CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for the 4th Week in Advent ~

Lord Jesus,
with wonder and praise
we have gathered as a family
to await that voice which announces your
birth.

What wonders you work in our lives as you become human, like us. It is good to know that you walk with us every minute.

There are so many choices we have to make, so many adventures ahead of each of us.

Help us to listen well.

What praise is yours as you reveal the depths of your love for us. Take good care of the ones we love so much as they walk with you on their own journeys.

Thank you for this wonderful season, and for the gift of sharing it with special people,

and for letting us know you better.

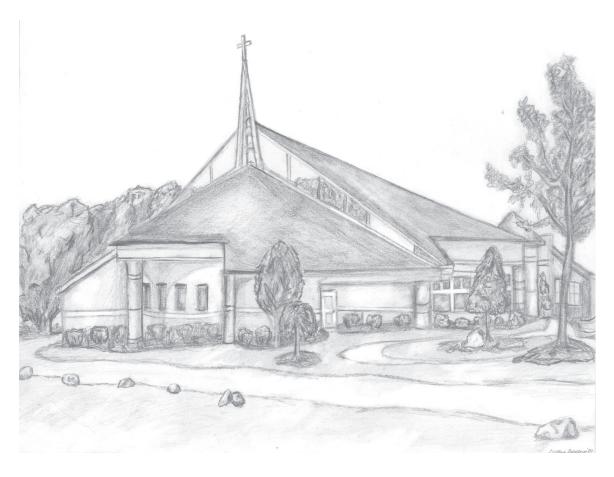
May we, like Mary, give you birth in our hearts
all the days of our lives.

We love you. Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**. phone: [440] 473-3560. e-mail: 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.

4th Week in Advent December 20-21, 2014

THANK YOU:

A special note of "thanks" goes out to all of you who participated in our Giving Tree and our Adopt a Family programs. Many families, in addition to literally hundreds of gifts for children from the giving tree were gathered again this year. Thank you and God bless each of you for sharing your life with someone else. A special thank you to Mary Schmidt, Gill Plavcan, and Patty Szaniszlo for all their hard work in coordinating these projects. Again, thanks to all who participated. As usual, your generosity in reaching out to others has been marvelous. Thank you. You are special.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

Again this year we will accept memorial donations to help defray the cost of flowers and decorations which we use in our chapel for the Christmas season. If you are interested in making a donation in memory of loved ones, please put the names of the loved ones along with your donation in an envelope, mark it "Christmas Flowers," and either give it to Father John or drop it in the offering basket. We will publish the names of the loved ones in the Bulletin as a memorial. This listing will begin with the Feast of Christmas.

2015 CALENDARS:

Calendars for the year 2015 are available for your taking. Besides having space for you to write your family appointments, the calendar also contains information about Mass and Reconciliation times here at Our Lady Chapel. We wish to thank the Schulte-Mahon-Murphy Funeral Homes for their generous donation of these 2015 Calendars to us. Please feel free to take as many calendars as you would like. Thank you.



SCHEDULE OF ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

To help you in your planning, here is a quick synopsis of the Mass schedule throughout the Christmas/ New Year Season:

- Wednesday, December 24
 - 4:45 PM Children's Christmas Eve Mass

10:00 PM — Traditional Christmas Eve Mass

- Thursday, December 25 Christmas Day Mass at 10:00 AM
- December 27-28 Regular weekend schedule
- Wednesday, December 31 New Year's Eve Mass at 5:30 PM
- January 3-4 Regular weekend schedule

WORDS THAT FEED US:

When we talk to one another, we often talk about what happened, what we are doing, or what we plan to do. Often we say: "What's up?", and we encourage one another to share the details of our daily lives. But often we want to hear something else — we want to hear: "I've been thinking of you today," or "I missed you," or "I wish you were here," or "I really love you." It is not always easy to say these words, but such words can deepen our bonds with one another. Telling someone "I love you" in whatever way is always delivering good news. Nobody will respond by saying: "Well, I knew that already, you don't have to say it again"! Words of love and affirmation are like bread. We need them each day — over and over. They keep us alive inside.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Rose DeSimone who is critically ill with congestive heart failure.
- For Grace Weil who is recovering from a stroke.
- For Patricia Weaver who is undergoing treatment for a debilitating back injury
- For Amanda Murphy, grand-niece of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C., who is critically ill.
- For Brother Charles McBride, C.S.C., who is undergoing medical testing.
- For Chris Biggins who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Cheryl Arndt, Gilmour housekeeper, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Pastor Henry Charles who is ill.
- For Marilyn Malloy, grandmother of Will ['15], Kylie ['16], Gianna ['20], and Charlie Velotta who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Bob Meyo, brother of former Gilmour Trustee, Ray Meyo, uncle of Lisa ['93] and Joe ['94] Meyo, who is under hospice care.
- For Sister Cheryl Keehner, C.S.A., who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Devin Stokel, who is critically ill with brain cancer.
- For Mark LeMed who is undergoing treatment for lung cancer.
- For Lynn Newton who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Patty Garbo who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jay Mulhollen who is undergoing treatment for brain and lung cancer.
- For Janice Feenstra, sister of Lisa Habe, aunt of Jack ['19] and Will ['20] Habe who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For John Russo, father of Jennifer ['93], who is undergoing treatment for
- For Janet Mehling, sister-in-law of Sister Mary Ann Mehling, who is seriously ill with cancer.
- For Emily Kuhar, niece of former Middle School Administrator, Patricia Brockway, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Paul Kelly, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for Leukemia
- For Anne Travassos, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Michael Shea, brother of Lower School Teacher, Theresa Stark, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Monica Starks, mother of Faith ['20] and former Gilmour student, Monica Joy, who is undergoing treatment for kidney disease.
- For Phylis McGinley, grandmother of Middle school Head of School, 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
- For Mary Kampman, mother of Mark ['81], Matthew ['85], Dean ['86], and Douglas ['88] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 aneurvsm.
- For Dan Hathey, technology associate, who is undergoing treatment for cancer and a stroke.
- For Betty Herten, aunt of Hope ['13] and James ['15] Herten, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Joseph Lamonte
- For Joshua Swibel, cousin of upper school teacher, Ginna Dybicz.
- For Louise DeFlorio [anniversary]
- For Janice Fiorucci
- For Father James Blaes, C.S.C.
- For Bishop Edward Pevec, retired auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland
- For Donna Moucha
- For Sister Catherine Skufca, O.S.U.
- For Archie Mae Green, sister of Brother Roy Smith, C.S.C.
- For Madeline Rinaldi.
- For Mary Jo Stabrowski, sister of Brother Donald Stabrowski, C.S.C.
- For Jacob Sheredy

