

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ AN INDEPENDENCE DAY PRAYER ~**

Dear Lord,  
There is no greater feeling of liberty  
than to experience freedom  
from sin and death  
that you provided for me through Jesus Christ.  
Today my heart and my soul  
are free to praise you.  
For this, I am grateful.

On this Independence Day, I  
am reminded of all those  
who have sacrificed for my freedom,  
following the example of your Son, Jesus Christ.  
Let me not take my freedom —  
both physically and spiritually —  
for granted.  
May I always remember  
that my freedom  
cost others their very lives.

Dear Father,  
I am so thankful for this nation,  
and for all the sacrifices others have made  
to build and defend this country.  
Help me to live my life  
in a way that glorifies you.  
Give me the strength  
to be a blessing in someone's life today,  
and grant me the opportunity  
to lead others  
into the freedom that can only be found  
in knowing Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.  
phone: [440] 473-3560 or 216-570-9276 [cell]. e-mail: blazekj@gilmour.org

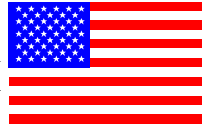
# Our Lady Chapel



*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.*

**INDEPENDENCE DAY — NO MASS ON JULY 5<sup>th</sup>:**

Our nation has such superb mottoes: “Liberty and Justice for all.” “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” “All are created equal.” “In God we trust.” How do you make these words ring true? As Christians, how do we live in peace and good will as one nation with other peoples? On July 4<sup>th</sup>, we give thanks to God for the land placed in our care, and for all peoples who call this land their home. **Because of a retreat conflict, Father John will not have Mass on July 5<sup>th</sup>.** Our holiday Mass schedule will resume on Labor Day. But please take time in a spirit of gratitude to celebrate the heritage of our nation.

**FAITH EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN:**

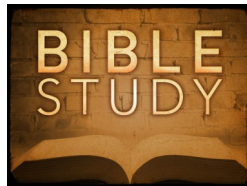
**We are going to resume Faith Education Classes for our children, beginning in the fall.** So it is important that you register your child. If you have a child — or know of a child — who is not enrolled in a Catholic School, and who needs to receive faith education, please enroll them in our Faith Education experience. Our **Faith Education Program** will help to fulfill your on-going religious education. **Our program runs from grades K-8. Students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to participate in our Life Teen Program.** We look forward to having your child join us in learning about and sharing our faith. **Please call the Chapel office [440-473-3560] with the needed information in order to enroll your child in our Faith Education program. Enrollment for next fall can be made at this time.**

**SATURDAY EVENING MASS & WEEKDAY MASS TO RESUME:**

Both Saturday Evening Mass and Daily Weekday Mass will resume with the beginning of the New School Year. **Saturday Evening Mass will resume on Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM. The Daily Weekday Masses will resume on Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>.** **The Daily Mass Schedule will be announced each week;** the schedule will fluctuate based upon the many other Masses that Father John says throughout the School days. So mark your calendars..

**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — JULY 7<sup>th</sup>:**

**Because of the many family graduations occurring during this time,** we will return to our normal Wednesday bi-weekly meetings of our Virtual Bible Study on **Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.** The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather our favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word. **Our topic for this Bible Study will be: Prayer.**



**If you text or email Father John [blazekj@gilmour.org] he will send you the zoom link and password. This is an important step to prevent negative intruders.**

We also need your help — we need future topics. **So, if you have a topic that you would like us to discuss, please let Father John know.** Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. **We will meet every other week — topic to be decided at the end of the previous meeting.** Plan on joining us. You’ll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord’s invitation: “I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart”. [Jeremiah 24:7].

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For John Weathers, who is undergoing treatment for liver cancer.
- For Mike Hiscar, who is seriously ill with a rare medical condition.
- For Bruce Schwartz, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Bill Barrett, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Joseph Sikes, a 2-year-old children who is hospitalized with a brain tumor.
- For Nick Salupo, uncle of long-time Housekeeping Employee, Natasha, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease.
- For Sarah Johnston, Head of Old Trail School, who is recovering from cancer surgery, and undergoing further treatment.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish [‘30], who is undergoing treatment for many medical issues.
- For Michelle Redmond who is having ongoing health issues
- For Chuck Vanmeter who is undergoing treatment for cancer of the mouth.
- For Danny McDonald, infant son of Therese Roche McDonald [‘01] who is undergoing treatment for epilepsy.
- For Christopher Geschke, who is undergoing treatment for autoimmune illnesses.
- For Margaret Carlin, who is preparing for hip-replacement surgery.
- For Lois Grano, who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Serena DiCillo, daughter of David DiCillo [‘84] and Polly Duval DiCillo [‘84], and granddaughter of long-time Gilmour teacher, m Bonnie DiCillo, and niece of John [‘83], Dawn [‘86], and Dan [‘88] DiCillo and Laurie Duval Muller-Girard [‘81]
- For Doris Azzarello, who is recovering from Knee surgery.

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For the nation of India, afflicted with overwhelming cases of COVID and death.
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- For a growth in awareness of the blessing of family life.
- For all those struggling with various addictions.
- For an end to sexual abuse and lack of respect for human persons.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.
- For a greater awareness of our call to create a more humane and just society.

**NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:**

We have two booklets with the Novena to Blessed Basile Moreau. There is a blue booklet which is used when one is praying for a personal intention or healing; there is a gold booklet which is used when you are praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novena was composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family to join in prayer through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.



