

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ The Prayer of a Prophet ~**

Gracious and merciful God,  
fill me with the grace  
of your Holy Spirit.  
Use me as an instrument  
of your love  
and your presence  
in a world  
so desperately in need of your voice.

Make me courageous  
in sharing my faith with others.  
Fill me with compassion;  
make me stronger  
in responding to your grace;  
allow me to reach out  
to those who wander  
amid the distractions of this world.

Give me the grace  
to hear your voice  
and answer my deepest yearning  
to know you  
more and more each day.

Loving God,  
strengthen me  
to be a witness  
to the saving grace of your Son,  
Jesus, our Lord.  
Amen

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.  
phone: [440] 473-3560. e-mail: [jbcsc@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jbcsc@ix.netcom.com)

# Our Lady Chapel



*Our Lady Chapel is a Roman Catholic community founded in the love of the Father, centered in Christ, and rooted in the Holy Cross tenets of building family and embracing diversity. We are united in our journey of faith through prayer and sacrament, and we seek growth through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and outreach, while responding to the needs of humanity.*

**LABOR DAY:**

On **Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>**, we take time to celebrate the final holiday of the summer — **Labor Day**. Besides reflecting on summer, the holiday, by its very title, invites us to reflect upon the contributions that each person makes toward the building of the human family. All of us are called by God to continue to participate in the work of creation. Each of us, because of our baptism, is called to bring to life, through our talents and energies, to that small piece of God's kingdom on earth. **Mass will be celebrated at 9:30 AM on Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>**. We would be honored if you and your family will join us.

**BLESSING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS — NEXT WEEKEND:**

On the weekend of September 6-7, we will be doing a **special blessing on all Students and Teachers**. As we observe the annual ritual of the beginning of the school year, let us celebrate together the blessings of education, and the wisdom and understanding that we can find as we pursue the truth of the life that God has shared with us. **We have chosen to do this blessing this year a little later in the beginning of the school year in order to allow families time to settle into their routines for the year. In addition, Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> is the first meeting of our Faith Education classes, and we would like to include these families as well.** We all journey together to discover that truth — that gift of God in ourselves and in one another — that gift that surrounds us. Please join us for this special moment of grace.

**WORLD YOUTH DAY & KRAKOW, POLAND 2016:**

**We are looking into the possibility of planning a pilgrimage to Karkow, Poland for World Youth Day in 2016.** This life-changing pilgrimage would include not only the events of World Youth Day, but also excursions to Wadowice — the home town of St. John Paul II; Auschwitz and the German concentration camps; as well as Czestochowa — home to the monastery at Jasna Gora and the famous icon of the Black Madonna.



Our plan is to have pilgrims attend catechetical sessions each morning, followed by evening cultural and spiritual events. Our group will officially welcome, celebrate mass, and take part in the Stations of the Cross with the Holy Father, Pope Francis. The official dates for our proposed itinerary are **July 22 — August 1, 2016**.

This invitation is open to **Our Lady Chapel Families** as well as all **Gilmour Families**. Chaperones must be 21+ years old. Children under 16 years of age will be required to be accompanied by a parent. In order to secure the appropriate hotel accommodations in Old Town — less than one minute away from Market Square, the center of World Youth Day — we need to act as promptly as possible. **If you think you might be interested in this treasured journey, please contact Father John or the chapel office at 440-473-3560.** We need to get a picture of how many people would be interested in this pilgrimage as soon as possible. **Please respond before September 14<sup>th</sup>.**

**A PRAYER FOR HARMONY:**

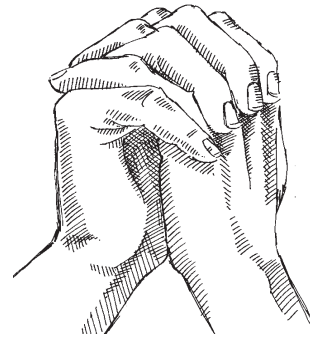
Plant the seed of unconditional gratefulness and nurture it with selfless love. Then, watch the tree of total harmony grow giving you fruits of blissful joy and happiness.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

Jesus calls us to pray for one another. Please keep all these people in your prayers.

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Gina Cortese, cousin of Liz ['12] and Hannah ['14] Bencivenni, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Carl Busch who is critically ill with congestive heart failure.
- For Joan Janovetz, sister of Judy Morgan who is recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- For John DiCillo, husband of Gilmour teacher, Bonnie DiCillo, father of John ['83], David ['84], Dawn ['86], and Daniel ['88], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Shannon Bailey, a child, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For John Nagy, who is seriously ill with inoperable cancer.
- For Rosemarie DeJohn, cousin of Marketing Associate, Kathleen Berry, who is recovering from lung transplant surgery.
- For Don Behner, who is under the care of hospice.
- For James Hlavin ['52] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Garrett Gulden who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Lexi Pappedakes, who is seriously ill with cancer.
- For Scott Morrison who is undergoing treatment for a stroke.
- For Anne Travassos, who is preparing for cancer surgery on Wednesday..
- For Michael Shea, brother of Lower School Teacher, Theresa Stark, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Carolyn Hawk, mother of Gavin ['21] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Michael Thatcher who is critically ill with cancer.
- For Brother Henry Skitzki, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Monica Starks, mother of Faith ['20] and Monica Joy ['21], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Janine Yardy, daughter of Geraldine Mockler, who is seriously ill.
- For Phylis McGinley, grandmother of upper school teacher, Elizabeth Edmondson, great-grandmother of Mollie ['21] and Abigail ['23] Edmondson, who is seriously ill.
- For Christian Connors, son of technology associate, Kevin Connors, who is continues in rehab following an accident
- For Mary Kampman, mother of Mark ['81], Matthew ['85], Dean ['86], and Douglas ['88] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Ray Sharnsky, long time Gilmour teacher and coach, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Stephanie Batt ['04], daughter of Debbie Moss Batt, who is undergoing medical testing.
- For Karen Wanders, mother of upper school teacher, Jonathan, who is undergoing treatment resulting from a brain aneurysm.
- For Betty Hersch who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Karuna Singla, sister-in-law of Upper School science teacher, Neena Goel, aunt of Nikhil ['13] and Nupur ['17] Goel, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Dan Hathey, technology associate, who is undergoing treatment for cancer and a stroke.
- For Ida Urbancic, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Betty Herten, aunt of Hope ['13] and James ['15] Herten, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Ann Raymond, grandmother of Adam Lesko ['05] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Dan Houlahan who is in rehabilitation following a brain aneurysm.
- For Sister Barbara Johns, I.H.M., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.



