

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ **A Prayer for a Change of Heart** ~

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God,
have mercy on us sinners.

Lord Jesus,
born under the bombs of Kyiv,
have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus,
who died in his mother's arms
in a bunker in Kharkiv,
have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus,
sent at 20 years old to the front,
have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, who still sees armed hands
in the shadow of your Cross,
have mercy on us!

Forgive us, Lord,
if, not content with the nails
with which we pierced your hands,
we continue to drink
from the blood of the dead
torn apart by weapons.

Forgive us, Lord,
if these hands that you created for care
have been transformed
into instruments of death.

Enlighten our consciences,
let not our will be done,
do not abandon us
to our own actions.
Stop us, Lord, stop us.
Amen.

—Pope Francis

Our Lady Chapel



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

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

PENANCE SERVICE:

Our community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on **Monday, April 4th at 7:00 PM.** Our service is centered around reflections by the various characters involved in the passion and death of Jesus. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to bring ourselves from our sinful ways back to the Lord. As we confront our own sinfulness, we realize that we, too, have a part to play in the death of Jesus. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be a time for individual confessions following the service, for those who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Please join us.



HARVEST FOR HUNGER and THE CLEVELAND FOOD BANK:

This year’s Harvest for Hunger campaign is more important than ever. Living through a pandemic has created unthinkable hardships for many Northeast Ohio neighbors, children, and families. In addition to easing the burden of tough choices these people have to make — like choosing between paying for groceries or paying to heat their homes. The Harvest for Hunger Campaign provides the gift of security and hope at a time when it is needed most.



The Greater Cleveland Food Bank has been very grateful for the outpouring of support we’ve received from the community in response to COVID-19. This crisis has exacerbated the situation for so many families who were already struggling. Even though we don’t know what the future will hold, we know that it will take months and even years for our clients and community to recover. With your support, the Food Bank and our agency partners will be here for the long haul.

Beginning next Sunday, and continuing throughout the campaign, we will be collected food items. Here is a list of food items that the Foodbank needs — Beans, Peanut Butter, Canned or Boxed Entrees, Pasta Sauce [low sodium please], 100% Juice, Cereal, Canned Protein [Tuna or Chicken], Whole Grain Rice and Pasta, and Canned Fruits and Veggies. **Place the items you bring in the boxes in the Narthex and we will take care of them from there. Cash donations may also be made. Please put them in the collection baskets at the door of the chapel and make sure that the envelope is clearly marked toward this purpose.**

DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND CATHOLIC MEN’S CONFERENCE:

The Diocese of Cleveland is sponsoring a **Catholic Men’s Conference on Saturday, April 2nd.** The Conference will take place at **The Holiday Inn Rockside, 6001 Rockside Road in Independence.** Registration begins at 8 AM, and the conference will conclude with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Malesic. Mass will conclude at 5 PM. Featured speakers will be Father Nathan Cromley [nationally known speaker, writer, retreat leader, explorer, innovator, educator and devotee of Our Lady], and Kevin Reilly [a cancer survivor who underwent surgery to remove his left arm and part of his shoulder and 5 ribs]. His message of hope and faith is inspiring. **To register, go to www.cmfneo.com, or call 877-208-5585. Cost for the day is \$35 [includes continental Breakfast and Lunch].**



POPE FRANCIS CONSECRATION OF UKRAINE and RUSSIA:

On March 25th — the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mother — **Holy Father Pope Francis will be consecrating Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at 1 PM [DST].** The consecration will take place during a penitential celebration in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome presided over by the pope. **All Catholics of the Diocese of Cleveland and all people of goodwill are asked to take a moment of prayer at that time to pray for peace in Ukraine in concert with the Holy Father and the universal Church.** We pray for an immediate end to the violence in Ukraine, for all who have been forced to flee their homes, for the children, the elderly, those who stayed behind to defend their country, for those who lost their lives and for all who love them. As Catholics, we believe prayer works, and that through the offering of a tidal wave of prayer that storms the heavens, God hears and answers our needs, and the needs of those who are oppressed.

—Bishop Edward Malesic

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Marie Forsythe who is seriously ill.
- For Fletcher Linsz, brother of incoming student, Logan Linsz [’26], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Sister Catherine Romancik, S.N.D.
- For Clarence Dabney
- For Thomas Victory
- For Theresa Bontempo, C.S.C.,
- For Sister Michael Marie Griffin, O.S.U.
- For Sister Elena Malits, C.S.C.
- For Curtis DeCrane, Uncle of Gilmour Counselor, Dan DeCrane.
- For Richard Schuerger
- For John Climaco
- For Dorothy Poland.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the people of the Ukraine and the people of Russia; for an end to the war; and for all people of the world to work more ardently for peaceful resolutions to political and social issues.
- For Thomas [’65] and Carolyn Brigham, and Hannah LeBerteaux [’05], whose homes were destroyed in the Colorado fire.
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- For a growth in awareness of the blessing of family life.
- For all those struggling with various addictions.
- For an end to sexual abuse and lack of respect for human persons.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.
- For a greater awareness of our call to create a more humane and just society.

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. Thanks for not forgetting about us.

Offerings-----[Saturday, March 12]-----[Weekly Mail-in] ----- \$ 740.00
Offerings-----[Sunday, March 13]----- \$ 652.00

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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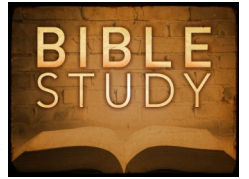
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Elaine Hocevar, mother of Greg [*97], Matthew [*98], Ryan [*00], and Sarah [*01] Hocevar, who is critically ill and awaiting a heart transplant
- For Chiron Alderman, who is seriously ill in the hospital.
- For Barry Cooper, cousin of AVI associate director, Bobbie Bonner, who suffered a stroke and has brain bleed.
- For Paula Fitzgerald, campus Minister at Ursuline College, who is recovering from knee surgery.
- For Eric Penick [*71] who is recovering from surgery.
- For Thomas Hughes, who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie [*17], Frank [*18], and Mia [*19] Nannicola, 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 William Rogal, father of Jill Thompson, who is undergoing rehab following 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 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 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 Karuna Singla, Sister-in-law of Science teacher, Neena Goel, aunt of Nikhil [*13] and Nupur [*17] Goel, who is undergoing treatment for bone cancer.
- For Melita Chiacchiari, mother of Mark [*94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco [*96] who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian [*09], Rosa [*12] and Edwin [*17] Heryak, who is seriously ill
- For Tom Podnar, father of Lower School art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, who is awaiting a heart transplant.
- For Father James Caddy, former pastor of St. Francis, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Paul Tuggey, grandfather of Charlie Tuggey [*21], seriously ill following a heart attack.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — TUESDAY, MAR. 22nd:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Tuesday, March 22nd 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: The Passion of Jesus.**

