

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for the Synod ~**

We stand before You,  
Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together  
in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home  
in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

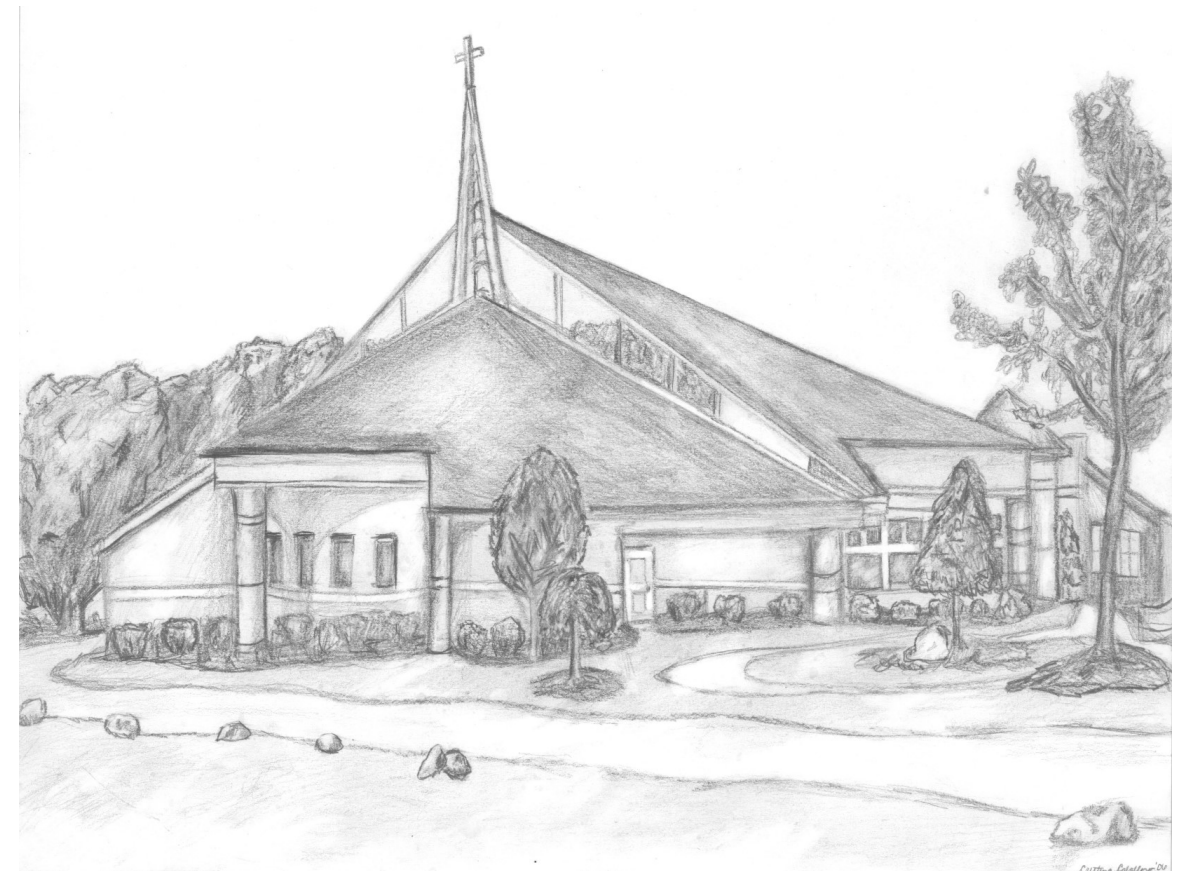
We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance  
lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.  
Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together  
to eternal life  
and not stray  
from the way of truth  
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,  
who are at work  
in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father  
and the Son,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

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

# Our Lady Chapel



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

**NO MASS NEXT SATURDAY — OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

Because of a previous commitment on Father John's Schedule, **there will be no Saturday evening Mass on Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>.** We apologize for the inconvenience this may cause. In addition, we have been closely monitoring whether the 5PM is a viable option for our Chapel Community. Attendance over the past 2 weeks has been 6 and 12 respectively. We will continue to monitor our attendance. God bless you.

**SYNOD ON SYNODALITY BEGINS:**

The Vatican announced the Synod on Synodality to listen, as the entire people of God, to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the worldwide Church. The theme for the synod is **“Towards a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.”** In the weeks and months to follow, all baptized persons and others will be invited to participate in the process of listening, dreaming, and discerning God's call for the Church.

A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, “journeys together.” The fundamental questions to be answered are: How is this “journeying together” happening today in your local church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our “journeying together?”

In responding to these questions, we are invited to recall our experiences: What experiences do these questions call to mind? What joys did they bring? What difficulties and obstacles have they encountered? What wounds did they reveal? What insights have they elicited?

We are also invited to share what we've learned — where in these experiences does the voice of the Holy Spirit resound? What is the spirit asking of us? What are the points to be confirmed, the prospects for changes, the steps to be taken? What paths are opening up for our local Church?

The Synod on Synodality is a call to conversion for the Church, to become more Christ-like in communion, participation and mission of all her members. Pope Francis is reminding us that we're journeying together to the Promised Land, and he wants to be certain that everyone is invited.

We look forward to experiencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit as we journey together to learn what is on the minds and in the hearts of the people of the Diocese of Cleveland. We are a pilgrim people, a community of believers on the way to the Father together. How we get there with one another as a Church is the focus of this synodal process,” said Bishop Malesic. “My prayer is that with the Holy Spirit to guide us, what flows from this synod will preserve the fire of faith in Jesus Christ as our savior through the ages.”

**WOMEN'S EVENING ZOOM RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM,** we will hold a Women's Evening of Reflection and Sharing **via zoom.** It has been several years since we have been able to host a Women's Fall Retreat, so we are excited to present this opportunity — even though it will only be by zoom. All Women of Our Lady Chapel and Gilmour Academy — and their guests and friends — are invited to join us for this retreat. **Father John** will facilitate our evening of reflection. **Father John will be sending out the zoom link to those who have registered.** So **mark the date on your calendars** and give yourself a treat in the Lord. Please **call Patty in the chapel office [440-473-3560] to register.**

**ON THE ROAD TO SALVATION:**

Three things are necessary for the salvation of a person — to know what one ought to believe; to know what one ought to desire; and to know what one ought to do.

