

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer to Know Myself ~**

O God,  
you have searched me  
and you know me  
better than I know myself.

From the womb,  
You have been nearer to me  
than my mother or father.  
You know the inner workings  
of my heart,  
my deceit and faithlessness,  
my love and fear,  
my hope and desire.

You dwell within me  
with an abiding presence,  
and my prayer to you  
is more natural than breathing.

Yet do I hide from you;  
yet to I run away  
from your presence,  
and each time  
I run away as well  
from my very self.

Bring me home,  
O God.  
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.*

**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 [stfrancisgm.formed.org](http://stfrancisgm.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. Please contact Father John if you have any questions.

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK:**

The annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week provides an opportunity for the Catholic community in Northeast Ohio to celebrate the role of Catholic education as an important, integral part of the evangelizing mission of the Church. The mission of our schools is to form students to love God and neighbor, to be good servant citizens of the world and to enrich our society with the good news of the Gospel by the example of our faith. I believe our schools strengthen our students for their journey through life until they fulfill their eternal destiny of becoming saints.



Our Catholic schools are academically excellent and focused on the growth of the whole person: mind, body and spirit. I am proud of the work our school leaders, administrators, teachers, staff, and parents have done to provide our young people with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in life and the values needed for everlasting life in the kingdom to come. I am especially grateful for the hard work and dedication of everyone associated with Catholic education in our diocese to ensure our schools have remained open and safe throughout the pandemic.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week this year, please take time to pray for all those who dedicate their lives to ensuring Catholic education remains a vibrant and accessible option for all students. Visit your local Catholic school. Encourage parents to consider a Catholic school education for their children. And please join me in praying for all our students and teachers, catechists, administrators and school parents.

—Bishop Edward Malefic

**FIRST RECONCILIATION:**

Over the course of these 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 Dwuan 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.

**A PRAYER:**

2 Jesus, may all that is in you flow into me.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- 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 and Godmother of Gilmour Service Co-ordinator, Martha Ligas ['09]
- For Margaret Diemer, mother of Peter ['75], Robert ['77], Dan ['78], and John ['82] Diemer, grandmother of Megan ['12], Emily ['14], Billy ['17], and Tim ['19] Diemer
- For Darlen Ondi, aunt of Gilmour Service Co-ordinator, Martha Ligas ['09]
- For Matthew Contessa, grandfather of Gilmour's Nature-Based Learning Coordinator, Darci Sanders
- For Daniel Dodson ['95], second-cousin of Kaleigh ['22] and Aiden ['25] McNamara
- For Debbie Gulstrom, sister of Brother Chris Torrijas, C.S.C.
- For Madelyn Price ['77]
- For Brother Paul Kelly, C.S.C.

**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 19<sup>th</sup>:**

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



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

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

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

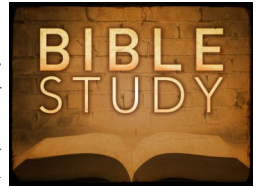
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Thomas Hughes, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Sister Karita Ivancic, S.N.D., who is preparing for eye surgery on Tuesday
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie ['17], Frank ['18], and Mia ['19] Nannicola, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Helen Murawski, who is under the care of hospice.
- For John Visconsi, brother of Tom ['61] and Tony Visconsi ['75] and Paulette Poklar, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For William Rogal, father of Jill Thompson, who is undergoing rehab following 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. 2<sup>nd</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God's word. It's a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can't come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God's word. **Our topic for this Bible Study will be: 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 30: 4 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 31: St. John Bosco	NO MASS
Tuesday, February 1:	NO MASS
Wednesday, February 2: Presentation of Jesus	NO MASS
Thursday, February 3: St. Blaise	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, February 4:	NO MASS
Saturday, February 5: 5 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	NO MASS
Sunday, February 6: 5 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**CAMP GILMOUR 2022:**

Camp Gilmour is back and safer than ever. With nine weeks of new offerings and old favorites for children as young as 3, Camp Gilmour has something for everyone! Join us for Preschool Camp [ages 3-5]; Day Camp [ages 5-12]; sports camps; and experiential camps exploring the fine and performing arts, drones, outdoor adventures, service, engineering and more. **Camps offered June 6-August 5.** Complimentary math and reading enrichment offered each morning for day campers. Before Care available beginning at 7:15 AM and After Care available until 6 PM. Register today at [gilmour.org/summerncamp](http://gilmour.org/summerncamp). 10% discount available thru February 28<sup>th</sup>.



**HOPE:**

The one who has hope lives differently.

—Pope Benedict XVI

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

When I was a young boy, I cracked my knuckles, bit my nails, and jiggled my knees up and down — I must have been a very nervous young man. These behaviors drove my grandmother to distraction. She would tell me all kinds of things that would happen to my fingers and ankles if I kept up these unsightly activities. While grandmother was well-meaning — and, of course I wanted to make her proud — there were nonetheless fear elements present in this approach.

God, however, is much more of a reinforcer — telling us often to not to be afraid, to be a person of confidence, and trust always in the Lord. These are all quite comforting and our faith does bring us peace, but there are times when we are nervous believers and frightened trustings. This all means that we are quite human beings and experience fears and doubts as naturally as we experience hunger and thirst. Yet God’s grace meets us where we are at as we try to find ourselves.

A good case in point are the words that God speaks to Jeremiah the prophet. God tells Jeremiah how he has known and prepared Jeremiah even from the womb [Jeremiah 1:4-10,17-19]. With this as a framework, God then challenges Jeremiah by telling him that he will have to speak the Word of God to his fellow Israelites — words that they are not going to like to hear. But even with this challenge in hand, God confirms a sense of strength and power that Jeremiah will receive from God in order to resist the external forces which will attempt to crush him and paralyze him in his vocation. In the end, Jeremiah will learn — as all the prophets have even to our time — that announcing the truth does not always end in the clover patch. Being summoned by God — chosen and included — usually ends in being excluded and rejected by those who, independently, decide what their truth is and who will be their god. This rejection, however, does not mean that God has forgotten him.