**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

Jesus calls us to pray for one another. Please keep all these people in your prayers

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Thelma Talbert, grandmother of Jayla Salter [‘17]
- For John Eble, grandfather of Kiley Eble [‘15].
- For Bob Skitzki
- For Brother Clement Burger, C.S.C.
- For Luigi Licursi
- For Brother Joe Esparaza, C.S.C.
- For Richard Schwarzbek
- For James Varveri
- For Edward Rainge
- For John Horgan, father of Gilmour’s associate Head of School, Brian Horgan.

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For the Community of Cathedral High School as they mourn the death of a student.
- For the victims of the plane crash at Cuyahoga County Airport students at Case Western Reserve University.
- For the people persecuted for their faith, especially in Iraq.
- For an end to the violence between Palestine and Israel.
- For an end to human trafficking..
- For the unemployed.
- For those who struggle with family relationships.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For a special intention.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Connie Alerton, who is recovering from a stroke.
- For Domenic Caporale, father of Ray [‘81], who has been hospitalized with heart and lung complications.
- For John Russo, father of Jennifer [‘93], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Janice Feenstra, sister of Lisa Habe, aunt of Jack [‘19] and Will [‘20] Habe who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Dolores Robinson, mother of upper school instructor, Deanne Nowak, who is ill.
- For Bob Hutchings who is recovering from surgery.
- For Matt Barry [‘13], son of Dean [‘84], brother of Timothy [‘12], who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Pastor Henry Charles, who is seriously ill following a series of strokes.
- For Bob Meyo, brother of former Gilmour Trustee, Ray Meyo, uncle of Lisa [‘93] and Joe [‘94] Meyo, who is under hospice care.
- For Chris Biggins who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Rob Rogers, husband of Kris, and father of Harry [‘22] who is recovering from surgery.
- .For Cheryl Arndt, Gilmour housekeeper, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

**FAITH EDUCATION — NEXT SUNDAY:**

Faith Education **will begin on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>**. Our Sessions go from **8:45—9:45 AM** each time we meet, with the hope that our children would then **participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass**. We have a number of families who attend the chapel regularly who have children who attend non-Catholic schools. Our **Faith Education Program** will help to fulfill your on-going religious education. Our program runs from grades K-8. Students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to participate in our Life Teen Program. **Please contact Patty in the Chapel Office (440)473-3560 if you have any questions.** Thank you for taking care of this important task.



**SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Sunday, August 31:<br><b>22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>     | <b>10:00 AM</b>                     |
| Monday, September 1:<br><b>Labor Day</b>                               | <b>9:30 AM</b>                      |
| Tuesday, September 2:  | <b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel] |
| Wednesday, September 3:<br><b>St. Gregory the Great</b>                | <b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel] |
| Thursday, September 4:   | <b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel] |
| Friday, September 5:   | <b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel] |
| Saturday, September 6:<br><b>23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b> | <b>5:00 PM</b>                      |
| Sunday, September 7:<br><b>23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>   | <b>10:00 AM</b>                     |

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR:**

For the past year, our teens have been volunteering at **Our Savior Lutheran Church Food Pantry** [located right across the street from the chapel]. The Pantry is open on the **third Saturday of every month from 11:00 AM – 1:30 or 2:00 PM**. Our Savior Lutheran’s Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Our teens have loved this ministry and have been very faithful to it. **We would now like to open this ministry up to our entire Chapel Community. If you would like to help on any given third Saturday, please call Patty at the chapel office [440-473-3560] to let us know that you are going to volunteer.** Come as a family or by yourself. During the course of the past year, the food pantry at Our Savior Lutheran Church served an average of 141 households each time.





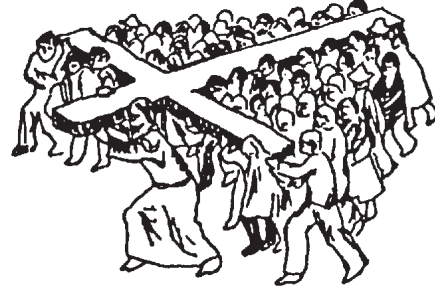
**REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:**

Being faithful to God is much more than keeping rules and doing the “holy” things. At the heart of being faithful to God is living as we have been created by God to be — a “creation”; not God. Being faithful to our identities involves living with the tensions which come from opposition.

The Scripture Readings for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time are all about surrender — Christ’s faithful journey toward His cross — and the self-surrendering act of His death — and our own final surrender to our being limited creatures. We are all painfully aware of how easy personal infidelities are. Life has many crosses, but the heaviest is that one is living with the tension of God’s unending grace, and our all-too-frequent indifference.

Jeremiah has been given the charge by God of confronting the people — and especially the religious leaders of Jerusalem. He is asked to buy an earthenware jug and break it in the presence of the people. He then is given words to proclaim that God intends to smash Israel — like this jug — because they have profaned the sacredness of the lands and their hearts.

Jeremiah is thrown into prison for delivering God’s message — not only is Israel going to be overrun, but Jerusalem itself will fall. Upon his release, Jeremiah goes to God for a “heart-to-heart” prayer or conversation [Jeremiah 20:7-9]. This is Jeremiah’s “pity party” — he is tired of people laughing at him and refusing to listen. He has done what God commands — and he feels within his heart a profound yearning to do more. But enough is enough.



Last weekend in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus asked His friends who they thought he was. Peter stated boldly that Jesus indeed was the Christ — the “Son of the Living God”. Now it’s time for a reality check — what does all this mean to be “the Christ” — the “Son of the Living God”? Jesus tells them what is going to happen when they all show up in Jerusalem — Peter has a better idea.

Jesus uses this tense moment to say that He has to suffer and die. There is a deep reality to Jesus’ being the Christ — and a deeper reality of the disciples’ being followers of the Christ. Jesus invites them to follow Him by being faithful to their relationship with Him — for it is this very relationship which has made them who they are. “Losing” and “gaining”, “saving” and “finding” are powerful words which get the attention of the disciples — and us. But it is the final word that Jesus uses that truly gets their attention — “For the Son of Man will come in God’s glory, accompanied by angels, and will reward each person according to his or her conduct.” What is this “conduct” about?

