

Our Lady Queen of Peace

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

www.olqpparish.org

February 22, 2015



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

Mr. Curt Baker

PSR COORDINATOR

Mrs. Debra O'Donnell

YOUTH MINISTER COORDINATOR

Mrs. Terry Ostlund

PARISH COUNCIL

Nikki Adams, Bailey Alexander, Cathy Carley,
Joe Corio, Lawrence Giovanni, Mary Luebbert,
Dave Mills, Rick Mraz, Julie Vermillion,
Maria Webb, Tim Webb

Parish Office

**School
Cafeteria**

636-671-3062

636-671-0247

636-375-5335

SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Saturday Evening	5:00 pm
Sunday	7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am
Holy Days	as announced
Weekdays	8:00 am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed for prayerful Adoration every Wednesday of each month after the 8:00 am Mass until 8:00 pm.

PERPETUAL HELP DEVOTIONS

Tuesday after 8:00am Mass

ROSARY

Monday through Friday after 8:00 am Mass
For vocations 2nd Monday of month after 8:00 am Mass
Rosary before 5:00 pm Mass - Fatima Prayers included on 1st Saturday
Before 5:00 pm Mass on Saturday evenings

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

First and third Sunday of the month after 11:30 am Mass. Make arrangements by calling Parish Office.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 pm 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

Registration forms may be found on our website (olqpparish.org/parishregistration.htm), in the Church lobby or you may stop by the Parish Office to fill one out. If you have recently changed your status, married, moved out of your parents' home or graduated from high school, you need to re-register. Please help us keep our records accurate.

Welcome to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

Upcoming Parish Events

2015

February

Sat 28 Daughters of Isabella Antique Tea

March

Sun 15 Red Hat/Ladies Bingo & Luncheon

S/S 28/29 Youth Bake Sale after Mass

April

Sun 5 Easter

Sun 19 First Communion

Sat 25 Daughters of Isabella Tailgate Sale

May

Wed 6 Confirmation

Mon 18 Patriotic Rosary

June

Sat 13 OLQP Picnic

July

6 to 10 Hope Builders Summer Service Week

August

Sun 23 Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary
Quarter Auction

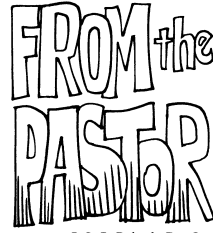
September

Sat 12 Daughters of Isabella Tailgate Sale

Sun 27 OLQP Quilt Social

October

Sat 3 OLQP Auction



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YOU ARE INVITED!

This Sunday, **February 22, at 7 pm**, Matthew Kelly's DVD "*The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality*" will be played in the OLQP Church Cafeteria. Are you still looking for something to do for Lent? Come and join other parishioners explore what Catholic spirituality is all about. Matthew Kelly is a very entertaining and engaging speaker. He is enthused about being Catholic and presents the basics of Catholic spirituality in a way that everyone can understand. The following is a description of this talk from his website:

"Have you ever felt disillusioned about your faith and filled with doubt? Matthew Kelly will take you on the adventure of a lifetime designed to help revitalize your spiritual life. Bold, practical, and inspiring, he will help you rediscover the true meaning of life as expressed in the seven pillars of authentic Catholic spirituality. One of our most popular talks for many years now, this DVD is sure to stir your soul and invigorate your spiritual life."

If you cannot attend this presentation then go to: <https://vimeo.com/23160806> and watch it on your own!!!!

Also, if you are still having trouble figuring out what to do for Lent, then keep it simple. Matthew Kelly has something for you called "Best Lent Ever" where participants will receive an email every day during Lent with a simple message. He describes it as follows:

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A LIFE-CHANGING LENT?

Join Matthew Kelly, the best-selling Catholic author in America, on a life-changing journey through your Best Lent Ever. Each week, participants will receive short videos and inspiration from Matthew that explain the genius of Catholicism and empower them to become the best-version-of-themselves. **It's simple and completely FREE**, the only cost is your commitment to live better each day this Lent.

Go to <http://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever/> and give it a try!

