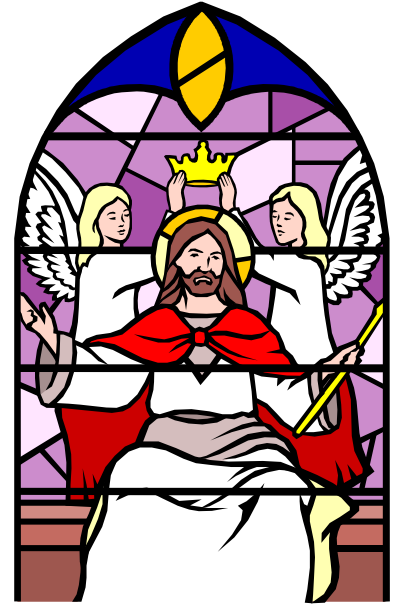


Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction

Feast of Christ the King Sunday, November 26



The practice of spending time before the Blessed Sacrament has tended to slide from the Catholic conscience and practice in the past. Recent movements to revive this practice bring sound doctrine and purpose. Our union with Christ the King is a reason of great joy.

It is important for parents to provide their children with a solid teaching concerning our need not just to receive the Eucharist at Mass, but to also be mindful of the need to spend additional time in quiet prayer, reflecting on the purpose of the Eucharist in our lives, and how our lives are to be joined with our Lord's in his suffering and death as well as his resurrection and new life.

Without this deepened awareness, we falter as Catholics. We need to question,

- 1) What does God have planned for my life and how I am to live it?
- 2) How does God wish for me to joyfully share His life in living my own life?
- 3) Can my life be more reflective of the life shared with me by our Lord?
4. Do I allow the full grace of the sacrament to transform my life into the presence of Christ's?
5. Am I providing enough time for the Lord in my life or is God relegated to a mere accumulation of minutes per week?

A good barometer of the importance of our spending time in prayer with the Lord is if we've recently said, "My schedule is overloaded," "I got busy and forgot," "By the time I'm ready to pray I'm too tired (and usually fall asleep)." These simply say God gets the leftover time — sort of like last week's gospel where Jesus shows the rich as providing from their leftovers (surplus) and the widow's desire to joyfully giving all that she had.

Please take this opportunity to spend time with the Lord — one-on-one. It may seem a bit frightening since it will also mean examining our priorities and our lives. But that's good. That's exactly what God desires — for our benefit. In the gospel next week, Jesus tells Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." In the same way, it is God's plan for us to seek the kingdom that is not of this world. And we need to provide this understanding for our children as well if there is to be any hope that they will understand what God's kingdom is really about and live it now. Allow this prayer time to be a joyful reunion that enlivens the heart.

Adoration Schedule:

Parishioners are asked to be present before the Eucharist during the following hours — according to the first letter of their last name.

1:00-2:00PM — I, J, K, L

2:00-3:00PM — M, N, O, P

3:00-4:00PM — Q, R, S

4:00-5:00PM — T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

5:00-6:00PM — A, B, C, D

6:00-7:00PM — E, F, G, H

Please mark your calendars and plan to bring the family for an hour of prayer with our Lord and Savior.

ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE

“Let Us Give Thanks Together”

Tonight! Sunday, November 19

7:30 PM

Plum Creek Presbyterian Church

We gather together as Christians — as members of Baptist, Eastern Rite Catholic, Lutheran, Non-Denomination, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and other communities and expressions of faith in Jesus Christ.

We gather to give thanks for the blessings we share as churches rooted in the teaching of Jesus Christ. We come together as brothers and sisters in and with our Lord.

We gather together to give witness to how God has blessed our community, and our need for an ongoing reliance upon God. We gather as we recognize that the blessings of God are never ending, and so needed in our world and in our community today.

This provides us with an opportunity to place our thanks as a focus in our lives for the entire week rather than one day. Fr. Tom will be the homilist for this gathering.

Please join us for this time of prayer and an opportunity to share in fellowship afterwards.



GOD FIRST

Personal Reflection

“...The first son refused, but later regretted his decision and went into the fields while the second son said yes, but did not go...” Matthew 21:28-32

I remember the first time I encountered the phrase “yes-man”. A “yes-man” (or yes-woman) is someone who says exactly what the person asking wants to hear. While I was teaching public school in Cincinnati, I had many “yes-students”. I always wondered what was going through their minds when they told me what I wanted to hear but then never delivered. It was like the student was just trying to keep up appearances — and stay in my good graces.

When I read this passage, I was challenged with the question:

“Am I a yes-man for God?”

