

Our Lady Queen of Peace

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

www.olqpparish.org

March 23, 2014



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

Bailey Alexander, Thomas Broadbent, Cathy Carley,
Joe Corio, Bev Gregory, David Holmes, Mary Luebbert,
Dave Mills, Donna Otzenberger, Jan Schultheiss,
Tim Webb,

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 Saturday)	
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 the last Wednesday of each month from 1:00 to 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
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.

Upcoming OLQP Parish Events

2014

March

Sun 30 **Knights of Columbus Ladies
Auxiliary Craft/Vendor Show**

Mon 31 **Parish Mission Begins**

April

Sat 12 **Parish All Day Confessions**

Sun 20 **Easter**

Sat 26 **Daughters of Isabella Tailgate Sale**

May

Sun 4 **First Communion**

Wed 7 **Confirmation**

June

Sat 14 **OLQP Picnic**

July

S/T 7-11 **Hope Builders Week**

August

Sun 24 **KC Ladies Auxiliary Quarter
Auction**

It's All About the Money

It seems like every time you come to church, someone is asking for money. Besides all the special collections that come with our parish envelopes, we might have grade school children raising money for their pro-life trip or there might be a missionary from Africa seeking support for the missions. There are fundraisers for school, for the Girl Scouts, for the St. Vincent DePaul Society, the Peace Pantry, the Hope Builders efforts during the summer, Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll campaign...and the list goes on. All of these causes are good and deserving, but I think people can get overwhelmed at the sheer amount of requests. As pastor, I receive many phone calls from groups and organizations outside the parish wanting to send a speaker to the parish to plea for help. Although I usually say yes to most of them, I do not expect our parishioners to give to everything. What I hope is that parishioners would make a solid commitment to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish and to the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). After that, give to whatever cause inspires you.

Compared to most countries in the world, God has blessed us with an abundance of resources. He expects us to share our blessings with others and to support the mission of the Church in this world to make known the mercy of Jesus Christ. There will never be a shortage of people, programs, agencies or causes seeking contributions and donations, so in the end, do what you can and then be at peace!

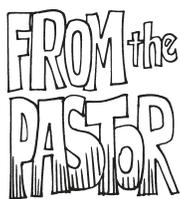
Back by Popular Demand: The Hoedown!

The Parish Council has decided to re-instate the Parish Hoedown after receiving many requests from parishioners. It was decided to end the annual event last fall because of a "perceived" lack of interest and a decline in attendance and participation. The Hoedown was introduced years ago as a way of expressing appreciation and gratitude for all the involvement and hard work of parishioners in support of the parish throughout the year. It is an outdoor event that takes place on the parish grounds on the first Saturday evening of October. It includes a huge bon-fire and a pot luck dinner featuring "camp cooked" chili. Mark your calendars for 6:00 pm Saturday, October 4th. Bring a lawn chair and your favorite recipe to share with everyone.

~ fr. mike

Parish Activities ~ March 24 - 30

Mon	March 24	PSR, 6:15 - 7:30 pm RCIA, 7:00 pm, Parish Office
Tues	March 25	Perpetual Help Devotions after 8:00 am Mass Quilters, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, 6:00 - 8:30 pm
Wed	March 26	Eucharistic Adoration , 9:00 am - 8:00 pm Catholicism Series, 9:00 am and 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
Thur	March 27	Choir Practice, 7:00 pm, Church
Fri	March 28	Fish Fry, 3:00 - 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
Sat	March 29	Lenten Mass, 8:00 am, Church



Parish Mission

Next Week Fr. Don Willard, a Redemptorist Missionary, will come to Our Lady Queen of Peace parish to present a four day Parish Mission. He will speak at all the Masses next weekend in order to introduce the mission and he will be the principal

speaker at each of the four sessions that will take place Monday through Thursday, March 31st - April 3rd. The theme of the parish mission is "Journey of Faith". Make plans to attend each of the four sessions and invite your family and friends to come.