~ fr. mike

WEDDING BANNERS

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John Schmees and Karen Cravens

OLQP ~ March 7, 2015

Parish Activities ~

Mon Feb 23 PSR, 6:15 - 7:30 pm
Tues Feb 24 Perpetual Help Devotions after 8:00 am
Mass
Quilters, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, 4:30 - 7:30 pm, Parish Office, Quilter Room
Wed Feb 25 Eucharistic Adoration after 8:00 am
Mass
Fire District Information Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Cafeteria
Thur Feb 26 Exercise Class, 6:00 PM, Cafeteria
Choir Practice, 7:00 pm, Church
Fri Feb 27 Fish Fry, 3:00 - 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
Sat Feb 28 Daughters of Isabella Antique Tea, 11:30 am, Cafeteria
Scouts Trivia Night, 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
Sun Mar 1 First Sunday Breakfast
Daughters of Isabella Mass, 9:30 am

First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2015

Big Ticket Raffle

Just an update on the raffle so far this fiscal year - of 600 tickets available, only 152 have sold to date. At the rate of 50 per month, we should have 400 sold by the end of February!!! We are falling way behind our goal this year!! The price was lowered to make it more affordable. If 600 of our 800 families purchased **one ticket**, the raffle would be sold out!!!! Please help our parish reach its fundraising goal by purchasing your ticket so you will be eligible for the drawing at the end of February.

Archdiocesan Financial Assistance Application Due Date: March 15

The Catholic Education Office will be using the FACTS Co. to input the data of those families applying for the Archdiocesan financial programs for the 2015-16 school year. Families must complete the FACTS Grant and Aid application when applying for the following programs:

- Catholic Families Tuition Assistance Endowment Fund (CFTA)
- Parish Employee Endowment Fund (PEEF)
- School Funds

Families meeting the above requirements may apply online for the CFTA and PEEF Funds beginning in late December at <https://online.factsmgt.com/aid> or obtain a paper copy from the Parish Office. Only one application per child will be accepted. In a divorce situation, the application from the custodial parent will be accepted.

Information and documentation required for these programs includes:

1. An application completed online or a signed and completed paper application.
2. Payment of the \$30 application fee made payable to: "Facts Grant & Aid Assessment". Please do not send cash
3. Copies of your 2013 Federal tax forms including all supporting tax schedules.
4. Copies of your 2014 W-2 forms for both you and your spouse.
5. Copies of supporting documentation for Social Security Income, Welfare, Child Support, Food Stamps, Worker's Compensation and TANF.

Failure to submit all of the required information by the deadline may result in your family not receiving financial aid or limit the amount given due to incomplete information.

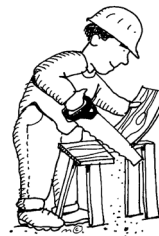
Youth Council News

**High School Youth Group
Lent is a Great Time to Grow
Stronger in Faith
Join us on Sunday Evenings
March 1st and March 8th
Invite a friend and join us!**



Get your homework done before 6:00 pm on Sunday evenings, invite a friend and join us from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Cafeteria Meeting Room. Strengthen your relationship with Jesus and become the best version of yourself. We also have time for fun and food. We will not meet if the weather is dangerous out.

Save the Dates!!!



Hope Builders Summer Service Week Monday, July 6th – Friday, July 10th

All current 8th grade youth and high school youth are invited to join us for this amazing week of building hope as we work together with adults to do much needed work for people in our community that could use some helping hands. As you are planning your summers, save the dates for Hope Builders. Registration forms will be sent out at the end of March.

Sunday, March 15th All High School Youth Pre-registered for Steubenville

You can help raise money for your conference by working at the Red Hat Ladies Event at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Sunday, March 15th, from 11:30-5:30 pm.

For more information about any of our youth ministry activities please contact Terry Ostlund, 314-566-8363 or email her terry.ostlund@olqpparish.org.

Welcome to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

RED HAT AND LADIES LUNCHEON AND BINGO

LADIES, are you looking for something fun to do? ALL LADIES are welcome, being or wearing a red hat is not required!!

Join us for an afternoon of fun, food and fellowship on SUNDAY, MARCH 15. The price is \$35 per person which includes the meal, 9 bingo cards, a dobber, and all the drinks (beer, wine, coffee, tea, and soda) you care to drink. The meal is: grilled chicken breast, pasta con broccoli, green beans, salad, and dessert.