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, March 20: 3 rd Week in Lent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, March 21:	NO MASS
Tuesday, March 22:	NO MASS
Tuesday, March 23:	NO MASS
Thursday, March 24:	4:15 PM [Eucharistic Chapel]
Friday, March 25: The Annunciation	NO MASS
Saturday, March 26: 4 th Week in Lent	NO MASS
Sunday, March 27: 4 th Week in Lent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

TETELESTAI IS COMING:

Our Lady Chapel is blessed to be only 1 of 2 places in the Cleveland Area to host the Passion Play, *Tetelestai*, this coming Lent. **Cleveland Performing Arts Ministries’ musical passion play will be presented at Our Lady Chapel on Friday, April 8th [8 PM], Saturday, April 9th [8PM], and Sunday, April 10th [2 PM] — Palm Sunday weekend..**



Tetelestai’s dramatic stage production and timeless music tell the story of Jesus’ trial, execution and resurrection in a visual way that will leave a lasting impression. Having *Tetelestai* here as we begin Holy Week will be a great way to enter into our observance of the Paschal Mystery.

There is no charge for the presentation, but free-will offerings will be accepted. **Covid Protocols will be in effect — exactly what these will be will be announced closer to the date.** For more information, please contact the chapel office [440-473-3560] or visit the *Tetelestai* website: www.livethepassion.org.

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Lent is all about coming to life. This joyful season of grace and hope is a call to our souls to come alive again. Each of us in our own way thirsts for the gift of life — for that living water that gives our souls purpose. In the Book of Exodus, Moses' life and vocation — not to mention salvation history — are changed forever because he was aware of what was happening around him — he took the time to investigate; he was open to God; and he was willing to engage and listen [Exodus 3:1-15].

Sure, a burning bush that doesn't consume itself is a curiosity; but still, a burning bush is not utterly unique, and if he had been wrapped up in his own problems or thoughts, or in a hurry, he could have easily passed by, assuming the bush would soon burn up or that someone else would be along to tend to it. How often do we pass by someone or something that could transform us, if we were open to them or it? Would God necessarily speak to us directly and give us a message as important as the message God gave Moses? Maybe not, but maybe. God does have desires and plans for each of us, just as God had desires and plans for Moses.

The Book of Exodus is God's attentiveness to the Jew's applying for work. They had been doing slave-labor in Egypt, but had been crying out for God to do a Great Work. Moses was doing his work of being a watcher of sheep, when this strange event of God's working attracted Moses' attention. The "burning Bush" became a turning-point of his life and the plight of the Jews. The Bush spoke, and Moses listened. The Bush burned, but, like God's ever-lasting love, was not consumed.

God was about to do a "second act of creation". The creation of the world was a pretty decent job, but for the Jewish people, their coming forth from the chaos of slavery and being form into the One and Holy People of Israel was even more a work of creative love. God's ways, after the original creation seems to do the works of God through the bodies and minds of the women and men of faith. Moses is such a body-mind person and as with most humans whom God has called to work, he had questions and doubts.

God, through the bush, reveals a name by which God sends Moses — and the name will remind the Israelites of the for-everness of God. God, like the bush, just is, and will be. God's "I-Amness" is how God wants to be and do. God is the Holy One of their ancient faithful leaders — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This trio is the major credential for belief. The ancient and new God is employing Moses to do the new work of the "new creation".

Luke's Gospel begins with the relating of two news events of the time to Jesus which help to form the context for some direct words of call to these listeners [Luke 13:1-9]. Then Jesus finishes His work with a picturesque parable.

When sickness, deformity, or something tragic and terrible happened, there was a belief that those afflicted were guilty of something. Lepers must have sinned; the man who was born blind must have sinned — or at least his parents. Eighteen people in Jerusalem had a tower fall on them — they must have been terribly guilty. Pilate had some people killed and their blood mingled, mockingly, with the blood of the sacrifices in Jerusalem. Were they more guilty than anybody else? Jesus turns their questions back on them. There seems to be plenty of guilt around, and plenty of work of repenting to do as well.

The poignant parable of the fig tree presents Jesus as the patient and petitioning husbandman. For three years, the owner has come looking for figs from his tree. No fruit has been found, so the owner requests to have the tree chopped down. The gardener asks for one more year of hard work, and then judgment can be made.

Jesus has been hard at His public work for three years, laboring to bring forth, not just repentance,

**FINDING OUT GOD'S NAME:**

Out of loyalty to Carrol Stuhlmueller, my beloved Scripture prof, I always include his unique explanation of the burning bush when I deal with Exodus 3:1-15. Unlike the vast majority of scholars, Carrol was convinced an angel wasn't positioned that day along Moses' path, waiting for him to reach a certain point, then notify another angel: "Cue the bush!" and the bush burst into flame. The late Scripture expert was convinced the bush always was on fire. The miracle in the narrative revolves around Moses seeing something everyone else overlooked. In the midst of a billion wilderness furze bushes, Moses alone notices the fire in one of them.

At some point of our lives, we stop looking. What passes before our eyes is so repetitious we no longer concentrate on it. We presume we're just seeing a constant repeat of what we've seen before.

Paul reflects on that phenomenon in his letter to the Church at Corinth: "Our ancestors were all under the cloud," he writes, "and all passed through the sea; yet God was not pleased with most of them" [1 Corinthians 10:1-12]. In other words, not everyone who experiences God working in their lives notices God working in their lives.

Following an identical insight, Luke's Jesus brings up something we've all experienced — God works almost the same way in everyone's life — even in ways that are at times unjust. Rarely does there appear to be a "method to the madness." It's simply part of being alive.

