

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer For Life ~

**Heavenly Father,
thank you
for the precious gift of life.
Help us to cherish
and protect this gift,
even in the midst of fear,
pain,
and suffering.**

**Give us love for all people,
especially the most vulnerable,
and help us bear witness
to the truth
that every life is worth living.**

**Grant us the humility
to accept help
when we are in need,
and teach us
to be merciful to all.**

**Through our words and actions,
may others encounter
the outstretched hands
of Your mercy.
We ask this through
Christ, our Lord.
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.

SPIRIT OF HOLY CROSS AWARD:

Congratulations to Chapel Administrative Assistant, Patty Szaniszlo, who was presented with the Spirit of Holy Cross Award. The Award is presented annually by the Priests and Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province, in recognition of lay men and women who carry out the ministry of Holy Cross. Patty was been assisting Father John in the chapel office for over 19 years. Congratulations, Patty. Thank you for being an important part of our Chapel family. You truly live the Holy Cross Spirit. God Bless you.

**FIRST RECONCILIATION:**

Over the course of the next several weeks, many of our second grade children will be receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. This is a moment of great grace for them and for each of us. To meet Jesus in his loving embrace of mercy and forgiveness is an important part of our journey to God, our Father. Let us pray for **Malina Carlino, Joseph Daly,, Reid Fistek, Katelyn Lennon, Braxton Malanaphy, Emmanuel Mascha, Harrison Schwabauer, and Dwan Smith**, and all our second grade children during this special time in their lives. And let us also pray that we will all grow into a deeper appreciation of the blessings of this special sacrament.

PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO CHAPEL FAMILIES:

Through a grant, the Diocese of Cleveland has obtained the wonderful spiritual program called **FORMED**. We are able to participate in this program through St. Francis of Assisi Parish since we lie within their boundaries. **FORMED** has many aspects to it. You can prepare for Sunday Mass by watching an insightful five-minute video by renowned Catholic teachers; you can enjoy a movie with your family that is both nourishing and entertaining; you can enrich your marriage with the award winning video series *Beloved: Finding Happiness in Marriage*; you can help your children grow in character and embrace the beauty and wonder of the Faith; and many more.



FORMED provides amazing content 24/7 for you to grow in your faith. **It's free and easy to register.** Go to stfrancismg.formed.org, click "Register" and enter your name, email address, and desired password; if you have previously registered with **FORMED**, you will need to know or update your password. You can only enter **FORMED** this way. Once you are logged in, you can download the app from the App Store or Google Play Store — just search for **FORMED**. Enjoy.

2021 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS: If you would like a copy of your 2021 Contributions to Our Lady Chapel, please call the chapel office [440-473-3560] and we will be glad to send it out to you. Since many have their own records and do not need to receive this statement, we have found that this is much more economical for us — as good stewards, we are trying to cut postage expenses from a mass mailing. Let us know if you need the statement sent to you and we will be glad to get it to you. Thanks for your understanding.

**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].

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Brother Joseph Annan, C.S.C.
- For Larry Lavelle, brother of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C., who is under hospice care.
- For Kevin Behm
- For Mary Clavin
- For Father José Prado, C.S.C.
- For Jim Fase, uncle of Father Matt Fase, C.S.C.
- For Mark Swencki ['88], brother of Paul Swencki ['85]
- For Helen Sestokas, mother of Transportation Mechanic, Tim Sestokas
- For Joe Norton, father-in-law of Joe Ciuni ['77], and grandfather of Joe ['03], Jane ['04], Tom ['06], and Mike ['08] Ciuni.
- For Mary Grycan, mother of Michael ['96] and Matthew ['99] Grycan, aunt of Gilmour Service Coordinator, Martha Ligas ['09]

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For Thomas ['65] and Carolyn Brigham, and Hannah LeBerteaux ['05], whose homes were destroyed in the Colorado fire.
- For all those suffering from COVID.
- 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 — FEBRUARY 19th:

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] of 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.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

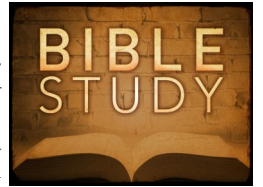
- For Brother Paul Kelly, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie [‘17], Frank [‘18], and Mia [‘19] Nannicola, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Helen Murawski, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For John Visconsi, brother of Tom [‘61] and Tony Visconsi [‘75] and Paulette Poklar, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Sheila Coyne, aunt of Katie Coyne [‘24], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For William Rogal, father of Jill Thompson, who is undergoing rehab following surgery
- For Kelsey Cesar, Yearbook Co-Ordinator, who is recovering from shoulder surgery.
- For Carol Patton, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Cassandra Williams [‘15], sister of Sebastian Williams [‘18] who is undergoing treatment for inoperable cancer.
- 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 undergoing treatment for cancer
- 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, Bonnie DiCillo, and niece of John [‘83], Dawn [‘86], and Dan [‘88] DiCillo and Laurie Duval Muller-Girard [‘81], who is recovering from a bone marrow transplant
- For Ray Gruss who is battling cancer.
- For Mary Curran, mother of Megan [‘10], Carolyn [‘12], and Catherine [‘17] Curran, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 Christine Maharg, mother of Lily Maharg [‘21], who is seriously ill with 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 Karuna Singla, Sister-in-law of Science teacher, Neena Goel, aunt of Nikhil [‘13] and Nupur [‘17] Goel, who is undergoing treatment for bone cancer.
- For Melita Chiacchiarri, mother of Mark [‘94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco [‘96] who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian [‘09], Rosa [‘12] and Edwin [‘17] Heryak, who is seriously ill
- For Tom Podnar, father of Lower School art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, who is awaiting a heart transplant.
- For Father James Caddy, former pastor of St. Francis, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, FEB. 2nd:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, February 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: Holy Cross Spirituality — the Charisms**



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, January 23 3 rd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 24:	NO MASS
Tuesday, January 25:	NO MASS
Wednesday, January 26:	NO MASS
Thursday, January 27:	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, January 28:	NO MASS
Saturday, January 29: 4 th Week in Ordinary Time	NO MASS
Sunday, January 30 4 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

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.