Extra bingo cards can be purchased if you want. There will be basket and 50/50 raffles with proceeds going to the Peace Pantry. There is no smoking in the hall for this event.

The OLQP Youth Group will be there to assist the ladies in attendance. They always provide a special touch with serving and attending to the ladies.

Again, the afternoon of fun is Sunday, March 15 at the Knights of Columbus Hall. It costs \$35 per person, doors open at noon, lunch is served at 1:00 pm. Bingo follows the luncheon. Advanced reservations are a must. PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS #6435 and send to Trish Guethle, 60 El Jer Drive, Cedar Hill, MO 63016. For additional information contact Trish or Tom, 636-274-2062.

AmeriGas Propane School Days

Your local AmeriGas Office is pleased to offer our school the opportunity to earn up to \$2,000 per school year by simply collecting AmeriGas Propane receipts. Anything that is necessary to improve the educational process can be purchased with these funds. Computers, Books, Sporting Equipment...you name it! Golden Rules of School Days are...no minimum gallon requirement; participating schools receive \$.02 per gallon purchased; maximum, allowable redemption is \$2,000 per check per school year.

Unclassified Ads in the Bulletin

All ads will be posted on a first come, first served basis. The ads are restricted to 21 words (about 3 lines of text) and must be submitted by Friday (nine days before bulletin publication) at 4:30 pm. If an item is deemed inappropriate for publication in this forum, the \$10 fee will be returned to the applicant. The ads will appear in the bulletin and on the parish website in the weekly online posting of the bulletin.

For Sale - Executive Membership in Lost Valley Lake Resort (valued at \$12,200) \$3,000 or best Offer. Call Patsy, 314-791-5550

For Sale - \$2,500 Red Hyundai Santa Fe (red) automatic FWD 3.5 172,000 miles.

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Unclassified Bulletin Advertisement Request

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Date Published _____

Advertisement Text (must be limited to 21 words)

Publication subject to approval by the Fundraising Committee. All items must be submitted by Friday, nine days before the requested Sunday publication date. \$10 fee must be paid at time submitted.)

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Dynamic Catholic *Alive!* 2015— Prayer

Expressions of Prayer: 1st Sunday of Lent

Lent is a 40 day season of repentance in anticipation of the Crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday. It is a time for us to grow in spiritual maturity, through acts of penance, prayer, almsgiving, abstinence, and fasting. This Lent, take time to go to Confession and participate in the Stations of the Cross. There are also many excellent Lenten reflection books available. Do you know why Lent is forty days long?
archstl.org/dynamic

4 Signs of a Dynamic Catholic Schedule

2015—YEAR OF PRAYER

2016— YEAR OF STUDY

2017— YEAR OF GENEROSITY

2018— YEAR OF EVANGELIZATION

Sign ups

Divine Mercy Presentation - March 11
7:00 pm, Cafeteria

(Name)

(Phone)

"I believe we should focus our efforts on helping people of all ages to develop vibrant spiritual lives. Everything else, any other good thing that we desire for the Church and for the world, will flow from a dynamic relationship with God."

Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic, page 33

Matthew Kelly's DVD
"Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality"
Sunday, February 22
7:00 pm, OLQP Cafeteria

If you missed it the first time, now is your time to see this motivational DVD. To register, call the Parish Office, 636-671-3062, or email parishbookkeeping@olqpparish.org.

St. Vincent De Paul



In today's Gospel, Jesus overcomes the temptations to wealth, power and esteem. As we begin Lent, may we open our hearts to the grace of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

In January, through your gifts, SVDP was able to provide \$1,222.77 for our neighbors in need... (\$75.56 for water/propane, \$965.56 for electric and \$181.65 for misc. expenses). God bless you!

We would like to thank Rockwood Bank

for advertising in our parish bulletin. Because of their generosity we do not pay for our bulletins to be printed. Please patronize our advertisers and thank them for supporting our parish.