—St. Thomas Aquinas

**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 critically ill
- For Gregg Thompson, husband of Jill, who is ill.
- For Daniel Hernandez, father of Patsy Schauer, who is ill.
- For Vicki Giancola, mother of Vince Giancola ['23], who continues treatment for cancer.
- For Kate Jackson, sister of LS art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, and aunt of Rita ['33] and Bridget ['35] Sheehan, who is undergoing treatment for COVID
- For Audrey, Olivia, Eva, Millie, and Penny Jackson, nieces of LS art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, and cousins of Rita ['33] and Bridget ['35] Sheehan, who are undergoing treatment for COVID.
- For Tammi Ramsey, who is critically ill with COVID
- For Liam Kirchner, a child, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Joseph Borkey ['82], brother of Jeff ['80] and Jerrod ['87] Borkey, father of Christian Borkey ['16], and uncle of Jerrod ['12] and former Gilmour student, Ian Borkey, who is recovering from cancer surgery.
- For Terry Lahey, who is critically ill with supranuclear palsy.
- For Albert Abramovitz, grandfather of Matt Chiancone ['17], who is critically ill as a result of cancer.
- For John Schenkelberg ['71], father of Craig Schenkelberg ['16], and uncle of Katherine ['89], Elizabeth ['92], Lisa ['98], Rick ['02], Colleen ['13], Sam ['19] Schenkelberg, and brother of Bob ['62], Charlie ['63], and Rich ['69] Schenkelberg, who is critically ill with COVID

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Peggy Lavelle, sister-in-law of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C.
- For Ronald Armstrong, brother of Brother Richard Armstrong, C.S.C.
- For Plato Anton, father of Chris Anton ['78] and grandfather of Alexis Anton ['13].
- For Fr. Mike Rock, O.de M. [Mercedarian Fathers]
- For Warren Palmer, grandfather of Holy Cross Seminarian, Mike Palmer, C.S.C.
- For June Kristofelc.
- For William Breck
- For Anthony DiCicco, father of Anthony ['79], Nick ['82], and Domenic ['85] DiCicco.
- For Devan Bogard

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

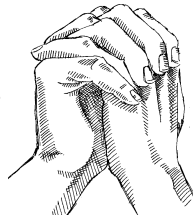
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- For a growth in awareness of the blessing of family life.
- For all those struggling with various addictions.
- For an end to sexual abuse and lack of respect for human persons.
- For a greater 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.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

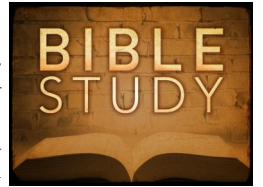
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Will Chadwick ['22], brother of Alex Chadwick ['25], who is recovering from surgery.
- For Ernie DeChellis, father of Elizabeth DeChellis ['24], who is undergoing medical testing
- For Hans Schmidt, father-in-law of Mary Schmidt, grandfather of Maggie ['12] and Jacqueline ['13] Schmidt, who is hospitalized.
- For Shirley Adams, mother of Todd Adams ['82], who is recovering from a serious leg injury
- 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 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 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 Darlene Lonardo, mother of Joseph Lonardo ['00], and grandmother of Angelina ['22] and Giana ['22] Lonardo, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- 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 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 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, OCT. 27<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, October 27<sup>h</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. 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: Since when is Sanctity spooky?**



**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, October 17: 29 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 18: St. Luke	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 19: St. Isaac Jogues & Companions	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 20:	NO MASS
Thursday, October 21:	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, October 22: St. John Paul II	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Saturday, October 23: 30 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, October 24: 30 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**MEN'S EVENING ZOOM RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM,** we will hold a Men's Evening of Reflection and Sharing **via zoom.** It has been several years since we have been able to host a Men's Fall Retreat, so we are excited to present this opportunity — even though it will only be by zoom. All Men of Our Lady Chapel and Gilmour Academy — and their guests and friends — are invited to join us for this retreat. **Father John** will facilitate our evening of reflection. **Father John will be sending out the zoom link to those who have registered.** So **mark the date on your calendars** and give yourself a treat in the Lord. Please **call Patty in the chapel office [440-473-3560] to register.**



**ATTITUDE:**

Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.

—Zig Ziglar

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

As the days move toward the late fall in the Northern half of the globe, the Church's liturgy challenges us to consider the Harvest of God — the in-gathering of gifts into the final Reign of God. In just a few weeks we will celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. If we remember our early Church history we recall that many Christians in the first few centuries were tortured and died because they claimed allegiance to the Lord Emperor Jesus, and not Caesar. Even the litany of entrance into the liturgy that we have retained as an entrance rite began Kyrie — Lord, which until then had been the title of the Roman god Caesar. But who is this Kyrie that we assert is Mercy? What is the style of leadership of this Kyrie of Heaven and Earth?

Pope Francis tells us that Jesus is all about mercy. We could even say Kyrie IS Mercy — and Francis in so many ways has tried to help us understand what it means when we say Jesus is Mercy. Francis talks about trying to understand mercy, not as a noun — an “it” — but as a gerund form of a verb: Jesus encounters us and He “mercifies” us — that is, he both transforms us in his mercy and makes us effective as mercy for others.

Mark's Gospel [10:32-45] tells us that Jesus assured those closest to Him that they must be servants of all — they must lead by serving in the manner that Jesus serves — by “mercifying” the world. The prophet discloses the servant-leader as one who utterly knows and loves his followers [Isaiah 53:6-12]. A servant leader does not sin, but he or she enters the consequences of sin and forgives and heals it. A servant leader does not “lord it over” but he or she stands under the other. A servant leader does not enrich or aggrandize him/herself, but is enriched only by God's mercy so that he or she can pour riches out on those served.

Every baptized Christian has been called to enter the servant leadership of Jesus. We are gifted with the mercy of God's Spirit to be merciful in our exercise of this “priestly” leadership. Such ability to respond is given in the priesthood of baptism but must be exercised constantly within the community and for the world. The servant leader knows that Truth — another name for God — can never be separated from Mercy. All the titles of God are intended to speak of the nature of God. They are limited only by our understanding of their meaning. God's mercy is, and is not, like our mercy; God's truth or justice or love both is and is not like the various experiences of humans that these words evoke. Truth that is spoken without mercy is simply NOT truth — because nothing describes God or God's activities that are not entirely mercy.

