

**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.*

**BLESSING OF ANIMALS — OCTOBER 3:**

On **Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**, our Chapel community will gather after Mass at **11:35 AM** to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. In the spirit of this celebration we welcome your family to bring your pet to be blessed. If you cannot bring your pet, bring a photo to share. Weather permitting we will meet this year — because of COVID-19 — outside in the Red Brick part of Pender Circle [right outside the chapel]. **If it rains on this day, the event will be postponed until the following Sunday.** We hope you can join us!

**JOIN US FOLLOWING MASS FOR A SURPRISE TREAT:**

On Sunday, **October 3<sup>rd</sup>** following Mass, join us out in the grotto out in front of the chapel for donuts from Patterson Orchards. This special treat is hosted by our Chapel Council which continues to nurture our chapel life together in so many ways — Spirituality, Social Gatherings, Service Opportunities, as well as in many behind the scenes “hands on” things that they do. **Special thanks to Mary Schmidt** who went out to Patterson’s for us this morning to make this event possible. If you would be interested in being on or helping out our Chapel Council, please speak with one of our Council members or Father John.

**BLANKET SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 9-10:**

The weekend of October 9-10 marks the annual Blanket Sunday Collection to aid the needy. The collection is sponsored by the Diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Society. This year, as in the past few, the collection will be a **cash only** collection. We will gratefully accept your cash donations and do the shopping for you, making your money go even further with bulk purchases of blankets and other items needed by low income families. So give someone a blanket for the winter — and give yourself a warm feeling! **Use the special Blanket Sunday Envelope [on the table] or mark your envelope Blanket Sunday Collection** and we will take it from there. You may also donate on line at [www.svdpcle.org](http://www.svdpcle.org). Thank you.

**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 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.**

**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 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.**

**REACHING OUR HEART:**

2 The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise.

—Maya Angelou

**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 Vicki Giancola, mother of Vince Giancola [‘23], who is recovering from serious surgery
- 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, and Eva 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 THE DECEASED:**

- For Curtiss DeMarco, father of Chapel Associate, Patty Szaniszlo
- For Morton Weisberg, grandfather of Kyle Wierzberg [‘04], and former father-in-law of Krista Gallatin [‘83].
- For Bishop Anthony Pilla, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Cleveland, great uncle of Alex [‘09], Nickolas [‘10], and Julia [‘14] Pilla, and Allison [‘03] and Chris [‘05] Immormino.
- For John Stowe
- For Gary Ault, husband of former Gilmour Instructor, Jennifer Ault.
- For Deacon William Starkey
- For Nancy DiCicco, father of Anthony [‘79], Nick [‘82], and Domenic [‘85] DiCicco.
- For Vincent Simon
- For Father Richard S. Rasch, O. de M
- For Robert Botti, step-father of Bradley [‘74] and Tim [‘80] Bickett.
- For Peggy Lavelle, sister-in-law of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C.

**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.

**HOW TRUE:**

The evils of government are directly proportional to the tolerance of the people.

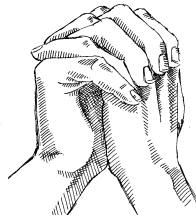
—Frank Kent

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

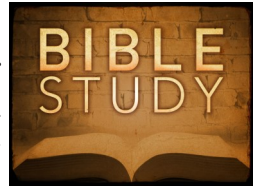
- For Pecola Pearson-Harris, mother of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Director, NaNetta Hullum, who is seriously ill.
- For Hans Schmidt, father-in-law of Mary Schmidt, grandfather of Maggie ['12] and Jacqueline ['13] Schmidt, who is hospitalized.
- For June Kristofelc, who is undergoing treatment for various medical conditions.
- 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 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, OCT. 13<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> 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: Feeling Powerless**



**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 3: 27 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 4: St. Francis of Assisi	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 5:	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 6:	NO MASS
Thursday, October 7: Our Lady of the Rosary	NO MASS
Friday, October 8:	NO MASS
Saturday, October 9: 28 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, October 10: 28 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**PRAYER:**

We begin to pray well as soon as we realize that complete detachment is never an accomplished fact. It is never realized completely — nor perhaps should it be. But in the process of trying to be reasonably detached, we pray. And prayer becomes more intense the more aware we are of our entanglements with things and people that distract us from God. This is not to say that things and people are not good. They are. But something has happened somewhere along the line; call it original sin or anything you like. The fact remains that most of our heartaches come from exaggerated attachments. It sounds old-fashioned to use words like “detachment,” but our experience tells us daily that we are not really free and that there must be someone to love who transcends the need to be loved, a lover who invites rather than demands our love.

—Murray Bodo, OFM



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

All of creation is a gift. It calls us to ponder the mystery of life. We have many “whys” and “what’s this for” questions. We are stumped often by the “unanswerables” about our own persons — and certainly the persons and personalities who surround us. We live our lives surrounded by the mysterious creatures that other human beings seem to be. Some are married, others intending to; others are religious priests, brothers or sisters; some are in the single state. But each of us live in relationship to those whose lives we touch. Each of us experience our own mystery; each of us is called to receive love, life, mystery all which are somehow wonderful. We pray for the fidelity to continue God’s creative love in whatever relationships we find ourselves. Those relationships are also part of God’s creating love.