Lent

Extra Lenten Masses

Saturdays - 8:00 am
March 29, April 5, 12

Confessions During Lent

Every Saturday 4:00 - 4:45 pm
All Day Confessions Saturday, April 12
9:00 am - 4:45 pm
No Confessions Holy Saturday, April 19

Stations of the Cross

Every Friday after 8:00 am Mass
Every Friday School Children 2:15 pm
(Not on April 18)

Eucharistic Adoration

Every Wednesday during Lent
9:00 am - 8:00 pm
Wednesday, April 2
9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Parish Mission

March 31st - April 3rd 6:30 pm

Youth Council News

- Youth Council Meeting, Tuesday, March 25, from 6:00 - 7:00 pm in the basement classroom.
- High School Youth group this Sunday evening, March 23rd and Sunday, April 6th, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm in the Cafeteria.
- All current 8th grade youth and high school youth are invited to join us for our summer service week called Hope Builders, July 7th through the 11th. The cost of this week is \$50 along with your time, talent and heart. If you would like an application or need more information about Hope Builders email Terry, terry.ostlund@olqpparish.org.

Thanks to all who donated to our monthly aluminum can collection. You helped us raise \$43 last month.

Archdiocesan Lenten Regulations

Good Friday (April 18, 2014) is a day of *abstinence* for all Catholics *over the age of 14*. On this day, *fast*, as well as *abstinence*, is also 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.

We should strive to make all days of Lent a time of prayer and penance.

Prayer for Lent...

Jesus Christ, Lord and Redeemer, we who have been baptized into your death hope to be raised to new life in you. Send your Holy Spirit upon us this Lent so that we might have the courage to take up our cross each day, to fulfill our duties with great love and to hope always in your Word. May this sacred season strengthen us to live as men and women dead to sin and alive in you. Amen



William Pounds and Sabrina Boyd
OLQP ~ April 5, 2014

FISH FRY

Lenten Fish Fries

All Fridays During Lent
Serving 3:00 to 7:00 pm
Good Friday

Serving Noon to 6:00 pm
Adult Dinners \$9 and \$7
Children \$4

Carryout/Drive Thru Service
To order please call
636-375-5335

Parish Mission
March 31st through April 3rd
An Extraordinary Event Awaits You!

Next weekend, March 29th and 30th, our Parish Mission, "A Journey of Faith", begins. Our mission will take place from Monday, March 31st, through Thursday, April 3rd. The Redemptorist Missionaries, known and requested nationwide as inspirational speakers giving their time and commitment to the renewal of the Church, will be leading the mission. The mission will begin with the weekend Masses and then beginning on Monday and continuing with evening sessions until Thursday. The Mission is a preaching event. God's Word is proclaimed through the life, learning and personal experience of the preacher. Each session will begin at 6:30 pm. This will be a faith experience of a lifetime for you wrapped in inspiring prayer, heart warming songs, thought provoking ministry and wonderful fellowship. Mark your calendars and plan to attend! Bring the whole family. Invite neighbors and friends. Everyone is welcome.

Parish Mission Helpers Needed
March 31st - April 3rd, 6:30 pm
Parish Mission Needs YOU!

Our Parish Mission is looking for a few volunteers to help out during the services.

High School Students:

We need **6 students (2 students each night)** Monday through Wednesday night to help out with child care during the Mission. You could earn Service Hours if needed.

Parishioners:

We are looking for **11 more parishioners (4 each night)** Monday through Wednesday who would be willing to participate in a small part of the Mission Service. Participants would have to be at Church at 6:00 pm to meet with Fr. Don Willard who will be presenting the Mission.

Anyone interested, please call Jan in the Parish Office, 636-671-3062.

Catholicism Series
Two Showings in Cafeteria
9:00 am * 7:00 pm

- March 26 - A Vast Company of Witnesses: The Communion of Saints
 April 9 - The Fire of His Love: Prayer and the Life of the Spirit
 April 16 - World Without End: The Last Things

When was the last time you spoke
 a kind word of encouragement to
 somebody? Speak one today.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The following are the dates each parish in our deanery will be hosting:

Good Shepherd

Tuesday, March 25, 6:30 pm- 8:30 pm

Our Lady

Thursday, March 27, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Our Lady Queen of Peace

