

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Founder's Week ~

God of love and forgiveness,
As we celebrate almost 70 years
of Holy Cross Tradition at Gilmour,
may we remember the foundation
of our mission and prayer:

Make us men and women of hope.
Fill our hearts
with the courage to act.

Open our eyes
to see where we can reach out
to others in hospitality,
welcoming all
and treating everyone with respect
in an inclusive way.

Teach us to walk in faith
with the poor and broken
in building the kingdom of God.

May the zeal of our founder
Be a guiding force in our lives
as we seek the Cross,
our only Hope.

And may we always know
that we live in your loving embrace

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Our Lady Chapel



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

A FEW MINOR INCONVENIENCES FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS:

Next Saturday, September 18th is the Gilmour Gala, celebrating the 75th Anniversary of Gilmour Academy. The following weekend is Alumni Weekend on Campus. And the Weekend after that — October 2nd — is Homecoming. Several large tents and some smaller ones are going to be erected in and around the large parking lot in front of the chapel. Now for the inconvenience:

1. **There will be no Saturday evening Mass on Saturday, September 18.** Mass will take place as usual on Sunday, September 19 at 10 AM. All other weekend Masses will be held as usual.
2. Parking for the chapel will take place in either the Ice Arena Lot or up at Tudor House. **There will be drop off available. Enter off of SOM Center; turn to enter the parking lot as normal; go part way around Pender Circle and then start up the driveway going up the hill. Stop at the chapel to drop off Passengers, and then continue up to Tudor House to park.** Upon leaving, this process will be reversed.

We thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MALESIC ON 9-11:

I remember where I was when I first learned of a plane hitting the north tower of the World Trade Center. It is a day I will never forget. For most Americans — if not the entire world — the events of Sept. 11, 2001 are seared into our collective consciousness as the date of one of history's greatest infamies. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the heinous terrorist acts resulting in the destruction of the World Trade Center's twin towers, the murder of thousands of innocent people, and a changed world.

Like me, when we hear the term "9/11", most of can remember where we were when we heard the news. We all recall the shock and horror of those previously unimaginable images from New York City, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. We can still see the frantic faces of the first responders selflessly and heroically rushing toward the disaster, and the crowds of people running from harm's way. We still honor all those innocent souls that were lost, including those on the hijacked airliners as we recall hero Todd Beamer's courageous last words: "Let's roll" as a call to defend the freedoms we enjoy in our nation. We will never forget the staggering loss of life, the senselessness of it all and the gut-wrenching realization that evil does exist in our world. Sept. 11, 2001 was a horrible event, but it solidified our resolve to find a way to peace. It was a national crisis that brought us together as a nation.

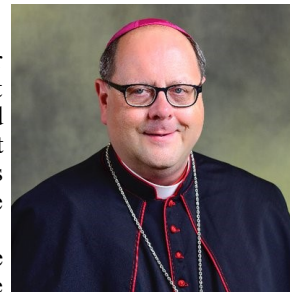
This year, as we remember what happened on Sept. 11, 2001, we feel compelled to come together again as a nation. We come together on bended knee in prayer for the people who lost their lives, for families who continue to mourn, for all those who in any way were traumatized by what we witnessed, and we pray for a change of heart among those who seek to harm us. We pray that we can reclaim the unity of purpose after the terrible events of 20 years ago. As we commemorate this solemn anniversary, may we never forget what happened on our country's soil and may we use this occasion as a moment of solidarity, strengthening our resolve to unite as Americans dedicated to working for justice, peace and the common good that allows us to find our salvation in Christ.

Together, let us pray that the Eternal One dispel the darkness of evil in our land and grant us his peace. May the God of all goodness and mercy provide us with light where

A HUMBLING REMINDER:

Heaven could not span its Creator, but the faithful soul — and only it — becomes its dwelling place and seat, and it becomes so in virtue of charity of which the impious lack.

—St. Clare of Assisi

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Virginia DiPuccio, mother of Dominic DiPuccio ['82], and grandmother of Dominic ['14], Matthew ['17], Sophia ['19], Armand ['19], Lena ['20], Michael ['22], and Izzy ['25] DiPuccio, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Katie Poelking ['01], sister of TJ Poelking ['98], who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Judy Hale, who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Elaine Hocevar, wife of Assistant Hockey Coach, Greg Hocevar, and mother of Greg ['97], Matt ['98], Ryan ['00], and Sarah ['01] Hocevar, who is undergoing treatment for a serious heart condition.
- For Richard Weakland, grandfather of Alex ['05], Vincent ['07], Nick ['09], Zachary ['17], and former Gilmour Student, Sarah Hostoffer, who is seriously ill.
- For Gregg Thompson, husband of Jill, who is ill.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

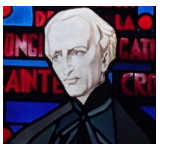
- September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. For all experiencing mental health challenges.
- For the safety and well-being of the people of Afghanistan
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- For a growth in awareness of the 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.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Maria Scheidler
- For Jeanne Droughton
- For Sister Katherine Kase, C.S.C.
- For Sister Miriam Angela Volkmer, C.S.C.
- For Marge Netzband

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.

