



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER  
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH  
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

*FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT*

*March 26, 2017*

MORE OF  
**HIM**  
L E S S O F M E

**Introduction to the Word:**

Lent is an intentional time, a special invitational time, a mini retreat time if you like. A time to slow down, pause and reflect; to examine, reframe, and deepen our relationship with God, others and self. This Lent we will be focussing on the theme “*More of Him and Less of Me.*” It is a time to take the focus off of ourselves – “what we are doing for Lent” and instead to connect with “what God wishes to do within us for Lent.” I pray that this Lent will be a time of blessing for you and all in your small group.

In addition to this written guide, and our audio of the Sunday Message, we have also developed a series of video follow ups. We encourage you to use these are the commentaries during the Season of Lent – and they will form the small group questions which will guide you.

Our progress to date has been significant....we have looked at the temptations that take us away from Cross of Christ (same as Jesus in desert). We have glanced together at the invitation to Go, Join and See the will and way of God for us and how this means we trust, follow and desire a new perspective to see Christ in a transfigured way and so we can honour the God Beyond All Praising. We have heard the call to live soul fully as we quench our thirst and embrace not the fleeting things of life but the eternal things. Now we look at saying an authentic “Yes”.

**Warm Up Activity:**

- Each of us thirsts.....what are the areas of your life where you thirst most for? (relationships, family, prayer)
- Each of us says “Yes” a lot...to the mundane and the monumental....how many times have you said “Yes” so far this week?

**CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)**



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**Leader:** We have been invited to live as children of the light, to share our light of Christ with others and to welcome the light of Christ that others share with us.

**Lord Jesus,** for the times fear has stopped us from sharing the light, **Lord, have mercy.**  
**Christ Jesus,** for the times we have rejected the light others share with us, **Christ, have mercy.**  
**Lord Jesus,** for the times that darkness has overpowered us, **Lord, have mercy.**

### **Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:**

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,  
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart  
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit  
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.  
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of  
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME** (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

### **FIRST READING** (1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13)

The Lord said to Samuel, “Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”

When the sons of Jesse came, Samuel looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” Jesse sent and brought David in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **SECOND READING** (Ephesians 5:8-14)

Brothers and sisters: Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.



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Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL** (John 9:1-41)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's work might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means sent).

Then the man who was blind went and washed, and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." They did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, who had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; Ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he



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do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sire? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)*

### COMMENTARY:

#### [Listen to our Series Theme Song](#)

[You may also as a group wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord’s Day Message](#)

#### [Please watch now the Video Commentary for this Week](#)

We recently celebrated the Solemnity of the Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25<sup>th</sup>). It is the day in which we celebrate that Mary said “Yes” to the invitation of the angel Gabriel whose words inspired by God the Father led to Mary becoming the Mother of God’s Son. Mary is the model of discipleship and she was not born blind, as the man in our Gospel was, but as the angel said to Her - “full of grace.”

Certainly as a parish dedicated to our Blessed Mother it is worthy and right for us to ask a simple and yet fundamental question to our Lenten journey – “What does it mean to say Yes?”

In the first reading we are introduced to the plight of Samuel. While Samuel appears to be a confident and strong messenger of the Lord, he is in fact fearful and reluctant and yet he responds to the litany of Lent – Go, Join and See and becomes an instrument of God in selecting David to be the King (a great King) who would succeed Saul. Here we learn an important lesson – that sometimes our YES is not something for us - it is something that is helping another learn and see the will of God for their lives. Our Yes is not always about us but it is always about Him



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Today's passage from Ephesians, the second reading, is from a section of the letter dealing with living the Christian life in the world (4:1-6:20). In particular the section today looks at the old life of darkness (pre-Christ) and contrasts it with the new life as "*children of light*". The message is clear and straightforward: "*Live as children of light ... and Christ will shine on you.*" We are called to have nothing to do with "*the unfruitful works of darkness*". Our call is one of "*Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead!*" It reminds us that Yes to faithfulness in ordinary moments will permit us to not only remember what being children of light means, but it will help us avoid darkness.