We can be quite concerned at times about doing the right things at all times — is God watching? But the reality of this is that this is very “external” — what Jesus is asking of the disciples — and of us — is a more internal following of Him. The cross of Jesus was more than the wood of Calvary — it was the flesh and spirit, the history and destiny of His whole life. He was His Cross! He was who He had heard He was — the “Beloved of the Father”.

We can also easily say that certain other people are our crosses. We might say that a certain physical disability or personality defect is our cross. But our cross has to be more interior than that. What Jesus is offering the disciples and us is the personal embrace of the totality of our reality — creature, limited, a mind that thinks like a limited creature. We can speak of “pain-avoidance” as a psychological process of not facing the truth of pains. There is a “cross-avoidance” built into our human

**PRAY THE ROSARY:**

Please join us as we **pray the Rosary every Saturday at 4:25 PM** in the Eucharistic Chapel. In the words of Pope John Paul II: “The Rosary of the Virgin Mary is a prayer loved by countless Saints and encouraged by the Magisterium. Simple yet profound, it still remains, at the dawn of the third millennium, a prayer of great significance. It has the depth of the Gospel message in its entirety. Through the Rosary, the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.” Please join us.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

|                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday:</b>    | 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Luke 4:16-30   |
| <b>Tuesday:</b>   | 1 Corinthians 2:10-16, Luke 4:31-37 |
| <b>Wednesday:</b> | 1 Corinthians 3:1-9, Luke 4:38-44   |
| <b>Thursday:</b>  | 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, Luke 5:1-11  |
| <b>Friday:</b>    | 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Luke 5:33-39   |
| <b>Saturday:</b>  | 1 Corinthians 4:6-15, Luke 6:1-5    |

**23<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Ezekiel 33:7-9, romans 13:8-10, Matthew 18:15-20

**ATTENDANCE:**

If you attend Mass regularly here at Our Lady Chapel, it would be helpful if you filled out a form [name, address, phone number, children, etc.] indicating this fact, if you have not already done so. Such information not only helps us to know who is attending Our Lady Chapel; it also is of great assistance to us in record keeping [for our friend, the IRS] of any contributions which you may make.

**ENVELOPES:**

- When you need a **new supply** of envelopes, please feel free to take a supply of them from the table in the vestibule, or call Father John at the Campus Ministry Office [473-3560].
- When you **use** your envelope, please make sure that **your number** is on it. If you need to know your number, please call the Campus Ministry Office. Thanks.

**WEEKLY OFFERING:**

Baskets will be passed during the “Preparation Rite” and will be brought to the altar as part of the Offerings to help offset chapel daily operating expenses. When you choose to use the envelopes, your donations to Our Lady Chapel will be acknowledged so that you have a record for the IRS.

**Total Offerings: Saturday [8/23/14] ----- \$ 964.00**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [8/24/14] ----- \$ 647.00**

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Father John will be available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you on **every Saturday** between **3:30 – 4:00 PM**. Confessions are also available “by appointment.” The Reconciliation Room is located in the small chapel directly across from Father John’s Office.



**PAYING THE PRICE:**

It is true to say in Scripture that the best way to surface God's will in our lives is to surface the prophets in our lives. It is also true to say that being the community's prophet is a painful ministry. Normally we know only the prophet's words. Rarely are we privy to his or her feelings. The biblical prophets' disciples are good at collecting and arranging their oracles, but they almost never give us an insight into their mentors' hearts and minds.

The two exceptions are Isaiah and Jeremiah. In three of the four Songs of the Suffering Servant, Isaiah gives us a glimpse of his state of mind as he's preaching to the exiles in Babylon [see Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12]. In a similar way, Jeremiah intersperses his biting "confessions" — his reflections on his relationship with God — and the problems which his ministry creates [see Jeremiah 10-20].

The Scripture Readings for this 22<sup>nd</sup> week of Ordinary Time offer us one of the most depressing in all of Scripture. Not only does Jeremiah's message revolve around "violence and outrage," but his ministry has resulted in his being "an object of laughter." He faces "derision and reproach all the day." Though he tries to get out of it, he quickly discovers it's like resigning from the mafia — "I say to myself: I will not mention him [God]. I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in. I cannot endure it" [Jeremiah 20:7-9]. He's trapped!

Yet, the most disturbing aspect of Jeremiah's prophesying is his claim that God originally tricked him into volunteering for it — "You deceived me, O Lord, and I let myself be deceived." Carroll Stuhlmueller always insisted that the English word "deceived" doesn't accurately convey the meaning of the original Hebrew. The original Hebrew word literally means "rape" — the forcible rape of a helpless person. That type of abuse can also be understood in the words: "You were too strong for me, and you triumphed."

Just as parents warn their children never to get into a stranger's car, Jeremiah is basically telling us that he's never been the same since he got into God's car — his whole life has been destroyed.

No wonder Paul reminds the Christian community in Rome: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice. Do not conform ourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that you might discern what is the will of God" [Romans 12:1-2]. Anyone who commits himself or herself to surfacing the will of God must expect suffering — especially if they try to convey that will to their communities.

Matthew's Jesus agrees — "Those who wish to come after me must deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow me. For those who wish to save their lives will lose them, but whoever loses their lives for my sake will find them" [Matthew 16:21-27].

Among the five criteria for distinguishing real prophets from fakes, two state that not only does the authentic prophet suffer for delivering his or her message, but those who carry out their message will also suffer. That seems to be why Peter "rebukes" the prophetic Jesus when he talks about the suffering he expects to endure for his preaching and lifestyle. Jesus has little patience with him — "Get behind me Satan! You are an obstacle to me."

The historical Jesus was convinced that if Peter was serious about conveying God's word, he'd also have to be serious about enduring the pain that word would bring. Jeremiah, Paul, and Jesus knew nothing of the "painless faith" many of us think we can and should achieve.

—taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet



way of thinking. Our various cultures promote "painless", "easy" and all other forms of avoiding just what it means to be a creature of God.