GOD’S CHILDREN:

God does not come to us by way of anything less than love for our enemy. God does not ask about good and evil, because even my good is not good before him. God’s love seeks the enemy and is perfected in the enemy. If it were not for this, none of us could talk about God’s love at all. Apart from this, none of us becomes the child of this God. This is the way Jesus, in his life and death, brought God to us. God’s children are enemies who have been overcome.

— Jürgen Moltmann

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The readings for this 3rd Week in Ordinary Time are all about the power of scripture — the Word of God. Scripture is life giving; it is transformational; it is intended to mold and fashion us into a “holy people” [see 1 Peter 2] who are called to bring hope to a world living in the darkness of sin. But how often we listen to this word of God with “half-hearted” ears.

It’s a big day in Nazareth — Jesus is going to speak in his hometown synagogue. He reads from one of the scrolls, returns the scripture to the attendant, and sits down. Anticipation is at an all-time high. Everybody knows him and his family, but he shocks them with his words [Luke 4:14-21]. They shake their heads — some get up and leave in some agitation.

Luke’s Gospel does not present an “Epiphany” scene such as in Matthew’s Gospel [2:1-12]. For Luke, this manifestation occurs within Jesus’ hometown — a dramatic presentation of the presence of God in the midst of the people. To some, this insertion, this intervention, brings out fear and to others anger. How do we react? Is it with the comfort of our thinking that we “know the Christ”? Or are we challenged anew by the words of God’s presence?

We need to listen to these words of Luke with more than our ears and more deeply than our minds. Jesus has come to speak to our captivity, our blindnesses, and our deeper-than-we-know desires for God’s love. Allowing anybody — even God — to come across our protected thresholds is dangerous, and we too can feel that fear and even an anger about our having such deep needs.

Our Scripture readings for this 3rd Week in Ordinary time begin with the prophet, Nehemiah. Ezra is the prophet’s scribe and he has a big job to do. The people have recently returned from exile and are rebuilding and repopulating their city and country. Ezra gathers the people — including children who are old enough to understand — and reads plainly from the book of the law. As they heard the words Ezra was reading, the people came to realize their sinfulness and began to weep [Nehemiah 8:1-12]. Why are they weeping? Was it because they were confronted with the Law’s demands which they had not obeyed — which resulted in their captivity. Were they weeping because of the pain of being separated from their holy city for such a long period of time? Was it because they realized that they had lost their connectedness with God because of their sinfulness?

Yet, Ezra reassured them of God’s love. Possibly their weeping may have come from sensing the love that God has had for them in bringing them back and giving them a second chance. They might be reflecting upon the first exodus and how God had formed them into a free people and had guided them through the desert to the abundant life which they were encouraged to enjoy. What a powerful reminder to us to listen carefully to the word of God and to always remember the Lord must be our strength. The people begin to celebrate the special bond and relationship that they have with God. They have come to realize that they have responsibilities as a result of being so loved. Their individual freedoms may have been challenged and they would have to surrender their individuality for the sake of the community.

Luke’s Gospel with a greeting to a man named Theophilus — “Lover of God”. Luke is writing more specifically for those of Greek communities — and us — who have heard of the message of the Apostles. Jesus has already spent his time in the Wilderness [see Luke 4:1-11]. He now returns to his home town of Nazareth, renewed and filled with the “Anointing Spirit”. In the synagogue, Jesus stands up to read from the prophet Isaiah [see Isaiah 61], and then he makes a prophetic statement that He Himself is the fulfillment of this prophesy that he has just read [Luke 4:14-21].

The town’s community quickly becomes divided. What we do not hear is how the town’s people — after hearing this — want to drive Him away and kill Him [Luke 4:28-29].

Jesus is laying out His platform — he is telling the people how He intends to live out His calling.

**DID YOU HEAR?**

The older I get, the more I’m convinced that we must constantly be reminded of the basics of our faith. If we don’t, we’ll eventually find ourselves in the same situation the Chosen People experienced during the time of Nehemiah and Ezra. Though they prided themselves on being the people of the covenant, many had forgotten the rules and regulations which comprised the agreement their ancestors had entered into with God. They had no idea what their covenant responsibilities actually were.

Yet, instead of lording their ignorance over them, Nehemiah and Ezra encourage them to celebrate. The day they finally discovered what God wanted them to do was sacred, holy to them and to the Lord. They had started to actually become the people God wanted them to be, living the unique contract that God had made with them.

As a teacher of Scripture, I’ve at times found myself in parallel situations. In helping people return to the beginnings of our faith, I’ve also experienced opening eyes and ears to things some of my fellow Christians never before realized existed. Take, for instance, St. Paul’s 1st Letter to the Church at Corinth.

Many of the Christians I’ve encountered through the years have no idea that we’ve been blessed to be molded into the body of the risen Christ — an essential part of the covenant we’ve made at baptism with Jesus of Nazareth, a responsibility we can’t sluff off or replace with our membership in the Catholic Church. Though most of us are content just to keep our “noses clean” and eventually squeeze into heaven, we forget that because of our baptismal covenant we’ve agreed to carry on the ministry of Jesus and become other Christs [1 Corinthians 12:12-31].

Thankfully Paul of Tarsus clearly understood that responsibility and reminded his Corinthian community about it. Since no one person can carry on Christ’s ministry by herself or himself, we constantly must join together with the other “gifted” people Paul spoke about. Each of us plays a part — no one’s contribution is insignificant. Christ’s body isn’t whole if any gift — no matter how “small” — is left out.

A sign we’ve forgotten this essential aspect of our faith has been the Catholic practice of referring to priests alone as other Christs. I certainly presume priests can be other Christs, but they became such not on the day of their ordination, but on the day of their baptism.

When Luke’s Jesus announces: “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21], is he speaking about what he historically is doing, or is he referring to himself as the risen Christ? The majority of Scripture scholars believe it’s the latter. The only Jesus our evangelist experienced was the risen Jesus. That means Luke is talking about the body of Christ that Paul spoke about.

Notice, Luke’s Jesus doesn’t say: “I’m fulfilling this Scripture passage;” rather he says: “It’s being fulfilled.” That seems to imply the people reading these words are helping in that fulfillment. All of us are bringing the glad tidings, liberating captives, giving sight to the blind, freeing the oppressed, and proclaiming a “holy” year. If we’re not willing to help, God’s word will never be fulfilled.