The Scripture Readings for this 27<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time opens with the Book of Genesis — the creation of woman [Genesis 2:18-24]. There are many jokes and one-liners which can come from this story — “The two become one and the rest of their lives they work out which one they will be.” “God put man asleep and gave the woman to fruitlessly and eternally try to wake him up.” But this story is too serious for jokes however.

The Book of Genesis is filled with many stories attempting to explain God, creation, human beings, and community order. It is somewhat like the authors are painting a huge picture of how things were, and why they are not that way now, and how the picture got cut up into puzzle-parts, and what is God going to do about all that.

Genesis seems to satisfy the human desire to have basic “Big Questions” answered — the question of how everything came to be, and why this and how come that? And the big question about the creation of woman is not “why was man created first?” God created all living things, but the highest creation is the human person. This person was presented with all the other forms of creation unlike his own, and it led to dissatisfaction. God saw this dissatisfaction — as God saw everything — and saw that it as “good”. God saw that human beings would search for completion and satisfaction — and this searching is “very good”.

In fashioning “woman”, God gave the man a closeness to himself — but just not quite — and this form of separation or distinctiveness would form the framework for the real meaning of human love. This human love is a revelation of God’s love. It is not a substitute or replacement for that love. They will “cling” to each other, embracing their physically-different bodies, while their search for true union continues toward God. Longing is a blessing and God’s love desires us to experience finite love as so many ways to put the puzzle back into its original union. In short, Genesis is the story of the necessity for order in relationships and how God is working things out.

And all this leads to the Pharisees “big question” for Jesus in Mark’s Gospel [10:2-18] — divorce. What happens when human relationships don’t always lead to the discovering of God’s love? Jesus begins to answer the question by quoting what God had intended for every man and woman. Jesus finishes His teaching in the presence of His disciples — divorce, that is the arbitrary dissolving of a true union in marriage, is against the order of things. The puzzle continues being broken by divorce; marriage is the commitment to bringing that union closer.

This wonderful and interesting discussion is broken up when mothers and fathers are bringing their children to Jesus. The disciples desire to continue this interesting conversation, but Jesus becomes upset and invites the children to come to Him to be touched, blessed, and welcomed. These teachings on such hot topics as the importance of union in community, are difficult. The children represent the simplicity of heart and mind which is needed on the part of those who would be a part of the “kingdom” or new order



questioners, and exposing people trapped by narrowness to an attractive bigger vision.

Some will hear the Scripture Readings for this 27<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time as a rationale for enforcing the letter of the law and setting limits to our ecclesial communion. Others may experience the grace of being caught up in the Genesis vision of humanity’s potential for union with God and neighbor, or be challenged by Jesus’ invitation to esteem each person as a unique gift of God.

Genesis 1 and 2 teach that God placed us in the midst of creation to enjoy and grow in communion with one another in the image of the Trinity. Jesus invites us to live into that truth for the rest of our lives.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup>:**

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

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

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

**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.

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

We are currently discerning a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training within the next month. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to this ministry, we would be delighted to include you in that ministry here at Our Lady Chapel. Both adults and teens [must be going into Senior year of High School] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. We are need of ministers for both our Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. **Contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you feel called to this ministry.** We are always in need of Eucharistic Ministers.

**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 ✨

**MADE FOR EACH OTHER:**

There could hardly be a better introduction to the Bible than the Book of Genesis' two stories of creation [see Genesis 1 and 2]. To begin with, these stories immediately show us that the Bible is teaching a kind of truth that is not found in either history or science books. With two incompatible explanations of the beginnings of the human race, we quickly realize that Genesis speaks to us of meaning and truth, not mere facts. That's why, when someone asked Jesus about relationships, he started with the meaning of the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis [Mark 10:2-16].

The author of the second chapter of Genesis enjoyed a deep awareness of what makes us images of God. The writer weaves a tale of God fashioning a creature endowed with godly characteristics. Then, feeling compassion for the loneliness of that one-of-a-kind creature, God made other living creatures — all of whom the new human could name, but none of whom could reply to him. Then God got the idea to make another person — one like the first, only different.

The author of Genesis 1 wanted us to realize that human beings were creation's crowning image of God — the best saved for last. The author of Genesis 2 reflected more on who we can be for one another. Explained through the symbol of a couple, the story reflects on the fact that we become fully human through the communication that builds relationships.

Adam was nothing more than an animal guardian and gardener before he met Eve. Then, when each met the other as a thinking, speaking person, their lives became fertile. They realized they were uniquely made for each other. Learning to love, they grew in their likeness to their creator. As Teilhard de Chardin would teach a few thousand years later, when Adam met Eve, creation was on its way back to its maker.

This was the scriptural backdrop on the day that some Pharisees tried to hook Jesus into a debate about the legality of dismissing a wife as if she were a worn-out coat or a troublesome piece of household furniture. Their question focused on what was "lawful."

Jesus amplified the question, trying to open their minds. Jesus admitted what the law said, and reminded them that the law served the narrow purpose of reining in hard hearts. Then he cut to the chase by reminding them that God created human beings for one another and that no person can be dismissed, rejected or marginalized without diminishing the entire order of creation.

There is little doubt that Jesus wanted to shake up his questioners. By basing his answer on Genesis rather than the law of Moses, Jesus invited his audience to consider not just Israel and her law, but God's purpose in creation. Then, reinterpreting Moses' law in that light, he supplanted their patriarchal, male-dominant mindset with an approach that honored the equality of the sexes. According to the law of the day, men alone had the right to initiate a divorce, and adultery was considered a violation of a man's property rights. Jesus' teaching accorded women in the same dignity and responsibility as their male counterparts.