Recently I was jogging, and I twisted my ankle and fell to the pavement — it hurt. I lifted my face to the sky and asked silently: "what are You telling me?" A little voice said: "Get up." So for the past three weeks I have been getting up with a slight hobble. My injured ankle is not the cross — my struggling with my whole humanity is the cross of my life. By "humanity" I don't mean physical frailty. I mean my history which brings me to my future and destiny. I do not always like my history — my present condition of hobbling, nor my unknown future. I desire to have it all quick and easy — finding my life now, gaining, winning. But the call is to have a more interior and God-centered thinking pattern about "me and thee".

We who are followers of Jesus who proclaim — Peter-like — that Jesus is the Son of God, are not seduced nor fooled. We believe and struggle with the verticality of our souls and the horizontality of our human creatureliness. The cross is not an event of time, but the time-bound movement toward our own Jerusalems and resurrections. "Get up!" the voice said to Jeremiah, to Jesus, to Peter, and to each of us who hobble after the Master. We show up, waiting for Him to show up and raise us all — and that is the "conduct" of holiness.

—taken from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

**CLEAN OUT THOSE CLOSETS AND SERVE OTHERS:**

Fall is quickly approaching, and we are beginning to prepare for the new school year. It is another time to once again clean out the closets. Clothing that no longer fits, or which was replaced by new items, becomes great items for others. Always remember the words of Jesus: "The poor you shall always have with you" [Matthew 26:11]. Please continue to bring your *gently used* men's, women's and children's clothing to the Lennon Board Room, or place it in the cedar chest which is located in the chapel narthex of the Chapel [just press the key button to open the chest]. We partner with Fatima Center to help provide clothing for general use. Also, **business work clothing for this season is especially needed. The Fatima Center helps men and women prepare for job interviews.** If you have some of these items, this would be a good time to send them along. Clothing for all seasons is accepted, but please try to keep in mind that storage facilities are limited at Fatima — so it would help if you could focus on fall items at this time. You may pick up a tax form when you drop off the clothing here at Our Lady Chapel — there are forms in the cedar chest. Clothing may be brought on the weekend, or during the week. Thank you. **If you have any questions, please contact Patty in the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

**AMAZON.COM:**

Please remember that when you want to buy something from Amazon.com, you need to first go to [www.ourladychapel.org](http://www.ourladychapel.org) and click on the Amazon logo at the bottom of the home page! Because of this simple step — and at no cost to the purchaser — Our Lady Chapel receives a percentage of all purchases that are made from Amazon.com. Ever since we have begun this program, we have consistently been receiving significant checks from Amazon that are being credited to help pay for chapel expenses. This affinity program remains in effect throughout the year, so we ask everyone to continue to remember to start your purchases at Amazon on the Our Lady Chapel home page! Thank you.



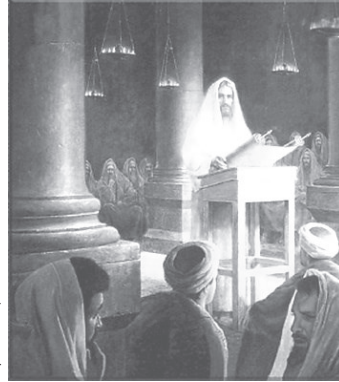


**SEEKING THE GLORY:**

Jacqueline Kennedy was one of the most admired woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like Helen of Troy, her face could have launched a thousand ships. But all her beauty, elegance, and wealth could not save her from a disfiguring cancer and ugly death in 1994. Obviously her beauty was not free. It came with an expensive price tag. But, if it was true for Jacqueline, so was it true for Jesus, the Nazarene. How much easier it would have been if Jesus could have continued to tell pithy parables, heal the sick, go fishing with his buddies, pray a lot, and die at an advanced old age. But that was not how his life would end. His down days were approaching [Matthew 16:21-27]. Matthew's Gospel points up a forgotten Christian truth — a truth that would not be far off base to say we want to forget.

We enter here the strange world of denial.

Bear in mind that Jesus' prediction of His approaching suffering comes immediately after one of the rare glory points of His life. Jesus had just asked his disciples "who do people say that I am?" Peter told Him: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." That unexpected and unqualified credo made His otherwise bad week. We are being reminded that each time the Nazarene savored a win, He immediately e-mailed the information to us that He would soon be given a bill for that victory. A good example of this would be the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor [see Matthew 17]. There He enjoys one of the few high points of His life — His face shines like the sun; His clothing becomes resplendent with a whiteness no Clorox can duplicate. Then the bill is presented to Him — "Tell no one, what you have seen, for the Son of Man must first suffer."



Here the Master is teaching His apostles that those of us who have tasted happiness today must realize that adversities await down the road. The Teacher is telling us: "I never promised you a permanent rose garden here." If He did not substitute a water bed for His cross, He will not do so for us either.

Each of us is anxious to receive favors from God — and we usually do. But, if we take the life of Christ as a guide plan, divine favors invariably come with a hefty price tag in the shape of a cross. Consider St. John Paul II. An obscure cardinal from Poland is elected Vicar of Christ. Wherever he went, millions shouted: "Viva il Papa." Then the young Turkish waiter appears with an extravagant bill on a silver tray in 1981. It takes the form of two bullets from an assassin's Browning 9-millimeter automatic pistol. Skilled surgeons were required to sew the pope's stomach back together — the Browning almost ended John Paul's life.

If this truth applies to the giants of our culture — John and Robert Kennedy, St. John Paul II — if it even applies to our Lord, why would we think that bad times are going to pass us by? Even in the spiritual life, there is no such thing as a free lunch — and just forget about a free supper.

Happily, though, this grim tale is not concluded. We must not snap shut the Gospel book until the last pages are read. In those pages, we discover the happy ending that everyone of us wants and needs — the mighty Resurrection of Christ. Remember again Mount Tabor. It is true enough that Jesus spoke of His suffering immediately after His glory. But He also said: "Tell no one what you have seen until I have risen from the dead." The formula would appear to be — glory, death, and resurrection. Death gives over to absolute victory.

Naturally enough, we would like to alter that plan of action. Were we drawing up the game plan, we would eliminate the suffering and just bring on the glory train. And so we can identify with Peter in

There have been popes for 2000 years — beginning with Peter. But it was only Pope, St. John Paul II — in our own generation — who stood up and said with clarity that capital punishment is wrong. Capital punishment is wrong because it goes against the heart of the gospel as revealed in the cross — namely, that we should forgive murderers, not kill them.

