

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for the Year of Mercy ~**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful  
like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us  
that whoever sees you sees Him.  
Show us your face  
and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze  
freed Zacchaeus and Matthew  
from being enslaved by money;  
the adulteress and Magdalene  
from seeking happiness  
only in created things;  
made Peter weep  
after his betrayal,  
and assured Paradise  
to the repentant thief.

Let us hear,  
as if addressed to each one of us,  
the words that you spoke  
to the Samaritan woman:  
“If you knew the gift of God!”

You are the visible face  
of the invisible Father —  
of the God  
who manifests his power above all  
by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church  
be your visible face in the world —  
its Lord risen and glorified.

You willed that your ministers  
would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel  
compassion  
for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them  
feel sought after,  
loved,  
and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit  
and consecrate every one of us  
with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy  
may be a year of grace  
from the Lord.  
And may your Church,  
with renewed enthusiasm,  
bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the  
oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this  
through the intercession of Mary,  
Mother of Mercy;  
You who live and reign  
with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

# 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.*

**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)

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

We are beginning our annual Advent-Christmas outreach program earlier this year because many have expressed concern that they have not had enough time to participate as they would like. Our Lady Chapel is again joining hands in partnership with several Parishes and social service agencies in an effort to share our lives together. The *Adopt a Family* project and the *Giving Tree* programs have been a tradition at Our Lady Chapel for many years. This year, we will again be serving these parishes and agencies in these two ways.

[1] **Giving Tree/Adopt a Child.** Our Lady of Fatima Community Center, the West Side Catholic Center, Manor Care, and St. Adalbert Parish are all trying to serve the needs of the less fortunate during this Advent-Christmas time. Most of these agencies need hats, gloves, socks, underwear, sweaters, sweat shirts, hoodies, infant needs, books, toys and games for children, ages Newborn to 16 years. Manor Care, serving the elderly, need fleece throw blankets, as well as hats & gloves. People will be able to pick an ornament off of the tree — located in the narthex of the chapel — with a label showing the item needed. [There will also be a tree located in the front lobby of the Lower School]. These items would then be gathered, UNWRAPPED, please, and the tag [ornament] taped onto the gift. **Our goal would be to have all items assembled by December 16<sup>th</sup>, for pickup by the various agencies.**

[2] **Adopt a Family.** This year we would again like to adopt between a minimum of 30-40 families from St. Adalbert Parish School. St. Adalbert identifies families — most often single parent, below poverty level families; we are given the grade levels of the children & other family information, so that you can purchase gifts appropriate to each member. In addition, if possible, we ask that you also provide a Christmas meal for the family [non-perishable items in a food basket, and/or Gift Cards for Giant Eagle, Aldi's or Family Dollar.] Those from our chapel family who participated in this project last year spoke very highly of the benefit of this project to their own families. This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. Adopt-a-family gifts should be WRAPPED. **We would need everything here at the chapel by NOON on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or [szaniszlup@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlup@gilmour.org)] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions.**

**ADVENT DEVOTIONS:**

On the table in the narthex of the Chapel are several Advent devotionals to assist you in your spiritual journey during this season of Advent. We hope that you will make use of them for you and your family. [1] **The Little Blue Book** with daily readings and devotions. This book corresponds to "The Little Black Book" that is so popular during Lent. [2] The daily scripture devotion, **The Word Among Us**, is available. It lists the scripture passage for the day along with a short reflection on one of the passages.

**ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE:**

On **Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>**, at **7:00 PM**, we will celebrate our Advent communal **Penance Service**. This service will consist of scriptural reflections by those involved in the Christmas story. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to straighten the paths of our lives to ease the arrival of our God. Each of us needs to truly hear in our heart the message of John the Baptist: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be an opportunity for individual reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation following the service. Please join us.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Pat MacCandlish who is recovering from neuro surgery.
- For Owen Timura, an 8 year old, who has been diagnosed with lymphoma
- For Jackie Goler who has been diagnosed with lymphoma
- For Jay Cusick who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- For Jesse Meyers, cousin of Cynthia Lowry, who is undergoing multiple surgeries for an infection.
- For Eddie Keating, brother of Kelly ['83] and Karen ['86], who is recovering from brain surgery.
- For Vickie Norris, kitchen employee, who is recovering from emergency heart surgery.
- For Becca Curry, a young mother, who has been diagnosed with lymphoma.
- For Kate Wilson, Niece of Brother Ken Kane, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Penny Morotto who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Justin Tarr who is critically ill with brain cancer.
- For Bun Riley, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Joseph Frantz ['75], brother of Mark ['65], David ['66], Roger ['69], and Peter ['78] Frantz, who is critically ill.
- For Cindy Bernet who is recovering from cancer surgery.
- For Jim Spicer who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For John O'Brian who has been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer.
- For Andy Sims who is recovering from spinal surgery.
- For Bill Slattery ['77] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For John Burkey, uncle of Rachel Burkey, member of music ministry, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Annie Trivassos who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nicholas Zanella., who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Jan Botek, wife of Fred, mother of Fred ['85], grandmother of Matthew ['14], Jonathan ['17] and Daniel ['21] Botek, who is undergoing treatment for dementia.
- For Teddy Prusock, nephew of Lower School associate, Nina Prusock, who is undergoing neurological testing.
- For Jimmy Vickers, father of Lower School teacher, Caroline Holtz, who is seriously ill.
- For Brother James Gulnac, C.S.C., who is under hospice care for cancer.
- For Kay Yunker, aunt of Mary Schmidt, great-aunt of Maggie ['12] Schmidt who is under the care of hospice.