In one form or another, Christianity’s been around for more than 2,000 years — far longer than our original ancestors in the faith thought it would take to evangelize the world. Perhaps one of the reasons for the delay comes from the fact that many of us accidentally threw away or lost Jesus’ original plans. As the late Ed Hays frequently reminded us: “Jesus’ original followers imitated him long before they worshiped him.” Could we create some place in the liturgy to quote Ed at least once a month? It could easily become one of our essentials we forget.

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

GUARD YOUR HEART:

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

—Proverbs 4:23.



LIVING IN THE SPIRIT:

Few expressions so succinctly summarize what is asked of us as Christians as does the expression: “to live in the Spirit.” Too often, however, this phrase is used in a way that is too pious, too over-charged with charismatic fervor, or too theologically abstract to have much meaning for ordinary people. It may well summarize Christian life, but it can also be little more than a very vague platitude. What does it mean “to live in the Spirit?”

St. Paul, in attempting to specify this, is anything but piously deluded or theologically abstract. Rather he speaks with a clarity that leaves almost no room for vagueness or false sentiment. He begins by a certain “via negative” — telling us that, if in our lives there is “lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factionalism, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like”, then we are not living in the spirit, pure and simple. Conversely, we are living in the spirit when, in our lives, there is “charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity” [see Galatians 5].

This is a valuable insight because, if we take Paul’s words seriously, we can never delude ourselves into identifying true life in the Spirit with what it is so often confused with false piety and over-privatized sentiment and confrontation out of hurt, paranoia, and narrow loyalties. When the fruits of the Spirit are absent — irrespective of how spiritually confident and self-righteous we might feel or how right our cause might seem — then the Spirit too is absent. We must be clear about this. The Spirit is present only when “charity, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, and chastity” are deeply in our lives — and permeate the air around us.

The Holy Spirit — as classically defined in theology — is “the love between the God and Christ, the Father and the Son.” It is in meditating this concept that we come to some understanding of what it means to live in the Spirit. Let me try to elaborate on this by using an image — that of romantic love in its peak fervor.

Imagine a man and a woman who are deeply, passionately, and completely in love. What will characterize their relationship? It is a constant giving and receiving, resulting in an ever deeper relationship and an ever intensifying gratitude — which will leave them both, daily, feeling ever more mellow, joyful, peaceful, mild, patient, chaste, and wanting to reach out and share with others what is so quickening in their own lives. Moreover, their love for each other will create around them, an ambience — a climate or atmosphere — of charity, joy, peace, patience, mildness, and chastity. The movement of giving-and-receiving-in-gratitude between them will create a warm hearth where others will spontaneously come to seek warmth in a world which offers too little peace, patience, joy, and the like.

Such a relationship can be a modest indicator for what happens in the Trinity — of how the Father and the Son generate the Spirit, and what results from this generation. The Father constantly creates and gives life. The Son receives life from the Father and gives it back in gratitude. This then — as is true in all relationships wherein gift is received lovingly — makes it possible for the Father to give even more to the Son. As this flow of life — this giving and receiving — goes on, gratitude intensifies and an energy, a spirit, the Holy Spirit, is exists.

This Spirit — since it is generated by gratitude — is naturally a Spirit of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, and chastity. Also, it is a spirit that is naturally incompatible with idolatry, adultery, violence, gossip, factionalism, jealousy, rage, and infidelity.

When we meditate on how the Holy Spirit is generated, we are under less illusion as to what it means to live in the Spirit. To believe that we are living in the Spirit when our lives are not permeated by, and radiating, gratitude is to be dangerously deluded. We must be clear about this, lest, as poet William Stafford puts it: “Following the wrong God home, we may both miss our star.”

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



The listeners would be familiar with this passage from Isaiah — they have been waiting for the coming of the person foretold. But they cannot believe that Jesus, Son of Joseph, whom they knew, could accept the newness of a person whom they thought also that they knew.

Students — both High School and College — have recently begun their new semester. Teachers and professors have been outlining for the students exactly what is going to be required. It can all seem a bit overwhelming to know what lies ahead in terms of home work. The students know that their teachers and professors are going to make them work, learn, suffer and eventually grow and deepen.

The Divine Professor wants to tell us what He is going to do for us. Throughout the course of Ordinary Time, we are going to hear Him and His doings. What He will be doing and offering us will be intended to deepen us, change us, and mold us into our being His Disciples. We will not always like what we hear, and because of captivities and blindnesses, we will be forced to admit and confront that within us which needs healing. It is one more year “acceptable to the Lord.” These are meant to be “glad tidings”, but we can love our prisons, our resistance to seeing and we won’t find them “glad tidings” at all.

As we go on this journey, we all need to remember that it is very easy to become accustomed to what we already know and how we behave — we do not want anything new. That is the very reason why Jesus was driven out of His home town and eventually out of the city of Jerusalem. And that is why we are tempted to drive Him out of our own little personal temples.

We pray for a spirit of excitement that each of our days is “holy” because the Lord is more present to us than we are to ourselves. Today is holy — a sacrament, an Epiphany, a Jesus-wink. Let us pray that we are able to hear it, see it, and taste it for what it is. May we dip a little deeper into the more central mystery of ourselves, and find the place where God’s grace is already laboring to comfort us.

—edited from the writings of Mary Lee Brock and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

LIVING IN THE AGE OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS:

Isaiah the prophet proclaimed the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, the “anointed” one. The Lord knows who he is, not simply because he is a good Jew, but with every fiber of his divine Personhood — he is the God-man, the divine Messiah foretold and exalted by the holy prophets. The Lord reads the words of Isaiah to the assembly in the synagogue with the purpose of declaring the truth of his divine-human personhood.

The Messiah’s characteristics are revealed above all in the “Servant songs” of Isaiah — see Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52, and 61. These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus’ Passion and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many — not as an outsider, but by embracing our “form as slave” [see Philippians 2:7]. Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life.

This is why Christ inaugurates the proclamation of the Good News by making his own the words of Isaiah — The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor [Isaiah 61:1-2].