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Norma Rasoletti who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Chris Biggins who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Cheryl Arndt, Gilmour housekeeper, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Pastor Henry Charles who is ill.
- For Dan Houlahan who is in rehabilitation following a brain aneurysm.
- For Sister Barbara Johns, I.H.M., who is undergoing treatment for cancer

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For an end to racial tensions in our nation.
- For all who are called and who live consecrated life.
- For an end to the Ebola crisis.
- For patience and understanding
- 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.

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.

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 is a basket in the narthex of the **Chapel** to collect any donations you may have. Thank you for your help!

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

PLEASE NOTE: Father John will be taking some time off this week. No Mass on Tuesday or Friday. Masses will take place over the weekend as usual. Sorry for any inconvenience this causes.

Sunday, December 21: 4th Week in Advent	10:00 AM
Monday, December 22:	5:30 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Tuesday, December 23:	NO MASS
Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve	4:45 PM 10:00 PM
Thursday, December 25: Christmas Day	10:00 AM
Friday, December 26:	NO MASS
Saturday, December 27: Holy Family	5:00 PM
Sunday, December 28: Holy Family	10:00 AM

REMEMBERING THE DEAD:

This might seem like a "strange" topic for this time of year. But, when we lose a dear friend — someone we have loved deeply — we are left with a grief that can paralyses us emotionally for a long time. People we love become part of us. Our thinking, feeling, and acting are co-determined by them — our fathers, our mothers, our husbands, our wives, our lovers, our children, our friends — they are all living in our hearts. When they die, a part of us has to die too. That is what grief is about — it is that slow and painful departure of someone who has become an intimate part of us. When Christmas, the New Year, a birthday, or anniversary comes, we feel deeply the absence of our beloved companion. We sometimes have to live at least a whole year before our hearts have fully said good-bye and the pain of our grief recedes. But as we let go of them they become part of our "members" and as we "re-member" them — they become our guides on our spiritual journey.

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Imagine two kinds of dwellings. To the left, we see King David sitting in his palace talking with the prophet Nathan [2 Samuel 7:1-16]. They are speaking about building a temple for the residence of the Arc of the Lord. To the right is a more simple house in which the young girl — Mary — is speaking with somebody about making a new dwelling for the presence of the Lord. Centuries lay between the two places and events, and yet there is a continuous link between them. Both David and Mary believe in God's desire to be with the human family.

There is a popular Christmas song — made famous by Perry Como — which begins: "O there's no place like home for the holidays." Actually, we all should be living that wonderful song of God which makes a holiday of God's making a home among us. The "Far-Away" God is moving from building to body — from "up there" to "in there."

This last weekend in Advent is not too late to do our Christmas-grace shopping. We should all begin with a holy emptiness as was the heart and womb of the "first church" — Mary. Santa leaving a stocking empty might be a sign of disfavor, but we are need to hope and pray that God finds us holy — and wholly — empty. We will celebrate these coming days that there was room in a stable when there was none in the "Inn."



We may be intent on filling the stockings and hearts of others these last few Advent days. This is a wonderful and loving thing to do. But let us be filled with the grace of "silent Longing." The older we get, the less we find completion in the "thing" of things. We become aware so slowly that possessions highlight only that place inside which remains hollow despite our apparent fullness. We long for the one gift which makes all other gifts and possessions precious — and that is the gift of humble hole-ness, or "silent longing." The God who said: "let there be light," says again: "Let there be life". And in Christ we have both.

But let's return to David sitting in his palatial house of cedar [2 Samuel 7:1-16]. The Lord has helped him defeat his enemies, and the ark of God has — at last — taken its place in Jerusalem. It has been carried into its present resting place accompanied by much dancing and musical celebration — including David dancing as the ark was carried to his resting place.