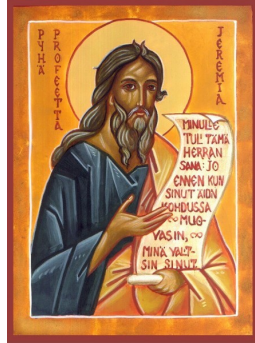
Luke’s Gospel for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time continues the scene of Jesus in his “hometown” synagogue [Luke 4:21-30]. Jesus had read in the synagogue a passage from Isaiah, following which Jesus tells His listeners that He Himself is the One Who fulfills that prophetic announcement [Isaiah 61:1-2]. All of His hearers speak well of this home-town product and rub their hands together in delightful anticipation of all the good things that Jesus is going to do for them.

As the townsfolk become very engrossed in self-centered excitement — they had heard all the great miracles that Jesus had done elsewhere, and they assume He will “naturally” do even greater deeds for them — Jesus speaks to them about their lack of faith. This conversation changes their acceptance and excitement into anger and rejection of Him.

Jesus offers the townspeople two historical — and scriptural — examples which the people with which the people would have been well acquainted. The first was the widow of Zarephath who has miraculously cared for by God through the prophet Elijah [see 1 Kings 17]; the second was the leper Naaman, who has cured by the prophet Elisha [see 2 Kings 5]. To make matters worse, neither of these people were Jews, nor did they live in Israel — thus they are foreigners.

The synagogue congregation knew instantly what Jesus was saying by making these references. Clearly Jesus was telling them that faith — more than family familiarity — was required for miracles, and they did not have faith that He was the fulfillment of what He had just read to them. Jesus got what He deserved from his former neighbors. He insulted them, and they wanted to get rid of him. He is led out to the brink of a hill, but slips away to live toward His final life’s statement on another hill where He will again experience what it means to Him to be Savior.

Jesus invites us to experience an inner conversion of heart — to follow Him toward His sisters and brothers and change the basic self-centered question from “What’s in it for me” to “What’s in it for them?” Jesus insulted His neighbors by what He said and what He did. Faith is an insult to the scientifically-data-based spirit of our day. Hope is an insult to the desperately-communicating tell me-



Our souls dimly remember once having known perfect love and perfect beauty. But, in this life, we never quite encounter that perfection — even as we forever ache for someone or something to meet us at that depth. This creates in us a moral loneliness — a longing for what we term a “soulmate” — namely, a longing for someone who can genuinely recognize, share, and respect what’s deepest in us.

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

**IT’S NOT A PERFECT WORLD:**

Will the real Jeremiah stand up? Is he the prophet of promise [Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19], or the prophet who utter those totally depressing lines of God’s abandonment [see Jeremiah 20:7-18]? Could these expressions of hope and failure have come from the same person?

When hearing any biblical prophet’s initial call from God, it’s important to recognize that such narratives are some of the last things written in that particular prophet’s book of oracles — often after the prophet’s death. If we don’t accept this in the case of Jeremiah, we’ll easily misinterpret it, and never be able to reconcile it with his later depression in life. Today Jeremiah is reflecting on a lifetime of being the conscience of the people. Through thick and thin he’s finally certain that God had called him to be a prophet even before he was formed in the womb; he’s convinced he’d been dedicated as a prophet to the nations before his birth. But when he accuses God of tricking him to be his mouthpiece, and wishing that he had never been born, he’s still in the middle of the thick and thin. It’s one thing for a prophet to look at his or her ministry from a confident, life-ending perspective; it’s a totally other thing to reflect on that life during the day by day encounters with evil that makes God’s presence and assistance problematic. Each passage is Jeremiah speaking, each passage is true, but each passage was composed at a different point in his faith journey.

Much the same can be said of Jesus the prophet. Just a few weeks ago we heard a voice from heaven assure him: “You are my beloved son in whom I’m well pleased” [Luke 3:22]. Yet today he’s forced to thread his way through an angry crowd to escape being killed [Luke 4:21-30]. Not exactly what we’d expect from God’s son. Why can’t a divine Jesus just snap his fingers and the crowd disappear? Is God no longer taking care of his son? After all, he didn’t do anything sinful; He simply raised people’s ire by reminding them that God’s actions aren’t limited to just God’s people. Certainly not a crime that merits a death sentence. Could Jesus also have experienced a Jeremiah-moment at that point of his ministry, but, for some reason, none of our four evangelists mentions it?

Any serious student of Scripture presumes the historical Jesus had many of those moments. Three of the four gospels narrate the best known of those occasions — Gethsemane. Yet we take for granted there were others, else the sleeping disciples who were with him that night wouldn’t have realized what was transpiring. Such moments must have happened before, when they weren’t asleep.

That’s why St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Corinth is so important. Only one thing keeps us going during those Jeremiah moments — love. Already in 8<sup>th</sup> grade I knew this passage was important because we were all forced to memorize it. But as I’ve gone through life I’ve continually discovered the depth of that importance. As Paul points out, without love nothing else matters. No matter our prerogatives or talents; without love, they’re nothing. It’s the only thing in our life that counts.

Recently I’ve suggested using Paul’s passage on love [1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13] at funerals — not just at weddings. Though it’s good to plan a future based on love, it’s far more significant to be able to reflect back on a life already lived in and with love. For many of us, our love and God’s love not only keeps us going, it’s the one element that makes sense of our lives, especially in our Jeremiah periods; when we can’t figure out why terrible things are happening and we’re tempted to “chuck the works.”

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



## THE KISS OF GOD ON THE SOUL:

What is the real root of human loneliness? A flaw within our make-up? Inadequacy and sin? Or, does Augustine's famous line, "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you," say it all?

Augustine's adage, for all its merit, is not quite enough. We are infinite souls inside finite lives, and that alone should be enough to explain our incessant and insatiable aching; except there is something else — that is, our souls enter the world bearing the brand of eternity, and this gives all of our aching a particularized coloring.

There are various explanations of this. For example, Bernard Lonergan — the much-esteemed theologian and philosopher — suggests that the human soul does not come into the world as a "table rasa" — a pure, clean sheet of paper onto which anything can be written. Rather, according to Lonergan, "we are born with the brand of the first principles indelibly stamped inside our souls." What does he mean by this?

