

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Blessing on Our Mother ~**

Loving God,  
You are the source of all life  
and your presence is shown to us  
through the gift of our mother.  
We thank you for her life,  
her care,  
and the love and value of family life  
that she has taught us.  
As a mother gives life  
and nourishment to her children,  
So you watch over your people.

Bless our mothers.  
Let the example of her faith  
and love  
shine forth as a bright morning star.  
Help her to hear your voice,  
and to follow you each day.  
May she teach her children  
to love and worship you.

Grant that we,  
her family,  
may we honor her  
with a spirit of love  
and profound respect.  
May you, O God, fill her with joy  
and holiness in your presence.  
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.*

**IMPORTANT SCHEDULE CHANGE COMING MAY 29: [one time only]:**

Because of graduation, we will have a change in the Mass time for the **Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>**. Mass on **Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>** will be at **9:00 AM**. **This is a one time change because of graduation which takes place later that morning.**

**MOTHER'S DAY:**

Happy Mother's Day to all our Mothers, step-mothers, grandmothers and God mothers. What a blessing motherhood is — not just the physical “giving birth,” but the nurturing and special love that mothering involves. At our Mass this Sunday, we are going to celebrate the blessing of mothers. Also, before Mass begins will with have a small May Crowning of Mary. Share this time with all those who have shared this beautiful treasure of God. Offer a prayer for our mothers — today and everyday.

**SATURDAY EVENING MASS TO RESUME JUNE 4:**

Now that we have moved a distance from COVID, and people are beginning to return to “in person” Mass, **we are going to resume our Saturday evening, 5 PM Mass, beginning on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>**. We have had a number of people again express interest in our having this Mass, and with the coming of the summer months, many people look forward to having the opportunity to attend Mass on Saturday evening. **We look forward to having you join us once again for this celebration of the Eucharist.** The Saturday Evening Mass will not be live-streamed.

**CHAPEL SPRING SOCIAL — SUNDAY, MAY 15:**

**On Sunday, May 15, following 10 am Mass, we will gather outside the Chapel for Coffee & Donuts!** It has been a long while since we have been able to spend time together as a community. But with the warmer weather returning, we now have an opportunity to gather outdoors. Donuts, coffee, water and juices will be available. In the event of rain, this gathering will be postponed. Please join us!

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — MAY 21<sup>st</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 Fletcher Linsz, brother of incoming student, Logan Linsz ['26], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma.
- For Agnes Miranda, grandmother of David ['12], Agnes ['14] and Matthew ['25], who is seriously ill with a tumor.
- For David Matis, husband of former Middle School Director, Paula Mattis, father of Kim ['89] and Bill ['91] Mattis, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Blasé Iuliano, son of Gary Iuliano ['77], who is encountered problems in preparing for brain surgery.
- For Susan Silbiger, former Gilmour Teacher, who is recovering from a broken hip.
- For Matthew Gebhart, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Joe Jarzynski, who is recovering from heart bypass surgery.
- For Thomas Hughes ['56], who is undergoing treatment for memory issues.
- For Dorothy Bryan, wife of former Athletic Director, Tom Bryan, and aunt of Georjanna Opalich ['09], Morgan Converse ['11], and Lexi ['10] and Spencer ['13] Antunez, who is critically ill.
- For John Roddy, brother of Tim Roddy ['87], son of Kathleen Roddy, former teacher's aide in the Montessori, and brother of Mary Roddy-Stretar, Marketing Associate at Gilmour, and cousin of Daniel ['83], Mike ['85], and Matt ['86] Roddy, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Marty Pahogales, who is undergoing medical testing
- For Herb Pahoresky, grandfather of Rebecca ['19], Joseph ['21], and Eve ['22], who is under the care of hospice.
- For Tom Hanna, who is preparing for heart bypass surgery.
- For James Law, husband of LS resource associate, who is undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Thomas O'Brien ['59], brother of Tim ['60] and Dan ['63] O'Brien, and uncle of Matthew ['97] and Michael ['07] O'Brien.
- For Valentin Kavcic, grandfather of Peter ['22], Jake ['24] and Andy ['24] Kavcic.
- For Patrick Langdon
- For Sister Mary Jane Honan, C.S.C.
- For Reverend Robert Pittman, S.S.S.
- For Barbara Pritts, aunt of former Gilmour teacher, John Reardon.
- For Sister Laura Melancon, M.S.C.
- For Bill Bray, step-grandfather of Morgan Converse ['11].
- For Father Harry Cronin, C.S.C.
- For Sam Nigro, father of Michael ['84], Sam ['87] and Jon ['95] Nigro
- For Jossie Amato
- For Joseph Piasecki
- For Margaret Diemer, mother of Peter ['75], Robert ['77], and Dan ['78], and John ['82] Diemer, and grandmother of Megan ['12], Emily ['14], Bill ['17], and Tim ['19] Diemer
- For Kathleen Carey
- For Donna McTaggart, the sister-in-law of Brother Joseph McTaggart, C.S.C.
- For John Nemunaitis, father of John ['74], Gregory ['76], Bradley ['80], Brian ['84], Marc ['86], and Michael ['93] Nemunaitis