Mark's gospel ends with a self-defining statement. Jesus is living among His followers and within the world as “Servant”. He is inviting them all to see His life — and theirs — as the heart of the “Kingdom”. The Romans enslave with power; Jesus as servant offers the power of self-sacrifice as their participation in His identity. And so, when James and John ask for their special privilege, Jesus asks them if they can they drink that, take it in and sink into this kind of living?

Jesus is meeting His human family where they are, and serving them what is good for them. The empire of Rome is a large section of our human territory. Much of our suffering occurs when that personal empire collides with our weaker desires for God's kingdom to come and replace our own. All sufferings cannot be explained so easily. We are invited to drink and sink into the powerful and gentle arms of the Servant, serving us toward what is ultimately good for us.

It is no accident in a harsh and embittered time in human history that God would grant us a servant leader for a Pope who makes mistakes, but is ultimately about mercy. As we move toward the celebration of the Solemnity of the Kingship of Christ, let us pray that we will remember that the Christ we give my hearts to is all about mercy — and challenges each of us to be mercy.

For any of us, if we have doubt of the truth of today's liturgy, and the liturgy of Christ's servant leadership, then we have only to look four weeks beyond the Solemnity of Christ the King and face the



The God we meet in Jesus is the one whose life is love.

The nearer we come to God the more we will share in God's glory — passionate, self-giving. Then we will understand the invincible power of vulnerable love.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — NOVEMBER 20<sup>th</sup>:**

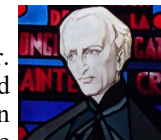
Our Savior Lutheran Church, across the street from Gilmour, has a Food Pantry which distributes food to the community on **the third Saturday of each month**. They welcome volunteers. If you want to volunteer, they have instituted some **new procedures** because of the Coronavirus. **Thus they help pre-pack nonperishables in bags on Thursday evening beginning at 5 PM.** They continue this prepacking on Friday if needed. Check with Elina Gurney on this. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help putting items from the foodbank into the prepacked bags.** Only volunteers will be allowed in the Church building, so you will be protected against the virus. Clients will remain outside in their cars. **The food pantry is then open from 9:30 AM—1:30 PM on Saturday.**

Our Savior Lutheran's Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

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

**NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:**

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were 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. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.

**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 a Senior in High School] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. We are in need of ministers for both our Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. **Contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you feel called to this ministry.** We are always in need of Eucharistic Ministers.

**CHILDREN'S BULLETINS:**

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



**TO BE GREAT; TO BE A SERVANT:**

“The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity” [Isaiah 53:6-12]. Who wants to hear this? Would this message move people to discipleship? It seems pretty certain that James and John had not thought that Isaiah’s “Servant Song” applied to Jesus before asking him to put them at his right and left hands!

Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s writings might help us focus Isaiah’s Servant Song and Mark’s Gospel. While in a Nazi prison, Bonhoeffer reflected that all people turn to God for help when they are “sore bestead.” On the other hand, he said that those who have been captivated by Christ turn to God when God is “sore bestead.” Bonhoeffer believed that Christians stand by God in God’s hour of grieving — when God is poor, scorned, homeless and hungry — “whelmed under weight of the wicked.”

Bonhoeffer critiqued “cheap grace” — the practice of Christianity that seeks the protections of status and power yet avoids the cross. Bonhoeffer teaches that “cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.” Cheap grace includes forgiveness that does not require repentance, baptism without commitment, and communion without consecration to a life of discipleship.

In Mark’s Gospel, we meet James and John, who were enthralled by their own concept of the messiah and ready for all the spoils of Jesus’ victory. They ignored what Jesus had said was at stake for him and his followers. Responding to their request to reign at his right and left, Jesus didn’t talk about coming into his glory through a battle with demons or evil earthly power, but rather through his baptism and the cup he would drink.

When we consider those two images, we begin to understand how countercultural they were. People didn’t baptize themselves. To be baptized implied submission to the ministry of another and the reception of a new identity and relationship to God. Baptism demanded a readiness to have one’s life turned around and oriented only to God.

Jesus’ cup, as he defined it, was his life’s blood shed — the cup that even he asked to be rid of, if only it were the will of God. In baptism, responding to the Father who named him the beloved son, Jesus accepted the commitment to be faithful, no matter the cost. His cup, offered symbolically at the Last Supper and accepted in the Garden of Gethsemane, was the fulfillment of that commitment.

What we often miss in considering the Scripture Readings for this 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time, is that Jesus’ acceptance of his baptism and cup was not only obedience to the Father, but a revelation of what the Father is like. The God who was “well pleased” in him was the God with whom he shared the vulnerability of love that does not count the cost. Jesus revealed the God who knows hours of grieving for love of the homeless and hungry, for those who suffer under the power of the wicked.

Time and again, the Gospel comes back to the formula that Jesus gives at the end of Mark’s Gospel: “Whoever wishes to be great will be a servant.”

St. Vincent de Paul explained the costly grace of the Christian vocation when he told his followers: “Let us work with a new love in service of the poor, looking for the most destitute and abandoned among them. Let us recognize that before God they are our Lords and masters, and we are unworthy to render them our small services.”

If we let Bonhoeffer and St. Vincent teach us, we realize that those who stand at the right and left hands of Christ may not have free use of their own hands. That is because, as Jesus warned Peter, their hands may be stretched out and tied by their captors [see John 21:18]. In other cases, their hands will be full of food for the hungry and medicines for the ill, or even already fully occupied by holding children and giving support to the infirm. The closer we are to Jesus’ right and left, the more we will be like him — hands, hearts, souls and minds fully occupied in the service of those who need the most.

Isaiah reminds us that “Because of his affliction, he shall see the light in fullness of days,” and, “the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him.” This underlines the idea that God’s servants share the ache of the divine heart and God’s desire to respond to need. That was evident in Jesus of Nazareth.

Incarnation of Mercy in a totally vulnerable infant.