Classical theology and philosophy name four things that they call transcendental — meaning that they are somehow true of everything that exists. These are: "oneness", "truth", "goodness", and "beauty". Everything that exists somehow bears these four qualities. However these qualities are perfect only inside of God — God, alone, is perfect oneness, perfect truth, perfect goodness, and perfect beauty. However, for Lonergan, God brands these four things, in their perfection, into the core of the human soul.

Hence we come into the world already knowing — however dimly — perfect oneness, perfect truth, perfect goodness, and perfect beauty because they already lie inside us like an ineradicable brand. Thus we can tell right from wrong because we already know perfect truth and goodness in the core of our souls, just as we also instinctively recognize love and beauty because we already know them in a perfect way, however darkly, inside ourselves. In this life, we don't learn truth — we recognize it; we don't learn love — we recognize it; and we don't learn what is good — we recognize it. We recognize these because we already possess them in the core of our souls.

Some mystics gave this a mythical expression. They taught that the human soul comes from God and that the last thing that God does before putting a soul into the body is to kiss the soul. The soul then goes through life always dimly remembering that kiss — a kiss of perfect love — and the soul measures all of life's loves and kisses against that primordial perfect kiss.

The ancient Greek Stoics taught something similar. They taught that all souls pre-existed inside of God, and that God, before putting a soul into a body, would blot out the memory of its pre-existence. But the soul would then be always unconsciously drawn towards God because, having come from God, the soul would always dimly remember its real home — God — and ache to return there.

In one rather interesting version of this notion, they taught that God put the soul into the body only when the baby was already fully formed in its mother's womb. Immediately after putting the soul into the body, God would seal off the memory of its pre-existence by physically shutting the baby's lips against its ever speaking of its pre-existence. That's why we have a little cleft under our noses, just above center of our lips. It's where God's finger sealed our lips. That is why whenever we are struggling to remember something, our index finger instinctually rises to that cleft under our nose. We are trying to retrieve a primordial memory.

Perhaps a metaphor might be helpful here. We commonly speak of things as "ringing true" or "ringing false". But only bells ring. Is there a bell inside us that somehow rings in a certain way when things are true and in another when they are false? In essence, yes! We nurse an unconscious memory of once having known love, goodness, and beauty perfectly. Hence things will ring true or false, depending upon whether or not they are measuring up to the love, goodness, and beauty that already reside in a perfect form at the core of our souls.

And that core — that center, that place in our souls where we have been branded with the first principles and where we unconsciously remember the kiss of God before we were born — is the real seat of that congenital ache inside us which, in this life, can never be fully assuaged. We bear the dark memory, as Henri Nouwen says, of once having been caressed by hands far gentler than we ever meet in this life.



who I am cell-phony world. Love is an insult to our strip-me and leave-me half dead society. Trusting, longing for, and cherishing are worth passing along as Jesus did and lived. Jesus called people from rugged individualism to an intimate, caring community life. In Luke's Gospel we see Jesus beginning His Own Cultural Revolution. The Great Impostor "passed out of their midst" — and is patiently entering ours. —edited from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

## IS THIS MAKING YOU UNCOMFORTABLE?

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a prophet? It's a very important part of both Jewish and Christian tradition. We learn something about prophets and prophecy from our Scripture Readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time — first from Jeremiah, who was by God's explicit call a prophet [Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19], then also from Paul [1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13], and finally from Jesus [Luke 4:21-30].

Jeremiah lets us know that this was not something he assumed on his own. God had called him to this ministry even before he was born. And Jeremiah — like other Old Testament prophets — was reluctant to assume the prophets' mantle because he knew it could get him into trouble. But like Isaiah, once Jeremiah heard the call, once God had put God's own words into his mouth, there was nothing he could do but answer the call and speak the word of the Lord.

The Old Testament prophets were constantly, at God's bequest, reminding the people of the covenant — of their responsibilities to God, to one another, and to the earth. The people were often remiss in doing what God had asked them to do, and the prophet's task was to urge them to get back on the right track.

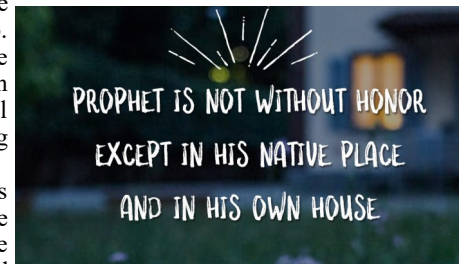
Jesus experiences some of this in the synagogue of his home town in Nazareth. At first as he interprets the word of God for them, they are full of admiration and wonder. But into the joyful reception of Jesus someone inserts a negative voice: "Isn't this Joseph's son? We know him. We know his mother, too. We watched him grow up. Where does he get off talking to us this way? Who does he think he is?" This isn't what we expected. And what began in admiration soon turns to anger and doubt. They drive him to the top of a hill and then they want to kill him — a foreshadowing of something soon to come in the life of Jesus.

In his First Letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul also speaks as a prophet, reminding the people of their responsibilities to one another. Paul had a special concern for this church at Corinth. He had founded it himself, and even when he wasn't there, he watched over it with loving care. He heard that there were problems in the community — there were factions and division, and Paul writes to remind them that they are the Body of Christ.

In this famous letter, Paul tells them what about the glue that holds this Body together — the glue that makes it possible, the glue that allows them to care for one another. And that glue is love — the love first of all that God has for us, and the love that we have for one another. This is not always an easy thing to do. Indeed, our own experience teaches us that it can be very difficult. But we must remember that the love that Paul talks about is the love that God has for us — the love of God's Spirit — so that when we love one another we are loving with the very love of God.

That same love of God continues to raise up prophetic voices in the church today, because there are still injustices and abuses that need to be addressed. And these modern day prophets still meet disdain, opposition, and even death. A Brazilian cardinal, Dom Helder Camara, once famously said: "When I give bread to the hungry, they call me a saint; when I ask why they are hungry, they call me a radical." Today we still ask why there is discrimination based on race or ethnic background or gender or sexual orientation? People don't like to hear these questions — they make us uncomfortable.

