

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer to St. John Paul II ~

O, St. John Paul,
from the window of heaven,
grant us your blessing!
Bless the church that you loved and served and guided,
courageously leading it
along the paths of the world
in order to bring Jesus to everyone
and everyone to Jesus.

Bless the young,
who were your great passion.
Help them dream again,
help them look up high again
to find the light
that illuminates the paths of life here on earth.

May you bless families.
You warned of Satan's assault
against this precious and indispensable divine spark
that God lit on earth.
St. John Paul,
with your prayer,
may you protect the family
and every life that blossoms from the family.

Pray for the whole world,
which is still marked by tensions, wars and injustice.
You tackled war by invoking dialogue
and planting the seeds of love:
pray for us so that we may be tireless sowers of peace.

O St. John Paul,
from heaven's window,
where we see you next to Mary,
send God's blessing down upon us all.
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.

FIRST COMMUNION:

This **Sunday, May 15th**, at the **10:00 AM Family Mass**, many members of our Second Grade Class, and several other students, will be celebrating their first Eucharist. Few of us will argue the fact that one of the times we are closest to God is at our first communion. The faith and openness of a child to Jesus is inspiring. May we all receive the Eucharist with so deep a faith. Congratulations to our children who are celebrating this special bond with Jesus: **Trevor Bilant, Josie Bullock, Jo Callam, Gavin Colleran, Peter Daberko, Ana Duraes, Fernando Duraes, Madeline Everest, Caroline Gardner, Emily Kish, Julia Klein, Timothy Lennon, Robbie MacKinlay, Daniel Miklus, Casey Nakhoda, Louisiana Sawyer, and Javi Swinarski.** Congratulations to all of our children, and also to their parents who have nurtured them in the faith and the love of Jesus. May we always remember that as people of faith — the Church — we too play a very important role in bringing each other into deeper relationship with Jesus.

**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!

**A NOTE OF THANKS:**

We the pillow case dress makers want to thank you for all your donations. The many pillow cases, fabric scraps, rick rack, trim and buttons have been a huge help with this project. Together we have made approximately 400 dresses that have gone to different missions in El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Madagascar, Panama and Uganda. We appreciate your continued support. Thank you again.

TAKE US OUT TO THE BALLGAME:

Join the Our Lady Chapel community as we head to **Classic Park in Eastlake on Friday, July 15th**, to watch the **Lake County Captains** battle the Cedar Rapids **Kernels** — a Minnesota Twins farm club. The **game starts at 7:00 PM, but we'll begin at 6:30 PM with a picnic dinner in the right field picnic plaza and conclude with fireworks!**

Cost is \$20 for adults and \$17 for children [ages 4-12]. The meal includes a 1-½ hour, all-you-can-eat buffet featuring the Captains BBQ menu — two entrees, two sides, chips, cookies and beverages — plus a box seat ticket to the game. The final menu will be determined later. **Payment will be collected in June, but sign up today on the easel** so we reserve enough tickets. The sign-up sheet is located on the Easel in the narthex of the Chapel, **or call Patty in the Chapel Office at 440-473-3560.** See you at the game.

**SCHEDULE CHANGE COMING UP [one time only]:**

Because of graduation, and the Baccalaureate Mass, we will have changes in the Mass times for the **weekend of May 28th and May 29th.** **Saturday evening Mass on May 28th** will be at **4:30 PM**, and **Family Mass on Sunday, May 29th** will be at **9:00 AM.** **This is a one time change because of graduation weekend.**

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Francine Gren, step-mother of Kitchen Associate, Val Gren, who is hospitalized.
- For James Kazel, father of Daniel [*86] and Gilmour counselor, Jamie, who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Mary Burkey, grandmother of chapel musician, Rachel Burkey, who is recovering from a heart attack.
- For Romano Bruno, great uncle of Richard Jones [*20] who is critically ill.
- For Nancy Collins who is under the care of hospice.
- For Carmella DeJohn who is seriously ill.
- For Tony Stricker who is undergoing treatment for a brain condition.
- For Bonnie O'Leary, Middle School Teacher, who is undergoing rehab following surgery.
- For Eva Shea, aunt of lower school teacher, Theresa Stark, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer
- For Ann Ally, mother of former Gilmour teacher Deshia Joseph, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Kate Wilson, Niece of Brother Ken Kane, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Justin Tarr who is critically ill with brain cancer.
- For Jim Spicer who is undergoing treatment for brain and lung cancer.
- For John O'Brian who has been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer.
- For Bill Slattery [*77] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For John Burkey, uncle of religion instructor, Rachel Burkey, 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.

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.

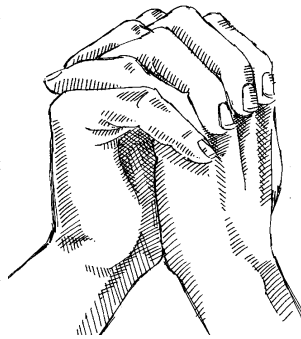
Total Offerings: Saturday [5/7/16] ----- \$ 2,743.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [5/8/16] ----- \$ 947.25