Isaiah’s words directly concern the sending of the Holy Spirit as an oracle by which God speaks to the heart of his people in the language of the promise, with the accents of “love and fidelity. St. Peter will proclaim their fulfillment on the morning of Pentecost [Acts 2:17-21]. The Lord’s Spirit will renew the hearts of all people, engraving a new law in them. He will gather and reconcile the scattered and divided peoples — he will transform the first creation, and God will dwell there with people in peace.

We live out our love for the Lord when we confidently declare that he is Lord and God to all we meet. Others will know we love them if we declare the divinity of the Savior — he who alone can forgive our sins, heal us and raise us up to holiness and joy.

—taken from the writings of Father Kevin Cusick which appear on the internet.

WE COME TOGETHER TO LISTEN TO THE BOOK:

We have a more than usually interesting situation in the Scripture Readings for this 3rd Week in Ordinary Time. Both Luke and Nehemiah take us right to the heart of Jewish worship. In the Book of Nehemiah, we hear the prophet Ezra, standing before the assembled congregation and presenting to them with the book of the law [Nehemiah 8:1-4,6,8-12]. This book had been lost with the destruction of the temple and was recently rediscovered when they began cleaning away the rubble to begin building a new temple. With that new temple, the people would also begin to build a new life, and what better way to start than by listening in prayer to what God had asked them to do? The people stood in the typical Jewish attitude of prayer with arms held high, and then when the reading was ended they prostrated themselves on the ground before the Lord and pledged to carry out all that the Lord required of them.

In Luke's Gospel, we find ourselves part of a typical Jewish synagogue service. Jesus is not only the lector for the day, but he is also the homilist. Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah. The people sit and listen. He then gives his interpretation of what they have heard, and the people respond [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21].

What happened in that ancient Jewish assembly, and what happened in the synagogue in Nazareth, are not very different from what happens in our Liturgy of the Word. The same pattern is at the heart of our worship — the word is proclaimed and interpreted in an assembly. And during those two actions, it is listened to, clung to, and savored.

And so, each and every week when we gather to share Eucharist together, we come to the moment when the assembly sits and the reader stands with the book open. It should be for us a moment of delight. Wherever we come from that morning, whatever the troubles, whatever the aches and pains, whatever the worries, whatever the preoccupations, somehow, we all need to get caught up into listening to this book.



What kind of a church is going to listen well to its book? One with no worries? Or one full of the struggles of everyday life? The truth is this: we who come here are hungry individuals, needy people, and when we are all together, we are a hungry church. The words of this book are our food and drink. We sit down and the reader opens the book, and the church is nourished.

How is the congregation nourished in that synagogue in Nazareth? Jesus is full of the spirit. He stands in continuity with the past by reading from Isaiah [see Isaiah 61], and he gives the people assurance that God has been faithful to God's promises — that in him what the prophet had said hundreds of years before has come to pass. His mission, his program, his vocation will be to do what the prophet says — to bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, give sight to the blind, release prisoners, announce a year of favor from the Lord. A year of favor is the Jubilee year when debts were forgiven, enemies were reconciled, and there was a new start for everyone. Jesus' words are words of encouragement for the people, words of compassion, of understanding, and of love.

And, of course, Jesus did not just talk about it — He went out and did it.

In his letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul tells us that we are the body of Christ [1 Corinthians 12:12-31]. Now that is not just a fanciful image. It is the expression of a reality. We are all united as one body with Christ as our head. And just as in the body what affects one member affects all, so, too, with us. If I break my leg or have a heart attack, my whole body's functioning is impaired. So, too, if something bad happens to one of us, it happens to all of us and if something good happens to one of us it happens to all of us. And since we are the body of Christ, those actions that we heard in the Gospel, and which describe Christ's mission, describe us as well.

That should make us pause and ponder — how do we as a local church embody those aspects of Jesus' ministry? How do we experience our actions as grounded in the Spirit? How well do we

All are different. Everyone is necessary. Together we each have our roles in the Grand Plan — God's plan of love for his people. Together we constitute the vehicle for God's plan. Together we make God's plan a reality. Together we make up the Body of Christ [1 Corinthians 12:12-31].

We should never think that our role is insignificant. We should never think that our part is too little. We should never reduce ourselves to a number. The Body of Christ needs every part, every person, to fulfill his or her role in life so that God's plan can triumph over the powers of evil. Perhaps, you work hard to make a life with your husband or wife; you spend endless hours molding your children, you wonder what part your checking over fifth grade math homework has in the grand scheme of your life. The love, the care, and the encouragement you give to that fifth grader helps him or her become the person God created your child to be.

Perhaps, you are no longer working — in fact retired for so long that you happily forget what it was like to get up for work every day. You go about your routine the best you can, interrupting your week with a visit to this or that doctor, or two visits, or more. You wonder what part your life has in God's plan. You forget that those younger than you are looking to you for wisdom and understanding and an example of a living Christianity.

Perhaps, you aren't married, you aren't retired, and you wonder, what significance can there be to your life? How do you treat people? Do they see you as a Christian in the way you approach your life and in the way you respect their lives? Do you reach out to others in their needs with your time? Do you give an example of Christ's love? Why would you doubt the significance of your role in God's plan? Perhaps, you are young and in school. Maybe you are a child in grade school or a Teen in high school or a young adult in college. You have tons of homework and wonder why you should take it so seriously. What does this have to do in the Grand Scheme? If you do your best to realize your potential, to become all you can become, then you will be able to fulfill the role that the Body needs you to fulfill. More than this: if you work as a Christian, if you fight off selfishness and are determined to be good to others, then you will be fulfilling the particular role that God has set aside for you right now.

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

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

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

**CHILDREN'S BULLETINS:**

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

Children's Worship
Bulletin ☀

SPIRITUAL READING:

Spiritual reading is not only reading about spiritual people or spiritual things. It is also reading spiritually — that is, in a spiritual way! Reading in a spiritual way is reading with a desire to let God come closer to us. The purpose of spiritual reading is not to master knowledge or information, but to let God's Spirit master us. Strange as it may sound, spiritual reading means to let ourselves be read by God! Spiritual reading is reading with an inner attentiveness to the movement of God's Spirit in our outer and inner lives. With that attentiveness, we will allow God to read us and to explain to us what we are truly about.

languages and through different activities, each of us who follow Christ are invited to live the truth that “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.”

