hermann** speaking on "**Eucharistic Adoration in the Year of Faith**".

The conference begins at 8:30 am with Holy Mass and concludes with a Holy Hour and Benediction at 12:00 noon. Continental breakfast is included in the \$20.00 registration fee.

Send name, address, phone number and \$20.00 fee (**payable to "Office of Worship"**) to: **Archbishop's Committee on Eucharistic Adoration, 6603 Christopher Dr., St. Louis, MO 63129.**

Contact Mary or Rose, (314) 846-8207 Ext. 200, for further information.

Marriage Preparation Program "Today and All the Days of Your Life"

This program is for engaged couples and will fulfill the Archdiocesan requirement for a marriage preparation program. The program will be offered starting February 10, continuing for four weeks, ending March 3. The sessions will be facilitated by Deacon Tom and Margaret Gerling. To register or for more information please call Deacon Tom or Margaret, 636-671-0627. Please note there is a cost of \$25 for the program.

Father Joe Kempf Presents "Was That You Lord? - Hearing Only As You Can" January 30, 2013 - 7:00 pm

Enjoy an hour long presentation with Fr. Joe and Big Al as he discusses "Was That You Lord? - Hearing Only As You Can" at our own parish. Refreshments and fellowship will follow in the Cafeteria. All parishioners are welcome to enjoy this with Father Joe Kempf.

We would like to thank

Prudential Alliance Rose O'Hara Realtor,

a parishioner, for advertising in our parish bulletin. Because of her generosity we do not pay for our bulletins to be printed.

Please patronize our advertisers and thank them for supporting our parish.

Roses For Life 2013

The Knights of Columbus is sponsoring "Roses For Life" on January 12th and 13th at all the weekend Masses. Please sign your "Rose For Life" in support of Pro Life. The Knights will be at the Church doors after Mass to collect the roses and any donation you wish to make. The Roses will be delivered in Washington D.C. on Friday, January 25th, as a show of our support for Life. Abortion in the USA has been legal for 40 years now. All donations will help with the cost of OLQP Pro-Life Trip.

BINGO

**Every Friday Night
Knights of Columbus Hall
Doors Open at 4:30 pm
Bingo starts at 6:45 pm
Everyone welcome!**

OLQP Parish Email List

Subscribe to our **Parish Email List** and receive:

- Parish News
- Event Calendar & Reminders
- Death Notices
- Holy Day & Holiday Mass Schedules
- Event Cancellation Notices
- Urgent Messages
- And so much more!

It's easy and safe to subscribe and unsubscribe.

This email list is for parochial use only and will not be sold or shared with anyone!

Go to www.olqpparish.org and submit your name and email address in the form on the bottom of the home page

OR

Email your name and email address to:
frbeighlie@olqpparish.org

Parish Secretary Job Opening

Sacred Heart Parish in Crystal City has a part-time position available as the Parish Secretary. This position will start as two days a week beginning in January or February 2013 and will become four days a week after July 1st.

Qualifications for this position include a high school diploma and experience with Microsoft Office (Excel, Word and Publisher). The candidate must be able to multi-task, have organizational skills, positive disposition, a high degree of judgment, initiative and discretion. Must have strong verbal and written communication skills, have the willingness to learn new software programs and be self-motivated.

Please send resume and cover letter to:

Sacred Heart Parish
555 Bailey Road
Crystal City, MO 63019

Parish Office email

parishoffice@olqpparish.org

OLQP Web Site

www.olqpparish.org

submit articles for bulletin

olqpbulletin@yahoo.com

**Deadline Friday at 4:30 pm
(9 days before publication)**

Seven Days of Inspiration

**Take one a day...
and feel great all week!**

Day 1

This day is filled with
small joys just waiting
to be noticed.

Day 2

You have the
strength you need.

Day 3

See yourself as you
truly are: amazing!

Day 4

The recipe for success?
One part hard work and
two parts hope!

Day 5

Dream. Create.
Achieve!

Day 6

Everything will
be all right.

Day 7

Possibilities always
outnumber problems.

Engaged Encounter Weekend

Are you engaged? Consider attending a Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend, a time of discovery and love for you and your fiancé. Spend a focused weekend together to prepare for your lifetime commitment. Weekends will be held in January, March, April, July, and September, 2013 at the Marianist Retreat Center in Eureka. You can learn more and register at:

<http://home.centurytel.net/stlengaged>, or by calling Jim and Cheri, 636-379-0962.