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Katilyn Wene, ten-age daughter of former Kitchen Associate, Stephanie Toma, who is undergoing treatment for meningitis.
- For Robert Vandall who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Donna Pollack, who is recovering from surgery
- For Norb Alerton, former Holy Cross Brother, who is recovering from kidney surgery.
- For Brother Romard Barthel, C.S.C., who is on hospice care.
- For Steven Ciuni, father of Joseph ['77], grandfather of Joseph ['03], Jane ['04], Thomas ['06] and Michael ['08] Ciuni, who is undergoing rehab following a stroke.
- For Candy McKinnon, mother of Gilmour instructor, Katy McKinnon, who is recovering from multiple surgeries as a result of a fall.
- For Joseph Morek ['14] who is recovering from surgery resulting from a military accident.
- For Elaine Willey, sister of Father John, who are undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Stephen Ungrady, father of Emily ['19], who is recovering from a stroke
- For Jim Virant, grandfather of Noah Virant ['20], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Todd King ['87], brother of Christie ['91] King, who is undergoing treatment for mirocondra
- For John DiCillo, husband of long-time Gilmour teacher, Bonnie, father of John ['83], David ['84], Dawn ['86] and Daniel ['88] DiCillo, who is seriously ill with lymphoma.
- For Jenny Blender, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Dorothy Kazel, mother of Daniel ['86] and Gilmour counselor, Jamie, who is undergoing treatment for cancer..
- For Mark LaCasse, brother of Upper School Associate, Linda Wheeler, uncle of Molly ['06] Wheeler, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Sue Nyberg, godmother of Katie Leavitt, who is seriously ill with cancer.
- 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 treatment for cancer
- For Colleen Lowman, grandmother of Religion instructor, Rachel Burkey, 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 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 Karen Wanders, mother of upper school Head of School, Jonathan Wanders, who is seriously ill.
- For Betty Herten, aunt of Hope ['13] and James ['15] Herten, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.



FAITH EDUCATION — June 5:

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 June: June 5**



SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Sunday, May 15: Pentecost	10:00 AM
Monday, May 16: 7th Week in Ordinary Time	5:30 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Tuesday, May 17:	5:30 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Wednesday, May 18:	5:30 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Thursday, May 19:	5:30 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, May 20:	NO MASS
Saturday, May 21: Feast of the Blessed Trinity	5:00 PM
Sunday, May 22: Feast of the Blessed Trinity	10:00 AM

UPCOMING CHAPEL ACTIVITIES:

May 14 -----	Student Make-up Retreat Eucharistic Minister Commissioning	10:00 AM—4:00 PM 5:00 PM Mass
May 15 -----	First Communion	10:00 AM
May 16 -----	Lower School celebrates 1 st Communion Parent Reception in Lennon Board Room	9:15 AM After Mass
May 17 -----	Kairos Leader’s Reunion OLC Council Meeting	3:30 PM—4:15 PM 6:15 PM—8:00 PM
May 22 -----	EDGE meeting [bowling]	11:30 A< - 3:00 PM
May 26 -----	Upper School Awards Ceremony	8:00 AM
May 27 -----	LS Blessing & Promotion Ceremony	9:00 AM
May 28 -----	Chapel Saturday Evening Mass Baccalaureate Mass [St. Francis]	4:30 PM 6:45 PM

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The Jewish people prepared to celebrate the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost — fifty days — by waiting for the seeds to grow into eatable food. They had planted these seeds at the time of Passover — a festival of remembering of how God had brought them out of Egypt and planted them — the Jews — in the new and promised soil of Israel. They prepared by waiting, watching, and hoping for nourishing rain. They would gather at the time of harvesting the first cutting of these plants, and celebrate their faith in the abundant and accompanying God.

This weekend we prepare to celebrate the abundant blessings of the “Wind” of God by being honest about how we have been growing because of the constancy of that Spirit. We can be quite occupied by how we need to grow, advance, and virtue-up in our lives. There are good crops growing in our lives and our relationship with God because of the goodness of God which we can easily negate. God gives in the increase, and we are God’s farm-field. It is good to be honest about the growth we are.

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the early Church dispensed with being casual and a strictly private life-style [Acts 2:1-11]. It might be safer to celebrate this feast by praying that the Spirit rest more upon others around us “whom we would like to see changed” — it’s always easier to deal with change when it’s someone else who has to change. To pray for the Spirit’s coming more into our own individual lives might end up being the change others have been waiting for in our way of being and acting.

Living a heartfull life is at the center of being a spirit-filled person. As we celebrate this feast, we need to ask God to send this mysterious Spirit to us so that we might live more trustingly the mysterious lives we have and are.

The Feast of Pentecost was originally an agricultural festival for the Jews — giving thanks for the early crop. Some of those Jews had become followers of Jesus, and of course, as Jews, they were to come to Jerusalem for the feast. It is in the midst of this gathering that the surprising event of a Holy Wind and Fire Storm takes place.

This Spirit’s coming brings about great changes in the lives of those early “inspired” Jews. The ability to speak and understand different languages is only the first — and even the most superficial — indicators of what happened. They were enabled to understand and speak to the differences within the human community. As they were gathered together to give thanks to God for the abundance of the fields, these men and women were to spread the news “of the mighty acts of God.” Through the Acts of the Apostles, we read of these “mighty acts of God” which present a new sense of Pentecost.

The earth brings forth harvested grain through the planting of human hands and the sun and rain from the skies. The new Pentecost is our celebrations of how God’s Spirit sent from the skies, brings forth a harvest of good works through the cooperation of human hands. In a sense, the Church is a “Pentecost” — it remains a gathering to give thanks for the abundance of “mighty acts of God” which are breathed into the human structure of the Church and into its members. We ponder, sing of, write about, and proclaim that God’s Spirit is faithful to God’s continuous creation.

St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Corinth holds a wonderful physical image expressing the work of the Holy Spirit. The human body has many parts. The human Church, the human race both have many aspects. The Church, like the human body, does many different things, but when guided by the spirit, it becomes the Body of Christ. As our face can reveal an aspect of our total person, so each of us reveals something of the Person and mystery of God [1 Corinthians 12:3-13]. What a great way to really live!