Saturday, April 12, 9:00 am - 4:45 pm

Immaculate Conception

Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

St. Anthony

Wednesday, March 26, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

St. David

Every Saturday, 3:30 pm - 4:15 pm

St. James

Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

St. Joachim

Thursday, April 10, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

St. John

Saturday, April 12, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
 Sunday, April 13, 9:00 am - 9:50 am and
 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

St. Joseph

Saturday, March 29, 9:00 am - 11:00 am

St. Rose

Saturday, April 12, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Monday, April 14, 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
 Tuesday, April 15, 5:30 pm - 6:15 pm

St. Stephens

Wednesday, April 16, 7:00 pm- 8:00 pm

MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION

The Ministry of Consolation will be offering a six week session to support those who recently experienced the loss of a loved one. The program conveys God's consolation through scripture, prayer, reflection and sharing our faith. The sessions begin on Saturday, April 5. The meetings are held in the Cafeteria Meeting Room from 9:30 to 11:30 am.

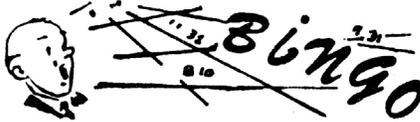
If you or someone you know is grieving the loss of a loved one, please know you are not alone. Consider allowing our Ministry of Consolation to walk with you during this difficult time. For more information please contact Judy Holmes, 314-605-0508 or Joan Ross, joanaross@sbcglobal.net.

BRMA Ecumenical Lenten Services

The Big River Ministerial Alliance will be having Lenten Services during Lent. Each Church will host a service in their own Lenten traditions and invite all from the different Churches to experience our differences and also our similarities.

There will be a free will offering requested at each service, and those funds will go to offset the costs of the Counseling Services that is available to all the Churches in the Alliance. Each service will begin at 7:00 pm and will last about an hour with fellowship to follow. This is an opportunity for the Christians of our community to meet one another and share in our common love of Jesus Christ.

This is the schedule for the Lenten Ecumenical Services:
 March 27, Community Church of Christ (Dittmer)
 April 3, Transformation UMC (Faith Methodist) H.S.
 April 10, St. Martin UCC (High Ridge)



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



St. Vincent De Paul...

is a small organization of parish men and women who have joined together to help our neighbors in need within our parish boundaries. Thank you for allowing us to be a channel of your almsgiving.

Eucharistic Ministers Makeup Training Session

If you missed our February Renewal/Training session we will be having a make-up session on Saturday, April 5th, in Church from 9:30 to 10:30 am. There have been some changes and we can all use a refresher training occasionally. This will also be an opportunity to update your contact information and preferred Mass time for the ministry.

Also, when schedules are developed, those who have renewed their commitment to the ministry by attending these types of activities are given preference in number and times of assignments.

Parishioners who wish to make this ministry their stewardship are also welcome. I can be contacted at joenenn@gmail.com or 636-285-0672 if you have any questions.

**We would like to thank
 Althoff Contracting,
 parishioners Jim and Vicki,**
 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.

**Great Opportunity!!
Fundraising Idea**

Help the Parish/Help Each Other

Greg Benefield, a semi-retired Jack-of-all-Trades Handyman, has approached the Fundraising Committee with an exciting idea.

Beginning on Monday, February 3, we will be offering chances on 8 hours of general maintenance and repair labor for \$5 a chance. When 100 tickets are sold a winner will be drawn. The winner will receive a total of 8 hours of general maintenance and repair work and \$100 to help defray the cost of any materials needed. The parish will earn \$400, the donated labor fee of \$50 per hour. Tickets are available in the Parish Office or can be purchased online through the Parish website.

PLEASE NOTE: Winners are limited to a maximum of 8 hours labor. For projects that need more time the winner is responsible to make other arrangements for finishing the work.

For more information on the services Greg can provide or to join him in providing services to the parish, please call Jan in the Parish Office, 636-671-3062.

You may use the ticket below, enclose your \$5 for each chance in an envelope and add to the collection basket, if you are unable to purchase from the office.



General Handyman Raffle

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

\$5.00 per chance

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Knights of Columbus

Ladies Auxiliary Council 6435

The Ladies Auxiliary Council # 6435 - Knights of Columbus is asking our parish family to consider helping with the Friday night Bingos.