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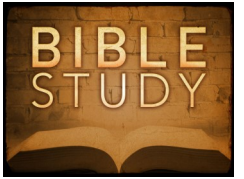
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Will Mueller, father of Morgan [‘20] and Ryan [‘22] Mueller, who is recovering from severe burns suffered in an accident.
- For Brendan Hearn [‘26], brother of Kelsey [‘22], who was seriously injured in a lacrosse game and is preparing for further surgery.
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie [‘17], Frank [‘18], and Mia [‘19] Nannicola, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Michael Nestor [‘98], who is undergoing treatment for a rare form of cancer.
- For Brian Fitzgerald who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Vicki Giancola, mother of Vince Giancola [‘23], who continues treatment for cancer.
- For Les Richardson, father of Gilmour Nature Specialist, Darci Sanders, who is recovering from brain surgery.
- For Elaine Hocesvar, mother of Greg [‘97], Matthew [‘98], Ryan [‘00], and Sarah [‘01] Hocesvar, who is critically ill and awaiting a heart transplant
- For Barry Cooper, cousin of AVI associate director, Bobbie Bonner, who suffered a stroke and has brain bleed.
- For William Rogal, father of Jill Thompson, who is undergoing rehab following surgery
- 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 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 and undergoing treatment for a blood clot.
- 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 — THURSDAY, MAY 12<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</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: God’s mercy and on-going love.** **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.**



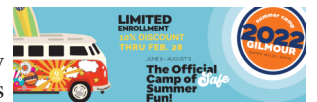
We also need your help — we need future topics. **So, if you have a topic that you would like us to discuss, please let Father John know.** Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. **We will meet every other week — topic to be decided at the end of the previous meeting.** Join us. You’ll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

**SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

Sunday, May 8: 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, May 9:	NO MASS
Tuesday, May 10:	NO MASS
Wednesday, May 11:	NO MASS
Thursday, May 12:	NO MASS
Friday, May 13:	NO MASS
Saturday, May 14: 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter	NO MASS
Sunday, May 15: 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter	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/summercamp](http://gilmour.org/summercamp).



**GROUNDING IN GRACE:**

Our well-being is grounded in grace. And grace is a voice much bigger than all the other attachments where we may park value or significance. We see that dignity alive in the hearts and souls of those around us. Now, courage takes on a new meaning. Giving us the permission to say yes to choices that invite more soft hearts in a world that needs them. When we see with our heart, we know that, regardless of our differences, we are on this journey together.

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

The great Christian writer, C. S. Lewis wrote that the most emphatic noise is the one we are trying not to listen to. I can fall fast asleep on a plane before it takes off and yet the barking dog across the alley can easily keep me from the delightful arms of Morpheus. The more I try to still my soul, the more the dog senses the chance to disturb the entire cosmos. We all know the noise of guilt — and we listen to that noise pretty easily. The noises of shame, disappointment and regret are likewise familiar tunes within our spirits.

But what about the noise of the Holy Spirit announcing a new Holiness within us? Why would we not want to listen to that? It is certainly an emphatic noise in the Gospels of these days — especially from John's Gospel. Why is it such a noise to which we do not want to listen? Is it because we know that we need a leash — a super-something to keep us on the track? Why is it that holiness is more difficult to receive than self-punishing spiritual inferiority? Maybe we need to become more in tune with the noise of the Lord in our lives.