A great way not to live is hiding because we are afraid. John’s gospel [20:19-23] displays this well. Locked in, not even a real gathering, the remnant is sitting in separation. Jesus rises in their midst and breathes the Spirit upon their fragmentation after the greeting of peace. His presence removes their

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Kelly Katzenmeyer.
- For William Rasoletti, son of Norma Rasoletti [Anniversary]
- For Jeanne Bender, mother-in-law of Kitchen Associate, Kathy Bender.
- For Eleanor DeStasio.
- For Dale Dardis
- For Sister Lois Petersen, O.S.U.
- For Rose Miranda, grandmother of Dominic DiPuccio [*82], and great-grandmother of Dominic [*14], Matt [*17], Sophia [*19] and Armand [*19] DiPuccio.
- For David Paulus
- For Father Maurice Amen, C.S.C.
- For Brother Jarlath D’Souza, C.S.C.
- For Rudi Licursi, grandfather of Maureen [*05] Licursi.
- For Mike Porter, father of Megan [*17] Porter [anniversary]
- For Heriberto Jaime, uncle of Patsy Schauer.
- For Chuck Gole
- For Darwin Rossi.
- For Edward Gilroy
- For Karen Bradley, mother of Joseph [*96] and Michael [*98]
- For Kenneth King [*58]
- For Cheryl Saterlee
- For Paul Ward.
- For Gerald Walczak, grandfather of Carter DiVincenzo [*19].
- For David Lascher
- For Father Edwin Kadzielawski, C.S.C.
- For Charlotte Smith, grandmother of Jeffrey [*80], Joseph [*82], and Jerrod [*87] Borkey, great-grandmother of Jerrod [*12] and former Gilmour Student, Ian [*17] Borkey.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For a person who lost their job
- For a person recovering from a stroke
- 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 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.

THE SPIRIT BRINGS US INTO UNCHARTED WATERS:

I'm afraid that the axiom "If you don't use it, you'll lose it" even applies to the Holy Spirit. It's clear from our Christian Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth didn't share his Spirit with us just so we could lock him/her away in our dogmas and conveniently forget about his/her presence in our daily lives. The historical Jesus was convinced that those of his followers who were seriously committed to carrying on his ministry would need his Spirit to guarantee that they would be carrying it out as he wanted it to be carried out.

This is certainly presumed in our Scripture Readings for this Feast of Pentecosts. In one of the earliest documents of the New Testament — Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth — the Apostle conveys his belief that the Christian community can't exist as Jesus planned it to exist without the Spirit. The Body of Christ can only function as a body when all its members correctly employ the gifts which the Spirit has showered upon them. More than anything, that Spirit develops and presumes the uniqueness of each person — "to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." In other words, if each Christian isn't given the freedom to develop his or her gifts, the common good of the Christian community will suffer [1 Corinthians 12:3-13].

In the Book of Acts of the Apostles, the Spirit's presence notoriously creates confusion and tension. It's no accident that Luke employs fire, wind and noise to accompany the Spirit's Pentecost arrival. If we want peace, quiet, and equilibrium in our Christian communities, we don't want the Spirit in our communities. The Jerusalem crowd initially presumes that those who had received the Spirit have simply been drinking too much — they're not acting like "normal" people act.

Scholars who deal in "quantum theology" have an interesting take on the confusion the Spirit brings. Going beyond just this planet to discover God's presence and activity in the entire universe, quantum theologians constantly remind us that change and evolution only take place in the universe when there are huge upheavals. If everything proceeds along peaceably, there simply is no change or evolution. For example, it's no accident that we refer to the beginning of creation as the "big bang." In many ways, the Holy Spirit is the "big bang" of the Christian community. Without his/her presence and activity we would never be doing what the risen Jesus expects us to do. We can't biblically expect to be a spirit-led church without wind, fire and noise constantly being a part of whatever we accomplish. That's how the universe works, and it's how the Spirit works.

John's Gospel, however, contradicts Luke's picture. John has the Holy Spirit come on the community not on the Jewish feast of Pentecost but on the Christian feast of Easter. According to his theology, Jesus rises from the dead, ascends into heaven, returns, and sends the Holy Spirit all on the same busy day. Also, unlike Luke, John connects the Holy Spirit in the life of the community with forgiveness of others. He faithfully agrees with other authors of the Christian Scriptures that the Spirit is the essential force helping us carry on Jesus' ministry, but his hooking up the Spirit with forgiveness is unique. In John's mind, the Spirit is the force who helps us discover how to forgive those who have hurt us.

Quantum theologians probably smile at John's insight. Nothing causes more turmoil in the Christian community than forgiveness. It completely destroys the equilibrium of revenge. We usually know what to expect when someone retaliates for injuries. As Pope Francis often reminds us, forgiveness sends us into uncharted waters. Only the risen Jesus' Spirit can guide us through the uncertainties such unexpected actions bring.

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



absence and they rejoice to hear his words and see the signs of his glory. As with all his encounters with the broken, lost and hurt, Jesus meets them with their pasts, in their now-times, but has a future-eye for their lives — Mission! Jesus meets them, and the early Church has a Reconciliation Service right on the spot. He then says: "I do not retain your sins, so whose sins are you going to retain?" He will tell them that as he has been sent to them, they are sent out and into and for this world he came to redeem. What a way to live!

The work of the Holy Spirit is to make holy flesh — the incarnation in each of us. We remember the story in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel where he was taken out into a valley covered with bones. God's breath moved over this semi-cemetery and flesh recovered the bones and the bodies recovered life [see Ezekiel 37].

