

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Veran's Day Prayer ~

Dear Lord,
Today we honor our veterans,
worthy men and women
who gave their best
when they were called upon
to serve and protect their country.

We pray that you will bless them, Lord,
for their unselfish service
in the continual struggle
to preserve our freedoms,
our safety,
and our country's heritage, f
or all of us.

Bless them abundantly
for the hardships they faced,
for the sacrifices they made
for their many different contributions
to America's victories
over tyranny and oppression.

We respect them,
we thank them,
we honor them,
we are proud of them,
and we pray
that you will watch over
these special people
and bless them
with peace and happiness.
Amen.

—Joanna Fuchs

Our Lady Chapel



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

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS:

November is traditionally the month set aside to remember our deceased. In this month in which we celebrate Thanksgiving Day, what better way than to remember the special people in our lives who have gone before us to the Lord. Our lives are built on their heritage. The responsibility to pray for our beloved deceased is clearly shown in scripture and expounded upon in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [see #1683 and 1690]. We who journey together on our earthly pilgrimages must accompany each other at our journey's end and surrender each other into God's hands. For, united in Christ as his living body, we journey in Christ as disciples and come together in Christ before the throne of our God in heaven.



On Sunday, November 14th at 10:00 AM we will celebrate our annual **Memorial Mass** here at Our Lady Chapel. At that Mass, we will remember all of our deceased family members, as well as deceased alumni, students, benefactors, and friends. **Please join us for this special tradition here at Our Lady Chapel.**

FAMILY ADVENT WREATHS “TO GO”:

Because of COVID, we will be making our Advent Wreaths “to go” this year. You will make them at home, and then we will schedule a zoom blessing of the advent wreaths that you have assembled. Cost of the Wreath is \$25 — this includes trimmings, candles, and everything else you will need. Please know that cost is not a reason to not making an Advent Wreath; please contact Father John. You must place your order by Sunday, November 21st. You can do so by emailing Patty at szaniszlop@gilmour.org, or you can call the chapel office at 440-473-3560 or email Father John at blazekj@gilmour.org. November 22nd is absolutely the last day to pre-order your wreath because we need to purchase the materials and assemble the “Advent Wreath Kit”. You may pick up your Advent Wreath Kit on Saturday, November 27th between noon and 3 PM, or on Sunday, November 28th from 11:15 AM until 12:30 PM. Please call the chapel office if you have any questions.

**OLC “ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:**

Again this year, we are going to be doing our Adopt-a-Family Program with St. Adalbert Parish School. **Because of the Pandemic, emphasis this year will be on gift cards. You certainly can purchase a “real” gift if you would like, but we thought it would be safer to do the gift cards and let the parents of the children do the shopping.** The need this year continues to be great because of the pandemic. St. Adalbert has identified families — most often single parent, below poverty level families; we are given the grade levels or age of the children and other family information, so that we can identify their needs for gifts appropriate to each member. In addition, if possible, **we ask that you also provide a Christmas food gift card for the family.**



If you are buying gifts, then the gifts should be wrapped. **Gift cards from the following places are best: Walmart, Aldi or Dave's. Chipotle, Amazon, Home Goods, Target, Marshall's, and Old Navy, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, and Ashley Stewart.**

There are also many **Grandparents who are raising children and need help.** For this group, **Aldi's Gift Card or Walmart Cards** are the best.

This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. **Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or szaniszlop@gilmour.org] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions.**

LIVE LIFE:

It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Liam Kirchner, a child, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Dan Kane, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for an infection in his leg.
- For Matt Rose who is recovering from extensive cancer surgery.
- For Paul Wadowick, uncle of long-term substitute teacher, Sarah Soplata, who is undergoing a procedure for a blood disorder.
- For John Visconsi, brother of Tom [*61] and Tony Visconsi [*75] and Paulette Poklar, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Marty Zingales, who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Joseph Annan, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for a stroke.
- For Father Joseph O'Donnell, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice
- For Frank O'Brien who is critically ill with COVID
- For Sheila Coyne, aunt of Katie Coyne [*24], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie [*17], Frank [*18], and Mia [*19] Nannicola, who is recovering from cancer surgery.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Kathy Roddy [anniversary]
- For Brother Thomas Dillman, C.S.C.
- For Father James Trepanier, C.S.C.
- For Peter Davet, uncle of Katie Davet [*00]
- For Jill Achkar, mother of JP [*83] and Alan [*86].
- For John Klens, father Gretchen Klens [*19]
- For Sister Mary Frank, C.S.A.
- For Virginia VanAuken
- For Linda Schrienk
- For Mary Broadbent.
- For Nora Lawrence
- For Dion Howells
- For Dan Van Dyke, brother of Brother James Van Dyke, C.S.C.
- For Mary Adamski.
- For Alice Ferfolia,, mother of Gilmour's Varsity B Hockey Coach, Mark Ferfolia, Sr., and grandmother of Assistant Prep Hockey Coach, Mark Ferfolia, Jr.
- For Arek Fressadi [*68]
- For Antoine Hilal, grandfather of Gia Hilal [*24]
- For Charles Corvi, son of David Corvi [*03]
- For Doty Murphy, cousin of Advancement Director, Ray Murphy.
- For Sister Mary George Haky, O.S.U.
- For Eugene Bernhard.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

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



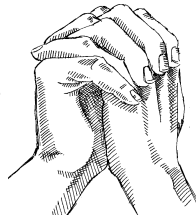
Reconciliation

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

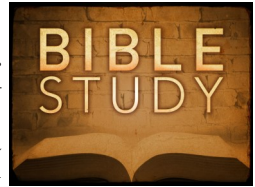
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Vicki Giancola, mother of Vince Giancola [*23], who continues 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 Dorothy Dowling, grandmother-in-law of Whitney Daly, great-grandmother of Thomas [*27], Mark [*30] and Joseph [*32] Daly, who is critically ill and under the care of hospice.
- For Katie Poelking [*01], sister of TJ Poelking [*98], who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- 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 McKitto, sister of Aidan McKitto [*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 — THURSDAY, DEC. 2nd:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, December 2nd 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: Advent**



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, November 14: 33 rd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, November 15:	NO MASS
Tuesday, November 16:	NO MASS
Wednesday, November 17: St. Elizabeth of Hungary	NO MASS
Thursday, November 18:	NO MASS
Friday, November 19:	NO MASS
Saturday, November 20: Feast of Christ the King	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, November 21: Feast of Christ the King	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

GIVING TREE:

This year the giving tree will continue to look different; the tree will be there, but there will be no ornaments on the tree. **Instead here is a list of gifts to purchase and put under the tree. All the gifts are NOT wrapped. They can be in grocery bags or other such “outerwear”.** All gifts will be going to **Fatima Center** as part of the **Toyland-Joyland Celebration**, or to **Regent of Euclid Assisted Living.** **We will also be working with Gilmour’s Kids 4 Kids Club to provide gifts for the needy.** Here is a list of the gifts that are needed for Fatima: **New Books, Games, African American Dolls, Toiletries, T-Shirts, Fleece Pants, Non-slip Footie Socks, Slippers, Fleece Throws, Gift Cards, Sweaters, Socks, Underwear, Hats, and Gloves.** Gifts for the student Council outreach will be added shortly.