OLQP Fish Fry

All Fridays During Lent - Serving 3-7 pm
Serving Good Friday, Noon to 6 pm
Adult Dinners \$7 and \$9
Children's Meals available for \$4
Check out the website:
olqpcodsquad.org

Pictorial Directories

We are selling a limited number of directories for \$10 each on a first come first served basis.

For Reflection...

When God pushes you to the edge of difficulty, trust Him fully because two things can happen, either He will catch you when you fall or He will teach you how to fly.

Welcome to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

Throughout Lent Masses will begin with the Kyrie (coming into Mass) and there will be no music played after Mass.

L

Extra Lenten Masses

Saturdays - 8:00 am

February 28

March 7, 14, 21, 28

E

Confessions During Lent

Every Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 pm

All Day Confessions Saturday, March 28

9:00 am to 4:45 pm

No Confessions Holy Saturday, April 4

N

Eucharistic Adoration

Every Wednesday

T

Stations of the Cross

All Wednesdays during Lent

at OLQP House Springs Cemetery at noon

All Fridays During Lent

after the 8:00 am Mass in Church

Good Friday at noon

All Saturdays During Lent

after 8:00 am Mass in Church

Catholic Relief Service Rice Bowls available in the Church lobby.

Lenten Regulations

Good Friday (April 3) is a day of abstinence for all Catholics over the age of 14. On this day, fast as well as abstinence is obligatory for those from the ages of 18-59. Abstinence means abstinence from meat. Fast means one full meal a day, with two smaller meals and nothing between meals (liquids are permitted). No Catholic will lightly excuse themselves from this obligation.

All Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence from meat. Here again, Catholics will not hold themselves lightly excused, but if there is a serious health problem, this obligation would not apply.

New Care Notes in Church Lobby

"40 Ways to Enrich Your Lenten Prayer"

"Discovering Simple Ways to Pray"

"Lent- A Time to Pray for Others"

"Finding Hope in Jesus' Words on the Cross"

"Praying With Sacred Scripture"

"Seeking God as a Spiritual Pilgrim"

CEDAR HILL FIRE DISTRICT INFORMATIONAL MEETING

The Cedar Hill Fire District will hold an informational meeting on Wednesday, February 25th from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm in the OLQP Cafeteria. This will be to answer any questions that District residents and businesses may have from information they have read or received regarding the District's pending decisions that could affect you. You are welcome to stop in during this time period to have your questions answered.

Matthew Kelly "Passion and Purpose" Event Coming To St. Louis

Living everyday with Passion & Purpose led by Matthew Kelly, invites us to identify God's voice in our lives and the specific purpose for which we've been created. Matthew inspires attendees to apply the genius of Catholicism to every aspect of our lives.

The event takes place on Friday evening, October 23, at St. Peter and Paul Church in Kirkwood and on Saturday morning, October 24, at Margaret Mary Alacoque in South County.

Join us for one of our Passion & Purpose events. It's not your typical church event! It has been a life-changing event for tens of thousands of people. Register online at **www.dynamiccatholic.com** (click events). Don't wait – these events will sell out!

Lenten Day of Recollection...

Parishioners, their guests and all throughout the Archdiocese are invited to join Archbishop Robert Carlson and the clergy of the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis for a Lenten Day of Recollection on Saturday, February 28.

This special day of reflection, recollection and reconciliation begins at 10:00 am and includes two spiritual conferences led by Archbishop Carlson. Each conference will be followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The day will end with evening vespers at 4:30 pm and the celebration of Mass at 5:00 pm. All conferences and prayer will be held in the Cathedral Basilica, with lunch provided for all in Boland Hall.

This gathering is free (good will offerings to help offset the cost of lunch will be gratefully accepted). Though a free event, organizers request advance registration to properly prepare for lunch. To register or for additional information. Please contact Laura Voegelin, 314-373-8208.

Chapel Hill's Trivia Night for The Peace Pantry!

Saturday, March 7th, 7:00 pm

The Knights of Columbus Hall (House Springs)

All Proceeds go to The Peace Pantry

Prizes, Prizes, Prizes!

Slideshow graphics and fun questions

Free beer, wine, soda and popcorn

\$25.00 per person (\$30 at the door)

Call Katie at 636-274-4100

See you there!

