

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Our Times ~

In a selfish world that seeks to destroy You O Lord,
and in a world mounted with false gods
and pyramids of pleasure,
we seek You O Lord, with a loving and sincere heart.

In a listless world that has lost its divine beat
and pulsates erratically with hate, envy
and jealousy, greed and every type of crime,
we listen for the comforting words You uttered to a little girl when You
took her by the hand and said: "Little girl, rise."

In a faithless world we strive to touch the hem of Your garment and our
reach is not long enough, it seems.
Our courage is hardly reflective of Your undying
loyalty and love for us.

In a blind world we search the walls and wells of time,
for at least some small penetrating light
to restore our faith in You O Lord,
and to leave all things directed to Almighty God.

In a musty and ill-smelling world
sunken very low in the foul odors
of our sexually obsessed society,
we look to You, O Lord,
for relief from the swamp of filth and corruption,
to make our senses wholly responsive
to the Divine Banquet and the Last Supper
in reparation for our sins and the sins of others.

In a deaf, indifferent and unconcerned world, O Lord,
grant us the hearing of the Holy Word
and never close the Holy Words to us.
We hope to share in Your life, in Your peace, in Your justice
that we remain always in perfect accord with You.
May the deep springs of grace
issue forth the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit
so that we too may be filled
with Divine Love and with Divine Compassion.

Amen.

—Father Francis Wisniewski. C.S.V

Our Lady Chapel



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

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

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.

THE VIRTUE OF TRUTHFULNESS:

Truthfulness is crucial to carrying out our vocation to extend the reign of God in the world. Truth is central to the Christian tradition. For Christians, God is Absolute Truth — the Source of all truth and the Goal of all truth seeking. Jesus Christ — the Word made flesh — is Truth incarnate, the definitive manifestation of divine truth, “the way, the truth and the life” [see John 14:6]. In word and deed, he proclaimed the truth that sets us free [see John 8:32] and taught us the way of truthful living. As promised, Christ sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, to help us understand and practice his fundamental teachings. Empowered by the Spirit, the Church is the community called to bear witness to the truth, to be an authentic sign and instrument of the kingdom, and to keep alive the memory of Jesus, who spoke the truth to the powerful and the marginalized. Prayer, both liturgical and private, is a form of truth-telling which expresses the fundamental truth that we are totally dependent on the God who loves and forgives us. Christian morality is not primarily about keepings laws, but is about honestly and generously living Christ’s command to love our neighbor as ourselves.

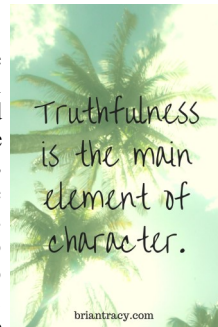
Prayerful reflection can reveal deceitful tendencies that impede and limit our ability to serve the kingdom. There is the temptation to think of our talents as personal possessions to be used for our own benefit rather than free gifts of the Spirit given for the benefit of others and for the common good. Some people tend to undervalue their gifts, thinking they have nothing to offer to make the world a better place. Others tend to exaggerate their own importance and talents, making it difficult to cooperate with others on worthy causes. There is a brand of Christian piety that concentrates so much on getting to heaven that it neglects the responsibility to spread the reign of truth, justice and peace in this world.

Catholic social teaching insists that serving the kingdom of God requires a careful reading of the “signs of the time” — accurate assessments of societal dynamics and honest judgments of the most effective means for promoting the common good. By matching an honest discernment of our gifts with an accurate assessment of societal needs, we can discern concrete ways of making the world a better place and serving the common good.

Young people, for example, who have learned in school scientific facts about the dangers of global warming could join an activist group like *Citizens’ Climate Lobby* that promotes bipartisan conversations with elected officials on controlling carbon emissions. A successful executive, who always took for granted the advantages of growing up in an affluent family, could come to recognize the truth of her privileged life and commit herself to helping the less fortunate. A priest could commit himself to include more of the Church’s social teaching in his homilies after admitting to himself the harsh truth that he muted that teaching for fear of offending his parishioners and losing their financial support.

In what specific way can the virtue of truthfulness prompt you to use your gifts to spread the kingdom and serve the common good?

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

**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 Judy Hale, who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Gregg Thompson, husband of Jill, who is ill.
- For Daniel Hernandez, father of Patsy Schauer, who is ill.
- For Debra Hurley who is ill.
- For Yelena Frolova who is ill.
- For Pecola Pearson-Harris, mother of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Director, NaNetta Hullum, who is seriously 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 Sister Katherine Kase, C.S.C.
- For Sister Miriam Angela Volkmer, C.S.C.
- For Marge Netzbund
- For Chris Nash, cousin of Basketball Coach and Counselor, Dan DeCrane.
- For Norma Rasoletti.
- For Barry Livingston, father of Learning Specialist, Katie Wetherbee and David Livingston [*90], and father-in-law of Katie Oviatt [*89].
- For Carlene Tryon, sister of Brother John Tryon, C.S.C.
- For Brother Richard Huber, C.S.C.
- For Margaret Lynch, grandmother of Grace [*02], Claire [*06], and Rachel [*08] Kenney

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.