Yet our sacred authors are convinced that God normally communicates with the "seers" — those who notice God at work in those areas and those people most of us overlook. Precisely in those unnoticed places and individuals one learns more and more about who God is and what he is doing in our lives. We eventually learn God's "name."

Of course, the main drawback in seeing what others ignore is that we then have responsibilities others never assume. It initially never crosses our mind that God's calling us to carry out a specific part of God's will. Moses, for instance, in seeing the fire in the bush, quickly discovers the freedom all Israelites expect God to achieve for them will only come about when he personally takes a hand in winning it. He never counted on that. Instead of being in the audience, this wilderness shepherd now finds himself on the stage. He quickly regretted he didn't lead his sheep down a different path that day.

Perhaps that's why Luke recounts Jesus telling the parable of the persistent fig tree grower — "I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future" [Luke 13:1-9]. Though we insist on going through life blindly ignoring the meaning of our everyday encounters, we follow a God who frequently boasts about his patience with us. Faith isn't either something one has or doesn't have. It's an ongoing process.

Among others, Paul recognizes movement in faith, else he wouldn't have used Scripture the way he did. He refers to it as being an "example" in our lives — something that can be a teaching tool. The Apostle believes that unless we're conscious of the examples God provides, we could end up "falling," as some Corinthians already have.

Trained in much of my Catholic education to regard Scripture as simply a source of proof texts, I was as blind as those who never noticed fire in the Sinai bush. I certainly am glad for the risen Christ's patience with me. But I still have a lot to see. But I'm glad my study of Scripture at least started me down a road in which I at least began to notice some of the fire God's spirit has ignited in this book.

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

GRATITUDE:

We begin to move under Jesus' standard when we join him in the living conviction that everything we have and are is God's gift.

RETHINK YOUR IDEAS ABOUT GOD:

What is God like? The Psalmist tells us that “the Lord is kind and merciful” [Psalm 103]. Other psalms add descriptions of God as a rock, warrior, eagle, sun, king, shield, judge, light, shepherd, etc. If we put our minds to it, we could cull our scriptures and come up with a litany of God's beautiful names — including the beneficent, the merciful, the supreme, the evolver and the creator.

With all you've been taught, do you ever wonder if your god is too small? This phrase is the title of a 1953 book by Episcopalian theologian J.B. Phillips. Phillips believed that ideas about God had grown static and all but meaningless to the contemporary world. While Phillips rocked his theological world in ways similar to what the Second Vatican Council would do a decade later, he was hardly the first to try to shake people out of their theological miniaturization of God — especially the God known through the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Much of the Gospel presents Jesus trying to shake people out of their deficient yet unwavering ideas about God. In Luke's Gospel, some people came to Jesus with a dilemma about God's justice. They were trying to make sense of two experiences of death. In one case, Pilate martyred people while they were offering sacrifice. The people concluded that those worshippers were either punished for secret sins or that evil was winning over God. In the second case, a tower fell and crushed 18 random victims, leaving the amateur theologians wondering if those people deserved death, or if life ultimately has no rhyme or reason. The essence of their questions was whether or not God can be counted on to reward the good and punish evil [Luke 13:1-9]. If not, was life simply absurd?

Jesus didn't defend God. He said that the dead were no guiltier than the living. Then he said that the living needed metanoia-conversion — a thorough change of mind and heart and vision. With that, he launched into a parable about a landowner, a gardener, and a barren fig tree. The owner who wanted his land to produce to its full potential told the gardener to destroy the sterile tree. The gardener — who apparently understood the life cycle of figs and the power of dung — asked for one more year during which he would “cultivate the ground and fertilize it.”

There's a tendency to interpret this parable by thinking of God as the owner and Jesus as the gardener/savior who wants to offer a last-ditch opportunity for the indolent tree. That interpretation — seeing Jesus as God's final offer — fits a theology of a just but merciful God, a respectable, predictable deity, a God who fits within human expectations.

Why do we think that Jesus was operating out of that theology? When we reflect a bit more, we remember that Jesus came from the tradition of Moses — the one who encountered the God of the burning bush. The God of the burning bush revealed a name that no one knows how to translate and many consider too sacred to pronounce [Exodus 3:1-15]. Rather than fitting nicely into human systems and theologies, this God comes to free slaves and shake up the unproductive.

Lutheran theologian Rudolf Otto described the experience of God as a mystery always beyond our comprehension, always more than any description we might give and never circumscribed by anyone's theology or hundreds of names.

This God is greater than all of creation, overpoweringly awesome. That is not a cowering emotion, but a feeling of being so overwhelmed that one is moved to adoration, simultaneously realizing that even the greatest act of worship falls short of being an adequate response. Our God attracts people like a lover, inspiring an unending desire to be near and to know more.

The Scripture Readings for this 3rd Week in Lent offer us an invitation to break open our biggest ideas about God. Moses tells us that God is a fire that burns without destroying. Jesus suggests that God is not only endlessly attractive, but also endlessly attracted by us. Jesus talks about the God who wants to shake us out of our lethargy, who wants us to go embrace the metanoia-conversion that opens us to believe in God's love so deeply that we replicate it in our own relationships. Then our productivity will not simply be works or good fruit, but we ourselves will continuously become new and diverse images of the God beyond all names.

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

but the fruits of repentance. Jesus is directing this parable to all His hearers, inviting them to turn their old ways into the new creation of His kingdom.

Jesus is also the Gardener, and His labors-of-love are not consumed or extinguished — again as with the Bush. We are living in that “one more year” — not of time, but of God's laboring love. It is not the bottom of the ninth inning, nor time for the last-second shot at salvation. “I Am Who Am” is laboring to bring about the Kingdom of Justice with the fruits of compassion and mercy. We all need to apply for entrance into this “fig-tree garden” where Jesus is laboring for us to be more fruitful. Lent is the part of the “one-more-year” during which we can apply for God's assistance to bring us more and more to life. More life means more daily actions of being who we are, and setting aside slaverish patterns of fruitless self-establishment. We apply for this help through the sacraments, personal prayer, and allowing Lent to be the “joyful season” of our coming alive to being God's new creation again.