This yearly celebration recalls the present, now-happening, breathing of God's Spirit among us. In our part of the northern hemisphere grass, flowers, trees, berries and the ever-present dandelions are all in bloom. The warming breezes have brought our dead lands to life. It is this wonderful event of God's continually bringing us back- up- to more life which is nature's celebration. It is our celebration as well.

The Holy Spirit "overshadowed" the empty womb of Mary "and there was Light" — the Word became flesh [see John 1]. That same Spirit is sent to "overshadow" us and bring our flesh into that same "light" and "Life" and bring forth the Flesh of Jesus again and again. As our Jewish ancestors planted the crops and relied on God to give the increase, so do we as the Church in our times. The Spirit who has given us life, gives life also through us to the world. We plant the seeds, and God's Spirit like the warm breezes brings forth a new abundance of life.

Jesus is still breathing his Spirit upon us. He continually urges us to "Mission!" — to a life of forgiving and giving, leading to a life of holiness. We are the Spirit-charged holy flesh of our bodies.

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

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 gurney.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.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

The story is told of Napoleon Bonaparte boasting to a Vatican cardinal that he would destroy the Church. In a casual and indifferent tone of voice, the official replied: “Good luck, Your Majesty. We priests have been attempting to do just that for centuries.” In effect, the bishop was doffing his scarlet biretta in salute to the Holy Spirit. That Spirit dwells comfortably — and sometimes very uncomfortably within the Church. Try what anyone might, the Church will not go away precisely because the Third Person of the Holy Trinity is on the job around the clock. Napoleon thought the prelate was pulling his imperial leg — he took on the Church, and he was rudely dethroned. The Church survived, and the former emperor wound up beating off mosquitoes as a full-time occupation on the damp island of Saint Helena somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean.

Think of the top athletes in any sport you can name — baseball, cricket, soccer, whatever. Without these players, their respective teams would be a big nothing. With them, their teams are contenders for championship journeys. Sometimes the stars and their fellow players because of them will wear championship laurels. These top-of-the-line performers lend an all-important spirit to their teams. Without them, the other players would be non-contenders and possibly losers.

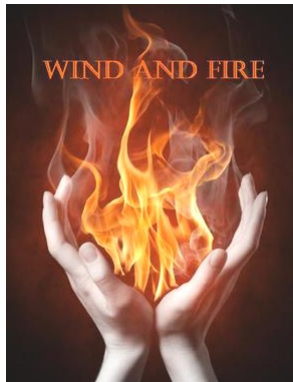
Without the Holy Spirit, the Church would be at best a third rate operation — or, perhaps better, a non-operation. But with the Spirit the Church is today able to survive its many difficulties. Some commentators go even further, pointing out that the Holy Spirit played a strong hand in bringing down the Communist empire — particularly in Germany and eastern Europe — in the last century. And who are you and I to say they are wrong?

What everyone does agree on is that it is the Holy Spirit that keeps the Church on her feet — sometimes bruised and bloody, but still valiantly swinging away. Many times that swing is good enough to be a knockout punch. And all of this is happening twenty centuries plus after its foundation in Palestine by Jesus!

Scientists tell us that space ships are moved out of the atmosphere of the earth by a particular fuel combination that results in millions of pounds of all-important thrust. Racing car enthusiasts giddily inform us that sleek race cars move around the track at an outrageous 200 miles per hour. They are of course propelled by an exotic mixture of powerful fuels. AS in the case of the space ships and racing cars, we Christians and our Church are likewise fueled by an awesome fuel — the Holy Spirit. And pound for pound, the Spirit is a winner. What other figure in the five thousand years of recorded history can match His track record? None of the champion players you can name are hardly in His league. But who or what is?

The Book of Acts of the Apostles speak of the Spirit in terms of wind and fire [Acts 2:1-11]. A writer has noted that a wind can move a clipper ship across an ocean at a brisk pace. First though it must take the effort to unfurl its sails. A fire can warm the corners of a cold room, but it must be lit and then tended. And so it is with you and me — we possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit from day one of our Baptisms. They were quadrupled by our respective Confirmations. They rest “unpeacefully” in our spirits — waiting to be called to birth and life. If they are, then we fly and we take on a golden glow. Try as one might, there is no way of disguising a genuine Christian. Unfortunately, there are so few genuine ones. Soren Kierkegaard sums up the situation of many of us. He most unflatteringly compares us to domesticated geese. Invariably we talk of flying — “We have wings. We should fly. Let us use them.” But unfortunately, we stay firmly glued to the ground.

But perhaps this Pentecost can be different for us. As somebody once said: “we do not need more



by, and radiating, gratitude is to be dangerously deluded. We must be clear about this, lest, as poet William Stafford puts it: “Following the wrong God home, we may both miss our star.”

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

CLEAN OUT THOSE CLOSETS AND SERVE OTHERS:

Spring is here— and Summer is coming. 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 spring and summer 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].**

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday: James 3:13-18, Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday: James 4:1-10, Mark 9:30-37

Wednesday: James 4:13-17, Mark 9:38-40

Thursday: James 5:1-6, Mark 9:41-50

Friday: James 5:9-12, Mark 10:1-12

Saturday: James 5:13-20, Mark 10:13-16

Feast of the Blessed Trinity: Proverbs 8:22-31, romans 5:1-5, John 16:12-15

PROVIDE A RIDE:

Volunteers needed to provide rides “to and from” Mass for members of Our Lady Chapel — both Saturday Evening Mass at 5 PM and Sunday Mass at 10 AM. **This ministry will involve only providing rides to the Chapel for Mass.** Volunteers must be 21 or older. Please provide your name and phone number so that we can form a call list. We have a growing need in the chapel and would like to provide this service to our members. **Contact Tina Newton at 440-991-6670**

**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



LIVING IN THE SPIRIT:

Few expressions so succinctly summarize what is asked of us as Christians as does the expression: “to live in the Spirit.” Too often, however, this phrase is used in a way that is too pious, too over-charged with charismatic fervor, or too theologically abstract to have much meaning for ordinary people. It may well summarize Christian life, but it can also be little more than a very vague platitude. What does it mean: “to live in the Spirit?”