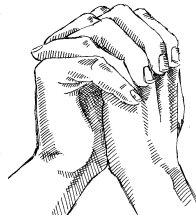
Children’s Worship
Bulletin ✨

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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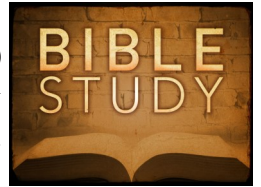
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Katie Poelking [‘01], sister of TJ Poelking [‘98], who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Julia Johnson, grandmother of Mikayla [‘23] and Michael [‘26] Fannin, who is undergoing treatment following a heart attack.
- For Mary Goers who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Tony Russo, uncle of Jacob [‘23] and AJ [‘25] Lowery, who is recovering from a 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 McKitto, sister of Aidan McKitto [‘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 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 seriously ill
- 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. 29th:

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 civil authority in carrying out 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 19: 25 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM Public Mass & Live Stream
Monday, September 20: St. Andrew Kim and Companions	NO MASS
Tuesday, September 21: St. Matthew	NO MASS
Wednesday, September 22: Our Lady of Sorrows	NO MASS
Thursday, September 23: Saint Pius of Pietrelcina [Padre Pio]	NO MASS
Friday, September 24	NO MASS
Saturday, September 25: 26 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM Public Mass only
Sunday, September 26 26 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:

“What were you arguing about on the way?” Jesus asks his disciples. But they remain silent [Mark 9:30-37]. In this silence, the simple question of Jesus, we cringe at the truth that springs forth: “They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.” Not having understood Jesus’ second prediction of his passion — and with it, the implication that their own lives would be drawn into that passion — they relate to one another in very human terms and according to human logic: If there’s a group, someone has to be on top!

The Book of Wisdom [2:12-20] has such a picture of the hatred which can arise when innocence or virtue becomes a threat and a judgment against the violent. Those individuals or groups who have tried to live and work for holiness, peace, and justice are a public insult to those whose interests are opposite. This opposition occurs within the Jewish community itself — those who do not follow God’s laws — as well as all the nations who oppress Israel. These, then, are the “wicked” who stand in opposition to the innocence and virtue of God’s chosen ones.

The Author of the Book of Wisdom is not making a prediction of how Jesus will be arrested and dealt with; rather, the author is reflecting on Israel’s orientation in living God’s ways, and noting that these will be met with violence by those inside and out of the Covenant-community who choose death rather than life. The writer personifies Israel as a “just one” whose ways insult those who are “wicked”. Israel, as the “just one”, will have their faith in the caring-God tested. For Israel, faith in God is true wisdom.

But the call of the Book of Wisdom is greater than just the people of Israel. Who is this “one” who trusts in God? That person has so many names of our own times and past centuries as well — Sir Thomas Moore, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, Jean Donovan, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel and companions, Oscar Romero, Pope St. John Paul II, Blessed Mother Teresa — and the list goes backwards and forwards. Innocence is a brilliant light to those who live in the darkness of violent indulgence and a soft comforting glow to those whose simplicity is gently lived.

Mark’s Gospel [9:30-37] is focused on the 2nd prediction of Jesus’ passion, death, and resurrection — recall that the Gospel for the 24th Week in Ordinary Time contained the first prediction. In each of the predictions, Jesus says what He feels will happen if He persists in living His personal truth; by teaching and healing and simply being, He insults those for whom self-importance is absolutely absolute. Jesus knows the ways of this world, and speaks to his friends in words they do not yet understand — actually after hearing what Jesus says about His coming, suffering and death, his disciples indulge in a group discussion on the topic of their own personal importance. Jesus asks them to reverse their thinking. He does this by telling them that the most important person is the one who serves others — He takes a little child in His arms and says: “do no harm.”

The word “innocent” comes from the Latin “nocere” — “to harm”. Thus a person who is “innocent” is a person who would do no harm. The first rule or commitment of a doctor is to be innocent — thereby attempting to heal. Jesus’ innocence is His divine love, which not only forgives, but also desires to continue and bring to healing the entirety of God’s creation.

Most of us know how we have lost our innocence. We have a personal history of doing harm to ourselves, to others, to creation, and to God’s kingdom of love. It is embarrassing for us to recall how our words and actions have reflected attitudes which harm others for our benefit. We also have lost our innocence by being harmed. Our pictures of who we are have been scratched or have had damaging acids applied to them by the words and gestures of others. Losing our innocence — whether actively or



didn’t produce rapid results. What they and political and religious systems before and after them failed to do was to prioritize the faithfulness that flows from love. Love is the only power capable of generating genuine loyalty — a faithfulness that is stronger than death.

The Scripture Readings for this 25th Week in Ordinary Time invite us to assess our personal and communal relationships with God and one another. Do we, like the Incas, attempt coercion when love seems too weak? Are we willing to gamble that servant love is sufficient to transform evil? Do we as a church give witness to such fullness of life and joy that we entice others to give their lives to it?

Today, we are invited to walk the road with Jesus and his thickheaded disciples, praying that we, too, can learn the invincible and irresistibly attractive power of self-giving love.

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

BEWARE OF THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER:

In his letter, James explains what he means by “defilement” [James 3:14-4:3]. It includes sins like gossip and unchastity. These sins cause great destruction. Back in the fifties and sixties, people talked about the “danger” of repression — if a person represses natural urges, they said, it will lead to anxiety and anti-social behavior. Better to “let it all hang out”, they said. Well, we saw how well that worked. When untethered, lust has terrible destructive power.

On this 25th Week in Ordinary Time, we examine the sin of envy — also called “jealousy”. Envy comes with a lot of energy. I see what another person has and I want something similar — a nice car, a successful career, a good friendship. When I was in high school I envied the athletes. At some point I realized that even though I would not be a great football player, at least I could get in shape with exercise and eating right. So the natural energy of envy is good, but it can go sour. As James says: “You covet but you do not possess. You kill and env; you fight and you wage war.”

In Mark’s Gospel envy rears its ugly head. Jesus begins teaching about the cross but his words go over their heads [Mark 9:30-37]. Instead of grappling with the mystery of the cross they start arguing about who is the greatest! You’d think the Apostles would be content to be one of the Twelve, but we human seem to always want more.

A priest once told about going from a poor to a wealthy parish. He saw more envy in the new parish than he did in his old one. One guy told him how miserable he became when he learned another executive got a bigger bonus! That other guy’s good fortune tortured him. Shakespeare calls jealousy a “green-eyed monster.” The reference is to a cat with typical green eyes. When the cat captures a mouse, it plays with its victim. “Beware of jealousy” says Shakespeare. “It is a green-eyed monster that mocks the meat it feeds on.” Envy makes fun of the victim it devours.