David and Nathan are in deep conversation. David is feeling guilty — he is living in a nice house, and the holy presence of the Lord is outside in a tent! And so David wants to build a nice house — a temple — for the Lord. At first, Nathan agrees with David. But later God speaks to him in a dream which plays on the concept of "house". While David was thinking about a physical building, the Lord promises a physical, bodily dynasty "house". This house will live on into history, and bring forth a new and ever-present presence of the Holy in the physical body of the Messiah.

Luke's Gospel is the familiar narrative of how this Holy Presence begins to take shape within the body of a young woman [Luke 1:26-38]. The tent of her womb becomes the new Holy of Holies and the ancient prophesies are being fulfilled.

In the middle of all Advent wreaths, there is a hole — an empty area which receives the full light of all four candles. The lights announce the vacancy, and they promise a completion which is to come. We do not enjoy the empty. Nature abhors a vacuum. The winds which blow are rushing into areas of low

WORLD YOUTH DAY & KRAKOW, POLAND 2016:

The time has come for us to take the next step in our Pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2016. It is time to start putting down deposits so that we can finance this trip over a period of time. We will begin to contact those who have expressed interest. We have a link to the presentation which Chris Dube from Dube Travel



did for us, so that you will be able to get all the details of our pilgrimage. Our pilgrimage to WYD will begin with our departure on **Friday**, **July 22**. Monday, we will visit Auschwitz and the German concentration camps, and see the place where St. Maximillian Kobe was martyred. We will then begin our trip to Krakow, stopping at Czestochowa — home to the monastery at Jasna Gora and the famous icon of the Black Madonna. During our stay in Krakow, we will journey to Wadowice — the home town of St. John Paul II, and visit the Church of the Divine Mercy and the Shrine of St. Faustina Kowalska. We will be staying at a hotel located on the square in Krakow, within walking distance of almost all of the events of WYD.

We will be attending catechetical sessions each morning, followed by evening cultural and spiritual events — daily Mass, the sacrament of reconciliation, adoration, and many other experiences. Our group will officially welcome, celebrate mass, and take part in the Stations of the Cross with the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

We will return to Cleveland on **Monday, August 1**. Over 40 people have expressed an interest thus far in this pilgrimage. The invitation remains 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. Please contact the chapel office — Father John or Patty at 440-473-3560 to confirm your place on this life-changing pilgrimage

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: 1 Samuel 1:24-28, Luke 1:46-56

Tuesday: Malachi 3:1-24, Luke 1:57-66

Wednesday: 2 Samuel 7:1-16, Luke 1:67-79

Thursday: Isaiah 9:1-6, Titus 2:11-14, :Luke 2:1-14

Friday: Acts 6:8-7:59, Matthew 10:17-22

Saturday: 1 John 1:1-4, John 20:1-8

Holy Family: Sirach 3:2-14, Colossians 3:12-21, Luke 2:22-40

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR OF ST. JOAN OF ARC:

Father Gary Malin, pastor of St. Joan of Arc, asked us to post this request. St. Joan of Arc Parish in Chagrin Falls is seeking candidates with a Bachelors degree in Accounting and at least 5 years accounting experience. The Business Administrator oversees and coordinates payroll, accounts payable, and data entry functions and is responsible for systems, accounting, financial reporting & budgeting. 10-12 hours per week. Submit resume to Fr. Gary Joseph Malin at St. Joan of Arc, 496 E Washington St., Chagrin Falls OH 44022.

THEOLOGY OF CHOSEN:

16

Biblical faith rarely revolves around what we can do for God. Our sacred authors are much more concerned with reminding us about the things God has done and will do for us. That's certainly the case with the Scripture Readings for this 4th Week in Advent. Nathan, for instance, dead-ends David's plans to build a house for the Lord by simply reminding him about God's plan to build a house for him — "When your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I [the Lord] will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me: your throne shall stand firm forever" [2 Samuel 7:1-16]. The Lord's relationship with David's family will last longer than any building constructed to honor God.

In a similar way, Paul ends his letter to the Church at Rome by reminding his readers that God is the one force in their lives who constantly "strengthens" them [Romans 16:25-27]. It's through their imitation of Jesus' dying and rising — this "mystery kept secret for long ages" — that they're able to experience God of strength entering and working effectively in their daily lives.

That's why Luke makes a big thing about Jesus' conception [Luke 1:26-38]. Though Scripture scholars like Raymond Brown have consistently warned us not to take such biblical annunciations

literally, we should never overlook the messages those unique narratives convey. We actually have three gospel annunciations pertaining to Jesus. Luke's account of the annunciation to Mary is by far the best known. But, we shouldn't overlook the other two — Matthew's annunciation to Joseph [Matthew 1:18-25], and Mark's baptismal annunciation to Jesus [Mark 1:9-11]. In each passage, the evangelist is concerned with conveying one or more theological insights into Jesus' personality and ministry.

Luke accomplishes this in several ways. No one can overlook Gabriel's statement: "The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." Nothing could be clearer. But even his future name — Jesus — is significant. It's easy to forget that the historical Mary never actually called her son Jesus — she never spoke Greek. She would have employed his



original Hebrew name "Joshua." The "Jo" is an oft-used biblical abbreviation for Yahweh — "shua" means saves. Whenever Mary called Jesus for supper, she was proclaiming her belief that Yahweh is constantly saving us — a very significant proclamation of faith when it's directed to this specific Joshua.