While Jesus' teaching referred specifically to marriage, the idea underlying his response defended the inalienable dignity of all people and the fact that we are made for one another.

Because Jesus spoke his ban on divorce in a particular historical context, it would be anachronistic to assume that it applies literally and in detail to other epochs and vastly different cultural circumstances. What stands and must be inculturated in every time and place is the human vocation to love one another into ever greater wholeness and unity.

Mark told us that the Pharisees were trying to test Jesus. They should have known better. Nobody ever succeeded in that effort. Jesus had a knack for turning hypocrisy inside out, questioning the

which Jesus was initiating.

I pause to insert a quotation meant to stimulate, confuse, and accept: "There is not a woman in the world, the reception of whom, is as precious as that of the truths which she reveals to us by causing us to suffer." "Truths" and "Causing" and "Suffering" are heavy concepts. Henry Higgins, in *My Fair Lady* sings plaintively: "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" He does not like the suffering that his love for Liza Dolittle is causing him. The "suffering" is change, growth, manhoodness, sensitivity, and basically his humanness. He — and we — would rather grow laterally and pretend the growth is profoundly.

Marriage and any true loving relationship between a woman and a man is a gift from God which keeps on giving. A loving relationship — and especially that blessed in Marriage — is a covenant of continuing God's creation. In marriage, the man and woman commit themselves to bringing forth life within the other. They say "Yes!" I will assist God in creating and helping to complete you. I will accept your assisting God's creating me. I will accept the process of suffering you will cause me in the process of God's creating me through you.

This is how God intends to put the puzzle together with all these strange-appearing pieces with various angles and dents. Jesus, by blessing the little ones, invites all of us to lives of "growing up" and "growing-within". Little children love what is new, different, and puzzling. These readings are not directly a denouncement of divorce — nor a statement about the necessity for everyone to marry. The readings are about God's ways of creating us and the necessity of our being available to all these ways.

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

**THE CALL TO THE GOSPEL IDEAL:**

In Mark's Gospel, the Pharisees test Jesus by asking him if a husband can lawfully divorce his wife [Mark 10:2-16]. Explaining that Moses permitted divorce because of "the hardness of your hearts," Jesus insists that husbands and wives "become one flesh" and "therefore what God has joined together no human being must separate."

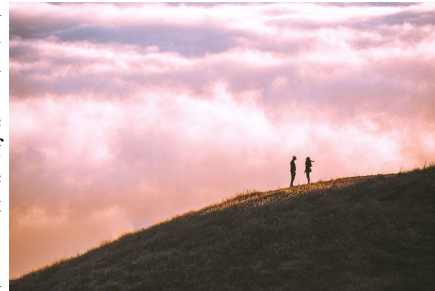
The scripture scholars tell us that Mark recorded this absolute prohibition of divorce around the year 70, and that Matthew writing less than 20 years later included an exception — permitting divorce for immorality. This suggests that we interpret the teaching of Jesus on marriage not as an absolute law, but as representative of the high idealism found in the Gospels — for example go the extra mile and turn the other cheek. Husband and wife becoming one flesh suggests an ideal never totally achieved but worthy of continued effort. Couples can never say we have a perfect marriage; we have totally achieved God's will for our union; we have done everything possible to help each other come closer to Christ. There is no place for self-righteousness or complacency in married life.

Christ does call couples to an ongoing effort to come closer to the Gospel ideal as exemplified in healthy marriages — a husband and wife work out separately a couple times a week to stay in better physical shape for each other; spouses arrange a date night once a week to have time to be attentive to one another; married partners read a book separately and find times to discuss it; newlyweds do a marriage encounter to improve their communication skills; a wife and husband have a difficult conversation on how they could do a better job of meeting each other's emotional needs; an elderly couple maintain their longstanding custom of discussing the Liturgy of the Word over brunch after Sunday Mass.

Reflection on the Gospel ideal of marriage reminds us that some couples cannot make it work despite good intentions and prudent efforts. Surely some marriages could be saved by good counseling, creative efforts, generous forgiveness, and deep prayer. Sometimes, however, divorce is necessary or the best of poor options. The church officially recognizes this and should offer pastoral care — welcoming divorced persons to liturgy and communion; sponsoring support groups for them; offering counseling to wounded spouses; creating a climate of understanding aware of the difficulties of making marriage work in the contemporary world; and providing good marriage preparation programs.

What does it mean to you personally to think of the teaching of Jesus on marriage as a high kingdom ideal?

—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet 5





**A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP EDWARD MALESIC:**

All human life is precious, fragile and given directly to us as a gift by God. As such, we are brothers and sisters in our human family, made in the image and likeness of God. We are all called to live out our responsibility to care for, protect and defend the lives of our brothers and sisters.

Sadly, in our great country we focus so much on our individual freedoms that we sometimes forget about our corresponding obligations to be protective of life, respectful, and caring to one another. Jesus reminds us to “Do to others as you would have them do to you” [Luke 6:27-38]. Consequently, we all have the obligation to defend life because it is the fundamental right from which all other rights flow. St. Pope John Paul II stated: “Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights — for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture — is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination.”

In our culture today, disrespect for life in the womb has spilled over to a general disrespect for the needs of others outside the womb. If life can be disregarded at its very beginning, why not be dismissive of it the middle and at the end, too? To be truly pro-life, we must also respect life after a person is born. This includes striving to end all racism, protecting the environment that we all share together, lifting up the poor, helping the addicted, comforting those in prison, etc. In short, we are all called to practice the corporal works of mercy.