**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].**

**TRUSTING GOD:**

"God is merciful, and we must trust Him: that is essentially the Divine Mercy message given to Sister Faustina by Jesus. It sounds simple, almost trite, but when we realize the *extent* of His mercy, it is truly amazing."

—Julie Onderko



**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Molly McKenna who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jerry Walczak, grandfather of Carter DiVincenzo ['19], who is undergoing treatment for congestive heart failure.
- For Charles Babbush, father of Jeffrey ['83] who is critically ill.
- For Ali Priest, who is undergoing treatment for a rare muscular disease.
- For Debbie Cappioni and Alice Bruce, great aunts of Patrick ['22], Daniel ['26], and former Gilmour student, Morgan Miklus, who are undergoing medical testing.
- For Thelma Bingaman, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Peggy Hurley, relative of James ['10] and Connor ['13] Hurley, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Sue Nyberg, godmother of Katie Leavitt, who is seriously ill with cancer.
- For Andrea Trivisonno who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Sister Jean Marie, O.C.D., who is undergoing treatment for a serious heart condition.
- For Mary Lou Lawlor, grandmother of Resident associate, Alec Lawlor who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Ryan Berger ['15], brother of Cameron ['17] who is recovering from injuries sustained in an accident.
- For Drew Franco, son of Brian ['90], nephew of Jeff ['88] and Kristin ['94] Kirkpatrick, who is struggling with a seizure disorder.
- For Michael Palumbo, father of Michael ['14], Marisa ['15], and former Gilmour student, Christian, who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Todd Deranek, relative of Hayden ['28] and Hadley ['29] Bashein, who was seriously injured in an accident.
- For Maureen Kenner, aunt of Katherine ['09] and David Hasler ['13], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Colleen Lowman, grandmother of Rachel Burkey, member of music ministry, who is seriously ill.
- For Dennis Kavran, father of Dennis ['86] and Jennifer ['95], grandfather of Adam ['14] and Madeleine ['16] Miller, who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Donna Farkas who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Lexi Pappadakes, who is undergoing treatment for complications from surgery..
- For Rosemarie Lemieux who is ill.
- For Robert Heltzel ['65], father of Jennifer ['91] and Kathleen ['93] Heltzel, who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Matt Barry ['13], brother of Tim ['12], who continues treatment for cancer.
- For Maria Ricci, friend of Linda McGraw, who is ill.
- For Jeff Warner, brother of Denise Calabrese, who is undergoing treatment resulting from a stroke and seizure.
- For Janice Feenstra, sister of Lisa Habe, aunt of Jack ['19] and Will ['20] Habe who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 Mary Kampman, mother of Mark ['81], Matthew ['85], Dean ['86], and Douglas ['88] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Karen Wanders, mother of upper school Head of School, Jonathan Wanders, who continues in treatment and rehabilitation
- For Betty Herten, aunt of Hope ['13] and James ['15] Herten, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.



**FAITH EDUCATION — DECEMBER 6:**

Faith Education for this year continues. Our Sessions go from 8:45—9:45 AM, with the hope that our children would then participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass. Register your family for classes by contacting Patty in the Chapel Office [[440-473-3560]. If you have any questions, please call Patty in the chapel office. Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility. **Dates for December and January: December 6-13-20 and January 10-24-31.**



**SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

Sunday, November 29: <b>1<sup>st</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
Monday, November 30: <b>St. Andrew</b>	<b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel]
Tuesday, December 1:	<b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel]
Wednesday, December 2:	<b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel]
Thursday, December 3: <b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	<b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, December 4:	<b>5:30 PM</b> [Eucharistic Chapel]
Saturday, December 5: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>
Sunday, December 6: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>

**UPCOMING CHAPEL ACTIVITIES:**

December 6 -----	Faith Education Session #10 Life Teen Meets	8:45 AM - 9:45 AM 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
December 7 -----	Vigil of Feast of the Immaculate Conception	5:30 PM
December 8 -----	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	9:30 AM 12:45 PM 5:30 PM
December 13 -----	Faith Education Session #11 EDGE Giving Tree/Adopt Family Project	8:45 AM - 9:45 AM 11:30 AM - 3:00 PM
December 15 -----	Chapel Council Meeting	6:15 PM
December 20 -----	Faith Education Session #12 Decoration of Chapel for Christmas	8:45 AM - 9:45 AM 11:30 AM

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

All of us carry in ourselves a repugnance for injustice, and we are distressed when we personally witness or suffer divisions that wound. We long for justice where it is denied, and union of hearts and minds where there is painful division. The longing is deep. It is a holy desire. What makes it holy is that, for us, the longing pertains not just to ourselves, but to all who suffer injustice and division. This puts us in global solidarity with one another and God, who desires justice and unity for all, and who sends us His Son to bring this about.

During the liturgical year, we do not hear much from the prophet Baruch. As a messenger and poet of God, he has accompanied the Jewish people into exile and captivity. Jerusalem is their City of Identity — but only in memory and prayer.

The Israelites have been confronted with their infidelities, and long to return to their homeland and their relationship with the God who brought them out of the first exile in Egypt. What we hear is a new song from the prophet. There is hope, and Jerusalem is the center or image of recovery and restoration. The great city — remembered by those now in captivity as beautiful, but in reality reduced to destruction — is pictured with new glorious dressing. And while Jerusalem is the image, it is really the people who are called to return and be adorned with the glory of God, and to embrace personal holiness. The mercy and justice of God will clear the way for this to happen.