Married Couple Retreat

SPIN Marriage Retreat, presented by Genesis Ministry, teaches various prayer methods and the joy of sharing God moments in our day. The retreat is designed to help couples build their relationship with God at the center of all that married couples say and do. The next retreat is scheduled for March 1-2, 2013.

Visit <http://www.genesis-ministry.org> or call Deacon Dennis, 314-246-9282.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Our next Eucharistic Adoration is
Wednesday, January 30,
from 1:00 - 6:00 pm.

Come visit with Jesus. He is waiting for you in the Eucharist. His love flows from Him, saturating you completely. In the stillness of the sanctuary, in the Presence of Christ, offer your heart.

2012 Contribution Statement

If you would like a 2012 contribution statement, please send a note (marked Linda) to the Parish Office (it may be placed in the collection basket, mailed to the Parish Office, or use the mail slot in the Parish Office door).

Thank you,
Linda

St. Louis Review Subscription

Please let the Parish Office know (yes or no) if you wish to receive the St. Louis Review. If you do not receive the envelope packet (which has the envelope included) you may write a note (with your name and address) and add it to the collection basket stating "yes" or "no" for the Review. If we do not hear that you do not wish to receive the Review the parish is financially obligated for you to receive one. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Linda
Parish Office

*Absent from the body present with our Lord.
In your kindness pray for the repose of the soul*

Robert Hupfeld,

friend of Tim and Sandee Burkemper

Raymond R. Wagner, father of Cathy Gansmann

John Brouk, husband of Cathy Stratil Brouk

*May God welcome them home, fill them with peace,
and bless those who will miss them.*

Our Gifts to God and Parish**Special Collections**

Seminary	\$	1,362.00
St. Louis Review	\$	120.00

New Building Fund

Lavender Envelopes	\$	786.00
Total Received to date	\$	739,561.99

Offertory

Sunday Envelopes	\$	33,844.00
Sunday Loose	\$	2,025.00
Above and Beyond	\$	254.00
Christmas	\$	18,806.00
First Offering	\$	705.00
Immaculate Conception	\$	70.00
Present and Future	\$	482.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$	1,380.00
Total Offertory	\$	57,566.00*
Offertory Goal	\$	49,500.00

*Total for 3 weeks

Thank you for your generosity.

1,157 registered members

As of January 7, 2013

Contributions Year To Date	\$	365,096.84
Projected Year to Date Budget	\$	462,000.00

Scrip Gift Cards are available in the Parish Office from 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday and every weekend after Mass.

Stewardship**Start With Prayer**

"John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water; but He who is mightier than I is coming...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit...'" Luke 3:16

The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults states that "Jesus' immersion in the water is a sign for all human beings of the need to die to themselves to do God's will." In other words, as baptized Catholics there is only one simple gift that we need to give to Jesus. The only gift God wants is a complete offering of ourselves. Once we surrender ourselves to God in this way, we will know in our hearts what else God might call us to do.

Parish Activities

Mon	Jan 14	Rosary for Vocations after 8 am Mass, Church PSR, 6:15 - 7:30 pm RCIA, 6:30 pm, Cafeteria meeting room Rosary for Peace, 7:30 pm, Church
Tues	Jan 15	Devotions after 8 am Mass Quilters, 9 am - 3 pm, 6 - 8:30 pm Finance Meeting, 6:30 pm, Rectory
Wed	Jan 16	Athletic Association meeting, 7 pm, FH
Thur	Jan 17	OLQP Science Night, 6 pm, Cafeteria Choir Practice, 7 pm, Church
Fri	Jan 18	Jr. High Trivia Night, 6 pm, Cafeteria
Sat	Jan 19	Blood Pressure Screening after Mass, Cafeteria meeting room
Sun	Jan 20	Hospitality Sunday Blood Pressure Screening after Masses, Cafeteria meeting room

Mass Intentions

Mon	Jan 14	8:00 am	Robert Dawson
Tues	Jan 15	8:00 am	Poor Souls
Wed	Jan 16	8:00 am	Oscar Buchheit
Thurs	Jan 17	8:00 am	Elvera Walker
Fri	Jan 18	8:00 am	Jim Vess, Sr.
Sat	Jan 19	5:00 pm	Herman Schmitt
Sun	Jan 20	7:30 am	People of the Parish
		9:30 am	Tracy Creighton
		11:30 am	Special Intentions