During 2013 and beginning with 2014 the Auxiliary is experiencing members who are relocating (moving out of state) or people retiring from helping after many years of service to the Bingo's. Help is needed with preparing the food, serving or cashiering.

Please look within your own heart to make some time to volunteer even if it is just a few hours a week or whatever time you have available. We do work hard but we also have enjoyment amongst each other and the bingo players, once you get to know them, they are fun to be with. This request is for men and women (also teens needing service hours can be considered).

For more information or any questions call Stephanie Schwantner, 636-671-2919 or Jane Saggio 636-671-2939.

**OLQP Athletic Association
9th Annual Trivia Night
Saturday, April 5**

Please consider reserving a table to participate in the trivia event, making a donation to be used as a prize, or sponsoring a round of questions. Doors will open at 6:15 pm and questions will start at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$20 each (\$160 for a table of 8). Free babysitting will be available at the Church. For more information about the event or how to purchase tickets, visit our website:

www.olqpraiders.com, or contact Cheryl,
wynn.cherylr@gmail.com or 314-852-2005.

Catholic Radio

For inspiration during the Lenten season listen to **AM 1460 KHOJ, Catholic Radio**. Programming includes daily Holy Mass, the Holy Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and the Stations of the Cross. For a schedule and a free CD, please call 314- 752-7000 or toll-free 1-877- 305-1234.

Kennedy High School Big Garage Sale

March 29th, 7:00 am to 1:00 pm

Proceeds go to help fund the students' annual service trip to Honduras. Homemade baked goods will also be on sale.

25th Annual Quilt Social Sunday, March 30, 1:00 pm

Sponsored by Hillsboro Ladies of Auxiliary
Knights of Columbus Hall
(north of Hillsboro on old Highway 21)
No one under 16 admitted
10 Hand Quilted Quilts given away
Refreshments available
No Smoking in the building

Senior Citizen's Prom

"A Night at Gatsby's"
Saturday, April 5, 2014
5:00 - 8:30 pm

Dinner and Dancing
Admission is free

Northwest High School
6005 Cedar Hill Road (63016)
RSVP: Lana Romaine—636-274-0555 ext. 148
or email lromaine@nwr1.k12.mo.us
no later than March 28, 2014

Hosted by Northwest Student Council

Seven Days of Inspiration

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

Day 1

Someone values you
more than you know.

Day 2

Good things can get
even better.

Day 3

Celebrate your strengths.
There are so many!

Day 4

Don't give up now.
Your dreams are so close!

Day 5

Change is easier
than you think.

Day 6

You're the best kind of
beautiful: real!

Day 7

Never underestimate the
power of a smile.

Parish Office email

parishoffice@olqpparish.org

OLQP Web Site

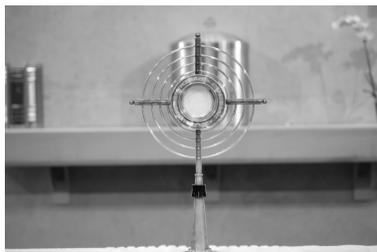
www.olqpparish.org

submit articles for bulletin

olqpbulletin@yahoo.com

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

Lent 2014 Adoration Schedule



March 26: 9:00 am-8:00 pm

April 2: 9:00 am-6:00 pm

April 9: 9:00 am-8:00 pm

Come visit with Jesus,
even if it is only for a few minutes,
Jesus will be glad to hear from you.

2013 Contribution Statement

If you would like a 2013 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

Spring Craft/Vendor Show Sunday, March 30th, Noon - 5:00 pm Knights of Columbus Hall

Spring is just around the corner so why not spend the afternoon with family, friends or neighbors and come to where the fun is! To rent a table as a vendor/crafter and for general questions please contact:

Krista Gross, 636-274-1968 or
email: gross123@sbcglobal.net
Jane Saggio, 636-671-2939
or email: janesaggio@yahoo.com

Our Gifts to God and Parish

770 registered members

197 online, loose and envelopes used this week

Thank you for your generosity!!!