The people in that Nazareth synagogue were also made uncomfortable by the challenges Jesus gave them, but they are the prophetic questions, and if we are to respond to the love that God in Jesus Christ has asked us to show for all people, they must be raised — and beyond that, action must be taken. It's what the love of God urges us to do. —taken from the writings of Father Leo Murphy, S.J., which appear on the internet.



**THE TRUTH IS HARD TO HEAR:**

The Scripture Readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time remind us of the reality of our own lives and the standards that we wish we could live by. Once again, we find Jesus speaking words that, although truthful are too difficult to hear [Luke 4:21-30]. So, what do we do when faced with an unpleasant truth or challenging choice? We “shoot the messenger”, so to speak — we try to discredit the person speaking when we cannot refute the essence of the message. While some of the crowd are awed by his gracious words, others are more concerned about his pedigree and address. Jesus for his mission to humankind had to face local suspicion and gossip. Essentially, he found, as we do, that prophets are accepted provided they come from somewhere else, and don’t say things we are not ready to hear.

Clearly, Jesus is not free from local prejudice, he is not above the haphazard way that people look at other people. Firstly, they complain that Jesus performs no local wonders while letting him know that they disbelieve in him anyway. When he tells them that his mission is addressed to all people, they become angry. Even though they don’t like what he is saying, they are selfish enough to think that they should be the only ones to hear it.

But let’s not point the finger too quickly at their fickleness, because we reject our prophets all the time. Sometimes the truth is too confronting because it does not conform to our perceived ideas. That’s what Jesus congregation is saying: “How can he know anything? He is not our idea of a prophet.”

To accept the prophet, we must give up our perceived ideas of where we will find the truth and be ready to accept it in many disguises. Can we let go of our long-held notions to be able to hear something that might be vastly different to what we have accepted or feel comfortable with?

Secondly, we reject those prophets who come to us with demands. When the teachings of Jesus require us to change our behavior and to sometimes surrender our comfortable lifestyle, then it becomes all too demanding and we turn our backs on our faith and ultimately on God. What did Jesus say? “If we love only those who love you back, what reward is that” [Luke 6:32-36]. If we only greet our family and friends what more are we doing than others. Turn the cheek if someone strikes you. Forgive your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you” [Luke 6:27-30]. If only Jesus had given us easy things to do then more people would believe in him.

Jesus speaks hard sayings. There is no denying that. He challenges our preconceptions. He asks us to see him in the poor and disenfranchised. Shall we reject the prophet who comes to us in this way? Shall we rise up against him? When we realize that he is speaking the truth, then we experience an inner conflict.

How can we find the resolve to make the changes that we know are required? It is really turmoil within ourselves, to try to walk down the path less travelled that will lead to the destination that we seek, but that road itself seems to have too many hills to climb.

That is why the message of Paul to the Church at Corinth today is so practical and sensible. He speaks of the quality of love that can endure whatever comes. The love that we require needs to be patient and kind, yet sometimes has the face of impatience and unkindness, sometimes ready to condemn and take pleasure in the failings and weaknesses of others. While we want our love for others to be satisfying and productive, according to Paul we must accept that love can be a tough program, but we cannot reject it because we know he speaks the truth. The lessons that are hardest to learn are the ones we remember for life.

—taken from the writings of Father Peter Dillon, which appear on the internets

**FOLLOWERS:**

What then, is the difference between an admirer and a follower of Christ? A follower is or strives to be what he admires. An admirer, however, keeps himself personally detached. He fails to see that what is admired involves a claim upon him, and thus he fails to be or strive to be what he admires.

— Søren Kierkegaard



Currently, as a nation, we are engaged in the whole question of gun control and the second amendment. We have all heard the arguments of gun lovers who proclaim their right to bear arms. How should we respond? Should we respond by speaking about the absurdity of having automatic weapons in our schools rather than limiting weapons to sporting use? While that position might be reasonable to some, it is unreasonable to others. Should we just send the person the names of the children killed? Or should we send a box of business cards with the words: “Have gun, will assault.” Those kinds of responses would knock the person over the head with the truth. Those responses would be immature and unchristian. Instead, a better approach might be to say that we need to do everything possible to prevent tragedies while respecting the right of people to be free of government intrusion into their lives. Perhaps, we could note that all freedoms have limits — even the freedom of religion. No religion has the right to do physical harm to its members. The better approach might be to say that in this case, we need to work together to find the acceptable limits to ensure the continual existence of this particular freedom.

No matter what the situation, as Christians we have to learn how to deal with our differences and problems in charity rather than to attack each other.

“Love is patient” — patience is difficult. It is something we want everyone else to have with us while we put limits on the patience we have with others. It is rare that I hear young people talk about the patience that they need to have with their parents. Occasionally, I’ll hear a Teen say: “My parents never had teenagers before, but whether I agree with them or not, I know they are trying their best.” Most of the time I hear: “My parents are so unreasonable.” Some parents take the view that their patience ends at high school or at college — as though they no longer need to act as parents once their children become 14 or 18. Yet, they want their children to be patient with them as they try to learn how to deal with them as young adults.

Many older people — myself included — drive through life with our hands on the horn of our cars. We want our needs to be met now — we want that person in front of us to get moving as soon as the light turns green. At the same time, we often don’t respond to the needs of others with a great deal of enthusiasm. When a baby wants something, the baby wants it immediately — and will cry to get attention. An adult is willing to recognize that his or her needs are not the most important things in the world — “When I was a child I used to think like a child, reason like a child, but when I became a man, I put aside childish things”.

“Love is kind.” Picture yourself standing before St. Peter at the Gates of Heaven. He’s just told you the good news that you are going in. Now, you’re just waiting for the shuttle to pick you up. So, as you’re waiting you ask him: “Hey, St. Peter, what was Jesus like during those three years that you followed Him through Galilee and Judea.” I am absolutely convinced that St. Peter would not say that Jesus was a great healer, a performer of wonderful miracles — nor would he say that Jesus’ words were electrifying, holding everyone spellbound. Instead, the first thing Peter would say would be: “He was the kindest man to ever live.” The tax collector Zaccheus, the woman caught in adultery — even Peter himself — were just a few that were embraced by the Lord’s kindness.