**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Dennis Hager, who is critically ill with Kidney Failure.
- For Billy Wessel, uncle of long-time Housekeeping Employee, Natasha, who is critically ill with COVID-19
- For Cailin Stubbs, mother of Kiki [‘23] and Trevor [‘26] Bilant, who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Mary Curran, mother of Megan [‘10], Carolyn [‘12], and Catherine [‘17] Curran, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nick Pudar, who is recovering from brain surgery and undergoing further treatment.
- For John Zippay, who is critically ill.
- For Addison McKito, sister of Aidan McKito [‘24], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.
- For William Foster, father of Will Foster [‘21], who is undergoing rehab resulting from a brain aneurysm.
- For Vicki Veldon, aunt of Allie [‘11] and Joseph [‘12] Lencewicz, who is critically ill as the result of Myloma
- For Cary Knupp who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Darlene Lonardo, mother of Joseph Lonardo [‘00], and grandmother of Angelina [‘22] and Giana [‘22] Lonardo, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Kelly Lozick Brown, who is undergoing treatment for cancer
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie [‘17], Frank [‘18], and Mia [‘19] Nannicola, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jill Shemory, mother of Adam Shemory [‘08], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Kevin Bogdon, who is undergoing treatment for Lymphoma.
- For Christine Maharg, mother of Lily Maharg [‘21], who is seriously ill with cancer.
- For Sammy Tidy, a young person, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Dave Howard, uncle of Gilmour Art instructor, Susan Southard, who is battling cancer.
- For Brian Fitzgerald, who is seriously ill with brain cancer.
- For Margaret Malarney [‘24] who is seriously ill.
- For Bernice Girgash, aunt of Basketball Coach and Counselor, Dan DeCrane, and great aunt of Lexie DeCrane [‘34], who is undergoing treatment for cancer..
- For Krishna Gupta, Sister of Science teacher, Neena Goel, aunt of Nikhil [‘13] and Nupur [‘17] Goel, who is undergoing treatment for a brain bleed
- For Tara Hyland [‘07], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Chris Nash, cousin of Basketball Coach and Counselor, Dan DeCrane, and 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin of Lexie DeCrane [‘34], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Karuna Singla, Sister-in-law of Science teacher, Neena Goel, aunt of Nikhil [‘13] and Nupur [‘17] Goel, who is undergoing treatment for bone cancer.
- For Melita Chiacchiari, mother of Mark [‘94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco [‘96] who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian [‘09], Rosa [‘12] and Edwin [‘17] Heryak, who is undergoing treatment for MSA.
- For Tom Podnar, father of Lower School art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, who is awaiting a heart transplant.
- For Jan Poorman, who is under the care of hospice.



**COME TO THE FEST:**

The FEST 2021 is only 5 weeks away! Join us for our Annual Catholic Family FESTival on **Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup> from noon until 8:00 PM. Gates open at 10 AM.** This year, there will be both an in-person and virtual format of The FEST! This year **FEST 2021 will be held at Brookside Reservation in Cleveland’s Metro Parks** [the address is 3900 John Nagy Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44144]. It’s a great new venue and we are looking forward to seeing you in-person. The reason for the move is to accommodate more people safely — but there is a limit. It still will be a day of faith, family, and fun. **There is a \$10 fee for The FEST** [if someone is unable to pay this, there will be a FEST In-Need Fund which will help underwrite the cost of tickets on a case-by-case basis]. Come and hear the best of the best of the national Christian artists: *We Are Messengers, Tauren Wells, Danny Gokey, for King & Country* . The day also includes dynamic activities for all ages, opportunities for prayer and reflection, and a large outdoor Mass will conclude the day.



This year’s theme for the FEST is **Take Courage**. After a year of being tossed about in the storm [see Matthew 14:27], our future is bright and hopeful because the Lord is with us. He said to those earlier followers — and each of us — “Take Courage, it is I.” We can walk forward into a bright and hopeful future not because the storm or the pandemic has passed, for our Courage and our Hope come from the Lord. With Jesus, we walk together into a future full of hope and promise. Together we will ‘take courage’ and celebrate the faithful love of God in our lives.

**And don’t forget, if you can’t join us in person, the FEST will also be virtual.** So whether “in-person” or virtual, join in for a day of faith, family and fun.

**SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

Sunday, July 4: <b>14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> Public Mass & Live Stream
Monday, July 5: <b>Observance of Independence Day</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
Tuesday, July 6:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Wednesday, July 7:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Thursday, July 8:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Friday, July 9:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Saturday, July 10: <b>15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
Sunday, July 11: <b>15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> Public Mass & Live Stream

**CHAPEL PICNIC WILL NOT TAKE PLACE THIS SUMMER:**

**Our Chapel Picnic which normally would have taken place will not happen this summer because of COVID. It will take place next summer on Sunday, July 10<sup>th</sup> following our 10 AM Mass.** Join us from our **Chapel Indoor Picnic which is scheduled to take place on Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup> following our 10 AM Mass.** We look forward to our community being back together again to celebrate each other during these special times. So mark your calendars.



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

The Scripture Readings for this 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time are all about identity — who God is, who Jesus is, and who we are, and how the Holy Spirit works to bring us closer together. But the question is: are we open to what that means in our lives? We do not always pay attention even when the Lord speaks to us and empowers us. Instead, we often fear what listening to God can mean in our lives. Encountering God and listening to him can put constraints on us, and make us vulnerable. We do not like that.

When we entered the grace-life through Baptism, we were anointed also into Christ’s manner of living as a prophet. To be a prophet means more than being able to predict the future — it means living as humans were meant to live. There is a certain non-conformity to the way Jesus lived as prophet, and while extending the divine love towards humanity, he did not expect, demand, or manipulate popular acceptance.

Ezekiel was very aware that the people he was sent to did not much like listening to God when the going got rough, or when things were going their way. It was his job to remind them sternly that the Lord was still their God, and that He had a message for their salvation. And whether they heed these words or not, they are going to know that a prophet of God has been among them [Ezekiel 1:28, 2:1-5]. Some of the people listened, and some did not.

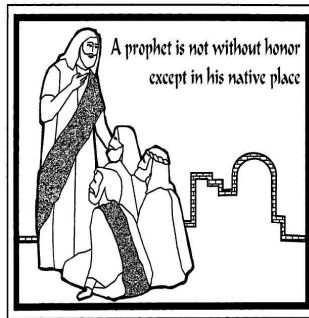
There is something for us to learn here. Being faithful to the grace of one’s baptismal vocation almost always means living as an insult to the spirits, manners, and dependencies of this world’s ways. Living as a faith-filled person in today’s world almost always places us with the marginalized — those who walk away from being identified with our past, or who live by doing only those actions which create a popular image. We are prophets when our life style reflects an alternative to the easy conformities of our cultures. Ezekiel had to stand up; Jesus and the disciples had to stand up for who they were [Mark 6:1-6]. We also need to stand up and stand by who God says we are, and how we will find peace by how we live.

This weekend in the United States we are celebrating the successful rebellion against King George and the English domination of our country’s beginning — commonly known as July 4<sup>th</sup>. There were rebels who desired to live free from what they experienced as tyranny. Independence and freedom are so precious to the human heart, and yet we live constantly under the tyranny of what can appear as freedom.

As stated above, Ezekiel gets a “stand-up call”. He is to prepare to go to the people of Israel who have become hard hearted — they are in a constant state of rebellion against a God whom they experience as a tyrant. Ezekiel is told to go to them so that they will at least know that God is still sending them invitations through a prophet’s presence. God empowers Ezekiel by commanding him to literally eat the scroll upon the message is written [see Ezekiel 3].