**IT'S YOUR CHOICE:**

The future is a dotted line and not a certain destination. We shape our futures by day-to-day choices and actions. Let us be open to the great "What's next?" in which we open up to being God's companions in bringing healing to the world.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

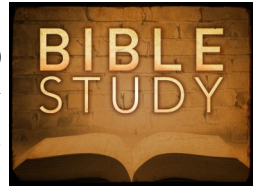
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Tony Russo, uncle of Jacob [*23] and AJ [*25] Lowery, who is undergoing treatment for a massive stroke.
- 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], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Ray Gruss who is battling cancer.
- For John Weathers, who is undergoing treatment for liver cancer.
- For Bruce Schwartz, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Bill Barrett, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish [*30], who is undergoing treatment for many medical issues.
- For David Patterson [*83], brother of Charles [*79] and Neil [*81] Patterson, 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 John Zippay, who is critically ill.
- For Addison McKito, sister of Aidan McKito [*24], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.
- For Vicki Veldon, aunt of Allie [*11] and Joseph [*12] Lencewicz, who is critically ill as the result of Myloma
- For Darlene Lonardo, mother of Joseph Lonardo [*00], and grandmother of Angelina [*22] and Giana [*22] Lonardo, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- 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 Christine Maharg, mother of Lily Maharg [*21], who is seriously ill with cancer.
- 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 continues rehab and medical care.
- For Bernice Girgash, aunt of Basketball Coach and Counselor, Dan DeCrane, 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 2nd 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 Chiacchiarri, 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 Father James Caddy, former pastor of St. Francis, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, September 15th at 6:30 PM. We will continue to meet bi-weekly throughout August and into the school year. 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 your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word. **Our topic for this Bible Study will be: The role of the plagues in God’s plan**



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.** Join us. You’ll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Sunday, September 12: 24 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM Public Mass & Live Stream
Monday, September 13: St. John Chrysostom	NO MASS
Tuesday, September 14: The Holy Cross	NO MASS
Wednesday, September 15: Our Lady of Sorrows	NO MASS
Thursday, September 16: Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, September 17:	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Saturday, September 18: 25 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM Public Mass only
Sunday, September 19: 25 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM Public Mass & Live Stream

ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:



We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5th [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John.** You do not have to attend Gilmour to 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].**



REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The speed of light is 299,792,458 meters per second or 186,282 miles per second. I wonder why it does not move faster. It is amazing that “they” can measure something that fast. We love having figures and measurements to satisfy our hungry minds and to have some comfort in knowing how we are doing — especially personally. The physical world is available for evaluation, weighing, and numbering. We become accustomed to having “read-outs”, “bottom lines” and “hard data”. Now there are available to us all kinds of numbers which can indicate growth or decline. We have credit-card reports, heart-rate and cholesterol numbers — just to name a few. There are large and small facts which indicate your financial, physical, social, and even mental health. But when it comes to rating “how we stand with God”, there are no meters or stock reports available. And for most of us, if we are honest, we suspect “not well”.

We cannot ever know how God is doing with us! The “spiritual” cannot be measured according to the physical or material ways. We can pile up prayers, devotions, and other religious practices, and assume that we have stored up in our spiritual barns enough self-validating “spirituals”. Many people give up on prayer and a peaceful relationship with God precisely because they don’t know “the facts” about how they are “doing” or “being” in the relationship that God constantly initiates with them. God’s love for us is greater than the speed of light; and it renders us humbled at the lack of speed we take to accept it. How we are doing is silly and not important compared to how we are being within that immeasurable love of God.

Our Scripture Readings for this 24th Week in Ordinary Time begin with what is known as the “Third Servant Song” from the prophet Isaiah [Isaiah 50:4-9]. It is also the reading used on Good Friday. Here Isaiah speaks to Israel, calling them to fidelity, even though they remain in captivity. This “song” is a proclamation by the prophet himself about how he will endure any suffering at all, because the God Who will protect him is the same God who will bring Israel out of exile. The prophet announces that for all his words of hope he has been disgraced; and even though he has suffered for his message, he has remained true to his calling, and relies totally on his God.

God responds to this plea of Isaiah by using the image of a lawyer defending a client — if anybody wishes to dispute Isaiah’s mission of bringing hope by staying faithful to all he has heard and believed, they have to go through God first.

Mark’s gospel has been talking about Jesus healing people who are unable to hear, speak, and see. Ears to hear, and eyes to see is the redemptive mission of Jesus. What is to be heard and seen is Jesus as The Redeemer. It is within this context that Jesus asks Peter that famous question — a question which is going to check their ears, eyes, and heart. How have they heard and seen Jesus? Maybe they receive Him as a wonder-worker — quite a magic man. Jesus asks them, as they walk along, about what they have heard “on the street” about him. What are others saying, how have they heard and seen him? [Mark 8:27-35].

The disciples begin by making their reports about who people are saying Jesus is. And when they are done, Jesus changes the game — how do they know Him? Peter’s answer becomes a highpoint in Mark’s presentation of the life and mission of Jesus — “for all those who have heard and seen Jesus through the pages of the Gospel up to this point, Jesus is the Christ!” No one has publicly said this before. Despite all the miracles, parables, teachings, and travelings, no one has seen it — until now — a declaration of faith. And even with this declaration of faith, more learning is needed. Jesus indicates that His being the “Christ” will result in His suffering and death.

This tension forms a further teaching for each of us — who, by reading the whole Gospel — also affirm that Jesus is the Christ. There are consequences to being a follower. Note that Jesus doesn’t ask them if they want to “follow” — it’s not a question; it’s an invitation — “follow me”.



not squash evil, but takes it in. In Christ, God suffers evil to transform it. Jesus did not escape the cross, but revealed evil’s ultimate powerlessness to overcome with life and love.

The victory of life and love Jesus tried to reveal to his disciples is what we celebrate this week in the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on Sept. 14th. The feast celebrates the height and depth and breadth of the love of God that no evil can overcome. Yes, this is a mystery, and our liturgy asks us the same question Jesus’ followers had to answer — whose disciples are we?

Knowing that Jesus the Christ is the divine servant who does not avoid suffering, but transforms it, are we still ready to get behind him?

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

HEDGEHOGS MAKE EXCELLENT PETS:

They’re easy to care for, don’t take up much space, are super cute and always make for a good story. We used to talk about our hedgehog, Hoosier, all the time. It’s that last point that earned my wife and I a house full of hedgehog paraphernalia. It’s our own fault, really, though we’re certainly not complaining. We have hedgehog salt and pepper shakers, hedgehog kitchen towels, hedgehog plates, hedgehog socks, hedgehog pillows — you name it. We can fill an entire Christmas tree with nothing but hedgehog ornaments, no exaggeration. So, it only makes sense that our daughters have entire shelves worth of hedgehog children’s books. And I admit that I bought more than a few.