The main Advent character arrives on stage in Luke's Gospel [3:1-6]. Luke introduces John the Baptist with direct reference to those who perpetrated injustice and division on the Jewish people of his time.

- Tiberius Caesar was the Roman Emperor, Pontius Pilate his delegate for Judea, and under him was Herod the Tetrarch who ruled Galilee. The imposition of Roman law on the Jewish people under their governance was brutal.
- The High Priest Caiaphas, presiding over the Sanhedrin, was the chief religious authority of the land. Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas and his predecessor as High Priest, still had great influence. Together with the Pharisees referred to in the gospels, they demanded literal interpretation of the laws in Scripture, and strict adherence to them — thus imposing a great and oppressive burden on the Jewish people.

These were the political and religious circumstances when John the Baptist began his mission at the River Jordan. John's call to repentance rings out over the windy roads and valleys of his time. To those who came to hear him he preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." The ones who came were from among those suffering the brunt of the oppression imposed by Rome, Jewish leadership, and the Pharisees. John was telling them that the ultimate relief from the oppression required their own personal renewal — ritualized by the baptism that John performed — to include repentance [sorrow for past sins, and a total and radical change of outlook in our relationship with God and others] and forgiveness — anticipated in the Kingdom of God who alone can forgive sins, a Kingdom now "at hand" with the advent of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

The redemptive events which began with John in a remote corner of Judea were — by God's design — the beginning of the fulfillment of God's concern for the salvation of "all flesh" — which includes us and excludes no one. Luke underscores this theme repeatedly. His concern for all continually pushes us to break down the barriers of injustice and division that deaden our world — just as it did the world faced by John the Baptist. The story that began with John and took hold with the ministry of Jesus and the spread of the early Church in his Acts of the Apostles, is now our story. We are called to confront and deal with the injustice and divisions in our world, and, joined in the Mystical Body of Christ, to replace

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Brother John Thornton, C.S.C.
- For Kathrine Kearney, mother-in-law of CFO Kelley Kearney, grandmother of Chris ['09] and Bridget ['13] Kearney.
- For Joe DeVito
- For Brother Julien Grandmont, C.S.C.
- For Sister Josephine Mariano, C.S.C.
- For Michael Spena, grandfather of Michael ['93] and Rebecca ['96] Spena.
- For Father Paul Pauzé, C.S.C.
- For Deacon Leo McNulty, Deacon at St. Francis of Assisi.
- For Sandra Wally
- For Father Wilfrid Murchland, C.S.C.
- For Joseph Schaut
- For David Dobnikar
- For Father Paschal Tsiquaye, brother of Brother Joseph Tsiquaye, C.S.C.
- For Rita Dufresne
- For Veronique Bourgies
- For Romain Dunet.
- For Fahad Barrak, cousin of Teba Saleh ['16].
- For Charles Gasper

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For Jaylynn Wilcox, a 12 year old girl, missing since November 17.
- For the victims of the violence in San Bernadino.
- For an end to violence in our society.
- For the families who are grieving the loss of loved ones.
- 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.

**BEING THE FACE OF GOD:**

God isn't looking for servants. God isn't looking for slaves, workers, contestants to play the game or jump the hoops correctly. God is simply looking for images! God wants images of God to walk around the earth. God wants useable instruments who will carry the mystery, who can bear the darkness and the light, who can hold the paradox of incarnation — flesh and spirit, human and divine, joy and suffering, at the same time, just as Jesus did. Watch what Jesus does, and do the same thing! —Richard Rohr

### SALVATION IN THE NITTY-GRITTY OF HISTORY:

The term “salvation history” is ideal for describing what our biblical sacred authors experienced. Both the writers of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures encountered a God who worked in their everyday lives. It was those daily, historical events that they tried to share with their readers.

Luke, more than any other evangelist, puts the community’s experience of the risen Jesus into the nitty-gritty of human history. Based on his conviction, he initially posits the “beginnings” of the historical Jesus during the first third of the first century CE in the Roman Empire’s Palestinian province. It was “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod tetrarch of Galilee; his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Traconitis; and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene — during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas” [Luke 3:1-6]. John’s appearance on the salvation scene — shortly before Jesus’ appearance — wasn’t something that happened “once upon a time” — it took place in the middle of other historical happenings.

During my lifetime, we’ve been able to even more accurately place John the Baptizer in his personal historical environment. The late 1940’s discovery of the original five Dead Sea Scrolls showed that the Jewish community living at Qumran in the first century BCE and first century CE, re-punctuated the writings of Isaiah, and Luke reflects this change. Instead of “A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,’” John, following the Qumran version, proclaims: “A voice cries out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’” Among other indications, this leads experts to believe the historical John was a member of that particular community, people waiting for the imminent arrival of the Lord — whom they believed would immediately right the wrongs they’d been suffering at the hands of their institutional enemies.



Can you imagine the humongous surprise it must have been to the Baptizer to eventually discover that one of his disciples — a carpenter from Capernaum — turned out to be the Lord — the one he and his community were anticipating. While he was looking up to the skies for God’s salvation, Jesus of Nazareth was standing right next to him — part of his everyday life.

Baruch would have smiled at the irony of John’s experience of Jesus not only being Messiah, but also God Himself. Four centuries before, he himself saw God’s hand and presence in the return of his fellow Jews from the Babylonian Exile [Baruch 5:1-9]. Though many would have looked at their homecoming as just a political event, the prophet, with his eyes of faith, could perceive “God leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory.” Historically a majority of those in Exile never noticed that it was God who was leading them back to Jerusalem. They — and their descendants — remained in Babylon until the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE! Unlike the prophet, they simply didn’t notice God’s presence.