Today we see Jesus returning to his hometown [Mark 6:1-6]. The crowd who has been listening to him and watching his miracles can only see and understand him because of his family roots. He is the carpenter’s boy — the son of Mary down the road. They are confined by what they know, and what they know is not enough. Despite what Jesus could demonstrate in terms of God’s power, or the words He spoke inspired by the Holy Spirit, if the people did not like what they heard, they would either dismiss him or run him out of town. Jesus remarks that a prophet or special person is not accepted at home where people think they have him or her in a convenient envelope.

While we were growing up a friend of mine was kicked out of the neighborhood drug store and told never to return again — he had caused the owner some grief more than a few times. Twelve years later — having grown into a wonderfully responsible young man — he went into the drug store in order to get something for his mother who was ill. When he walked in the store, the owner looked up and said: “I told you out!” This is a true story, and it is not a unique one either. Jesus is someone new and different; he



**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Carl Heltzel [‘73], brother of Paul [‘63], Bob [‘65], Larry [‘66], and Mike [‘83], Heltzel, and uncle of Jenny [‘91], Katie [‘93], Ryan [‘96]
- For John Jeresko
- For Jack Landskroner
- For Theresa Dragga.
- For Father Jerome Lukachinsky.
- For Annie Phinnessee, aunt of Food Service Associate Director, Bobbie Bonner.

**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.



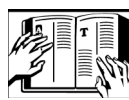
**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

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.



**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].**



**CHAPEL ENVELOPES:**

Over the course of COVID-19, many people have been mailing in donations to the chapel. Now that we have begun to assemble again, many are also looking to replace their envelope supply. We really appreciate this, as our collections are obviously way down. **If you would like us to send you a supply of envelopes, please call Father John or Patty at the Chapel Office [473-3560], and we will get them**

**WEEKLY OFFERING:**

**Thank you to those who have begun to send in weekly offerings. We really appreciate it.** Here are the offerings that we have received throughout **the week prior to July 18-19.** Thanks for not forgetting about us.

Offerings-----[week of June 26]-----[paypal]----- \$ 120.00  
 Offerings-----[week of June 27]----- \$ 1,400.00

**PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH WEAKNESS:**

The earliest Christian author, Paul, reached that tough conclusion very quickly after his conversion — “I will boast most gladly of my weaknesses”, Paul tells the Corinthian Church, “in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. For when I am weak, then I am strong” [2 Corinthians 12:7-10].

At first, this statement seems to be a total contradiction in terms — something that doesn’t make sense on paper. Yet it works! Using a modern idiom, the Apostle’s telling his community: “Try it! You’ll like it!” It’s hard to explain a faith experience. Unless we’re courageous enough to actually experience it, it’s something only theologians discuss — rarely a truth we make our own. But if we’re serious about becoming other Christs, we have to be willing to imitate the first Christ.

With that imitation in mind, it’s important to listen carefully to Mark’s Gospel [6:1-6]. There are several things to note on this occasion. First, Mark initially mentions that one of the reasons Jesus’ hometown folks put him down is because he’s a nobody — “Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon?” Obviously, carpenters were far down on every first century CE Palestinian economic ladder. It didn’t take a lot of smarts to make your living just sawing and hammering nails in wood. Certainly, it didn’t make anyone an expert in theology, nor provide them a platform from which to preach God’s word. No good Jew is obligated to listen to an uneducated bumpkin.

Second, at the end of the passage Mark makes an unbelievable — for Christians — statement: “Jesus was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from laying his hands on a few who were sick and healing them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.” How can this be? We were taught Jesus, as God, is able to do anything — we even had a grade school discussion on the possibility of his drawing a “square/circle!” You mean Mark’s informing us there’s something not even God can do? Without peoples’ faith in him, Jesus is helpless.

Matthew, in his account of the story, changes Jesus from being a carpenter to “being the son of a carpenter” — quite a switch. This itinerant preacher no longer has a lowly occupation. In Matthew’s gospel [10:5-15], Jesus becomes, like Ward Cleaver — a man without a profession. No longer can he be put down for where, or how he works.

Second, Matthew also changes Mark’s comment that Jesus “could not” work any miracles to Jesus “did not work” any miracles. The presupposition is he could have done so, but for some reason, freely decided not to. A huge difference.

In both situations, Mark, agreeing with Paul, provides us with a weaker Jesus than Matthew. We presume the historical Jesus found no problem serving God in a way that exposed his weaknesses. No doubt he frequently reflected on the problems Ezekiel experienced as a prophet while preaching to his people [Ezekiel 1:28, 3:1-5].

The late Rudolf Bultmann often reminded his students that Jesus, the preacher, eventually became Jesus, the preached. Long before his followers began to preach him, the historical Jesus had to deal with the weakness that accompanies preaching God’s word. If we’re really another Christ, we’re the preaching, not the preached other Christ. We imitate a mentor who had to discover the strength that comes from falling back on God’s strength, not his own. There’s no other way to do what God expects us to do.

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

**FOOD AS THE SOURCE OF GRATITUDE:**

Food offers a constant opportunity to take in gifts with gratitude, which is one of the fundamental practices of the spiritual life. Every time you eat is a chance to give thanks for all those many links in the great chain of being that brings nourishment to your body and your soul. It’s a chance to be grateful for the miracle of your body, which can take food and turn it into the miracle that is you

has been ordained to be so, but others mistrust and reject his differentness.

Many of the great saints — from Peter and Paul to modern-day, holy people — have had to live with their pasts in the presence of those who knew them before their conversion. More than that, each of us has to live with our pasts which might be known only to ourselves. We can be tempted to reject, resist, and deny the newness — the graceful growth of the healing of Jesus within us. We have many experiences of our being rebels ourselves — demanding, and fighting for our independence. The great freedom for us as humans is to recognize God, not as tyrant, but as creator and sustainer. God continues sending us prophets, and prophetic moments and events to make us aware of our rebellion — God calls us to live less troubled lives, resulting in giving others lots of grief more than a few times.

Growing, changing, becoming new again are all very frightening, but Ezekiel had to eat the scroll — and we too must eat God’s word and share his life’s grace in the Eucharist. Jesus did not argue, defend, or reject his neighbors — he continued being who he was, and doing who he was as prophet. The questionings of others did not move him to question himself; Jesus remains a question mark in the minds of those who thought they knew the answers. We who follow Jesus are moved to live not as commas, but always as exclamation points and question marks ourselves. Jesus left his watchers and listeners scratching their heads by what he taught, and by what and how he did things. We may have scratched our heads many times at these ways. Slowly, we grow in his style of expanding the envelopes in which we have, or others have, put us. We are meant to rebel against the tyrannies that hold us captive of becoming who God wants us to be. Our relationship with Jesus frees us to be a puzzlement, a head-scratcher to others — one whom, “they shall know that a prophet has been among them.”