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

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?

“So what is it that you have to offer?” Tom Ryan asked me that question after he had heard enough of my bellyaching. Tom was a fellow seminarian back when I was in Don Bosco Seminary in the late 60’s. I had been complaining to Tom that after three months, it was clear to me that I was not going to be accepted by my classmates. I was in my third year of seminary, but because of previous education that I had, my third year began with me being placed with a different group of seminarians than my first two years. Now some of these fellows had been together seven or eight years. Here I was, a new-comer. It is not that people were mean to me. I just didn’t feel like part of the group. I was close friends, though, with Tom Ryan and could complain to him. Only, he didn’t want to hear it. Instead he said: “So what is it that you have given to the group to be accepted by the group?” It all set me thinking. Nothing really — at least not yet.

But the track meet was only about four months away. Back in those days, we had over two hundred seminarians. One of the highlights of the year was the interclass track meet — an all-day event followed by a huge victory party. My new class had gotten close to winning the previous year and come in second or a close third. So, I thought about it. Tom was right. I couldn’t run fast, but I could run long, and the final event was always the cross country run. So I ran every day. I worked hard and was able to get some points for our team. We won by one point. My effort didn’t win the day — it was just part of the overall effort of our class. But we did win. From that point on, I was thoroughly accepted by the other guys, and even found myself elected to represent them.

We are all part of a grand event. We each have a role to play in this event. What is your role? What is my role? How well do we play our part? So what is it that you have to offer?

The event is grand. It is no less than the re-creation of the world. The first words of Luke’s Gospel are the introduction to the entire Gospel of Luke. These four lines are written in a highly artistic style — in classical Greek, not the common everyday Greek of the rest of the Gospel and New Testament. Most probably the first draft of this Gospel placed these words exactly where they are today — directly before Jesus’ first sermon in the Synagogue in Nazareth. [Remember, the Lucan infancy narratives, the Lucan Christmas story, are all later additions to Luke’s Gospel — written after the Gospel, and then added by the Lucan community].

Let me paraphrase this: “O Lover of God, O Theophilus, many have written narratives of what has happened. I also did a detailed study to present these events accurately, and in a way for you to understand the significance of what has happened. Jesus returned to Galilee after his baptism by John in the power of the Holy Spirit. He went to the local Synagogue and read the passage about the Spirit of God” [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21].

That passage from Isaiah prophesied a time when the Spirit of God would come upon the Chosen One. People would experience the Messiah’s presence in the healing of the blind and the proclamation of the good news to the poor. “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” — The New World has begun.

And we are part of this — you and I. What is it that we each have to offer? We each have unique gifts and talents. Some are prophets, apostles, healers, teachers, mothers, fathers, priests, ministers, artists, handymen, care givers, engineers, mechanics, accountants, investors, service men and women. Some are health care workers, others protectors of legal rights. Some design buildings, others build them.



understand the history of the Jewish people as our heritage, too? How does our mission in terms of where we spend our time, energy and money, extend beyond the walls of our church? How would we act if we saw ourselves as Luke has Jesus do, as the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world because if we are the body of Christ, that is what we are, the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world.

How then, concretely, practically speaking can we be the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world? When as mothers and fathers we raise our children with love, giving them good example and teaching them to love one another and to spread that love beyond the family, we are the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world. When we welcome strangers and make them feel comfortable and at home in our midst, we are the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world. When we give food and clothing to the hungry and homeless who come to us for help, when we offer them words of encouragement and hope and aid them in the difficult task of getting their lives in order, we are the fulfillment of God’s promises to the world.

St. Augustine has a beautiful passage which links all of this together with what we do each time we come to the Eucharist. He says: “If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and his members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord’s table. You receive your mystery in Holy Communion. You reply ‘Amen’ to that which you are, and by giving you consent. For you hear: ‘The body of Christ,’ and you reply: ‘Amen.’ Be a member of the body of Christ, so that your ‘Amen’ may be true.”

—taken from the writings of Father Leo Murray, which appear on the internet

DISCOVERING THE WAY OF THE LORD:

The Scripture Readings for this 3rd Week in Ordinary Time are all about God’s plan. Ezra reads aloud the entire book of the law — God ordinances for his people [Nehemiah 8:1-4,6,8-12]. St. Paul writes about God giving us different gifts so we would work together [1 Corinthians 12:12-31]. And Luke in the preface to his Gospel says that he wants to write things down “in an orderly sequence” [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21]. St. Paul calls Luke “the beloved physician” [see Colossians 4:14]. As a medical doctor, Luke knows the importance of having a plan not just for writing a Gospel, but to achieve health and strength.

God has a plan individually for you and me, as well as a plan for us together. Knowing this invites us to ask ourselves: “God, what do want of us? What are your priorities and goals?”

We don’t start from scratch. We know from the Bible and twenty centuries of Christian reflection that God creates us for his glory. Each of us reflects some aspect of God’s goodness, beauty, power and wisdom. He means for us to use those gifts for the common good — ultimately for the salvation of souls.

Someday this world will turn to dust. The world will fall apart, but the humblest soul will endure. Where you and I spend eternity carries more weight than all the wars, elections and stock markets. God makes us for his glory and for eternal salvation. That’s his overall plan.

But what specifically does God want you and me to do? What does he want for our Church community? We can learn a lot from Luke. Spontaneity has its place, but if we don’t form a plan, we won’t get very far. We all know people who have big ideas, but they go nowhere. They never get started. They prefer to do whatever makes them feel good and whatever eases their pain. Let’s be honest — from time to time you and I do the same. It doesn’t bring great results. To really achieve something great, we need discipline, a plan.

Now, doing God’s plan is more than gritting one’s teeth and going through the motions. We can make a new beginning with God’s plan. But it takes discernment and prayer. We all need to ask God: “What is your plan for me? What is your will for me? As the Psalmist reminds us: “The law of the Lord is perfect; it refreshes the soul” [Psalm 19:7].