Please return your gift to the Giving Tree in the Chapel Lobby by Monday, December 13th so that they may be distributed to Fatima and the other organizations for their celebrations. Join in the Christmas spirit by bringing joy into the lives of others.

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

In this northern half of the earth there are many signs of endings — the harvests are completed, and the outdoor fun-things are stored away for the winter. The trees are quickly losing their clothes and seem to shiver in the divesting winds. As the weather begins to divest itself from all that covers its inner beauty, so we in the Church are called to shed all that we hide behind and begin to focus on who God has called us to be.

While this is all happening within our small sector of the world, those in the southern half of our earth are experiencing beginnings — the re-dressings of trees and fields. Hope and trust do lead to fullness, but it takes time. All this serves to remind us that in each of our lives, there is a death remembered and accomplished, and a resurrection and fruitfulness to be lived — there are always endings and beginnings. Each day we are sent to enter into the community of believers to be a blessing to this world through us.

The setting for the Book of the Prophet Daniel is a world at war. It is a story of kings battling against each other. Power and domination drive for supremacy. It is distressing and relentless. In the midst of this the message of the Prophet Daniel is filled with hope, redemption and resurrection [Daniel 12:1-3]. The prophet speaks of hope to those who belong to God; there is an explicit promise of a recovery of life for those who lie in the dust; and there is a “forever” to that life given to those whose names are in the “Book”.

Those who are wise by living justly will be holy — brightly shining like the stars. Actually, it was believed that the stars were where the holy existed after their lying in the earth. The planets were the symbols of orderliness and therefore godliness — and hence, holiness.

This same celestial theme is the center of Mark’s Gospel. The word “gospel” means “Good News”. And yet, the “good news” of Mark’s Gospel for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time sounds very much like “bad news” [Mark 13:24-32]. Where’s the grace? Where’s the hope? Where’s the invitation to God being faithful? It is unfortunate that this word of hope was not included — when Jesus reminds his disciples that the one who stays firm to the end will be saved [Mark 13:13]. Jesus is Lord of the earth and sky. While we desire to know the date and place of the final ending or “second coming”, Jesus encourages us to keep living towards our eternal existence — the “when” is “now”.

We all know that there is going to be an end to our individual lives on this earth. Jesus is saying that we should live today as if we knew that later today is the beginning of our final ending. We would love to be able to read the signs of the time and get ready and be prepared and looking good when the Lord comes collecting. We are encouraged rather to read the signs of our minds and hearts. How sacred it all is and how wonderfully mysterious it all is. There are new leaves and growth in bush and tree and field. The fall of the leaves is not the beginning of the end, but the beginning of the beginning. We are encouraged to watch, but live the sacredness of our lives every day.

It is a strange thing — this on-coming of God. In five weeks we will celebrate a “first-coming”. It will be a birth of a Baby, the Prince of Peace. Shepherds and Wise Men will come in humble awe. We will kneel with them fearlessly joyful while the stars of the heavens keep watch. How do we see this in the midst of “the stars falling from the skies”? Allow me to make a quite bold statement here — God is not merely a “Mercy-Machine”. God, as revealed in the fullness of revelation in Jesus is the God of Creation! The mercy of God is not some “legalistic equation” that God applies to our lives. Mercy is not a fractional part of God’s creative love. Sin is our personal de-creation of ourselves, others, and our relationship with God.

If we have an image of God that centers on God’s being legalistically merciful, then we push Jesus to the sidelines and stand in midfield shivering like the naked trees of winter, fear, and frightened that the

**DECEASED CLERGY & RELIGIOUS**

November 2020 ~ November 2021

Deacon Gary Tomazic	Sr. Miriam A. Volkmer, CSC	Monsignor Robert Wolff
Fr. James Trepanier, C.S.C.	Br. Robert Weinmann, C.S.C.	Sr. Therese Zammikiel, P.P.C.
Sr. Marietta Umlor, C.S.C.	Sr. Louisita Welsh, C.S.C.	Abbot Clement Zeleznik, O.S.B.
Sr. Loretta Valdes, C.S.C.	Fr. Bill Wickham, C.S.C.	Sr. Alberta Zimmer, C.S.C.
Deacon Carl Varga	Sr. Michael M. Williamson, CSC	

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

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.

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — NOVEMBER 20th:

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

WHY DOES GOD NOT HEAR ME?

God listens not to the voice, but to the heart.