St. Paul, in his writings, attempts to clarify this — he is anything but piously deluded or theologically abstract. Rather he speaks with a clarity that leaves almost no room for vagueness or false sentiment. He begins by speaking negatively — if in our lives there is “lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factionalism, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like”, then we are not living in the spirit, pure and simple. Conversely, we are living in the spirit when, in our lives, there is “charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity” [Galatians 5:22].

This is a valuable insight because, if we take Paul’s word’s seriously, we can never delude ourselves into identifying true life in the Spirit with what it is so often confused with — namely, false piety and over-privatized sentiment, and confrontation out of hurt, paranoia, and narrow loyalties. When the fruits of the Spirit are absent — irrespective of how spiritually confident and self-righteous we might feel or how right our cause might seem — then the Spirit too is absent. We must be clear about this. The Spirit is present only when charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity are deeply in our lives — and permeate the air around us.

In theology, the Holy Spirit is classically defined as “the love between the God and Christ, the Father and the Son.” It is in meditating on this concept that we come to some understanding of what it means to live in the Spirit. Let me try to elaborate on this by using an image — that of romantic love in its peak fervor.

Imagine a man and a woman who are deeply, passionately, and completely in love. What will characterize their relationship? Constant giving and receiving, resulting in an ever deeper relationship and an ever intensifying gratitude — which will leave them both, daily, feeling ever more mellow, joyful, peaceful, mild, patient, chaste, and wanting to reach out and share with others what is so quickening in their own lives. Moreover, their love for each other will create, around them, an ambience, a climate, an atmosphere, of charity, joy, peace, patience, mildness, and chastity. The movement of giving-and-receiving-in-gratitude between them will create a warm hearth where others will spontaneously come to seek warmth in a world which offers too little peace, patience, joy, and the like.

Such a relationship can be a modest indicator for what happens in the Trinity — how the Father and the Son generate the Spirit, and what results from this generation. The Father constantly creates and gives life. The Son receives life from the Father and gives it back in gratitude. This then — as is true in all relationships wherein gift is received lovingly — makes it possible for the Father to give even more to the Son. As this flow of life — this giving and receiving — goes on, and gratitude intensifies and an energy, a spirit — the Holy Spirit — is present.

This Spirit, since it is generated by gratitude, naturally is a Spirit of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, and chastity. It is also a spirit that is naturally incompatible with idolatry, adultery, violence, gossip, factionalism, jealousy, rage, and infidelity.

When we meditate on how the Holy Spirit is generated, we are under less illusion as to what it means to live in the Spirit. To believe that we are living in the Spirit when our lives are not permeated



of the Holy Spirit; rather, He needs more of us.” Go make a difference.

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

FINDING THE SPIRIT:

John’s Gospel tells us that the disciples were gathered in a locked room for fear of the Jews [John 20:19-23]. It is Sunday evening — the third day since their Master, Jesus of Nazareth, was apprehended and executed by the Romans. We can imagine something of their mental and emotional state — deeply fearful for their own lives; completely dispirited since they had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah who would save them; horribly guilty for running away when Jesus was arrested and needed their support; and totally confused about what they would do next. Suddenly, Jesus is in their midst, proclaiming: “Peace be with you.” Then he shows them the wounds in his hands and feet and repeats: “Peace be with you.” Jesus does not berate them for their lack of faith or chastise them for their cowardice — he simply offers them a greeting which conveys understanding, love, and forgiveness. After repeating his greeting of peace, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and declared: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

We all know something of the fear, hopelessness, guilt and confusion experienced by the disciples after the death of Jesus — and some of us can testify to the transforming power of Christ’s peace and the gift of the Spirit. After suffering a heart attack, Sam, an engineer, who had little experience of fear throughout his life, became surprisingly anxious about many things — especially death. Feeling weak and vulnerable, he read about Cardinal Joseph Bernardin who dealt with his terminal cancer by “befriending death.” Sam began praying every day that Christ would breathe the Holy Spirit upon him to help him befriend death. Over time he found that the more he was able to accept death as part of life, the better he was able to manage his daily fears.

Jill who suffered an unwanted divorce just two years into her marriage was disheartened and cynical about life in general — and men in particular. Nevertheless, she continued to participate in the liturgy — receiving communion every Sunday. She joined a support group for divorced persons sponsored by her parish, and once a week tutored a first grade girl in an inner-city school. After a couple of years, she began to develop more positive personal thoughts and feelings — I can still have a fulfilling life; I must learn to forgive those who hurt me, including my ex-husband; I see now that Christ’s peace is more powerful than the cynicism that threatened to poison my soul; I am learning to trust the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen me as I get on with the often confusing task of making a better life.

In what way have you experienced Christ’s peace and the gift of the Spirit in your own life?

—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet



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 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.

WISDOM:

“Moving on is simple, it’s what we leave behind that’s hard.”

THE SPIRIT AT WORK TODAY:

At some point in most Catholic Churches this weekend, you will probably here the phrase: “today we celebrate the birthday of the Church.” But the truth is that this phrase ought to require a good deal of qualification before it slips off any tongue. By using the words — “birthday of the church” — we tend to imply that the Church sprang fully formed into being. Sure the Church had to grow up, but the implication is that all the essentials were there from the start. It tends towards the assumption that Peter was swiftly acclaimed as the first Pope, and the ten remaining apostles were soon regarded as bishops, and everything went smoothly after that. But nothing is further from the truth. There are hundreds of issues and assumptions that would have to be quietly glossed over if we were to fall in with such a scenario.