The author who always brings us back to our daily lives is Paul of Tarsus. Though he still seems to be anticipating the return of the risen Jesus in his lifetime, he reminds his community in Philippi that in the meantime they have been blessed not only with knowledge, but also with “perception” [Philippians 1:3-11]. He prays that both continue to increase, along with the love they have for one another — a love which makes their knowledge and perception possible.

Jesus’ initial followers not only discovered, but also became convinced that when they generously gave themselves to one another, their personal history morphed into a salvation history. They were actually joining in God’s work of freeing people.

While most of us don’t think our personal lives are worthy of a “formal biography,” during this Advent, it might be good to remember that the historical John the Baptizer probably thought the same thing about the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

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

them with the Kingdom of God.

To do this we need to renew our own “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,” just as John’s disciples did — we need to let go of all the unholy hanging-on-to’s in our lives. John is asking us to check out what we are holding onto for our identity and our security. In short, John is asking us to let go of all the old and stale forms of relating with God, and to prepare for something — a Some One — who is coming to be held on to. The familiar is so comforting, and the Baptist is proclaiming the latest surprise in a long history of unusual revelations.

That is the purpose of Advent. Luke’s Gospel reminds us that we have the grace to acknowledge our sins and the sins of the world, to repent and change, to enjoy God’s unconditional forgiveness, and to join in the wisdom and work of our Lord. In doing that, we fulfill what John the Baptist prophesied when he quoted Isaiah — “Make straight his paths, and every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

—taken from a combination of articles written by Father Larry Gillick, S.J. and Father Kevin Kersten, S.J., which appear on the internet

### 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



### YOUNG PEOPLE — JOIN OUR CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

All youths are invited to participate in our CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY Biblical presentation of the Gospel, during the **Children’s Christmas Eve Mass on Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:45 PM**. If seeing is believing then doing is even better. **Are you interested in having your child act out the Gospel this Christmas?** Drama is a good way to reinforce Biblical teachings and encourage children to take what they’ve learned, interpret it, and present it. Please join our cast as we celebrate the church’s liturgical seasons throughout the year. **Rehearsals will be at 11:30 AM on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**. If you have any questions, **Contact Denise Calabrese [216-905-0661] or [d-calabrese@att.net](mailto:d-calabrese@att.net)**, call **Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560]**, or simply **sign up on the sheet located on the easel in the Narthex of the Chapel**.



### 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.

### 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



**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HELL AND HEAVEN:**

A story is told of a soldier who asked a monk: “Teach me the difference between heaven and hell.” The monk said: “You are an obvious coward, not a warrior. Furthermore, I believe you do not know how to use that gun.” The soldier was so enraged that he drew his revolver from his holster to shoot the monk. As he prepared to squeeze the trigger, the monk said calmly: “That’s hell.” The abashed soldier immediately came to his senses and placed his gun back in its holster. And the monk said quietly: “That’s heaven.”

In nineteen days, we shall salute the feast when heaven came to earth as a Child. As a fitting preparation for that feast this second week of Advent, why doesn’t each of us attempt to reproduce heaven on earth in the here and now? Why need we wait for Christmas day itself?

I met a person today who was busy doing such. This woman makes barely above a minimum wage at her job. Her employer gives her neither medical plan nor pension. Yet, despite my words of caution, she mailed a check for \$200 to the Red Cross for the victims of a recent disaster. She was giving not from her surplus, but from her household funds. It was, you might say, her birthday gift to the Christ. Using Matthew’s Gospel as a yardstick, we know that Jesus will never forget it [see Matthew 25:34-37]. In addition, Jesus promises that He will return the gift to her a thousand-fold [see Matthew 19:29]. The Master will not be outdone in generosity.

The monk in our opening story would probably say to the woman: “While the damage done by the disaster is hell, your gift is heaven.” That generous woman deserves not only our commendation and admiration but also imitation in some form by ourselves throughout these next several weeks. She is what this season of Advent is all about. The Son was generous enough to leave the heavens to become what we are. Why then are we not generous enough to reproduce the heavens immediately in our own corner of this global village?

Luke’s Gospel [3:1-6] talks about how John went about the whole Jordan district preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We would like to think that the Baptizer was speaking to hardened sinners, but as William Bausch points out, he was doing nothing of the sort. The record shows that he was preaching not to criminals, but to the Pharisees, Scribes, and the Jewish people themselves — good church-going folk.

In a word, his message is directed squarely at us. While we certainly are aware of our “limitations”, most of us spend more of our time looking privately upon ourselves as just about the salt of the earth. Unhappily John the Baptizer would not be a member of our fan club. In Matthew’s Gospel, the Baptizer is on the record calling us a “brood of vipers!” [see Matthew 1:7]. John the Baptist is certainly no man to mess around with. John continues: “prove your repentance by the fruit it bears” [Matthew 3:8].