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

SOUND ADVICE:

Surrender to what is; let go of what was; have faith in what will be.



JUSTICE UP THE RIVER:

There is a significant difference between charity and justice. Both are part of the teaching of Jesus. Both are a part of our Catholic faith. But we — like most Christians — are much better at charity than at justice, and we may not even be aware of the difference.

Harry Fagan — who was one of the pioneers of social action in our Cleveland diocese back in the sixties — had a favorite story which he would tell frequently to draw out the difference between charity and justice. It was a story about a small Christian village located by a broad river. One day as the people in that village were busy doing their various tasks, a body floated down the river. When they saw it, they retrieved it and gave it a reverent burial, because they were good Christian people. The next day another body floated down the river, and they did the same. As the days passed, more and more bodies kept floating down the river. So, they bought a boat and put guards at the river so that nobody would escape their notice and each body could be reverently buried. As the days passed on, some wounded people began floating down the river clinging on debris. So again, being a Christian community, they retrieved these people and brought them to the hospital. They expanded their hospitals and in time provided retraining for those who had been wounded, so that they could earn a good living.

After a number of years, almost the entire village was engaged in caring for the dead and the wounded. The mayor decided to call a meeting to see if there was anything more that they could do. A few suggestions were brought up, but almost everyone believed that they were doing all that they could for those who were in need. Then, just before they were ready to dismiss the meeting, a young man raised his hand and said: “I know we are doing a very good job caring for the dead and the wounded. But don’t you think we should send some people to go and find out what’s happening up the river?”

At this point Harry Fagan would stop and say: “That small Christian village is like a typical Catholic parish — very good at some things — very good at burying the dead, of caring for the sick, of ministering to those who are hurting — very good at charity. But it is not so good at going up the river — at finding out why those bodies keep floating down, and seeing if there could be anything we could do to stop them. We are not as good at justice.”

Now doing justice is not easy. But it is essential if we wish to follow Jesus. In our Catholic tradition, this truth was expressed in the clearest way in 1971 when the bishops of the world met and issued a document in which they said that working for justice and contributing to the transformation of the world is a constitutive part of preaching the gospel. That is an involved way of saying that, if we want to be disciples of Jesus, if we want to really follow what he preaches, we must go up the river. We must try to find out the reasons that the bodies keep floating down and see if there is something we can do to stop them.

The bishops of the world were not making up some new dimension of Catholicism. They were merely following the teaching of Jesus presented so clearly in Luke’s gospel [1:1-4, 4:14-21]. In this great scene from Luke, Jesus comes to the synagogue at Nazareth and gives us his mission statement — the purpose of his ministry. When he defines his purpose, he does not say that he plans to teach people to pray — although he in fact does that with his disciples. He does not say that we should love one another — although he certainly believes that we should. What Jesus does is find a passage from the prophet Isaiah [see Isaiah 61] that says that he is called to proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and to set those who are oppressed free. Jesus’ mission is about justice — it’s about going up the river, discovering the structures that oppress people and trying to free them.

We, of course, are called to follow him. Doing justice is not easy. It is much easier to help the elderly lady on our street by cutting her grass than to explore the reasons why she cannot find adequate healthcare. It is much simpler to feed the person who is hungry than to try to discover the structures that



WHO AM I?

What if you were asked to choose a word, an image, or a passage of Scripture to summarize who you are and want to be? What might you choose? High school seniors sometimes choose the phrase they want under their picture in the yearbook. Their grandparents might complete this exercise by planning their funerals. Others make identity statements with tattoos. Reciting the creed, singing and praying are also expressions of our identity.

Jesus chose the context of a Sabbath liturgy to describe himself and his mission to his hometown folk [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21]. As Luke tells the story, this happened after Jesus had begun his public life. Before he went to the synagogue in Nazareth, he had been baptized, spent time in the desert, and was getting a reputation in Galilee as a preacher and healer. One wonders what he and others expected as he stood before his neighbors, now not the craftsman son of Joseph, but a public preacher whose reputation got back home before he did.

Until that moment, one of the few unusual things that his neighbors noted about Jesus was that he had never married. John the Baptist or the Essenes could have been his models for celibacy, but Jesus didn’t adopt John’s austere lifestyle or the separated, communal life of the Essenes. Biblical scholar José Antonio Pagola suggests that Jesus remained celibate because his passion for the reign of God required all his emotional energy.

Historical data suggests that Jesus was close to 30 years of age when he began his public ministry. That was about an average lifespan in his time, indicating that he was at least middle-aged when he began this phase of his vocation. His family and friends must have wondered what had happened, what caused the conversion that led him to the mission he announced in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Jesus’ announcement, short as it was, gives us the interpretative key to the rest of his life. The first line sets the tone for everything that would come: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Perhaps more than other evangelists, Luke emphasizes the Spirit’s movement in Jesus and in the life of the people. We have already heard of the Spirit’s involvement with Jesus’ conception and birth. The Spirit descended on Jesus at the baptism and led him to the desert. Throughout his life, every one of Jesus’ actions and decisions flowed from what he believed the Spirit was leading him to do.

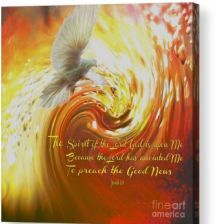
By quoting Isaiah [see Isaiah 61] and identifying with the anointed one, Jesus might have been referring to expectations about a coming Messiah. What we should note is that Jesus does not simply say he has been anointed, but that he was anointed for the purpose of bringing glad tidings to the poor. From the beginning, he avoids being proclaimed as the Messiah and describes his mission as being sent to bring glad tidings to the poor.

This theme, begun by his mother in her Magnificat, remained a core characteristic of the Gospel. The Spirit of God leads Jesus to minister to the poor, and to call his followers to do the same. This will be his definition of what it means to be Messiah.

Jesus chose this passage from Isaiah to explain who he was called to be and what he intended to do. He would carry it out in relationships with people from all strata of society, by healing, preaching, forgiving, teaching and calling others to follow him. He did not demand that all his followers become impoverished or itinerant preachers. He did demand that they put others first, stop vying for first place and serve people on the margins and he knew they could do so in a variety of ways.