The early church is branching out and is experiencing growing pains. At the center of these growing pains are two apostles — Paul and Barnabas — who are advancing the “word of God” through the blessing of the Holy Spirit [Acts 13:14-15, 43-52]. They seize the opportunity to enter the local synagogue and were encouraging converts to Jesus to stay faithful. One week later they are at it again and the religious leaders of the Jewish people become jealous — fearful that they would lose their following. Jesus did the same thing.

But as the apostles were mistreated and threatened, a great turn of events happens. The “gentiles” — the foreigners — are now to be the recipients of the Gospel's graces. The early church learned that the price of fidelity is costly — living the Gospel will be met with resistance and violence.

John's Gospel needs a little background [John 10:27-30]. Jesus' talking about the Good Shepherd follows upon a conversation that Jesus has with the Pharisees in which Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being blind and closed minded — they just don't want to listen. It is in this context that Jesus uses the image of the Good Shepherd — He is the gate through which His flock will enter eternal life. Those who belong to the Shepherd are the true followers and receivers of God's call.

The sheep belong to the Father and have been handed over to Jesus to be His Flock. Others will try to snatch them away, but the true followers of the Christ will flee from them. Being a member of the flock is all about listening. There are many reasons why we do not want to, or like to listen. We may not like the looks of the speaker. We might have already heard the same thing before, many times. We do like listening to stories, but not statistics. We love listening to a speaker who seems to have been thinking the exact same way we have.

It is difficult to listen to Jesus when He is talking to me about letting go of my independence — my wanting to be apart from any community and at other times wanting to be a part of community. Community here is family, church, nation, team, and class — whatever group asks for my time, gifts, heart and head.

The word “depend” means “hanging on to”. When I add the negative “in” in front of “depend”, it means not hanging on to anything. Our present world is alive with movements promoting independence from one entity or power so as to be dependent on some other.

Jesus claims us as actual gifts from the Father and Jesus is offering us to be in a relationship which will continue the caring for all God's creatures. Our depending on God is not a casual “now-and-then” experience. God loves us as God loves the Son, and the Shepherd has laid down His life that we might pick up ours.

I know there are terms such as “inter-dependent, co-dependent, overly-dependent, self-centered independence”. These are good distinctions, but the struggle remains. Jesus is resisted by His listeners then and now, when He tells us He has brothers and sisters who are poor, rejected, afflicted, abandoned,



In the end, after some bitter exchanges, Paul and Barnabas were exiled — a fate that they construed as a share in the rejection of Christ and an opportunity to continue their mission in a place that might accept it.

After seeing how the apostles contended with rejection, we hear details of John's apocalypse — his vision of the end times. Writing for a people suffering serious persecution and speaking to the others who share their fate throughout history, John uses spectacular imagery to assure them that, just as for Jesus, faithfulness will win out in the end.

To depict his hope, John describes the immeasurable multitude of people from every time, place and tongue who have remained faithful. There are no limits to who can participate in this victory celebration. No matter what they have been through, they now wave peace palms as signs that suffering and conflict have been redeemed and God is there, wiping the tears from their eyes.

With counterintuitive imagery, John tells us that the people who will stand rejoicing in Christ's presence have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. John leads us to understand that washing our robes in the blood of the lamb means joining in Christ's death and resurrection. That's rather easy to say when we think of it as the baptismal ritual of dying and rising with Christ. It's far more challenging when participation in Christ's passion stops being symbolic — when the people are not just the baptized, but persecuted innocents. Under these circumstances, participating in Christ's sacrifice implies believing in God's goodness so much that in the midst of torment we still strive to forgive and love our oppressors.

This offers us a new image of Christ the shepherd who says: “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.” The shepherd John depicts gave his life in faithfulness — even when he could not envision the final result. He is the one who, as he was dying on the cross, continued to bear witness that no one could take him away from the father and thus no one could put an end to his mission.

Today, in this moment of history, these readings take on a radical character and describe the demanding depth of our Christian vocation. We remember that following our shepherd will lead us where he goes — into the heart of conflict and suffering.

No one would seek that, but when it comes — as it inevitably does — we have a guide whose voice speaks through the myriad who have gone before us and those who listen to him today: “No one has the power to snatch you away.” In the end, it's that simple — and not at all easy.