Envy is the most miserable sin. A Spanish proverb says: “Envy is skinny because it bites but never eats.” Envy plagues our society. We’ve developed a politics of envy. Instead of finding ways to work together, we concentrate on bringing other people down.

So what can we do about envy? James offers a solution. On one level its simple — but it costs something. James says: “you do not possess because you do not ask.” To overcome envy, we need to ask and to ask rightly. What does it mean to ask rightly? Before we ask, we should thank — express gratitude for what God has given. For sure, we have big problems and plenty goes wrong, but don’t you and I also have something to thank God for? After you count your blessings, then you are in a position to ask for what you need — not to win the lottery, but what you actually need today.

Thank him; then lay your needs before him - and don’t forget to pray for others: family members in pain, our church with its burden of shame, our nation so divided and hurting, our world where so many suffer unnoticed. To begin each day with petition and gratitude will go a long way to combating that green-eyed monster of envy.

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



POWER, SERVICE, AND LOVE:

Historians tell us that the ancient Incas' preferred method of incorporating new groups into their empire was by gift-giving. A delegation would enter a foreign territory carrying an abundance of food and rich offerings to demonstrate how people's lives could thrive under their rule. If that didn't work, they found other methods to subjugate the group.

The Incas provided a wobbly attempt at something like Jesus' model of servant leadership. The great distinction between the Inca and Christian approach is that Jesus limited himself to the humble, vulnerable power of service and attraction, never moving into coercion. That made him a threat to people who flaunted their status and strove to control others to their own advantage.

The author of the Book of Wisdom clearly portrays the fate of prophets like Jesus. Their humble dealings with others create an implicit critique of authoritarianism and religious pretension [Wisdom 2:12-20]. As we see everywhere from neighborhood playgrounds to international politics, people who act with great generosity — who serve by bringing out the best in others — are frequently recognized as a threat by those who need to make their importance felt. People who strive to be first — whose driving motivation is their own advantage and advancement — cannot abide the servant leader. The servant's style unmasks their egoism.

At their core, those who wield dominating power intuit their own weakness. They know that they are susceptible to anyone with greater power and thus they must hold tight to their fragile supremacy. Deep down, they understand that their control is limited to the efficacy of the threat they can muster. They gain a following by inspiring fear, an emotion incapable of generating loyalty. Jesus relied solely on the attractiveness of the message he incarnated — a method so contrary to the way of the world that, like us, the disciples found it extremely difficult to grasp.

Mark's Gospel presents Jesus' second attempt to help his disciples understand that his enemies were going to use all the coercive power at their disposal to put an end to him and his ministry. Worse yet, it would look like they succeeded. The first time Jesus taught this way, Peter tried to correct him. This time, Mark says the disciples were "afraid to question him." Obviously, they were beginning to understand what he was saying.

Their fear was entirely rational. It wasn't just that Jesus was going to suffer, but his fate involved similar implications for them. Love him as they did, they weren't quite ready to go that far.

Additionally, they were still enthralled by the images of power that surrounded them. They had suffered under Rome's domination and, as simple people, they were cowed by the sophisticated, haughty religious elite. Except for Jesus, they had precious few examples of authority that expressed itself in love that empowered others and created unity. Competition and power struggles were much easier to understand.

When the early Church prayed Psalm 54 — "By your might, defend my cause" — they probably imagined God crushing their enemies. In contrast, Jesus longed for them to comprehend the power of the invincible love of God. They wouldn't really understand that until they saw it played out in the cross and Resurrection — exactly the scenario Jesus was preparing them for.

As read the Scripture Readings for this 25th Week in Ordinary Time, rather than wonder at the disciples' thickheadedness, we might examine our own attitudes about power, service and love. The message that Jesus taught with his life was that God's dominion is solely one of attraction. God so loves the world that God will have nothing to do with coercion — not even to save the Son from suffering and death. Instead, the greatest revelation of God's character shines through Jesus' refusal to allow any rejection, threat or suffering to cause him to abandon his mission of making God's love present.

The Incas' offering of the good life was tentative. Unlike God, they abandoned that method if it



passively — always involves some form of sin. It is God's Will that we, ever so slowly, appreciate and then appropriate the person each of us is in God's loving eyes. When we do violence to another, or violence is done to us, self-acceptance and self-donation become crippled as from a harmful injury.

Jesus takes the little child in His arms as a revelatory gesture of how each of us is invited by Him to welcome ourselves, and embrace ourselves — because He does. We have injured and we have been injured, but we are missioned by each sacramental encounter we have with Jesus — from Baptism through the Healing of the Sick — to be welcomed and welcoming to others because we continue to allow Jesus to do the same with us.

When Jesus answers the question about which one is the most important, He replied that the most important will be the last of all and the servant of all. Here is the center of it all then. If we are last, because of having been harmed and remain injured by our choices or fears, then we are not last, but lost. It is in allowing ourselves to be healed that we will serve Christ's healing touch in the scratched and dented lives of others.

The name given by the Letter of James to this all-too-human manner of thinking and acting is "selfish ambition" — which breeds "disorder and every foul practice." No small thing — this worrying about who is the greatest! James' diagnosis of human discord, illustrated by Jesus' friends, points to a disease that afflicts all human hearts, but one that has a particular effect on those closest to Jesus.

Focus on self remains in direct opposition to focus on God. No one can move toward God who remains focused on the self.

In a passage of his apostolic exhortation on evangelization, Pope Francis speaks to all those who work "in and for the Church," cautioning them about the temptation to "spiritual worldliness." That is, he warns about attitudes and behaviors that seek "not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-being." This, he goes on to say, can take on many forms, depending on the kinds of persons and groups into which it seeps. How can we avoid this? Pope Francis responds: "by making the Church constantly go out from herself, keeping her mission focused on Jesus Christ, and her commitment to the poor."

For all — but especially those who work "in and for the Church" — the gospel asks us to pay attention to the focus of our love: Love of self? Or love of Jesus and those whom he loves?