For all the diversity in hedgehog things available to the general public, there seem to be only a handful of hedgehog plotlines in children’s books. They tend to go like this: Hedgehogs are not huggable — just look at those spikes! No one wants to hug this hedgehog, and she’s really sad about it.

There are varied solutions: tuck the hedgehog into something soft to muffle the sting of the spikes; pair her up with a more durable critter — say, an armadillo or a turtle. The outcome is always cute. But the basic premise is the same — just look at that spiky creature; no one wants to get near it.

Here’s the problem: Hedgehogs are entirely huggable. We used to cuddle with Hoosier all the time; so did our very young daughters. It’s really not that hard or novel. But people see nothing beyond those prickly quills and assume the worst.

We all can be a bit prickly at times — grumpy, scared, angry. Those are the times, in fact, when hedgehogs ball up, quills out — and you shouldn’t touch them. But that isn’t their permanent state — just be patient and they’ll unwind.

Too often, I think, we see nothing but the prickly quills on the people around us — family, friends, colleagues, strangers.

We catch them in stressful moments and freeze them that way in our minds. We assume they’re always prickly — and we shouldn’t get too close. Perhaps we see ourselves that way — prickly, unforgivable, better left alone.

Consider how God sees each of us, our full selves. Whole human beings. Prickly, sure, but so much more. God sees us beyond a single moment; God is patient in God’s desire to accompany us through life’s challenges and joys and moments of frustration.

God waits for the hedgehog to unwind, to lower her quills. God knows how huggable a hedgehog can be.

—taken from the writings of Eric Clayton which appear on the internet

**FORGIVENESS:**

Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family.

—Henri Nouwen

WHOSE DISCIPLES ARE WE:

I've heard theology students joking about contemplating the Angry Mysteries of the Rosary. Along with the cleansing of the Temple and cursing the fig tree, we have Mark's Gospel in which Jesus named Peter "Satan," and ordered him out of his sight. That's good fodder for fun among seminarians who need a chuckle break, but it's not a very good interpretation of what happens after all of this.

On this 24th Week in Ordinary Time, we see how a journey with Jesus could become an intense experience of spiritual formation. Taking advantage of the leisure of a journey, Jesus asked his disciples about how folks were perceiving him. Disregarding the opinions of his adversaries, they recounted the rumors they'd heard from people who were both impressed and confused.

Some suspected he might be John the Baptist. That was a rather odd thought; anyone who knew about John would have known that Herod had beheaded him not too long before this conversation took place [see Matthew 14]. They added that others thought that perhaps he was another of the prophets. Those ideas sprang from their sense of how they knew God had interacted with Israel throughout their history.

When Jesus fixed his gaze on those who had chosen to journey with him, the answer changed. Peter responded: "You are the Christ" [Mark 6:27-35]. Peter testified that they saw Jesus not as a prophet of old, but as the anointed one sent by God to save Israel.

That's the good news. But then came the hitch: "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer, be killed, and rise after three days." That was so shocking that Mark adds the incredulous phrase: "He said this openly!"

Of course, Peter was as ready to help Jesus revise his thinking as he had been to proclaim his faith in him. He pulled Jesus aside to talk some sense into him. Peter realized that Jesus had just veered wildly off the script for a messiah. The disciples might have been free from the expectation that the Messiah would be a warrior or king, but weakness, rejection and being killed — no. That scenario didn't correspond at all to their image of the one God would send to redeem Israel.

Although Peter rebuked Jesus in private, Jesus' reply made witnesses of everyone present. He addressed Peter as "Satan," calling him a tempter, the kind of enemy that would sow weeds in the garden of God's reign — "Get out of my sight". This whole scenario recalls what Jesus said to Peter in the beginning when he called Peter to follow him — "You are to follow me, not the other way around!" [see Mark 1:20].

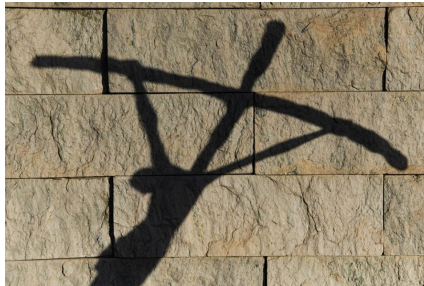
Peter's reaction to what Jesus had said was as natural and as narrow as his experience and expectations. He had grown up on salvation stories that portrayed a God of power and might. It's unlikely that either he or the other disciples had ever interpreted Isaiah's suffering servant as an image of God or the Messiah [Isaiah 50:4-9].

People suffering under Roman domination were hardly longing for a savior who would suffer. People who waited for God to punish the wicked and reward the good didn't and couldn't fathom the idea that God's chosen one could be put to death. They knew that isn't how God works!

Finally, Jesus' talk about rising on the third day offered small comfort. In their religious imagination, the third day had nothing to do with clocks or calendars — it was the day of salvation, which could come in an instant or in the distant future.

The question Jesus put to the disciples remains relevant for us today — Who do we say he is? What do we expect in our interactions with God?

Much as we resist it, the God we meet in Jesus, the Christ who is our savior, is thoroughly unlike the materialistic, political or militaristic gods the world urges us to worship. The God we meet in Jesus does



The paradoxical tension is between winning and losing. Jesus predicts His winning ultimately by His losing, and those who wish to win with Him will have to deny their desires and need to win. For Jesus it comes down to living faithfully the good He is and because of the ways of humanity, the good is an insult to some of the Jewish leaders. Living and doing the good has put Him and His followers in conflict with the forces about whom, Jesus is making His sufferings and death a part of his prediction.

In our part of the world, we have had a really hot summer and also a lot of rain. Because of this, farmers are struggling to harvest their crops. Gardeners are picking their vegetables over which they have labored for months. Jesus used the image of good seed and weeds to describe the tensions between good and evil. Those who have watered their gardens have spent bent-back hours pulling weeds whose tiny relatives were waiting to replace their fallen weed-folks. Why do weeds grow faster, larger and more abundantly than the tender vegetables? If there were no weeds, gardening would be even more a joy. If following Jesus did not involve conflicting with the ways of this fallen world, there would be more followers and more harvesting of the good.