Special Collections

Black/Indian Mission	\$	176.00
Catholic Relief	\$	20.00
Eastern European	\$	41.00
St. Louis Review	\$	60.00

New Building Fund to date \$764,168.69

Offertory

Sunday Envelopes	\$	13,057.33
Sunday Loose	\$	544.00
First Offering	\$	15.00
Parish Enrichment	\$	250.00
Total Offertory	\$	13,866.33
Offertory Goal	\$	13,200.00

As of March 17, 2014

Contributions Year to Date	\$483,084.49
Projected Year to Date Budget	\$488,400.00

*"One easy way we can show good
stewardship is to simply smile more!
Be an example of joy to those around you,
even when things aren't going your way."
Taken from Dave Baranowski's
February Stewardship Alive Newsletter.*

Stewardship

Start With Prayer

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again."

John 4:13

Jesus reminds us that material things, even something as basic as water, can never satisfy us for long. When we build our lives around material possessions we always want more. True satisfaction only comes when we follow Jesus.

Please pray for those who are ill

(parishioners are in bold)

Danielle Enghauser	Rose Ficken
Audrey Hastings	Paul McDonnell
Greg Hirtz	Ellen O'Brien
Maryann Barnett	Wally Freihaut
Alice Boeger	Bob Ellison
Jackie Nappier	Andy Nappier
Fran Mills	Trish Guethle
Alice Wood	Ed Kelemen
Cliff Brandt	Helen Salamone
Anna Cicerelli	Ray Wieschhaus
Zachary Rawlins	Jennifer Younkins
Sandy Quinn	Laura Hicks

Al Cortner, husband of Laura (OLQP preschool teacher)
 Brenda Meredith, aunt of Dixie Garrett
 Chuck Hampton, cousin of Dixie Garrett
 Vince Mendenez, friend of Dixie Garrett
 Kathy Garrett, sister-in-law of Dixie Garrett
 Christy Dickerson, friend of Debby Maloney-Reeves
 Terry Rombach, daughter Ron and Mary Copeland
 Ed Rabbitt, father of Tammy Groppe
 Irma Kory, mother of Joanne David
 Glennon Boyer, brother of Della Walz
 Joseph Boyer, brother of Della Walz
 Lorayne Mills, mother of Dave Mills
 Allen Chott, nephew of Judy Mottert
 Robert Bokern, brother of John Bokern
 Dave Landers, brother-in-law of Bernie Henning
 Joe Politte, brother-in-law of Ken DeClue

~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.

**Pray for the Deceased**

We offer sympathy and the assurance of our prayers to the family of

*Susan Blumm,
mother of Donald Blumm*

*John (Sonny) Gibbs,
brother-in-law of Lester and Margaret Meyer*

Mass Intentions

Mon	March 24	8:00 am	Raymond Brune
Tues	March 25	8:00 am	Mary Brooks
Wed	March 26	8:00 am	Anna Ade
Thurs	March 27	8:00 am	Vince Ferrara
Fri	March 28	8:00 am	Angie Ecker Intentions
Sat	March 29	8:00 am	Janet Hanlon
		5:00 pm	Vernon Hoesser
Sun	March 30	7:30 am	People of the Parish
		9:30 am	Jim Vess Sr.
		11:30 am	Fr. Don Molitor Intentions

March 29th and 30th**Special Ministers of the Eucharist**

5:00 pm	Bev Gregory, Dixie Garrett, Ralph Munzlinger, Deb Pigue, Judy Lorentz
7:30 am	Mary Strayhorn, Jim England, Carl Boyer, Patsy Boyer, Mary Bjornstad
9:30 am	Ken Bohnert, Jo Ann Vess, Jan Schultheiss, Barb Perez, Tom and Margaret Gerling
11:30 am	Larry and Margaret Bottchen, Sharon Schmidt, Carol Freihaut, 1 needed

Proclaimers

5:00 pm	Tom and Mary Heeley
7:30 am	Scott Reimer, Jim England
9:30 am	Bruce Gallion, Vicki DeLong
11:30 am	Don Moeller, Barb Oppelz