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

**OUR LOVE OF COUNTRY:**

Today, as we celebrate Independence Day, we thank God for our nation. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus returns to Nazareth — his native place [Mark 6:1-6]. It’s natural to feel fondness for a person’s native land.

Still, it doesn’t always happen. When I was a young man, I considered myself more a “global citizen”. I saw our country’s many failures, and did not want to be identified with them. I looked down on patriotism. Today I realize that this attitude is a mistake.

Pope St. John Paul said this: “If we ask where patriotism appears in the Decalogue, the reply comes without hesitation — it is covered by the Fourth Commandment, which obliges us to honor our father and mother.” We love our parents not because they are perfect or because they never do anything wrong. No, we honor them because Jesus has commanded it. And he promises that if we honor our parents, we will have a long and prosperous life. Something similar applies to love of country. We love our country not because it is perfect but, because only by loving country can we make it better.

We have reasons to love our country. I think about my grandfather. At the end of the nineteenth century, he left a country with an ancient class system that kept people down. He came to a nation that gives people opportunities. Grandpa and his two brothers started a small logging operation. They earned enough to help relatives back in the old country. Eventually he brought my grandma here. In spite of their age, they had two children. I am grateful for the opportunities America gave to my grandparents — and continues to give to so many.

I know that some of our ancestors did not have the same good fortune as my grandparents. Still, we are all here together. If we are going to make our nation better, we have to begin with love and gratitude. We are called to be grateful not only when things go well, but also when they do not. St. Paul talks about God giving him a “thorn in the flesh” [2 Corinthians 12:7-10]. What exactly that thorn was, we don’t know. But we know that God reminded Paul that “my grace is sufficient”.

We are called to love our country not because our nation is perfect, but because only by love and gratitude will we make our nation better. We take to heart these lines from the Preface of the Mass for Independence Day: “Jesus spoke to us a message of peace and taught us to live as brothers and sisters. His message lives on in our midst as our task for today and a promise for tomorrow.”

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom, which appears on the internet



**OUR NEED TO BE IN CHURCH:**

The bishop asked the monsignor: “How was my homily?” The monsignor replied: “You were brief.” The bishop responded: “I try never to be tiresome.” The monsignor quipped: “You were tiresome too.” The nineteenth century English poet, Alfred Tennyson, wrote: “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.” Was that a cute throwaway line or did Lord Tennyson know something we do not? The answer to our question is to be found in the prayer life of Jesus.

During boyhood, Mary and Joseph annually took the Child to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in the Great Temple. It was a costly journey for this working-class family. And don’t forget exhaustion — the trip was about a five day walk over ninety miles. The sun would blister them in the day, and the nights were freezing cold. But each year, faithful as the sunrise, they loaded the old donkey and moved south. When Jesus became a Man, He continued to go to Jerusalem for the solemn feast. Furthermore, every Saturday in Nazareth, the Master picked up His weekly contribution envelope and took Himself to His synagogue or parish.

There He worshipped publicly and received instructions. This procedure He followed until He knocked the dust of Nazareth off His sandals for good at about age 30, and began his public ministry. But Mark’s Gospel shows that He continued weekly public worship after leaving His home town. Today Mark explicitly mentions that Jesus was present in a synagogue [Mark 6:1-6]. The next time you want to skip weekend Mass, you might want to dwell on this point. Perhaps a line from Saint Padre Pio might help: “If we understood the Eucharist, we would risk our life to get to Mass.

Some wannabe intellectuals say: “If the homilies were better, I would go.” The only answer for that is the response of the grizzled old pastor: “If it’s laughs you want, catch a TV comic. If worship, I’m your man.” Can you imagine the number of dull sermons that Jesus of Nazareth must have been subjected to over thirty-three years? How many times must Jesus have put His knuckle deep into His mouth to stifle laughter at some theological gaffe from a well-meaning rabbi? Yet, He faithfully went each Saturday.

“I don’t go to church because there are so many hypocrites there.” Do you really think there were no such deadbeats around the Teacher during His public worship days? Incidentally, we always have room for one more hypocrite. And, as Andrew Greeley puts it: “If you can find a perfect church, join it. But realize that as soon as you do, it ceases to be perfect.”

Deadly homilies and hypocrites notwithstanding, the Nazarene felt obliged to go to public worship. To paraphrase CS Lewis, he wanted to tune into the secret wireless of God. If Christ did all this, so of course should you and I. An even careless reading of the Gospels reveal that the Teacher invested His time in private prayer as well. It was a given that every Jewish family would have a schedule of daily private prayer. This would be particularly true at meals. This custom Jesus continued to the end — as the Last Supper indicates.

His public ministry had to be very busy. Yet, He put aside quality time for private prayer. Check it out in Luke. He writes: “Crowds pressed on Him. But He retired to a mountain and prayed” [Luke 5:16]. In Mark: “In the morning, He got up, left the house, and went off to a lonely place, and prayed there” [Mark 1:35]. If the Master had not spent so much time in public and private prayer, He could have cured so many more hundreds, if not thousands, of their physical ailments. One must thereby conclude He considered prayer not a luxury item, but a necessity. It is a must-do for us. John tells us the servant is not greater than the master and the pupil not greater than the teacher [John 13:16]. Given the example of the Nazarene, why then do we assign prayer to the fringes of our lives? Why is it not one of the essentials of our brief existence? “To pray is to expose the shore of the mind to the incoming tide of God.”

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

**BEING PRESENT TO GOD AND LIFE:**

Shortly after his conversion, St. Augustine penned these immortal words: “Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness, I plunged into the lovely things that you created. You were with me, but I was not with you” [Confessions, 10:27].

Augustine — sincere, but pathologically restless — had been searching for love and God. Eventually he found them in the most unexpected of all places — inside of himself. God and love had been inside of him all along, but he had hadn’t been inside of himself.

There’s a lesson here — we don’t pray to make God present to us. God is already present, always present everywhere. We pray to make ourselves present to God. As Sheila Cassidy colorfully puts it, God is no more present in church than in a drinking bar, but we generally are more present to God in church than we are in a drinking bar. The problem of presence is not with God, but with us.

Sadly, this is also true for our presence to the richness of our own lives. Too often we are not present to the beauty, love, and grace that brims within the ordinary moments of our lives. Bounty is there, but we aren’t. Because of restlessness, tiredness, distraction, anger, obsession, wound, haste, whatever, too often we are not enough inside of our ourselves to appreciate what the moments of our own lives hold. We think of our lives as impoverished, dull, small-time, not worth putting our full hearts into, but, as with prayer, the fault of non-presence is on our side. Our lives come laden with richness, but we aren’t sufficiently present to what is there. A curious statement, but unfortunately true.