I am disturbed by images of people shouting at one another on airplanes, the disruptions at public board meetings, shootings in our city streets and the mean-spirited unproductive speech that sometimes comes from people who claim to follow Christ. As we go about our day, do we treat people — all of them — as made in God’s image, even if the image is tainted in them? We should want to help those in our society who are struggling to welcome new life — like moms who are pregnant or parenting in difficult circumstances, and seek healing for those parents who are struggling after the loss of a child, including those who regretfully lost their children through abortion. Instead of tearing people down, we must want to raise them up. This begins by praying for them, but it must not end there. Our love of others must be shown in our actions and in how we treat and value all human life. We seek to convert the minds and hearts of those who disregard life by our example of peaceful and steadfast defense of it.

I wish we could recover the unity we all felt as a nation after the events of 9/11. And I believe we can. But as people of faith, we must lead the way in love. We may disagree with each other, but the correction we give must be gentle as well as steadfast in faith. We must take on the mind of Christ who did not come to condemn us, but to save us.

Every October, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates *Respect Life Month*, and the first Sunday, Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, is observed as Respect Life Sunday. Let us use the month of October to see one another with the eyes of God, as part of his creation. As we focus on the right to life, let us not be neglectful of our obligation to support life in every stage from beginning to end. We can also use the time to ask for the Lord’s forgiveness for our sins against life, both personal and corporate.

Because there are so many invaluable life issues, the diocesan Office for Human Life, in collaboration with the diocesan Social Action Office, will be highlighting different aspects of life each week throughout the month of October in order to help build and celebrate the culture of life.

**OUR LIFE:**

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

—Isaac Penington

**REALTIONSHPIS — BLESSINGS, NOT AGGRAVATIONS:**

Biblical morality revolves around relationships. That’s why the Scripture Readings for this 27<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time are so significant. As Christians, we stand in awe of the relationship that Jesus of Nazareth has with us. The author of the letter to the Hebrews couldn’t have described it any better: “He for a little while was made lower than the angels, that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters” [Hebrews 2:9-13]. We’re important enough to die for.

Even before Jesus appears in history, our sacred authors were deeply concerned with how we relate to one another. The Yahwistic writer of Genesis, for instance — active almost 3,000 years ago — wasn’t afraid to take on the culture of his or her own day and age, as he/she took on the well-known myth of the creation of woman. In the author’s day and age, women were not only regarded as unequal to men, they were often looked upon as being sub-human. One need only check ancient Middle Eastern creation myths to see the belief that men were often formed from a different material than women.

But before the author gets to women, he/she must take care of animals. We know from pre-historic European cave art that bestiality was certainly practiced in the ancient world. That seems to be why the sacred author begins this particular myth by stating: “None of the wild animals proved to be the suitable partner for the man.” That suitable partner had to be someone who is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” — in other words, made from the same stuff that the man was made from.

That radical belief also becomes the author’s “etiological” reason behind intercourse. Because man and woman were originally one, they’ll engage in acts of intimacy which will again make them one. This is quite a different relationship between men and women than the Yahwistic writer’s 1,000 BCE culture envisioned.

Mark’s Jesus takes that relationship one giant step further [Mark 10:2-16]. Though contemporary Jewish law permitted divorce under certain circumstances, Jesus outlaws it completely. Falling back on the Yahwist’s concept of oneness during intercourse, Jesus contends such a oneness is a permanent condition — it can’t be broken. Once one, always one.

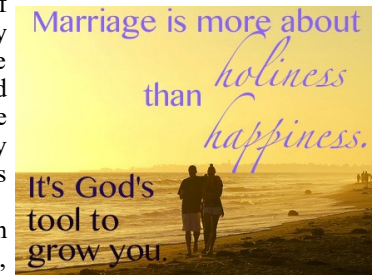
Though modern psychologists often bring up situations when a personal decision to become one with another wasn’t made with full understanding of what such a decision entails — and even church law provides dispensations from some unions — Jesus isn’t talking about exceptions. He’s simply stating a general principle: when two of his followers give their word to one another in such a serious, life-changing moment, that word is to be kept. Our imitation of Jesus’ dying and rising in our everyday life changes how we relate to others in that everyday life — especially with those with whom we’ve vowed to be one.

It also changes how we relate to “insignificant” people in our lives — as Jesus’ disciples discover at the end of Mark’s Gospel. Though they see the children as an avoidable aggravation, Jesus regards them as a sign of how his followers are to accept God’s kingdom around them — with the openness with which a child accepts the daily happenings in his or her life. He then reinforces his belief by embracing and blessing them.

Normally when biblical people bless someone or something, they’re not asking God to add something to the individual or object — they’re simply thanking God for the blessing which that person or thing already brings to their lives — something his disciples hadn’t noticed.

Perhaps we’d live more fulfilling lives if we, like Jesus, also looked upon our relationships as blessings, and not aggravations.

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



the way to the store, the father tried to get a conversation going: “How’s school?”

“Okay,” came the reply.

“How’s basketball?”

“It’s okay.”

“What were you watching on TV?”

“Nothing!”