He was kind. “Love is kind”, and, in Jesus Love is Incarnate. He was kind, and the Kind One said to us: “Come, pick up your cross and follow me” [see Luke 14]. By that He wasn’t limiting us to accept our struggles in life — he was telling us to deal with all that life throws at us as He dealt with life, in complete kindness, in complete charity.

When I was a child — we all have a lot of growing up to do to live as Christians. But that’s OK. The Lord is not done with any of us yet.

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

**GREAT ADVICE:**

Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation

—Pope Francis



“survival of the fittest” economically, socially, politically and culturally takes shape in a new world order already evolving behind our masked existence.

The prophetic word is a graced word, and no matter how searing it may be, it always invites transformation.

The Gospel account of Jesus speaking in the synagogue reminds us that prophets are not accepted in their own land. Indeed, political, religious and social leaders want to toss prophets over the cliff because prophets shake up the status quo [Luke 4:21-30]. For those of us who dare to act prophetically like Jeremiah and Jesus in our world hungering for hope, vision and justice, we have the promise of presence — “I am with you to deliver you,” says the holy one, whose power working within us continually empowers us for the work to be done.

Finally, Paul reminds us that love is the greatest of all virtues. At the heart of the prophetic mission is an insatiable love for the divine and all creation, making the work of justice ever more compelling and forever alluring [1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13].

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

### WHEN I WAS A CHILD:

“Well, I certainly could have handled that differently. I certainly could have been more caring, kinder, or, at least, not so abrasive.” Images of past situations often plague me. There was the time that the elderly lady said something to me that was none of her business, and I let her know that she was out of line in a way that she would not forget. And, maybe she was hurt by my comment. Or the time that someone went out of their way to be good to me, and instead of noting the act of kindness, I reacted to something else that the person did that was dead wrong. I don’t know if it is part of my getting older, but I am more aware than ever that there have been many times that I could have and should have handled things differently.

How true that probably is for all of us. You said something to your husband or wife, child or parent, that was correct, but was said in a way that ended up doing more harm than good. Being right does not excuse us from charity. Plenty of people — and all of us plenty of times — have used truth to hurt rather than to help.

St. Paul has it right when he says: “When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, think as a child, reason as a child. When I became a man I put aside childish things.” Why did St. Paul attach this to his great treatise on love? What does “being a man not a child” have to do with “love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, or rude, or self-serving, or quick tempered, or sulking, etc.?” Simply enough, a child has to be taught to be patient, and kind, not jealous, etc. — some never learn the lesson and remain childish. Sometimes all of us are spiritually immature.

Many people — including people who claim to be devoted to God — use truth in a way that is hurtful. Look at the way that so many handle the situation of gay marriage — or, for that matter, the situation of gays in the Church. The truth cannot be questioned — marriage as we use the term in the Church, means a union of two people of opposite genders which is open to bringing children into the world. But this truth has been proclaimed by many in such fierce terms that people often ask: “Why is the Church anti-gay?” The mere fact that people ask that question tells us that something is drastically wrong in the way truth is presented. The Church is not anti-gay. It declares the immorality of sexual relations outside of marriage, but that position applies to all people — heterosexual and homosexual. When a gay person says to me: “I’m gay, but am doing my best to live a moral life”, I respond: “And I am a heterosexual doing my best to live a moral life.” That doesn’t make me better than you or you better than me. But that message is not conveyed by many in the Church. Instead, what the gay person most often hears is: “You really don’t belong here. We’ll tolerate you, but little more than that.” How exactly does that attitude comply with “Love is patient, love is kind?” It does not. That attitude is the attitude of a child who refuses to recognize a world from a viewpoint very different than his or hers.

### WHAT IS FAITH?

The problem of the nature of faith plagues us all our lives. Is openness to other ideas infidelity, or is it the beginning of spiritual maturity? What is it that can possibly take us so far afield from the initial believing self? How do we explain to ourselves the journey of getting from there to here, from unquestioning adherence to institutional answers, to the point of asking faithful questions? It took years before I realized that maybe it is belief itself that carries us there. Maybe if we really believe about God what we say we believe, there comes a time when we have to go beyond the narrow-mindedness of law. Maybe, if we are to be really spiritual people, we can’t afford the mind-binding of denominationalism. In order to find the God of life in all life, maybe we have to be willing to open ourselves to the part of it that lies outside the circles of our tiny little worlds.

The Sufi tell of disciples who, when the death of their master was clearly imminent, became totally bereft. “If you leave us, Master,” they pleaded, “how will we know what to do?” And the master replied: “I am nothing but a finger pointing at the moon. Perhaps when I am gone you will see the moon.” The meaning is clear — it is God that religion must be about — not itself. When religion makes itself God, it ceases to be religion. But when religion becomes the bridge that leads to God, it stretches us to live to the limits of human possibility. It requires us to be everything we can possibly be — kind, generous, honest, loving, compassionate, and just. It defines the standards of the human condition. It provides the basis for the ethics that guide our human relationships. It sets out to enable us to be fully human beings.

—taken from the writings of Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B., which appear on the internet

### LOVE IS A GIFT FROM GOD:

We are all called to live God’s plan for us — whether we are aware of that plan or not. We see it in the Scripture Readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. God speaks to Jeremiah about the design for him — even when he was a young boy [Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19]. Now, on the brink of adulthood, God tells him to stand up and cincture his belt. God has work for him, and it won’t be easy. The young man will run into obstacles. People will oppose him, and beat him down. But lift up your head, God says. I will strengthen you like a pillar of iron. If you read the whole book of Jeremiah, you know he faced trials — including being tossed into a pit. And they left him to sink into muck at the bottom. Jeremiah represents what we should expect when we respond to God’s plan. We will face attacks, sometimes from other people, sometimes from demonic powers.

When Jesus begins his public ministry, like Jeremiah, he faces attacks. Throughout Jesus’ entire ministry he battles obstacles. Today we hear from those who were closest to him — the ones he grew up with [Luke 4:21-30]. They are so upset that they want to throw him off a cliff. Notice Jesus does not shout; he doesn’t get violent or aggressive. He simply walks between them and continues his mission. If they don’t want me, others do.