Seven Days of Inspiration

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

Day 1

Find something to love
in yourself. Others
already have.

Day 2

A new beginning can
start at anytime.

Day 3

Let your heart speak.
It knows what
you need.

Day 4

There's always a
reason to smile.

Day 5

Treat yourself the same
way you treat strangers:
with kindness and respect.

Day 6

Expect the best of life.
You deserve it.

Day 7

Hope is never a
waste of energy.

St. John the Baptist (Villa Ridge) 50th Annual Fried Chicken Dinner Sunday, March 8, 10:30 am - 6:00 pm

The meal is served family style by the men of the parish. The price of the dinner is \$13 for adults, \$5 per child under 12 years and preschool children are free. The monies taken inform this dinner is used to help keep our school going.

Drive thru and carry-outs available.

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)

Welcome to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Our next Eucharistic Adoration is
Wednesday, February 25,
after 8:00 am Mass ending at 8:00 pm.
Come visit with Jesus; He is waiting for you
in the Eucharist. In the presence of Jesus,
offer your heart.



Daughters of Isabella Antique Appraisal and Tea February 28, 11:30 - 2:00 pm OLQP Cafeteria

Attendees bring items to be appraised for insurance value. They are served a light lunch, tea and desserts. There is a fee of \$15 to be paid before (mail check to Ruth Haen, 9736 Ridge Road, Dittmer, 63023) or you can pay day of sale. Call Jan, 636-671-3093 or Fran, 314-809-2676.

All funds will be used for St. Vincent de Paul, Peace Pantry, Birthright, Women in Transition, Veterans, Retired Priests, baptismal bibs and the parish.

OLQP Boy Scout Troop 533 Family Trivia Night February 28, 7 pm, Cafeteria Doors Open at 6:30 pm Cost \$10 per person.

Everyone is welcome to bring their own snacks and beverages - no alcohol please. All proceeds will go to support Scouting activities. For more information please contact Tim, 314-941-3286.

Catholic Relief Service Rice Bowl

Join our parish and more than 13,000 Catholic communities across the United States—in a life changing Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowls. Pick up your family's rice bowl from the Church lobby, your Lenten sacrifices change lives.

Our Gifts to God and Parish

790 registered members
198 online, loose and envelopes used this week
Thank you for your generosity!!!

Special Collections

Black & Indian Mission \$30.00
Central & Eastern European \$83.25

New Building Fund.....\$763,391.94

Offertory

Sunday Loose\$672.00
Sunday Envelopes \$10,133.39
Candlemas \$25.00
Parish Enrichment\$235.00
Total Offertory.....\$11,065.39
Weekly Offertory Goal\$13,000.00

As of February 17, 2015

Contributions Year To Date.....\$419,752.31
Projected Year to Date\$442,000.00

2014 Contribution Statements

If you would like a 2014 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

Stewardship Start With Prayer

"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God..."

Mark 1:14

Do you ever think about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to come into Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that Jesus was proclaiming. It must have taken great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, following a life of stewardship takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that God will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

Please pray for those who are ill
(parishioners are in bold)

Maryann Barnett	Danielle Enghauser
Wally Freihaut	Joyce Stenger
Jackie Nappier	Andy Nappier
Tim Lodes	Vicky Duckworth
Paul McDonnell	Janice Robertson
Lenore Burns	Ed Kelemen
JoAnn Vess	Butch Turek

Josie Roetemeyer, sister of Fr. Mike
 Pamela Bokern, niece of John/Shirley Bokern
 Barbara Mattler, sister of Patty Broadbent
 Amanda Broadbent, daughter of Tom/Patty Broadbent
 Delbert Swanson, stepfather of Scott Reimer
 Mary Stone, sister of Susan O'Shea
 Gene Barnett, husband of Maryann Barnett

~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, 671-3062. Names will be removed after 3 weeks.

General Handyman Raffle

Name _____

Phone _____

The cost is \$5.00 per chance and when 100 tickets are sold we will draw a winner.