And so, the challenge is before us; a change in attitude is called for. Make friends with someone you’re at odds with. Pick up the phone and talk to somebody you haven’t talked to in months or years. Be the first to hold out the hand of reconciliation even though it gets slapped or rejected. Don’t turn your head at shady dealings. Be willing to put some of your possessions on the line. Support the Church — not out of your excess, but out of your substance. Add up your Christmas spending bills that you chalked up for presents, and then slice off 10 percent and give it to the poor. Give evidence that you mean to repent. While great opportunities to help others seldom come our way, the small ones surround us every day. It only takes only a minute to be kind, but the prophet reminds us the end result can remain forever and a day.



the best advice comes from Ruth Burrows, the British Carmelite. In her *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*, she offers us this: “Surrender and abandonment are like a deep, inviting, frightening ocean into which we are drawn. We make excursions into it to test it, to see whether it’s safe, to enjoy the sensation of it. But, for all kinds of reasons, we always go back to dry land, to solid ground, to where we are safe. But the ocean beckons us out anew and we risk again being afloat in something bigger than ourselves. And we keep doing that, wading in and then going back to safety, until one day, when we are ready, we just let the waters carry us away. —taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 5:17-26
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Genesis 3:9-120, Ephesians 1:3-12, Luke 1:26-38
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Isaiah 40:25-31, Matthew 11:28-30
<b>Thursday:</b>	Isaiah 41:13-20, Matthew 11:11-15
<b>Friday:</b>	Isaiah 48:17-19, Matthew 11:16-19
<b>Saturday:</b>	Zechariah 2:14-17, Revelation 11:19-12:6, Luke 1:38-47

**3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Advent:** Zephaniah 3:14-18, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:10-18

**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 2016. There is a **basket in the narthex of the Chapel** to collect any donations you may have. Thank you for your help!

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

We are currently discerning a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training within the next month. 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.** We are always in need of Eucharistic Ministers.

**CHILDREN’S BULLETINS:**

Each week, we are making available a **Children’s Worship Bulletin**. There are **two editions:** [3-6] and [7-12]. They are available on the table as you leave. The Bulletin focuses on the readings for the week. These are wonderful tools for your children to learn more about the scripture readings for the week. We hope you will take them for your families or your grandchildren. Thanks.



**THE STRUGGLE TO TRUST:**

Perhaps the most important thing we ever need to learn is this — it is safe to love! Yes, it is safe to be vulnerable because we are in loving hands. It is safe to surrender because we fall into light — not darkness. It is safe to be weak because the strength we need is found when we give up on our own power. It is safe to give up the hurts we cling to because these lose their force when we are in love. It is safe to trust, to let our loved ones be free, because a power beyond us loves them more than we do, and ultimately takes care of their safety. It is safe to give ourselves over without fear, because, as faith teaches, in the end, all will be well. And it is safe to live our lives with daring because God, as Julian of Norwich assures us, sits in heaven, smiling, completely relaxed, his face looking like a marvelous symphony. The world is ultimately safe. It is safe to love.

But it's not easy to believe that. Perhaps if we had all been loved perfectly — had perfect confidence, and had never been wounded, disappointed, betrayed, or made to cry tears of regret — we would find it easier to believe that it is safe, that we can trust, that we have no need to protect ourselves, and that we do not need to be forever anxious about how we are measuring up, how we are being perceived, how we are being understood, and whether we are worthy of love.

Most of the time we find it hard to trust because we find ourselves wounded, lacking confidence, anxious about many things, and feeling the need to protect ourselves. It is hard to trust, and especially it is hard to show weakness and to be vulnerable. In the air we breathe everywhere — sometimes even in our most intimate relationships — we inhale a distrust that makes us want to show a superior strength, attractiveness, talent, intelligence, self-reliance, and cool detachment. Distrust and self-protection are everywhere. It's hard to let ourselves be vulnerable and to trust that it is safe to love.

And yet, deep down, vulnerability and surrender are what we most deeply want. At every level, we need and want surrender. Morally and religiously, the entire gospels can be put into one word — surrender. Emotionally, psychologically, and sexually the deepest imperative inside of us is simply — surrender. And, deeper than all of our anxieties and our need to protect ourselves, lies a truth that we know at the core of our being — namely, that in the end we cannot take care of ourselves, we cannot make ourselves whole, and we cannot hide our weaknesses from each other. We need to surrender, to trust, to let ourselves fall into stronger and safer hands than our own.

But in order to do this, we need to trust — trust that it is safe to love, to let go, to reveal whom we really are, to show weakness, to not have to pretend that we are whole and self-reliant. This, as we know, is not easy to do. Indeed, on any given day and at any given moment, it is existentially impossible for us to feel safe, to give ourselves over, and to be vulnerable. And so we generally risk the cold misery of detachment rather than risk being misunderstood, rejected, shamed, or seen as needy.

How do we move towards trust? How do we, as Henri Nouwen puts it, move from the house of fear to the house of love?

There is no easy way, no simple formula, no magic bullet, and simply realizing where we need to go is not enough to get us there. Awhile back, at a workshop, a woman came up to me at the break and said: "I agree with what you, trust is everything, but I can't get there!" She speaks for almost all of us.

How can we get there? How do we pull the trigger on trust?

This is a journey that takes a lifetime. To master this is to be a saint. So we shouldn't be surprised if we still find ourselves — at least on any given day — a long ways from where we want to be. Perhaps



This Advent put a wraparound smile on the face of John the Baptist. He sounds as though he needs some cheering-up.

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

**CHRIST CAME INTO THE SHADOWLANDS OF LIFE:**

Isaiah reminds us: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For those who lived in a land of deep shadows — light! sunbursts of light! [Isaiah 9:2]. This is where the story of Advent begins. Almost eight centuries before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah told of His coming. The biggest Christmas gift of all time was announced to people who would not live to see the day of its arrival. They wouldn't know the Christmas story in their lifetime. But we can know it.

