

Our Lady Queen of Peace

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

www.olqpparish.org

April 3, 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

April

- Sat 9 **K C Meat Shoot**, Soccer Fields
 Sat 16 **Parish All Day Confessions**
 9 am - 4:45 pm
Athletic Association Trivia Night
 Sun 17 **Palm Sunday**
Easter Egg Hunt, KC Hall
Seder Meal, 4pm, KC Hall
 Thu 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**
 Thu 30 **Blood Drive, 2-7 pm Cafeteria**

July

- Tue-Sun 19-24 **Home Builders**
(Youth Ministry)
 Mon-Thu 25-29 **Soccer Camp**, Athletic Field
 Sat 23 **50th Anniversary Mass with**
Archbishop Carlson

August

- Sat 20 **Daughters Tailgate Sale**

September

- Sat 24 **Moonlight Golf Tournament**
 Sun 25 **OLQP Quilt Social** KC Hall

October

- Sat 1 **Hoedown**
 Sat 8 **Harvest Moon Auction** KC Hall
 Sun 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



Pastor's Desk

Did you ever get sooooo mad that you could just shoot something? Well, our Knights of Columbus would like to give you the opportunity to shoot something (but only after you have calmed down). On **Saturday April 9th**, the Knights will host a **MEAT SHOOT** beginning at 10:00 am on the OLQP Athletic Field. There will be food and drink available.

If you have never participated in a meat shoot before, you might be surprised at how much fun (addictive) they can be. It consists of shooting a shotgun at a paper target. Whoever can get a shot bead closest to the crosshairs on their target in that round wins a designated prize, usually cash or a selection of meat. Special Youth rounds (which are well supervised) will be available for children 13 years of age and under. It costs between \$1 - \$5 per round depending on what the prize is.

You do not have to own a shotgun and you do not have to be a skilled shooter. A good portion of it is LUCK. In fact, in our last meat shoot, children ended up walking away with a good portion of the prizes not only in the youth rounds but in the adult rounds also. It's not difficult at all. You point the shotgun at the target, close your eyes and pull the trigger. It's that easy!! (just ask Mary Wigge!) (Actually, you want to try and keep your eyes open.)

The Knights of Columbus are big supporters of our parish. They provide us with man-power for projects, financial contributions and the generous use of their hall for various events. I would like to invite you to help support them in this event and have a good time doing so. Step out of your comfort zone and try something different. Don't be shy if you are a newbie! Male or female (and quite a few women took part in our last meat shoot), young or old, **Andrew Schwantner** and **Kevin Duff** will set you up and get you started. Hope to see you there next Saturday!

Fr. Mike

PS. The Easter Bunny has been given a special pass and will not be one of the prizes or targets!





OLQP School News

This week's focus: 8th grade

- The 8th graders are already counting down the days until their graduation! Before that, though, they have Confirmation and the 8th Grade Mystery Trip, as well as one more quarter of work!
- Our 8th graders plan on attending four different high schools.
 - * Ali Gal plans to attend Seckman High School.
 - * Anthony Grisham plans to attend St. John Vianney High School.
 - * Andrea Brown, Lucas Diffey, Rachel Haug, Madisyn Hirth, Lena Montileone, Hanna Osborne, Jessica Queen, and Justin Thomure plan to attend Northwest High School.
 - * Mary Turney and Kali Chafin plan to attend Notre Dame High School

We are very proud of our 8th graders and, even though we are in no hurry to have them graduate, we wish them well during their high school years!

Pro-Life Action Day Tuesday, April 5th

Everyone is invited to attend the Pro-Life Action Day in Jefferson City at the Capital building from 10 am until 2 pm. Get your friends together, wear red and carpool to Jefferson City to be a voice for the unborn. Our 8th grade students from OLQP will be attending with some of their parents and teachers. We hope to see you there. For more information go to the Missouri Right to Life web site, missourilife.org



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:

- 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

Blossom Before The Fruit

Every spring the fruit trees



remind us of the importance of good weather conditions if their blossoms are to grow into delicious fruit. If the weather conditions are favorable, the pests don't attack and the tree gets enough water and nutrients the fruit will be healthy and plentiful. Fruit trees are great teachers for us as parents of teen children.