—St. Cyprian

DECEASED CLERGY & RELIGIOUS*November 2020 ~ November 2021*

Sr. Joan Allem, C.S.C.	Sr. Marilla Dyer, C.S.C.	Deacon Robert Matoney
Sr. Ann Joseph Apack, C.S.J.	Br. Francis Feeley, C.S.C.	Sr. Florence May, C.S.C.
Fr. Arthur Bacher	Sr. Barbara Jeanne Fehr, C.S.C.	Sr. Ann Therese McAndrew, CSC
Fr. Bob Barker, C.S.C.	Br. Edward Folken, C.S.C.	Fr. Thomas McGovern
Fr. Andrew Beaudoin, S.S.S.	Sr. Mary Frank, C.S.A.	Fr. Joseph Mecir
Fr. James Becherer	Sr. Susan Gauntner, H. M.	Fr. Dominic Modzelewski, O.S.B.
Sr. Joanne Becker, C.S.C.	Br. Thomas J Gorman, C.S.C.	Fr. Cornelius Murray
Br. Robert Berthiaume, C.S.C.	Fr. Ken Grabner, C.S.C.	Fr. Bob Nogosek, C.S.C.
Br. Edward Boyer, C.S.C.	Fr. Gregory Green, C.S.C.	Sr. Hedy Olesky, S.N.D.
Sr. St. Brigid Bromeling, C.S.C.	Fr. Donald Guertin, C.S.C.	Deacon Terry Peacock
Sr. Lucia Bucholtz, SSJ.-T.O.S.F.	Sr. Nora Gurnett, C.S.C.	Deacon Lindley Pennypacker
Fr. Richard Burchell	Fr. Thomas Haggadorn	Bishop Anthony Pilla
Fr. Thomas Carten, C.S.C.	Sr. Carolita Hart, C.S.C.	Fr. Joseph Piskura
Sr. Mary Brian Cauley, C.S.J.	Fr. Ernie Hepner	Fr. Richard S. Rasch, O. de M.
Sr. Mary Clennon, C.S.C.	Br. Richard Huber, C.S.C.	Fr. Dan Redmond
Sr. Miriam Cooney, C.S.C.	Fr. Bill Karg	Sr. Roman Ress, S.N.D.
Sr. Patricia Crane, C.S.C.	Sr. Katherine Kase, C.S.C.	Fr. Mike Rock, O. de M.
Fr. Bill Crumley, C.S.C.	Br. Robert Kelly, C.S.C.	Sr. Maureen Rooney, C.S.C.
Sr. Suzanne Cubbison, O.S.U.	Sr. Albertine Kramer, C.S.C.	Sr. Maureen Ryba, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.
Sr. Carmen Davy, C.S.C.	Sr. Laurette Kramer, S.N.D.	Fr. Gerald Sabo, S.J.
Fr. Robert DeLeon, C.S.C.	Br. James Lakofka, C.S.C.	Deacon William Schill
Sr. Mary DeNardis, C.S.C.	Sr. Lucy Lalsangzuali, C.S.C.	Br. John Schuszler, C.S.C.
Fr. John Dias, C.S.C.	Sr. Dorothy Langlois, C.S.C.	Sr. Julie Shea, C.S.C.
Sr. Jean Marie Dick, S.N.D.	Br. Leo Legendre, C.S.C.	Deacon Dennis Smith
Br. Thomas Dillman, C.S.C.	Sr. Maria Rosa Leggol, O.S.F.	Deacon William Starkey
Deacon Charles Doerpers	Br. Wilbert Leveling, C.S.C.	Fr. Robert Stein
Sr. Cyril Dubala, C.S.C.	Deacon Joseph Loutzenhiser	Fr. Ron Szudarek
Sr. Alice Dugar, S.N.D.	Fr. Jerome Lukachinsky	Sr. Patricia Ann Thompson, C.S.C.

sky is going to fall upon us with wrath and vengeance. With that image, would we, could we ever look forward to the “second coming” of the Prince of Peace!

What God asks of us is “mercy not sacrifice” — mercy towards ourselves from ourselves. God is always at work, laboring to bring all of us into harmony within and around us. We can worry about whether we will be ready, but the more important reality is whether or not we believe that we belong to God — by God’s creation of us from the beginning and leading up to our final ending, which of course, is only the beginning of what’s always new. The mercy of God is always coming to make more of us than we can make of ourselves. —taken from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

APOCALYPTIC TIMES CALL US TO ACT:

Although apocalyptic visions are famous for their dreadful details, disaster is only their context, not their message. The word apocalypse comes from two Greek words that together mean to uncover or reveal; apocalyptic visions and literature propose to reveal the redemptive potential of what appears to be a situation of personal and/or global disaster.

Although doomsayers in every age have amassed evidence that theirs was the worst of times, the turmoil and tragedy of our era give us every right to lament. We might mark the beginning of our epoch with the 1960s moment when earthlings orbiting the moon sent us pictures of Earth that revealed the big picture irrelevance of the national borders pretending to divide and define our globe. Science has taught us that evolution is our history, and technology allows us to speak face-to-face with people anywhere on Earth while Google helps us overcome our language barriers. It would all be very hopeful if it weren’t so terribly frightening to lose our traditional stability and certainties.

More frightening than our losses are some truly novel elements of our 21st century context. We are in a climate calamity. Social media includes an uncontrollable and too-often irresponsible explosion of [mis] information. Churches feel the loss of traditional religiosity among both sincere and apathetic sectors of our societies while new, varied and vibrant perceptions of our humanity have broken open our old categories of gender, race, class, nationality, etc. It seems like everything that once created stability has gone up for grabs.

Apocalyptic visions do seem to focus on catastrophe — Daniel’s “time unsurpassed in distress” [Daniel 12:1-3], and Jesus’ prediction that the sun will be darkened, the stars falling and the powers in heaven will be shaken [Mark 13:24-32]. Nevertheless, Daniel’s disaster sets the scene for the appearance of Michael, the angelic helper. Then, when Jesus talks about the fearsome signs, he explains: “When you see these things happening, know that the Son of Man is at the gates.”

The message? Apocalyptic visions aren’t all about terror. Like people of ages past, we need to remember that crises create our context, but they don’t define us. As Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si’*: “How wonderful is the certainty that each human life is not adrift in a world ruled by pure chance.” Apocalyptic times invite us to see the transformational power of God ready to move into action wherever the need is the greatest.

In *Laudato Si’*, Francis tells us that humanity is at a crossroads, but that we have the freedom necessary to respond to the crises of our epoch in a “bold cultural revolution” that would be based on appreciating that everything in our world is interconnected. Although he does not exactly define that revolution, he calls us to redefine our notion of progress, seeking ways to create a better world and an “integrally higher quality of life.” That implies a care for creation that cherishes the dignity of Earth and all her creatures. Francis also reminds us that the complexity of our current situation and the multiple causes of our crises call us to redefine our notion of progress and seek solutions that incorporate the riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality.

We are living in apocalyptic times. Our moment calls us to a realistic assessment of our crises and a response that springs from the grace of believing that now is the time to lift up our heads and see that the Son of Man is at the gates. Today, the Son of Man cries out to us through the agony of creation and invites us to collaborate with him in the work of redemption. Our apocalyptic/revolutionary task is to join together and reveal the redemptive potential that is possible only in our unique time.

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

WHEN IS THE “SECOND COMING”?

In 1981, a man left \$57,000 in his will to Jesus — it was for His own personal use when He returned at the Second Coming. The money was to be invested at the highest interest in the meantime. Does anyone really think that Jesus will be shopping at a posh department store for a new seamless robe and sandals upon His return? Does anyone feel money is what He shall require from us at the Parousia? Is this what the Nazarene is all about? Christ is more interested in the way that we conduct our lives in this moment rather than tomorrow. He is more eager to see us improve life for others today than He is to remove us from it.