How different from you and me! I will speak for myself. If I receive a put-down or rejection, I start brooding. People are so ungrateful! But the reality is that I need to do two things — ask if I can learn something from the rejection, then recall that there are people who do need me. As Mother Teresa used to tell her Sisters when they felt like moping: “Get out with the people.”

All of us face trials, disappointments, even devastation. The question is: How do we deal with those contradictions? The first thing is to recognize that God allows those trials so that we can learn love. As St. Paul reminds us: “Love is kind and patient. It doesn’t brag and get puffed up. It’s not quick tempered, rude or self-serving. Love doesn’t brood over injuries. It takes no joy in doing wrong, but rejoices in the truth.” And then comes the zinger: “Love bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” [1 Corinthians 12:31-3:13].

From Paul’s description we can see that love is more than a feeling. Don’t get me wrong. Emotions are important. We move on an ocean of feelings. Like waves they toss us one way and another. We should do everything we can to promote positive emotions. But when all is said and done, love is not a feeling — love is a decision. Even more, love is grace — something beyond human capacity. St. Paul calls love a charism — a gift from God. We have to ask God for that gift. —taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom., which appear on the internet.



**LOVE AS INTIMACY AND TRANSCENDENCE:**

“There are in the end three things that remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love..” This line concludes one of the most beautiful and profound passages in the Scriptures — the famous hymn to love from Paul’s first letter to the Church at Corinth [1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13]. In this hymn Paul asserts that love is the greatest gift. This is another way of saying that without love we miss life. We must have love if our lives are to be fulfilled and complete.

What does Paul mean by love? It includes, but it is something much greater than romantic love. In fact, a careful reading of Paul’s hymn to love will reveal that there are two distinct aspects of the kind of love that Paul is describing.

The first aspect pulls us towards other people. In the first part of the hymn Paul describes the qualities which allow us to bond with others — love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious, or puffed up. Love is not self-seeking or rude. These qualities of love allow us to connect to others, and to commit to others. If we use modern terminology, we would call this movement of love that binds us to others intimacy. Paul is saying that without intimacy in our lives are incomplete.

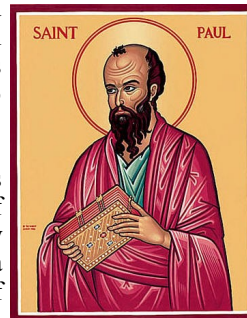
But as you continue to read the hymn another aspect of love emerges: an aspect which moves us beyond ourselves, beyond our understanding — even beyond the people we love. Paul says: “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. My knowledge now is imperfect; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” Paul is pointing to the part of life that pulls us beyond ourselves into something larger. A modern word we would use to characterize this aspect of love is transcendence. Paul is saying that without transcendence life is incomplete.

So when Paul tells us that we must have love, he is insisting that our lives must be characterized by intimacy and transcendence. We must have both if we are truly to live. Unless we let love pull us towards intimacy with another person our lives will be impoverished. That intimacy could be with a spouse or with a close friend. But what is clear is that that movement toward intimacy involves work. Some people identify intimacy with a feeling or a verbal marriage commitment. Intimacy, however, involves the work that Paul describes in the first part of the hymn. Intimacy is being patient with the other, listening to the other, understanding the other, respecting the other in his or her uniqueness, adapting our lives to meet the other’s needs and dreams.

A few years ago, there was a delightful little movie in theaters; It was called: **A Date With Tad Hamilton**. It is not a great movie, but it has a number of wonderful scenes. In one, Tad Hamilton says to the female lead: “Come away with me. I love you.” She responds: “No, you don’t love me. You love the idea of loving me. You really don’t know me. Real love is knowing the details of another person.” Intimacy is knowing the details. Intimacy is appreciating the specific things in others that make them to be who they are. If we then are going to claim intimacy with someone, we have to claim more than a feeling — more than a certificate. We have to be able to recount what are the specific things that make that person to be who he or she is and rejoice in that particularity. As Paul states in this hymn: “Love rejoices in the truth.” When we know the truth of another person’s life, and they know the truth of our life, and when we both rejoice in what we know, then we have intimacy.

But intimacy is not enough. We also need transcendence. We need the ability of seeing something greater than ourselves, of understanding that there is something beyond all the things that we can organize and control. We must know what it is to step over the line from knowledge to mystery. That trusting of ourselves to mystery is what Paul calls love. If we insist on limiting our lives to only the things that we can see and feel, if we insist on limiting our lives to only the things we can understand and control, our lives are impoverished. It is a failure of love.

Love then pulls us in two different directions, towards intimacy and towards transcendence. We

**ALL CREATION IS PROPHETIC:**

We can no longer view the prophetic as a gift and activity reserved for human beings alone. All creation is prophetic because, from a faith perspective, all creation is infused with the prophetic and wise spirit of the divine. Thus, all creation communicates the wonder, the mystery, the complexity, the beauty of the divine as we hear in Psalm 19:1-4:

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.  
Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;

Yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.

As part of creation, human beings — regardless of status, race, class, orientation, ethnicity, age, ability, gender, religious belief or no belief — have the potential to be prophetic and to act prophetically. Christians, by virtue of their baptism, are anointed into the prophetic tradition and called to embrace and exercise their prophetic charism and vocation.

This gift invites people everywhere to speak to social, political and religious leadership, to judicial officials, to power brokers, to those involved with a community’s economy and well-being. To act prophetically is to work for justice, to align ourselves with humans and nonhumans living on the margins, to de-center and eventually dismantle hegemonic power structures while unseating their hegemonic leaders. To act prophetically, to expose inequity and discrimination of all types, is noble work that cannot wait.

Jeremiah reminds us that like the character Jeremiah, our prophetic call is to the nations; our prophetic work is to span the globe [Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19]. In this current pandemic, we are experiencing the “great reset” of our global economy. The COVID-19 crisis is said to be the cause of political, economic and social disruptions. As we know, the pandemic has exposed the inconsistencies, inadequacies and contradictions of multiple systems.