The teen years are much like the springtime in the cycle of a fruit tree. As parents, we all want our teen children to grow into capable, contributing and connected adults but they are not there yet. Our teens are in the blossom of their life. We must do our best to ensure a safe and loving environment and setting clear guidelines and boundaries that will help them fight temptation. Just as each fruit tree is unique, each of our teen children are unique and will have unique challenges that we as parents must encourage them through. It is vital for our teens to have a healthy and safe environment filled with the warmth of our love and personal integrity which will help them plug into God's amazing mercy and grace. Enjoy parenting your teen in the springtime of their life.

Congratulations to our Confirmation Candidates

Last Wednesday our 8th grade youth were confirmed by Bishop Rice. We welcome these young people into full membership of the Catholic faith.

Newly Confirmed Invited to Join Youth Group

All the newly confirmed youth are invited to bring a friend and join our high school youth on Wednesday evenings in the Bear's Den from 6 - 8 pm. Have some fun, share some faith and eat some popcorn.

HopeBuilders

Summer Service Week Registration

All current 8th grade youth and high school youth are invited to register for HopeBuilders summer service week. We will stay here on campus and go out into the community to do service during the day. In the evenings we will have different faith filled and pure fun activities. This will be held from Tuesday evening, July 19th, thru Sunday, July 24th. The cost of the week is \$50 and your time and talent. Call Terry for a registration packet.

Registrations are due with a \$25 deposit by April 15th.

Terry Ostlund, Youth Minister
314-566-8363

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

Resource Book Changes Deadline Tuesday, April 12

It is already time to look at our Resource Book (the blue Parish Resource Book Directory) and make changes for the new one coming out in September. This year we will be going to the smaller size. If you are the contact for an organization, ministry or volunteer group please check what your description says and let me know if you would like to make any changes. If your description is lengthy maybe we could shorten it a bit as we will also be losing space with the smaller size. I will need this information no later than April 12.

It is also a good time to make sure that the parish office has your current address and phone number. If you do not want your phone number published please call the office and let me know. This will make it easy for fellow parishioners to get in touch with you.

Thank you so much for your help in making these changes.

Linda

St. Vincent De Paul

We encourage all the members of our parish to:

- To have ears to hear the "cries of the poor",
- To have eyes to "seek and find the forgotten, the suffering or the deprived," and
- To have hearts that "bring God's love to the poor" through our generosity and donations.

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.



Parish Corner

Every week a different organization is featured in the bulletin. The following week they have representatives in the Church lobby to talk about their organization and sign up potential members.

OLQP Boy Scouts

OLQP Boy Scouts fall under our youth ministry program. Our **Cub Scout Pack 555** caters to boys in 1st through 5th grade. Our **Boy Scout Troop 553** serves boys and young men from 6th grade to age 18 and our **Venture Crew 2553** is comprised of youth (male & female) in high school through age 21. Our programs are open to all youth in the community.

Did you know our Boy Scout Troop was chartered 57 years ago in House Springs and has produced **45 EAGLE Scouts** to date? To earn the rank of EAGLE, young men must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges and demonstrate leadership by planning and executing a project that provides a service to their community.

Did you know that the following were Eagle projects performed by OUR scouts?

- The OLQP sign at the Byrnesville Cemetery
- "Welcome to Scottsdale" sign at Scottsdale Rd and Highway 30
- Sheetrock ceiling at the Peace Pantry
- Outdoor classroom at Cedar Springs Elementary School
- Bookcases for the OLQP School Library
- Retaining wall at the Wild Bird Sanctuary
- Nature Trail, Footbridges, and Park Benches at Cedar Hill Intermediate
- Bird/Butterfly Garden at Cedar Springs Elem.
- Cemetery Sign at the Methodist Church in Otto
- Resident Shelter at Sunny Hill
- Footbridge at West Tyson County Park
- Landscaping at House Springs Lions Hall
- Retaining wall at Faith United Methodist Church
- Handicapped accessible raised-bed garden at Cedar Springs Elementary
- Nature Trail at Cedar Springs Elementary
- Landscaping at Little Brennan Elementary
- Landscaping at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Fenton

For more information on any of our scouting programs, contact **Joe Corio at 636-285-4530**.