Andrew Greeley has some wise thoughts on this point — “The Second Coming, the New Age, the New Epoch, can and should be happening throughout this day and week.” I saw the Second Coming at a Soup Kitchen where I worked. A white woman volunteer gave a black man soup, pasta, and coffee. As he was leaving, he thanked her. Then she noticed the bad condition of his shoes. She told him to wait. From the clothing closet, she brought several pairs. The woman got down on her knees and fitted each pair. Finally, she found his fit. In this forty-minute encounter, Jesus in His Second Coming was present. I was watching Him washing His apostles’ feet all over again.

I witnessed the New Age today at a fast-food restaurant. A busload of children treated their waitress with kindness — “Please” and “Thank you” were more plentiful than hamburgers and cokes. They cleaned their table. They left a generous tip and a happy waitress. There was no doubt but that the Lord was present.

I see the New Epoch every time one of you gives a \$100 to a priest and asks him to give it to a family having a difficult time. If one looks sharp enough, you can see a smile on Christ’s face. I observed the New Order yesterday. I was lost and could not find the correct road. I asked directions of a young man. Though he was in as much a hurry as I, he U-turned and told me to follow him for several miles. Then he put my car on the correct road. Can you not hear Jesus applaud?

I heard of the Second Coming yesterday. A mother told me of her return from a long journey. On her kitchen table, she found a dozen carnations waiting to greet her. The benefactor was her teen son. That day she saw Christ in her boy. I saw the New Epoch last week when a fellow priest had heard that people in a diocesan parish were gleefully giving another priest — whom he hardly knew — a hard time. He phoned: “May I buy you a good lunch?” The trip cost him not only the restaurant bill, but also a round trip of 140 miles, and over half a tank of gas. Was not the Nazarene riding with him that day? Each of us can fill in the blanks with other stories. When have you seen the Second Coming this week? —and hopefully you were the cause of it.

If you can’t find an instance, then hopefully you will bring it about tomorrow. Ask Jesus: “How do we prepare for dying?” Jesus responds: “By living.” As Father Andrew Greeley says: the answer to the “when?” of the Second Coming can be readily given. The Lord is present anywhere people treat each other with gentleness, generosity, and thoughtfulness. A man helped Mother Teresa in Calcutta. He was swept off his feet as he watched the small giant wash sick bodies. The man said to her: “I want to remain here permanently with you.” Mother Teresa, whose wrinkled face showed thousands of miles of wear, said with a smile: “No, no. It is but an illusion. Go home and bloom where you are planted. The message that each one of us is a member of God’s family is as much needed where you came from as it is here. We must do small things with great love.”

This story of Mother Teresa so moved US President George W Bush that he quoted it in his brief inaugural address in Washington, DC in 2001. This week why not see how many times you yourself can bring Jesus back to earth? Here’s a proverb to motivate you — “I sought my God; my God I could not

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see. I sought my soul; my soul eluded me. I sought my neighbor, and I found all three.” Become God’s miracle for somebody today. —taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooly, which appear on the internet.

REACTING TO THE SIGNS:

In Mark’s Gospel [13:24-32], Jesus speaks to the disciples about the last days — the sun will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky; the Son of Man will come on the clouds, with great power to gather his elect; stay alert to the signs that the end is coming; of that day or hour no one knows — not the angels, not the Son — but only the Father.

The scripture scholars tell us that Mark’s Gospel reflects the “apocalyptic outlook,” prevalent in the Jewish world at the time of Jesus. This outlook expected God to intervene soon and decisively in history to save His people suffering under Roman rule. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks to the disciples about the end of time, the last days: the sun will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky; the Son of Man will come on the clouds, with great power to gather his elect; stay alert to the signs that the end is coming; of that day or hour no one knows, not the angels, not the Son, but only the Father.

But how are we to interpret this scenario today when most people are not expecting an imminent end of the world? We need to begin by developing a healthy attitude toward the future which remains essentially unknowable. For some people, the essential problem is excessive worry and anxiety over a future which appears dark, dangerous, and scary. To those who know something of this tendency, Mark’s Gospel speaks comforting words — remain calm despite all the chaos because the Son of Man, Christ himself, will come to gather his people; the God who alone knows the future is totally trustworthy and will not abandon us; the frightening future is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the source of a light more powerful than all the dark forces.



We can imagine persons appropriating this message in various ways. Facing an important job interview, a very anxious recent college graduate managed to stay calm enough to do well in the interview. A middle-aged woman found the strength to make it through a dreaded regimen of chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer. A senior citizen terribly anxious about dying became peaceful in the last month before his death.

Others are not concerned enough about the future — drifting through life; putting things off; expecting things to get better without proper effort; falling into complacency; ignoring signs of impending trouble; making poor decisions without considering the future consequences. To those who experience this temptation, Mark’s Gospel has a sharp message — be prepared for the unexpected; actions have consequences; we have a limited number of tomorrows; one day we all stand before the merciful and just Judge.

We can envision people who got this message. An engaged couple decided that saving intercourse for marriage would help them develop other ways of communicating and relating. A husband, who for years missed the April tax deadline — causing serious distress to his wife — started filing early, leaving him with a much happier wife. A single man who never worried about the future took out an insurance policy to cover nursing home expenses so he would not be a burden on his younger sister if he was incapacitated.

What is your fundamental attitude toward the unknown future and how does the Gospel speak to you? —taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet

LOVE:

Love is the affinity which links and draws together the elements of the world. Love, in fact, is the agent of universal synthesis. —Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

EVENTUALLY YOURS:

There was a very successful funeral director who developed his own personal style of letter writing. Before he would sign his name at the end of the letter, he would always close with “eventually yours.” There is no doubt about it, we all will be eventually his — as we will be eventually God’s. The reality of death is certain. The older we get, the clearer the certainty of death becomes. Such realizations can lead to fear and discouragement. That is why the image that Jesus uses in Mark’s gospel is so important [Mark 13:24-32]. Jesus is describing the end of the world and there are many fearful signs — the sun will be darkened, stars will fall from the heavens. But in the midst of this description of gloom and fear, he gives us the example of the fig tree. It is a positive image. It is an image of new life. In the midst of the old world dying, the fig tree buds and puts forth new leaves. I think what Jesus is saying is that as the end draws closer — whether it is the end of the world or the end of our individual lives — there is hope. There are signs of new life. It is a hopeful description, isn’t it? It also leads to a question. What are the advantages of growing older? What are the new buds, the new life that come with advancing years?