—edited from the writings of Cindy McMahon and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

WORDS TO LIVE BY:

Jesus prayed throughout his time on the cross — whether it was Psalm 22 [“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”], or the Words of Psalm 31 [“Into your hands, I commend my spirit”], Jesus truly is a person of prayer.

“Into your hands I commend my spirit” — is there a more compelling and powerful expression of trust in the entire Bible? Jesus uttered it from the cross at the moment of his death, and that cry has since been repeated by countless believers as they left the world — from Charlemagne to Thomas More to many a believer who is dying this day. Certainly, these words are appropriate for the end of life, as we prepare to shuffle off this mortal coil.

But for us, they should serve not only as words to die by, but as words to live by. Yes, Jesus spoke them as he gave himself up to God — but he also lived them every day of his life, surrendering his own will as he sought to follow that of God — even to Calvary and the Cross. And so must we do, living into these words by committing ourselves to seek and to do God's will, wherever it may take us. Such trusting surrender does not come easily. Most of us would rather maintain control over our own plans and ambitions than to place them in the hands of God, who just might see things differently.

Counseling such trusting surrender, the Carmelite nun, and martyred Jewish convert, Edith Stein once wrote: “We know not, and we should not ask before the time, where our earthly way will lead us. We know only this, that to those who love the Lord all things will work together to the good, and further, that the ways by which the Savior leads us point beyond this earth.”

Loving God, Give me the confidence and faith I need truly to place myself in your trustworthy hands. Amen.

—taken from the writings of Betsy Cahill, which appear on the internet

**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/summertimecamp. 10% discount available thru February 28th.



THE FIDELITY OF GOD:

Have you ever talked to a burning bush? I haven't, but I know people who talk to plants and flowers. They tell me it helps the flowers and plants to grow better. Somehow it communicates a good feeling to them. I don't know. I'm not a gardener, and I've never tried it. It might have seemed like a silly question, except that in the Book of Exodus, Moses talked to a burning bush [Exodus 3:1-15]. Of course, this was no ordinary burning bush — this was God communicating with Moses.

The Scripture Readings for this 3rd Week in Lent, tell us a great deal about God. I guess we always want to know more about God. We have many, many images of God from our Bible — both the Old and New Testaments. But in spite of the fact that there is an abundance of information, we never tire of looking deeper into the mystery of who God is, what God does, how I relate to God. Just what does it all mean?

In the Book of Exodus, Moses is actually a fugitive from the law. He had killed an Egyptian and is now in hiding in a place called Midian. He has married the daughter of Jethro — a local priest. In our scene, he is tending the flock of his father-in-law when suddenly he is aware of a bush that is on fire nearby. Now you or I might want to douse the bush with water or call the local fire department, but Moses is too curious to do that because oddly enough the bush, though it is burning, is not being consumed by the fire — it burns but it remains alive and green and in full bloom. A very strange sight indeed.

So Moses decides to get a closer look at what is going on, but as he approaches the bush he hears a voice. It's God's voice saying: "Don't come near. This is holy ground. Take off your shoes. I am the God of your Fathers — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." The first thing this tells me about God is that God communicates in mysterious ways, and that God often uses material things as media of communication. In fact, the whole world in some way is constantly bringing us messages from God. As the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins puts it: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

My own personal conviction is that God is constantly trying to communicate with us — if only we had eyes to see and ears to hear. But God had a reason for speaking to Moses in this way. God had an important message. So after attracting Moses' attention in this dramatic fashion, God told him that he had heard the cry of his people. Remember, God's people — the people of Israel — were slaves in Egypt. They were suffering under Pharaoh who was a cruel tyrant, the Saddam Hussein of his day, and they had been crying out to God for help. So equivalently God tells Moses: "I have determined to save my people and I want you to be the instrument of their liberation from slavery."

Now imagine Moses' reaction. As a fugitive from the law in Egypt, he risks arrest and his own life by going back to confront the Pharaoh, and he is understandably hesitant. He needs more information. If he simply goes to the people and says: "The God of your Fathers has sent me," would they believe him, and so he asks God: "What is your name?" Now knowing someone's name did not simply identify the person. It told you a great deal about them. To the ancient Israelites it revealed the inmost being of an individual.

Now God could not reveal the inmost being of the divine essence, because ultimately our finite minds could never grasp it. So God gives Moses an answer which turns out to be somewhat of a riddle: "I am who I am" or "I shall be who I shall be." For centuries theologians have been trying to figure out what that means. It's mysterious and it's elusive. But subsequent events add some understanding. This God who is, is a God of fidelity who stays with his people, who stands by them. As he tells them later in

**THE NAME OF GOD:**

In the Book of Exodus, God reveals his name to Moses [Exodus 3:1-15]. Today we hear Moses asking God what his name is — to understand the importance of this question — we need a little background. When God created the first human being, he placed the man in a beautiful garden and gave him a task. This is what he had to do — give names to all the animals. He saw a graceful animal with a very long neck and said: "giraffe". Another small green animal hopped on the ground, then entered the water, and Adam called it a "frog". Adam gave a name to every animal. You would think he would be very happy with his beautiful garden, but he was not completely happy. In spite of having the company of all the animals, he still felt lonely. Even though he knew the name of each animal, none of them knew his name [see Genesis 2].

Likewise, in the Garden of Eden no animal could know Adam's name. So, God cast a deep sleep over the man and took out a rib. God fashioned the rib into a woman. When the man awoke, he exclaimed: "this one at last is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone" [Genesis 2:23]. Then he said: "she shall be called woman for out of her man she has been taken." In Hebrew the word for woman is "ishah", and the word for man is "ish". In other words, the woman is not only the most beautiful thing the man had seen. Much more important, she could know his name.

I often talk to engaged couples about this. During their engagement and marriage, they almost always have special names for each other — bunny, tiger, cupcake, pudding, sugar; I hope not vinegar. The Bible says that God gives a new name to his beloved. In the book of Revelation, Jesus has this to say about the one who approaches him: "I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it" [Revelation 2:17]. The Lord has a special name for you and me.

But what about God himself? He knows our name, but can we know his name? In Exodus, God instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that "I AM" has sent him. This seems mysterious — and it is. The Israelites shied away from pronouncing the four letters which are here translated "I AM". But they knew they had been given something very precious. In other words, God invited them to a relationship of intimacy — the kind of relationship that exists between two dear friends or between a groom and his bride.