If the apostles are the bishops, then who are the priests? And why is the word “priest” never even mentioned in the New Testament? And how come there is no reference to any ritual of ordination of anyone in the scriptures? And where do the Cardinals fit in? One could go on and on asking similar tricky questions — as many over the centuries have done.

The key to escape this “craziness” is to realize that Christ bequeathed his followers the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide the Church. At the Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down upon those gathered in that locked room, and filled them with the earnest desire to go out and proclaim the Gospel to each person in his or her own language [Acts 2:1-11]. The first impulse of the Spirit is therefore a missionary impulse. The task given to the apostles and early disciples is to open the hearts and minds of the people of the world to the Good News. And the disciples certainly took up this task — they travelled the length and breadth of the known world to bring the message to as many as they could.

It is only later that the organizational questions come in. It is only as a result of the expansion through the world and the resulting growth in the number of believers that it becomes necessary to answer questions such as: “What does baptism consist in?” “Who is authorized to preside at the Eucharist?” “What does authority in the Church mean?” These, and a myriad of similar questions, are still being worked out today. Indeed it was only finally agreed that marriage was one of the seven sacraments as late as the year 1215. And astonishingly, 2000 years after the first Pentecost, the precise role of the laity is still not clear.

The tolerance of Christianity in the Roman Empire declared by Constantine in the Edict of Milan in the year 313 was clearly an important turning point in the history of the Church. For it was then that Christianity became not merely a tolerated religion — it became the established religion of the whole Roman Empire. Before then you couldn’t be an army officer if you openly professed Christianity; after that point, with a few exceptions, you couldn’t be an army officer unless you openly professed Christianity.

And, for good or ill, with establishment comes institutionalization. In the space of a very few years we moved from a loose arrangement of house churches to one with a centralized bureaucracy and a system of governance not dissimilar to the structure of the Roman Empire itself.

The whole point of all of this is that the work of the Holy Spirit did not begin and end on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is alive and well and is working in the Church right down to the present day — and he will continue his work until the very end of time. It is precisely through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that all our institutions and structures came into being. But what we have to be careful about is whether these are fixed in stone for all time. We have as a Church to keep things under review and to



left their hiding place and publically proclaimed Jesus Christ. Before Pentecost they feared being caught and killed. After Pentecost they only feared not being true to the Spirit.

We also have to leave the security of our hiding places and publically proclaim Jesus Christ — we can’t keep silent in our homes when the gifts of God are being thrown into the garbage. For example, many have reduced marriage to an egotistical celebration of temporary romance. We have to stand for the sacrament as given to us by the Lord and proclaim marriage as a vocation from God. In the case of late term abortions and partial birth abortions, many have devalued life to the point that a matter of inches determines for them the difference between a woman’s rights and murder. We have to take a stand for life as a gift from God from womb to tomb. Yes, we may be destroyed by the popular crowd. But we have to be true to ourselves and true to the Spirit who has formed us into who we are.

St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: “No one can say: ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service, but the God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit [1 Corinthians 12:3-7]. We need to use the spiritual gifts we have received so others can find Christ. We each have powerful ways of bringing others to Christ. We each have a share in the Holy Spirit.

We need to talk so the Spirit can speak. We need to talk so others can hear the Spirit. We need to talk. St. Francis of Assisi said: “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.” We need to talk with our lives. We need to be so deeply devoted to our Lord that Christian is who we are — not merely what we say, or even what we do. When our speech and our actions flow from our union with Christ, then others are drawn by the Spirit to enter this union. A number of years ago a terrible tragedy hit a family in our parish. People rallied around the surviving widow. She wasn’t Catholic — at the time. But she became Catholic because she wanted what those others had. They talked with their lives. She heard the spirit and sought unity with them in Christ.

The elements of the world that have rejected God have condemned themselves to babel — their lives are as meaningless as their words. But they do not have to continue suffering. There is hope available. There is harmony available. There is peace available.

In the Upper Room Jesus said to them, His disciples: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit” [John 20:19-23].

We have been empowered to bring peace to a world that longs to be rescued from chaos. May we have the courage to talk with our lives so the Spirit can speak to their hearts.

—taken from the writings for Father Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet.

LIFETEEN and EDGE BIBLE STUDY — this Summer:

Once again this summer, we are gathering at various summertime places to do our Bible Study. **High School and Middle School [6-7-8] Students**, as well as our **college students** who are in the area for the summer will come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. **Adults are also welcome.** **Our first gathering of the summer will take place at Chagrin Falls City Park [across from the Pop Corn Shop on Wednesday, June 8th at 6:30 PM.** Places that we have gather in the past have included Chagrin Falls Park, Pizzazz by John Carroll, and Mitchell’s Ice Cream Factory on Cleveland’s West Side. It is amazing to see people come up to us — or look over at us — and ask what we are doing. When they find out that we are doing a Bible Study, they are moved. **What we need is suggestions on Spiritual topics that you would like to discuss.** So give your ideas to Father John or to one of the leaders of LifeTeen or EDGE. Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful summertime activity. **Normally during the summer months, we will meet for Bible Study on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, but at times it will vary because of schedule conflicts.** Plan on joining us. You’ll have a blast.