I would suggest two blessings — wisdom and miracles. The older we get, the wiser we can become. Now, of course, it is true that you can find some dense and stubborn old people. But most of us learn from our experiences. Most of us realize that we have the opportunity to become wiser. A famous Islamic Sufi teacher describes his development this way: “When I was a young man, I used to pray daily and fervently that I would have the courage to change the world. By the time I became middle-aged, I realized that I had not changed one single person, and so I changed my prayer. I began to pray for the grace to change the people around me, to influence my family or friends. Now that I am old, I have changed my prayer again. Now I pray for the grace to change myself. Had I had the wisdom to pray that prayer from the start, I would have so much more to show for my life.” Wisdom can grow as we grow older. We can learn to think before we speak. We can learn to consult before we act. We can recognize the ebb and flow of life and determine when we need to push forward and when we need to hold back. In the famous prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous: “Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Wisdom grows with age. So do miracles. Now when I talk of miracles, I am not talking about the sun standing still or the appearance of some heavenly being. I am referring to the ordinary miracles that shape and direct our lives. Those miracles become clear in retrospect. It is only when we look back over many years of living that we begin to discern the powerful ways that God has been loving us. It is here that those who are older have a distinct advantage. It is when you are celebrating your fortieth wedding anniversary and you look back, that you realize the miracle of that day long ago, when you overcame your hesitation and accepted that blind date and therefore met the person that you now have loved for almost a half a century. It is when you retire after a successful career and look back, that you recognize the miracle of meeting that person who by example was the one who showed you the value of the career which has now blessed you for a lifetime. It is when you have been friends with someone for many years that you understand the miracle of the relationship—that despite all the ups and downs of life and the many friendships that came to an end, this one continues. Here is someone you can still talk to, you can still laugh with, you still care for. Most important dimensions of life seem like “business as usual” when you’re living them. It is only when you look back, that you are shocked by the power they have had to shape your life. It is only in retrospect that they emerge as true miracles. And the older you are, the more miracles you see.

Wisdom and Miracles are the gifts of growing older. They are meant to be shared. So if you have been around for a half a century or more and you are beginning to feel the limitations of growing older,

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WHEN TO GUARD YOUR HEART:

“Guard your heart” is a phrase that can easily be misunderstood. In the book of proverbs we read: “Above all else guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life” [Proverbs 4:23]. Usually when we think of “guarding our heart” we think about guarding it from evils in time of temptation. However, if we guard our heart in the wrong way, we end up by building barriers around it that are so strong that nothing can come in — no pain, but also no joy.

My heart became dried up, hard, and rigid. I rested in logic and making good sense. I valued my head over my heart instead of the connection between the two. “Follow your heart” was a phrase I scoffed at because to me it sounded a lot like an excuse to do whatever you want.

Then, two days ago my spiritual director looked at me and said: “Follow your heart”. I think my face reflected horror. I wanted to disagree with him. I wanted to keep my heart all locked up and guarded, but he had some good points.

In hiding away my heart, I was preventing myself from being truly happy. I had a misunderstanding of what following my heart really means. It doesn’t mean that I give into every desire I have. It means that when God speaks into my heart, it needs to be open and ready to receive the gifts that God is offering to me.

Your heart is the source of life. **In order to receive the gifts that God has for you, your heart must be open.** It can’t be barricaded and kept away from the Lord. Guarding your heart doesn’t mean you become a guarded person. **The best way to guard your heart is to give it to your good Father.** This means loving Him completely and trusting that even though your heart isn’t in your hands — it’s safe!

This doesn’t mean that you won’t get hurt. It doesn’t mean that your heart won’t lead you astray sometimes. It doesn’t mean that we should throw all logic out the window. **It’s all about balance** — balancing your head and your heart.

Though our desires can be misguided or “unordered” — as St. Augustine would call it — the heart is also where God speaks to us. It is where he reveals his plan for us, where He comes to meet us. **We can’t lock down our hearts and rely on our head alone. But we also can’t completely ignore logic and good reasoning.** We must remember that God speaks to us in movement of the heart, and as long as you are walking with the Lord, the openings of your heart are not something to be feared or disregarded.

When your heart is open to the Lord, He will begin to speak. Sometimes it won’t be logical. Sometimes it will require you to go outside of your comfort zone. But God is not confined to logic or your comfort zone. **God is waiting and ready for you to give your heart to Him so that He can give you the fullness of life.**

Here are some things to reflect upon, journal about, or talk about:

- In what ways do you need to guard your heart more?
- In what ways do you need to open your heart?
- How do you feel about the phrase “follow your heart?” Why?
- How are you being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit?
- What is God speaking to your heart about, and how are you responding?
- What scares you the most about opening your heart to God?

A GOOD QUESTION:

What I really lack is to be clear in my mind about “what I am to do” — not “what I am to know”. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do. What good would it do me to be able to explain the meaning of Christianity if it had no deeper significance for me and for my life?

—Soren Kierkegaard



would it not be a good idea to claim its benefits, as well? You have a wisdom. Spread it around. There are miracles that have happened in your life. Tell them to others — to your family, to the people you know, even to strangers that you meet.

If you are a young person, this is for you, as well. If you are fortunate to know elderly people who you respect, why not choose to ask their advice, to seek their wisdom? Why not invite them to tell you what are the miracles that they have seen in their lives? Think of all that we are losing by not asking our grandparents, our parents and others: What do you know? What are the miracles that have shaped your life?

I am serious about this! Think of the power that would be released if you provide an opportunity to others to tell you of the wisdom and miracles which they have accumulated over a life-time. Please decide to do it. Ask them today. Call them up this week. If you are embarrassed, tell them you went to church and the priest told you, you had to do it. Do not let the opportunity slip by. Time, after all, is growing short.

What are the advantages of growing older? They are certainly not increased flexibility or greater energy. But there is more wisdom and more miracles to share. So share them. Claim them as your own, as part of the gift of growing older. So that when, in time, you become eventually God’s, you might be able to say: “Lord, I thank you for all the blessings of my life. But the ones that you gave me at the end — they were the best of all!”