Servers

5:00 pm	Madelyn Hicks, Z. Mikko, Tabettha Otzenberger
7:30 am	Alyssa Block, Alyssa Jones, Marie Kenney
9:30 am	Jenna Grosvenor, Allison Kohne, Andrew Theiss
11:30 am	Josie Looney, Sophia Scanlon, Lexi Schmidt

Ushers

5:00 pm	Don Brooks, Ken Ganey, Ben Slodkowski, Bill and Donna Clifton, Bart Heinzer
7:30 am	Jeff Eschbach, Larry Lammert, Ted Hempten, Vince Rocchio, Tim Webb, Jerry Terry
9:30 am	Tom Mattingly, Larry Whitworth, Trisha Larson, Chuck Phillips, Patrick Craig, Robert DeLong
11:30 am	Kevin Huss, Paul McDonnell, Mary Buckley, Cristina Duncan, Jennifer Younkins, G. Freihaut

**March 28**

Cathy Morlock,
Debbie Stephens,
Chyree de Roode
Cheryl Brinker,
Carol Delue

**Next Sunday's Readings
Fourth Sunday of Lent
Cycle A**



THEME: To grow is to live.

Vision, seeing, is a motif that runs through the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Samuel is led to put aside his way of seeing in order to see things as God does, to find a king for God's people in the person who seems to be the least likely candidate. The Letter to the Ephesians plays out the theme of light and darkness and the works that are accomplished as worthy deeds in the light of Christ as opposed to the works of darkness. And the story of healing the blind man in John's Gospel explores the idea of seeing, seeing with the eyes of faith, on many levels.

THE READINGS:

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

The first reading, from the First Book of Samuel is the story of the choice of David to be Israel's king. In simplest terms the story, as it stands by itself, makes the point that God does not see as mortals do, that He looks within while we can be caught up in externals. But this story has to be read in the context of the entire Deuteronomistic presentation of the rise of kingship in Israel.

The story of the rise of kingship begins at the end of the tumultuous and disastrous period of Judges with the dedication of Samuel to God's service even before his birth. Samuel is designated as a prophet and, in the Deuteronomistic presentation; prophecy arose in Israel with the rise of the monarchy as a means of serving as a

check on unbridled use of kingly power. With the rise of kingship, three traditional offices – spokesman and messenger of God (a prophetic office), offering sacrifices (a priestly office), and military and political leader (a kingly office) could no longer be combined in any one person as they had been in Moses, Joshua, and the charismatic Judges raised up by Yahweh to lead His people.

Saul was chosen as Israel's first king and the story of Saul's kingship is largely a tragedy in the classical sense of the term. Saul's tragic flaw is that he tries to be and do too much. He is associated with prophetic bands and offers sacrifice before a battle. Throughout his kingship, Saul is constrained by Samuel, controlled by him. Here, too, Samuel is overstepping his bounds. Before anointing Saul to be king, Samuel had functioned as a judge, a military leader, spokesman of God, and cult mediator. After anointing Saul as King, Samuel maintains his position in what can be construed as a domineering relationship with Saul. So, a key to today's story of the anointing of David, is Samuel's continued grief over the rejection of Saul and reluctance to replace him. He does not want to give up the measure of control he still exercises over the people through his domination of Saul. A constant theme in Scripture is that our God is a God who leads us into an unknowable future. He is a God of growth, of life, of change. And here is the dilemma. As humans, we have a drive for stability, for a measure of control in our lives, a drive that can lead us to impose our wills for the sake of maintaining order, for maintaining what is safe and comfortable for us, for maintaining control – or at least the illusion of control. Faith and trust in God involves letting go, relinquishing control and opening ourselves to an unknowable future. The interplay of characters and actions in today's reading is not merely an exhortation to avoid looking only at externals and trying to see into the heart, but a radical exhortation to relinquish control, to abandon ourselves to a loving God who leads us into an unknowable future, to echo the words of Jesus in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but yours be done."