As we hear about some of the authorities in both the Church and the world right now, it would be well for us to call on one another to be, servant leaders whose lives are characterized by the “mercification” of our hearts so that we, in turn, “mercify” those we are called to lead through servanthood.  
—taken from the writings of Carol Zuegner, which appear on the internet

**COMING TO SERVE:**

Mark’s Gospel begins with the Zebedee brothers — James and John — angling for high positions in the kingdom much to the chagrin of the other ten [Mark 10:32-45]. Jesus used the occasion to teach the Twelve that they should not lord it over others, but should act as servants. Jesus reminded them of his own mission — “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” Furthermore, Jesus lived out that vocation during his public ministry, exorcising demons, healing the sick and preaching the good news.

Mark’s Gospel prompts reflection on ways we might be tempted to lord it over others — throwing our weight around; taking advantage of others; misusing our authority; exploiting the weakness of others; looking down on the less fortunate; putting on airs; portraying a sense of superiority; dominating conversations. If we can detect even quite subtle ways of lording it over others, we are in a position to hear Christ calling us to act less like masters and more like servants — to be less self-centered and more like the Master.

We can imagine individuals who are trying to be more Christ-like in their relationships. A mother who interfered too much in her son’s marriage now helps out only when asked. A husband who expected his wife to wait on him is now doing his share of the domestic chores. A father who generally ignored his daughter and her teenage activities now responds generously when she asks for his help. A very successful older brother who often fought with his younger sister now helps pay for her college education. A corporate executive who was overly harsh with one of her employees is now helping him to develop his skills so he can move up in the corporation. A pastor who thought of his flock as children needing fatherly guidance now sees himself as a servant leader — empowering his adult parishioners to use their gifts to build up the Body of Christ and spread the kingdom in the world. A municipal judge who tended to look down on the petty criminals before him became more compassionate, looking for ways to rehabilitate them.

How can you become a more faithful disciple of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve?

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

**POWER THROUGH POWERLESSNESS:**

The movement from power through strength to power through powerlessness is our call. As fearful, anxious, insecure, and wounded people we are tempted constantly to grab a little bit of power that the world around us offers, left and right, here and there, now and then. These bits of power make us little puppets jerked up and down on strings until we are dead. But insofar as we dare to be baptized in powerlessness, always moving toward the poor who do not have such power, we are plunged right into the heart of God’s endless mercy. We are free to reenter our world with the same divine power with which Jesus came, and we are able to walk in the valley of darkness and tears, unceasingly in communion with God, with our heads erect, confidently standing under the cross of our life.

It is this power that engenders leaders for our communities, women and men who dare to take risks and take new initiatives. It is this power that enables us to be not only gentle as doves, but also as clever as serpents in our dealings with governments and church agencies. It is this power that enables us to talk straight and without hesitation about sharing money with those who have financial resources, to call men and women to radical service, to challenge people to make long-term commitments in the world of human services, and to keep announcing the good news everywhere at all times. It is this divine power that makes us saints — fearless — who can make all things new.



**BEING AMBITIOUS FOR CHRIST:**

When the Emperor and Empress of Japan visited the United States, a few years ago, prominent people behaved like children. They wanted to be in pictures with royalty; they wanted to somehow bask in their prominence. Mark's Gospel for this 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time talks about two of Jesus' disciples wanting to be in the spotlight. But let those of us who do not pursue being in the presence of celebrities be the first to throw a stone at either of these disciples. The naked ambition of James and John as described by Mark [10:32-45] should be of much consolation to every one of us. The picture that Mark paints of James and John is anything but "saintly"; he shows them with warts and all. And Mark's point is that with such proud, preening characters as these, Jesus conquered the world. So, there is a place and job for each of us with all our peccadillos in the divine plan.

But we should not beat up too much on the brothers James and John. Mark's story also illustrates their tremendous faith in Jesus. The Master had just predicted for the third time His approaching murder — He was an outlaw with a price on His head. He stood before them exhausted and dressed in rags. He did not possess a dollar to His name. To all appearances, He was a loser. Yet, James and John were absolutely convinced that when push came to shove, He would be a big winner. They were surely guilty of wanting the spotlight, but also they possessed a faith in Jesus that was overwhelming. Would that you and I had such faith in the Nazarene!

Ambition traditionally gets a bad press. St Bernard labels ambition as "the parent of hypocrisy." William Shakespeare considered it a sinister drive. Even King Henry VIII — for all of his warts — says that ambition is the "sin that fell the angels." Spinoza pictured it as a madness. For TS Eliot, all history "deceives with whispering ambition."

But ambition can be a positive influence in our lives also. Joshua was most anxious to establish the Jews in the land flowing with milk and honey [see Deuteronomy 31]. David wanted to erect a temple to honor God [see 1 Kings 5]. St Paul announced in a letter to the Church at Rome that he longed to convert Spain to Christ [see Romans 15]. Jesus Himself was clearly a person of ambition. His self-appointed job definition was to travel from village to village speaking of the Good News. He wanted to gather Jerusalem under His wings. He set His face to "give His life as a ransom for many."

So, obviously ambition is not all bad. What a more attractive Church we would belong to if each of us had the ambition, like the Lord, to serve and not to be served, to minister and not be ministered to. A self-proclaimed distaste for ambition can be a very thinly disguised cop-out for an unwillingness to serve. Recall that question put to Pope St. John XXIII by a visitor: "How many people work here in the Vatican?" Without a twinkle in his eye, the Pope responded: "About a third of them!" Working for Christ the Pope is saying is not a part time-job.

The contemporary Church is in dire need of many more Joshuas, Davids, and Pauls. And it looks to us today to step into their empty sandals. The sad truth is that far too many of us want to do as little as possible while getting as much as possible. We want to take and not to give. We want the bonus without the onus. We want to be God's grandchildren but not His children. The Christ and His Church become the big losers.

The apostles of Jesus — including James and John — paid their dues — and then some. The verdict is out on each of us. What we need then is more Gospel ambition and not less of it.

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

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE:**

Making a difference is always possible, especially with persistence and dedication. —Gladys De La Mora

**HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

It's been over a month since we've heard the second of Mark's three predictions of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Finally, we have the third. Following the same pattern of the previous two, it begins with the prediction — which for some reason has been omitted in the Gospel for this 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. What we do have is what follows this third prediction — the misunderstanding of what it means to die, and the oblivious response of James and John [Mark 10:32-45]. Jesus again clarifies the issue.