WE TALK; THE SPIRIT SPEAKS:

I want to begin by giving a quick summary of CS Lewis' book: *That Hideous Strength* — the third book in his science fiction trilogy. The National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments, or N.I.C.E., had pretty well taken over Edgestow, a college town in England. N.I.C.E. was determined to expand its influence to dominate not only the country, but eventually the world. N.I.C.E. offered untold wealth — all through the advancement of science and technology. People were willing to make numerous sacrifices to be part of N.I.C.E. — including their dignity, their faith, and their God. You see, although outwardly polite and scientifically efficient, deep in the bowels of the N.I.C.E. headquarters was the evil one, seen as a disembodied head who was the head of all their operations.

The hero and heroine, Mark and Jane Studdock slowly come to realize the evil that has domineered their world — Jane through her dreams, and Mark by being forced to take a position writing propaganda for the company. They, Edgestow, England, and the world appeared to be powerless before the evil. Everyone was either under its spell or was suddenly missing. N.I.C.E. continued to grow, continued to win over the opinions of humankind. Jane and Mark sought help beyond that which man can provide. All seemed lost until the Banquet at Belbury — provided by N.I.C.E. to celebrate its victories. A prophet appeared and cursed N.I.C.E. with the curse of the Tower of Babel. When Jules, the public head of N.I.C.E. got up to speak, he spoke gibberish. No one could make out what he was saying. Others arose to speak, but no one could understand them either. Then they turned on each other. A riot ensued, during which wild animals that had been caged for later experiments were released. The leaders of N.I.C.E. were killed — most killing each other. Evil died off and order was restored.

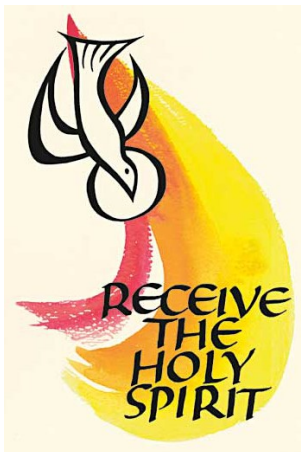
I find it brilliant that C.S. Lewis called on the biblical account of the Tower of Babel to conclude this book. He nailed it. In Genesis the people of the world wanted to show that they were more powerful than God. God responded by confusing their language. They then made war on each other [see Genesis 11].

The story of the Tower of Babel stands in radical contrast to the events of Pentecost. The disciples of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit and then proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the people who were in Jerusalem. People from all over the known world hear the disciples in their own language. The apostles are really just talking, but the Spirit they had received was speaking. According to the Acts of the Apostles, three thousand people became Christian that day. They were united by their determination to spread the Gospel. They were united by the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:1-11].

This was not a matter of the translators at the United Nations. The people who heard the Apostles' words heard the Holy Spirit. They themselves became empowered by that Spirit to spread the Gospel. They brought Christ to their families. Many brought Christ beyond their families to the world.

Let's look at those first apostles. How could it ever be possible that commoners from Palestine would have the power to lead the world to Jesus Christ? These people seldom left Galilee. And yet by the time they died, people in Greece, Macedonia, Asia Minor, Italy, Egypt, Ethiopia and other sections of Africa, and India and other parts of Asia — perhaps even as far west as Spain — were all calling Christ their Lord. These men and women didn't do this — the Holy Spirit did this. They talked; the Spirit spoke — and the world listened. Many followed.

The Holy Spirit is also powerful in our time. We have received this Power at our own personal Pentecosts — our confirmations. We are now capable of transforming lives — even capable of transforming the world. But we have to be willing to talk for the world to hear the Holy Spirit speak. The disciples who were locked up in that Upper Room on Pentecost Sunday received the Spirit and then



be open to the promptings of the Spirit the whole time.

Let's take some examples. One would have to have their head in a bucket of sand not to realize that there is a crisis in the priesthood today. We in the West are undergoing a time of transition. The collapse in Church attendance is one symptom; another is the crisis in vocations to the priesthood, and to the religious communities. However much we want things to stay the same the Church is certainly going to look very different in ten or more years' time. We have to have confidence and realize that, whatever transitions we are going through, this is not because the Holy Spirit has gone away. He is still with us and will undoubtedly guide us through the difficulties ahead.

And the Holy Spirit is not only with the Church as a whole — he is with each individual member of the Church. That is what the Sacrament of Confirmation is all about. And the Holy Spirit accompanies us in our pilgrimage through life — guiding us through life's transitions and the many vicissitudes we experience.

The Church did not spring into being with all its structures and doctrines in finished form. Neither did we understand all the implications of our faith at the moment of our Baptism — or even our Confirmation. Rather, we gradually grow in understanding; we develop and deepen our faith on our journey through life. It is at the moments when our faith is challenged and tested that we most need to turn to the Holy Spirit and pray for his guidance and ask for the gift of discernment to help us make the right choices — choices that will lead us forward; choices that will bring us closer to God; choices that will bring our human potential to its fulfillment.

The Feast of Pentecost is indeed the "birthday of the Church", but there are many more birthdays ahead for the Church — many more challenges to face, many more opportunities for the Church to deepen and strengthen fidelity to the Divine Savior, its founder and sole reason for existence.

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

LIFE TEEN:

Our final regular LifeTeen meeting of this year will take place on Sunday, June 5th when we will **honor our graduates and discuss our Summer Bible Study — a very popular series of gatherings each summer.** Come and try us out. Life Teen generally 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.** If you can't join us on June 5th, **our next meeting will our first Summer Bible Student [see article on page 13] which will take place on Wednesday, June 8th.** Please join us for a wonderful experience. Please continue to remember all our teens and young people in your prayers.