That is just one of the morally revolutionary features inside of the cross. There are countless more. Rene Girard, speaking as an anthropologist, puts it one way when he says that the cross is the most revolutionary moral event in the history of the planet. Mark, the Evangelist, speaking as a disciple of Jesus, puts it another way — for him, the cross of Jesus is the deep secret to everything.

In Mark's gospel, to the extent that we understand the cross of Jesus, to that extent do we grasp life's deepest secret. And the reverse is just as true — to the extent that we don't grasp the meaning of the cross, to that extent we miss the key that opens up life's deepest secrets. When we don't grasp the cross, life's deep mysteries become a riddle.

Both Mark and Rene Girard are right — the cross of Jesus contains life's deepest moral secret, but, as Rumi says, we live with a secret we sometimes know, and then not.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet

**DRESSES FOR HONDURAS:**

One of the nurses in our Gilmour Clinic is involved in a **dressmaking project** for the children of Honduras. They have devised a method of making sundresses out of common pillowcases, and then adorning them with other items for decoration. And that is where you come in. **If you have any old buttons, ribbon, ric-rac, lace or other sewing trim**, please bring them in. The group would like to collect these items to help decorate the dresses they are working on. This is an on-going project; the dresses will be sent to Honduras every time there is a mission trip. The next trip is scheduled for March of 2015. There will be a **basket in the narthex of the Chapel** to collect any donations you may have. Thank you for your help!

**ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:**

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John.** You do not have to attend Gilmour to be an altar server, lector, or to be involved in any other ministry at Our Lady Chapel. **Please call the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

**During our Masses this weekend, we are commissioning a number of new Eucharistic Ministers.** We will shortly begin to discern a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training soon. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to this ministry, we would be delighted to include you in that ministry here at Our Lady Chapel. Both adults and teens [must be going into Senior year of High School] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. We are need of ministers for both our Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. **Contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you feel called to this ministry.**

**HOW TRUE:**

Let your life match your lip.

**THE CROSS OF JESUS:**

Among all the religious symbols in the world none is more universal than the cross. You see crosses everywhere — on walls, on hillsides, in churches, in houses, in bedrooms, on chains around peoples' necks, on rings, on ear-rings, on old people, on young people, on believers, and on people who aren't sure in what they believe. Not everyone can explain what the cross means, or why they choose to wear one, but most everyone has an undeveloped sense that it is a symbol — perhaps the ultimate symbol — for depth, love, fidelity, and faith.

And the cross is exactly that — the ultimate symbol of depth, love, fidelity, and faith. Rene Girard, an anthropologist, once commented that “the cross of Jesus is the single most revolutionary moral event in all of history.” The world measures time by it. We are in the year 2014 — roughly since Jesus died on a cross, and ever-increasing numbers of people began to organize their lives around its significance.

What is so morally revolutionary in the cross?

Precisely because it is such a deep mystery, the cross is not easy to grasp intellectually. The deeper things in life, love, fidelity, morality, and faith are not mathematics. Rather they are mysteries whose unfathomable depths always leave room for more still to be understood — we never quite arrive at an adequate understanding of them.

But that doesn't mean that we don't know them. Knowing is different than understanding, and we intuit a lot more than we can intellectually imagine or express. For example, *Time* magazine did a cover story some years ago on the meaning of the cross. They interviewed a large number of people asking what the cross of Jesus meant to them. One woman admitted that she couldn't really explain what the cross of Jesus meant to her, but stated that she had a sense of its meaning — when she was young girl, her mother was murdered by a jealous boyfriend. When she saw the blood-soaked mattress and her mother's bloody hand-print on the wall, she realized that she had to find a connection between her mother's story — and her blood on that mattress — and Jesus' story — and his blood on the cross. Sometimes the heart intuits where the head needs to go.

Beyond this gut-knowledge, what can we intellectually grasp about the meaning of the cross? What is its revolutionary moral character?

Theologians, classically, have tried to come to grips with this mystery by dividing the meaning of the cross — and of Jesus' death — into two parts: [1] the cross gives us our deepest understanding of the nature of God; [2] the cross is redemptive — it saves us. All Christians believe that somehow we are washed clean in the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Neither of these concepts is easy to explain — though theologians do better with the first [the cross as revelation] than with the second [the cross as redemptive]. But both concepts — even to the limited extent that we can intellectually understand them — are thoroughly morally revolutionary.

Christianity is over 2000 years old, but it took us nearly 1900 years to fully grasp the fact that slavery is wrong — that it goes against heart of Jesus' teaching. The same can be said about the equality of women. Much of what Jesus revealed to us is like a time-released medicine capsule. Throughout the centuries — slowly, gradually, incrementally — Jesus' message is dissolving more deeply into our consciousness.

And this is particularly true about our understanding of the cross and what it teaches. For example:



Matthew's Gospel. When Christ promises He is going to suffer, Peter replies: “Heaven forbid that this should happen to you.” Jesus — the original script writer — closed Peter down roughly. The Galilean is reminding Peter — and ourselves — that no false authors are welcome. We are but the actors who strut about on the stage for a time and then watch the final curtain fall. If savvy, we will recite our assigned lines correctly. We will resist the temptation to sneak our prose past the Master. Hopefully, then, all of us will win resurrection and a warm embrace from Jesus the Nazarene on the final day.

William Penn summed up this Gospel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century — “No pain, no ointment; no thorns, no throne; no bitterness, no glory; no cross, no crown.”

—taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooley, which appear on the internet.

**SOULCORE:**

“SoulCore” is a core workout that is meditative on the rosary and similar to yoga or Pilates in style. It's a deep sensory experience that combines candlelight, aromatherapy, and spiritual music to provide participants the opportunity to renew and strengthen body, mind, and soul while contemplating the mysteries/fruits of the rosary. “SoulCore” was born out of the desire — the calling — to strengthen our physical bodies, while at the same time, strengthening our souls through prayer. The logo of “SoulCore” — the A intertwined with the M — means “Under the Protection of Mary.” We deepen our devotion to Jesus and Mary by praying the rosary; it helps us to remain aware that we are constantly under the protection of Jesus and Mary. Richard Beyer beautifully described this experience: “In meditating on the mysteries of the rosary, Jesus also helps us to interpret and understand the meaning of his life and death. The more we reflect on the lives of Jesus and Mary through the mysteries, the more we become like them in mind and heart. By means of the rosary, the Spirit of God gradually transfigures our hearts and minds to resemble those of Christ and his Mother.”