Many have lived this message. Martin Luther King tried to do good for racial justice and died for doing that. Yet, by his death there has been an increase in racial acceptance. Others died for the same cause and greater life has resulted. The Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador spoke of the possibility and inevitability of their being taken captive or murdered for their teachings on land reform and social justice in that country. Their predictions proved true as well. Jesus knew in this same way that He was heading for a deadly conflict by trying to bring the true life to this world.

We would probably side with Peter and try to talk Jesus out of His mission — thereby relieving the tensions we feel by professing that He is the Christ, the Savior and the One we will follow by denying ourselves, picking up our crosses and engaging the conflicts with this weedy world.

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

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SEPTEMBER 18th:

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. In this critical time, this is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

A CHILD'S SENSE OF WONDER:

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantment of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.

— Rachel Carson

KNOWING CHRIST THROUGH “NEW EYES”:

Napoleon Bonaparte was entertaining a number of his generals at dinner. The superb meal of pheasant and wines was done. Napoleon and his guests were drinking cognac and smoking cigars. A discussion began about Christ. Napoleon listened intently, but said nothing. Most of the guests dismissed the Nazarene as merely a man. Then their emperor said: “Gentlemen, you are wrong. I know men. Jesus is more than a man.”

“The real voyage of discovery,” wrote Marcel Proust, “is not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” Many of us have the unhappy habit of looking at an object of beauty with gauze over our eyes. Perhaps we have looked at the piece or person too often. Its real essence goes right by us. Jesus can be one such person that we examine through a glass darkly. We must bring to Him Proust’s “new eyes.” We must say with ee cummings that “the eyes of my eyes are opened.” We must be able to say with WH Auden that “I believe because He is in every respect the opposite of what He would be if I could make Him according to my image.”

Take Mark’s Gospel for example [Mark 8:27-35]. The setting of this Gospel is in the northeastern corner of Palestine. This was not Jesus’ usual territory. He was running away from the crowds and the journalists. He needed quality classroom time with the twelve — they had many credits to get before receiving their bachelor degrees in theology. They needed time to work on their dissertations. And His own days were quickly racing to their conclusion. Also, Jesus was deep in pagan country. The gods had first been worshipped here by the Syrians, then by the Greeks, and finally by the Romans. Our Leader is exhausted, painfully thin, and badly needing sleep. He stands here in this pagan milieu. Surrounded by these forgotten gods, Jesus asks His ragtag army of twelve whom they believe Him to be. And there is no doubt but that He wanted this motley crew to reply that He is the Messiah.

Can you name any other passage in the Gospels where the Master is more aware of whom He Himself really is? It would be hard to find it. Peter, of course — the spokesman for the group — did not disappoint Jesus. His response still reverberates with crescendos after all these centuries — “You are the Messiah.” It may have been the most momentous answer given to any question in history. Peter — unlearned though he was — had come to realize that their Leader could not be summed up in purely human terms — no matter how flattering they might be. Others might call Him John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets. But all of these titles — though clearly intended as compliments — fell far short of the mark. The Christ was a complete original. He one of a kind. The cliché that says: “They threw away the mold when they made him,” may well have been first spoken about the Nazarene.

What is interesting about this exchange is the fact that Jesus began by asking the Apostles what others were saying about Him. Then He reversed His field and asked: “And you, who do you say I am?” At some point, one must stop saying what others say about the Christ. There comes a time when each of us must confess whom we think Jesus to be. I have met a number of people who know far more Christology than I.

Some write poetry and music about Him. Yet they would be the first to admit that they are not Christian. Many of them are good people, but they do not believe in the Galilean — some of them concede that with deep regret. Pilate asked the prisoner before him whether He was indeed the King of the Jews. The most famous prisoner ever in captivity asked whether Pilate was simply mouthing what others had said about him or whether he was speaking for himself. Our religion is not a matter of knowing about Jesus — it is about knowing Him. Napoleon was one of those who intuitively knew that the Christ was more than human. While we know nothing about Napoleon’s relationship to Christ, we do

**HOW TO DIE — PART 1:**

Christianity is a rather simple-to-understand faith — if you die with Christ, you rise with Christ. The problem comes in the definition of terms — especially what it means to die with Christ.

Obviously, our faith doesn’t demand we actually take off our clothes, lie down on a crucifix and have nails pounded in our wrists and feet. Though the historical Jesus actually died in that way, his followers were never expected to precisely imitate that event. Our dying with him is on a different level. That’s why our first evangelist — Mark — makes certain his readers know what the gospel Jesus means by “dying with him.”

Three times in his Gospel — chapters 8, 9, and 10 — Mark’s Jesus predicts his passion, death and resurrection. After each prediction, one or more of his disciples say or do something showing they have no idea what it means to die with him. Finally, Jesus clarifies the situation, teaching Mark’s readers three different lessons on dying.

Mark’s Gospel for this 24th Week in Ordinary Time presents us with the first of these predictions [Mark 8:27-35]. It begins with Jesus asking his disciples “who he is.” Peter’s given the honor of initially “screwing up the works,” earning Jesus’ well-known, dreaded command: “Get behind me, Satan.” The leader of the Twelve has no idea why dying with Jesus is necessary. Simon, and those who think like him, are obstacles to Jesus’ dying/rising life and ministry.

But how does someone actually die? By denying themselves, taking up their “cross” and following Jesus.

Of course, carrying one’s cross wouldn’t have made sense until after Jesus’ resurrection. That’s why scholars believe the historical Jesus most probably encouraged his followers to carry their “tau.” The tau — a T — isn’t just the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet — it’s also used to symbolize “totality.” Similar to our expression “from A to Z” — only for them it would be from aleph to tau. “Doing something to the tau” implies doing the whole thing. At the time of Jesus, some holy, pious Jews would actually wear a tau on their clothes, or tattoo one on their hand as a sign they were totally dedicated to carrying out Yahweh’s will. Francis of Assisi knew this, prompting him to frequently use taus — taus are now found in many Franciscan coats of arms.