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

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For Sister Suellen Tennyson, M.S.C., and the Marianite Sisters of Holy Cross, who have experienced assault and violence in Burkina Faso, West Africa
- 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.

- The voice of God enters our lives as the greatest of all powers, even as it forever lies in vulnerability, like a helpless baby in the straw.
- The voice of God is always heard in privileged way in the poor, even as it beckons us through the voice of the artist and the intellectual.
- The voice of God always invites us to live beyond all fear, even as it inspires holy fear.
- The voice of God is heard inside the gifts of the Holy Spirit, even as it invites us never to deny the complexities of our world and our own lives.
- The voice of God is always heard wherever there is genuine enjoyment and gratitude, even as it asks us to deny ourselves, die to ourselves, and freely relativize all the things of this world.

The voice of God, it would seem, is forever found in paradox.

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

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you.

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

### IN A TIME OF TRIBULATION:

John's Gospel sounds so simple: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me" [John 10:27-30]. There are times when it does feel just that clear and easy. On the other hand, the Book of Revelation tells us that discipleship develops by passing through a time of great "tribulation" [Revelation 7:9-17], and the Acts of the Apostles is full of warnings that faith communities will be tested by internal divisions even as their very character seems to be challenged by new members from every land [Acts 13:14-15,43-52]. This sounds a whole lot like today's world!

As we celebrate the Easter season, current events may be the signs of the times that we need to help us understand these mysteries more deeply than ever before. Let us think about this Easter in the light of the past few years of our history.

First, the country was ravaged by bitter political divisions. While those were raging, we had COVID-19 — the pandemic that forced us to realize what it means to be part of a truly global world in which the fate of each affects all. Then, a few months ago, we saw the invasion of Ukraine, a situation many have interpreted through biblical images such as David and Goliath, the massacre of the innocents, or the epic attempt of evil to dominate the world.

Those violent, apocalyptic images make for an interesting contrast with the image of Christ, the good shepherd.

What are the Scripture Readings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Easter trying to tell us? First, let's look to Paul and Barnabas on their mission in Greek territory. Their preaching seemed to start innocently enough, urging the mixed crowd of ethnic Jews and converts to remain faithful to God's grace. Ah, but what does faithfulness entail?

For Paul — the Pharisee-convert to Christ — faithfulness implied being open to new revelation — including the revelation that God's choice of people could go beyond Israel. But when the traditional group saw the enthusiasm of the Gentile converts, the warning bells went off — they were sure to be outnumbered and their traditions would be challenged. That could not be right!



Reconciliation

homeless, and jobless. Jesus — and they — are asking — inviting us — actually insisting that we are to depend on them for receiving true life. Jesus also tells us that there are others who belong to this flock who have been listening to other voices. Jesus depends on us to speak and live what He has tried to say to us, to me, and so many times.

In conclusion, do you know that three out of every two persons have trouble with fractions.

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

### FREEDOM FROM SELF:

"Penance" for Francis of Assisi was not some kind of dark asceticism, but it was a proactive free leap into the problem ahead of time. This man profoundly understood freedom. It is the same freedom that we see in Jesus when he says: "You are not taking my life from me, I am laying it down freely" [John 10:18]. In the opening words of his last will and testament, Francis brilliantly says: "The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way. For when I was broken, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers, and the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them; and when I left them what before had seemed bitter to me was now turned into sweetness of soul and body. Afterwards, I waited just a little bit and then I left the world."

His phrase "left the world" did not mean leaving creation — it meant leaving what we might call the "system." Francis left business as usual, and he began what he called an alternative life, which at that time was called "a life of penance" — or abandoning the system. He decided to live a life focused on alleviating the needs and the suffering of others instead of a life of self-advancement. Most of our decisions are usually based on personal, egocentric preference and choice. This is the life that we are called to "leave" — the self that Jesus says must "die" to fall into our Larger Life or True Self. Freedom for both Jesus and Francis was purely and simply "freedom from the self" which is precisely "freedom for the world." This is so utterly different than our American notion of freedom.