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

The second reading, from the Letter to the Ephesians, seems, thematically, to be more aligned to Johannine thought than to Pauline. The letter shows a progression in Pauline thought, especially in broadening the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ to refer to the worldwide unity of believers, and not just local groups and the idea that Christians now participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. This idea is certainly in line with Johannine "realized eschatology." What is striking in today's reading is the motif of light and darkness. Our present participation in the life Christ offers is characterized as light and light reveals what is right and true and good. Light is opposed to darkness, a refusal to participate in the light and life of Christ. The heart of the reading is the exhortation to try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

This echoes the theme developed in the story of David's anointing. Finding out what is pleasing to the Lord involves letting go of how we see things for the sake of entering into God's plan, His guidance of us into that unknowable future, moving into light that shows the way and opens us to what is really of God.

GOSPEL READING: John 9:1-41

The idea of seeing permeates the reading from John's Gospel and functions on a variety of levels. The story of granting sight to the man born blind is one of the seven miracle stories in John's Gospel. In John, the miracles are referred to as signs and the purpose of the signs is to point beyond themselves to the light and salvation present in Jesus; they are to be occasions of faith, a step towards entering into a full and loving relationship with Jesus and His Father.

Certain characters in John's Gospel function as representative figures, representing seven possible responses to Jesus and His offer of a loving relationship. These responses run the gamut from outright rejection to full and loving commitment. The man born blind is such a representative figure. He represents those for whom Jesus' signs are a stepping stone to faith, those who are able to get beyond the good thing that happens in the sign to see the nature of the one performing it. He is still a person without full understanding, but is open to Jesus and commits to Him. He represents those on the way to full and loving commitment. And he is this because, though physically blind, he "sees;" he understands that somehow God is present in the works of Jesus and he is willing to move into the light of that presence of God.

It has long been held that John's Gospel is influenced by Israel's Wisdom Traditions and the story of the man born blind begins with the disciples' question to Jesus, a question that reflects conventional wisdom: good actions lead to good results, bad actions lead to bad results. Jesus counters the disciples' presupposition with the claim that suffering exists in the world to manifest the goodness of God. The disciples see a blind man but don't see the truth of the situation, that bad situations are an opportunity to manifest God's love and care.

Next come the religious leaders. They are portrayed as sharing the same presupposition as the disciples, but more, they see themselves as the teachers and leaders and they see devotion to God to be caught up in strict adherence to rules and Law, to tightly controlled responses. Jesus is a threat to them and easily dismissed as a sinner because He breaks the Law and heals on the Sabbath. They represent outright rejection, showing no openness at all to Jesus, His message and mission, His revelation of His Father. Claiming they can see, they choose to remain blind.

The final characters to emerge in the story are the parents of the man born blind. Their response to the whole situation is motivated by fear – fear of losing the

status quo. Perhaps they do not so much reject Jesus as ignore Him. Their conundrum largely reflects the context in which John's Gospel was written, a time when believers in Jesus were excluded from synagogue fellowship. If they acknowledge the sign, the presence of God in Jesus, they risk losing their sense of belonging, their sense of what is safe and right and comfortable in their relationship with God. They risk losing their relationship with God as they see it on their terms.

Today's readings speak to us of a God who leads us into an unknowable future, who offers us the possibility of change and growth, of living in new ways, of growing in our relationship with Him and the people He has placed in our lives. Blind tenacity for the sake of stability, for the sake of tradition, for the sake of the status quo kills such possibilities.

Growth is a life-long process, a process that involves letting go of where I am right now for the sake of what can be. Believing communities and the individuals that make them up are called to growth, to a process of change. To grow is to live, and Scripture attests that God is the God of the living; to hang on, to refuse to grow, that is to die.

FOR REFLECTION:

- What experiences have I had in my life of gradually coming to see, to understand? How do these experiences provide me with a model for growing in my faith, in my relationship with God?
- When have I judged by outward appearances and missed the heart of the matter? What did I miss? What opportunities did I fail to see? What practical steps can I take to help me look beyond mere externals?
- What elements in my life do I try to control? How does my drive for control limit God's ability to work with and through me? What is God asking me to surrender right now?
- John presents seven possible responses to Jesus, from outright rejection to full and loving commitment. Where would I place myself along this spectrum of responses to Jesus? Why? What can I do to grow in my relationship with God through Jesus?
- What experiences have I had that led me to real growth as a human being? What was painful about these experiences? Was the pain worth it? How am I called to grow now? Will such growth and change be painful? How afraid am I to let go and grow?