

**Homily for March 2, 2003
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time B**

By Father Charles Bowes

**Hosea 2:16b, 17b, 21-22
2 Corinthians 3:1b-6
Mark 2:18-22**

We pray for the future, and we pray for peace this Lenten season.

Last week I encouraged our Lenten penance to invite God's new future to draw near through our prayer, fasting and works of kindness. As we pray for the future of our parish, our diocese, and for the larger Church, I described how God is doing something altogether new in our day as God did something altogether new in Jesus.

It is with that confidence we have in the Risen Lord that we can trust God's new thing. We can trust God's new wine that God intends to pour into us who have been recreated, made into new wineskins by our baptism and by our faith flowing from that baptism.

Last week I encouraged prayer during Lent in preparation for our Parish Convocation to take place on Thursday evening, May 22, for about two hours wherein we will vote and decide the strategies to shape our future plans for our parish.

This week the invitation for our Lenten prayer is for peace – peace with a human face. I have here a book in which will be inscribed the names of a number of our parishioners who are on active duty in the

military. This book will be placed at the shrine of Mary and will be available throughout this Lenten season with these names to be prayed for and to petition Mary as Queen of Peace to intercede for them and to protect them and to bring them home safe again. You may choose to light a candle in prayer for these folks. If you wish to add a name, you are welcome to do so by contacting the parish office so that we can have it inscribed. In this way we shall be placing a human face on our prayer for peace this Lenten season. We shall be praying for our future, and we shall be praying for peace through our prayer, our fasting, and our works of kindness.

Are we able to receive the new wine that God wishes to pour into us who are made being new? The future holds many challenges for us as a parish, and as a diocese for our nation and our world in terms of peace. We can intercede in prayer for all the world and for all those whose lives we touch. Let's do that this Lenten season – be in prayer and fasting and works of kindness for a human face with a name as concrete as those inscribed in this book. Toward the end of Lent we'll see how well our situation is nationally and internationally in terms of war or peace. We envision this book to be placed here seasonally as needed, to keep before us on an

occasional basis the fact that all life and all love has a human face, and beneath it all is God's good grace which we invite. It was John Henry Cardinal Newman who once said, "To live is to change. To be holy is to have changed often." God is doing something new and we invite that invasion with open hearts.

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