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

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — OCTOBER 16th:

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.

THE CHALLENGE:

We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light.

—Mary Dunbar

GETTING IN STEP WITH THE TIMES:

Pain sometimes can be the making of us. Beethoven is the classic example. Deafness hit him as a young man. It did not sit well with the young Ludwig. As a consequence, this period of his life was not distinguished. But once he had come to accept it, his genius bloomed. Arguably his *Ninth Symphony* is the most beautiful work of music ever written. If Beethoven had written nothing else, the Ninth would have won him immortality. Yet, the night he conducted the symphony for the first time, he could not hear a bar of his music. Nor could he hear the wild applause that greeted its debut. Yet, he sensed his labor was a triumph.

So will we rejoice if we learn to master our pain as Christ would have us. When it comes our turn to die, as somebody has noted, God will not be shouting to us to help someone else. Rather, He will Himself be rushing to comfort us and He will be telling us that “His love is greater than our pain.” Jesus tells His people that He must suffer and die. But Mark continues to include comments like “But they did not understand what He said” to give an accurate picture [Mark 9:30-37]. Perhaps Sigmund Freud would tell us the apostles were blocking out understanding — they had no desire to know what He had spoken to them on this distasteful subject. They wanted to hear only pleasant lines that promised them happy days.

However, there should be none among us ready to throw the first stone at the twelve. Who among us gets our pleasure out of suffering? It is a condition we wish would become history. It is said that our conscious life begins with a cry and will end with one — in the first case, it is a shout of bewilderment, and in the second, it is often a cry of pain. The Gospels assure us that God will not turn His back on our pain. To underline that assurance He sent us His Son.

We are, says Michael Himes, what God chose to become. The Jesus story of pain is familiar to us. But we are reminded that without a Good Friday there can be no Easter Sunday. The British writer CS Lewis wrote an incisive line in *The Problem of Pain* — “**God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain.**” **And why cannot we as Christians shout to another who is in pain? A woman with terminal cancer told me how much the prayers and visits of a fellow Christian mean to her. That visitor brings with him a special broth, mums from his own garden, and the day’s newspaper.**

Then they spend some time in prayer together. What that man is doing is seen by him as a small thing; but he is doing it with love. In *Frannie and Zooey* of JD Salinger, we learn of Mama Glass’ answer to all difficulties — consecrated chicken soup. Very often a chicken, run quickly through some boiling water, is just the medicine the doctor ordered for many of us.

In Genesis rings that ugly question of Cain: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” [Genesis 4:9]. Christ gives a clear response — “Yes!” The genuine Christian looks at the person in trouble and speaks: “I look at you and I see myself.” Remember: “Great occasions for service come seldom. Little ones surround us daily.” Furthermore, it is only through suffering — whether it be our own or someone else’s — that we for the first time begin to appreciate the gifts that God has given us. It has been observed that it took centuries for our ancestors to stand erect and put one foot in front of another. But, as our doctors testify, few of us take the effort to exercise.

So, our bodies — these temples of the Holy Spirit — begin to come unglued before our eyes. Do we take care of this wonderful machine that is our body? Or take the question of sight. As one philosopher noted, so many of us look but do not see. Many of us confess to reading trash, but few of us take the time to read the magnificent prose poetry of the Book of Isaiah or the Psalms or Dag Hammarskjöld’s *Markings*. Why not refresh our spirits with the giants? Or the ability to pray. Reflect on Karl Barth’s words: “To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorders of the world.” It is time to begin again. Why do we wait? But be gentle.

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

IS YOUR FOCUS ON SELF OR JESUS?

The Gospel for this 25th Week in Ordinary Time is Jesus’ second of three foretellings of his death and resurrection. Last week, Mark’s Jesus told his followers that they must carry their “taus” [crosses] — be totally open to whatever God asks of them. Today Jesus becomes more specific about the implications of such openness.

Following the same pattern of predication, misunderstanding and clarification, the evangelist begins by having Jesus talk about his future arrest, death, and resurrection. But then Mark quickly adds: “They did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.” It’s clear that they didn’t understand because “on the way” they were “discussing among themselves who was the greatest” [Mark 9:30-37].

To the amazement of the Twelve, Jesus first confronts their ambitions — “Those who wish to be first, shall be the last of all and the servants of all”. Then Jesus presents them with an “audio/visual” — “Taking a child, he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them: ‘Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.’”

No matter what part of Mark’s gospel we’re reading, we must always go back to the opening words of Jesus. At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus not only announces the good news that “God’s kingdom is at hand,” but he also tells us how to surface God working effectively in our everyday lives — we must “repent” — totally change our value systems. We’ll only begin noticing God present in those we meet and the situations we experience after we achieve a 180 degree switch in what we believe is important in life — when we start focusing on people and things we never before noticed. Applying this to the disciples’ conversation on “importance”, we find God only when we take our eyes off ourselves and put them on others.



If our life’s goal is always to become the head high honcho, people who crisscross our lives will simply be stepping stones to reaching that end. If some individuals, like children, really can’t help us achieve the notoriety for which we yearn, just sluff them off to the side. Anyone useless to me, is useless, period.

As an essential part of repentance, Mark is convinced that those committed to dying and rising with Jesus will eventually discover no one is useless. Each person we encounter throughout our lives will present us with another way to surface the risen Jesus among us.

This insight parallels the insight some Jews received about 100 years before Jesus’ birth. During that period, the Wisdom author began to understand that there’s a life after this life [Wisdom 2:12-20]. Once that shift in their faith happened, God’s biblical people started zeroing in on more than just the here and now. There was a future to consider — a time when even some of “those condemned to a shameful death” would be taken care of by God. Life doesn’t end with our physical deaths.

In the same vein, the writer of the letter of James [3:14-4:3] is convinced that changing our life’s focus will eventually change our personalities. We always have the possibility of switching from jealous and ambitious individuals to peaceful, gentle and compliant members of a vibrant Christian community.