Even the first words of the angel's encounter with the virgin are theologically significant. Matthew employs the Greek word "kecharitomene" when he speaks about Mary — a word modern English translations render as "highly favored one." But because some of the first English translations of the Christian Scriptures came from the Latin Vulgate — and not the original Greek — we're accustomed to hearing Mary referred to as "full of grace."

Without any reference to Mary's Immaculate Conception, Matthew just seems to be saying, "This is your lucky day, Mary! If I were you I'd buy a lottery ticket!" This wonderful thing is happening in Mary's life, not because of anything she did, or anything that happened to her prior to this annunciation, but simply because God chose to make her an instrument of God's salvation.

Hearing these words, the Luke's community would have reflected on how they — as other Christs — were also instruments in God's salvation. They hadn't forced God to include them in his plans. Their relationship with the risen Jesus was God's free gift. It wasn't given them because of their good looks, their deep spirituality, or because they'd do a better job than anyone else carrying on Jesus' ministry. They — like Mary — were simply "kecharitomene".

air pressure. Water flows naturally into cracks, pockets, and holes. Lack of food creates a sense of hunger which is not always a terrible thing, but we don't always enjoy that feeling. We do not like the empty feelings which come from separation or loss.

There is a hole in the human experience of everything. At times, we might believe that we have total fullness in a relationship or possession. It does not take long for us to find the holes, though, and we can be tempted to search elsewhere. All of human experiences are actually invitations to embrace the reality, and the hole is part of that real relationship or possession. We long in everything for the hole to be full — always, and "right now".

In truth then, "not having" is a "having". As the candles of the Advent wreath highlight the central emptiness of the wreath, Christ's coming into the human circle shows how empty life is if we think this human life is all there is, or it is all about our gratification. Jesus speaks directly to how we are to find the holy in the hole.

Mary received a gift in her Advent waiting. Her empty womb was available to receive. Her "dance card" was not filled, and God's interruption of whatever her daily agenda was continued how God's ways of embracing the little, the unimportant, and the empty. In her life and body, the empty was something — it was available.

The addict runs from the longing — only to find more emptiness, because the addict is looking for the wrong gift. Those who can stay faithful to the human experiences of not having it all, do receive a wisdom and a grateful sense of all that lies beyond. The stable awaits — the many inns are overflowing. We wait with nothing in hand except our hands reaching. We will do some longing these days — with the hope that the joy of a holy experience of the "holey". For "The virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emanuel" [Isaiah 7:14].

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

FAITH EDUCATION:

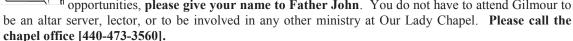
Here are the dates for Faith Education for the months of January and February — January 11th and 25th, and February 1st, 8th, and 22nd. Our Sessions go from 8:45—9:45 AM each time we meet, with the hope that our children would then participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass. We have a number of families 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 responsibility

ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. Any student who is in the 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5th [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



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

MY FIRST ADVENT:

[As this 4th Week in Advent centers on Mary's pregnancy, we offer this reflection on Mary by a woman in pregnancy. Enjoy]

I was huge! Not just big — gigantic. Even before I entered my third trimester, well-intentioned old ladies would pat my shoulder encouragingly and say: "Any day now!" as I waddled my way through the grocery store. Considering the raging pregnancy hormones running through my system, I'm impressed that I didn't slap any of the kind-hearted dears. I was huge.

As the end of November neared, I started wearing flip-flops exclusively because my swollen feet wouldn't fit into anything else. I think I gave up on other footwear after one particularly bad day when my husband had to help me get my boots off as I helplessly yelled inchoate phrases about being the only woman who would be pregnant *forever*. My maternity coat didn't fit anymore by the time it was cold enough to wear it. When I wasn't at work, I was lying on the couch or in the bathtub — trying to remember what it felt like to be able to see my toes. But then I would see a tiny limb change position — reminding me that my massive tummy housed a moving, living child.

As December neared, and Advent began, I considered this Season for perhaps the first time. I had lighted Advent candles as a little girl, and had been excited about Christmas coming, but I had never considered the season as anything except a "Pre-Christmas countdown". I came to realize that this is as incomplete an understanding of Advent as is the definition of pregnancy as merely the "nine months preceding a birth".

While I tried to remember what my feet looked like, I remembered the Blessed Virgin Mary. I confess that I had never thought much about her before — I had never felt that we had anything in common until now. But as my belly got rounder and rounder, and my back got achier and achier, I remembered her — "She has done this. She has felt her child move in her womb, perhaps responding to the sound of her voice or her song. She experienced this miracle of life, taking place within her."

In our modern disenchanted age, we have not completely lost our fascination with the miracle of new life. Whenever I dragged my sleepy, pregnant body to public places, my experience was different than ever before. Little children looked at my belly — fascinated — sometimes even trying to give my belly a pat or lift up my shirt to discover if there was really a baby

inside. Other mothers smiled at me and grandmothers reassured me. My ordinary child — this new ordinary life — elicited such a response of amazement. I began to wonder: "How much more miraculous is the coming of our Lord?" — "For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given."