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

THE GIFT OF CONFIDENCE:

God does not want something from you — God wants something for you. What God wants for you is expressed in four basic concepts: [1] Faith — a lived relationship with Jesus; [2] Communion — the blessings of that relationship; [3] Abundance — God’s blessings in this moment; and [4] Confidence.

Blessing do not come to us without sacrifice, trial, and suffering. For that reason, God wants us to be people of confidence. Read what the psalmist writes: “Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices; my body also abides in confidence. For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your faithful one undergo corruption” [Psalm 16:8-9]. We experience this confidence — not because we are intrepid. We experience it because of God. Here is an example. My body abides in confidence, not because I exercise and eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables. My body abides in confidence because I know — when all is said and done — that God will not abandon me. We need that confidence in God.

Mark’s Gospel speaks about distress — “a time unsurpassed in distress” [Mark 13:24-32]. Jesus describes a tribulation with global and cosmic dimensions. Terrible things are happening in our world. What the future may bring us we do not know. But Jesus tells us to stand firm — “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away.” Trust Jesus. Trust his word. He wants to give you the gift of confidence.

Express your confidence in God by making a gift of what you value most — your time. Is weekly Mass and daily prayer your priority? Time, abilities, resources — how are each of these used by us? How does each of these lead us to God? Ask God to open your heart to the possibilities, and live in confidence.

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

R.C.I.A [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults]:

Our RCIA program will begin shortly. If you have been thinking about investigating the Catholic faith, or if you know someone who has been thinking about it; if you have been away from the Catholic Church for a while, or are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith; if you know someone who is not fully initiated [Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation] in their Catholic faith — then consider joining or having them join our RCIA program.

Please contact Father John [440-473-3560] for more information.

BLESSED IS THE MAN
WHO TRUSTS IN THE
LORD
WHOSE CONFIDENCE
IS IN HIM
JEREMIAH 17:7



GOD MEETS US IN OUR MESS:

I am going to be honest here. I am mess. Like seriously. Just this week I've slept through my alarm and missed two of my classes because of it. I've fallen behind on just about everything, and bombed an exam. I've been swimming in anxiety and grief, and feel like my life is one big crazy checklist. So, believe me when I say, if things are not going well, I know how you feel. I am right in the thick of it too. I am no stranger to feeling like everything is out of my control, like I am knee deep in all the things, like everything's a mess — like I am a mess.

Sometimes it is extremely hard to look past all of the drama, the breakups, the heartaches, the natural disasters, the tragedies, the loss, the confusion, the stress — the absolute messiness. In those messy moments when we are our messiest, when the hurt feels like it is too much to bear, we may think it will be easier if we just push God away.

But it's not — which is why it's a good time to remember that God asks us to cast aside our anxiety and keep our eyes fixed on "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious. [Philippians 4:6-9]. God asks us to fix our eyes on Him and draw closer to Him. When we do this, we can see the ways He wants to speak to us through the messiness of our lives more clearly.

I'm not going to lie, letting Jesus into our messiness is really hard. We're afraid of being vulnerable with Him; we're afraid that if we open our hands, He'll take from us what we're not ready to give, or we're afraid He'll fix things we don't want to be fixed. But, He desires this union with us more than anything else. He longs to console us and desires our trust.

And when we are in the thick of it — as I am, and as I am sure some of you are — it is important to remember Jesus uses these times of suffering to draw us into His passion. If you're like me, those last few words might have you shook — His passion? We shrink back at that phrase because it makes us uncomfortable; we don't want to suffer and we don't want to die to self. But, we forget what a joy it is to participate in His cross, for His cross is what brought about new life!



When we feel like everything around us is crumbling, or that life couldn't be any more crazy, there is nothing more important than realizing that everything is grace. Run to Him and lay down all your burdens. Run to Him and let your heart sing of the ways He has blessed you in the messiness.

For me, I show my thanks when I sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and allow myself just a few minutes to wallow, and tell Jesus all that's on my heart — what is making me sad, confused, lonely, or stressed. I actively choose to set those things aside for just a moment and say: "Jesus I come to you in my mess. I am yours. I surrender to Your will, and today, I choose to live out of a place of abundance."

I then list ten things in my journal for which I am grateful, trying especially hard to find Jesus in all the brokenness. Maybe He was present in my roommate's loving words, the sweet friend that folded my laundry for me because she knows I am stressed, a nice text message, or even something as simple as a cool breeze. Giving thanks for all the little joys in the midst of suffering puts our broken humanity in perspective, and allows God to again become the Lord over our life.

And if that isn't enough to make you realize the good, just think of how He suffered for you. What does it mean that the Savior of the universe would have endured the pain of the cross a thousand times over even if it were just for you alone?

Remember, friends, what He has done for you. Recall all the times He has filled your days with

who can take life itself as if we were God.

We should never be surprised at how messy life can get or how deranged we can be. What is surprising rather is that sometimes — in the pre-sophistication of a child or the post-sophistication of a saint — we do find simple happiness, simple meaning, and simple faith.

Things could only be simpler if God had made us Swiss clocks — wonderfully tuned to pre-set rhythms, with no mess, no sin, no evil, and with the beauty of perfect crystal.

But then there wouldn't be any love, freedom, creativity, or meaning. No. God built us on a razor's edge, so full of godly fire that we are capable of both martyrdom and murder.

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

YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND HOPE:

A few years ago, I decided to attend Mass. It had only been a few months since returning to the Church after an extended absence; however, I would not classify participation before the break as faithful. It was the season of Thanksgiving, and I thought it made perfect sense to attend the celebration of the Eucharist, whose very meaning is — thanksgiving. Unaware of the liturgical calendar, I went expecting joyful readings about gratitude — and, well, thanksgiving. However, that is not what I heard — not even close. Hello, doom and gloom!

The liturgical calendar spans from the First Sunday of Advent to the Solemnity of Christ the King. I have discovered the alignment of the end of the liturgical calendar with readings focused on the end times. At first glance, the weeks' readings leading up to Advent become foreboding, ominous, and even a little depressing. One has to search really hard to find hope — but it is there. Thanks to the Resurrection, one can always find hope!

While Daniel sets up the doom [Daniel 12:1-3], the Responsorial Psalm dispels the gloom [Psalm 16]. Here we find the word: "I set the Lord ever before me; with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed." Then, the author of Hebrews records: "For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated" [Hebrews 10:11-18]. What could be more hopeful than that?