January 19th and 20th**Special Ministers of the Eucharist**

5:00 pm	*Beverly Gregory, *John Holmes, Joe Nenninger, Barb Nenninger, Dixie Garrett, Pat Hoskins, Peggy Mikko
7:30 am	*Terry Soer, *Jim England, Sue Syers, Linda Weber, Mary Bjornstad, Ken Bohnert, Pat Hanes
9:30 am	*Kent Sturhahn, *Maria Webb, Patsy Boyer, Rich Ortmann, Dale Andrews, Carl Boyer, Joanne David, Vicki De Long
11:30 am	*Tom Gerling, *Margaret Gerling, Andrea Lawson, Paul McDonnell, Michelle Mose, Lynette Rawlins, Patrick Rawlins

* You are responsible to clean the vessels after Mass

Please pray for those who are ill

(parishioners are in bold)

Frieda Siebel-Spath **Rich Leiber**
Audrey Hastings **Lenore Burns**
Jackie Nappier **Paul McDonnell**
Joyce Stenger **Shirley Bokern**
Greg Hirtz **Dot Hirtz**
Michael O'Shea

Elsie Million, friend of Sandee Burkemper
CJ Ellis, grandson of Christine Dower
Mary Ellis, daughter of Christine Dower
Kimberly Reckmann, daughter of Ed Kelemen
Rob, Tina and Clifton Ruh
Joanne Thomes, friend of Katie Tutass
Wayne Wencker, father of Angie Henning

~those serving in the military, the homebound,
shut-ins of the parish and all in nursing homes.

To add a name please call the Parish Office,
636-671-3062. Names will be removed after
3 weeks.

Proclaimers

5:00 pm	Barb Nenninger, Joe Nenninger
7:30 am	Frieda Siebel-Spath, Linda Weber
9:30 am	Maria Webb, Bruce Gallion
11:30 am	Michelle Mose, Tom Mattingly

Servers

5:00 pm	Gabby Anderson, Rose Haug, Michael Reiter
7:30 am	Alyssa Block, Allyson Bridges, Kaitlyn Bridges
9:30 am	Olivia Berry, Hayden Conley, Kaitlyn Esch
11:30 am	Marissa Ginger, Mitchell Ginger, Gracie Scanga

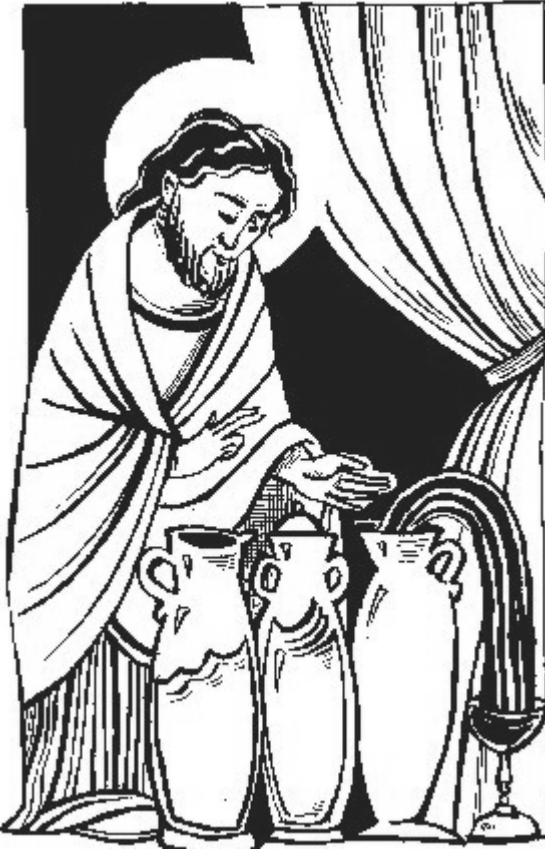
Ushers

5:00 pm	Katie Tutass, Darlene Allmeroth, Ken Ganey, Ralph Munzlinger, Don Brooks, Ben Slodkowski
7:30 am	John Nahlik, Robert De Long, Ted Hempten, Vince Rocchio, Tim Webb, Jerry Terry
9:30 am	Ray Graf, Butch Mattingly, Sam Pierceall, Jeff Queen, Ralph Schultheiss, Tom Broadbent
11:30 am	Cristina Duncan, Jennifer Younkings, G. Freihaut, Becca Mose, Jim Robertson, AL Schuld



Cathy Morlock,
Debbie Stephens,
Chyree deRoode
and Cheryl Brinker

**Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C**



THEME: Unity from Diversity.