Mark has Jesus telling his community that the first way another Christ dies is to be totally open to whatever God wants him or her to do. Ironically for the historical Jesus, part of his personal tau consisted in his accepting the cross. No wonder the evangelist could replace tau with cross when Jesus was in the picture. Yet carrying one’s tau is much broader than just one unpleasant thing we’re expected to endure.

Isaiah’s tau, for instance, includes the physical suffering he refers to when he speaks to the people of his time [Isaiah 50:4-9]. But even before that suffering happens, he mentions that God opens his ear every morning to hear what he’s got in store for him during that particular day. Unless he’s a good “listener,” he’ll never die enough to know how he’s part of God’s plan.

James couldn’t agree more. Fed up with Christians who do nothing but boast about the depth of their faith in Jesus, he demands to know where “the beef” is. Only when we get involved in supplying the concrete “necessities of the body” for those in need do we start dying [James 2:14-18]. Takes a lot of listening and tau-carrying to reach that point.

Obviously, some followers of Jesus hear only the rising part of their dying/rising experience of the risen Jesus. Mark continues to be convinced we concentrate on the dying aspect for a little while longer. Tune in next week for the second way to die — it’s guaranteed to get even more complicated.

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

HOW TRUE:

What you see depends on what you’re looking for.

—Anonymous

be hurried. Why? Why is God, seemingly, so slow to act? Is God callous to our suffering? Why is God so patient, so plodding in his plan, when we're suffering so deeply? Why is God so excruciatingly slow to act in the face of human impatience?

There's a line in Jewish apocalyptic literature, which metaphorically, helps answer this question — every tear brings the messiah closer! There is, it would seem, an intrinsic connection between frustration and the possibility of a messiah being born. It seems that messiahs can only be born after a long period of human yearning. Why?

Human birth already helps answer that question — gestation cannot be hurried and there is an organic connection between the pain a mother experiences in childbirth and the delivery of a new life. And that's also true of Jesus' birth. Advent is a gestation process that cannot be rushed. Tears, pain, and a long season of prayer are needed to create the conditions for the kind of pregnancy that brings forth a messiah into our world. Why? Because the real love and life can only be born when a long-suffering patience has created the correct space, the virginal womb, within which the sublime can be born. Perhaps a couple of metaphors can help us understand this.

John of the Cross, in trying to explicate how a person comes to be enflamed in altruistic love, uses the image of a log bursting into flame in a fireplace. When a green log is placed in a fire, it doesn't start to burn immediately — it first needs to be dried out. Thus, for a long time, it lies in the fire and sizzles — its greenness and dampness slowly drying out. Only when it reaches kindling temperature can it ignite and burst into flame. Speaking metaphorically, before a log can burst into flame, it needs to pass through a certain advent, a certain drying out, a period of frustration and yearning. So, too, the dynamics of how real love is born in our lives. We can ignite into love only when we — selfish, green, damp logs — have sizzled sufficiently. And the fire that makes us sizzle is unfulfilled desire.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin offers a second metaphor here when he speaks of something he calls “the raising of our psychic temperature.” In a chemistry laboratory it's possible to place two elements in the same test tube and not get fusion. The elements remain separate, refusing to unite. It is only after they are heated to a higher temperature that they unite. We're no different. Often it's only when our psychic temperature is raised sufficiently that there's fusion — that is, it's only when unrequited longing has raised our psychic temperature sufficiently that we can move towards reconciliation and union. Simply put, sometimes we have to be brought to a high fever through frustration and pain before we are willing to let go of our selfishness and let ourselves be drawn into community.

Thomas Halik once commented that an atheist is simply another term for someone who doesn't have enough patience with God. He's right. God is never in a hurry — and for good reason. Messiahs can only be born inside a particular kind of womb — namely, one within which there's enough patience and willingness to wait so as to let things happen on God's terms, not ours.

Hence, ideally, every tear should bring the Messiah closer. This isn't an unfathomable mystery — every frustration should, ideally, make us more ready to love. Every tear should, ideally, make us more ready to forgive. Every heartache should, ideally, make us more ready to let go of some of our separateness. Every unfulfilled longing should, ideally, lead us into a deeper and more sincere prayer. And all of our pained impatience for a consummation that seems to forever elude us should, ideally, makes us feverish enough to burst into love's flame.

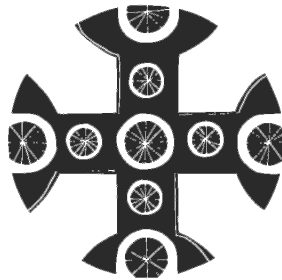
To offer yet another image — it is with much groaning of the flesh that the life of the spirit is brought forth!

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

A PRAYER:

14 May the cup of compassion within our hearts pour out covering the whole earth, both near and far.

—Larry Ward



know that our own association with Jesus the Nazarene must be a most intimate and warm one. We must bring Proust's “new eyes” to examine Him.

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

HOW DOES KNOWING CHRIST CONNECT TO HOW YOU LIVE?

When Jesus asks his disciples: “Who do people say that I am?” is he checking out the response of the populous to his healing and preaching ministry? Evidently, many think he is one of the prophets returned to life — perhaps John the Baptist or Elijah. Then Jesus turns to his disciples, asking them a more personal, engaging question: “But who do you say that I am?” [Mark 8:27-35]. Responding out of his Jewish religious tradition, Peter replies: “You are the Christ” — indicating that he saw Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, the anointed one of God. Jesus uses the opportunity to teach his disciples that he must suffer rejection and be killed by the religious leaders. Peter does not want to hear this — earning a strong rebuke from Jesus, who then summons the crowd to instruct them in the harsh truth that they must take up the cross to follow him.

Mark's Gospel invites us to engage the question of the identity of Jesus in an honest, personal way — who is Christ for me? To identify ourselves as one of the 2.2 billion Christians in the world today means that in one way or another we see Christ as central to our lives, and as exercising decisive influence on how we live. In answering that question, Mark warns us against easy answers that effectively deny that Christ was a suffering servant: for example, seeing him as a Santa Claus figure who favors faithful believers with a comfortable, prosperous life; or as a divine person who was spared the hard lot of a fully human existence.