God's Cod Squad

An Opportunity for You????

Would you like an opportunity to meet fellow parishioners and use your time and talent for the parish? If so, we would like to invite you to become a volunteer at our weekly Fish Fry.

It is not too late for you to volunteer. We will be having a Fish Fry on April 8th, 15th and 22nd. There are many positions and open times available. Set up starts at 1:30 pm and clean up starts at 7 pm with many things going. On April 22, Good Friday, set up starts at 10 am to enable us to serve lunch. It takes at least 62 volunteers to run a Fish Fry. We hope you will become one of the squad. Please see the sign up board in the Church lobby or at the Fish Fry to see what may interest you or contact Deacon Paul, God's Cod Squad leader.

**OLQP Athletic Association
6th Annual Trivia Night**

The OLQP Athletic Association will be sponsoring our 6th Annual Trivia Night on April 16th at the K of C Hall in House Springs. Proceeds from the event will be used to purchase new uniforms, upkeep on our fields and maintain our registration fees at the lowest in the area. Go to our website www.olqpraiders.com for more information and trivia registration forms.

BINGO

Every Friday Night
Knights of Columbus Hall
Doors open at 4:30 pm
Bingo starts at 6:45 pm
Hope to see you there!

**Our 50th Anniversary
Commemorative Mugs On Sale Now**

10 oz. acrylic mugs are being sold for \$6. Mugs are available at the Fish Fry, First Sunday Breakfast, Hospitality Sunday and with Linda in the parish office.

**Easter Flower Fundraiser
for St. Vincent de Paul**

Our Holiday Poinsettia Fundraiser was such a success raising over \$550 for St. Vincent de Paul that we are again taking orders for flowers to be used on our Altar for this Easter.

Your donation will not only be used to enhance our Altar for the Easter season but will also benefit someone in need in our community through our St. Vincent de Paul Society.

You may use the form below and put it in an envelope marked "FLOWERS" and put it in the collection basket or turn it into the office. All orders MUST be in by April 13.

Additional order forms are available in the Church lobby.

Of course, if you just wish to make a monetary donation for flowers it will be gratefully accepted also.

If you have any questions, please call Joanne, 274-0590.

Please choose from the following:

	Price	Quantity	Total
Easter Lily full 3-4 blooms	\$10.00	_____	_____
Kalanchoe, various colors	\$10.00	_____	_____
Mum, various colors	\$10.00	_____	_____

Cash or checks accepted.

Please make checks payable to St. Vincent de Paul

Name _____

Phone _____ Amount paid _____

If your flower is donated in the memory of a loved one, please print their name below:

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

Sponsored by the Daughters of Isabella in the Cafeteria. Everyone is welcome, questions please call Nancy, 274-2698.

**Let's Go Trout Fishing
with Monsignor Norb
at Meramec Springs
on Monday, April 11.
Any questions please call
Fred Plake, 636-376-3002**





We would like to thank the Daughters of Isabella for hosting our Hospitality Sunday, March 20. It is such a great way to meet new parishioners, renew past friendships and keep in touch with friends. Again, thanks so much to Daughters of Isabella for hosting Hospitality Sunday.

Thank You

The Sunnyhill Ladies wish to thank Our Lady Queen Peace for their excellent hospitality at the March 18, 2011 Fish Fry. Special thanks to Lori Carbone, Bob Ellison, Bill Mikko and Maryann Turek for your extra kind help with serving their meals and drinks. We wish to thank the kind lady who made a monetary donation, most unexpected, but the ladies deeply appreciated your thoughtfulness!

Many Thanks,
Sunnyhill Ladies
and Staff (Linda and Donna)

Thank You

Dear OLQP,

Thank you all for your prayers, Masses and love you have shown our family during this difficult time. You are the best!

Fran Ferrara and Family

Seven Days of Inspiration

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

Give the best you
have... yourself.

~~~~~

Friendship is a plant  
we must often water.