**Join us on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM or Friday mornings at 8 AM in the Athletic Center's Upper Room for one hour of “SoulCore”.** [The Upper Room in the Athletic Center by following these simple directions — When you enter the Athletic Center, turn left and go through the doorway into the hallway to the pool locker rooms. ON your right you will find steps that lead up to the Upper Room]. During each session we will meditate on a different set of the mysteries. Please bring your own exercise mat and a set of light handheld weights. While most of the exercises focus on core strengthening, we also do at least one decade of arm focused exercises each session. Please note also that everyone is welcome — no matter your fitness level. Every exercise we do in “SoulCore” is an invitation — and you are encouraged to participate at your own level. Prayer and meditation is the true focus of “SoulCore”. Contact Karen Hostoffer at [KLHostoffer@gmail.com](mailto:KLHostoffer@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns that you have. Karen, a member of our chapel community, looks forward to bringing this new program to the Gilmour Academy community. There is no charge for the sessions, although a free will offering of \$5 to \$10 is appreciated to help defer the cost of insurance, licensing, and continuing education. If you would like more information about the program, also check out the “SoulCore” website — [www.SoulCoreProject.com](http://www.SoulCoreProject.com). Hope to see you there.

**A WAY OF LIFE:**

We ought to do good to others as simply as a horse runs, or a bee makes honey, or a vine bears grapes season after season without thinking of the grapes it has born.

—Marcus Aurelius





**MEETING CHRIST ALONG THE WAY:**

Last weekend, Matthew's Gospel recorded Peter's spontaneous profession of faith: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Christ's response was the great mandate to Peter and his successors: "Upon this rock I will build my Church" [Matthew 16:13-20]. But then things turn sour — Jesus calls Peter a stumbling block and says: "Get behind me Satan"! It is hard to credit that these two things should be in the same Gospel — let alone in the same chapter.

Of course, since we are dealing with a period of three years condensed into twenty-six short chapters — excluding Matthew's infancy narratives — we are not expected to take the chronology absolutely literally. For the sake of brevity, and the need for a flowing text, things that happened at different times and on different days are often placed right next to each other. Thus we sometimes get the impression that one followed immediately on the other — not true!

However, there are some clues that would indicate that Peter's profession of faith and his being called an obstacle did not happen immediately after each other. Matthew's Gospel for this 22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time [Matthew 16:21-27] begins with the words: "Jesus began to speak" about going up to Jerusalem and suffer and die at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees and then rise again. This is important because it is the first prediction of his passion in Matthew's Gospel. And so, when Matthew notes that "Jesus began to speak to them", it is not very specific — and so we must take it to mean "from that time on" — not necessarily the very next minute.

It is clear that Matthew has deliberately chosen to put these incidents together. Matthew puts these two things together as a warning to us — the members of the Church, the people to whom this Gospel is primarily addressed. Matthew is a warning that we should not take Jesus' affirmation — "You are the rock on whom I will build my Church" — in any sort of triumphal way. We should not become so confident that we are members of the true Church of Christ that we start to believe that this means we can do no wrong. Actually, what Jesus is telling us is that we have to tread very carefully so as not to become the very opposite of what we are meant to represent.

While Peter did not mean to offend Jesus — and he certainly did not want to do anything to obstruct Jesus' plan of salvation — it is simply that Peter didn't understand what Jesus said in all its fullness. Peter was simply saying the kind of thing any other human being would say in the circumstances — he can't really believe that Jesus would need to suffer and die. Because he loves Jesus, he does not want Jesus to die — thus Peter's statement of disbelief.

One can't help but think of how human Peter was; his very impulsiveness being one of his most endearing characteristics. It seems that Peter always speaks from the heart — even if what he says is a bundle of contradictions.

We find this to be very reassuring. Jesus did not choose the perfect person on which to build his Church — No, he chose a one like us; someone with all the same sorts of faults and contradictions that we recognize within ourselves, and yet someone who is essentially good and straightforward. Even when we get to the moment of Peter's greatest betrayal — when he denies Christ three times — we find that it is not something blatantly bad that he is doing. Actually he is trying to be near Jesus — to find out what is going to happen to him, and — one is tempted to think — try to help Jesus if he can. What happens is



the Lord's dock — but the forces the other foot has stepped into draws us away from the dock, and we end up in the drink. We ask ourselves: "How did I get involved in something like that?" Then, responding to God's grace, we not only seek forgiveness, but we give up the actions that we thought would not be all that dangerous for our spiritual lives.

We Christians are called upon to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. That means that we sacrifice the pagan aspects of life in order to live for the Lord. "I didn't know Christianity would be this difficult," the young couple who are doing their best to have a wholesome relationship complains. "Wait, you mean that commitment to Christ demands that I stay sober. Everyone I know gets drunk on Friday nights," the senior in high school argues. "Two can live cheaper than one doesn't apply when both are getting social security. Are you telling me that I am not living my Catholic faith because we won't get married? If that's so, then the faith is demanding too much," the retiree rationalizes.

"You deceived me, Lord, and I allowed myself to be deceived," Jeremiah says to God [Jeremiah 20:7-9]. Commitment to the Lord carries the cost of rejecting the world where He is not present. So, like Jeremiah, we want God in our lives, but then again, we don't. We appreciate the cost of Christianity until that cost becomes personal. Yet, like Jeremiah, we live for the fire burning within our bones — the fire of God's love. We allow ourselves to be deceived. But we continue to want God.

Joe Farris is a wonderful Catholic young adult. He is a big, tall, Catholic husband and father from North Carolina. Recently, during a retreat talk, Joe said repeatedly: "You have destroyed my life, Lord." And Joe is right — having God in our lives destroys all other possibilities in life. The decision we have to make is whose life do we want — our life or His Life? If we want His Life, then He will destroy those parts of our lives where He is not present. "The problem with you is that you are thinking like the world does, not like God does," Jesus tells the disciple [Matthew 16:21-27]. Jesus said this to Peter just after Peter told Jesus "God forbid that you would have to suffer and die". Jesus was upset with Peter for this comment. Why? What did Peter do that was so wrong? Jesus was upset because Peter allowed himself to be drawn from the Kingdom of God — he was conforming to the world.