Christians express the centrality of Christ in their lives in various ways that respect his teaching on the cross. Jesus who suffered and died to save us helps us to deal with our many health problems. The Teacher who had no place to lay his head gives us motivation to keep looking for a job. Christ who forgave his executioners enables us to forgive our emotionally abusive parent or spouse. Jesus who went about doing good in a troubled world is our main model for keeping high moral standards in the competitive world of business. Christ who identified with the hungry and thirsty encourages us to maintain our commitment to serve the poor. Jesus who called his disciples friends keeps us going on a bad day. Christ who walked with his disciples assures us that the crosses we encounter can lead to a richer life.

Who is Christ for you and how does he help you deal with the sufferings of life?

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

ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:



We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5th [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage

of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John.** You do not have to attend Gilmour to 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].**

LIFE:

Life is not about “or” — it is about “and.” It is magical and messy. It is heartwarming and heartbreaking. It is delight and disappointment. Grace and grief. Exquisite and excruciating, often at the exact same time.

—Kristi Nelson



FAILING WITH PETER:

Nobody wants to fail. None of us tries to make mistakes. All of us are embarrassed when we mess up. But mess up we do. Failing is a part of living, and all of us can fail in a variety of ways. We can fail in our relationships — hurting our marriage, our children, our friends. We can fail in our jobs — taking on more than we can handle, cutting corners that lead to disaster, betraying the trust that others place in us. We can fail ourselves — giving in to apathy and self-pity, nurturing a private selfishness, trading in on our good name.

There are many ways to fail. The question is not whether we will make a mistake, but how we will respond when we do. Here is where the experience of Peter can help us. In Mark's gospel, among the villages of Caesarea Philippi, Peter makes a serious mistake. Buoyed up with pride at his ability to realize that Jesus is the Messiah, he pushes off from that shaky foundation and challenges Jesus. He corrects the Lord, when Jesus announces his upcoming passion and death [Mark 8:27-35]. Peter oversteps his bounds, reveals his ignorance, and betrays the trust that Jesus had placed in him. Jesus reacts strongly, pushing Peter aside and calling him Satan. This failure of Peter foreshadows an even greater failure, when, during the passion, Peter three times denies Christ. There is no doubt that Peter was a good person — that Peter had great intentions and a big heart. But there is also no doubt that Peter made big mistakes. Peter is like us, and his experience in Mark's gospel points to two truths which we need to remember when we fail.

The first truth is this: God does not reject us when we fail. Peter's mistakes may have surprised and discouraged Peter, but they did not surprise or discourage God. God knew who Peter would be from the moment of creation. Nevertheless, God chose to create Peter and called him to lead the church. God relates in the same way to us. Our mistakes do not surprise God — God loves us in spite of them. No matter what we have done, God still calls us to be daughters and sons, agents of Christ's Kingdom. God's love for us is constant. It is everlasting.

The second truth is this: when we fail, we are called to face our mistake and move on. Jesus reminds us: "Those who wish to be my disciples must take up their cross and follow me." Normally when we think of a cross, we image it as some burden which life places on our shoulders. But crosses can also be burdens we place on our own shoulders. Our mistakes and failures are our crosses. What are we to do with them? We are not supposed to deny them or excuse them. We are not called to put them down and bury them; we are called to take them up and carry them. We carry our failures as crosses and move forward with the help of Christ.

It is not a question of whether we will make mistakes, but how we shall respond when we do. Peter shows us the way. I am sure he never forgot those foolish words he spoke at Caesarea Philippi or Christ's stinging rebuke. I know he always remembered the three times that he denied Christ before the cock crowed. But he took up those mistakes and moved forward as a disciple. We can do the same. No matter what we have done, we can take up our failures and follow after Christ. We need not fear that those mistakes will crush us, because God never stops loving us, and the love of God is the most powerful force in creation.

Not only does God's love allow us to take up the cross of our failure and move forward; God's love can make that cross light.

—taken from the writings of Father George Smiga, which appear on the internet



away from Jesus Christ? Yet, we do this. We have held onto our sins as though we could not live without them.

We have made our possessions our security. And we have sacrificed our opportunity to follow Christ, to live for Christ and to die for Christ. But then, we have returned. We are here because we know that sacrificing ourselves for Christ — living an authentic Catholic life — gives us the greatest life we could ever possess — the life of Jesus Christ. A few days ago, we were reminded about a tragedy performed by people who hate us because we are Americans. We experienced twenty years ago that this hatred was not confined to the American presence in the embassies in their countries, but to all Americans — including those here in the United States. Many people in this world despise the Church. Many of those who have rejected God, many of those who claim that there is no God, hate all whose lives are determined by their faith.

There are people in your workplace, at your school, in your neighborhood, who are going to hate you because you take your faith outside the walls of the Church building and into the world. Their scorn, their mockery, and even their attacks present us with a great gift. They give us the opportunity to embrace the cross of Christ by refusing to back down from our faith. They give us the opportunity to be courageous. Are we going to join the Disciple Peter — the one whose view of life was limited to the physical world — or will we join the Apostle Peter who lived and died for the spiritual? This is the fundamental choice of our lives. We are called upon today to follow Christ — to embrace our faith, to share our faith, and, when it is needed, to suffer for our faith. Pray today and every day for the courage to live your faith.

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

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.

**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].



Reconciliation

EVERY TEAR BRINGS THE MESSIAH CLOSE:

"People are always impatient, but God is never in a hurry!" Nikos Kazantzakis wrote those words, and they highlight an important truth: we need to be patient — infinitely patient — with God. We need to let things unfold in their proper time — God's time.

Looking at religious history through the centuries, we cannot help but be struck by the fact that God seemingly takes his time in the face of our impatience. Our scriptures are often a record of frustrated desire, of non-fulfillment, and of human impatience. It's more the exception when God intervenes directly and decisively to resolve a particular human tension. We are always longing for a messiah to take away our pain and to avenge oppression, but mostly those prayers seem to fall on deaf ears.