Fast forward many years after that eye-opening Mass, my life relationship with the Lord and the Church has grown significantly. This winding down of both calendars has become my chosen time to consecrate myself to Jesus through Mary using St. Louis de Montfort's Total Consecration method. I love preparing for the coming of Christmas by devoting time to the scriptures, Marian prayers, and spiritual reading. I tend to get caught up in the secularism of the holidays, hence my assuming the "Thanksgiving" themed Mass!

Soon we'll be entering the season of Advent — a time to prepare for the coming of Christ — not just in remembrance of his first coming in the Feast of his Nativity but also in the understanding he will come again. We need to prepare our hearts and homes not only for our company, but for the greatest guest of all — Christ.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus explains what to expect when he returns — "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory" [Mark 13:24-32]. Furthermore, it reminds us to heed these warnings, so we are not caught unaware. To remember, though heaven and earth pass away — his words, his teaching, he, himself, does not. Be alert, be prepared. Although we know not the hour, every year, the Church provides us a time to pause, reflect, and prepare with the cycle of the liturgies and the great devotions of our faith. From the darkness comes a great light. As we pass from Advent to Christmas, let us enjoy the celebrations, careful not to leave Jesus out of them, and most importantly, ready our homes and our hearts to receive him.

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

GOD'S RISK — OUR FREEDOM:

Why doesn't God make things easier? Perhaps the most vexing faith-question of all-time is the problem of God's silence and his seeming indifference — why does God allow evil? Why do bad things happen to good people? If there is an all-powerful and all-loving God, how do you explain that millions of innocent people suffered and died under Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, in massacres in Rwanda, Algeria, and the recent terrorist killings in the USA? Where is God in all of this?

And the presence of evil in the world poses a deeper question — why is God seemingly hidden? If God is so massively real, why do so many people not recognize, acknowledge, or care about his existence? Why do believers have to live, almost always it seems, on the edges of doubt? Why doesn't God make his existence clear — a fact beyond doubt? Why doesn't God silence his critics?

There's no satisfying answer to that question — and there never will be.

No definitive faith textbook can ever be written that will soothe every doubt and answer every critical objection. Why not? Because making peace with this mystery — the mystery of God's hiddenness — is a question of a relationship in love and trust and not simply a question of correct theory. Faith, like love, matures through relationship not just theory.

Understanding God's hiddenness — God's way — is like a child coming to understand his or her parents. You have to relate long enough, live in patience long enough, and develop enough maturity so that, at a point, understanding arises out of a certain co-empathy. Love is the eye, Hugh of St. Victor used to say. When we are loving enough we begin to understand.

However, theory is still important. An old philosophical axiom suggests that the heart follows the head, that love itself must be guided by intellectual vision. Thus some theological theory on the question of evil and God's hiddenness can be helpful. What has classical, Christian theology taught on this? Essentially this: evil exists because God respects freedom, both in nature and in human beings. When we are confronted with the problem of evil in the world, the conclusion we might draw is in no way that God doesn't exist or doesn't care, but rather that God respects and values freedom in a way that we don't.

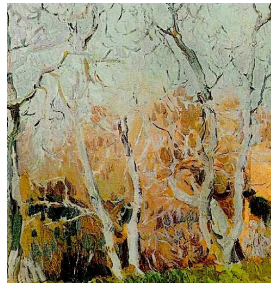
What does this mean?

God doesn't make things easier because God can't make things easier — at least not without making us and the world into something far less than we are. When God made us, he gave us as much freedom, creativity, and spunk as was possible. He didn't play it safe, but gave us as much godliness as he could without making us into gods ourselves. Simply put, in making us, God went so far as to give us a freedom that even he won't tamper with. A risky business, but, it seems, as a parent, God would rather risk than control, allow creativity outside of his influence than limit ingenuity, and tolerate the misuse of freedom than relate to robots.

God is perceived as silent because he allows human freedom and ingenuity to be precisely what they are meant to be — non-coerced, even by God. God is not a frightened parent who needs to control, nor a threatened creator who kept what was best back for himself. God allows evil because God respects the freedom and ingenuity of creation and can ultimately, as we know from elsewhere in our faith, redeem whatever goes wrong.

This helps explain not only the question of evil, but also why life can be so distressingly complex and why we can sometimes boil over into a quasi-divine rage.

We have been made, as scripture assures us, “a little less than God” [Psalm 8:5]. If God could have given us divinity, I believe, he would have. But the one thing God can't do is to create another God. So, in creating us, God took us as close to divinity as possible. Given the incredible array of qualities that God put in us, it shouldn't then be surprising that we are pathologically complex, that human grandiosity has a perpetual itch to set itself against God, and that, when frustrated, we are capable of becoming killers



joy, with consolation, with mercy. He has done so much good for you — even when you are too bogged down to see it all.

I invite you to reflect on the good God seeks to bring out of even the worst situations. How can you pay closer attention to the ways He wants to speak to you through your messiness? Will you trust that His will is always a gift, despite the imperfect packaging? —written by Laurie Medina, a college student

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday: 1 Maccabees 1:10-63, Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday: 2 Maccabees 6:18-31, Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday: 2 Maccabees 7:1-31, Luke 19:11-28

Thursday: 1 Maccabees 2:15-29, Luke 19:41-44

Friday: 1 Maccabees 4:36-59, Luke 19:45-48

Saturday: 1 Maccabees 6:1-13, Luke 20:27-40

Feast of Christ the King: Daniel 7:13-14, Revelation 1:5-8, John 18:33-37

THE WISE SHALL SHINE BRIGHTLY:

A little over two weeks ago, people went around trying their best to frighten other people. They were having fun. Horror movies are still popular — people go to them to scream. They are having fun. Why? Perhaps part of the fun that people have on Halloween — or at a horror movie — is that they like getting scared. Perhaps part of it is knowing that this is all make believe.

The Scripture Readings for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time are scary. The trouble is that they are not make-believe. Daniel says that a time is coming which will be unsurpassed in distress [Daniel 12:1-3]. Jesus also talks about this time when he says that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give off light, the stars will fall from the skies and the powers in the heavens will be shaken [Mark 13:24-32].

Both Daniel and Mark's Gospel are written in the literary genre we call “apocalyptic writing”. This genre uses poetry and prose, and engages the imagination and emotions. It is meant to scare people into recognizing the horrors of sin and the devastation that sin causes. The end of the world is not make believe — it will be a scary time. But is it a scary time for everyone? Daniel is told that the people who remain faithful will escape. The wise shall shine brightly and those who lead others to justice shall be like the stars forever. Jesus says that the Son of Man will send out his angels to gather his elect from the end of the earth and the end of the sky. So the question is: “How scared should we be?” The answer is really

another question: “How committed to God are we?” If we are committed to the Lord, we have no reason to fear the end of time.

