

Our Lady Queen of Peace

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

www.olqpparish.org

March 27, 2011



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

Ms. Renée Chauvin

PSR COORDINATOR

Mrs. Debra O'Donnell

PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR

Mrs. Nancy Lorenz

YOUTH MINISTER

Mrs. Terry Ostlund

PARISH COUNCIL

Sandee Burkemper

Joanne David

Vicki De Long

René Heibeck

Arnie Lohbeck

Dave Mills

Denise Ortmann

Rich Ortmann

Linda Weber

PHONES

Parish Office

671-3062

School

671-0247

Cafeteria

375-5335

SCHEDULE OF HOLY MASSES

Saturday Evening

5:00pm

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

Sunday

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

Holy Days

as announced

Weekdays

8:00am

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

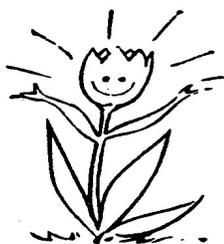
As soon as marriage is contemplated, contact one of the parish priests.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

314-223-8751

YOUTH MINISTRY

314-566-8363

Upcoming OLQP Parish Events**2011****March**Wed 30 **Confirmation** 7:30pm Church**April**Sat 9 **K C Meat Shoot**, Soccer FieldsSat 16 **Parish All Day Confessions
Athletic Association Trivia Night**Sun 17 **Palm Sunday
Seder Meal**, 4pm, KC HallThu 21 **Holy Thursday, 7 pm**Fri 22 **Good Friday, 7 pm**Sat 23 **Easter Vigil, 8 pm**Sun 24 **Easter**Sat 30 **Daughters Tailgate Sale**Sat 30 **Annual Catholic Appeal** begins**May**Sun 1 **First Communion**Fri 13 **2011 Spring Fishing Tournament**Sun 15 **Daughters May Crowning
Annual Catholic Appeal** ends**June**Sat 11 **OLQP PARISH PICNIC**Thr 30 **Blood Drive**, 2-7 pm Cafeteria**July**Mon-Thu 25-29 **Soccer Camp**, Athletic FieldSat 23 **50th Anniversary Mass with
Archbishop Carlson****August**Sat 20 **Daughters Tailgate Sale****September**Sat 24 **Moonlight Golf Tournament**Sun 5 **OLQP Quilt Social** KC Hall**October**Sat 1 **Hoedown**Sat 8 **Harvest Moon Auction** KC HallSun 16 **Daughters Fashion Show** KC Hall**November**Sat 5 **K C Meat Shoot****December**Sun 4 **Advent Tea** KC Hall**2012****January**Sat 14 **Knights Mouse Races** KC Hall**GOOD NEWS!**

Last week, we received notice that we were awarded a grant from the Archdiocese of \$11,000



to be used to fix our failing waste treatment facility. We applied for the grant several months ago through a program that helps support parish viability.

The grant was made possible from contributions to the ACA collection and the Returning God's Gifts program. Please keep this in mind when we begin the annual ACA collection in a few weeks. Our parish has received back a substantial amount of the money that was contributed to this important Archdiocesan collection last year!

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE....BUT SOMETIMES THEY DO! During the 1960's, the Church implemented liturgical changes which included changing the language of the Mass from Latin to the native language of each country.

The English speaking countries, at the time, opted to use a loose translation of the Latin texts in an attempt to make the English translation more meaningful. Because of this, the English text used at Mass is not exactly the same text that is used by the rest of the world when celebrating Mass.

Several years ago, the Bishops of English speaking countries decided to rectify this discrepancy in translation by having the texts that we use at Mass re-translated so that they would more faithfully reflect the original Latin meeting. The translation has been completed, and on **November 27, 2011**, (the **First Sunday of Advent**) the changes will be implemented.

What this means is that some of the prayers and responses of the celebrant and of the people are going to be a little different. An example of what is going to change is the greeting that we use at the beginning of Mass. Right now the celebrant says "*The Lord be with you*" and the people respond "*And also with you*". After the changes take place, the celebrant will say "*The Lord be with you*" and the people will respond "*And with your spirit*". When these changes take place, we will be using the same translation that the rest of the world has been using since the 1960's.