Unity out of diversity. On this second Sunday in Ordinary time, the readings focus on newness, on the new ways God expresses His love and care for His people, on the new means of God's presence to His people that is found in the life and ministry of His son. And in all this newness, there is the suggestion that God creates unity out of diversity, that different times, different peoples, different gifts and ministries all work together to bring God's love and care, to make His presence with us a reality.

THE READINGS:

FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

The first reading is taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. The reading has its context in the third section of

the Book of Isaiah, the section most likely dated to the early years of the restoration after the Babylonian Exile. The voice of God's messenger, the prophet, proclaims a new life, a new situation, a new relationship with God for the people of Jerusalem. The presence of God for His people, experienced in the return from Exile, ushers in a new age, a change in the fortunes of the people, a time of new possibilities. Yet, as is consistent with so many biblical passages that proclaim God's favor for His people, their favor, their chosenness, is for a purpose. The nations of the world will see in the restored community of Jerusalem the presence of God in the world. They will be drawn to Israel's loving God by seeing the favor and glory of God's people.

SECOND READING: I Corinthians 12:4-11

The second reading comes from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Corinth was, by ancient standards, a metropolitan center. Paul had established a Christian community there, but that community was experiencing division. People of different backgrounds were adapting Paul's message to their ways of thinking and molding Christian life to reflect their backgrounds and thought patterns. These differing groups stressed the different gifts of the Spirit as signs of God's favor, as signs of belonging, as signs of truly being Christian. Against these flawed views of Christian life, Paul had to stress that there were many gifts of the Spirit and that they were all given for the common good.

If we experience God's grace and favor, then how are we to live? Paul was adamant in his approach. We are to live in unity. The diversity that is in our midst is not to be a cause of division, but a source of richness. The different gifts and ministries in the community are for the good of all, for building up the community.

GOSPEL READING: John 2:1-11

The Gospel reading is John's account of Jesus' first sign, His first miracle, at the wedding feast in Cana. John does not record the multitude of miracle stories found in the Synoptics, but only seven representative actions that sum up Jesus' whole ministry and speak to us of His true identity. In John, Jesus' signs are occasions of faith and are intended to lead people, in experiencing the presence and power of God, to enter into a full and loving relationship with our revealing God. Seven is a number of completion and perfection in the Bible. Jesus' seven signs, showing a progression from control over material things to power over life and death itself, are a complete and perfect summary of who Jesus is for us.

There are a couple of details in this story that are worthy of note. First, Jesus notes "my hour has not yet come." In John, Jesus' hour is the moment of His glorification and that comes in the crucifixion. At that moment, Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of God, is all that He is intended to be and His mission is accomplished. Yet, along the way to that moment of ultimate glorification, Jesus has little moments that reveal His nature, that offer glory to God, that offer signs of hope and faith for the people who experience them, that offer the possibility of entering into a full and loving relationship with Jesus and the Father who sent Him.

Secondly, this sign is significant in that Jesus takes the water jars used for Jewish purification rites and transforms them into something new and better. He goes beyond the old and established ways of living our life with God and offers a new possibility for having a personal relationship with God. It is to be noted that Jesus is not replacing the old, but going beyond it. His sign is an offer of the possibility of growth, of deeper intimacy in our relationship with God, of moving towards what we are meant to be as Jesus moves towards the fulfillment of His destiny in the crucifixion.

All of the readings today speak to us of the presence of God in our lives, a presence of God that transforms old

ways of living and old patterns and offers us new possibilities. As we join Jesus at the start of His mission and ministry, we are given a choice – the choice to say "yes," to be transformed, to grow and live more deeply into our personal relationship with Him and His Father, or to hang on to the old, to embrace His message and offer of love in terms of our backgrounds and thought patterns, to reject the offer or to accept only on our terms. If we can let go and accept Jesus on His terms, then how are we to live? Paul answers this. We are to live by celebrating our different gifts and abilities, but using our gifts and abilities for the building up of the community, by empowering others to make their contributions to the common good.

FOR REFLECTION:

- What has been my experience of unity created from a variety of elements, from different people with different gifts?
- How can I use God's favor to me, His gifts to me, to draw others to Him? How can our parish community use God's gifts to us to draw others to Him?
- In what ways am I tempted to downplay and denigrate others' gifts and differences? In what ways have I excluded others who are different from me? Have different gifts than I do?
- How can I be true to what is established and traditional and still be open to new ways God leads me to relate to Him and serve Him?
- In living my relationship with God, how am I called to foster the common good? How willing am I to put aside what feels right and comfortable to me for the sake of the common good?