© Annika Nelson

*We offer sympathy and the assurance
 of our prayers to the family of
 Ferris Hamlyn, of our community*

Mass Intentions

Mon	Feb 23	8:00 am	Sr. Ann Miriam Stenger
Tues	Feb 24	8:00 am	Msgr. David Ratermann
Wed	Feb 25	8:00 am	Julia Muehlenkamp
Thurs	Feb 26	8:00 am	Rob Strayhorn
Fri	Feb 27	8:00 am	Marcella Richardson
Sat	Feb 28	8:00 am	Julia Muehlenkamp
		5:00 pm	Arleen Lammert
Sun	March 1	7:30 am	People of the Parish
		9:30 am	Jim Vess
		11:30 am	Mary Harig

February 28th and March 1st

Special Ministers of the Eucharist

5:00 pm	Peggy Mikko, Katie Tutass, Bev Gregory, Mary Luebbert, John Holmes
7:30 am	Jim and Carol England, Jo Jahnsen, Mary Bjornstad, Ruth Haen
9:30 am	Maria and Tim Webb, Dale and Pat Andrews, Tom Broadbent, Chris Camden
11:30 am	Lynette and Patrick Rawlins, Sharon Schmidt, Angie Tarter, Denise Witt

Proclaimers

5:00 pm	Joe and Barb Nenninger
7:30 am	Scott Reimer, Frieda Siebel-Spath
9:30 am	Helen Salamone, Larry Giovanni
11:30 am	Gary and Carol Freihaut

Servers

5:00 pm	Jack Groppe, Michael Reiter, M. Schwantner
7:30 am	Cameron Beck, Cameron Gerber, Zach. Morlock
9:30 am	Peter Kenney, Alec Poulsen, Alexi Sanchez
11:30 am	Cooper Dutton, Kate Marting, Jaden Nash

Ushers

5:00 pm	Jeff Heibeck, Dixie Garrett, Darleen Allmeroth, Don Brooks, Ken Ganey, Ben Slodkowski
7:30 am	Doug Bjornstad, Steve Morlock, Jeff Eschbach, Larry Lammert, Ted Hempen, Vince Rocchio
9:30 am	Greg Love, Terry Filicsky, Ray Graf, Jeff Queen, Ralph Munzlinger, Ralph Schultheiss
11:30 am	Paul McDonnell, Mary Buckey, Cristina Duncan, Jennifer Younkins, Gary Freihaut, Rebecca Mose

Thank you for cleaning Church

February 27

Cathy Morlock,
 Carl and Patsy Boyer,
 Gail DeGunia,
 Carol Delue
 and Maria Webb



March 1, 2015
Second Sunday of Lent
Cycle B



THEME: The path to glory leads through sacrifice.

Our Lenten journey has begun and we are on the way to the glory and hope of Easter. We have a vision in mind, a goal to be achieved. Yet all of today's readings remind us that the path to glory, the achievement of our hopes, passes through sacrifice and suffering. There is a price to pay, not to merit or earn eternal happiness with our Risen Lord, but in living our connectedness with others, in living what flows from the life we hope to move into, in saying "Yes, Lord, I will follow you. I will do what you did. I will love as you did. I will give of myself for the sake of proclaiming your love to others."

THE READINGS:

FIRST READING: Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Our first reading is from the Book of Genesis. In a very real way, this story of the near sacrifice of Isaac is worthy of Stephen King. It's a horror story. In the mind-set of the ancient world, some cultures did practice child sacrifice. In this story, Israel explored the possibility, "What if our God would want this of us?" On one level, then, the story functions as a faith statement of ancient Israel. Our God is different from other gods; we are different from other peoples. In our journey with our God we are about living life, not sacrificing it!

On another level, this story is a key element in the cycle of stories about Abraham, the ultimate reason for honoring Abraham as the Father of Faith. It serves as a model of ultimate faith and trust in God. Abraham had been promised that he would be the father of a great nation. Isaac was the son of the promise. Everything Abraham hoped for rested on him. Now, he is asked to let go. To sacrifice his son. To trust that God's promises would work themselves out as God saw fit, not as