I was expecting my son during the season of expectation. The word comes from "expecare" — to wait, to hope, to look for. I did all these things. At first, there was contentment in the waiting and in the hoping. But eventually, the groaning, and the miserable discomfort led to a readiness to be delivered and face labor. A week before my due date, I was so exhausted and so tired of bumping the counters with my colossal tummy, and getting up 10 times a night because the little angel had given my bladder yet another energetic punch, that I began to lose it. I couldn't climb the stairs to my office one more day; I couldn't fit behind my desk; I couldn't sleep.

Until the discomfort crossed a certain threshold, and I was struck with a desperate desire to be pregnant not a day longer, the pain of delivery was alarming to me, and I remained unprepared. But in

rather than ruin gift with impatience.

Only virgins' wombs bring forth messiahs because they alone live in advent waiting a delaying bridegroom late, hopelessly beyond the eleventh hour.

Still the virgin's womb waits
Refusing all counterfeit lovers and impatience
which demand flesh on flesh and
a divine Kingdom on human terms.

Messiahs are only born
in virginity's space
within virginity's patience
which let God be God and
love be gift.

Why a virgin's womb for a Messiah's birth? Why an obsession with purity within the Christian tradition? Because, as we all know only too well, our lives are full of most everything that is not virginal or pure — impatience, disrespect, irreverence, manipulation, cynicism, grandiosity; and, as we all know too, within this matrix no messiah can be gestated.

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

R.C.I.A [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults]:

We are beginning to plan for our RCIA program which will begin in a few weeks. If you know someone who has been away from the Catholic Church for a while, or who is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, or who presently is not a Catholic but would like to pursue this avenue of faith; if you know someone who is not fully initiated [Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation] in their Catholic faith — then



consider having them join our RCIA program. Please contact Father John [440-473-3560] for more information.

AMAZON.COM:

Please remember that when you want to buy something from Amazon.com, you need to first go to 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



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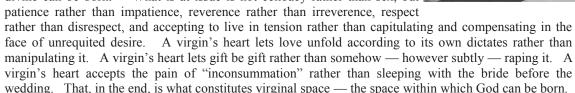
we have begun this program, we have consistently been receiving significant checks from Amazon that are being credited to help pay for chapel expenses. This affinity program remains in effect throughout the year, so we ask everyone to continue to remember to start your purchases at Amazon on the Our Lady Chapel home page! Thank you.

VIRGIN BIRTH:

Christian tradition has always emphasized that Jesus was born of a virgin — the Messiah could only come forth from a virgin's womb. The main reason for this emphasis of course is to highlight that Jesus did not have a human father and that his conception was from the Holy Spirit. But there is often a secondary emphasis as well — less-founded in scripture. Too common within that notion is the idea that Jesus was born from a virgin because somehow sexuality is impure — that it is too base and earthy to have a connection to such a sacred event. The holy must be kept separate from what is base. Jesus wasn't just born of a virgin because he did not have a human father — he was also born of a virgin because his birth

demanded a purity that, by definition, rules out sex. Our concept of the virgin birth has been infiltrated by a piety which, for all kinds of reasons, cannot accord sexuality to the holy.

What's wrong with this? Beyond denigrating the God-given goodness of sexuality, it misses one of the major aspects of revelation within the virgin birth. There is a moral challenge within the virgin birth, something which invites imitation rather than admiration. Christian tradition emphasizes a virgin birth — just as it emphasizes a virgin burial, a virgin tomb to parallel the virgin womb — not because it judges that sexuality is too impure and earthy to produce something holy. Rather, beyond wanting to emphasize that Jesus had no human father, the Christian tradition wants to emphasize what kind of heart and soul is needed to create the space wherein something divine can be born. What is at issue is not celibacy rather than sex, but patience rather than impatience, reverence rather than irreverence, respect



Thirty years ago, trying to express this, I wrote poem entitled, *Virgin Birth*. Today I blush at the youthful idealism in that poem; but, on my better days, I take counsel from the young man who wrote those lines:

The perennial paradox, peculiar to this Father and Son
Specialists in confounding human wisdom withdrawn from wonder.
A virgin gives birth, not to sterility, but to a Messiah.
What has virginity to do with giving birth? Nothing!
When wisdom wastes words wandering towards a truth that will not set us free.
Virginity and inconsummation: Incomplete heart and flesh,
wrestle with a God who has no flesh
who won't let flesh meet flesh
ache, awaiting completeness
to stave off sterility, truly the unforgivable sin against the spirit of life.
But sterility becomes pregnant with yearning for the spirit
that sleeps with God at night and impregnates with messianic spirit
those patient enough to yearn and sweat lonely tears

those last days, it no longer frightened me — anything but this! I started to understand that it is not until we are exhausted, ill with our condition, and miserable, that we are ready for Christ — only then can we really long to be delivered.

I kept thinking about the Blessed Virgin Mary — "was she as desperate to give birth as I was?" I considered with wonder how, when her baby boy was delivered, he would in turn deliver her, deliver me, and deliver my own unborn son.