The poet, Rainer Marie Rilke, at the height of his fame, was once contacted by a young man from a small, provincial town. The young man expressed his admiration for Rilke’s poetry and told him that he envied him — envied his life in a big city, and envied a life so full of insight and richness. He went on to describe how his own life was uninteresting, provincial, small-town, too dull to inspire insight and poetry. Rilke’s answer was not sympathetic. He told the young man something to this effect: “If your life seems poor to you, then tell yourself that you are not poet enough to see and call forth its riches. There are no uninteresting places, no lives that aren’t full of the stuff for poetry. What makes for a rich life is not so much what is contained within each moment — since all moments contain what’s timeless — but sensitive insight and presence to that moment.”

Poetry is about being sufficiently alert to what’s in the ordinary.

Augustine was lucky that the clock never ran out on him. He realized this before it was too late — “Late have I loved you!” Sometimes we aren’t as lucky — our health and our lives must be radically threatened or taken from us before we realize how rich these in fact already are, if only we made ourselves more present to them. If everything were taken away from us and then given back, our perspective would change drastically. Victor Frankl — the author of *Man’s Search for Meaning* — like Augustine, also was lucky. He had been clinically dead for a few minutes and then revived by doctors. When he returned to his ordinary life after this, everything suddenly became very rich: “One very important aspect of post-mortem life is that everything gets precious, gets piercingly important. You get stabbed by things, by flowers and by babies and by beautiful things — just the very act of living, of walking and breathing and eating and having friends and chatting. Everything seems to look more beautiful rather than less, and one gets the much-intensified sense of miracles.”

The secret to prayer is not to try to make God present, but to make ourselves present to God. The secret to finding beauty and love in life is basically the same. Like God, they are already present. The trick is to make ourselves present to them. Rarely are we enough inside of our own skins, present enough to the moment, and sensitive enough to the richness that is already present in our lives. Our experience comes brimming with riches, but too often we are not enough inside of it. Like the young Augustine, we are away from ourselves, strangers to our own experience, seeking outside of ourselves something that is already inside of us. The trick is to come home.

God and the moment don’t have to be searched out and found. They’re already here. We need to be here.

Karl Rahner was once asked whether he believed in miracles. His answer: “I don’t believe in them. I rely on them to get through each day!” Indeed, miracles are always present within our lives. Are we?

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

**SCANDAL OF THE INCARNATION:**

In his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul addresses a community he knew all too well. He loved them in spite of their petty competitiveness and pretensions to wisdom and holiness. When Paul wrote this part of his letter, he had just finished a surprisingly brief description of his extraordinary experience of visions — what we would call mystical experiences.

In the next breath, he adds that God kept him from being too complacent by sending an “angel of Satan” to give him a “thorn in the flesh” [2 Corinthians 12:7-10]. People — curious about the details of Paul’s life — have speculated over and over about what he was talking about, but Paul didn’t get specific. If he had, readers in later centuries would have been less likely to get caught up in curiosity and have paid more attention to why Paul referred to this problem in the first place.

In talking about his weakness — whatever it was — Paul subtly taught about prayer and ministry. In regard to prayer he says: “I begged the Lord that it might leave me.” He tells us that when he begged Christ — three times being a way of saying “a whole lot” — the answer was: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So much for “Ask and you will receive!”

Paul is driving home the point that prayer opens us to God’s will. That leads us to conclude that genuine prayer is a path that always leads us beyond ourselves. When we think of it that way, we realize that prayer is our lowly human way of addressing the God whose plans are so much bigger than ours that offering our desires is like our offering of bread and wine in the Eucharist — we bring what we have in order for it to be transformed. God dares us to believe that the raw ingredients of our lives contain the seeds of the kingdom of God.

Mark’s Gospel is the story of Jesus’ unimpressive showing in his hometown [Mark 6:1-6]. As had happened before, Jesus surprised the crowds with his teaching, but this time instead of addressing a crowd of strangers in Capernaum, he was doing the equivalent of preaching at a family reunion. His message about the nearness of the kingdom of God and the need to take on a new attitude got its most skeptical reception among his own kindred. People who had known him since his swaddling clothes days knew better than to have outsized expectations about anything that could come from Nazareth.

The crux of the problem was the “scandal of the incarnation” — the shocking possibility that God could reveal self through ordinary people and events. The scandal of the Incarnation frightens us because God comes so close that we must respond directly and personally, without the protection of rituals and philosophies. The people in the synagogue at Nazareth heard Jesus’ message, but they chose familiar limitations over divine possibilities. It was easy enough to have faith in the God who spoke long ago to Abraham and Moses, but such happenings in their own time and place went beyond the limits of credulity — Jesus’ message did not fit inside their religious imagination.

Ultimately, the people of Nazareth were following the lead of their Israelite ancestors who begged Moses to tell God not to come too near lest they die of fright [see Exodus 20:18-21]. Jesus ended up amazed at their lack of faith — a condition that cut short his ability to perform mighty deeds among them. That rather astounding statement presents another dimension of the scandal of the incarnation — Mark is telling us that the all-powerful God can be limited by human disbelief.

The Scripture Readings for this 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time remind us that God’s ways are not what we would expect, and that God offers us more than we are generally ready to accept. As Marty Haugen’s hymn, *Here in This Place*, celebrates, it’s “not in some heaven, light years away, but here in this place,” that God chooses to meet us.

Much to everyone’s discomfort, God sends prophets from within the people themselves. Not only that, but God doesn’t outfit the prophets with superpowers that command belief. The message of God’s nearness comes packaged in what looks too familiar for us to take it seriously. Yet, that very familiarity frightens us because it demands that we recognize the incarnational potential of our own time and place. As Paul taught, God chooses to work with and through human weakness.

—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appear on the internet

**BRINGING GLAD TIDINGS WITH AN OPEN HEART:**

Could you be described as “obstinate and stubborn” [Ezekiel 1:28, 2:1-5] — particularly in matters of faith? What aspects of the Catholic faith have you yet to embrace with an open heart? Do you question God’s plan of sheer goodness for you, a loved one, or the world? [CCC, #1]. In Mass, do you believe what you cannot see, as you witness ordinary bread and wine become the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ? Does the Word of God dwell in you richly? When people spend time with you, do they “know that a prophet has been among them” [Ezekiel 1:28, 2:1-5]?

At Baptism, each of us receives an anointing with sacred chrism oil, at which time the priest or deacon prays these words: “As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.” In our Baptism, we are called to “play our part in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World” [CCC, #897].