Change can be tedious if not difficult. During the upcoming months there will be more information, instruction and explanation for the upcoming changes. "Cheat Sheets" will also be created so that we can begin to practice the changes that will be taking place. In the end, no matter what words are used, the result is the same. **WE WORSHIP, ADORE AND ENTER INTO COMMUNION WITH JESUS CHRIST...AND THAT IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE!!**

Fr. Mike



OLQP School News

- The students in grades 1-6 are taking the GMADE Math test to determine strengths and weaknesses and to guide instruction.
- The students attended Eucharistic Adoration. To aid their adoration experience, the 6th graders read silently from Exodus and the 7th and 8th graders read silently from the Gospel of Matthew.
- Kindergarten registration for 2011-2012 has begun! If you have a kindergartner and are interested in him/her attending OLQP, please contact the school office for registration and kindergarten screening information.
- Congratulations to the Rixford and Hicks families on the births of their new baby girls!



We will enjoy our brown bag lunch at 11:30 am at the Knights Hall. Hope to see everyone there.



RCIA

We meet every Monday evening at 7 pm in the Cafeteria meeting room. All parishioners or guests are invited to sit in on any of our sessions when the topic being discussed might interest them.

Upcoming Sessions:

- March 28 - The Nicene Creed
- April 4 - The Way of the Cross
The Lord's Prayer
- April 11 - The Meaning of Holy Week
- April 16 - RCIA Retreat
- April 18 - No Classes
- April 23 - Holy Saturday – Reception of the Sacraments



YOUTH MINISTRY

Transformation

This Sunday's gospel is about the living water transforming the life of the woman at the well. Jesus took the time to reveal Himself to the Samaritan woman who was thirsty for pure love and genuine attention. How often does Jesus reveal Himself to us throughout each day and we miss Him because our hearts were not ready for His amazing love? Lent is an awesome season to stop and allow Jesus to transform our hearts, minds and souls so we will be able to appreciate the many ways He reveals Himself to us throughout each and every day.

One way He reveals His amazing love to us is through our children. It is easy to look at a baby and see God's amazing love shine from his/her eyes but as our children grow often we become busy and distracted by life that we forget to stop and soak up the many amazing ways Jesus reveals His love to us through our teen children. As parents of teens we must take time to thank God for our children and the many ways to reveal God's love to us. Slow down during this season of Lent and soak up the many blessings of family. Enjoy allowing your love for God to permeate your family life so your entire family can be transformed by the love of Jesus.

Wednesday Youth Nights

All High School youth are invited to bring a friend and join us for our weekly Youth Nights on Wednesdays from 6 to 8 pm in the Bear's Den where we "Bear the Love of Christ". Enjoy growing in your faith while eating popcorn and having fun.

*Note that there will **not** be a Youth Night on Wednesday, March 30th, due to Confirmation. Please pray for our Confirmation candidates as they continue preparing for this sacrament.

Terry Ostlund, Youth Minister
314-566-8363

**"Precious Metals" Collection next week,
April 2nd and 3rd. Thanks for your support!**

*Birthright Shower and
Salad Supper
April 7, 6:30 pm*

The Shower and Supper is sponsored by the Daughters of Isabella at 6:30 pm in the Cafeteria. Everyone is most welcome to join us. Are you thinking about joining the Daughters? Come, join in and find out about our organization.

*Tuition Assistance
Application Deadline April 1*

Any Catholic family wishing to apply for tuition assistance, from the parish or the Archdiocese, for the 2011-2012 school year must obtain a "FACTS" application from the Parish Office.

The due date for the application is April 1, 2011 and must include a copy of your 2010 Income Tax Return.

**Seder Meal
Sunday, April 17, 4 pm
Knights of Columbus Hall**

Please join us to celebrate the Seder Meal. Bring a dish (to feed 12)

- A-H - Vegetable
- I-Q - Dessert
- R-Z - Pasta or Potato

to share and a set of candles for your table as part of the tradition of the meal. The parish will provide the meat, salad and drink. This is a special time to come together as a parish for fellowship, a meal and to remember our Christian roots. Please sign the book in the Church lobby so we will know how many people will be attending.

St. Vincent De Paul

The volunteers of OLQP-SVDP Society
THANK YOU for the generous donations. We have been able to help many of the needy in our area. This is how the funds were disbursed in February:

Electricity - \$451.00 Prescriptions - \$64.90.

Thanks again, have a good Lent and God Bless.

SVDP Volunteers



Parish Corner

Every week a different organization is featured in the bulletin.

Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy of the Word is a program designed for the children who have not yet received their First Communion. The gospel reading is adapted to this age group. Additional stories, activities, and crafts help make the gospel message relevant to the lives and experiences of young children. At this time, Children's Liturgy of the Word is scheduled only through the school year. We meet during 9:30 am Mass in the Cafeteria. Parents and volunteers are always welcome.

Any questions please call Mary Mattingly, 274-2698.

Stephen Ministry

Consider letting a Stephen Minister help. A Stephen Minister is a parishioner who is trained to listen, care, encourage, pray and walk alongside you during difficult times. It's confidential, free and very helpful. To learn how you can receive care please call Margaret, 314-223-8751. All calls and sessions are confidential.



God bless you!

Retiring Old Flags

Cub Scout Pack 552 and American Legion Post 783 is holding a Flag Retirement Ceremony on April 10th at 1:00 pm at the KC Hall in House Springs. We are in need of flags for this ceremony. Please donate your worn flags to this worthwhile event of teaching patriotism to our youth. All are welcome to attend, and if enough flags are available, participate in this ceremony. All Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts from OLQP are invited to participate. Please donate your flags at the KC Hall on Fridays between 4:00 and 10:00 pm. Questions please contact Paul McDonnell at (636) 274-0442 or Mike Hartung at (314) 956-5967 for pickup.

Thank you

Lenten Workshop Series on Prayer

This Lent, we will offer a six week workshop series focusing on practical suggestions on how you can improve your prayer life. We will use the Catechism and writings of the saints as our foundation. We'll then translate these writings into our everyday life. The goal is to leave the meeting with solid dogma, uplifting inspiration and several practical ideas on how to put it into practice. Discussion topics will be:

March 30 – The Rosary – Spending Lent with Mary

April 6 – Mediation – Opening Up to the Lord

April 13 – The Psalms – Praying the Prayers Jesus Prayed

April 20 – Adoration – “Can You Spend an Hour with Me?”

Feel free to come to all the workshops or select the ones that appeal to you most. Any questions please call Phyllis 677-4364 or email phyllis106@charter.net.

Recent Baptisms

Benjamin Michael Leonard
son of *Grant and Kimberly Leonard*

Bulletin Deadline Change

Bulletin deadline is being changed to Friday (i.e. deadline March 25 for April 3 bulletin) at 4:30 pm. I need to send the bulletin by noon on Tuesday of the bulletin week to insure that I receive the bulletin by Friday. A new company has bought the current bulletin company and changes were made. I am sure once we get in the habit of this new schedule it will be fine.

Thanks so much for your help.

Linda

K of C - OLQP - 2011 Fishing Tournament Saturday, May the 14th (This is the weekend after Mother's Day)

The 2011 Spring Fishing Tournament will be held at the Kon Tiki Resort located on the Little Niangua arm of the Lake of the Ozarks, right at the Big Niangua.

We've been to the Kon Tiki Resort in the past. Kon Tiki is located in the Highway EE resort area, off Highway 7 just out of Greenview.

This year's lodging **will not** be included, Kon Tiki is holding some rooms for us, but only for a short time. Reservations must be submitted by the end of March to secure our rooms and space is limited. Each person is responsible for making their own reservations. Please contact Jeff or Deacon Paul after making reservations so we can keep a contact list of those who are going in case there are any changes to be made.

Contact info: 1-800-873-5320 – www.kontikiozarks.com

E-mail address – kontikiresort@sbcglobal.net

The entry fee this year will be \$50.00 which will include:

Trophy hats for first, second, and third place winners;

and an evening banquet meal will be supplied after the weigh in.

Fishing will start at dawn and end at 4:00 pm with weigh-in at 4:30 pm.

Dinner and stories about the ones that got away begins at 6:00 pm.

For more information call or email:

Jeff Littrell at 314-607-4121 – ljd124@AOL.com

Deacon Paul at 636-677-4040 – dconpaul@charter.net

**Congratulations!
OLQP Speech Team**

The March 12th Speech Meet at Sacred Heart School in Valley Park provided another opportunity for the OLQP Bellarmine Speech Team to shine! Allison Kohne and Nicole Adams won a red ribbon in the duet category. Regan Becnel scored well in the humorous monologue category and got a red ribbon. Jane Kenney, also in the humorous monologue category, brought home a perfect score and therefore got a gold ribbon. Congrats to all the member of the OLQP speech team!