We cannot allow this to happen. A world that is in darkness needs us to be its light. People are looking for hope. People are searching for a reason for living. We can give them that hope. We can give them that reason for life. We can be the Light of Christ for others. We do not have to conform to a world of darkness. We can be transformed by God.

—taken from the writings of Father Joseph Pellegrino which appear on the internet

**MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP — THE EDGE:**

Our next gathering will be **Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>** right after Mass. Bring your friends. Our topic will be: **Is the Mass the source and center of our faith?** EDGE is open to all who are in **grades 6-7-8**. Come and find out what **the EDGE** is all about. If you have not joined us before, that's OK. **Just call the office and let us know that you are going to be coming.** We ask you to do this because there will be food involved. Our EDGE Youth Group has a Faith-Service-Social component, and we need your help. Join in on an exciting happening. **Call the Chapel Office at 440-473-3560.** Join us for a fun filled faith experience. All are welcome.

**IF AND ONLY IF:**

The renewal of the Church will be in progress when it is seen as a fellowship of consciously inadequate persons who gather because they are weak, and scatter to serve because their unity with one another and with Christ has made them bold.

—Elton Trueblood



**CONFORM OR BE TRANSFORMED:**

“Times have changed, Father. I’m only doing what is perfectly acceptable by our society.” And with these words, the elderly lady explained away her present living condition. And with the same words, the young man justified his “wild” lifestyle, and with the same words the substance abuser justified his/her actions. And on and on and on. Add in whatever immoral behavior you can think of, and someone will say: “I’m only doing what is perfectly acceptable by society.”

But what society is that? To what society is this acceptable? It is acceptable by the society that finds nothing wrong with hedonism, putting one’s pleasure before every other good in life — including respect for others, respect for country, respect for life. What is the society that so many claim for themselves? It is the society that is at best amoral, but which is mostly immoral. It is the society that is at best pagan, but mostly atheistic. When a person hides his or her immoral behavior behind the “acceptable-by-our-society” argument, that person is invoking the society that St. Paul calls “this age” — or “the pattern of the world” [Romans 12:1-2]. This is the world that Jesus Christ came to save. It is the world of selfishness, a world of pride, a world where God is neither wanted nor present. It is a world of darkness. It is a world to which we Christians cannot belong. St. Paul reminds us: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

We were joined to a new world when we were baptized. Each of us is a key part of the new world — the Kingdom of God. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people in each of our lives who look to us to illuminate their darkness with the Light of Christ. The problem is that we are enticed by all that is around us to reject all that is within us. And so we often straddle major issues in life.

Take Charlie Miller, for example. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon at Don Bosco College and Seminary in Newton, New Jersey, as Charlie and a small group of friends walked by the little lake — more of a pond really. They had an hour to kill between Sunday Mass and dinner — not enough time to change out of their suits, but perhaps too much time for Charlie to spend walking around the property. The group came upon the little dock with the row boats. Charlie said: “I’m going to take a boat out. Anyone want to come?” No one wanted to mess up their suit, so they all said: “No”, and they watched Charlie go out onto the dock, untie a boat, and put one foot in the boat while keeping his other foot on the dock. But Charlie didn’t know a whole lot about boats. Slowly the boat drifted from the dock on which Charlie still had one foot planted — at least he thought it was planted. As the boat drifted further and further from the dock, Charlie was stretched out until he lost his balance and fell into the lake. Everyone applauded, and then proceeded to “fish him out”. Charlie got into his predicament because he refused to commit — he had one foot on the dock and one in the boat. And as a result he fell into the drink.

We often do this ourselves — we have one foot that we are convinced is safely planted in God’s world, but then we stretch out our other foot to another world — the world of pagan society. And we also fall. Even though we recognize our dignity as sons and daughters of God, we often let ourselves get involved in actions that are far less than holy. We think that we are OK because we are firmly planted on

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LIKE IT

that his cover is blown; he is recognized, and it is the panic that this induces that causes Peter to deny that he even knows Jesus.

When Peter responds to Jesus’ statement of approaching death — “Lord, God forbid that this should ever happen” — Peter’s real intention was not to be a stumbling block, so much as to try to protect Jesus from harm. We are inclined to think that Jesus is being a bit hard on poor Peter, but in reality, Jesus is trying to stress very clearly that this is going to happen to us all — we all have distractions and options that lead us contrary to the will of God our Father.

The underlying assumption of Peter is that suffering is bad; it is something that we should be protected from — and this is an assumption that we all share in our everyday lives. Christ, though, tells us something different — he tells us and shows us in his own life suffering is redemptive. He tells us that suffering is essential to his work of salvation.

One of the greatest problems in the world is that people do not seem to understand this anymore. In fact, one of the most common arguments against the existence of God put forward by ordinary people today is that God allows the innocent to suffer. What they fail to take into account is that suffering has a meaning — they fail to understand that it is often only through suffering and struggle that a greater good can come about.

Now this is not to say that suffering and pain are good in themselves, or that we would feel obliged to flagellate ourselves every five minutes! — this would be a distortion of God’s intention. But we do know that in suffering there is something deeply mysterious, valuable, and redemptive.

In time Peter was to come to understand the meaning of the Cross. We know that when faced with his own crucifixion at the hands of the Romans, Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to imitate Christ.

There is another tradition that speaks of Peter leaving Rome to escape persecution, and as he passes down the Via Appia, he meets Christ travelling in the opposite direction — towards Rome. He greets Christ with the words “Quo Vadis, Domine?” — “where are you going, Lord?” Jesus responded that he was going to Rome to be crucified once again. Peter then turned around and returned to the city to face his own death. This little story might be apocryphal, but there is something in it for each one of us. Our following of Christ will inevitably lead to the Cross, and it is how we regard the Cross that will determine our response to it. We will then face the moment of truth, and we hope that, with God’s help, it will be the moment of our salvation. —taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet

**LIFE TEEN:**

Our next gathering will be **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>** right after Mass. Bring your friends. Our topic will be: **Is the Mass the source and center of our faith?**

Life Teen is open to **all high school aged young people**. **Just call the office and let us know that you are going to be coming.** We ask you to do this because there will be food involved. Come and try us out. We have a great deal of fun together and we grow in our faith at the same time. **Respond to your texts and/or emails, or call the chapel office [440-473-3560] to be notified.** Please continue to remember all our teens and young people in your prayers.