After that exchange, things went silent. At the grocery mart, still in silence, they loaded the items they wanted into the shopping cart and waited in line while a very slow, inept, and disinterested cashier dealt with the customers ahead of them. Finally, when their turn came, the father, quite out of sorts because of the unnecessary wait, deliberately tricked the cashier. He placed a fifty dollar bill on the counter, and then, thanks to the inattention of the cashier, was able to substitute a twenty dollar bill for it before the cashier picked it up. The price for their groceries was nineteen dollars and the cashier gave the father thirty dollars change — on a twenty dollar bill. But, instead of walking out of the store thirty dollars richer, the father instead calmly — though obviously making his point — pointed out to the cashier his mistake and returned to him the \$30 that he had, in his inattention, incorrectly given.

As they walked out the door, several other customers who had experienced a similar irritation with the cashier said to the father: “You should have kept the \$30. It would have taught the slob a lesson!”

When they were in the car, his son said: “Dad, that was neat!” Then, without any prodding from his father, the son began to talk and to share with him a lot of things about his life — including how school was going, how basketball was going, and what he had been watching on television. The father, for his part, said little and, in fact, heard little for he was thinking: “If my son had not been with me, I would have kept the thirty dollars! Moreover, my wife is wrong, my son doesn’t need me — I need him!”

We need our children — and for more reasons than this story, good though it is, makes obvious. Our children raise us, not vice versa. It is they who put a rope around us and take us where we would rather not go — namely, into an adulthood and into a selflessness that, without them, we would never attain. We become adult by having and raising children. This, perhaps more than anything else, moves us beyond being children ourselves.

Why is this so? Some of the reasons are more obvious than others. When we are raising children it is more natural for us to stop thinking of ourselves as children; when we are forced to respond to other’s needs we tend to be less focused on our own. Raising children forces us to live a certain virtue. It is conscripted adulthood — we mature, almost against our will. But there is a deeper dynamic operative too — children have the power to fire within us the deepest and most powerful surges of love that we can ever experience in this life. More so than does romantic love or the love that we have when we get involved in causes, love for our children is a love that can take us beyond ourselves, break our narcissism, and let us genuinely imitate — weak though it may be — the life-giving love of God.

There is something in children — some combination of helplessness, dependence, innocence, trust, vulnerability, simplicity, playfulness, and simple physical beauty that opens the heart to selflessness in a way that our other loves do not. That’s why celibacy can be dangerous. Perhaps there is nothing in this world as powerful to break selfishness as is the simple act of looking at our own children. In our love for our children we are given a privileged avenue to feel as God feels — to burst in unselfishness, in fire, in joy, in delight, and in the desire to let another’s life be more real and important than my own.

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



## THE RIB OF ADAM AND THE BODY OF CHRIST:

Ten years ago, I wasn’t brave enough for Genesis, chapter two. While thumbing through my parish’s liturgical guide for wedding planning ahead of my 2012 nuptials, I remember my gaze falling on the story of the creation of woman in the Book of Genesis [Genesis 2:18-24].

“Nope,” I thought. “Definitely not. Next, please.”

The image of Eve crafted from the flesh of Adam has been so often misconstrued and misunderstood — both by those who would deny the equality of the sexes and those who would accuse the Church of doing so. I was concerned with what the non-Catholics on my guest list would think of the Church — and, I will admit, of me — if words like “this one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken” were read aloud at my wedding.

But a decade of marriage has shown me that this Scripture passage is not about subservience at all, but about belonging — and not just belonging within a marriage, but within the entire Body of Christ. The concept of belonging can be almost as controversial as sexism can. We don’t like to think that we belong to anyone else — that we need them and they need us. It’s not easy to need someone and to be needed in return. It’s inconvenient. And sometimes, it even feels undignified.

The funny and wonderful thing about sacramental marriage is that it is a reflection, in miniature, of the human family itself. In the simple challenge of facing daily life at the side of your spouse, so much is revealed of how we interact with other people — how we live with them, how we love them, how we honor them, and how we don’t.

Marriage shows you the places of connection to other people that you didn’t even know existed. It’s a crash course in how the choices you make with your physical body — with your voice, with your actions or with the lack of them, with something as insignificant as the way your face looks when someone else is talking — can make another person feel safe, affirmed, and cherished.

It can also make them feel threatened, offended, or degraded.

Earlier this month, when the Supreme Court declined to block a Texas law banning abortions after the child has reached six weeks’ gestation, I saw my social media feeds erupt in a fight about ownership, autonomy, and responsibility. People everywhere pontificated on where one person ends and another begins.

All this discourse made me think of Genesis. It made me think of what marriage and “the rib of Adam” has taught me about the human family — “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

Marriage showed me how woefully inept I am at looking at any particular situation and thinking, before thinking anything else: “How can I ensure the good of the other? How can I best take care of this person?”

Belonging, after all, brings with it accountability — another reason it can be an uncomfortable state. If I am flesh of my husband’s flesh, I must be concerned chiefly with his welfare. He must do the same. He and I must die to our own desires when they conflict with the good of the other.

But I — and he — must do the same for the unborn child. We must do the same for that unborn child’s mother. We must do the same for the widow, the orphan, the refugee, the worker, the immigrant, the medically vulnerable, and the homeless veteran.

As I said, I am woefully inept at it. But when I read Genesis, I see why I must keep praying for the grace to embrace the ways in which I belong to the other members of the Body of Christ, and the ways in which they belong to me.

—taken from the writings of Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman, who appear on the internet

## KNOW THIS:

There is nothing the devil fears so much, or so much tries to hinder, as prayer.