**Fr. William Scheid Presents
Neil Simon's "Fools"**

The Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Apostolate and The Fr. William Scheid players will present Neil Simon's "Fools" on Friday, April 8th and Saturday, April 9th, at 8pm and Sunday, April 10th at 3pm. All performances will be at Pope John Paul II Auditorium at the Cardinal Rigali Center, 20 Archbishop May Dr. This year there will be a special Wine and Cheese Party prior to the Saturday performance. All proceeds support the Catholic Youth Apostolate youth programs. All tickets are \$12 each. There will be an additional \$10 charge to attend the Wine and Cheese Party. For more information please contact Allison, 314-792-7624 or email: allisontabeta@archstl.org for tickets.

Everyone Invited

American Cancer Society Relay for Life
May 6th, 6 pm until May 7th, 6 am
Faith Community Church

www.relayforlife.org/nwjeffersoncomo

Questions please call 1-800-227-2345

Seven Days of Inspiration

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

Act as if what
you do makes a
difference. It does.

You learn something
every day if you
pay attention.

Trust yourself!
You know more than
you think you do.

Laughter is God's
sunshine.

We are all beginners,
starting fresh each day!

Angels are never
far away!

Hug your friends -
it will make them smile
on the inside and out.

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

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Our next Eucharistic Adoration is
Wednesday, March 30
from 8:30 am – 8:00 pm

Palm Sunday and Holy Week

The sign-up booklets for Palm Sunday and Holy Week are in the lobby of Church. This is such a holy time of the year and this provides us with an opportunity to participate in the celebration. Please sign up for the service you wish to participate in.

Lenten Schedule**Adoration on Wednesdays of Lent**

8:30 am to 8 pm

Stations of the Cross

Fridays of Lent after 8 am Mass
School Children Fridays 2:15 pm

Fish Fry's

Every Friday of Lent 3 to 7 pm
Good Friday, April 22, noon to 7 pm

Parish All Day Confessions

Saturday, April 16
9am - 4:45 pm

April 17, Seder Meal, 4 pm, KC Hall

April 21, Holy Thursday Mass, 7 pm

April 22, Good Friday Service, 7 pm

April 23, Easter Vigil, 8pm

Easter Masses, 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 am

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

Dorothy Seal, grandmother of Scott Berry,
great grandmother of Kyle, Craig and Olivia,
aunt of Susan Whitworth

Mary Hetherington, mother of Chas Hetherington
*May God welcome them home, fill them with peace,
and bless those who will miss them.*

**Our Gifts to God and Parish Last Week
240 Envelopes Used****Special Collections**

Black/Indian Mission	\$	48.00
Eastern European	\$	11.00
St. Vincent de Paul	\$	171.00

New Building Fund

Lavender Envelopes	\$	465.00
Total Received to date	\$	691,274.49

Offertory

Sunday Envelopes	\$	9,142.00
Sunday Loose	\$	600.00
Above and Beyond	\$	36.00
Present and Future	\$	10.00
Total Offertory	\$	9,788.00
Offertory Goal	\$	13,699.00

Thank you for your generosity.

As of March 21, 2011

Contributions Year To Date	\$	458,622.45
Projected Year to Date Budget	\$	520,562.00

Script Gift Cards

Sales	\$	3,235.00
Profits/tuition reduction	\$	142.40

Script 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**

"Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.'" John 4:7

How often through our lives does Jesus ask us to give Him a drink? Remember that Jesus lives in every person who is physically hungry and thirsty and also in all those who thirst for compassion, love or care. Mother Teresa was motivated in her work in Calcutta by two of Our Lord's last words as He hung on the cross, *"I thirst"* John 19:28. Sometimes it may be difficult for us to give the drink that Jesus asks from us. Yet, can we really refuse to share our time, talent or treasure to relieve Our Lord's thirst in this world?