**So, we have to ask ourselves: what does it mean to live out our call to and share in Christ’s prophetic office?** Christ establishes the lay faithful “as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith and the grace of the word” [CCC, #904]. **His grace — as we learn from St. Paul in his letter to the Church at Corinth — “is sufficient for you” [2 Corinthians 12:7-10]. Even more incredible, it is our very weaknesses — those moments of doubt, uncertainty, and even troubles — that burst forth His astonishing power.** Our witness is perfected by grace, especially when we are honest about our struggles of faith but still willing to continue to seek His truth.



Regardless of what we fail to understand, we still know Jesus is our Lord and Savior. If we could see and understand all, then what would be the purpose of faith?

Witnessing is not always as easy as sharing what Jesus has done for us or our reason to believe. **The most compelling witness comes from the things people see us do over the words we choose to speak.** There can be a great difficulty for us to be an evangelizing disciple to our friends, family, or neighbors — possibly the very people we most wish to know the goodness of our God. There is some consolation knowing Jesus himself faced such difficulty, and to know he could be “amazed at the lack of faith” some people exhibit. Jesus, however, did not give up, and neither should we.

**Instead of becoming discouraged or trying to force our desire for all to believe, perhaps this is when we pray that someone else will bring the Good News to those we cannot.** We need to learn how to use our energy to better lean on the grace of God to both grow stronger in our faith and to live out our call as Priest, Prophet, and King. Prayer to the Spirit of the Lord falls upon us so we may bring glad tidings to those willing to have their obstinate hearts softened too.

—taken from the writings of Allison Gingras, which appear on the internet.

**LIFE IS A GIFT TO BE SHARED:**

What is care? The word “care” finds its origin in the word “kara”, which means “to lament, to mourn, to participate in suffering, to share in pain.” To care is to cry out with those who are ill, confused, lonely, isolated, and forgotten, and to recognize their pains in our own heart. To care is to enter into the world of those who are only touched by hostile hands, to listen attentively to those whose words are only heard by greedy ears, and to speak gently with those who are used to harsh orders and impatient requests. To care is to be present to those who suffer and to stay present even when nothing can be done to change their situation. To care is to be compassionate and so to form a community of people honestly facing the painful reality of our finite existence. To care is the most human gesture, in which the courageous confession of our common brokenness does not lead to paralysis but to community. When the humble confession of our basic human brokenness forms the ground from which all skillful healing comes forth, then cure can be welcomed not as a property to be claimed, but as a gift to be shared in gratitude.

—taken from the writings for Henri Nouwen, which appear on the internet.



**WHATEVER BRINGS A PERSON TO GOD IS HOLY — LIKE IT OR NOT:**

“That tree is very important for me,” an older Jesuit said to me, almost 30 years ago. We were at Eastern Point Retreat House in Gloucester, Mass., standing on the broad lawn that overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. It was a bright day and the sun glistened off the water. He pointed to a lone evergreen tree — not that tall — leaning to one side, a bit battered.

New to the spiritual life, I had no idea what he was talking about. What’s an “important tree”? I suppressed the urge to laugh or make a joke. My friend explained that on a retreat many years ago he had a profound spiritual experience while standing under that tree. Now, every time he came to Gloucester, he would see that tree and be reminded of what had happened. Not only the experience itself, but the tree became “important” to him.

To me, it looked like any other tree. There were also taller, nobler, better trees all around us — the kind you might paint, take a photo of or put on a Christmas card. But not for my friend. For him, it was this little tree that carried all sorts of meaning — which he told me that he could not even describe adequately. Now, every time I see that tree, I think of my friend, who died 15 years ago.

Lately, I have noticed an increasing tendency for people to critique many such “important trees” in the spiritual life. It is hard to miss all the articles saying that this style of church architecture is boring, banal, or wrong; that this kind of hymn is hackneyed, silly, or not sufficiently reverent; that this kind of — take your pick: author, book, way of prayer, devotional practice, school of spirituality — is not Catholic enough. Modernist church architecture is a “curse.” Songs like “On Eagle’s Wings” are “theologically vague.” And so on.

“To each their own”, of course. But a deeper and more serious issue is the critique or even condemnation of things that hold great spiritual meaning for individual believers.

My Catholic boyhood in the 1960’s and 1970’s in the suburbs of Philadelphia was filled with things that many people now judge as not only outmoded, but bad — modern architecture that is too bland, folk hymns that are passé, styles of presiding that are rejected. It is easy to snigger at those things, and even though easy, it is also dangerous.

Twenty years as a spiritual director, accompanying a wide variety of people in their spiritual journeys, has taught me many things. One of the most important is this: God meets people where they are. What moves one person may leave another person cold. What seems to me a dull book, a slapdash poem, or a kitschy poster may be the very way that God encounters someone else. In seeing the many things that move others, I have learned not to judge. The Holy Spirit knows better than I do.

Over the past few years, I have helped to lead annual pilgrimages to the Holy Land with upward of 100 people. At the end of each day, we gather to share our experiences of what moved us spiritually. It is always a source of wonder — even amusement — how different events, places, and, yes, churches and hymns, affect individuals so differently. “I was so moved by the Church of the Nativity!” one person will say. “Didn’t do anything for me,” another will reply. “Too noisy!” If God meets people where they are, why criticize the places where God does that?

The rule of reverence applies to everything in the spiritual life. You enjoy praying the Rosary? So do I. But I do not judge people who don’t — St. Thérèse of Lisieux said that reciting the Rosary was for her as difficult as an “instrument of penance.” Nor do I say that other devotional practices are not as “worthy.” You like traditional Masses? So do I. But I don’t critique the liturgies in the “Family Masses” or “Young Adult Masses.” Some people love the hymn “On Eagle’s Wings”, but it doesn’t speak to others.

Whenever I hear people who put down elements in the spiritual life — or worse, mock them — I

disastrous “Ad Hominem” argument. For many it did not make sense to listen to this little man.

This destructive pride or self-righteousness is particularly and painfully evident in those who rejected Jesus because He was one of them — all too familiar to them [Mark 6:1-6]. His mighty deeds, His miracles, His wisdom, the power of His speaking, were lost on people who could not get beyond the fact that this was the carpenter’s son speaking. They knew His family. They missed the words of the Greatest of All Prophets because they were too proud to hear them. Their “Ad Hominem” attack led to their not receiving the gifts of the Messiah as promised by the prophet Isaiah. Mark’s Gospel concludes with Jesus saying to them: ““A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house.” Then Mark adds: “So He was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.” How sad.

We also can easily get caught up in “Ad Hominem” arguments and miss the truth when it is right in front of us. The “Ad Hominem” argument prevents us from recognizing the possibility that truth can emanate from someone we know. For example, a home ownership group is meeting regarding the designs for a community center. Someone we might know who can be quite mean, stands up in the meeting and says: “We should design the building in such a way that all the members of our community — including those with physical challenges — should feel welcome.” Do we hear the truth of the statement, or do we miss the truth because we are so focused on the foibles of the one speaking?