~~~~~

Happiness is only
a smile away.

~~~~~

A cloudy day is  
no match for a  
sunny disposition.

~~~~~

Friendship is like
two clocks keeping
the same time.

~~~~~

Let there be more  
joy and laughter  
in your living.

~~~~~

Never give up...
there's always some
joy in the cup.

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, April 6
From 8:30 am - 8:00 pm.

**Palm Sunday and Holy Week
Sign Up Booklets**

The signup 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.

**Our Gifts to God and Parish Last Week
215 Envelopes Used**

Special Collections

Black/Indian Mission	\$	52.00
Eastern European	\$	20.00
St. Vincent de Paul	\$	155.00

New Building Fund

Lavender Envelopes	\$	465.00
Total Received to date	\$	691,739.49

Offertory

Sunday Envelopes	\$	10,302.00
Sunday Loose	\$	639.00
Above and Beyond	\$	291.00
Total Offertory	\$	11,332.00
Offertory Goal	\$	13,699.00

Thank you for your generosity.

As of March 28, 2011

Contributions Year To Date	\$	469,854.45
Projected Year to Date Budget	\$	534,261.00

Script Gift Cards

Sales	\$	2,785.00
Profits/tuition reduction	\$	114.24

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

Lenten Schedule**Adoration on Wednesdays of Lent**

8:30 am - 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

**Stewardship
Start With Prayer**

"We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day." John 9:4

It is important to note that Jesus uses the plural "we" in this statement and not the singular "I." By saying, "We have to do the works..." Jesus commands all of us to participate in the work of God. It is not enough for us to simply know God's will. We must also do God's will, which means helping and serving others.



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

Doris Walezak, mother of Linda Scotino

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

Parish Activities

- Mon April 4 PSR, 6:15 - 7:30 pm
RCIA, 7 pm, Cafeteria meeting room
Rosary for Peace, 7:30 pm, Church
- Tues April 5 Devotions after 8 am Mass
Quilters, 9 am - 3 pm, 6 - 8:30 pm
Church History Class, 7 pm, Cafeteria meeting room
- Wed April 6 **Eucharistic Adoration, 8:30 am - 8 pm**
Lenten Prayer Workshop, 7 pm, Cafeteria meeting room
- Thurs April 7 Choir Practice, 7 pm, Church
Daughters of Isabella Birthright Shower and Salad Supper, 6:30 pm, Cafeteria
- Fri April 8 **Stations of the Cross after 8 am Mass and 2:15 pm**
- Sat April 9 K C Meat Shoot, Athletic Field
- Sun April 10 Children's Liturgy after 9:30 am Mass, Cafeteria
Youth Mass, 6 pm, Church

Mass Intentions

- Mon April 4 8:00 am Tyler Freihaut
6:30 pm Jim Jahnsen
- Tues April 5 8:00 am Anna T. Redel
- Wed April 6 8:00 am Francis Stewart
- Thu April 7 8:00 am Warren & Bernice Dierks
- Fri April 8 8:00 am Edward Clayton
- Sat April 9 8:00 pm Marie Delue
5:00 pm Deceased Members of Finney Family
- Sun April 10 7:30 am Alice Nahlik
9:30 am People of the Parish
11:30 am Joyce Clayton
6:00 pm Tyler Freihaut

April 9th and 10th

Special Ministers of the Eucharist

- 5:00 pm Margaret Bottchen, Donna Clifton,
*Bev Gregory, Clay Gregorc, Maryann Turek,
Ralph & Sandy Munzlinger
- 7:30 am Gerald Bachmann, Andrea Lawson,
*Rich Ortmann, Michael & Joyce Ruopp,
Joyce Stenger, Shirley Tenny
- 9:30 am *Dale Andrews, Mary Copeland, Carol Delue,
Bruce Gallion, Pat Hoskins, Barb Perez,
*Sharon Reineri, Jan Schultheiss
- 11:30 am Debbie Cleek, Angie Ecker, *Tom Ecker,
Tom Mattingly, Barb Oppelz, Len Reinhardt,
*Joan Ross