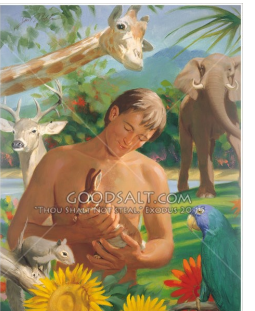
Now the difference between God and man is infinitely greater than the difference between man and other animals. To cross that divide, God himself has to fashion the bridge. When he revealed his name to Moses, it was a great step — like tossing a rope across a gorge. The revelation of the name foreshadowed the one who would himself be the bridge between God and man. Jesus makes it clear he is God among us. At one point he says: "Before Abraham came to be, I AM" [John 8:58]. The name of God is Jesus.

That name is precious — Jesus. Today we often hear Jesus' name used carelessly, as a joke or an exclamation. Some even try to discredit the name. When we hear that name used badly, we should respond by saying the precious name softly in one's heart. That name has power. The name of Jesus makes the demons flee. It soothes a wounded spirit. That name opens the door to the one relationship which will never disappoint. And something else happens when we draw near to Jesus. He not only allows you and me to say his name; he speaks my true name and yours. He gives that white stone with a new name written on it. Someone said that the greatest human desire is that someone else knows us as we really are. Only Jesus can do that. —taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom., which appear on the internet.

FINDING GOD IN CHALLENGING TIMES:

In tribulation immediately draw near to God with confidence, and you will receive strength, enlightenment, and instruction.

—St. John of the Cross



BE HONEST WITH GOD WHEN YOU PRAY:

The three spiritual pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Most of us try to give up something for the liturgical season that precedes Easter, and also try to be more generous. But how many of us think of this as a time to jump-start our daily prayer? With that in mind, let's focus on one important practice — being honest with God. Letting God come to know you is essential in your relationship with God. Letting yourself be known in this relationship means, more or less, the same as it does in any relationship — you must speak about your life, share your feelings and reveal yourself openly. Honesty is an important part of this process. Honesty is an essential part of prayer.

In his book *God and You*, Jesuit William Barry suggests thinking about what happens when you are not honest in a relationship. Usually, the relationship begins to grow cold, distant or formal. If you're avoiding something unpleasant, the relationship devolves into one defined by nothing more than social niceties. Eventually the relationship dies. It's the same with prayer. If you are saying what you think you should say to God rather than what you want to say, then your relationship will grow cold, distant and formal. Honesty in prayer, as in life, is important.

How can you be honest with God in prayer? The easiest way may be to imagine God in front of you. You might picture God or Jesus sitting across from you in a chair, sitting beside you on a couch or whatever feels comfortable. Then just speak in a familiar way — in silence or out loud — about your life. Honesty with God means sharing everything with God — not simply gratitude and praise and not just things you think are appropriate for prayer. Honesty means sharing things you might consider inappropriate for conversation with God. Being honest can be difficult.

Anger is a good example of something we might avoid bringing up in prayer. Disappointment — which is part of the human condition — often leads to anger. So anger is a sign that you're alive. And all of us can get angry for any number of reasons — a frightening medical diagnosis, the loss of a job, a family conflict, a terrible financial blow, or the rupture of a relationship.

God can handle your anger, no matter how hot it burns. God has been handling anger as long as humans have been praying. Just read the Book of Job in the Old Testament — there Job rails against God for causing his painful situation. Usually Job is seen as a patient man — and at the beginning of that book he is. But eventually even Job loses his patience and begins to curse the day he was born — “I loathe my life,” he says. “I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul” [see Job 10].

Anger, sadness, frustration, disappointment and bitterness in prayer have a long history. Why shouldn't you allow yourself to express those feelings too? Father Barry frankly acknowledges these situations and offers this advice: “All I can do is encourage you to speak directly to God if you have questions about God's ways, as one friend to another, even if anger is the only emotion you can voice.”

Being honest also made me feel that God now knew exactly how I felt. Have you ever had the experience of confiding something to a friend and feeling relief? I felt God could now better accompany me, just as a good friend might. More accurately, I would now be able to allow God to accompany me.

Saying it aloud also brought me face-to-face with my ingratitude. Sure, there was a big problem in my life, but there were some wonderful things going on at the same time. I was like an adolescent saying to his parent: “I hate you!” because he's asked to go to bed at a reasonable time, turn off his video games, or take out the trash. Hearing myself talk like that — out loud — revealed a childish aspect of my relationship with God — one I very much wanted to move beyond. Finally, it was a reminder of how often we push God away when we need God most.

So it was a good prayer!

—taken from the writings of Father James Martin, S.J., which appear on the internet



the book: “I shall be your God and you will be my people and I will be faithful to you” [see Exodus 6]. I will be faithful to you, no matter what. The people would not always be faithful to God, and God sometimes got upset by that as the prophets frequently warned. But God never abandons them and is always calling them back. “Come back to me with all your heart” [see Joel 2].

So, from our first reading we learn that God communicates all the time in many and mysterious ways — often in ways that are unexpected and surprising. We learn, too, that God cares for the people, hears them when they cry out to him, and comes to their aid. The sacred name of God — “I am who I am” — means that God is faithful, never abandoning those whom he loves.

Luke's Gospel gives us still more information about who God is and how God acts with us [Luke 13:1-9]. When people talked with Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed and those who were crushed by a falling tower, they presumed that these bad things happened to them because they were wicked people — that God was punishing them. Jesus lets the people know that God does not act that way — that those who were killed by Pilate or crushed by the falling tower were no worse than anybody else.

This is followed immediately by still another picture of God. In this one God plays two roles. First, God is the owner of the vineyard who has a fig tree that has not borne fruit for three years, so he decides to cut it down because it's using up the richness of the soil and is producing nothing. But God is also the vine-dresser who looks at the fig tree and thinks that if he gives it one more chance then perhaps it might bear fruit. Our God is always willing to give us another chance. My feeling is that if the vinedresser came back with the owner the following year and still found no fruit he would again decide to give it another chance. That's just the way God is. These are all positive images of God.