In the first prediction, it was Peter who has a problem dying with Jesus [see Mark 8]. In the second, it's the 12 who get into a discussion about who is the greatest [see Mark 9]. And now with the third prediction, the honor goes to James and John. Totally missing Jesus' point about first dying then rising, the brothers foolishly ask to be given the "glory seats" when Jesus comes into his glory.

Mark's Jesus initially cuts them down by simply replying: "You do not know what you are asking." But then, when the other ten "become indignant" at the brothers' request, Jesus clarifies what dying with him actually entails. In the first prediction/misunderstanding/clarification incident, dying revolved around being open to whatever God asks of us; in the second, accepting even the community's most insignificant members as being important. Now in this third incident, Jesus takes our dying one step further — "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you."

Then Jesus outlines his dream of an authority structure which completely turns all other such structures upside-down — "Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." In Jesus' ideal community, the persons who serve others are more important than the people who are served.

We must always remember that there were "real" slaves during the historical Jesus and the evangelist's day and age. What we today regard as symbolic or metaphorical language was looked at quite differently 2,000 years ago. Slaves back then were expected to give themselves totally over to their masters — their lives revolved around being at the beck and call of others. Jesus not only demands the same of his followers, he even goes beyond that by mentioning that he regards himself as a "ransom" for many.

When I ask my students, "What's a ransom worth?" they normally respond, "Whatever the person being ransomed is worth." I presume a kidnapper would expect to get more for Pope Francis than for a parish priest in our local community. That means that Jesus — and his imitators — gauge their value by the value of those they serve. If we're important, it's only because we serve important people.

The prophet Isaiah seems to have been the first biblical person to come up with this idea of "vicarious suffering" — the belief that one person can suffer for another. His disciples, in today's Fourth Servant Song reflect on that phenomenon — "Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt shall he bear" [Isaiah 53:6-12].

It's not clear how such vicarious suffering works, but as we hear in the Letter to the Hebrews, some of Jesus' earliest disciples regarded his death and resurrection as exemplifying such an action. Just as the Jewish high priest offered sacrifices for the people, so Jesus — one of us — offered himself for us. As Isaiah's followers expressed it: "By his wounds we are healed" [Hebrews 4:14-16]. Jesus, like the prophet, had more than the smell of the sheep on him — He actually took on their sins. There's no way we can more deeply serve others.

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

**WISE WORDS:**

I have decided to stick to love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

is quite another when things are unfair — when you are unjustly criticized, when everyone else seems to have lost balance, when, like on Good Friday, it gets dark in the middle of the day.

It is one thing to be gracious when those around you are respectful, warm, and fair; it is quite another when everyone seems bitter, disrespectful, jealous, and cold. It is one thing to bless others when they want to receive that blessing, when they hang on to your every word, when they want to be in your company. It is quite another when their very glance speaks of loathing, and when they avoid you when you come into a room.

It is one thing to forgive others when that forgiveness seems fair, when it isn't impossible to swallow the hurt, when the wound dealt you is not mortal; it is quite another to forgive someone when it isn't fair, when the wound dealt you is mortal, when the life being murdered is your own. It is one thing to give your life over to family, church, community, and God when you feel loved and supported by them, when they seem worth the sacrifice, when you get a good feeling by doing it; it is quite another thing when you do not feel support, when it doesn't seem worthwhile, and when you feel no other reason for doing it except truth and principle.

These contrasts capture, in essence, to what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. His passion was a drama of the heart — not an endurance test for his body.

What made Jesus' sacrifice, his handing himself over, so special? We have, I think, focused too much on the physical aspects of the crucifixion to the detriment of what was happening more deeply, underneath. Why do I say that? Because none of the Gospels emphasize the physical sufferings, nor indeed, the fears that Jesus expresses in conversations before his death. What the gospels and Jesus emphasize is his moral loneliness, the fact that he was alone, betrayed, humiliated, misunderstood, the object of jealousy and crowd hysteria, that he was a stone's throw away from everyone, that those who loved him were asleep to what was really happening.

And this moral loneliness, mocked by those outside of it, tempted him against everything he had preached and stood for during his life and ministry. What made his sacrifice so special was not that he died a victim of violence — millions die as victims of violence and their deaths aren't necessarily special — nor that he refused to use divine power to stop his death. What made his death so special is that, inside of all the aloneness, darkness, jealousy, misunderstanding, sick crowd hysteria, coldness, and murder, he held out, he gave himself over, without bitterness, without self-pity, holding his ideals intact, gracious, respectful, forgiving, without losing his balance, his meaning, or his message.

That's the ultimate test and we face it daily in many areas of our lives.

Some years ago, I was participating in a forum debating a book on chastity. The book, written by a woman still in her early twenties, was a very idealistic one, and it urged young people not to have sex before marriage, but to keep their virginity as a special gift for their partners in marriage. One of the panelists — a very sincere woman — had this reaction: "I like what this young woman says and when my daughters are in their teens I'll have them read this book, but what she says makes a lot more sense when you are 20 years old and know what you're waiting than when your 39 years old and no longer know what you're waiting for!"

Jesus' sacrifice was so special because, long after the clock had run out on everything, and there seemed no reason left to wait for anything, he still held on — to his ideals, his balance, his gracious forgiveness, and his love. The struggle to do that — to remain faithful — is the real drama inside the death of Jesus and in the end it is a struggle of the heart, not the body.

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



## THE LOVE WE ARE CALLED TO:

The Eucharist is at the center of our faith lives. At Mass, we recall how Jesus humbled himself to enter into the muck of our world. Along with the bread and wine, we offer ourselves together with Jesus as a living sacrifice to the Father. We pledge that we will give of ourselves in service to the needy, the lonely, and the desperate so that the blessings of eternal life may be extended throughout the world. When we come to Mass, we are not bystanders or spectators. Rather our lives are at stake. We are proclaiming that Christ has died to save us and that we are willing to sacrifice ourselves in service to others. Jesus gave of himself in service to others. If we are to follow him, we must do the same.

Jesus makes this very clear to his disciples in Mark's Gospel [10:32-45]. Though he was the most powerful man to ever walk the earth, Christ did not become human to dominate others. He came to seek out the sick, the suffering, and the sinners. Jesus came not only to instruct and heal us, but he suffered the cruelest death imaginable to open up heaven to those who would believe. Jesus was not in it for the glory. And anyone who follows him must be willing to live as he lived. To be like our master, we must make ourselves the slaves of others.