* You are responsible to clean the vessels after Mass

Proclaimers

- 5:00 pm Joe & Barb Nenninger
- 7:30 am Ken Bohnert, Ann Riley
- 9:30 am Margaret Gerling, Helen Salamone
- 11:30 am Ernie Bradow, Laura Huss

Servers

- 5:00 pm Madison & Reagan Becnel, Christine Gregorc
- 7:30 am Alyssa Block, Cameron Haug, Kaitlyn Robertson
- 9:30 am Hannah Mraz, Hanna Osborne, Kimberly Queen
- 11:30 am Allie & Nicholas Gal, Ashlyn Mattingly

Ushers

- 5:00 pm Larry Bottchen, Bill Clifton, Arnie Lohbeck,
Jerry Sheets, Helen Stewart, Ronald Williams
- 7:30 am Robert De Long, Jeff Eschbach, Ted Hemen,
Larry Lammert, Steve Morlock, Vince Rocchio
- 9:30 am Tom Broadbent, Terry Filicsky, Ray Graf,
Sam Pierceall, Jeff Queen, Ralph Schultheiss
- 11:30 am Gary Freihaut, Michael Harris, Kevin Huss,
Paul McDonnell, Andy Nappier, Rich Rousseau

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

- Dorothy Rudloff Jackie Nappier
- Mary Slodkowski Carol O'Shea
- Scott Beck, Jr. Lloyd Young

Hubert Taylor, father of Nancy Wilfong
Buck Thomas, husband of Donna Thomas
Kay Oestman, sister of Maureen Turney
Dave Haig, friend of Ken and Jan DeClue

~ 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
olqpbulletin@yahoo.com
Deadline Friday at 4:30 pm
(9 days before publication)



Mary Jo Dawson,
Mary Ann Whitecotton,
Debbie O'Donnell
and Carol Delue

**Fifth Sunday of Lent
Cycle A**

THEME: Our hope is to live.

The readings for the Fifth Sunday of Lent focus on God bringing life to lifeless situations. The oracle of Ezekiel follows immediately on the vision of the dry bones and offers hope of new life for the exiles; the psalm records the plea of the penitent from the lifeless depths of sin; Romans, too, while holding out the promise of eternal life in the resurrection of the body, equates lifelessness with sin; and the story of the raising of Lazarus is the last sign recorded in John's Gospel, a final sign to draw people out of a lifeless situation and point them to the salvation offered in Jesus.

THE READINGS:

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:12-14

The reading from Ezekiel is the oracle that comes immediately after the vision of the resuscitation of the dry bones. The valley of the dry bones represents the situation of Israel in the exile. Time has passed and people are settling in. Hope for a return to Israel is diminishing and the exiles are becoming content to build homes, start families, engage in the structures of life in Babylon. Energy and enthusiasm for the idea of election, for living a special relationship with God is waning. Israel's relationship with its God is in a dry, lifeless situation. In this context, God speaks a promise not just of return, not just of going back, but of revival and renewal. He addresses the exiles as "My people"

and promises to fill them with His Spirit so that they will know Him. And a constant theme in the Old Testament is that knowing leads to life.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:8-11

The second reading, from the Letter to the Romans affirms again that life comes from the Spirit of God within us. What God promised through Ezekiel is accomplished in Jesus Christ – we have God's Spirit. This Spirit, though we may be sinful, is God's pledge of life that will lead us to share in the resurrection of Jesus, to share eternal life with our merciful God.

GOSPEL READING: John 11:1-45

In John's Gospel, the raising of Lazarus is the final and greatest sign – overcoming death itself. The seven signs (miracles) are all intended to point beyond themselves to the person of Jesus who makes God's presence manifest in the world. In the synoptics, the cleansing of the temple provides the final push to drive the religious leaders of Israel to seek Jesus' death. In John, that was one of the first acts of Jesus' public life. Throughout His ministry, there was constant conflict between Jesus and the leaders of the people. It is this culminating sign that provides the final push in John for the religious leaders to actively seek to rid themselves of Jesus.