Psalms 103 — our Responsorial Psalm for the day — reinforces this thought: “Merciful and gracious is the Lord. Slow to anger, abounding in kindness. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.” There are moments in our lives when perhaps we doubt God's care, when troubles overwhelm us. That's when a great deal of faith and trust are needed. Perhaps it might help to think of Moses who was called from a relatively trouble-free task of tending his father-in-law's sheep to become the opponent of Egypt's Pharaoh and the leader of an escaped band of homeless people. Real faith and trust in God are not always easy to come by. However, our God, though utterly mysterious, is truly and always “kind and merciful.”

—taken from the writings of Father Leo Murphy, S.J., which appear on the internet.

CONFESSION AND THE FIG TREE:

Most of the sins I confess when I approach God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation are sins I committed on the way to approaching Him in the Eucharist. I am not proud of this, and I'm not making excuses. But it's really hard getting a family of five out of their beds and into a church pew on a Sunday morning. Everyone has to be wearing clothes — usually clothes they don't particularly enjoy. The long hair of little girls needs to be brushed and arranged — oftentimes amid screams. The little ones have to be fed and clutching whatever stuffed animal they have decided is The Chosen One this week — the magical talisman they assure me will help them be quiet and not dissolve into a shrieking meltdown just as Father elevates the Host.

I say this in jest, partially — of course my sins are far more numerous in quantity, and often more serious in kind, than the orders I bark and the rebukes I hand down from the passenger seat of our van on a Sunday morning. But it's only partially in jest, because here's the cold, hard truth: I am consistently at my worst in that seat, in that moment, stressed out and tired and resentful. I'm laser-focused on the failures of the people I love and preoccupied with the weight of the burden I carry.

I've said some pretty terrible things to my husband in those moments, and I've snapped so hard at my kids that I've wondered if God even wants me to come to church that day. So, I take it all to

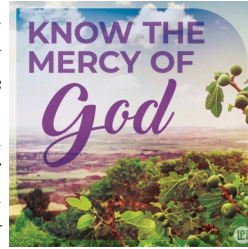
Confession, and I lay it out, and God embraces me and tells me we'll try again next time.

But in recent months I've been plagued by an aversion to Confession — a restless self-consciousness that kept me away for longer than it should have. A voice was whispering: Why go in that little room and kneel down and say all the same things, over and over and over again, when you know you're not strong enough to stop doing the very things you keep confessing? When you know you're headed right back to the front seat of the van?

I shared this with the priest the last time I went to Confession. I literally told him: "I feel so lame coming in here and saying the same things over and over again. I mean the Act of Contrition when I say it, but then I go back out there and do it all again. I hate it." What I left unsaid — but what I know he understood — was my real question: If this sacrament is working, why do I keep needing it?

God bless him for not rolling his eyes. But he patiently explained to me that the sacrament is working exactly as it was designed, again and again and again. Because it brings me, kneeling, before the mercy of God — again and again and again. It is reminding me that I am not better than these temptations. I am not better than these failures. I am not better than these weaknesses. I am the fruitless fig tree, slated for the ax. I exhaust the soil of the orchard. But still there is a Gardener who has not given up, who looks at me and says: "Wait — I'm not done with that one yet."

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



EVIL IS NOT GOD'S WILL:

We do not know everything, and it is dangerous to pretend that we do. God has not revealed all things to us, and it is blasphemous for us to speak as if God did. One of the things that we as Christians know very little about is why bad things happen in our world. We cannot answer the question: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" We cannot even answer the question: "Why do bad things happen to bad people?" When it comes to the origin and source of evil, God has told us very little. And so, we remain largely in the dark.

About six years ago some friends of mine on the west side experienced a terrible tragedy. Their young son of four years old contracted cancer and died. I went to the funeral home and as I was waiting in line to pay my respects, I overheard the woman standing in front of me saying to the grieving parents: "You must be strong. Because it was God's will for your son to die." Her words took my breath away! I wanted to scream at her: "How do you know God's will? And what would make you think that God would ever want the death of this young, innocent child!"

The truth is, we do not know why bad things happen. Saying: "God is responsible," is an attempt at an explanation — but it is an unfortunate one. It makes God to be a cruel and heartless god who would wish the death of the innocent. Yet, the desire to find an explanation for evil is very strong. Therefore, when evil happens, you will always find people seeking to explain why a bad thing is somehow a good thing or why the people who suffer somehow deserve it.

This is what happens in Luke's Gospel [13:1-9]. Some of the people in the crowd tell Jesus that Pilate murdered some Galileans, and their implication is that the Galileans were killed because they were sinners. Jesus rejects this explanation out of hand. He says: "Do you think those Galileans were greater sinners than all the other Galileans?" Jesus adds another example of evil — an accidental one. He talks about a tower that fell on eighteen people and killed them. Then he asks: "Do you think that those people who died in that way were greater sinners than all the other people in Jerusalem?" Jesus' answer is clearly: "No." Trying to explain the origins of evil is senseless. We simply do not know.

Now this leads to another very important, but subtle, distinction. So listen carefully. We do believe that good can come out of evil. We do not believe that God sends evil to us. Let me say that in another way. Even in our darkest moments, Christians believe that God will find a way to bring

It takes tremendous courage for them to stand for their faith life — particularly when that stand is unpopular and seems to put them in some sort of moral minority. By the way, this isn't true. Most people in the schools are trying to be the best people they can be. But what if this were true? What if you were just one of the few who are determined to live morally? Then consider this: It is better to be among the moral few than be part of the immoral many. It is better to be the lone tree that bears fruit than to be part of a non-productive orchard that is slated to be chopped down.