We know this — in fact, every day we pray for the strength to remain committed to God no matter what crisis we face. We do this every time we say the Lord’s Prayer — remember this prayer ends with: “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” What we are saying is: “Don’t allow us to be tempted to leave you Lord. Protect us from the evil that can destroy us. Help us to be holy, set aside for you.” It is not easy to be holy. We live in a society that promotes self-indulgence. Loving God and loving neighbor can’t exist in a self-indulgent society. Neither action adequately answers the question: “What’s in it for me?” The immoral elements of our society attempt to dupe us into believing that it is normal to put ourselves before others. Sometimes this is obvious; sometimes this is subtle. For example, many people have followed a path to marriage that they don’t realize has been dictated by a self-absorbed society. Although their goal is to make a lasting life together, so many begin with a trial marriage to be sure that they are going to be happy. When it comes time to marry, they have to move from “What can I get from this relationship?” to “What can I give to this relationship?” The immoral element of society has weakened their ability to embrace sacrificial love because that was not the foundation of their relationship — they have been duped. And yet, society — particularly the godless media — presents living together as a step towards marriage when it so often and so sadly is a step towards divorce.

In our modern times, approaching marriage as a sacred union of sacrificial love is counter cultural. A young couple sometimes has to do battle against friends and even relatives. The young couple has to fight to be holy — to be set aside for the Lord. The self-indulgent elements of our society cannot see the value of another person except as a means for one’s advancement. People routinely use other people for their own gain. There are so many people in the world who are suffering; yet so many in society can see no profit in reaching out to help them — “What good will it do me, here in America, if I try to help the poor in the Sudan?” they ask within themselves without daring to voice the question.

The concept of helping others because they bear the image of God carries with it no personal gain — at least not here on earth. It takes tremendous courage to withstand the temptation to care only for oneself. It takes courage to trust God to be with us when we reach out to others. It is counter cultural to truly be charitable. It is also Christian. The work place and the school, high school and college, are places where the godless elements of society encourage people to use others. Be it for career advancement or for better grades, people are prodded into taking advantage of others for their own gain. How many people have befriended another to use his or her ideas either to destroy them or to claim them as their own? How many people seek good grades by using another person’s work? That is the way of the godless element of society.

It is the world from which we seek to be delivered. Perhaps others will advance in their careers or in their schools, but the Christian is concerned with advancing in holiness. The Lord knows that we can withstand evil. He gave us free will. We can choose to be separate, to be holy, to be His. He gives us His Grace. God gives us both the desire and the ability to see where He can be found and where His image is absent. We cannot allow the self-indulgence of society to convince us that we have no choice but to join in with the evil. We are not evil — we are good. In fact, all people are good. This is how God created us. He calls us to holiness; He is calling us to be true to ourselves. God is calling us to recognize His goodness in ourselves and in the world and to serve Him in His creation — “And the wise shall shine brightly, like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead many to justice will be like the stars forever.” Leading others to justice means bringing others to a relationship with God. People are longing for meaning, purpose and fulfillment in life — they are longing for God. They need us to give witness to holiness, to happiness. We can do this. The world needs us to do this. We do not fear the end of time. Nor do we fear the end of our own time, our death. What we do fear is giving in to the world and rejecting God. Now that's scary.

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

FINDING SALVATION IN THE “HERE AND NOW”

For almost a century and a half, scholars have debated whether the historical Jesus actually preached God’s kingdom among us right here and now — or whether he preached about its future arrival. Both opinions can be defended from Scripture. But from those same Scriptures, we can be fairly certain what some of Jesus’ first century disciples believed on the topic.

All experts agree that one of the most difficult — and unexpected — things with which Jesus’ earliest followers had to deal was his “delayed Parousia.” We know from the earliest Christian writing we possess — Paul’s first letter to the Church at Thessalonica — that Paul was convinced that Jesus’ Second Coming was just around the corner. He still was hoping for his imminent arrival when, ten years later in the late 50’s, he wrote his first letter to the Christian community in Corinth. In it, he advised its unmarried members not to get married because the time between then and Jesus’ arrival was very “short” [see 1 Corinthians 7]. They certainly wouldn’t get their hall deposit back if he appeared before the day of their actual ceremony.

Mark’s gospel is probably written in the last years of “it’s just around the corner” belief [Mark 13:24-32]. Though Jesus was still delaying, the “fig tree was about ready to bloom.” Mark might not be around to experience it, but he was convinced some of his readers would still be alive when it happened. His goal was to instill the faith of Daniel in them — a faith which constantly looked forward to God breaking into the lives of the faithful and delivering them from all their problems.

This hope for an imminent Parousia began to fade by the mid-eighties — when Luke composed his gospel and the Book of Acts of the Apostles. Luke seems to be the first Christian author to presume that he and the community for which he wrote would all live their natural lives and die before Jesus’ return. That major change in faith automatically forced many Christians to switch their focus from the future to the here and now. More and more they began to zero in on the risen Jesus’ presence in everyone they met and every situation they encountered.

Within ten years, John’s gospel eventually appeared, featuring the novel theology of “realized eschatology.” Events which followers of Jesus had once presumed would happen at the end of their salvation history were already taking place as that history was still unfolding — one need only reflect upon the exchange between Martha and Jesus on the occasion of her brother Lazarus’ death to surface an example of this new way of thinking. Note how John’s Jesus assures her that what she thought was going to happen in the future is already taking place as they speak [see John 11].

The author of Hebrews might not have totally bought into John’s realized eschatology, but he’s obviously concerned with making certain that his community reflects on how Jesus’ death and resurrection has changed how we live our lives right here and now [Hebrews 10:11-18]. No matter whether Jesus returns or not, we — unlike our Jewish ancestors — no longer have to worry about “sin offerings.” Our sins have already been forgiven.

But, getting back to the historical Jesus, can we know with complete certitude what he actually believed and preached? Probably not. In spite of that, experts agree he certainly mixed both the future and the present in his preaching. Though he might have thought a special future event would drastically change the universe, he also was convinced that such a change would begin in the way we lived our daily lives right now.

Perhaps some of us have yet to acquire that kind of faith.

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

DISCOVERING NEW LIFE:

The undertaking of a new action brings new strength.

—Richard Evans

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