In order to be free for life, we must quite simply be free from our small selves. Francis knew that Jesus was not at all interested in the usual "sin management" task that clergy love to think is their job. He saw that Jesus was neither surprised nor upset at what we usually call sin. Jesus was upset at human pain and suffering. What else do all the healing stories mean? They are half of the Gospel! Jesus did not focus on sin. Jesus went where the pain was. Wherever he found human pain, there he went, there he touched, and there he healed. Francis, who only wanted to do one thing — imitate Jesus — did the same. But you cannot do that, or even see it, unless your first question is something other than "What do I want?" "What do I prefer?" or "What pleases me?" In the great scheme of things, it really does not matter what I want. We are not free at all until we are free from ourselves. It is that simple and that hard.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.



### THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU:

The *Jesus Prayer* — or any other prayer form — is meant to be a help to gently empty our minds from all that is not God, and offer all the room to him and him alone. But that is not all. Our prayer becomes a prayer of the heart when we have localized in the center of our inner being the empty space in which our God-filled mind can descend and vanish, and where the distinctions between thinking and feeling, knowing and experience, ideas and emotions are transcended, and where God can become our host. "The Kingdom of God is within you" [Luke 17:21], Jesus said. The prayer of the heart takes these words seriously. When we empty our minds from all thoughts and our hearts from all experiences, we can prepare in the center of our innermost being the home for the God who wants to dwell in us. Then we can say with St. Paul "I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" [Galatians 2:20]. Then we can affirm Luther's words: "Grace is the experience of being delivered from experience." And then we can realize that it is not we who pray, but the Spirit of God who prays in us.

—Henri Nouwen 5

**WE ARE THE SHEEP OF THE LORD:**

John's Gospel for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Easter is extremely short, but has great density of meaning [John 10:27-30]. The words are powerful, strong, very rich in doctrine and in pastoral application. The words of the Lord can be read in the context in which Jesus pronounced them — during the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, some time before the Passover when Christ was arrested and condemned to death. But one can also read the words in the light of the Resurrection of the Lord, and in the fire of the Spirit of Pentecost.

Following the Resurrection, when the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, he met Simon Peter and said to him: "Feed my sheep" [John 21:17]. With these words, Jesus confirms Peter in his charge as the Vicar of Christ. Peter must hold the place of Christ — as must all the Successors of Peter until the end of time. With these words, Jesus entrusts to Peter "his sheep" — Jesus entrusts to Peter all the men and women whom the Father loves and wants to save through the death and resurrection of his only Son! With the words "Feed my sheep", it is no longer Jesus alone who is under the unique care of the Father, but also Simon Peter, the fisherman of Galilee who became a "fisher of men" [see Luke 5:10].

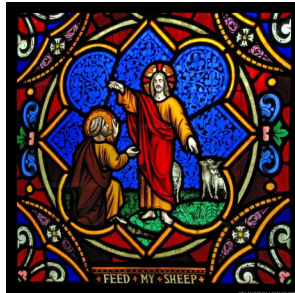
Today, in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the sheep of the Lord are the sheep of Peter, who continues to watch over his flock, acting in the person of his Successor — the Pope. Today, the risen Jesus is in Heaven, in the glory and splendor of the Father, he and the Father sending the Spirit of Love and Peace to the entire world. The Holy Spirit teaches all who truly allow themselves to be taught, he reminds them of all that Jesus said to his disciples while he lived on the earth — "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" [John 14:26]. But, in the benevolence of the Father, who loves Simon Peter as a son, the Holy Spirit teaches the sheep of Christ through the intermediary of Peter himself: the sheep of Christ, who are now the sheep of Peter, hear the voice of the Lord by listening to the breath of the Spirit, in obedience to the words of Peter and his Successors.

Jesus knows absolutely all the men and women whom the Father loves and wants to save for eternal life. While this is true knowledge, it is especially a knowledge of love which Jesus possesses in the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the ministry of Peter is a service of love and charity towards all the sheep of the Lord. Peter presides in charity! It is in this knowledge of love that the sheep follow Peter, and follow Jesus in Peter: "I know them, and they follow me".

Jesus, the Living, the Resurrected, is eternal Life and he gives this life to his sheep — "I give them eternal life." Jesus is eternal Life, and he gives eternal life — for, while he remains God, he is also, at the same time, Man. Jesus is the sole mediator between God and men. But, in his role as mediator, Jesus wanted to have partners. These partners are not his equals — for they are not God and Man as he is. But they are his servants — each one of them places his entire person at the service of Christ, and devotes himself, body and soul, to the Lord.