As I waited in joyous, miserable, anxious expectation, I started to understand an inkling of what it must have felt like to wait for the Messiah — Mary's son. I begin to understand the Joy born to the world on Christmas Day and present with us now as I heard the sound of the first beautiful and strong cry of my newborn son. I realized — in a new way — how to wait with groaning and expectation for our Lord's return in glory. It was my first Advent.

—an edited excerpt from Haley Stewart's book: Feast! Real Food, Reflections, and Simple Living for the Christian Year.

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. During the course of the past year, the food pantry at Our Savior Lutheran Church served an average of 141 households each time. 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.

MARCH FOR LIFE:

Again this year, students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to participate in the national March for Life in Washington, D.C. Begun in 1974 on the first anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the March for Life is an annual peaceful and public demonstration that promotes the right to life and advocates for the dignity of the human person from conception; the goal of the March is to protect unborn children and their parents from the tragedy of abortion. This national event is a unique opportunity for students to practice our Holy Cross core values and to live out the Academy's mission "to develop the competence to see and the courage to act in creating a more humane and just society." **Our March for Life will begin with a**



Prayer Vigil held in Our Lady Chapel at 9 PM on Wednesday, January 21st. We will be departing for Washington at 10:30 PM, participate in the Mass for Life at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, March for Life from the National Mall to Capitol Hill, and returning back to Gilmour around 10 PM on Thursday, January 22nd. Cost of the trip is \$65. All meals and snacks are the responsibility of the student. Registration needs to be completed by Friday, January 9th. Please contact Father John if you have any questions, and obtain the forms needed for the trip.

BECOMING IMMERSED IN HISTORY:

An African girl gave her teacher a gift. The teacher said: "You walked miles to get this." The girl replied: "Walking is part of the gift." People speak of Christmas in July. Yet, it was in August, 1993, that The New York Times excitedly gave us a Christmas gift about the House of David. An Israeli archaeologist had just "discovered a fragment of a stone monument with inscriptions bearing the first known reference outside the Bible to King David and the ruling dynasty he founded." Why not research the family tree of Jesus whose birthday approaches? We will not have to dirty our hands in mud as the archaeologist did. Our information is in the Old Testament. One does not require a massive brainpan to conclude that the awesome entry of God into the body of an itinerant preacher named Jesus of Nazareth was no hit and run accident. It was set from day one. For Him, the long journey was part of the gift to us. His birth of a teen-ager named Mary was the end of the promise made by God in the Bible's first

The promise was given to spaceship earth. God addressed the serpent: "I will put enmities between you and the woman. She shall crush your head and you will lie in wait for her heel" [Genesis 3:15]. Centuries move on. The general promise of the Christ becomes more specific — it is placed in the care of the Semite people. They descended from Shem whose father was the famous Noah of the ark. The Semites developed into many nations — Israel, Arabia, Syria, and Jordan. Of these Semitic nations, God selected one to whom Jesus' promise was given. That nation was Israel. The promise was given to Abraham, its founder: "Through you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" [Galatians 3:8]. The Jews were the chosen people. Abraham gingerly passed the promise to his son, Isaac. That young man married and he gave it to Jacob, his son. And the line was established.

Jacob and his wife gave birth to two sons — each son would found one of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was the tribe of Judah which was chosen from among the twelve to fulfill the age-old promise of Christ — "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the staff between his feet, until he comes to whom it

If you are still counting, the promise of Our Lord has been given by this point to spaceship earth, then the Semite people, the Jewish nation, and the tribe of Judah. Within the tribe of Judah, the promise was carefully given to the family of David. The centuries passed in their happy and doleful fashion. Christ's long journey was coming to an end. A clue of this is found in the prophecy Isaiah — 'A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son. His name shall be called Emmanuel...God with us."

Then one special night the melancholy Roman emperor Caesar Augustus was finishing pasta with clam sauce and vino in his splendid palace along the polluted Tiber river in Rome. A gentleman called Quirinius was living it up as governor in Syria. Wonders of wonders, the global village that was earth was at peace. A peasant and his expectant wife were making a long journey to the town of Bethlehem — or, as a poet put it: "The lady rode a donkey, the man walked, and the baby was in the lady." There Mary gave birth to Jesus. He was the promise made flesh — God become Man. The infinite had at last become finite. Say you were a lab technician and were allowed by Mary to take DNA from the Baby's finger. You would discover that He was a Semite there, in these words of Gabriel, we learn everything we need to know about Mary. She was united to God from the first moment of her existence — she was full of Grace. She was the one who was chosen — blessed among women. She was the one whose desire for God was being answered.

The Lord was with her. Mary was so open to God that she could receive the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit during her normal day. She didn't have to journey to the Temple to experience God — she lived in his presence. Pope St. Leo put it this way: "Mary bore God in her mind before she bore him in her body. Her desire for God, in fact, was so intense, that she immediately responded to the angel's message. She immediately set into motion the very action of our salvation." This desire that the ancients had for God — this desire that Mary had to be his handmaiden — should lead us to ask: "Do I really desire him? Do I crave his presence to come and return our world to his original plan?"