But, of course, as Mark reminds us: to pull this off, we first have to be committed to dying and rising as his Jesus defines those two terms. Among other things, we have to be willing to look into a mirror and notice the person standing next to us before we notice ourselves, to experience God’s presence in an individual afflicted with Alzheimer’s, and to never again construct a church building with a children’s cry

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

MISTAKES:

The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing

—John Powell

The irony is that the baby ultimately wields the greatest power. The athlete could crush it, the dictator could kill it, and the rock star could out-glow it in sheer dynamism, but the baby has a different kind of power. It can touch hearts in a way that a dictator, an athlete, or a rock star cannot. Its innocent, wordless presence, without physical strength, can transform a room and a heart in a way that guns, muscle, and charisma cannot. We watch our language and actions around a baby, less so around athletes and rock stars. The powerlessness of a baby touches us at a deeper moral place.

And this is the way we find and experience God's power here on earth — sometimes to our great frustration. And this is the way that Jesus was deemed powerful during his lifetime. The entire Gospels make this clear, from beginning to end. Jesus was born as a baby, powerless, and he died hanging helplessly on a cross with bystanders mocking his powerlessness. Yet both his birth and his death manifest the kind of power upon which we can ultimately build our lives.

The Gospels describe Jesus' power and authority in exactly this way. In Greek — the original language of the Gospels — we find three words for power or authority. We easily recognize the first two: energy and dynamic. There is a power in energy, in physical health and muscle, just as there is a power in being dynamic, in dynamite, in having the power to generate energy; but when the Gospels speak of Jesus as "having great power" and as having a power beyond that of other religious figures, they do not use the words energetic or dynamic. They use a third word — "exousia", which might be best rendered as "vulnerability." Jesus' real power was rooted in a certain vulnerability — like the powerlessness of a child.

This isn't an easy concept to grasp since our idea of power is normally rooted in the opposite — namely, the notion that power lies in the ability to overwhelm others, not underwhelm. And yet we understand this — at least somewhat, in our experience of babies, who can overpower us precisely by their powerlessness. Around a baby, as most every mother and father has learned, we not only watch our language and try not to have bitter arguments; we also try to be better, more loving persons. Metaphorically, a baby has the power to do an exorcism. It can cast out the demons of self-absorption and selfishness in us. That's why Jesus could cast out certain demons that others could not.

And that's how God's power forever lies within our world and within our lives, asking for our patience. Christ, as Annie Dillard says, is always found in our lives just as he was originally found, as a helpless baby in the straw who must be picked up and nurtured into maturity. But we are forever wanting something else — namely, a God who would come and clean up the world and satisfy our thirst for justice by showing some raw muscle power and banging some heads here and now.

We are impatient with quiet, moral power that demands infinite patience and a long-term perspective. We want a hero, someone with the blazing guns of a Hollywood superhero but the heart of a Mother Theresa. The guns of the world, which are blasting away evil, that's what we want from our God, not the power of a baby lying mute and helpless against the cruel powers of our time. Like the Israelites facing the Philistines, we are reluctant to send a shepherd boy against an ironclad giant. We want divine power in iron, muscles, guns, and charisma.

But that's not the way intimacy, peace, and God are found.

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

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].



WHO'S ON FIRST?

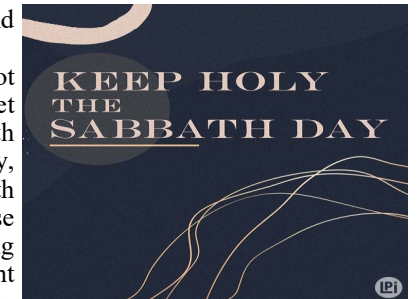
How we define the word "success" matters. Success is associated with the attainment of some goal or purpose. Taken on face value, this definition is not incompatible with what Jesus teaches. Being people of mercy and peace, for example, are certainly worthy goals in our Lord's eyes. However, we run into trouble when the goals and purpose associated with our understanding of success are self-serving rather than in service of the Kingdom of God. We are so conditioned to put our efforts into obtaining privilege and status that we forget about matters of the soul and the heart. These often get pushed aside in our pursuit of more tangible, measurable, secular gains.

What about the essence of our being — our soul? Our world does a great job convincing us of the illusion that being first is best. Whether it be first in line, first to be picked for the team, getting into our first choice for college, first to finish their work, or first in my social group to earn the most money, great satisfaction is supposedly achieved. Our egos can easily become our gods and we live this strangely attached — yet sadly detached — life where we are both connected and disengaged. Life becomes "something we do" — a series of predestined roles we play on the road to success. Our stages are set with all of the pieces we think we need to get us where we think we need to go. We dance from one to the next, barely taking time to breathe, as we touch each component making certain everything is where it needs to be. Yet in doing so, we tire of playing the puppeteer of our life's characters and pieces, leaving our souls parched, lifeless and arid.

It is no wonder that St. Oscar Romero wisely said to "Aspire not to have more, but to be more." It is better to have our life stage set with less so that we can be more fully present, rather than set with multiple things in competition for our time. Quality, not quantity, matters most in the Kingdom of God. Jesus wants nothing to do with our secularly success driven lives. He sees no more value in those pursuits than he did with the money changers in the temple. In being consumed with our own personal advancement over a true investment of ourselves in life, we become no better than those money changers. The illusions are the same: me before you, the top is better than the bottom, us versus them, personal security and safety over universal harmony and peace, making more and more money versus time-honored principles and virtues such as honesty, kindness, and love.

The world and its people are in crisis. As a result, faith and family are suffering. We are often so confused trying to figure out "what's" important that it's not even funny. Our young families, especially, suffer. Running from one thing to another — dance recitals, hockey games, baseball games, karate, swimming, music lessons, and other extracurricular activities leaves everyone exhausted. One after another of these "necessities" for success take time away from "simply being" together as a family, properly worshipping God, and savoring life. We convince ourselves that all of these steps are necessary in order for our children to become successful. While each is fine to pursue in its own right, the way the package often comes together is destructive. Yet, we are overlooking what we really need to work on: our souls.