—St. Philip Neri

**FAILING WITH HIGH IDEALS:**

There are two ways to ruin your life, and they pull in different directions. Unless we aim high, unless we strive for what is best, it is unlikely that our life will amount to very much, or that we will really make any difference in the lives of others. If we are going to live well then, we must live with high ideals. But high ideals are not in themselves the whole picture. We must also have hope in times of failure. Because all of us, at one time or another, will fail. We will all make mistakes. Some of us will make disastrous ones. In those moments, our future hangs upon our ability to find hope, to rally our courage, and begin again.

Therefore, unless we want to ruin our lives, we need to develop two rather distinct ways of living: striving for high ideals and resolving to find hope in times of failure. Both of these abilities are important for us to embrace as Christians. Jesus in Mark's gospel centers on marriage as a prime example of the call to a high ideal. Even in a society where the divorce rate is 50%, we as a community continue to follow Jesus' teaching and believe that a life-long commitment in marriage is possible. Even though our society denigrates the value of sexuality, we continue to hold that marriage is a sacred union, a life-giving relationship, not only for husband and wife, but for the family and the community that surrounds them and witnesses their faithfulness.

We know that marriage is founded on love, but we also know that marriage is much more than love. Marriage entails more than physical attraction. Sam Levinson, the Jewish humorist, says: "Love at first sight is easy to explain. It's when people have been looking at one another for 40 years that love becomes a miracle." We are a community that believes in that miracle. We believe that life-long growth and faithfulness are possible. Yet to reach that possibility, the high ideals of patience and forgiveness and sacrifice must be embraced. We are proud to recognize that those people in our lives — people that we know in our family and friends — who have taken on those high ideals and have made them real.



Marriage then, calls us to live with high ideals. But this is not the whole story. We also know that there are those who have tried to live those high ideals and failed. For them, nothing is more important than to find hope in such failure. Our call is to assist them in finding that hope. Our role is to be there for those who have failed in marriage and remind them that even though divorce seems like a death blow, there can and will be life again, and love again, and, perhaps even another marriage in which to live the high ideals of lifelong fidelity and love.

We need to be a community that assures those whose marriages fail that God does not reject them, nor does the church excommunicate them, and that there are ways in which we can pastorally resolve a second marriage, and invite them to full Eucharistic fellowship. Marriage then, is a clear example of how we as a Catholic community hold to the highest ideals and are still willing to support one another to find hope in times of failure.

But this dual focus of high ideals and hope in failure is not simply limited to marriage. It applies to many aspects of our life. We are right to set high ideals for our children, to lead them to lives of honesty and responsibility; to persuade them that they can live full lives without dependence on alcohol and drugs. We should have no hesitation to place those high ideals before them. But when they fail, our place is to be at their side, giving them our love and helping them to find hope.

We should have no hesitation to set high ideals for ourselves — to discover our talents and our abilities, to identify the areas where we need to grow. We should not fear to believe that we can be a more assertive, more independent person. We can strive to be someone who is more humble, more caring, less judgmental. We can aim for those high ideals. But when we fail, we must learn from our experience and begin again.

who are called to make God real to the world by reflecting His Love in your love for each other. The world needs the Sacrament of Matrimony. It needs you to be married in the Church and it needs you to live this sacrament.

How important you are to us all! We the single, we the celibate, we the separated, we the divorced, we the widowed, need you the married to embrace and to live the ideal of marriage. We ask God's blessing upon all who celebrate the sacrament of matrimony. May you have the courage and strength to give witness to the presence of God in the union of husband and wife.

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

**Monday:** Jonah 1:1-2:2, Luke 10:25-37

**Tuesday:** Jonah 3:1-10, Luke 10:38-42

**Wednesday:** Jonah 4:1-11, Luke 11:1-4

**Thursday:** Malachi 3:13-20, Luke 11:5-13

**Friday:** Joel 1:13-2:2, Luke 11:15-26

**Saturday:** Joe 4:12-21, Luke 11:27-28

**28<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Wisdom 7:7-11, Hebrews 4:12-13, Mark 10:17-30

**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].**

**A PRAYER:**

While many conspire for greed, and many conspire for power, and many conspire for supremacy and domination, may your spirit fill us, Holy One, to follow the way of Jesus, joining in a creative and liberating conspiracy for your peace, your shalom, your ubuntu, for all. Amen. —Brian McLaren

**OUR CHILDREN AND GOD'S LOVE:**

There is a story floating around, that merits retelling: There was a father of a family who was confronted one day by his wife who challenged him to spend more time with his 14 year-old son. "He needs you," she said, "and you are neglecting him!"

"He doesn't need me!" the man protested. "He's at an age where he should be cutting the family strings somewhat more."

His wife, however, insisted, and the man, more out of guilt than conviction, went into the living room where his son was watching television and asked him to accompany him on a trip to the market to buy groceries. The son, more out of boredom than interest, agreed, and so the two set out. In the car on



## THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY:

Recently, I attended a meeting about Catholic marriage that began by noting that over the last seven years there has been a significant decline in Catholic marriages — almost by 25%. Since the Catholic population keeps growing, it is obvious that either many people are not aware of the obligation to get married in the Catholic Church, or the concept of a Catholic marriage does not carry significant meaning in their lives. With the continual attack on marriage and the family by our society, and in light what Scripture says, I would like to reflect with you on this beautiful sacrament. Why should people get married in the Catholic Church? This is certainly not just a nice thing to do. And if people only want to get married to use the Church as a backdrop for pictures, then they really don't understand marriage as a sacrament any more than the people who bring their children to First Holy Communion but then don't return with them until Christmas understand what the Eucharist is all about. Why should people get married in the Church? Why did so many of you make this decision?