And so we see in scripture the constant, painful cry: Come, Lord, come! Save us! How much longer must we wait? When, Lord, when? Why not now? We are forever impatient, but God refuses to

WHICH PETER ARE YOU?

Mark's Gospel is familiar, but it seems to be missing something [Mark 8:27-35]. We hear Jesus asking his disciples: "Who do people say I am." We hear Peter's answer: "You are the Christ." But then Jesus moves on to speak about how he would suffer greatly. We are missing something — actually, we are missing a lot. There are no references to Jesus changing Simon's name to Peter, no references to Peter being the rock on which the Church will be built, no references to Peter being entrusted with the Keys of the Kingdom [see Matthew 16]. What happened?

Mark's gospel emphasizes the demands of Christianity. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus says: "Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it" [Matthew 10:39]. Mark expands this to say: "Anyone who loses his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel will save it" The good news of Jesus Christ demands sacrifice — even the sacrifice of our lives. Mark's emphasis is the cross. This is not just the cross that Jesus died on. The cross that Mark presents is the cross we are called to embrace. Sacrificial love must be the way of the followers of Christ. That is what the Letter of James is speaking about when he says: "I will demonstrate my faith to you through my works" [James 2:14-18]. This is not how we want to hear religion presented. We want religion to be less demanding. We want to hear that if we just do our best to be decent Christian people, our lives will be easy now, and there will be eternal rewards in the hereafter. But Jesus never promised us that our lives would be easy. He said that they would have meaning, and purpose, and relevancy. This is what He means when He said that we have to lose our lives for His sake and the sake of the Gospel to find life.

In his great book, *Letters to a Young Catholic*, George Weigel speaks about the weakness that Peter exhibited in the days before Easter and Pentecost. One time Peter walked on water towards Jesus, but then lost his focus, and began to drown. In the Gospel for this 24th Week in Ordinary Time, Peter tried to stop Jesus from accomplishing the will of the Father — thus aligning himself with the devil. That is why Jesus called him Satan. Peter publicly denied Christ three times. Yet, Peter allowed his life to be radically changed by Christ. Weigel notes that the evangelists — the writers of the gospels — did not present the disciples as plastic saints, but as weak men who realized that the only way they could keep their eyes fixed on Jesus would be to become courageous heroes. And they did become courageous heroes. Peter left the security of his little fishing business in Galilee to journey through a world that wanted all people serious about God dead. He went to the capital of that pagan world — Rome — where he knew his proclamation of the gospel would cost him his life. He was condemned to be crucified, but, tradition has it, when he was brought to the place of crucifixion, right next to where the Basilica of St. Peter stands now, he asked that he be crucified head down because he did not deserve to be crucified like the Savior. Yes, Peter had been weak — he had failed. But, as Weigel reminds us, weakness and failure have been part of the Catholic reality from the beginning and extending to modern times.

This includes the weakness, failure, stupidity and cowardice among its ordained leaders. But purification among Catholics — whatever their vocations in life may be — and their rededication to Christ demonstrate that with Jesus Christ failure is not the final word. Emptiness and oblivion, Weigel writes, are not our destiny. Love is the final word, and love is the most living thing of all because love is of God. When we keep our eyes focused on the Lord, we can do what might seem impossible — be that walking on water or living an authentic Catholic life. We can live our lives as the gift for others that our lives were meant to be. Weigel writes that we can discover the depths of our lives by emptying ourselves of our own self concerns — "In the Catholic view of things, walking on water is an entirely sensible thing to do. It's staying in the boat, hanging tightly to our own sad little securities, that's rather mad." There are times that we have all acted in a rather insane way. How could it possibly be sane for us to walk



UNDERSTANDING FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP:

We've all experienced it — life was wonderful and everything seemed to be going along smoothly. Your career and relationships were moving forward with no conflicts or stress. Your family members were healthy. You knew you were loved and you were surrounded by your loved ones.

And then, it happened — a phone call reporting an accident or death. Your child or parent has gotten sick. A job has been lost ... Whatever it was, things changed for you and your family. There was no going back to before. I imagine that Peter and the Apostles experienced that same sinking feeling when they heard Jesus say that he would have to suffer and die [Mark 8:27-35]. After all, things had been going so well for Jesus and his friends as they traveled from town to town, teaching the crowds and healing the sick.

As we come to this 24th Week in Ordinary Time, we come also to the midpoint of Mark's Gospel — a turning point as Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem where he will eventually suffer betrayal, rejection, and torture, before dying on a cross.

Although we know that the story ends with the Easter morning Resurrection, we need also to understand all that would bring us to that moment. The Resurrection is a far-off event. Peter and the Apostles weren't prepared to hear that something horrible was looming on the horizon.

When Jesus asks Peter: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's reply is spot on — "You are the Christ." This is a great statement of Peter's faith, but it was also loaded with political and cultural implications. For Peter and many of Jesus' other followers, the Christos — the Messiah or "anointed one" — would be the long-awaited king who would bring justice and prosperity to the oppressed People of Israel. But Jesus makes it clear that he is not that kind of messiah and his followers won't enjoy royal privileges. Jesus explains that, if those traveling with him are to be true disciples, they will have to imitate his example — "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

By telling us to "take up" our cross, Jesus isn't saying that we have to meekly submit to unfair treatment and suffering or embrace a blind, "offer it up" sort of spirituality. And, while they may be opportunities for grace, illness, sad events or even disasters aren't "the cross." There is nothing particularly Christian about many of the challenges we face in daily life. Finally, we can never silently or blindly accept abuse or injustice as being the will of God. Jesus rejected these and so should we. Instead, "the cross" that we are to carry is the sacrifices, trials, and hardships that can be a consequence of placing our faith and hope in him and of living according to his teaching.