What we don't realize is that human beings have lost something very important along the way in life — innocence. We also don't realize that we really want and need it back. We get confused thinking that the "hole" we are feeling deep within is meant to be filled with something else. Only Jesus restores our lost innocence. There is wisdom to God's wonderful commandment to "keep holy the Sabbath day." We need a day of intentional worship and playful rest. When we can connect with the truth of God in Word and Eucharist, it makes all the difference in the world. We realize that the stages of our lives are not things that require the management of a skilled puppeteer but instead require the embrace and investment of a loving, engaged servant. In keeping the Sabbath holy, we also can find time in life's business to



celebrate and play! When we can be playful, joyful, and even somewhat carefree, life is good. Relationships are things to be celebrated and enjoyed.

That's why Jesus loved the image of a child. There is a playful innocence about children — they don't manage life, they live it! They also want to do things for you, especially if you are someone they respect, admire, or idolize. There is no selfish ambition present in the innocent child, only the desire to please. Thus, we have here the makings of a good servant, one who is detached from a preoccupation with self so that they can be used by God in service of others. We cannot be useful instruments to God unless we begin to perfect the "ministry of being." And we cannot begin to do that until we rid ourselves of the world's illusions and invest ourselves in the Kingdom of God. When we make that challenging choice, the tables begin to turn. We may find ourselves moving to a lesser place in the world's eyes but to a more prominent place in God's eyes. Sadly, however, many find all of this too challenging.

St. Oscar Romero continues with words of wisdom when he says: "Beautiful is the moment in which we understand that we are no more than an instrument of God; we live only as long as God wants us to live; we can only do as much as God makes us able to do; we are only as intelligent as God would have us be." Now there is a recipe for success! Imagine what the world would look like if we all really believed this and taught this as a firm and necessary lesson to our children! We could actually stop worrying about being first and experience the joy of life. And when we experience joy, we experience God; who is life for our souls.

—taken from the writings of Fr. Mark Suslenko, which appear on the internet

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.



INTIMIDATION:

Don't be intimidated by what you don't know. That can be your greatest strength and ensure that you do things differently from everyone else.

—Sara Blakely .

PETER PAN OR THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

All of us have heard of Peter Pan and the magical place where he lived, called "Never- Never Land." It was a place where children never had to grow up or assume any responsibility, where they could do what they wanted to do whenever they chose to do it. Occasionally you'd have to deal with a pesky pirate, but all the needs and pleasures of life were magically available.

What would Never-Never Land look like if we tried to update it to our own times? It might be a place where we could watch any TV program or movie we wanted twenty four hours a day; a place where, if we decided, we could fly to the other side of the world or move across town in a few minutes; a place where every kind of food was available, from steaks to pizza, from capers to cantaloupe, and we could eat as much as we wanted, even if it made us sick; a place where if we wanted to play golf, we would not have just one beautiful golf course to choose from, but maybe ten or twenty; a place where we could watch it football games from all parts of the country; a place that had malls full of merchandise, more than we could ever buy or need, and where we could shop until we became bored with doing so.

Could it be that our lifestyle has much in common with Peter Pan's magic place? Could it be that America is in some sense a Never-Never Land? It certainly seems so when we compare the way we live to the way that most of the people on this planet live. If you were living in Zambia, in Africa, you would

peak. Dan Mazur knew what greatness was. He and those with him put aside their own dreams of conquering Everest for the sake of a fellow climber.

Who would be the greatest among the disciples? Who would make it to the top? Would it be James, John, Peter, or Andrew? They did not know what greatness was. They would learn though. Jesus would show them greatness from a cross. That was the message that Jesus was trying to get across to his disciples after he heard them arguing about who should be first in the Kingdom of God. He said that the first shall be last and servant to all. He put his arms around a child as an example of work — child care — that might seem to be beneath the dignity of the great men they thought they would become. For Jesus to be great was to serve.

Jesus calls us to be his disciples — His true followers. He calls us to set aside our own desires for the sake of others. He calls us to seek the greatness of humble generosity — to "rank first" among our families, friends and communities by taking on the spirit and role of being their servant — "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be last of all and the servant of all" [Mark 9:30-37].

The jealousy and selfish ambition that attacks the just one in the Book of Wisdom [Wisdom 2:12-20] and that James berates [James 3:14-4:3] are the sad marks of the identification of the godless — people who have rejected God and His Son. The sign of the Christian is seen in his or her setting another's needs over his or her wants.

We are all called to do this, continually. Every day, every moment of the day, you and I are called to consider others over ourselves. The needs of the children, the sick, the poor and the elderly call us away from ourselves and call us into Jesus. Every day we have to resist the temptation to selfishness — the temptation to put ourselves before others. Every day we are called to greatness by conquering a mountain much more difficult than Everest. We have to conquer ourselves. Every day we are called to be the Presence of Jesus for others.

And the infant cries. And the girl with the MBA gets up to nurse him and change him. Her education was worth it. Someday she may go back to the office, but she has learned greatness through sacrifice. And the retired man spends at least eight hours a day making sure his wife suffering from dementia has care and company. He had learned a lot in his life. Now he is a teacher. He is teaching the rest of us what greatness is. And the young single walks away from the bar scene, the wild scene, and becomes an AIDS buddy. He is a great person, using his time to provide care for the dying.

The goal of our lives is union with God. The strength to achieve this union comes from Jesus Christ on the cross. He made Himself weak so we could be strong. We pray today for this strength, the strength to reach out to others in charity, the strength to ascend the Mountain of God.

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

THE POWER OF POWERLESSNESS:

There are different kinds of power and different kinds of authority. There is military power, muscle power, political power, economic power, moral power, charismatic power, and psychological power, among other things. There are different kinds of authority too: We can be bitterly forced into acquiescing to certain demands or we can be gently persuaded into accepting them. Power and authority are not all of a kind.