In reality, however, one needs to ask this question: “Is the pandemic being weaponized by the world’s powerful techno-feudal lords as a means to ‘reset’ the global economy so that the wealthiest of nations and the wealthiest citizens in nations can enrich themselves and flourish at the expense of others’ demise and devastation?”

We need only to tabulate the profit gains of the pharmaceutical industry, the telecommunications and social media giants such as Zoom, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and the mega-corporations like Amazon. Added into the equation is mega-billionaire Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic flight into space complemented by the ongoing and escalating battle between the world’s two richest men — Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk — over who will send people into space first.

All of these many gains and efforts are occurring during this present time in history as non-Western nations like Africa sink deeper into poverty, and people around the globe struggle to make ends meet without a just wage afforded to them, in an era of tragic loss with no end in sight.

Who are Judah’s kings and princes, priests and people today whom Jeremiah would address in bold and unwavering ways? Where are the prophetic voices and persons addressing the “great reset” now, in a time when “compliance” seems to be the order of the day and loyalty to leadership the revered virtue?

Now, more than ever, Catholic social teaching on economics needs to come into play, but one wonders if even some Catholics supporting media outlets like Eternal Word Television Network, which grossed an annual revenue of \$64,946,744 in 2019, are not part of the great corporate economic “reset.” The moment is upon us to emerge from isolation, to enter the global arena prophetically, to read critically the signs of the times, and to expose and address the crucial issues of our present realities before the





Jesus, Son of God, the fulfillment of the prophecy, taught with authority and amazement, yet they rejected his message [Luke 4:21-30]. In love, he continued, even though he knew a prophet is rarely accepted in his land. Jesus demonstrates the truth of evangelization, the “why” for soldiering on despite obstacles and rejection — people will hear, believe, repent, and be redeemed.

Where are you called to share the message? How will you overcome any rejection you may encounter in your family, neighborhood, or community? What can you glean from Jesus’ teaching to proclaim the wondrous deeds of our God? How can you be strengthened by God’s love so that you might reflect that love to others?  
—taken from the writings of Allison Gngras, which appear on the internet

### MOVING BEYOND THE ORDINARY TO FIND CHRIST:

In the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus, who has identified himself as the Messiah, seems to be making an initial positive impact on his fellow citizens of Nazareth, who were amazed at his gracious words [Luke 4:14-21]. But then the people also asked: “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” — perhaps indicating some doubts about a hometown boy making such claims, or wondering why he didn’t work miracles for them as he did elsewhere. At any rate, Jesus went on to note that two Gentiles — a widow and a leper received God’s special help when Jewish widows and lepers did not. Terribly upset with the suggestion that God somehow favored Gentiles, his neighbors turned completely against Jesus, to the point of trying to kill him but he passed through their midst and went away [Luke 4:21-30].

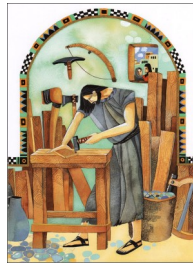
This fascinating story suggests some important things about Jesus. [1] He lived a very ordinary life in his hometown for over thirty years; [2] he made a big impact on people in his public life by his eloquent preaching and amazing miracles; [3] he courageously spoke the truth people needed to hear despite personal danger; [4] he challenged the narrow minded outlook of his own people; [5] he was willing, when the time was right, to die for the cause of God; and [6] he came to save all people without exception.

We could think of Luke’s Gospel as an invitation to reflect on our own temptations to exclude others, to embrace prejudice, and to display intolerance. Jill has been very upset with the terrorist attacks on the United States by radical Muslim extremists. She is worried about the safety of her children and grandchildren. She finds herself fearful of people who look Middle Eastern, suspicious of Muslims, and negative about Islam as a violent religion. The political rhetoric about excluding Muslims resonates with her fears. Jill confesses her feelings to a Christian friend who told her some positive things about Islam — the vast majority of the 1.6 billion Muslims in the world are opposed to violent jihadism; the Quran puts great emphasis on loving God and loving neighbor; Muslims believe in doing God’s will, praying every day, fasting periodically and giving alms to the poor. She warned Jill that she was falling into “Islamophobia” and more generally “xenophobia” which she explained meant fear of people from other countries. Jill got the point, but the conversation with her friend did not touch her heart. However, when she reflected on Jesus and his message of inclusion — especially that he died for all people — she knew in her heart that she had to readjust her whole attitude toward Muslims. She attended a prayer service at the local mosque for the victims of terrorist attacks and made initial efforts to get to know a Muslim family in her neighborhood.

The Gospel does indeed have an inherent power to transform exclusion into communion and fear into love. Do you find exclusive attitudes in your own life? How could you do better at putting on the inclusive mind of Christ?  
—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet

### WHAT IS IT THAT WE REALLY WANT?

As we engage in the struggle to embrace God’s will, it is important for us to know that our deepest and truest self desires God’s will.  
—Eamon Tobin



must have both to truly live. Moreover, because love pulls in two directions, there are two distinct abilities that we must encourage in our lives — holding on and letting go.

Intimacy demands that we hold on to another, that we commit ourselves to the hard work of listening, changing, and appreciating. If we are to be intimate we must not be afraid to commit — to hold on. Transcendence demands the ability of letting go, of understanding when we have come to the point where we no longer have control, when there is something greater than ourselves into which we can entrust our lives. A full and complete life demands the ability to hold on to the people we love and to let go at those times when mystery begins. Knowing when to do each is the key to happiness.

Love is indeed the greatest of gifts, but it pulls us in two distinct directions. Therefore, the Scriptures today invite us to examine our lives and to assure ourselves that we are open both to intimacy and to transcendence. If we wish our life to be complete, to be fulfilled, if we want to be happy, we must learn how to hold on to the people we love and how to let ourselves go into the embrace of a God who loves us.  
—taken from the writings of Father George Smiga, which appear on the internet

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

<b>Monday:</b>	2 Samuel 15:13-16:13, Mark 5:1-20
<b>Tuesday:</b>	2 Samuel 18:9-19:3, Mark 5:21-43
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Malachi 3:1-4, Hebrews 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40
<b>Thursday:</b>	1 Kings 2:1-12, Mark 6:7-13
<b>Friday:</b>	Sirach 47:2-11, Mark 6:14-29
<b>Saturday:</b>	1 Kings 3:4-13, Mark 6:30-34

**5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Isaiah 6:1-8, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Luke 5:1-11

### 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 22]-----[Weekly Mail-in] ----- \$ 30.00**  
**Offerings-----[Sunday, January 23]----- \$ 357.00**

### 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

**THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF REAL FRIENDS:**

It is a fact: we are hard-wired for relationships. We need friends, and we need community. It is no secret though that growing in friendship takes time and effort. Friendship is a topic we talk about all the time, but how exactly do we recognize when a friendship is going sour, or even the joys and challenges in friendship? How do we identify when friends are not good friends? Here are some thoughts.