This brings us to Paul’s famous passage about the body of Christ. Neither Paul nor Jesus expected that all who would be Christian should be and act or even worship in the same way. In fact, Paul emphasizes the vital importance of diversity. As he says, each is a part of the body of Christ, gifted by the Spirit to bring something unique to the world. This applies to individuals as well as communities and cultures.

The Scripture Readings for this 3rd Week in Ordinary time invite us first to contemplate Jesus in his own discernment and acceptance of his vocation — his developing identity. Then, aware that every vocation grows and changes, we are invited to ask the Spirit to continue to reveal our path to us. Doing that will lead us to recognize the gifts we have been given and how to use them. In the end, in different



God always finds us. He does not want us to stay lost. He sends messengers, servants, prophets, teachers, signs, promptings, and witnesses to get our attention so that His message can be delivered. Yet repeatedly, pride and arrogance convince us that we can do anything and everything without Him. Perhaps by setting pride and arrogance aside, we might recognize something deeper about ourselves and see just how lost we really are. We will see what binds us and our sinfulness. God wants to release us from all of that baggage! Not only that, but God wants to release us from what centuries of human baggage has caused — world organizational systems and accepted standards of operating that continue to keep people poor, oppressed, captive, and blind to truth. We need to be freed not only from what we are doing to ourselves, but from what we are doing to others!

We do not have to look far to see the devastation. Anger, frustration, starvation, and violence are widespread in our nation and worldwide. Places once known to be safe are now places of anxiety and fear. Division, corruption, and exploitation exist within all institutions. People are confused over who they are and what true happiness means. Wars are waged, and more violence continues to be threatened. God’s creation is hurting. It’s looking more like what we created than what God has entrusted to our care. Human life as a sacred gift from God has become an increasingly unpopular truth. Corruption and exploitation exist at the highest levels and “sins of the flesh” run rampant. We fail to accurately calculate the devastating cost to humans across the world and throughout all generations.

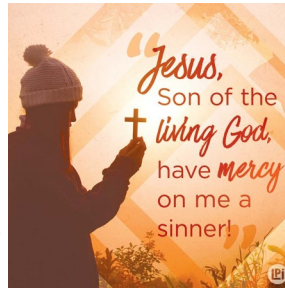
Are we ready to let go of the control? Of the need to be right? Of the need to be ruggedly independent? We cannot live without God’s Mercy, His unconditional, eternal, and ever-present love. We do not always get it right; the world does not get it right. The world is like a washing machine stuck on the spin cycle, relentlessly rotating, never quite getting where it needs to be. It forgets what it is supposed to do. It doesn’t work. It is broken.

God, as Emmanuel, came into the brokenness of our world to help us fix it. The followers of Jesus, baptized in Christ and made in God’s image and likeness, have yet to learn that to be a servant, one must share. Here’s a true story: A woman visiting friends went to the local parish for early Sunday Mass. She proceeded to sit in a pew and in short order received a tap on her shoulder. “Excuse me, you are in my seat. Can you please move?” She got up and went to another pew. Beginning to pray and prepare for Mass, she receives another tap on the shoulder with the same request. “Excuse me, you are in my seat. Can you please move?” What is this, she thought to herself? She got up and moved again. Feeling a bit perturbed at this point, she was astonished when the exact same scenario happened a third time!

What happened to the woman in this story is a microcosm of exactly what is wrong with our world. These “people of God” who asked this woman to move believed they were doing nothing wrong. This stranger encroached on space believed to be rightfully theirs. After all, they are the regular, faithful contributors to this parish and are, thus, entitled to reserved seating, right?

Wrong. Entitlement has become one of our most significant problems and sins. We have become entitled to entitlement! In God’s kingdom, nobody is entitled to a seat — yet all are seated. Isn’t that wonderful? Maybe that is what the first hearers of Jesus’ proclamation in the synagogue understood — that everyone has a place. No one is without a seat and what we do in the small matters of our lives affects how the big ones play out. While we may not have directly exacerbated the plight of someone suffering in another part of the world, we can easily be responsible for making someone in our community feel unwelcome, unappreciated, and unloved. All actions and attitudes are connected to the whole, resulting in a ripple effect on life beyond our comprehension. Until we understand the meaning of love and grasp our reluctance at times to receive it, we will remain tethered and aimlessly spinning. We stay broken and lost. Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner!

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



prevent that person from feeding his or her own family. It is easier to visit the prisoner in jail than to try to discover the reasons for violence and despair in our society that populate our jails with a disproportionate number of the poor and disenfranchised.

Doing justice is difficult and messy. It calls us to get involved in politics and economics and environmental science and sociology — all areas where religious people are not often welcome. But we must be there, because we are called by Christ to contribute to the transformation of our society.

So how do we do justice? Three simple steps: learn, pray, act. We must learn what the issues are, how people are oppressed by poverty and injustice. There are also many things that can be read, so many ways to educate ourselves. But once we identify injustice in our midst, the next step is to pray, to ask what God is calling us to do. Then when we see an opportunity, we act. Write a letter. Talk to someone. Make a contribution. Do something that is going to help society change for the better. That is what justice calls us to do.

Doing justice is not easy. But neither is it optional for those who follow Jesus. For Jesus calls us to go up the river, to discover the causes of injustice and to work to change the structures that support them. Yes, we are called to love one another. But we are also called to do justice, to contribute to the transformation of our world.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

- Monday:** 2 Samuel 5:1-10, Mark 3:22-30
- Tuesday:** Acts 22:3-16, Mark 16:15-18
- Wednesday:** 2 Samuel 7:4-17, Mark 4:1-20
- Thursday:** 2 Samuel 7:18-29, Mark 4:21-25
- Friday:** 2 Samuel 11:1-17, Mark 4:26-34
- Saturday:** 2 Samuel 12:1-17, Mark 4:35-41

4th Week in Ordinary Time: Jeremiah 1:4-19, 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13, Luke 4:21-30

CHAPEL ENVELOPES:

Over the course of COVID-19, many people have been mailing in donations to the chapel. Now that we have begun to assemble again, many are also looking to replace their envelope supply. We really appreciate this, as our collections are obviously way down. **If you would like us to send you a supply of envelopes, please call Father John or Patty at [473-3560], and we will get them right out to you..**

WEEKLY OFFERING:

Thank you to those who have begun to send in weekly offerings. We really appreciate it. Here are the offerings that we have received throughout **the week prior to July 18-19.** Thanks for not forgetting about us.