The consequences — or "cost" — of discipleship can take two forms. The first is that by saying "yes" to Jesus, we willingly set aside ways of thinking and acting that are at odds with the Christian life. Faithful discipleship demands that we sacrifice for the good of others, promote peace and justice, and seek God's will in whatever comes our way. It means being a person of love and hope. The second consequence is much more dramatic and costly, physical suffering and even death for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel.

As we know, countless Christians around the world have suffered — and continue to suffer — simply because of their faith in Jesus. We can think of so many examples from the past months and years of Christians who have suffered exile, whose communities have been ravaged, and of those who have given their lives for their faith. Pope Francis reflected on this reality when he remarked, "May the Lord, today, make us feel within the body of the Church, the love for our martyrs and also our vocation to martyrdom. We do not know what will happen here: we do not know."

As we embrace the cross and accept the consequences of following Jesus the Christ, we can find comfort and strength in the knowledge that the cross was not the end for Jesus and it is not the end of our story either. Jesus conquered death. The Resurrection transforms the cross — his and ours — into a sign of hope and life — "Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

—taken from the writings of Brother Silas Henderson, S.D.S., which appear on the internet



PICK UP YOUR CROSS:

Well God, here we go again — the beginning of another ministry year. Freshmen are imploding at Life Night with a mixture of energy and nerves. Seniors already are suffering from senioritis. Veteran Core people are setting the most excellent example by showing up late for the excited new Core Members. And parents are complaining about the Confirmation calendar for the year because our retreat falls on Homecoming weekend for the smallest school in my parish boundary. All this before even one Pumpkin Spice Latte has touched my lips.

What's that God? You want me to head over to the chapel and read the Gospel from this Sunday: Mark 8:27-35? Okay... "Then Jesus summoned the crowd, along with his disciples, and said to them: "If any of you wish to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow in my footsteps. If you want to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake and for the gospel, you will save it."

See you know what I'm dealing with here God. I'm not saying I hate anyone, but I know you know what I'm going through. I've been picking up so many crosses I could start a Cross-Fit gym in my ministry. Which cross do you want me to pick up first? Cause I have had a crazy summer and just this week, one of my Core Members passed away, and our parish community is struggling with grief, and the teens have so many questions about why you would take away someone so in love with you Lord, someone so young and marvelous. And there is a teen whose dad has cancer and the family is struggling so much. Oh, and what about the cross I've been carrying for the teen that has been struggling with addiction and is about to enter rehab? Not to mention her sibling in EDGE and family who have been journeying with her. So which cross do you want me to pick up first?



Read the scripture again? Seriously? Fine! "If any of you wish to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow in my footsteps." **My own cross...Not other people's cross? I don't know what my own cross is. You got to help me here God. I'm at a loss. I'm so busy praying for others and the ministry that I don't know my own cross.**

I guess if I'm honest with you, I'm fearful about a lot of things. I'm afraid my hours will be cut, or my new pastor won't like what I'm doing in the ministry I've put my heart and soul into and fire me.

What's that God? Do I trust in your call and your provision? Sometimes... I wish all the time... but truthfully, just sometimes.

Well, now that I'm thinking about my crosses, I'm ashamed to admit it, but I'm prideful. I feel like no one notices all the work I put into the ministry, all the hours put in, all the things I do for the teens, and the parish. Well, really for you God.

Is it really for you God? I can't believe you're asking me that? Well... I know I said I would be honest... I guess it's not always for you. I want recognition; my pride is something I truly struggle with. I need to work on this cross a lot.

What else is there you ask? Well, I'm exhausted, but I don't know how that is a cross. This summer has been crazy busy! I had a Steubenville Conference, mission trip, summer camp, leadership training, and Mass and Muffins every Wednesday at 8 AM. I mean what youth minister is even awake at 8 AM?

Did I take a Sabbath day? Well, I work on Sundays, so I take a half-day on Monday after staff meetings. Does that count? I guess I'm doing more than you are calling me to do and don't rely on other employees and Core that much. Now that I think about it, this is probably my biggest cross. I want to appear to be the best, "got it all together" youth minister. There's that pride thing again. How do I work on my pride God?

Continue reading the Gospel? Sure, no problem. "If you want to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake and for the gospel, you will save it." What are you trying to do in

me, God? What do I need to do? What will it cost me? I mean, what are you asking me to surrender, to let go of, to take on?

Maybe I need to sit here with you for a while to understand what you want to do in me and in the ministry you have placed in my care. I suppose I need to let go of some things in my life and ministry to make room for you to move. I know I need to stop carrying everyone's crosses and start to feel the weight of my cross. I need to feel that weight so I understand what I need to surrender. I want to follow you! I do!

I hear you...

Yes, I will do better this year... this year will be different, I promise.

I love you too.

—taken from the writings of Tricia Tembreull, and Youth Minister and Campus Minister.

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. 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. 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].**

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday: 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 7:1-10

Tuesday: Numbers 21:4-9, Philippians 2:6-11, John 3:13-17

Wednesday: Judith 13:17-20, Hebrews 5:7-9, John 19:27-29

Thursday: 1 Timothy 4:12-16, Luke 7:36-50

Friday: 1 Timothy 6:2-12, Luke 8:1-3

Saturday: 1 Timothy 6:13-16, Luke 8:4-15

25th Week in Ordinary Time: Wisdom 2:12-20, James 3:16-4:3, Mark 9:30-37

THE PRESSURE OF COMPETITION:

One of the saddest aspects of the lives of many students is that they always feel pressured. . . . The word school, which comes from schola — meaning "free time" — reminds us that schools were originally meant to interrupt a busy existence and create some space to contemplate the mysteries of life. Today they have become the arena for a hectic race to accomplish as much as possible, and to acquire in a short period the necessary things to survive the great battle of human life. Books written to be savored slowly are read hastily to fulfill a requirement, paintings made to be seen with a contemplative eye are taken in as part of a necessary art appreciation course, and music composed to be enjoyed at leisure is listened to in order to identify a period or style. Thus, colleges and universities meant to be places for quiet learning have become places of fierce competition, in which the rewards go to those who produce the most and the best.

—Henri Nouwen