Most people turn to the Church because they realize that marriage was the most important decision of your lives; You wanted Jesus [God] to be present in the way of a sacrament as you celebrated your marriage — not just at your wedding. The sacrament of marriage is not just a prayer during the wedding; it is not just a blessing of a union. It is far more than this. The sacrament of matrimony is the union of God with people establishing a new unit of his Church. The sacrament of matrimony establishes the Christian home with Christ at the center. That is why people get married in the Church. And that is the ideal.

However, we live in a world that has often given up on ideals. We live in a world where people — good people — suffer the result of sin. “But there is disorder,” the Pharisees say to Jesus —the Law of Moses, after all, permitted a bill of divorce. “This was not the Father’s intention,” Jesus replies. Disharmony in homes, among people, results from all — good people and bad people — suffering the results of sin. We have so many wonderful people whose marriages have suffered. It may not be their fault; it may not even be their former spouse’s fault. Just as children suffer sickness and death due to the effects of sin in the world; so many good people suffer the destruction of their marriage or the inability to form a sacred lasting union due to the effects of sin in the world, not necessarily in either of the individuals. Therefore, we need to have a special place in our hearts and in our charity for those who have suffered the loss of their marriages. They have been pulled away from the intention of the Creator by the forces of the world. They need our support and our love.

It was never in God’s plan for evil to enter the world. Evil resulted from humankind’s decision to push God — the Lord of Life — aside, and to, therefore, choose death. God never meant for people to be widowed, divorced or single. In God’s original plan, there was no need for celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom because all would enjoy the Kingdom to its fullest in marriage. In God’s original plan there would be no need for people to work so hard to establish and preserve their marriages. It is sadly amazing how evil is able to distort something that is so good. The divinely created attraction of men and women to image God has been deformed into a drive to selfish gratification. Sex is portrayed by the media as having little to do with love and mostly concerned with debauchery. But people know better. People have an innate knowledge that tells them that a person cannot love and take at the same time. People know that the ideal of marriage exists. But people need more than the ideal. People need witness, your witness.

They need the witness of your marriages as a union with God, imaging the Creator's Love for the Word, making real the mystery of the singular in the plural and the plural in the singular. They need the witness of your marriage — your sacrament. Your marriages are infinitely more than natural unions. You are not animals who mate for life. You are human beings, made in the image and likeness of God,



Our faith in Jesus Christ gives us a deep perspective on both ideals and failures. Christians believe in high ideals because we know that God has created us good and we have the dignity of God’s own sons and daughters. Therefore, we can strive for all that God calls us to be. Yet we as Christians also understand the cross of Christ. The cross tells us that there is always hope, even in our darkest moments, even in our deepest failures. We believe that the final word is not death but life. So, let us aim high. Let us never think that failure eliminates hope. Let us strive to excel, but never despair in our disappointments. Let us leap for the stars, always believing that if we fall, God will be there to catch us.

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

## GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE:

The question for us this week is: why did God make us male and female? It’s clear that it did not happen by accident — it forms part of God’s eternal design. Pope St. John Paul speaks about “the nuptial meaning of the human body.” Our bodies, he says, have a language. The language of the body indicates that we are equal and complementary. Our bodies fit together like pieces of a puzzle. Our bodies speak the language of self-donation — total self-giving. That’s why Jesus says: “For this reason a man and a woman each shall leave their father and mother and cling to each other; the two of them become one. They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore let no one separate what God has joined together.”

This is a difficult teaching. It always has been, but today we live in an extremely mixed up society. We want to present this teaching without judging. You and I have plenty of our own sins. We desire to accompany fellow sinners without compromising Jesus’ clear teaching. For Jesus human sexuality is sacred. It’s meant for the life-long union of holy matrimony. And this union is a sign — a sacrament — of the union of Jesus with his bride, the Church.

All of us have some sense that our sexuality is sacred. We can see that in the “MeToo movement”. For a man to reduce a woman to the level of an object is deeply disrespectful and damaging.

To guard sexuality as something sacred is difficult. A man called to matrimony must dedicate himself to one woman, to the exclusion of sexual intimacy with all others. Celibacy — the unmarried state — involves renouncing sexual intimacy while recognizing the importance of other forms of intimacy — for example, brother and sister, friendship, and above all spiritual fatherhood and spiritual motherhood. These forms of intimacy, which can be very deep, can only exist if the unmarried person renounces sexual intimacy.

This is something we want our youth to learn, but it not easy. We live in a porn saturated society. We are weak and easily fall. Thanks be to God, when we turn to Jesus he gives strength to get back and start walking the right path. Every Christian is called to chastity. To quote the Catechism: “Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either a man or a woman governs their passions and finds peace, or they let themselves be dominated by them and they become unhappy [CCC, #2339].

And so we must ask ourselves: “why did God create us a male or a female? Following God’s plan brings us intimately into his life.

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom, 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].