Imagine four persons in a room. The first is a powerful dictator who rules a country. His word commands armies and his shifting moods intimidate subordinates. He wields a brutal power. Next to him sits a gifted athlete at the peak of his physical prowess — a man whose quickness and strength have few equals. His skills are a graceful power for which he is much admired and envied. The third person is a rock star whose music and charisma can electrify an audience and fill a room with a soulful energy. Her face is on billboards and she is a household name. That's still another kind of power. Finally, we have too in the room a newborn — a baby, lying in its crib, seemingly without any power or strength whatsoever, unable to even ask for what it needs. Which of these is ultimately the most powerful?

THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN:

Who would be the top dog? Who would be the greatest one on the Mountain? Would it be James or John, Peter or Andrew? Jesus called them aside. They didn't know what greatness was.

Dan Mazur knew, though. Dan Mazur is a professional mountain guide. He is one of many who lead people on the ascent up Mount Everest — the steepest mountain in the world at 29,029 feet. Now, in case you are thinking of climbing Mount Everest for your next vacation, be prepared to pay up to \$100,000 each to attempt to reach the summit. Also, you need to be in top physical shape. You have to show that you spent months in rigorous training. Some suggest that you spend three years turning yourself into a well-honed athlete. The government of Nepal where Everest is located demands that you take a special course in trekking along with paying \$11,000 for a permit to make the climb. So with all this done, you have to fly to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, and then hike ten days just to get to the Everest Base camp, about 17,500 feet. You would have to do this in May because there are only a few weeks between the worst of the winter storms and the summer monsoons. From the base camp you have to climb to Camp 1 at 19,500 feet. That is followed by a 1,500-foot climb to Camp 2 and a 2,000-foot climb to Camp 3. From here the air is so thin that you will have to use oxygen tanks to make it to Camp 4 at 26,300 feet. Now you have made it to the death zone where at least 300 climbers have died from the temperature, the altitude, running out of oxygen, falls and avalanches, sudden storms, heart attacks, frostbite, snow blindness, and hypothermia. If you make the dash to the summit, you will still have to face the equally dangerous descent. Hey, but you get a T-shirt.

I think all these details are necessary to get the full impact of Dan Mazur's story. Early one morning in May, Mazur was struggling alone with two well-paying clients on an ascent up to Mount Everest. They were only two hours from the summit — 28,094 feet up with just another 835 feet to go. Then they saw a dot of colored fabric in the distance. At first they thought it was a tent, but they soon realized that it was an abandoned climber. The climber was an Australian named Lincoln Hall. Hall had made it to the top, but during the descent he became gravely ill from oxygen deprivation. His two Sherpa guides tried to help him, but they felt forced to leave him to save themselves. When they arrived to safety, they declared that Hall was dead. But Hall wasn't dead — somehow, he had managed to survive the night without gloves, jacket, sleeping bag, oxygen or food. He had perched himself on a small ridge, a two foot by two-foot space. He could easily have dropped 8,000 feet on one side or 6,000 feet on the other side. Hall was hallucinating when Mazur approached him. Mazur and the others spent the next four hours pulling Hall away from the slopes, giving him bottled oxygen, food and liquids. While they were working hard to save him, two Italian climbers past them on the way to the summit. Mazur asked them to help; they just said that they didn't speak English. Right. They certainly weren't the first to behave this way. Only eleven days earlier, David Sharp died 1,000 feet into his descent. Dozens of people walked right past him, unwilling to risk failing on their own ascents. Mazur radioed the base camp for help. Some of the Sherpas there finally made it to them. They helped save Hall, but by that time Mazur and his clients were too exhausted to attempt the peak themselves. Their supplies were depleted. They couldn't wait for another day. They had to return without completing the climb. Mazur would not receive his full commission. But Mazur said that he had no regrets — "You can always go back to the summit, but you only have one life to live. If I had left that man to die, that would have been on my mind for the rest of my life. How could I live like that?"



So, who was the greatest on the mountain? Was it the Italians who made it to the top? Or the others who walked past David Sharp? Or was it Dan Mazur and the people with him who spent a great deal of money, time and energy and who found a summit 835 feet below the pinnacle of Everest? Their money, time and effort were not wasted. They had conquered Everest without reaching the top of the

wake up each morning and 86% of your friends and neighbors in that same country would be living under the poverty line — 86%! Many without electricity or clean water or sewage — not to mention education or health care. In 1970, people who lived in the United States and in the first world had a standard of life that was 30 times better than those who were in the lowest 20% of the world's population. Today — four decades later — that gap has doubled. Now we have a standard of living 60 times greater than the poorest people on the planet.

When you look at the size of that gap, do not the things which often concern us seem a bit childish, a bit self-indulgent — whether we should buy a new blouse or a pair of pants, when we have 30 pairs of pants or blouses in our closet and we have not worn many of them for years; whether we need a third car or a second home. If Jesus were suddenly to appear and ask us: "What are you talking about, what are you discussing with your broker or with your employer or with your spouse?" wouldn't we be embarrassed to admit what was filling up our lives?

The disciples in Mark's gospel were embarrassed when Jesus asked them such a question, for they were discussing which one among them was the greatest [Mark 9:30-37]. Even as Jesus talked about his own necessary suffering and death, they were concerned about their own issues, their own indulgence. They were living in their own Never-Never Land.

To the extent that we can identify with the disciples, what can be done? How can you and I live in our society as disciples of Christ in a culture that seeks to pamper us and indulge us? It is not an easy question. But I am not sure that our answer to it should be taken to the extreme. I am not sure that Jesus would ask most or any of us to give away all that we have and live in a hut in Africa. I certainly know I do not have the will or the courage to live the way most people in the world are forced to live. The issue, after all, is not that the comforts that we have are evil or bad, but that they become so problematic when compared to how little the rest of the world has.