Among the collaborators chosen by Christ are the priests. Every day — and especially every Sunday — each one of them places his body and soul at the service of Christ and, taking bread, as the Lord did on the day before his Passion, he repeats in the name of Christ: "This is my Body", "This is my Blood". Then, the priest gives to the Lord's sheep eternal Life, saying: "Receive the Body of Christ." Among priests are, of course, Peter and his Successors. Like Christ, Peter can apply to himself the words: "I give them eternal life." Devoted in body and soul, through love, Peter collaborates in the Work of the Lord by giving to Christ's sheep eternal Life!

Saint Augustine spoke in the following way to those in his care, as he held the Eucharist in his hands: "Be what you see, and receive what you are." In saying this, he associated the concept of the Body

**SEARCHING FOR GOD AMONG MANY VOICES:**

We are surrounded by many voices. There's rarely a moment within our waking lives that someone or something isn't calling out to us; even in our sleep, dreams and nightmares ask for our attention. And each voice has its own particular cadence and message. Some voices invite us in — promising us life if we do this or that or buy a certain product or idea. Others threaten us. Some voices beckon us towards hatred, bitterness, and anger, while others challenge us towards love, graciousness, and forgiveness. Some voices tell us that they are playful and humorous, not to be taken seriously, even as others trumpet that they are urgent and weighty, the voice of non-negotiable truth, God's voice.

Within all of these: Which is the voice of God? How do we recognize God's voice among and within all of these voices?

That's not easy to answer. God, as the scriptures tell us, is the author of everything that's good — whether it bears a religious label or not. Hence, God's voice is inside of many things that are not explicitly connected to faith and religion, just as God's voice is also not in everything that masquerades as religious. But how do we discern that?

Jesus leaves us a wonderful metaphor to work with, but it's precisely only a metaphor — He tells us that he is the "Good Shepherd" and that his sheep will recognize his voice among all other voices [John 10:27-30]. In sharing this metaphor, he is drawing upon a practice that was common among shepherds at the time — at night, for protection and companionship, shepherds would put their flocks together into a common enclosure. They would then separate the sheep in the morning by using their voices. Each shepherd had trained his sheep to be attuned to his voice and his voice only. The shepherd would walk away from the enclosure calling his sheep — often times by their individual names — and they would follow him. His sheep were so attuned to his voice that they would not follow the voice of another shepherd, even if that shepherd tried to trick them — shepherds often did this to try to steal someone else's sheep — by imitating the voice of their own shepherd. Like a baby who, at a point, will no longer be cuddled by the voice of a babysitter, but wants and needs the voice of the mother, each sheep recognized intimately the voice that was safeguarding them and would not follow another voice.



So too with us: among all the voices that surround and beckon us, how do we discern the unique cadence of God's voice? Which is the voice of the Good Shepherd? There's no easy answer, and sometimes the best we can do is to trust our gut-feeling about right and wrong. But we have a number of principles that come to us from Jesus, from scripture, and from the deep wells of our Christian tradition that can help us. Here are a series of principles to help us discern God's voice among the multitude of voices that beckon us. What is the unique cadence of the voice of the Good Shepherd?

- The voice of God is recognized both in whispers and in soft tones, even as it is recognized in thunder and in storm.
- The voice of God is recognized wherever one sees life, joy, health, color, and humor, even as it is recognized wherever one sees dying, suffering, conscripted poverty, and a beaten-down spirit.
- The voice of God is recognized in what calls us to what's higher, sets us apart, and invites us to holiness, even as it is recognized in what calls us to humility, submergence into humanity, and in that which refuses to denigrate our humanity.
- The voice of God is recognized in what appears in our lives as "foreign," as other, as "stranger," even as it is recognized in the voice that beckons us home.
- The voice of God is the one that most challenges and stretches us, even as it the only voice that ultimately soothes and comforts us.