Very often the battlefield is our country where we have to fight for morality regardless of the popularity of our stand. This fight might be the one we hear the most about, and we should because it is taking lives, abortion, or it may be the fight that we do not hear enough about, the fight that our country treat everyone justly with special care and protection for the poorest and most-needy of our citizens. A country's greatness is seen in how it treats the least of its citizens. "Seek Justice," says the Lord, "and bear fruit." The fig tree has to produce fruit. Each of us is a fig tree. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus reminds us: "Life is short. Make the best use of whatever time you have. And we still have time — it is not too late. The fig tree has been given another year. There is time for us to fight for the Kingdom of God. May God give us the courage to use His time wisely. May we bear fruit.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: 2 Kings 5:1-15, Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday: Daniel 3:25-43, Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 4:1-9, Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday: Jeremiah 7:23-28, Luke 11:14-23

Friday: Isaiah 7:10-14, Hebrews 10:4-10, Luke 1:26-38

Saturday: Hosea 6:1-6, Luke 18:9-14

4th Week in Lent: Joshua 5:9-12, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Luke 15:1-32

LENTEN NOTES:

During this sacred time, each of us is called to spiritual growth — particularly through a turning away from sin. Lent is a time for "new beginnings" — a time to grow in our relationship with God and each other. There are 3 major spiritual practices during Lent to which Scripture calls us: **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.**

—LENTEN REGULATIONS:

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are days of **fast** for all between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine. Fasting means that one full meal for the day is allowed, along with two light meals [snacks]. No eating between meals. Those not included in these "ages" are encouraged to take upon themselves some aspects of the fast, whenever possible.

Ash Wednesday and **All Fridays** during Lent are days of **abstinence** from meat, for those who are fourteen and older. Again, those not included in these "ages" are encouraged to participate whenever possible.

remember:

We cannot follow Christ when we already see ourselves in his place.



—Casey Cole

THE TIME TO PRODUCE FRUIT IS NOW:

“OK, I’ll give the fig tree another year of care, but if it doesn’t produce, it’s out of here.” Luke’s Gospel [13:1-9] contains a warning for us to make the best use of the time that we have on earth. We have all witnessed how some lives end far sooner than anyone expected. As painful as it is for us to witness the death of the young, we have to remember that the quantity of years is not important — the quality of those years is what really matters. What is the quality of our years? How do we make the best use of the time that God has given us?

We are each a fig tree planted by the Lord to bear His fruit. He gardens us; He nurtures us; He cares for us with Word, Sacraments, and the Grace to seek His Presence in others. But we must produce. We are living on God’s time, not our time. How well are we using this time? That is the challenge of Luke’s Gospel. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Messiah. He is our Loving Brother and our Compassionate Lord. He is THE prophet. And as the prophet He does not circumvent the message that we need to hear. He loves us too much to keep the truth from us — even if it is painful. And the truth is simple: we must fight evil and do good, repent and bear fruit as the gospel says, or we will suffer eternal death. There is a war enjoined — it is the war of God’s kingdom against the forces of evil. This is not just an apocalyptic battle of St. Michael against the devil — it is a real life battle right here and right now of God’s people against evil in the forms of materialism and hedonism. The ancient Christians believed that every Mass was another battle in the war, another victory for the Kingdom of God.

Martyrs are never seen as victims — they are victors defeating evil with its own instruments of death. We are all engaged in this war. The battle field is our homes where we have to put up a terrible fight to keep our lifestyles from falling into unchristian behavior. If we don’t put up the battle for Christian charity, horrible things can happen. Husbands and wives share a deep knowledge of each other. A good husband or wife shares his or her inner feelings, fears and joys with his or her spouse. But if the marriage is not founded on and centered in God’s love, then the husband and wife can violate intimacy and use this knowledge to hurt each other. When that happens, then evil wins out. But in a real Catholic marriage — a marriage that is a sacrament, a marriage of two people united in the Love of the Lord — husbands and wives respect each other in all ways and profoundly. In this marriage fruit is produced — the fruit of sacrificial love. In the same way, if children don’t respect their parents with the respect that reflects the Fourth Commandment, they can hurt their parents by talking back, being nasty, by doing those things that they know upset their parents. If parents allow their children to treat them with disrespect then evil wins out. Raising a child is demanding work — it demands protecting them from hurting themselves, not just physically but also spiritually. Children who find the way that God is calling them to live their faith are the fruit of committed Catholic parents.

The battlefield is our jobs and our neighborhoods, where we have to be honest, and true, and faithful, and Christian. Many workplaces are horrible. Perhaps you have experienced a person destroying another’s reputation to get a better job. When this happens evil wins a battle. People often play relationship games with others. Marital fidelity appears to be an afterthought in some people’s minds. The person that stands for honesty and faithfulness, the person who is honorable in work and in marriage, is winning victory after victory for the Lord. He/she is bearing fruit.

The battlefield is our schools, where our children, teens and young adults have to put up with mockery when they stand for what is right, proper and moral. Young people have a natural need to fit in.



something good out of the evil that we suffer. That, however, is different from saying that God sends evil to us so that goodness can emerge.

This puts us as Christians in an unbalanced situation. We know that when good things happen to us, they come from God. When we meet our future spouse, when we deliver a healthy baby, when we are fighting cancer and the cancer is defeated, we quickly and correctly say: “This is a blessing that comes from a God who loves us.” The scriptures tell us that all good things come from our Father in heaven. But when bad things happen to us, we do not have a similar explanation. It is wrong to say that my marriage failed because God wanted it, that my child was born with a birth defect because that was God’s will, that the treatment for my cancer did not work because it was a part of God’s plan. If we undergo a divorce and grow personally from the experience, it is appropriate to thank God for the growth. It is not appropriate to say that God ended my marriage so that I could grow. When a loved one dies of cancer, it is sometimes the case that the family pulls together and is able to express their love for each other in ways that was never possible before. It is right for that family to thank God for the honesty and intimacy which the death occasioned. It is not right to believe that God wanted our mother’s death so that we might pull together as a family. In every situation, when it comes to the reason for evil in our lives, the simple answer is we do not know. We must insist God is not the source of evil.

This truth applies even to the Paschal Mystery — the life, the death the resurrection of Jesus. One of the great services that Mel Gibson has done in making his movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, is that he has generated a conversation among ordinary Christians as to what is the saving power of Jesus’ death. We do believe that all of Jesus’ life — his life, his death, his resurrection — was the means of our salvation. So it is true to say that we are saved through Jesus’ suffering and death. But even as we say that, we must remember that Jesus’ suffering and death was something evil. It was wrong. It was unjust. It was cruel. Even though we call the day on which Jesus died Good Friday, we must not forget that it was primarily Bad Friday. For on that day, an innocent man was cruelly, brutally, and unjustly crucified. In that sense we must assert that God was not responsible for Jesus’ death. It was not God’s desire that Jesus die. Yet out of that evil death, we do believe that God drew our salvation.