As the GOD FIRST series gets more and more involved, I begin to see that many times in my life, I am a yes-man for God. I’ll do the right things, say the right

prayers and hope that God will let me coast safely the rest of the way. This plan brings marginal peace to my life, doesn’t require too much of a commitment and has a great “outward” appearance. But what about God, who sees everything and not just the outside?

The GOD FIRST series has challenged me to look closely at what type of relationship I have with God. Do I just “check-in” with the “man upstairs” once a week? Or do I have an ongoing relationship with God?

This passage tells me that it is never too late, no matter what I have been doing I can still change my mind when it comes to God’s plan. Granted, I have not been a criminal, but, following God halfway is certainly not living up to God’s expectations.

Since God knows every thought I have, even before I have it, being a “yes-man” is getting old. Rather than trying to “fit” God’s will into my life, I am trying to surrender and trust that God can only have good things in store for me. It’s not always easy, but it is more fulfilling than trying to keep up appearances. Letting go and letting God offers me more hope, more possibility, and the chance for my creator to be creative.

— Will Smith

NEEDED: FULL-TIME CUSTODIAN

We regret announcing that Ed Campbell has accepted another position, which happens to be more in line with his training and experience. We're sorry to see Ed go, but can well understand his own situation.

Therefore, we are in need of hiring a full-time custodian who can meet the following job description:

- PA State Child Clearance and criminal record check is mandatory;*
- Skills should include basic abilities concerning plumbing, electricity, use of various tools and equipment*
- Cleaning ability is essential*
- Oversee part-time employees*
- Responsibility includes all parish buildings and grounds*

Applicants should send resume to Mr. Joe Caterino at St. John the Baptist Parish. References should be included.

Salary is negotiable.

Questions should be directed to Joe Caterino through the rectory office (412-793-4511) at St. John the Baptist Parish between the hours of 9:00AM and 4:00PM.



Remembering Points from "Spirituality and Prayer for those Facing the Holidays Alone"

There are three types of Loneliness:

1) Chronic Loneliness is the most severe type and goes hand-in-hand with a person withdrawing deep inside the self. Deep depression, chronic fatigue and loss of appetite are some of the symptoms which a trained doctor is needed to access.

2) Transient Loneliness is a common aspect felt by most people at one time or another in life and is often caused by life transitions. A feeling of nothing to look forward to, or nobody loves me, or a sense of permanent separation can create this.

3) Situation Loneliness is due to just that — a particular life situation out of the ordinary and causing a change in lifestyle. This could be retirement, moving, kids going to college. In this situation a void is created and needs filled in some way.



- Every person's loneliness is different and the solution is different in every situation.
- Keeping busy is not necessarily the answer. We need to slow down, confront self and learn how to adjust to new life, accepting the situation as an opportunity.
- It is not bad to take time and focus on a loss, but not to dwell on it as it shuts out everything else, including growth.
- Journaling is a solid way to help yourself through loneliness and can become an excellent prayer form as we write our thoughts as well as our asking God's help and direction.
- All loneliness is usually accompanied with a sense of shame

— "How can I be like this with so many people around and many people worse off than myself?"

- Being alone can be positive, remembering aloneness and loneliness are not synonymous.
- To ask for help is to admit a need and to seek a connection with another.
- Hugs, touching, pets are all means of our seeking an intimate relationship if only for a brief period of time. These validates us as persons and as persons capable of .

WHEN PRAYING OUR LONELINESS

- It usually speaks of our disconnectedness with others and with God; pity is usually involved and we'll often question God or be mad at God. God understands. But we don't want this to become a reason for despair.
- Emotions are strong and not often dealt with properly.
- It becomes a chore to see goodness, including God's goodness. Expressing feeling in informal prayer is conversation with God — and important. It changes us and our prayer.
- All loneliness is a result of lack of dialogue. Prayer needs to be dialogue with God, we need to stop and listen to God.
- One of the hardest things to do is to ask for help, yet we must do this, particularly with God.

PRAYING OUR ALONENESS

- This is a prayer of connectedness as we are open to and seeking guidance from God.
- Silence and solitude are our friends as they are used to still the aching heart, the troubled mind, and move us to an openness that desires the grace of God, that healing presence.
- Emotions change, now acknowledge the value of self, and help us accept the abilities we have to go beyond the self in caring and reaching out to others.
- Aloneness allows us to connect with God and again see the value of ourselves connected with God and others.
- This prayer moves us from an inner focus to a sharing.