Do we really want our lives to be transformed by the presence that we celebrate on Christmas Day? We cannot live without Jesus Christ. We cannot live a meaningful life — a life worth living — without God. If we are satisfied with whatever the world has to offer, then we are just puppets of our environment and misfits of creation. If our Christmas becomes a celebration of things — and not a spiritual celebration of the presence of Christ — then our Christmas will just be a yearly exercise of summoning up the proper emotions, another day of empty smiles, another day that will come and go without effecting us. St. Augustine said it best: "Our hearts were made for you, O Lord, and they cannot rest until the rest in you." St. Augustine had it all together. We are always longing. We are always seeking. We are always desiring. But the only desire that fills us is the desire for Christ. Like Augustine, we pray: "Come Lord Jesus".

We are given the celebration of Christmas to come closer to God. We are given this feast to recognize that he alone can answer our needs. Make time this week. As you approach the Christmas liturgy, talk to God about what we all really need — His Presence and His Love. Ask God to come come and set things straight. Make your prayer the prayer of the church — Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus.

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

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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 12/13//14] ------ \$ 1,125.50 Total Offerings: Sunday [12/14/14] ------ \$ 1,209.00

THE EVERLASTING DESIRE:

As the whole world prepares to celebrate Christmas — making believe that the Christmas Season has started — we all need to pause to reflect upon what we really need — what is the real desire that we all have in our lives? This need — this deep desire — is the need for the presence of God. The need for God's presence in our life becomes quite obvious when we consider the power of sin within us and among us. It's almost as if we are asking: "who can save us from ourselves". Only the grace, presence, and life of Jesus Christ can save us. His very name — Jesus — means "God saves us". He saves us from our sins. He saves us from ourselves. When we consider our need for God's presence, and the world's need for God's presence, our desire for God deepens. We work so hard to provide the very best for our young people, our children, our families, and our neighbors. Yet, we continually run into problems that we have no way of preventing.

The effects of the power of darkness are all around us. Take, for example, the poor women who are suffering post abortion stress. Very often, they were led into a bad decision by people they trusted; now their lives have been radically changed. Their darkness was caused by a world around them that rejected love. How many people have darkness in their marriages? One person gives himself or herself to another in love, but the other person is only concerned with taking. A very good person ends up in a very bad marriage. One family suffers from alcoholism or some other form of substance abuse. Another family suffers from sickness. Many mourn the loss of a loved one — particularly at Christmastime. All of us encounter situations of darkness in our life.

We must call out: "Come Lord Jesus." Come and deliver us from these dilemmas. Come and restore the world to your original plan where people would not suffer the deadly effect of sin. Our Advent prayer is the prayer of the entire Church — Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus.

Yes, the Lord did come 2000 years ago to begin the transformation of the world. And yes, the Lord continues to come to us on our altars and in Word and sacrament. But the transformation of the world has only begun. The Lord promised us that he will come again to free us from darkness. And so we all still pray — more than 2000 years after the first Christmas — "Come Lord Jesus"!

To understand deeper our eternal desire for the Lord to come again, let's focus back to that time 2000 years ago in Palestine as Joseph traveled with his pregnant wife Mary to his ancestral city of Bethlehem [see Luke 2]. Joseph was a member of the family of David. He remembers well the promise made to David — "Your house will stand forever" [2 Samuel 7:1-16].

But there was no descendent of David on a Jewish throne. All those, like Joseph, who could trace their lineage to David were just common folk now. They and all of Israel were oppressed by the Romans. The people were being led into immorality by these pagans. Those who tried to be faithful Jews were subjected to the rigorous laws of a dead and hypocritical temple cult. They witnessed the one Jewish ruler — Herod the Tetrarch — act as morally degenerate as the pagans. Joseph and the people of his time felt darkness around them. They called out to God to come — come and set things straight in this twisted and deformed world.

It was to one of these faithful Jews that the angel Gabriel came. He called her "full of Grace". He told her that the Lord was with her and that she was blessed among all women [Luke 1:26-38]. Right





out of the Jewish nation. Further, you would conclude He was of the tribe of Judah, and, more exactly, of the family of David. Talking of His mother, we might all want to remember the line of Meister Eckhart: "We are all meant to be mothers of God. He is always waiting to be born."

We ring down the curtain with the twenty-six hundred year old Jeremiah — "I will perform, says the Lord, the good word I have spoken to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. I will make the bud of justice to spring forth unto David. They shall call him the Lord our just one" [see Jeremiah 33]. As a gift to Jesus, why not embrace Walt Whitman's advice? — "Love the earth, sun, and animals. Despise riches. Give alms to everyone. Stand up for the stupid and crazy. Devote your income and labor to others. Argue not about God." —taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooley, which appear on the internet.

CLEAN OUT THOSE CLOSETS AND SERVE OTHERS:

Winter is here. Another change in seasons, and 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 winter 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].

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.

PREPARING FOR JESUS:

Think of the many, many stories about God choosing people. There's Moses, Abraham, and Sarah; there is David, Jeremiah, Gideon, Samuel, Jonah, and Isaiah. There is Israel itself. Much later there's Peter and Paul — and, most especially, there's Mary. God is always choosing people. First impressions aside, God is not primarily choosing them for a role or a task — although it might appear that way. God is really choosing them to be God's self in this world — each in his or her unique situation. If we allow ourselves to experience being chosen, being a beloved, being somehow God's presence in the world, we invariably communicate that same chosenness to others — almost naturally. And thus the Mystery passes on from age to age. Yes, we do have roles and tasks in this world, but finally they are all the same — to uniquely be divine love in a way that no one else can or will.