So why is it so important that we consistently protect God from being the cause of evil? Two reasons. The first is that if we believe that evil is the result of God’s will, we can grow to become complacent about it. If we believe that evil is a part of God’s plan, we may grow lax in opposing it. Yet we as Christians must oppose evil at every turn. We must use our energies to attack sickness, to oppose injustice, to reject violence. We must oppose the death of the innocent with the same strenuous commitment that we would have opposed Jesus’ own death.

The second reason that we must insist that God is not the cause of evil is that such a belief distorts our picture of God and of ourselves. If God is somehow responsible for evil, then God becomes a cruel and heartless god, which is untrue. If God sends us evil, then we must be guilty or bad people which is not necessarily the case.

We do not know everything. When good things happen to us we rightly claim that they are blessings from a God who loves us. When evil things happen to us, we must admit in all humility we do not understand why. Therefore, when evil touches our lives, we should not try to explain it or pretend that we understand it. What we must do instead is entrust ourselves to God and to others for support, believing that the same God who brought our salvation out of the evil of Jesus’ death, will not allow our own sufferings to be wasted. Even as we believe that God does not send bad things to us, we continue to trust that God will walk with us and somehow bring blessings from the evil we endure.

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



THE CALL TO GREATNESS — BUILDING MEN OF GOD:

Greatness; that's our goal as men, right? Whether we want to be a scientist or a lawyer or a football player, we want to be great. That's a good thing because we are called to greatness by God. However, every great doctor or athlete or plumber or teacher had someone coach them.

If we're going to be able to face the challenges and do what seems impossible in manhood today, we need a coach. If we want to be men of God, we have to be willing to learn. In our generation, I don't think the problem is that you and I aren't willing to learn. I think the problem is that there aren't enough men willing to teach us.

Have you ever felt unworthy to do great things? I definitely have. A lot of us feel like even if God was calling us to do something big, we wouldn't be right for it. Little lies have their way of sneaking in. Here's the thing about lies and insecurities — they have to be sneaky. They stay in the dark, because if they were exposed to the light, we'd be able to see them for what they really are.

This is where dads come in. A father is supposed to make us feel secure. A father is supposed to chase away our fears. Often, fear has its roots in us worrying that we won't have everything we need. Our dad's love for us is supposed to be a mirror of the love God, the Father, has for us. In God the Father's love, we have everything we could ever need. When we're rooted in that love, fear has no place. However, if we take our eyes off of that love and forget that we are His sons, fear and lies can creep in.

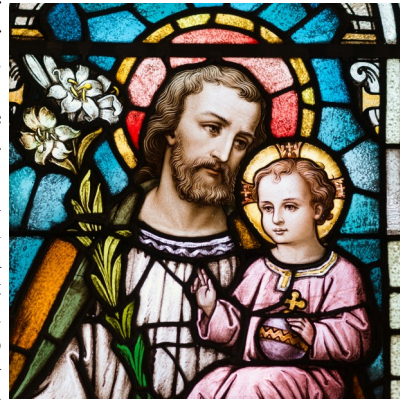
It's pretty astounding how many of us believe the lies we hear every day — whether it's from a bully, the media, our friends, or something we tell ourselves. On the other hand, God is always speaking truth into our lives — but often we can't hear Him. There's a lot of noise around us, and God doesn't seem to love shouting. Many times, He speaks in whispers [see 1 Kings 19:11-13]. God has many channels through which He speaks to us.

Though we don't have any record of Joseph speaking in Scripture, we do have record of him listening. He listened to God on multiple occasions [Matthew 1:18-24, Matthew 2:13-14]. Even though Joseph was a great father to Jesus, his biggest witness might be the way he allowed himself to be fathered by God. For Joseph, a lie that could have crept in would be that he wasn't a real father to Jesus since he wasn't blood related, therefore making him totally unworthy of this task God called him to. Since Joseph didn't have anything biologically to do with Jesus' birth, this lie may have actually sound like truth at first.

The angel who came and spoke to Joseph in that first dream said to Joseph: "You are to name Him Jesus" [Matthew 1:20-21]. God commissioned Joseph to name the child! That was primarily the duty of the father. Although Jesus' name was preselected, God gave Joseph the honor of naming Him — as if to solidify Joseph's fatherly role in Jesus' life. Joseph didn't need to doubt — he knew who he was because God said who he was. Even if others had their doubts, Joseph knew what God had done and was not going to be thrown off by the haters.

Furthermore, Mary confirms Joseph's fatherly role when they find Jesus in the temple and she says: "Your father and I have been looking for You with great anxiety" [see Luke 2]. Now God and Mary both confirmed it. He no longer has to ask himself: "Am I the right man for the job? Am I really called to be Jesus' father?" Instead, he can focus on what God called him to and ask: "How can I do a better job?"

Joseph listened to God the Father and trusted in Him. Joseph dove into his role as a son of God. Sometimes being a son is one of the hardest things to do — especially when our dads aren't perfect. So many guys struggle with wounds from their relationship with their dad. I am one of them. We need to forgive our dads for the ways they've failed us. The first step is to trust in God, the Father, and believe we are His sons. We need to let His perfect love cast out all fear [1 John 4:18]. We need to honor our



dads and learn from their good qualities. Then, we can try to understand where they are coming from. They also had imperfect fathers who failed to love them perfectly. These small steps can eventually lead to a deeper understanding and healing in the relationship.

Whether our dads are awesome or not so awesome, whether they are around or not around, and whether we speak with them or not, they are family and they are our dads. They always will be. Growing up doesn't mean no longer being a son. Joseph's biggest lesson to us was that even as he became a father, he never stopped being a son.

So for right now, maybe that's your focus. Just be a son. If you're dad isn't around, you're still a son of God. And regardless of your vocation, you'll someday be called to be a father figure. This is the great journey us men go on — we transform from boys to men, from sons to fathers.

Joseph shows us that being a good father is rooted in being a son. He shows us how to keep trusting in the face of doubts and weakness. Loving like St. Joseph isn't impossible. Being a great man, son and father is not out of your reach, but it's not easy either. Fight for it.

—written by Dom Quaglia, a father

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

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

**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, 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.

**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].