But in order to understand the story, we have to understand ourselves and the world that we have created. And so, Isaiah paints the perfect picture of that brilliant moment when our world collides with God's wonder; our darkness is pierced by His light. God didn't come to people who were already "spit-shined" — he came to those who were buried in darkness, desperate for help, and longing for hope.

Have you been living in the land of deep shadows? Most Christmas carols do not talk about daunting shadows or dreary days. Rather they talk sparkle and shimmer. They talk "ho-ho-hoing" and "mistletoeing" — and all of that is fine and fun if you're having a great year. But let's be honest about the fact that this relentless commercialized happiness is not really what lives at the heart of Christmas. Christmas is deeper than that — it reaches into darker places.

Jesus didn't come to cheer us up; He came into the shadowlands we call home to set us free. He came to untangle us from the despair that wraps itself around our joy and peace and purpose. Thus hopelessness is the very first qualification for receiving the bright hope of Christ — and of Christmas. Perhaps you are exactly where you need to be to experience the miracle of Advent after all.

Try this. When the sun goes down, take a candle and a match into a dark room. Sit in the darkness for a few minutes. There in the deep blue evening, consider the difficult things you are facing in your life. Now light the candle, and look at the way the room changes. What can you see that you couldn't see before? How does the flame flicker through the blackness that used to own the room? In what way can His light invade your own darkness.

Advent is a time to keep our hearts focused on the real story — the story that really matters. Ask God to send his light into the darkness of your life.

—taken from the writings of Thomas Newlson, which appear on the internet.

**CHAPEL 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY NOTE CARDS:**

Note Cards of the Vatican Treasure — Our Lady Of Gilmour — are also available for purchase. The card has a beautiful photo of Our Lady of Gilmour — taken by John Reid — on the front. The inside is blank for your message, and the back of the card has a description of the Vatican Treasure and it was brought to the Chapel, along with appropriate credits. **The Cards sell in packets of 5 for \$10.** The Cards are located in the chapel office and are available by contacting **Patty Szanislo at (440) 473-3560 or at [szanislo@gilmour.org](mailto:szanislo@gilmour.org).**

**THE SOUNDS OF ADVENT:**

May the sounds of Advent stir a longing in your people, O God. Come again to set us free from the dullness of routine and the poverty of our imaginations. Break the patterns which bind us to small commitments and to the stale answers we have given to questions of no importance. Let the Advent trumpet blow, let the walls of our defenses crumble, and make a place in our lives for the freshness of your love, well-lived in the Spirit, and still given to all who know their need and dare receive it. Amen.

—Howard Thurman

**THE MESSENGER:**

As we enter this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent, Luke's Gospel introduces us John the Baptist [Luke 3:1-6]. We will hear more about him next week when we will be told more specifically the content of his preaching. Today we are dealing with his appearance on the history's stage as we are told how he fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah. St. Luke is very careful to make sure we know precisely when all this took place, and so he tells us who was the Roman Governor of Judea, and who the local kings were, as well as the names of the priests in charge of the Temple. Luke wants there to be no doubt about what happened, where it took place, and precisely when.

It is important to understand that God works within history. He acts in particular times and places and with certain people. God uses our culture and our particular understandings as well as our customs and traditions as he unfolds his great act of salvation in the world. Faith is not meant to be lived in the abstract — in a world of fantasy. Faith is absolutely concrete and very particular. It is about specific times and specific places and specific people. Ours is a religion that is all about the here and now; it is concerned with the actual world as we experience it. It is about us and about our specific realities, and for this we should be very grateful indeed.

Therefore Advent is not something about the past — or even about the future. It is not meant to be about Jesus being born 2,000 years ago; or about his coming again at some undefined point in the future. Advent is about the here and now. As St. Paul reminds us: "Today is the Day of Salvation" [2 Corinthians 6:2].

St. Luke is also very insistent that John does not begin his ministry of his own accord; he begins as a result of a direct revelation from God. Moreover his ministry is the fulfilment of an important prediction by the Prophet Isaiah [see Isaiah 40:3-5].

If you look at this prophecy of Isaiah you will easily see that it is reminiscent of the journey of the Chosen People through the Desert. Once the People of Israel had been rescued by God from slavery in Egypt, they were led by God through the Desert of Sinai. On this journey — which lasted for forty years — they learned a lot about themselves and about God. They were given the Ten Commandments, and were eventually led after numerous tests of their faith into the Promised Land.

The prophecy of Isaiah is important because it is meant to stress to the People of Israel that they are now about to undergo a completely new Exodus. John the Baptist is its initiator, but it is Jesus of Nazareth who will after three years of public ministry lead the whole world into a completely new path one leading to ultimate reconciliation with God.

John the Baptist begins his ministry by preaching repentance — he invites the people to confess their sins and to seek forgiveness, and to symbolize this by washing themselves in the River Jordan in a primitive rite of Baptism. John the Baptist wants the people to bare their souls, and in an act of humility to seek forgiveness from God. He understood that only by such an act of purification would the People of Israel be ready to welcome Christ into their world and to embrace the salvation he would bring.

Isaiah speaks about a voice crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord." We immediately identify this voice as that of John the Baptist who comes out of the wilderness at a time when no one expects that the "the Lord" — the Messiah — is arriving imminently.

Clearly this is what Luke intends us to infer. John the Baptist is someone exceptional — he comes like the prophets of old, having lived a life of penance in the desert; and he comes with a fiery message of salvation for the people. And like those old prophets, his words are accepted by the mass of the ordinary people, but completely ignored by the leaders and priests who think that he is simply someone come to



winding roads be made straight, and the rough ways of our lives be made smooth, so that the Messiah may rush into our lives unimpeded. And may we see the salvation of our God — for, indeed, the very name Jesus means God Saves.