**A real friend does not only talk about themselves.** A real friend cares about you and cares about how you are doing. Friends only concerned with themselves or pushing their own agenda are not real friends. True friendship is reciprocal. St Teresa of Jesus said: “True friendship consists in mutually perfecting one another and drawing closer to God.” A real friend is invested, intentional and makes time for others.

**A real friend does not gossip.** A real friend helps us and reminds us to live in truth. Think about your conversations with friends. If the main topic with friends is centered around gossip or talking negatively about others, chances are those negative conversations take place without you there as well. This is a huge problem because not only are we hurting others with our words, but we are also not growing as we are not addressing issues inside ourselves. Pope Francis once addressed St. Peter’s square, saying: “Gossip can also kill, because it kills the reputation of the person! It is so terrible to gossip; in the end, it fills the heart with bitterness, and even poisons us.” Scripture goes on to say: “The one who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend” [Proverbs 22:8]. A real friend helps us reminds us to live in truth.



**A real friend does not discourage you from your goals.** A real friend supports you in your pursuit of excellence. If your friends try to distract you from your goals, they are not your real friend. Note: this is a different story if your goals are not good. A real friend will journey with you, support you, help you live the virtues, and ultimately walk with you to Heaven.

**A real friend does not judge you.** A real friend is honest and encouraging. If your friend is constantly judging you — pointing out your flaws, and making you feel bad about yourself — then they really are not your friend. Some people, unfortunately, like to bring others down. A real friend should make you feel positive, empowered, and uplifted. Friends should also challenge you, but with and through love. It is important to note — judging is different than challenging. Again, in friendship, challenging each other is actually good because we lift each other up and challenge to do their best.

**A real friend does not betray your trust.** A real friend is trustworthy. Toxic friends betray trust and share things that were supposed to be held in confidence. If a friend betrays your trust in a major way, you don’t necessarily have to mend the relationship. A good friend has self-control and cares about your heart and what you share. Trust is essential in a good friendship.

**A real friend does not hold grudges.** A real friend forgives. Real friends don’t hold grudges! They don’t constantly remind you of something that happened in the past that was or was not your fault. One of the key components of healthy relationships is forgiveness. We are all human, so inevitably, we will make mistakes. In friendship, though, it is the ability to recognize and acknowledge our mistakes, apologize, and forgive each other so that we find a way forward.

**A real friend does not get jealous or make everything a competition.** A real friend cheers for you and is on your team. Don’t get me wrong, competition is fine; however, friendship based on competitive behavior is never healthy. Your main goal in friendship should not be to one-up your friend. If you feel like your friend never has anything nice to say when you achieve something, it’s a sign they see you as a rival, not a friend. It is unhealthy to have the mentality that “If my friend is winning, then I am losing.” Real friends acknowledge that God is calling all of us to greatness, and thus they should

encourage you on your faith journey. Your friends should be your biggest fans and greatest supporters. A real friend will want to see you succeed, to see you be happy, and desire Heaven for you.

**A real friend does not constantly belittle you.** A real friend shares joy. If your friends are continually insulting you, they are not your real friends, and that negativity should not be welcomed in your life. A real friend lifts you up and encourages you, not puts you down and makes you feel small.

One of the greatest joys in life is the gift of real friends. St. Thomas Aquinas said: “There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.” All of us desire to experience true, authentic, life-giving friendship in our lives. It is worth the effort to invest in these relationships. Real and authentic friendship should always point the other to God. —written by Kelly Colangelo, a young adult

**LIFE TEEN and EDGE:**

**Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again.** We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board Room. If you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen website — [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com). There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs. Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass. And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].



LIFE TEEN

**PROCLAIMING GOD’S WONDROUS DEEDS:**

Sometimes it is a struggle to see how each of the Mass readings correspond. Other times the threads between them interweave like a masterfully woven tapestry. The Scripture Readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time represent the latter. Strands of being created for a plan and a purpose, prophecies shared and rejected, good people treated as evil, and connected to all of it, a God that loves without reserve — upholding, strengthening His beloved.

Through our baptism, we share the beauty of being intimately known and loved by God. Like Jesus and Jeremiah, we are not only known but also called to be harbingers of the Good News — regardless of the difficulties faced in doing so. Formed in love, the grace of God animates us. His divine indwelling continually elevates our faith. We find the courage to witness to others through grace and never by our strength. When we accept the unfathomable gift of God’s perfect love, not only does it cast out every fear, but it remains impossible to keep it to ourselves. If we fail to desire or find opportunities to share the Good News of Christ with others, we have entirely missed the point of what it means to be loved by Love itself.

Last Weekend, we celebrated “Word of God Sunday” which emphasized the importance and value of Sacred Scripture for the Christian life. Through the Word of God, we encounter Christ. These encounters prepare us to be disciples.

One way in which to enter into scripture and to deepen our faith is to use the method called “Lectio Divina” — Divine Reading. It’s all about reading, reflecting, and praying Scripture. Normally when we read scripture, we read from “beginning to end”, but in Lectio Divina, we need to stop when something hits us or speaks to us. There is no hurry to finish the passage. In fact most times we do not finish.

The fact is that we are all formed, dedicated, and appointed — all prepared to be prophets. For example, Jeremiah worried about what he would say, but the Lord assured all the necessary words would be supplied [Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19]. We are dependent upon God, and will be strengthened and taught by him so that we can proclaim His marvelous deeds. And most importantly, we are clanging gongs if we do not ground all our actions in love [1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13].