As members of a community of faith, we can relate to the bickering that went on among the disciples. We all love our church, and many of us give long hours of our free time to support it. Many of us are generous when it comes time to give to special collections or help out with fundraisers. However, it happens more often than we would like to admit that generous people get overlooked and feel slighted. We can feel bitter that others get the recognition we believe we deserve. We can resent that we are giving so much and others are giving so little. Or we can get so frustrated and offended by the pettiness and gossiping of others that we want to give up altogether.

While it is natural to want to be recognized for our work, it is not what the follower of Jesus is called to seek. All the great saints prayed that they would be overlooked and taken for granted even as they spent long hours in service of others. What they wanted more than anything was to be recognized by God for their work. So, they continued on even when they were made fun of because they wanted to be like Jesus who gave without counting the cost and who did everything not for the glory but out of pure love for others. Each of us who calls Jesus "Lord" must do the same.

At every Mass, we gather to recall the sacrifice that Jesus made to save us. Are we willing to give of ourselves for others? Are we willing to go without so that we can give more generously to the needy? Are we willing to risk injury or even death to protect the helpless? Are we willing to take on the thankless jobs no one else wants out of pure love for Jesus? Are we willing to go without being recognized because we set our hearts on the reward that only God can give? Above all, can we do all this with a spirit of joy and thankfulness because we are blessed to be able to know, love and serve our Lord?

—taken from the writings of Douglas Sousa, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage

of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John.** You do not have to attend Gilmour to be an altar server, lector, or to be involved in any other ministry at Our Lady Chapel. **Please call the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

## BEING OF GOOD CHEER:

Cheerfulness prepares a glorious mind for all the noblest acts.

—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



**THE FIRST GIFT FROM THE LORD:**

What was the first gift that Jesus gave us? When he began his earthly ministry, what was the first step that Jesus took? What was the foundation that he laid upon which he intended to build everything else? Jesus' first step was not to erect a building. The first Christian church was not built until centuries after his death. Nor was his first step to write the scriptures. The first writings of the Christian scriptures were not composed until decades after Jesus' ministry ended. Nor was his first gift, to give the Spirit. The Spirit did not descend until after the resurrection. Nor did Jesus begin by instituting the Eucharist. That sacred meal which we share was established on the night before he died.

No, Jesus' first step was to establish a community. Immediately after his baptism, he went out and called disciples who could share life with one another. Therefore, the first gift that Jesus gave to us, is the gift of one another. He did this because he knew that if his teaching was to be understood, if his miracles were to have an effect, if his mission was to impact the world, he would need a band of men and women who shared a common identity. He would need disciples who would discover in their relationships with each other his very presence in their midst.

How peculiar it is, then, that we so often forget the essential nature of community. How unfortunate it is that are many who still associate their faith with a church building, as if bricks and mortar could on their own, lead us to God. How misleading it is for us to think that studying the bible or memorizing the catechism, or devoutly receiving the Eucharist, or saying the rosary could on their own adequately form our faith — they can't. We need community! Because it is only when our lives touch, when stories are shared, when love is exchanged, that our faith can come alive and the power of Jesus' presence emerge in our lives.

In his memoir of being a prisoner during the Second World War in the infamous Japanese concentration camp on the River Kwai, a British veteran noted that as the prisoners of that camp first came together, overt displays of faith were common. Prisoners would regularly pray publicly; many would read the Bible daily. However, as time passed and as it became clear that there would be no immediate release from this camp, these displays faded in the face of discouragement and anger. But then, out of hardship and necessity, those individual prisoners began to care for one another. They began to protect those who were weak among them and some even gave their lives for one another. As those individual persons began to share common identity, not only did their faith in God return, but it deepened. They were able to see in their midst, the presence of God's love. Those prisoners began to realize that religion was not primarily an issue of belief, but one of action, where people cared for one another, even when it was not clear whether such caring would help. Out of that service to one another, faith became living and real.

This truth guides Jesus' words in Mark's Gospel [10:32-45]. It is why he commands his disciples to be servants of one another. Because Jesus knows that it is only when we care for one another, when our lives touch and intersect, that the Good News of his gospel will have power. The beauty of any parish church is the community that assembles within it. For this is a place, an essential place, where faith can be shared and where lives can touch. As Bishop Pilla asked over and over again throughout his life: "What would you do without your parish community in which your faith can become real?" This is a place where lives can touch and where faith can become more than just a matter of words.

I know how different my life would be without a community. My faith depends and grows because of the inter-connection with person in our parish community. So many of you have opened your lives to me, have served me and have allowed me to serve you. Yet, the history of this parish cannot be explained simply by the relationship between the community and it's pastor. This community, from the start, was a community which recognized that service to one another was the foundation of faith. Our history was created because parishioners knew their own gifts and were willing to share them with one another, so



served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

We are a Eucharistic people. You hear that expression all the time. But what does that really mean? We celebrate Jesus' Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. We receive communion. We adore his Presence in our tabernacles and during Eucharistic adoration services. But that is just one part of the Eucharistic dimension of our lives. To be a Eucharistic people, our celebration of the Eucharist must encompass washing the feet of the Lord's people. Remember that was what Jesus did before He gave His Body and Blood at the Last Supper — He washed the feet of his disciples and then issued the Mandatum, the mandate for them and for us: “What you have seen me do, you also must do” [see John 13:15]. This was followed by the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. We celebrate the Eucharist through service to others and continually experience the Presence of Christ.

Mark's gospel [10:32-45] is really an encouragement to continue to serve the Lord through serving others. It is an encouragement for our parents, particularly our Moms, whose days are spent in so many loving tasks and who are often many levels beyond tired. What you are doing is noble, and holy, and Christian. You are giving yourself in service to people whom God loves, and whom you also love, your children. How many of our Dads are also tired, and worn out by work and the stress of providing for their families? Yet, there they are coaching, leading scouts, helping with homework, and looking for new ways to engage their children. Parents must have authority over their children for the home to function properly. Your sacrifice is how you achieve this authority. It is the Christian way.

James and John had it all wrong. They wanted power, they wanted authority. Instead, Jesus called them to sacrifice and service. And when, after Pentecost, they sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Kingdom of God — they were, in fact, among the great gathered around Jesus' throne.