Abraham expected. Could Abraham do this? Could he, ultimately, leave in God's hands all that he hoped for? The story also works on a third level, the level of family relationships, the relationship of a father and son. Throughout the story, the narrator notes that Abraham and Isaac proceeded, the two of them as one. In his words, Abraham never speaks Isaac's name. He is not an individual person, but the fulfillment of Abraham's hopes and dreams. And Isaac just isn't the brightest bulb in the pack. He asks, "Look, father, here is the knife and here is the fire, but where is the lamb of sacrifice?" We want to scream at him, "Wake up, kid!" Later, Isaac will have a story about finding a wife. It's a patterned story, repeated often in the Old Testament, about the hero traveling to a foreign land, moving through a set of typical actions at a well with girls, and ultimately finding a wife. The longest and most developed example of this type of story is Isaac's, and he isn't even in it. In his story, his father sends a servant to find a wife for his son. The son is acted upon and for. And in his own family, Isaac will favor his older son over his younger and be deceived by his wife and younger son, who manipulate him to give the sacred family blessing to the younger boy. Here is the son of the promise!

Yet, that also is the point of the story. God has a plan and it will proceed. Abraham wanted to make sure it proceeded as he thought it should, but God had other ideas. And aren't we all guilty of that. We believe that we, that our families, that our children, have a place in God's plan and we want to control things, make them work out as we are sure God would want them to. In doing this, we attempt to control other people, when what God asks is that we let go, let Him work with other people as He sees fit, as He works with us. A final, significant and sad element in the story is that after the story of the near sacrifice of Isaac, the two never appear on the pages of Genesis together again; the two never speak again. God's promise will be carried out, now completely independently of Abraham and the rift between father and son will never be healed.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:31-34

The second reading, from Paul's letter to the Romans, is one of the most well known passages from all of Paul's writings. Who can separate us from the love of God? In Romans, Paul presented his basic teachings to a community he wanted to visit. His life was one of faith and sacrifice. For the sake of Jesus Christ, he broke ties with his Jewish roots; for the sake of Jesus Christ, he stood against early Church leaders to defend a mission to the Gentiles; for the sake of Jesus Christ, he suffered at the hands of those to whom he preached. There was, for him a price to pay. Yet, in it all he could affirm that he was loved, that he was cared for and directed by God, that faith and trust in God mattered. It gives us confidence. For Paul, Abraham was the great model of faith, precisely because of Abraham's ability, no matter how much he had to struggle with it, to let go and leave things in God's hands. When we can do that, nothing can separate us from God's love.

GOSPEL READING: Mark 9:2-10

On the Second Sunday of Lent, the Gospel reading in all three cycles is one of the accounts of the Transfiguration. The setting of the story is Jesus' journey to Jerusalem with His disciples, a journey that will end in the passion and crucifixion of Jesus. Along the way, the disciples get a glimpse of resurrection glory. They get to see the end of the journey. And, as is typical of Peter, he misunderstands and wants to hang on to the moment, to live the glory now. Yet the whole story makes clear that the path to resurrection glory passes through the passion and death of Jesus. It cannot be otherwise for us. Our path to eternal life with our Father, passes through a life of sacrifices, a life of letting go of control and going where our God leads us, a life of working for the good of others – as God works in their lives, not as we would want or expect God to work in their lives.

We are called to faith and trust in God, but more, we are called to a faith and trust in God that let's God be God, that asks us to abandon ourselves and our cherished

attempts to control our lives into His loving hands.

FOR REFLECTION:

- In what ways in my life have I had to pay a cost, make a sacrifice to achieve what I wanted? Can I expect things to be different in my journey with God? What does it mean for me to say that my life is a journey with God?
- Israel acclaimed that we are about living life, not sacrificing it. So, how does sacrifice enter into our lives, become a necessary part of it? Are the sacrifices I make sacrifices of life or for life? How do I understand the difference?
- What do I try to control in my life? What do I try to control in the life of others? How might God want me to abandon myself and my sense of control to Him? How easy is this? How possible?
- Paul proclaims that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Do I really believe this? What about sin? What about all the bad choices I have made? What about those times when I know I'm wrong and I don't want to let go or be sorry? What does it mean that nothing can separate us from the love of God?
- What are those things in my life I want to hang on to, to cherish, to find as stopping points? How do they keep me from moving forward? What does it mean to me to affirm that the path to glory passes through suffering and sacrifice?