Or far closer to home, husbands and wives know each other’s foibles and failures. So often this prevents them from hearing the truth come from their spouse. So many teens cannot get beyond their parent’s humanity to hear the truth of their Mom and Dad’s advice. So many parents cannot get beyond their teens lapses in maturity to recognize their virtues.

Perhaps the “Ad Hominem” argument is most destructive when we apply it to ourselves. So often we want to make a statement of faith or a statement of morality, but we feel that we are just not good enough to speak out. For example, someone who was raised in my generation might say: “How can I tell my children or my grandchildren not to smoke and take drugs, when I sacrificed years of my youth to the wacky weed?” Or, “How can I emphasize to the kids the importance of receiving communion weekly, when I was away from the Church during my college days?” or “How can I protest immorality, when I have been far from saintly myself?” These are “Ad Hominem” arguments that we are using against ourselves. If we follow this line of thought than we would never stand up for the truth.

Let’s go back to Saint Paul. He was certainly aware of his own personal failings. He speaks about a thorn in the flesh. What was this? A sin he had trouble avoiding. Was his temper getting the best of him? Should he stop preaching Jesus Christ because he recognized this thorn? No, the message was more important than the person. He might be weak, but the message, the Gospel is strong. What Paul writes at the end of his letter can be paraphrased into: “Maybe this is all for the better. It is not me, but the message that is important. I am weak, but Christ is strong. In fact, I am happy to be weak if that focuses my attention on true strength, the power of the Lord.”

And that is what we need to realize — all of us. We all know our own personal failings and sinfulness. But we want God in our lives. We want His Kingdom of Peace and Justice to come. We need to realize that God will speak through us despite our own foibles. The truth of the Lord comes from the Lord — not from the one who mouths it. We err horribly when we focus in on the individual proclaiming truth — even if this individual is ourselves.

The power of God is upon us. His presence is among us. His truth is in our hearts and on our lips. We need to be less demanding upon others and upon ourselves. We pray that we will not let our own humanity — or that of anyone else — keep us from hearing, proclaiming and living in the Truth of the Lord.

—taken from the writings of Monsignor Joseph Pellegrino which appear on the internet 13





**“AD HOMINEM” DISASTERS:**

Miriam Webster defines an “ad hominem” argument as one which appeals to feelings or prejudices rather than the intellect; it is often marked by an attack on an opponent’s character rather than by an answer to the contentions which are made. An “ad hominem” argument is often a personal attack on one’s rival. Thus, an “Ad Hominem” argument is an attack on a person instead of an argument based on what the person is presenting. It basically says that because a person has this or that foible, or limitation, or even failing, we shouldn’t listen to him or her no matter what he or she says. For example, someone says that it is wrong for a nation to steal land from another nation like Russia did in the Ukraine regarding Crimea. The person with the opposite viewpoint, instead of countering with something like: “Russia owned this land 120 years ago” says: “Well, you don’t have the education to argue with me, and besides, your fat and fat people don’t know what they are talking about. And your mother dresses you funny.” An “Ad Hominem” argument is the weakest of all arguments because it does not consider the facts, and just attacks the person presenting the opposite opinion.

The people didn’t recognize God working in Ezekiel. He was too much of a fanatic for them — a bit of a kook. Paul wasn’t all that some thought he would be either — he was a little guy probably with a high squeaky voice, and certainly not a great orator. Finally, the people didn’t recognize that Jesus was the Word of God among them. They had watched him grow up.

The Scripture Readings for this 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary time present us with three “Ad Hominem” disasters.

Take Ezekiel for example. Here’s the background. The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel comes from the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity — around 580 BC. After the people of Israel had fallen into pagan practices — trusting in military treaties with pagan neighbors rather than trusting in God — the Lord withdrew His protection. Like the Pharaoh in the days of Moses, the people became more and more obstinate — refusing to listen to the prophets. Thus, God warns Ezekiel: “The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn” [Ezekiel 1:28, 2:1-5].

The Hebrews ended up being conquered by the Babylonians and taken into exile to what is modern day Iraq. At the beginning of this exile, the people felt absolutely deserted. Some believed that they were being punished for their sins. But many others refused to believe in God any more — “If God exists, He would not have allowed this to happen,” they claimed. Instead of drawing closer to God in their need, they rejected His very existence.

But God gave the spirit of prophesy to one of these exiles — Ezekiel. Ezekiel said that God set him on his feet; God gave him standing among a downtrodden people. Some would listen to him. Some would not.

With Ezekiel and with all of the prophets, God used one of their own to speak to the people. The humble accepted this; the proud could not accept this. This pride was destructive — it resulted in the disaster of the people refusing to listen to the Word of God because they could not fathom that God would speak to them through this or that everyday man. They leveled an “Ad Hominem” argument against Ezekiel.

The “Ad Hominem” argument was also the basis of the criticism that many in Corinth had regarding St. Paul. In his second letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul would write: “For someone will say: ‘His letters are severe and forceful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible’ ” [2 Corinthians 10:10]. Many of the Corinthians were no longer following the teachings of Paul because he did not cut the figure that they experienced in some of the other people who spoke to them. St. Paul’s response to all this was to remind his people that he knows he can be weak — in fact he speaks about a thorn in the flesh that he prays that God would remove, but he says that his own weakness shows the Power of God in his words [2 Corinthians 12:7-10]. For the Kingdom of God has advanced. Many have become followers of Christ — not because of Paul but because God worked through this weak man. Sadly, too many Corinthians would not allow themselves to be open to this truth. They were stuck in a

find myself feeling sad. I imagine people hearing these critiques and discovering that something that they cherish — a hymn, a church, a work of art — is something that “experts” say they shouldn’t like. Or that “better educated” or “more discerning” or “more spiritual” people don’t approve of the very thing that brings them closer to God.

Whatever brings a person closer to God is holy. Whether it’s a folk hymn like “All That I Am,” sung by a sister with a guitar, or “Tantum Ergo Sacramentum,” chanted by a monastery choir; whether it’s a 1960s, blond-brick, A-frame church with abstract stained glass, or Chartres Cathedral with soaring windows that you can find in an art history book; whether it’s a faded print of the Sacred Heart that hung in your grandmother’s kitchen, or a Caravaggio masterpiece that you once saw in a church in Rome; whether it’s a book by Richard Rohr or Scott Hahn — all paths to God are to be revered.