It's the same for us. We sacrifice for others and the sacrificial love of the Lord gives us the authority to call ourselves Christian.

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

**Monday:** 2 Timothy 4:10-17, Luke 10:1-9

**Tuesday:** Romans 5:12-21, Luke 12:35-38

**Wednesday:** Romans 6:12-18, Luke 12:39-48

**Thursday:** Romans 6:19-23, Luke 12:49-53

**Friday:** Romans 7:18-25, Luke 12:54-59

**Saturday:** Romans 8:1-11, Luke 13:1-9

**30<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Jeremiah 31:7-9, Hebrews 5:1-6, Mark 10:46-52

**A DRAMA OF THE HEART — JESUS' SACRIFICE:**

It is one thing to love when you feel love around you, when others understand you and are grateful for your person and gifts. It is quite another when everything around you speaks of misunderstanding, jealousy, coldness, and hatred.

It is one thing to maintain your ideals when they are shared by others, when the gospel works for you, when principle works out in practice; it is quite another when it seems you are alone in some ideal and when the gospel appears to be delivering more death than life. It is one thing to keep your balance when the rhythms of life support it — when there is a healthy give and take to things, when life is fair; it



**AUTHORITY AND SERVICE:**

**James and John had it all wrong. They wanted authority.** They wanted to sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus when the Kingdom of God was established on earth. They wanted to lord it over others. They wanted to be powerful and feared because of their power. They looked forward to being in authority [Mark 10:32-45]. They had it all wrong. In the Kingdom of God, authority would come through service, not through power.

I had a life lesson in this many years ago when I was a teacher at Mary Help of Christians School in Tampa. At that time the school was a boarding school for boys from grades 6 through 9. And they were stinkers. I was with the Salesians of St. John Bosco — I was Brother Joe; not a priest yet. I was at the school with three other teaching brothers — all right out of college, and all overwhelmed by our work. I have some really embarrassing memories of my two years at that school. We were not trained to handle troubled children, and many of the children had severe problems. We did our best, but, sadly, we often acted like children ourselves. Although the Salesian educational model is one of preventing children from getting into trouble, in reality, the model we followed was having the kids fear us. There would be a lot of yelling and punishments. That was our way of achieving authority — through power and fear. I regret the times that I joined in this myself.

But we also worked very hard for the children. I remember having five preparations a day — five unique classes to teach, and a total of 35 minutes a day when I was not supervising the children. I would try to do my lesson plans while attempting to keep the kids quiet in the study hall. It rarely worked.

One day, though, the strangest thing happened. Besides everything else, we decided to put on the musical, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. We needed music. I used to play the piano in high school and college, so I volunteered to provide the music. But this meant I had to practice. Instead of going to bed at the time I usually did — in my private room with 28 ninth graders in the dorm I supervised — I used to wait until the kids fell asleep, then sneak out to practice the piano. The other brothers would keep an eye on my dorm. I remember that I was way beyond tired for weeks. Well, this one day I was teaching an eighth grade class in history, standing in front of the class, I realized that I was falling asleep standing up. I looked at my watch, and there were fifteen minutes missing from the class. I continued the class making believe nothing had happened. When the bell rang and the kids started leaving, I asked one of the eighth graders if I had fallen asleep. He said: “Yeah, you did.” Then I asked him why the class had behaved so well — they didn't take advantage of the situation, but just stayed at their desks reading on their own. The boy said to me: “Well, we all know that you've been working real hard for us; so we thought we should let you sleep.”

On that day I learned that authority comes from service — not from position or power or fear.

Your parents — good parents as you are — know this. You want your children to respect you and, for their sakes, listen to you. You know that you earn that respect not through intimidation and fear, but by your sacrifice for them. Your way of life, your daily routine, revolves around caring for your children. Sometimes you have to remind your children about all that Mom and Dad does for them out of love; but all in all, your children respect you because they experience how much you show your love for them every day. That is the source of your authority.

This is what Jesus is telling James, John and the other disciples — true power, true authority, flows from service. Jesus summoned his disciples and said to them: “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be

that the real presence of Christ might become explicit and powerful among us. Today we must recommit ourselves to that that kind of service and shared life. We need to strive to find new ways to serve, not only one another, but the community around us. Jesus' first gift was the gift of one another — the gift of community. If our faith is to be real, that community must be one in which we live and participate.

A woman was walking down the street, saw two little boys, seven years old, sitting on the curb, crying. With concern, she stopped and asked them: “Children, what's the problem?” The one little boy said: “We have a stomach ache and [point to his brother] it's in *his* stomach.” Shared pain. Shared life. Shared love. These are the essential components of living faith. These are the gifts that allow others to see the presence of Christ in our midst. These are the gifts that allow us to be the Body of Christ in our world.

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

**JESUS, I PLACE MY TRUST IN YOU:**

If you want to live life from the perspective of eternity, then you need to pursue the virtue of trust. Trust is the key. In Psalm 33, we pray: “Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you” [33:21]. The big question is, how do we place our trust in God? How do we say that prayer: “Jesus, I trust in you”? Since I was diagnosed with the abdominal aneurysm, I have become aware of people with much worse afflictions — emotional, familial and physical. One of my nephews came down with a strange and painful disease. He is much younger than me, and has two young children. The question arises, how do we trust in God when such terrible things happen?

Mark's Gospel provides a path. In Jesus we can see that God does not stand aloof from our world. Jesus says: “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” [Mark 10:32-45]. What does this mean?

To understand how Jesus is “ransom” we have to go back to the Old Testament. Isaiah speaks of a man who “gives his life as an offering for sin through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear” [Isaiah 53:6-12]. Fulfilling this prophecy Jesus takes our guilt on his shoulders. He becomes a ransom for us.

The Author to the Letter to the Hebrews explains it this way: “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin” [Hebrews 4:14-16]. Jesus was tested and he passed the test. Because of that the Letter to the Hebrews says: “So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”

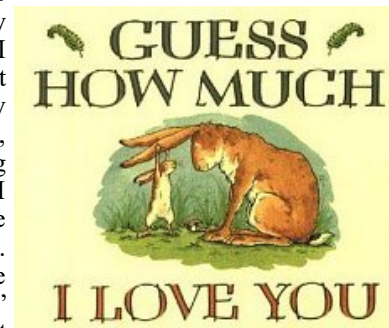
People used to be able to walk into the White House legally and ask the president for some favor or to present a grievance. That's no longer possible in the White House. God, however, did not close access to his throne of grace. God will give timely help — not my time or your time, but God's time.