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

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

Winter is here — another time to once again clean out the closets. Clothing that no longer fits, or has been replaced by new items, can become 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 [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].**

**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, or email Elina Gurney at [gurnev.oh@gmail.com](mailto:gurnev.oh@gmail.com).** Come as a family or by yourself.

**BRINGING UP THE OFFERTORY GIFTS:**

Would you and your family or group like to bring up the gifts at the offertory at Mass? In the past, our Council people have invited people to bring up the gifts, and we have found that many — if not most — of you like to be asked. But in using this method, we may be leaving people out, especially if it is done as a "last minute item". So, we are posting a sign-up sheet on the Easel in the narthex of the chapel. **If you or your family or group would like to bring up the gifts on a certain Saturday or Sunday — or if you are open to doing this at any time — please call the chapel office [440-473-3560].** We look forward to opening this beautiful experience to all in our community.

**WISE WORDS:**

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.

—Mae West



**PREPARING FOR THE LORD:**

Most of us are probably in the middle of Christmas preparations. We are trying to get cards out and gifts bought and wrapped. We are preparing for parties, baking cookies, and generally getting ready for the celebration. The celebration is the birth of Christ — the Divine Presence given to us as one of us. We have to remind ourselves continually that it is for this that we are preparing. All the beautiful traditions that are unique to Christmas — the cards, gifts, carols, and shows — are just reflections of the deep celebration we share when we are united to the One who is both one of us and the Second Person of the Divine Trinity.

In Luke's Gospel [3:1-6], we have a solemn presentation of the establishment of the Kingdom of God — "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" Something major is going to be presented — something that has to be seen in its historical context. That something is the ministry of John the Baptist — "the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." And the words spoken centuries before by the prophet Isaiah now — in John — become the voice crying out in the desert — "Prepare the way of the Lord".

John called out to the people of his time who longed for the Messiah. He also calls out to people of all time who experience the desperation and darkness of a world that rejects God, but who, nonetheless, desire to experience the joy and light of accepting Jesus Christ. John is calling us to prepare — prepare ourselves, prepare our children, and prepare the world for its Savior.

We prepare ourselves by rooting out the darkness of our lives. That is why we go to confession during Advent. We want to clean the house for company — Special Company, the Presence of the Lord. Many say special prayers during Advent. The Advent Wreath is really a prayer meant for families before dinner. Many spend a little extra time reading scripture. Reflect often on Isaiah 9 and 11.



We prepare our children by teaching them the Christmas story — the real story of the birth of a child in utter poverty, in a smelly stable. We tell them about the proclamation of the angels, the joy of the shepherds, and the determination of the wise men. Many families have two different types of Nativity sets — a nice one for display, and a special one for the children for their touching and playing.

St. Francis of Assisi is credited with constructing the first Nativity scene. Do you think that just maybe the "saint of poverty" wanted to show the world that true riches are found in the Love of God, the Love of the Holy Family, and the Love of holy families — families united to the Lord? As you teach your children about the birth of Jesus, let them know that Christmas is about God's Love, not about materialism. One little custom you might want to incorporate into your family is to keep the manger empty until the children are ready to go to bed on Christmas Eve. Then have the children put the baby Jesus in the manger and lead the family in singing *Silent Night*.

We prepare the world for its Savior by emphasizing the reason for the celebration. This is Christmas. Don't say: "Happy Holidays": or "Season's Greetings". Rather say: "Merry Christmas". Invite family and friends to join you at Mass on Christmas. And when you come to Church and see many whom you do not normally see at Mass, welcome them warmly. Let them know that we want them to be here. There are many people who come back to a regular practice of the faith after being welcomed on Christmas. This is because you prepared the way for them to let Christ into their lives.

We are in preparations mode — preparing not just for the many beautiful facets of the celebration, but preparing for the Lord. May our valleys be filled and our mountains and hills be leveled, may our

disturb their cosy division of power and wealth.

While it is true that the one who comes to prepare the way of the Lord is a clear reference to John the Baptist, we must also realize that it also refers to us who live in the present day. For it is our job also to prepare the way of the Lord. It is just as necessary for us to help our brothers and sisters to realize that the Lord is in our midst and that it is essential that they heed his words. It is our task to make the ways of our Master smooth so that all humankind shall see the salvation of our God. We are the John the Baptists of this present world; we are the modern day prophets proclaiming a message of salvation. We are the ones whose task it is to draw everyone's attention to the fact that Jesus is with us and that the salvation he brings needs to be embraced and accepted.

It is our task to invite our neighbors to repentance. This is not easy; no one likes to be reminded that they are sinners and need to seek forgiveness. But if we take our cue from John the Baptist, it might help us. In his day it was apparent to the people that John had already made his own this message of repentance — he had lived a life of penance in the desert. It was clear to everyone that he had already repented of his own sins. His message was therefore completely believable backed up by the fact of him having obviously lived it out in his own life. Like him we too need to have repented and done penance for our sins because it is only through seeing this that those around us will realize that this is something they have to do as well.

This message will be an uncomfortable one for many. Many may even despise us for it. But it is our mission — and it is certain that some will listen and be converted. It is good therefore in this holy season of Advent to be reminded of our sacred duty. Let us all make a resolution to carry out this blessed and vital mission.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet

**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 [11/28/15] ----- \$ 2,513.00**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [11/29/15] ----- \$ 630.00**

**IMPOSSIBLE:**

"Impossible" is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. "Impossible" is not a fact — it's an opinion. "Impossible" is not a declaration — it's a dare. "Impossible" is potential. "Impossible" is temporary.