So what can we do? Is there any realistic or practical way that we can hear the gospel and deal with these hard realities? Jesus shows a way. When the disciples are lost in their other worldly, self-indulgent thoughts, Jesus takes a little child and places her in their midst and says: "Whoever welcomes one such child as this in my name, welcomes me." Jesus is asking us to do one small thing this week that brings our thinking and our lifestyle more in conformity with reality? Can we take a few minutes just to realize how much we have and be thankful? Can we spend 30 minutes on the internet learning some of the hard facts about the distribution of wealth in our world and the many organizations that are trying to bridge the gap that separates us? Can we identify one vulnerable and hurting person in our family, in our neighborhood, at our workplace and give something to that person? What we might give need not be financial. We could give of our time and our compassion. Could we think of one small thing that would simplify our lifestyle, make one decision that would go against the American mantra of more and better and bigger?

I think this is what the gospel challenges us to do. Just as Jesus welcomed one small child, we are asked to take one small step that could lessen the gap between the life that we live and the life most of the world lives? I realize that even taking one step can be challenging. Having to face some of the real gaps, some of the real injustices in our world is uncomfortable, disconcerting to the way we would like to think the world is. But facing such hard realities is, after all, the difference between a child and an adult, between those who are worried only about their own life and needs and those who can serve the needs of others. It is the difference between someone who wants to play in Never-Never Land and someone who is committed to build the Kingdom of God.

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



I NEED POPE FRANCIS:

I need Pope Francis — not only because I'm part of the Catholic Church, but I need him because I'm sinful, and broken, and I need a constant reminder of how to be like Christ. I have been awestruck by Pope Francis from the first moment he walked out onto the balcony, to the last news article I read about him. God knows how many split ends I have, how often I cringe when people chew ice, and where I'm going to be in 5 years. God understands me and you — His people — and He knew exactly what kind of father-figure we needed to lead us. So He gave us Pope Francis.

Here's why we need him:

Because we're self-absorbed. You know it's true. We all love ourselves a little too much sometimes. Proof — the most popular websites are social media sites that scream “look at me and how great my life is.” Given the choice, we'll choose comfort, warmth, food, and then diet pills — all for the sake of our own happiness and image. It's easier to have an attitude than to set yourself aside, and to live on superficial highs instead of dying to self and carrying your cross. So here's a man who is not only willing, but takes joy in serving the Church. Sure, this is the royal priesthood, but he's not pampered like royalty. It's a tough, demanding job. He could have acted proud and inflated when he was made pope. Instead, Pope Francis' attitude said: “Here I am to serve you; I want to set myself aside in order to walk this journey with you.”

Because we're materialistic. Excessively. We just want to be happy and happiness can be bought with a plastic card and taken home in a plastic bag — right? Not according to our new pope, who as an archbishop chose to live in simplicity, take public transportation, and cook his own meals. He wants to be among his people, caring for the poor; he's not afraid to get his hands dirty. Reminds me of another epic man — Jesus.

We want to look away from the beggar on the street because destitution is embarrassing to the person who always wants more. It's not embarrassing to the person who's detached from the world and who knows that he's serving Christ in every one of his brothers and sisters — rich or poor.

Because we prefer tolerance over truth. It's easier and safer to say that we need to be tolerant of everyone and not “force” our beliefs on other people. I think that we don't want to make people mad. We want everyone to like us. Evangelization comes down to whether or not you care more about saving souls or saving your popularity. Pope Francis cares about saving souls so he isn't going to water down the truth. In the past, he has spoken out strongly against abortion, gay marriage, euthanasia, and other hot topics — and he isn't about to quiet down. In fact, he'll probably proclaim truth even louder — because tolerance should never mean being relativistic. Truth is true no matter how difficult it is so proclaim. Some people aren't afraid to call others out of their sin — and they're called saints now.

Because we fear authority figures. Have you see his face? Of course you have. Come on, he's adorable! There's no way to be intimidated by someone who ends his first public pope-speech with: “good night and sleep well.” Is there anything more fatherly? We're a generation who's out to “stick it to the man” whenever we can. That's not okay. God places people in authority and they deserve our respect — whether or not we agree with them. Sure there are people who abuse their power and herald faulty ideas and agendas, but that doesn't mean it's okay to deface images of them or call them names. A refusal to respect authority is also a refusal to accept God's authority. Since Pope Francis is a visible sign of Christ's authority on earth, putting our trust in him is to put out trust in the Holy Spirit.

Why have I decided to place my trust in Pope Francis? Because I need an example of how to be a good Catholic. I need someone who not only serves Christ's people, but who embodies Christ's



sacrificial love. I need a father to love and care for me through thick and thin.

I need Pope Francis. As Pope Francis himself has said: “Rend your hearts, open your hearts, because only in a broken and open heart can the merciful love of God enter, who loves and heals us.”

—written by Christina Mead, an associate of the Bible Geek

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:	Ezra 1:1-6, Luke 8:16-18
Tuesday:	Ephesians 4:1-13, Matthew 9:9-13
Wednesday:	Ezra 9:5-9, Luke 9:1-6
Thursday:	Haggai 1:1-8, Luke 9:7-9
Friday:	Haggai 2:1-9, Luke 9:18-22
Saturday:	Zechariah 2:5-15, Luke 9:43-45

26th Week in Ordinary Time: Numbers 11:25-29, James 5:1-6, Mark 9:38-48

FINDING JOY IN THE MIDST OF PAIN:

“Without thinking or feeling some emotion, there is just awareness. There is then no desire for bliss, enlightenment, or to teach others. Things are just as they are. In that so-called emptiness, enjoyment arises of itself. As soon as we try to enjoy, the enjoyment ceases. Somehow at the bottom of emptiness — openness, pure awareness — there is enjoyment, fullness, presence and peace.

“Bring the same emptiness and freedom to each moment and its content. Then you will be happy even in the midst of suffering. Accept everything and everyone just as they are, where they are, and try to act as lovingly as possible in every situation. Be ready to be led you know not where or when. Hush the discriminating mind dividing things into good or evil for me.”

—Thomas Keating

**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