So feel free to like and dislike whatever you want in your own spiritual life. But don’t feel free to tell other people what they are supposed to like and dislike. Because what you are doing is saying how the Holy Spirit should work — and that is never a good idea.

As a Jesuit novice, I was full of the overconfidence that entrance to a religious order sometimes instills in a person. But I am glad that, just that one time, going against my pride, I did not laugh when my friend told me about his favorite tree or tell him that he should prefer another one. Or enumerate the reasons why his tree could not hold a candle to the other, taller, better ones just a few feet away. The look on his face when he saw that tree shut me up.

And now, when I return to Eastern Point, I see that tree, and it’s important for me, too.

—taken from the writings of Father James Martin, S.J., which appear on the internet

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Genesis 28:10-22, Matthew 9:18-26
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Genesis 32:23-33, Matthew 9:32-38
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Genesis 41:55-42:24, Matthew 10:1-7
<b>Thursday:</b>	Genesis 44:18-45:5, Matthew 10:7-15
<b>Friday:</b>	Genesis 46:1-30, Matthew 10:16-23
<b>Saturday:</b>	Genesis 49:29-50:26, Matthew 10:24-33

**15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Amos 7:12-15, Ephesians 1:3-14, Mark 6:7-13

**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, ricrac, 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. **Set the items on the table in the narthex of the Chapel** and we will take it from there. Thank you for your help!

**LIMITEDNESS:**

What we grasp of truth is necessarily always partial and limited. No matter how huge your hands and how firm your grip, you can only hold so much.

—Brother David Steindl-Rast

**JOURNEYING WITH RELUCTANT TEENAGERS:**

As a High Schooler, I was a Youth Minister's worst nightmare. I showed up to programming to check off the Confirmation requirements, and then sneak out after they took roll. When I was there, I never paid attention, hoarded the snacks, and if I had a phone my freshman year of high school, I would have been on it. So, to say the least, I was not the star student when it came to youth ministry. But today, I am a living testament to God's sense of humor — He took me, one of the most reluctant teenagers, and called me to become a Youth Minister.

Because of my personal experience and stubbornness as a high schooler, I have a soft spot for those reluctant teenagers. These are the teens that often get looked over or are seen as hopeless. They are the ones who take a lot of energy, patience, and love. And just like any teen, they are the future of the Church and worth fighting for. If you are a youth minister, core person, or a current parent, here are some tips to help you reach the more reluctant teenagers.

1. **Listen.** Any teen wants to be heard, but listening is easier said than done. When we listen, we are not just hearing them, but really taking to heart what they are saying. Listening does not require you to have answers to questions or solutions. Teens are not always seeking answers; instead, they seek someone who cares enough to listen. Simple things like making eye contact, being present, or affirming what they are saying can show that you actively listen to them.
2. **Persistent Invitation.** When disciplining a reluctant teen, we must be persistent. You will hear nine "no's" before hearing one "yes." Keep asking, keep inviting, don't give up on them. Invite them to bible studies, invite them to Life Nights, to retreats, to grab a cup of coffee. I always ask myself: "what's the worst thing that can happen?" Maybe the worse is when a teen says no for the seventh time, but maybe — just maybe —, this is the one time that they say "sure."
3. **Meet them where they are at.** A more reluctant teen is not going to always be found on the church campus. More often than not, many of them can be found on the field, on the stage, on the court, in the studio, on the track. Wherever they are, meet them there. Disciplining is not reserved for the physical church building. Disciplining is meant to happen everywhere. By meeting them where they are at — you build relationships and, in turn, build trust. This trust will ultimately lead to them being more open to hearing about the Good News that you share with them.
4. **Be Authentic.** Be yourself. Teenagers have a talent for weeding out false things. A reluctant teen doesn't need a viral Tik-Tok star; they don't need someone with a high Snap streak; they need you — just as you are. Your authenticity will lead them to the authentic love that Christ has to offer them.
5. **Prayer.** It is impossible to help teens form a prayer life if you don't have one yourself. Prayer does not help your relationship with God — it is your relationship with God. Prayer should be the center of everything you do. During the difficult times when you feel like giving up or feel as if things said are going in one ear and out the other of a teen, remember that God has got them. I always have to remind myself that God is asking me to lead them to Him. He is the one who changes their hearts. We cannot do that, and at times we can get frustrated. We want to see the fruits of our labor, but we must trust that seeds are being planted and God will water them. Prayer centers us and reminds us that God's plan is better than our own.



Coming from a previously reluctant teen, I want to thank you. Thank you for your patience, thank you for your kindness, and thank you for your relentless fight for Heaven. As a teen, I was naïve to those around me, leading me to Heaven, and I never got a chance to thank those people. So, for all those who you are leading, and you may never receive thanks, on their behalf, thank you.

—taken from the writings of Kelly Simpson, a youth minister

**LIFE TEEN and EDGE:**

**Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in person again. We will still allow people to join us virtually, but we want to encourage you to come in person.** We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board Room. If you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen website — [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com). There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs.



**Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass.** And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. **Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].**

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JULY 17<sup>th</sup>:**

Our Savior Lutheran Church Food Pantry has instituted **new procedures** because of the Coronavirus. **Thus they help pre-packing nonperishables in bags on Thursday evening beginning at 5 PM.** They will continue this prepacking on Friday if needed. Check with Elina Gurney on this. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help packaging the items from the foodbank into the prepacked bags.** Only volunteers will be allowed in the Church building, so you will be protected against the virus. Clients will remain outside in their cars. **The food pantry is then open from 9:30 AM—1:30 PM on Saturday.**



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.

**Please let Elina Gurney know if you would like to help. You can do this through the chapel office [440-473-3560] or by emailing Elina Gurney at [gurney.oh@gmail.com](mailto:gurney.oh@gmail.com).** In this critical time, this is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

**LEARNING TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE:**

I don't know about you, but I struggle to hear the voice of the Lord. When I have a particularly difficult time hearing Jesus speak, these are the steps I follow to dispose my heart and mind to hear Him:

1. **We must desire to hear Him.** We need to examine ourselves and our lives and decide if we really want to hear what the Lord has to say?
2. **We must make that desire known.** Pray. Ask. Pray again. Tell the Lord you want to know Him and are ready to listen.
3. **We must make ourselves available to hear Him respond.** We cannot hear the Lord's voice, or His answer to our prayer, if our lives are overrun with the noise of the world. We need to carve out time each and every day to sit in quiet and just listen.
4. **Learn what Jesus' voice sounds like.** The Lord is speaking to you all the time. That is a guarantee. We do not always hear what He is saying because we are not listening, nor we have taken the time to get to know

—taken from the writings of Maddy Bernero, which appear on the internet