Parish Activities

Mon	March 28	PSR, 6:15 - 7:30 pm RCIA, 7pm, Cafeteria meeting room Rosary for Peace, 7:30 pm, Church
Tues	March 29	Devotions after 8a m Mass Quilters, 9 am - 3 pm, 6 - 8:30 pm Church History Class, 7pm, Cafeteria meeting room
Wed	March 30	Eucharistic Adoration, 8:30 am - 6 pm Confirmation, 7:30 pm, Church Lenten Prayer, 7 -8 pm, Rectory Conference room
Thurs	March 31	Choir Practice, 7pm, Church
Fri	April 1	Stations after 8:30 am Mass and 2:15 pm Used Book Sale begins, Cafeteria Fish Fry, 3 - 7 pm, Cafeteria
Sat	April 2	Used Book Sale, 6 - 7 pm, Cafeteria
Sun	April 3	First Sunday Breakfast after 7:30 and 9:30 am Masses Used Book Sale after all Masses, Cafe.

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

Christine Dower	Ann Bevard
Rich Leiber	Dorothy Rudloff
Jackie Nappier	Gerry Schroeder
Mary Slodkowski	Carol O'Shea

Allen Chott, nephew of Judy Mottert
Kitty Conway, aunt of Rich Ortman
Joe Wood, father of Doug Wood
Ralph Michael, father of Geraldine Little
Baby Henley, relative of Geraldine Little
Tracy Musselwhite, niece of Lynette Rawlins
Rachel Preston, granddaughter of L. Rawlins
Trudy Girard, sister of Lynette Rawlins
Jimmy Rawlins, son of Lynette Rawlins
Hubert Taylor, father of Nancy Wilfong
Debbie Laird, friend of Geraldine Little
Donna Henslee, friend of Geraldine Little
Buck Thomas, husband of Donna Thomas
Kay Oestman, sister of Maureen Turney
Dave Haig, friend of Ken and Jan DeClue
Louise Gunter, mother of Lynette Rawlins

~ 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.

Parish Office email
parishoffice@olqpparish.org
OLQP Web Site
www.olqpparish.org
submit articles for bulletin
olqbulletin@yahoo.com
Deadline Friday at 4:30 pm
(week before publication)

Mass Intentions

Mon	March 28	8:00 am	Robert Crean
		6:30 pm	Marie Delue
Tues	March 29	8:00 am	Warren & Bernice Dierks
Wed	March 30	8:00 am	Amilda Stratil
Thurs	March 31	8:00 am	Barb Rocchio
Fri	April 1	8:00 am	Wally & Geneva Freihaut Intentions
Sat	April 2	8:00 am	Barb Rocchio
		5:00 pm	USA to Return to Prayer
Sun	April 3	7:30 am	People of the Parish
		9:30 am	Margaret O'Brien
		11:30 am	Joyce Clayton

April 2nd and 3rd**Special Ministers of the Eucharist**

5:00 pm	Peggy Mikko, Sandy Munzlinger, Katie Tutass, Joe & Barb Nenninger, *Michael & Joyce Ruopp
7:30 am	*Mary Bjornstad, Ruth Haen, Michele Huff, *Jo Jahnsen, Ann Riley, Marie Strayhorn, Linda Weber
9:30 am	*Fran Corley, Lee Hoffman, Dan & Kim Horn, Jan Hussman, Connie Stubits, *Jo Ann Vess, Nancy Wilfong
11:30 am	Sandee Burkemper, Deb Pigue, Sharon Schmidt, Lynette & Patrick Rawlins, *Maria Webb, *Denise Witt

* You are responsible to clean the vessels after Mass

Proclaimers

5:00 pm	Larry Bottchen, Barb Nenninger
7:30 am	Scott Reimer, Frieda Siebel-Spath
9:30 am	OLQP School
11:30 am	Gary & Carol Freihaut

Servers

5:00 pm	Allyson & Kaitlyn Bridges, Sara Eimer
7:30 am	Briar Bolte, Jordan Duff, Dylan Vancil
9:30 am	OLQP School children
11:30 am	Christopher Dutton, Ben Pigue, Claire Webb

Ushers

5:00 pm	Bill & Donna Clifton, Ken Ganey, Ralph Munzlinger, Jerry Sheets, B. Slodkowski
7:30 am	Gerald Bachmann, D. Bjornstad, J. Eschbach, Wally Freihaut, Larry Lammert, John Nahlik
9:30 am	OLQP School
11:30 am	Don Brooks, John Holmes, Don Reno, Jim Robertson, Al Schulz, David Witt



Diane Yocom,
Susan Whitworth,
Joanne David
and Joan Thompkins

**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: I 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 Deuteronomic 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 Deuteronomic 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 world-wide 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?



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