In the larger context of the whole Gospel, the raising of Lazarus serves two purposes. It is a sign, demonstrating the glory of God and pointing to Jesus as the means of God's self-revelation. It is a cause for belief. And the end result of the story is that many came to believe. But it also serves as a contrast to Jesus' resurrection. Lazarus emerges from the tomb still wrapped in the trappings of death. His is not a resurrection to eternal life, but a resuscitation. When the disciples visit the tomb of Jesus, they find the wrappings left behind. Death no longer has a hold on Jesus.

There is a general progression in the seven signs Jesus performs in John's Gospel – from changing water into wine, to healings, to power over the forces of nature, to power over life and death itself. Each sign is an occasion for Jesus to teach and His teaching is met with misunderstanding. But each sign is also an occasion for faith, for entering into a relationship with Jesus as the revelation of the Father, even with misgivings and misunderstandings, an entrance that leaves people open to growth in that relationship. And this is the case with the raising of Lazarus. The sign is an occasion for Jesus to proclaim who He really is – the resurrection and the life for those who believe, the means of hope and the opening of a relationship with the Father.

Some, like Mary and Martha accept the offer of the relationship whole-heartedly and have a full and loving commitment to Jesus; others come to believe but are still on the road, are still growing and developing in that relationship; some see only the signs and fail to respond to Jesus the revealer – “Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” And finally, the religious leaders will find this all to be too much, more than they can tolerate and maintain their sense of stability and control. They actively reject Jesus.

As we near the end of our Lenten journey, we come again to see that it is God who brings life to lifeless situations, to situations where we are tempted to just hang on, to accept what is and hope for no more, even to situations of ultimate loss – death itself. What deadens us to hope most often is our own sinfulness, our turning back on ourselves and seeking our own ends, our tendency to absolutize our experiences and define boundaries for our lives that limit us, that shut us off from hope, from the full manner of living that is possible for believers, for those who have a full and loving commitment to their God.

Ezekiel proclaims that the present moment isn't the end of the story, but a step along the way, a moment in time to respond to a loving God who calls us His people and promises us hope and revitalization. For John, the present moment has absolute significance, not in itself but as a moment of choice, a moment to decide to live in the light and commit to Jesus the revealer, or to shrink back into darkness and live by our own devices. Life – fully living in the world in the here and now, and the possibility of eternal life with our loving Father – depends not on our ability to take control and maintain what is comfortable, but in letting go of control, in letting ourselves constantly be reformed by our revealing God, by growing in our relationship with Him, a growth that is never content with what is, but always celebrates what can be – if only we love, if only we approach Jesus and His Father with full and loving commitment.

FOR REFLECTION:

- What are the lifeless situations in my life, those areas of life where I'm stuck, where there is no energy, no enthusiasm, no hope? What are the lifeless situations in my community of faith, those areas of life where we're stuck, where there is no energy, no enthusiasm, no hope?
- How well do I know God? Does my knowing God, my relationship with God bring life to the lifeless situations in my life? What can I do to know God better? Does the possibility of knowing God better give me hope?
- In what sense do I believe that the Spirit of God is within me? Does this suggest to me that I have within myself all that I need to bring life to the lifeless situations of my life? To the life of my faith community? How can I do this?
- In simplest terms, a miracle is the experience of God in our world. What has been my experience of miracles, of God's involvement with us? In John's Gospel, for some people miracles were threatening, confusing, challenging and uncomfortable. What about my experience of God's involvement in our world has been threatening, confusing, challenging or uncomfortable for me? What can I do about this?
- In what ways am I tempted to absolutize my experiences, to hang on to what I have, to limit my possibilities and squelch hope? God brings life to lifeless situations. How can I open myself to His offer of life?

FASTING AND FEASTING

Lent should be more than a time of fasting. It should be a joyous season of feasting.

Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others.

It is a season in which we should:

Fast from judging others	Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from emphasis on differences	Feast on unity of all life.
Fast from apparent darkness	Feast on the reality of light.
Fast from thoughts of illness	Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute	Feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent	Feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger	Feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism	Feast on optimism.
Fast from worry	Feast on Divine order.
Fast from complaining	Feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives	Feast on affirmatives.

**God Bless You
This Lent...**

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