SANTA JESUS:

There were parts of my house that were off-limits because they were dangerous — this included the loft inside our garage, the thorn bushes in the backyard, the workshop, and the attic. I understood why three of these four were dangerous, but the attic was just another level to our house. Wanting to mostly abide by my parents' rules, I decided one July day I would check the attic out. After all, there weren't power tools up there — how unsafe could it be? What I found up in that attic shocked me. There were empty boxes from our Christmas presents! This may not seem all that weird — except these were boxes from the Christmas presents we received from Santa Claus. And Santa didn't bring them in boxes!

A horrific reality sunk in — my parents had kidnapped Santa Claus!

As I woefully descended the attic steps, lamenting the reality that I needed to turn my parents in to the police for kidnapping, the actual reality set in — my parents were Santa Claus!

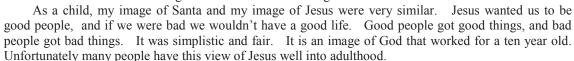
I was angry. They lied to me, and the first thing I needed to do was confront my mom. I laid the accusation out against her — she had been deceiving me for 10 years of my life, and how could she pretend to be Santa Claus? I ran into my room crying.

My mom came into my room to console me and calm me down. I learned that the Easter Bunny, the tooth fairy, and leprechauns were also not real. I then looked at my mom and I asked her something that I think startled her: "So, is God not real, either?"

There is a really toxic image of Jesus that a lot of Catholics have — "Santa Jesus". Here is how

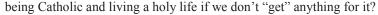
Santa Jesus works — you believe in Santa Jesus and want to have a relationship with him, but the relationship is really kind of messed up. You only want a relationship with Santa Jesus because you want the good things that Santa Jesus brings. And Santa Jesus wants you on your best behavior — or you won't get anything good. In this view, when we get "coal" spiritually — or when life is hard, or when we suffer — we immediately think that we have done something wrong, or that Jesus is mad at us.

Santa Jesus is a toxic image of God because eventually we realize that it is cruel, and no decent relationship works like that. It is wrong for someone to simply love us and give us good things when we do all the right stuff. We wind up rejecting this image of Christ when we are faced with suffering — what does Santa Jesus know about suffering? Couldn't he do something about it?



Santa Jesus becomes irrelevant the first time we find ourselves doing all the right things, but someone that does evil things gets more than us. It is the first time that we don't go to that party, yet find that, rather than everyone praising us, they gossip about us. It is the first time that we do the holy thing in a relationship, but instead of winning our significant other over, they dump us for someone less holy. It happens when we strive to love the Lord and our neighbor, yet bad things still happen. We start to ask God: "have you been lying to us? Is any of this real? Where is my reward for being a great Catholic? Why don't I get good gifts for being a good person?"

Sadly, a lot of people get stuck here, and some walk away from God. They can't reconcile their understanding of Santa Jesus with the reality of the world we live in. Sometimes bad people seem to get more, while good people suffer. It can seem like God isn't being fair with us. Is there any benefit to



As a kid I was more focused on the gifts that "Santa Claus" gave me. Once the myth of Santa Claus was dispelled, a big part of me was worried that I wouldn't get those gifts anymore. As I grew up, I realized that there was something bigger behind Santa all along — my parents' love. As a teenager, it became more important to me that I spent time with my family rather than got a lot of gifts. That continues as an adult — simply just to be with them is gift enough.

Jesus Christ is the same way; what is the benefit of following Christ if we don't always get worldly things? Simple — the benefit is that we receive the greatest gift — Christ himself. Jesus gives us himself in relationship — when we follow Christ we live in His life and love.

It doesn't mean we will become millionaires. It doesn't mean we will have a new car with a giant red bow on it. It doesn't mean that we won't suffer or experience "unhappiness". It also doesn't mean that "bad people" will always get what is coming to them. In fact, we should hope that those that don't have a relationship with Christ get what they deserve — God's mercy, healing, and love. Just like us.

When we look at Jesus as though He is Santa, we can easily become disappointed when we don't get what we asked for in prayer, when we feel like we are being neglected in the gifts that we receive, or when other's receive more — when we think they should receive less. But Jesus is not Santa and gives us the only thing worth anything — the gift of himself. —written by Joe Stepanek, an associate of the Bible Geek

LIFE TEEN:

Santa lesus

Our next gathering will be on Sunday, January 4th — this will be a brief meeting sharing the joys of Christmas. Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Saturday, January 10th when we will gather for a very popular "game night" from 6:30 PM—8:00 PM. Life Teen normally meets right after Sunday Mass — from



11:30 AM—1:00 PM in the Lennon Board Room. 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. On Sunday, January 25th, we will be gather to discuss the March for Life. 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.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP — THE EDGE:

Our next gathering will be on Sunday, January 11th, when we go to "Build-a-Bear" to create Teddy Bears for Children Hospitalized at Ahuja Hospital. Bring your friends. 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. On Saturday, January 31st, we will have our

EDGE "game night". 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.

BEING READY:

There is vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique — You have to keep open and aware directly to the Spirit that motivates you. Keep the channel open.

—Martha Graham