“Joy-Filled” Trumps “Joyful”

Last Wednesday our first through fourth grade students heard the gospel of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus. Realizing that they were healed of this infirmity that kept them removed from society, they became “*joyful*.” They could again celebrate life with everyone else. The children also heard that only one became “*joy-filled*” and returned to give thanks to our Lord. The difference is notable.

A “*joyful*” person celebrates those things that are of this world — the things that make us all happy but often last for a very short period of time.

A “*joy-filled*” person recognizes that his/her joy is not in the life experience of the here-and-now, but in the realization that God has touched their life.

Joy, as we know from scripture, is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is from God. It is gift that is infused into a person’s soul. It is permanent. It only wanes when we fail to acknowledge its presence in our life — the presence of God with us.

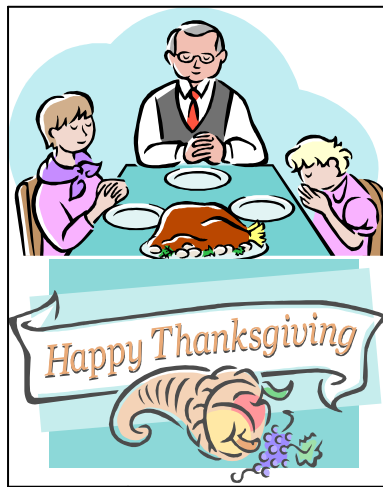
Anyone can be *joyful*. This comes from an experience in this world that may last for a long period of time, or may only be a temporary euphoric feeling. These are times such as the family gathering together for Thanksgiving dinner. The person responsible for preparing the meal may not come to that euphoric sense until after the dinner is on the table and everyone is satisfied, having eaten their fill. Others may come to that sense of joy simply in sharing time with cousins, aunts and uncles. But all of this ends when the cars are warmed up and everyone is strapped in and on the road home, tired and ready for bed — or dreadfully anticipating an early wakeup for 6:00 a.m. Christmas shopping. The joyful person enters back into reality and life continues along as it had as in past days before the holiday.

Not everyone is “*joy-filled*.” A *joy-filled* person has the ability through faith to see God’s presence in the family gathered together, in the trip home, in the next day shopping, and in every aspect of every day. It’s all part of that gift of the Spirit. It doesn’t allow life to be separated from God. In this chosen way of living life, God is seen as integrated into every aspect of life.

Lord knows the child who is overjoyed with

the gift of a pet — that is, until the child is held responsible for its care, its feeding, etc. The joy is great when the responsibility is light or at those times when companionship is sought out.

But with God’s joy, there is an anticipation of the responsibility because this is not seen as a burden, but rather as an entering into the sharing of God’s life as God shares life with us. We recognize that we do not have to do it all, that things will happen in God’s time and in the manner God so chooses. We don’t have to plan everything out, but rather fulfill what God has planned out for us. We only need to respond



as *joy-filled* individuals to the companionship — oneness — God extends to us. There is a conversion of heart and mind that takes place that allows us to focus on God’s everlasting presence and peace.

This presence and peace of God is realized as we more and more take on the will of God. And that will of God? It’s for us to be people with the joy and desire of God, us living in harmony and oneness with God. Anything more

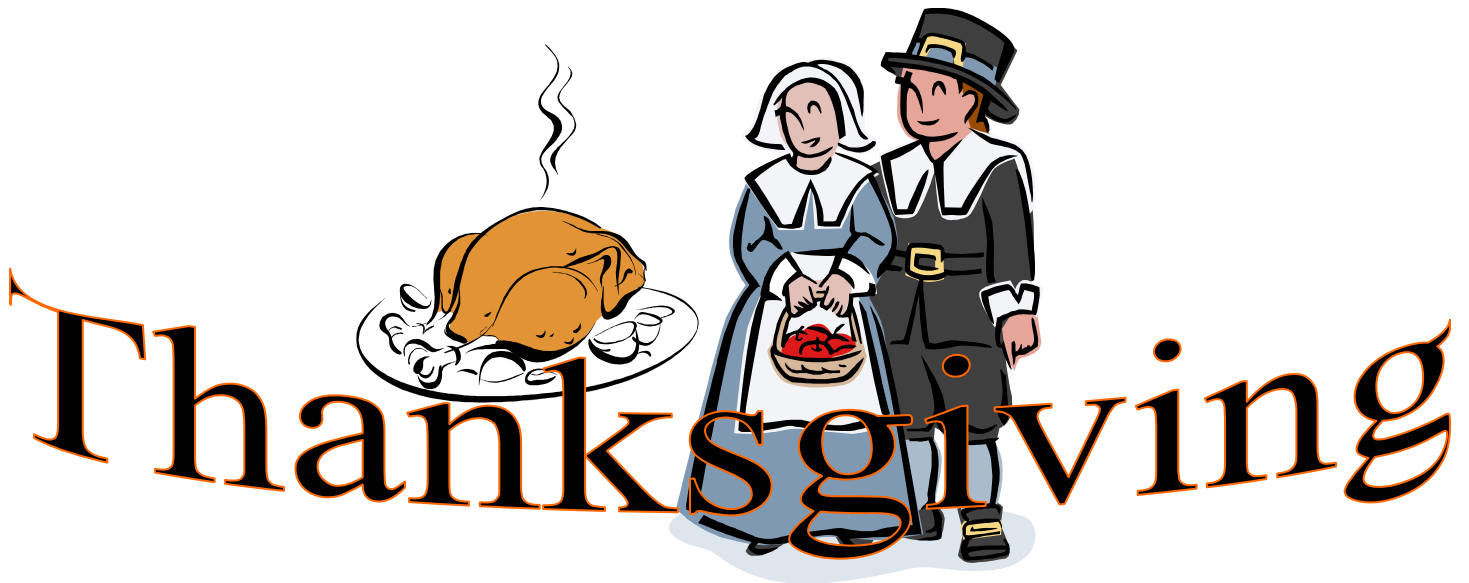
is chaotic, foolish, and self-destructive.