—Muhammad Ali

**HOPE IN DARKNESS:**

I stared in disbelief as my Twitter feed blew up with news about the San Bernadino shooting. I bounced from news website to news website — the world feeling darker with each new detail and each eye witness testimony. It seemed all too familiar.

When I was in middle school, I remember the broken sense of innocence as they told us two boys shot their fellow students in their high school in Colorado. They told us that we would need to start practicing “active shooter” drills at our school — and the world felt darker.

I remember walking into my World Cultures class my sophomore year of high school to find the television playing scenes of airplanes slamming into buildings as our teacher frantically told us what just happened on that September 11<sup>th</sup> morning. The word “terrorist” became a term we heard daily from that point on — and the world seemed less safe.

In college, I remember walking to one of my classes when I heard about a student at Virginia Tech that violently assaulted several students and teachers on his campus with a weapon. Once more, we began to walk through “active shooter” drills in my courses, as we all were reminded how to escape a deadly situation.

This is only a small part of my history — and yours. Recently, we’ve been reminded of the horrific human capacity to sin, hurt, and destroy. An elementary school in Newton, Connecticut; multiple terror attacks in Paris; outside a Planned Parenthood in Colorado; San Bernadino, California.

I heard someone say: “this is horrific — especially so close to Christmas.” And I agree — it is actually horrific regardless of when it happens. These events remind us how fragile life is, and how vulnerable we are. They frighten us. They leave us asking: “What is going on, Lord? Can’t you come and make this right? Can’t you come and fix this now? What are you waiting for?”

One of the oldest prayers in the Church is spoken in Advent. It is simple — “**maranatha**”. In Aramaic, it is a call of longing — “Come, Lord Jesus.” It is no surprise that in the early Church this expression had profound urgency amidst persecution and fear. **A tension exists within Advent that we often ignore — a tension between the joy of the coming of Christ and the reality that Christ comes into a broken world.**

Jesus’ coming is heralded by angels, and his birth is marked by the visit of kings. But in the Gospel of Matthew, there is also another picture — a massacre of children under the age of two [Matthew 2:16]. The birth of our savior is marked with bloodshed. We get a clear view of why this child has been born — ultimately to give up his life for ours.

We don’t like the focus on that in Advent. It should be a time of rejoicing and waiting to celebrate Christmas. But this year, our eyes must be directed toward that tension. It is the Advent tension between the manger and the cross — the tension between the Christ child, and Jesus who will come again at the end of history.

One of the most difficult realities for us to reconcile is this, especially in the Advent season — **though Jesus wins the victory over sin and death, the effects of sin still remain.** Jesus tells us that he will come again to put an end to suffering and death, but that we have work to do between now and then. When Jesus leaves the disciples with this mission, they went back into a world that was violent. In the years after Jesus’ death, almost all of the apostles were martyred; the temple was destroyed; a major war was fought — and people prayed: “**maranatha**”. And then they proclaimed the Gospel.

Ultimately, this is our hope in Advent — and the hope that we bring to a broken world. Jesus is born into our brokenness — into a world messy with sin. **Jesus is born in the midst of violence and bloodshed.** Jesus comes to open the doors of eternal life for us. We remember that in Advent.

But we also look ahead in Advent. We recognize that our world is still broken, and that we need to do the best that we can to bring healing to our world while we wait for Jesus to bring full healing. **We**

**need to be peacemakers — even when the task seems impossible.**

When we talk about “waiting” in Advent, this is what we mean — we don’t wait for Christmas. We remember the first Christmas because it points us to the second coming of Christ — the one where Jesus wins the final victory. We light Advent candles to remind ourselves that the darkness in this world will never cast out the light, and sometimes that light shines brightest in the darkness. Those candles may not light up an entire room, but they light up those closest to them. Even if we can’t fix the entire world, we can bring people into that light.

That is the mission and the urgency of the prayer. We pray that Jesus will come, and we pray for the grace to work in His name until that day. **We trust that our work isn’t in vain — even when it seems like it is. Even when all the good we do seems wiped out by a senseless act of violence.** Even when the love we bring seems like it is overshadowed by hate. We know it isn’t in vain because Jesus Christ is coming again, and we want to make His message known so that, when He does come, we won’t be the only ones waiting. We will have shared this hope that sin and death and suffering are not the end, and that something great lies ahead of us. We will have helped other people prepare their hearts.

Until that day, we pray and we work. We hope and we share our hope. We weep with those who weep, and we rejoice with those who rejoice. We share Christ, and we pray: **“Lord Jesus, come again. Find us ready to be led back home.”**

—taken from the writings of Joel Stepanek, an associate of the Bible

**LIFE TEEN:**

**Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, our Life Teen group will be discussing how to get the most out of our Advent.** Come and try us out. Life Teen 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. 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. **Our next Life Teen meeting will be on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** when we will be shopping at Aurora Farms Outlet for our Giving Tree and Adopt-a-Family programs. **Life Teen will also meet on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** as we decorate the Chapel for Christmas. Please join us for a wonderful experience.



LIFE TEEN

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

**Our next meeting of the EDGE is on Sunday, Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** when we will be going shopping at Aurora Farms for some families for Christmas — our Adopt-a-Family program. Come and try us out. 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 look forward to your participation. All are welcome. **EDGE will also meet on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** as we decorate the Chapel for Christmas. Please join us.

**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.