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

Our final regular EDGE meeting of this year will take place on Sunday, June 5th when we will **honor our 8th graders who are moving into a venture in their life's journey. We will also discuss our Summer Bible Study — a very popular series of gatherings each summer.** Come and try us out. EDGE generally meets right after Sunday Mass — from **11:30 AM—1:00 PM** in the **Lennon Board Room.** Our EDGE program is open to **all middle school aged young people [Grades 6-7-8].** Come and find out what **the EDGE** is all about. If you have not joined us before, that's OK. **Just call the office and let us know that you are going to be coming.** We ask you to do this because there will be food involved. Our EDGE Youth Group has a Faith-Service-Social component, and we look forward to your participation. All are welcome. If you can't join us on June 5th, **our next meeting will our first Summer Bible Student [see article on page 13] which will take place on Wednesday, June 8th.** Please join us for a wonderful experience.



THE ONE BIBLE VERSE I ALWAYS PRAY WITH:

There is no question I receive more from people online or at events than: “Hey Mark, what’s your favorite Bible verse?” Of course, questions about whether or not Matt Maher has more gray hair than I do come in as a close second — but I digress.

There is possibly no question easier to answer, yet more difficult.

Choosing one “favorite” Bible verse, for me, is like trying to choose a favorite child. It’s impossible — although, my favorite child is often the one who is not sugar-ed up and acting like a demoniac. You see, different “seasons” of life bring with them different needs and struggles, joys and failures. In this way and for this reason, every season has a different verse that I tend to lean on or look to for support, direction, or just plain hope.

I have several favorite verses, to be honest.

- After a long and tiring day of ministry, I find solace in “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” [Nehemiah 8:10].
- When the Lord feels distant, or falls silent, I lean into: “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” [James 4:8].
- In those times when my family or I am suffering, I rush to: “he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away” [Revelation 21:4].
- In times where I’m overwhelmed with gratitude and God’s goodness, I turn to: “Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” [Psalm 95:2]. I also love: “How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?” [1 Thessalonians 3:9].
- In times of confusion, I lean on: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” [Proverbs 3:5-6].
- When the future looks bleak, I pray: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” [Romans 8:28] and: “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you” [Jeremiah 29:11-12]. I pray these until I actually trust in those words again.



Beyond all of these great nuggets of timeless wisdom, however, there is one verse that encapsulates each of these sentiments and more. It comes from the Prophet Isaiah, given to him at a time of great darkness, when he and his nation were falling into hopelessness: “Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand” [Isaiah 41:10].

I love this verse on so many levels. It is clear and concise. It is present and unwavering. It is strong, but still tender, challenging yet comforting. In short, it is everything a good Father should be.

There is no command more repeated in Scripture than “fear not.” The repetition of that command is

not because God is forgetful, but because we are. God knows that we are often tempted to give in to fear. However, pay attention to the “why.” God tells us not to fear because He is with us.

Think about the first time you were left alone as a child or lost sight of your parent in a crowded store. Fear comes like a tidal wave. Yet that moment your eyes lock onto your parent again ushers in a reclaimed peace and security. How often in your life are you filled with fear? If we are present enough to the situation and aware enough to pray — and call God into the situation — that fear quickly turns to dust.

Pay close attention to what the Spirit is saying through the prophet Isaiah. Not only does God bid us not to fear, and remind us of His eternal — dare I even say “Eucharistic” — presence with us; He even tells us there is no reason to dismay, for He is God.

God is God — I am not. No matter how hard we try or how often we act like it, that simple truth brings freedom and peace. There is a God Who cares for me and about me and is with me and desires a relationship with me. What we call a storm, He calls a path. Moses didn’t part the sea, nor Peter tread upon it because they willed it — not because God did.

This second part of my favorite verse invites me — and you — to trust in God’s power over my own. God shifts the gears slightly, making three promises to us:

1. The Father will strengthen you.
2. The Father will help you.
3. The Father will uphold you.

You’d be wise to commit these promises and, actually, the entire verse to memory. Write them down in your own handwriting. Plaster them on your mirrors, your walls, your dashboard. Tattoo them on the insides of your eyelids if it’ll help you.

God’s not going anywhere. He will fight the battle for you [Exodus 14:14]. He will be our help, our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer [Psalm 18:2]. He will be there too, when we fall or jump into the pit and He will lift us out [Psalm 40:2]. Like a good father, He will take us by the hand and lead us to victory, as the verse promises in its conclusion.

People are often surprised when I share this “favorite verse” with them. It’s as though they think that I never doubt or struggle — like the person holding the microphone or writing the book must “have it all figured out.” To be clear, the only thing that I’ve figured out is that I have nothing figured out, except this: I need Jesus. I need Jesus more and more every day. I cannot imagine my life without Him nor would I want to do so.

Acknowledging your need for God does not make you weak — it makes you self-aware and honest. Admitting that you don’t have it all together does more than make you merely human — it makes you humble. The more you learn to look to and lean on God’s promises, the easier it becomes to trust in them and, ultimately, in Him.

I don’t share these verses, write, speak, or tweet because I have nothing better to do. I do it because I have no One better to share. I don’t have all the answers, but I know the Answer — and His Name is Jesus Christ.

If you’re still reading this, I’d like to end with a challenge. I cited about a dozen verses in parentheses above. More often than not when we read a blog or chapter we don’t actually take the time to look verse citations up for yourself. I’d like to ask you to do it this time. Grab your own Bible and highlighter. Open to each and let God’s truth pierce your heart and penetrate your soul in a new way.

Ultimately, it doesn’t matter what my favorite verse is — it’s about whether or not I let the Word of God dwell in me richly [see Colossians 3:16] — and whether you do. Life is not a wrestling match of “God versus you” but, rather a love story where God verses you — all you have to do is turn His holy page each day and let Him.

Happy reading.

—taken from the writings of Mark Hart, the Bible Geek.