The masterful Gospel of today is truly rich. There are four things of importance in today's passage worth noting (there are others but these four points are key). One, the notion that the man was being punished with blindness because of sin is totally refuted by Jesus. Two, the giving of sight happens on the Sabbath day, a fact that so "blinded" the Pharisees it was all they could see. Three, blindness and fear resulted in the man being driven away. And four, perhaps the most important point of the entire gospel, all of the events in the gospel today lead to the powerful proclamation by the man: "*Lord, I believe.*"

So, all of this culminates in an authentic truth - simply put - that an authentic Yes to God turns the tide from me to Him. That when we say Yes authentically to the Lord - we will be used in His plan not our purpose. That when we say Yes authentically to the Lord - we will become like Him and of Him - and others will see Him in us (as children of light). That when we say Yes authentically to the Lord - be better able to see our sinfulness yes, but God's mercy more, and this makes Jesus - Lord of Our Life - and leads us to eternal victory.

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:** (15-20 minutes)

- a) During the ritual of baptism a candle is lit from the Paschal candle and given to the newly baptized with the exhortation to "*receive the light of Christ*". As we grow and mature in our faith following baptism, how are we called to share with others this light we have received?
- b) Mary was "full of grace"...what are the things that keep us from sharing this grace (this light)? How you can more concretely and effectively respond to this challenge of letting your light shine with your family, friends and strangers.
- c) The healing of the blind man is clearly an experience of going from darkness into light, an experience of beholding things never before seen by the man. Can you think of a moment when something became clear for you or God's plan in a situation was now seen in the light?
- d) While Samuel appears to be a confident and strong messenger of the Lord, he is in fact fearful and reluctant. What fills us with fear and makes us reluctant to make our lives "More of Him and Less of Me"?



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e) Use now the other questions mentioned in the video as part of your discussion.

### Intercessions:

**Leader:** Our response: Lord Hear us

For our Holy Father Pope Francis, for health and ministry. For our Church as we continue to walk humbly with the Lord guided by the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Lord.

For our parish community as we enter the Season of Lent, that we may dedicate this Season to More of Him and Less of Me as we use this Season to live out the spirit of surrender, invite others to worship at Mass and share in the reverence and love we have for the Eucharist. We pray to the Lord.

For all those who are preparing to celebrate Sacraments during this coming year; for those preparing for marriage, those in our RCIA process, those children who are preparing for First Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation: may their journey of faith lead them closer to the source of Hope and Life who is Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

For those areas of our life that are in need of being restored to Hope. May the weight of doubt not tempt us, faith not fail us, but rather may our relationship with Jesus abound in great measure as we adopt the mindset of Christ. We pray to the Lord.

For those who are sick and suffering at this time, especially parishioners in hospital or nursing homes. For those who have died and for all the intentions recorded in the Parish Book of Prayer. We pray to the Lord.

**Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)**

### **Closing Activity and Prayer** (15-20 minutes)

*(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)*

### **GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:**

During this week, try to be more conscious of the number of times you say “Yes” – is it More of Him and Less of Me when you do? Be ready to discuss this experience next week in Small Group.

### **GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT**

- Please consider offering a **Holy Hour in our Adoration Chapel** – either as a group or individually –for the intentions of our Pastor and his Pastoral Team, in their work to build up our parish.



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- Start preparing as an individual and a group for our Day of Mercy on April 6. Consider individually and as a group attending the Pilgrimage to be part of our visit to St Michael's Cathedral in Toronto and hearing Cardinal Collins speak.

*GROUP ACTION:*

- ✓ Is your small group helping with our commitment to aide St Patrick Parish, Hamilton and their downtown outreach? Remember any of these items can be placed in the Adoration Chapel Hallway – mark them “Hamilton.”
- ✓ Spend some time this week reflecting upon how you can more concretely and effectively respond to this challenge of letting your light shine with your family, friends and strangers.

**Let us pray** (together)

*O God, who enlightens everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts,  
we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder  
what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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