**KEEP YOUR EYE ON JESUS:**

An arrow can only be shot by pulling it backward. When life is dragging you back with difficulties, it means it’s going to launch you into something great. So just focus, and keep aiming.

**LABOR DAY AS SEEN THROUGH THE CHURCH:**

This year Pope Francis canonized Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II. Both made immense contributions to the social teaching of the Church on the dignity of labor, and its importance to human flourishing. St. John Paul II called work “probably the essential key to the whole social question” [*Laborem Exercens*, #3], and St. John XXIII stressed workers are “entitled to a wage that is determined in accordance with the precepts of justice” [*Pacem in Terris*, #20].

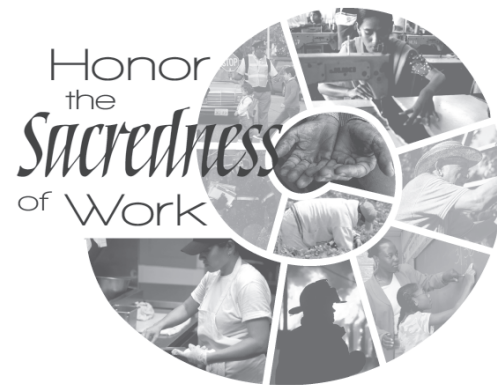
Pope Francis added to this tradition that work “is fundamental to the dignity of a person. It ‘anoints’ us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God. It gives one the ability to maintain oneself, one’s family, and to contribute to the growth of one’s own nation.” Work helps us realize our humanity, and it is necessary for human flourishing. Work is not a punishment for sin, but rather a means by which we make a gift of ourselves to each other and our communities. We simply cannot advance the common good without decent work and a strong commitment to solidarity.

Labor Day gives us the chance to see how work in America matches up to the lofty ideals of our Catholic tradition. This year, some Americans who have found stability and security are breathing a sigh of relief. Sporadic economic growth, a falling unemployment rate, and more consistent job creation suggest that the country may finally be healing economically after years of suffering and pain. For those men and women, and their children, this is good news.

Digging a little deeper, however, reveals enduring hardship for millions of workers and their families. The poverty rate remains high — 46 million Americans struggle to make ends meet. The economy continues to fail in producing enough decent jobs for everyone who is able to work, despite the increasing numbers of retiring baby boomers. There are twice as many unemployed job seekers as there are available jobs — and that does not include the seven million part-time workers who want to work full-time. Millions more — especially the long-term unemployed — are discouraged and dejected.

More concerning is that our young adults have borne the brunt of this crisis of unemployment and underemployment. The unemployment rate for young adults in America — at over 13 percent — is more than double the national average of 6.2 percent. For those fortunate enough to have jobs, many pay poorly. Greater numbers of debt-strapped college graduates move back in with their parents, while high school graduates and others may have less debt but very few decent job opportunities. Pope Francis has reserved some of his strongest language for speaking about young adult unemployment, calling it “evil,” an “atrocious,” and emblematic of the “throwaway culture.”

The situation is even worse in other parts of the world, with young adult joblessness reaching up to three and four times the national average — even in places like England and Australia. In some countries, three-fourths of young people who work have resorted to the unstable and sometimes dangerous informal economy in an attempt to make ends meet. Pope Francis has said that young people “call us to renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future” [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #108]. We need to do more to nurture this hopefulness and provide our young adults with skills, support, and opportunities to flourish.



Meaningful and decent work is vital if young adults hope to form healthy and stable families. Work and family life “must be properly united and must properly permeate each other. In a way, work is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work” [*Laborem Exercens*, #10]. Research is bearing out the consequences of neglecting this relationship — marriage rates have declined by close to 20 percent in the last 40 years, and the birth rate is the lowest on record. Among young adults, the decline in marriage has been steeper — 40 percent. Although not the only reason, many young adults, because they are unable to find decent work, are delaying marriage and starting a family.

Our challenge this Labor Day is to rise to the challenge of solidarity posed by Jesus when he commanded us to “love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” [John 13:34]. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity — solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples” [#1941]. Since each of us is made in the image of God and bound by His love, possessing a profound human dignity, we have an obligation to love and honor that dignity in one another, and especially in our work.

What would our communities, parishes, and country look like if we all recommitted to each other and the common good? If, instead of lamenting the dwindling hopes of our young people, we create institutions, relationships, and an economy that nurture human flourishing? If, instead of bickering about ideologies, people acknowledged the human dignity of others and worked together?

At their best, labor unions and institutions like them embody solidarity and subsidiarity while advancing the common good. They help workers “not only have more, but above all be more, and realize their humanity more fully in every respect” [*Laborem Exercens*, #20]. Yes, unions and worker associations are imperfect — as are all human institutions. But the right of workers to freely associate is supported by Church teaching in order to protect workers and move them — especially younger ones, through mentoring and apprenticeships — into decent jobs with just wages.

As a nation of immigrants, we recognize that a vibrant and just economy requires the contributions of everyone. Those who come seeking decent work to support their families by and large complement, rather than displace, American workers. But we need to fix our broken immigration system to stop the exploitation and marginalization of millions of people as well as address the development needs of other countries. In doing so we would also level the playing field among workers, provide more opportunity for all who can work, and bring about a needed “change of attitude toward migrants and refugees” [Pope Francis, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees*].

Supporting policies and institutions that create decent jobs, pay just wages, and support family formation and stability will also honor the dignity of workers. Raising the minimum wage, more and better workforce training programs, and smarter regulations that minimize negative unintended consequences would be good places to start.

In doing this we follow the lead of Pope Francis in rejecting an economy of exclusion and embracing an authentic culture of encounter. Our younger generations are counting on us to leave them a world better than the one we inherited.

—Archbishop Thomas Wenski, committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, USCCB

**GOD SPEAKS:**

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands.

—Psalm 90:17