## GOD MADE SEX — AND HE MADE IT SACRED:

God is one creative Creator. He gave us the cosmos, the sun, the moon, and the stars. He gave us the mountains and the seas, volcanoes, and icebergs, tropical rain-forests, and sand-covered beaches. He gave us the humpback whale, the platypus, the giraffe and the dragonfly. God also gave us humanity. God created us male and female — beautifully distinct and wonderfully made in His divine image. God created marriage and God created sex.

Did you catch that last line? God created sex — it was His idea — and sex is sacred. Sacred comes from a Latin term that means “holy”. When something is sacred it is connected to God and deserves great respect and reverence. God is the author of all life, and, as such, the Creator of that which brings life.

Before we go on any further, it’s vital to point out that sex is absolutely more than a physical act. Sex has two purposes — the unitive, which brings a married man and woman even closer together; and the procreative, which opens a man and a woman to the possibility of creating life with God.

It is important that we make a clear distinction here — love is not what makes sex sacred — at least not “love” in the sense most people think. You see, sex between animals isn’t sacred, but sex between people is.

Why, you may ask? Humans are sacred. We are God’s children. We are made in His image and likeness [see Genesis 1:26-27]. It’s not just that a man and woman are “making love” — it’s that they are potentially “making humans” — and there is nothing more sacred than human life [see Psalms 139:14-16, and Jeremiah 1:4-8].

We are mammals, yes, but we are not the same as animals. By virtue of our intellect and our free will, we are made distinctively different from the animals. We reflect the image and likeness of not only our Creator, but of our Heavenly Father, who is all holy, all perfect, and all sacred.

Human sexuality is not about what we receive, but what we give.

In other words, when we reduce sex merely to an act that elicits pleasure, sex has been stripped of its dignity — the end result is use. Sex is part of God’s beautiful mystery of life in which He plays a critical role. When you strip the dignity from sex — when you take the mystery out of sex — you’re left with pornography. Sex carries with it a purpose; pornography is merely about use.

Sex is an amazing gift of God and the Church proudly proclaims how incredible and beautiful sex is in the proper context and relationship of sacramentally-committed love between a husband and wife — both sacred creations of God.

—written by Mark Hart, executive Vice-President of Life Teen



## 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].**

## YOUR LIGHT:

You may think your light is small, but it can make a huge difference in other people’s lives.

## HOW CAN WE NOT TALK ABOUT FAMILY?

Have you ever heard the song *See You Again*. It was very popular a few years ago. I have a problem with this song. You see, I am a rapper. And I feel like Wiz Khalifa — the rapper featured in two verses of this song — flat-out disappoints. Where’s the speed? Where are the genius rhyming schemes? How could you ever justify using a grunt-like sound to fill time that could otherwise be spent rapping? But — I set aside my bias and looked at the lyrics. They’ve got an important message, I will admit — “How can we not talk about family when family’s all that we got?”

This summer, I left my “independent college kid” lifestyle behind and moved back home. At first, I wasn’t sure how I felt about it. No more making my own schedule. No more midnight Bagel Bite meals. Now I had to text and check in with my parents. I had to watch my sister use my car at her convenience. And, even though I’m almost not even a teenager even more, I was reminded to cut back on “teenager sass” quite regularly.

But then I realized that all this stuff — although different from what I had grown accustomed to in college — was part of what made family so special. Who else could see me at my best and keep me humble? Who else could see me at my worst and still love me? Who else would be there for the long haul, no matter what? How can I not talk about family?

But, let me quote Leroy Jethro Gibbs from NCIS here: “Family’s more than just DNA — it’s about people who care and take care of each other.”

Maybe our home life is great; maybe it’s not. Regardless, we’re still part of one big happy family — the Church. Every Christian we encounter is our brother or sister. Every priest we pass is our Father. Every Catholic that has ever lived — today or thousands of years ago, here or across the globe — is connected to us. We’re connected by the mere fact that we share in the inheritance of our Heavenly Father. Each soul on this earth is a point in a complicated and united web. Our lows affect those connected to us — they feel our pain and stoop down low to be with us in our suffering. Our highs affect them, too — they are raised up as a result of the joy we spread. One person drawing near to the Lord is felt by all. Likewise, one person falling away is felt by all — perhaps even more intensely.

It means we’ve got a family behind us. We’ve got people praying for us, even if they have never even seen our face. A particularly powerful ally are the Saints in heaven — they get extra prayer power due to their awesome perfect unity with Christ. So thank God for that — some of the most holy people to walk the earth are sitting next to God praying for you. Through their earthly example, they help us figure out this whole “life” thing. They’ve been tested. They’ve failed. But they kept trying, and that’s why we look at their lives with such awe and respect today. Let the prayers and the examples of these holy men and women encourage you — we can be like them. The sin struggle is real, but the attainability of sainthood can win any day.

Our faith wasn’t meant to be walked alone. You can know every word in the Bible, or go to Mass every day, but if you don’t have a community, your faith is nothing. This Church community exists solely for the purpose of leading one another to heaven. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are here for you — to walk with you, and for you to walk with them in return. They are there when life gets messy, to help bring you up; they are there when life is great, to celebrate alongside you. They are the ones who will be real with you, the ones who will hold you to a higher standard, helping you live in a manner worthy of the call you have received [see Ephesians 4:1].

How can we not talk about family? Well, Wiz, you’re right. We can’t NOT talk about it — because, aside from Jesus, they’re all we have. It requires vulnerability. It requires effort and time and investment of love. But, with a family by your side, you get so much more than you give.

—written by Faith Noah, an associate of the Bible Geek