When praying Psalm 118 we hear, “*Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his mercy endures forever.*” This psalm calls for all of creation to give thanks as it fulfills its expressed purpose according to God’s plan. Thanksgiving is supposed to be a daily, moment-to-moment occurrence where we see that will of God happening in all of life.

Although created as a secular holiday meant for a spiritual purpose, let us take Thanksgiving to reflect on how *joy-filled* we are in comparison to how joyful we seek to be. Let us give thanks that we have been wonderfully, beautifully made, and join with all of creation in giving thanks as we find ourselves and our lives consumed into the plan willed by God. It is meant for us and those to whom God sends us to share God’s blessings.

Joy-filled people come to realize, like the lone leper, how truly blessed we are, how wonderfully we are called — beyond simply being joyful.

A Blessed Joy-Filled Thanksgiving To All!



**TO BE THANKFUL FOR
(NOW AND IN THE FUTURE)...**

...that the turkey was done on time,
 ...that the turkey didn't dry up while we waited for
 late arriving family members to show up,
 ...that a second card table was set up because
 the family grew during the past year,
 ...that there was no fighting among the relatives
 desiring to watch the football game and
 those desiring to view "*It's a Wonderful
 Life*" for the 17th time,
 ...that there was enough white meat on the breast
 to satisfy everyone,
 ...that it didn't snow until we're all back home,
 ...that uncle Elmer didn't fall asleep on the couch
 snoring so loudly so as to end any and all
 conversation,
 ...that something other than turkey was served,
 ...that friends took us in as family for the
 holiday since our family is far away,
 ...that the stores will have what I want at
 12:01AM Friday morning,
 ...that where the family will celebrate Christmas
 did not become an issue over dessert,
 ...that it was warm enough to open some doors
 and windows in grandma's stuffy house,
 ...that there was a substitute for that green bean
 and fried onion casserole,
 ...that the price of gas does not skyrocket to equal
 the temperature of the oven,
 ...that for a day the news will not announce a
 murder on our streets or a death to a
 soldier,

...that all families had sufficient funds to purchase
 a turkey this year,
 ...that the family can be family again,
 ...that the job market improves and employment
 found,
 ...that the cost of living decreases,
 ...that our family spent time in prayer on
 Thanksgiving day,
 ...that the news broadcasts showed the Beatitudes
 being lived out in many ways,
 ...that peace is given a chance, and justice has
 become an issue we are aware of,
 ...that there is an increase in participation in parish
 ministries,
 ...that the service activity, shown by our young
 people preparing for confirmation,
 continues to grow in our parish and hearts,
 ...that we have grown in understanding the needs
 of others and responded in time and talent,
 ...that we have grown spirituality as a people of
 faith,
 ...that the Word of God has challenged us and made
 us uncomfortable in our acceptance and
 response to God in our lives and that of the
 parish,
 ...that GOD FIRST has caused greater discernment
 of our prayer and the focus of our lives,
 ...that our vision of "Church" has grown through our
 outreach ministry and work in our cluster,
 ...that we are a people not looking at the past but are
 open to what God asks of us today and
 tomorrow,
 ...that God has blessed us in more wonderful ways
 than we could ever repay.