For all Jesus does for us, we can trust in him. That does not mean injustices disappear. Still, when we look at the cross, we see that no one has suffered greater injustices than Jesus.

Our church architecture can help us focus on the cross. In our church, we have the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament chapel which is reserved for quiet prayer and small ceremonies. In that way our church is more like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome that has the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel on the side. It means no disrespect to Jesus truly present in the Eucharist. But we have a crucifix right above the altar. When you come into our church, before you enter the pew, you should bow to the altar and the crucifix. When you bow, I encourage you to say: “Jesus, I trust in you.”

When you come to your personal end game, that prayer will bring you across the finish line — “Jesus, I trust in you.” In spite of life's terrible injustices, we have reason to trust Jesus. He became a ransom for me and for you. We can approach his throne with confidence.

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



**ON USING A OUIJA BOARD:**

Anyone else already getting excited for Halloween? I mean, what's not to love about a holiday with plenty of scary movies and a chance to show off your creative skills with a sweet costume? Plus, it's the one time of year you can unapologetically purchase several jumbo bags of chocolate without any judgement.

There are plenty of fun things to do to get in the Halloween spirit, but there is one thing we need to talk about — one thing we need to avoid — because some of you out there are straight up inviting evil into your lives. Of course, I'm talking about Ouija Boards. Using a Ouija Board literally is the Dumbest Thing you Could do This Halloween.

Ouija boards claim to help you contact people who have died by asking the wooden board a question and watching the pieces spell out an answer. This might sound like innocent fun, but here's why you should think twice about phoning a friend on the other side this Halloween.

First, **Ouja Boards are Sinful.** The Church considers Ouija boards to be a form of divination. Divination is knowing and declaring future events or hidden things by means of communication with occult forces. Ouija boards are sinful and dangerous. When we use them to access unknown knowledge, we refuse to place our trust in the providence of God and, instead, place it in demonic spirits.

Even if you don't believe you're communicating with demons, that does not affect the fact that you're opening yourself up to evil — whether you like it or not — when you participate in any sort of divination. The Catechism clearly states: “All forms of divination are to be rejected. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone”[CCC, # 2116].

I know what you might be saying: “Ouija boards are harmless. How am I going to communicate with demons if I don't even believe they're there? For goodness sake, they sell Ouija Boards in the toy aisle at Target. How bad can they really be?”

To that I would say: “Why even risk it?” If there's any chance whatsoever that evil spirits — whose mission in life is to separate you from God's and His perfect love — could creep their way into your life via a ouija board, isn't it only logical to stay far, far away from it? Giving an evil spirit access to your life isn't going to be the fun and games Hasbro promises. Evil is real and it will affect your life if you give it any power to, and I know you don't need that in your life right now!

Think of it this way: when you go into a Catholic church, maybe you've noticed a golden box in there. That's what we call a tabernacle and inside the tabernacle is the Body of Christ in the form of bread — what we Catholics call the Eucharist. Whether you believe that's Him or not does not change the truth that it is. In the same way, whether or not you believe evil spirits can be contacted through divination does not change the fact that they can.

It doesn't matter if you genuflect before a tabernacle or not — although you should out of respect — Jesus is still there. We believe that simply being in the presence of Christ you are in the presence of His grace — graces that will give you peace, help you to avoid sin, and graces that enable you to be a holy person. These graces do not depend on whether you believe Jesus is there or not.

In a similar way, demons bring defiance, oppression, and despair. When we willingly put ourselves in their presence we also invite these problems. Demons are real — whether you believe in them or not — and they have one desire — to rebel against God's plan by leading the children of God astray and destroying them. Demons are not to be messed with.



So, promise me that you'll stay away from those little demon walkie talkies and let Satan know this Halloween.

One other thing: if you have used a Ouija Board before, there is no need to freak out! You're not possessed just because you played with one. Ouija Boards are dangerous, but because of Jesus' victory over Satan, we have no need to fear evil. The only power that the Devil has is the power we give him. Go to confession and confess that you have used a Ouija Board, and let Jesus claim victory over your life!

—written by Ryan McQuade, a youth 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](http://lifeteen.com). There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs. **Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass.** And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. **Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].**

**CREATION-CENTERED PRAYER:**

The spiritual nature of reality, and the material, the physical, have been one ever since the Big Bang. The incarnation did not just happen 2,000 years ago; rather, matter and spirit have been one since God decided to manifest himself/herself.

Christ is everywhere. The entire planet is anointed and messianic, if you will. All bears the Christ mystery. The whole point of going to communion in church is to sacramentalize the universe. We're not only in communion when we go to communion. We're always in communion when we learn this. We're in communion driving to church. We're in communion walking up the steps of the church. We're in communion at the bathroom break. We're in communion when we're in nature.

Franciscan sister José Hobday [1929–2009], was a Seneca elder, an author, and a storyteller. She writes of how she learned to “pray always” from the Native American spirituality of her mother, which honored this sense of being in constant communion and harmony with God in all things. José writes: “My mother prayed as a Native American. That meant she saw living as praying and praying as living. She tried to pray her life. She expressed her prayer of gratitude, for example, in the way she did things. She told me many times: ‘When you stir oatmeal, stir it slowly so you don't forget that oatmeal is a gift and that you don't take it for granted.’

“She made a prayer out of the way she stirred oatmeal. Doing things prayerfully. That reflected her approach to prayer. She always did that. She even did it in the way she walked. She taught me and my brothers to walk with our hearts high and to walk softly on the earth because the earth is our mother. As we walked, she said, we should be ready to enter into every movement of beauty we encountered.”

So, what things have I learned from Native American spirituality? First, to make my prayer creation-centered. Indians pray as relatives of the earth. They consider the sky their father, the earth their mother. The sun can be a brother or a sister. This makes you a creature with a relationship to creation, not someone above it or better than it.

In our prayer, we might very well reflect on creatures, and their relationship with creation. That is what Native Americans have done. It has not only kept them in touch with creation, but with the Creator as well.

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., which appear on the internet