Offerings-----[Saturday, January 15]-----[Weekly Mail-in] ----- \$ 670.00
Offerings-----[Sunday, January 16]----- \$ 500.00

EXAMPLE:

Act in such a manner that you are living proof of a loving God.

HOW I HAVE OVERCOME MY CHALLENGES WITH GOD’S HELP:

My name is Anya. I was born and raised Catholic. With God, I have overcome a lot of struggles in life. When I was just a very little girl I was diagnosed with Autism [Asperger’s] and cognitive delay. Having this condition made it very hard for me to make friends or even communicate with people, because I didn’t know how to explain things verbally.

Well, I am one of those kids who always loved God — no matter what was to happen. But at times I would get very stressed at my family for doing something that would make me very angry. I would freak out. My family calls this my “meltdowns.” The older I got, I realized that it was still hard for me — there still were situations that made me angry; but now I began to realize that I had a God that I could pray to for help. God is my friend so I can talk to him.

It was very hard for me to make friends because I didn’t have very good social skills. One time, when I was in 6th grade, I heard about LifeTeen Mass and youth group. I knew some of my siblings went and sort-of wanted to go, but I was afraid that it might not be “my thing”. I didn’t really like to be separated from my mom and she knew the only way she could get me to go — because she really wanted me to go — was if she went with me. So my mom started helping out at youth group, so that I would attend.

I felt worried because I didn’t have any friends at youth group, but I kept on going back because I wanted to grow in my faith. As I kept on going, I started to make friends. As the months went on, I knew that saying okay to trying out youth group was a good thing — not just did it help me to make friends, but I learned more about my faith.

Another time I overcame a challenge was when I went to the Franciscan University of Steubenville Youth Conference and I wanted to go to Confession. I knew that I would not know any of the priests there, and that made me very nervous about going. I was scared because it would be a priest that I have never been to, and up until then — because of my issues — I only would go to confession if I knew the priest. My mom would always go first to confession, and explain my issues to the priest — that decreased my anxiety and fear. But now I was petrified.

Well I prayed about it. I just said to God: “God, I trust in You. If this is what I need to do to be happy, then I need the grace to go.” I was hoping the line would not go fast because I didn’t want it to be my turn. All of a sudden it was my turn — and there I went. The next minute, I realized that I just went to confession! I felt so great after that, and I realized that it doesn’t matter who the priest is because it is Jesus sitting there in front of me, and Jesus is happy that I went to confession. He realized that what I did was wrong, and He wanted to have those sins gone, and for me to be happy again. That was all that mattered. Since then I can just walk into any confession now and not be afraid.

Another great challenge for me is school. Between my cognitive delay and my Autism, school has been very difficult for me. Around the middle of freshman year, I was thinking about how I wanted to go to college to do something with photography — or working with children. But I was really struggling because I wanted to be successful. I wanted to go to college, but with school being so hard already for me, how could I ever pass college?

So what did I do? I prayed to Jesus Christ. I just talked to him. I was like: “God, you know what is the best for me, and I know that you have a plan for me. So please give me a sign of what I should do.” I prayed that constantly, and one day I realized that I don’t need college to go far in life. All I need to do is something that made me happy. I took photography classes at my school, and my sister, Katya, and I started our own business called **Puzzle Pieces Photography**. We specialize in “special needs photography.” Through this decision, God showed me how I can be a big help in other people’s lives because — since I have Autism and sensory stuff — I know first-hand how people with those issues react. So I use my love for children and photography is a good way.



St. Gemma says: “If you really want to love Jesus, first learn to suffer because suffering teaches you to love.” Justin Fatica — from the band **Hard as Nails** — explains it this way: “God allows us pain to teach us to depend on Him. Those who have handicap, challenges and mountains to climb, give Jesus Christ the chance to be victorious. We’re not victims — we are victorious with Jesus one person at a time. We will share memorable and powerful messages that Christ came, not for those who have it all together, but to take impossible situations make them possible.”

With all of the struggles I have faced, it helped me to love God even more than I did before. God lets me struggle and have to climb mountains to get to Him. When I can’t manage my struggles, I have learned to depend on him.

When I get frustrated, I have to find a way out the problem. That is the same way I think of a real mountain. When you climb a mountain, you may come upon a big rock. You have a problem to solve — find a way to get passed it to continue to the top. The top I am trying to get to is Heaven, and I can’t go to Heaven if I don’t love God and work on my struggles. I learned that Jesus is my friend, so He will listen to what I have to say. He takes what I think are impossible situations and makes them possible. Part of making them possible is working on them myself — but also remembering to ask God for strength to continue.

—written by Anya Rosien, a high school student, at the encouragement of the Bible Geek

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

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



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



THE SPIN CYCLE

Jesus came into this world to show us God’s kind, beautiful, suffering face. God, who cares deeply about the poor, the captives, the blind, and oppressed is truly a servant-God. God — majestic in His transcendence — is also tender in His immanence. God is the God of the journey who never leaves His people. God simply waits. Generation after generation has wandered and fumbled to find their way. As we continue to stumble over the “gods” we create and often prefer, God simply reminds us that He is here.

What was the reaction when Jesus stood in front of those assembled in the synagogue when he said: “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing?” [Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21]. Some may have thought he was presumptuous, arrogant, or even insane. Others who listened more with their hearts than their heads may have thought differently. They could have experienced the genuine, perfect, and unconditional love that resonated in his flesh and knew, without a doubt, that they were in the presence of someone wonderful and remarkable.

Jesus is the ultimate and perfect testament to God’s love. His actions and words give witness to this truth. St. Augustine tells us what this love looks like — “It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men.” Love finds its pinnacle in Jesus’ complete and humble offering of himself on the cross. This is where Love’s sacrifice and transformation meet. This wedding of death and life reveals the mystery of God’s unconditional love and mercy. These are the signs for which human beings are constantly looking. Only God, through the gift of eternal life, can give life meaning.