Of course, we have to freely follow him. In the Book of Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas urge the people to “remain faithful” [Acts 13:14-15,43-52]. Like them we will have trials, but you notice that they were “filled with joy.” They know that Jesus is with them.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd — the Lamb who suffers not only for us, but with us. For that reason, he can give us a “blessed assurance.” No one can take us from his hand. And he will lead us to the springs of life-giving water. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

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

## WHO'S LISTENING TO THE SHEPHERD?

No one sits down on a beautiful sunny day, no worry in the world, and writes Scripture. If our sacred authors didn't have some problems bugging them, we'd have no Bible. They only write because something or someone needs to be confronted. That's certainly the case with Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts of the Apostles. One of the issues prompting Luke to compose his double volume work was the claim of some Jews that the historical Jesus planned to destroy their religion by bringing huge numbers of Gentiles into it without obligating them to keep the 613 Laws of Moses. That certainly was what some of his followers were doing fifty years after his death and resurrection — Luke's day and age.

The evangelist counters their argument, claiming that Jesus and his disciples originally evangelized only Jews. Non-Jews came into the picture only after Jews rejected the call of Jesus to reform. Gentiles simply were benefiting from what Jews had discarded.

Take Paul and Barnabas for example [Acts 13:14-15,43-52]. “Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said: ‘It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you [Jews] first, but since you reject it and condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.’” In other words, God's word, spoken through Jesus, isn't going to be dead-ended just because those to whom it was originally directed, reject it.

It's significant that the Gentiles who accept the word are a unique group — God fearers. That's the biblical term usually employed for non-Jews who are very favorable to Jews — frequently attending synagogue services, and even keeping some of the Mosaic regulations.

Historians have recently delved into these individuals, reflecting on their position in various Jewish communities. Since they seem to have been generous contributors to Jewish causes — even building some synagogues — their becoming Christians certainly created tension between Jews and Jesus' followers.

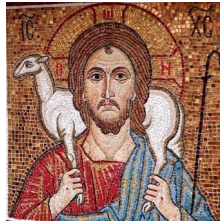
Yet it's interesting to note that Paul and Barnabas never stopped preaching when those whom they expected to eagerly receive their word, eventually rejected it. They simply began to realize God's word — as the prophet Isaiah discovered five centuries before — is alive, and that there's always someone around who's eager to benefit from that life — even if it isn't those whom we logically expected to benefit from it.

I originally taught Scripture to Catholic high school girls, who seemed bored by almost everything I taught. Then one morning, when called into the hall to receive a message from the office, I discovered an eighty some year-old retired nun standing in the corridor outside my classroom door. When I asked if I could help with something, she just smiled and said: “No. I come here and listen whenever you're teaching. We never had many Scripture classes in the convent during my formation. I'm learning a lot from you.” Obviously I was teaching the wrong group. Along with high school students, I've been teaching adults ever since.

We have no idea who's going to be in that great heavenly multitude that the author of Revelation refers to, nor do we have any secret information on what our role is and will be in helping gather that multitude. But we do know there'll always be people out there listening for the voice of the shepherd. John's Jesus is convinced of that.

As other Christ's, our job is to never stop preaching that word. Isaiah was convinced it always has an effect — no matter how or to whom it's proclaimed. But it does bother me that the gospel Jesus was frequently criticized and dismissed because he preached it to sinners. Wouldn't you think the “good folk” would do more with it than sinners? Does that create a problem?

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



of Christ with the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ — the Church. “Be what you see” — become similar to Christ whom you see under the appearances of bread and wine. “Receive what you are” — receive the Eucharist in order to be the Body of Christ. Saint Augustine, and Saint Peter before him, could also have said: “No one shall snatch them out of my hand.” For both of them held in their hand the Body of Christ, but also his Mystical Body — the Church! Both of them could have said in all truth: “No one shall snatch them out of my hand.” For, in holding the Eucharist, they had in their hand the sheep of the Lord!

God Father watches over all creatures! His Love has no limit! He watches over each of his children with equal care! All that he desires is that we go to him, in Christ, in order that we too might be one with him. If we are one with Christ, then we will be able to say, like the Lord: “I and the Father are one.”

—taken from the writings of Father Daniel Meynen, which appear on the internet.

## KNOW THE SHEPHERD:

A preacher once told this story about everyone's favorite psalm — the twenty third. In a family gathering, a youngster stood up and recited it from memory. It was a beautiful rendition — the child's words flowed like music. His folks applauded enthusiastically and asked him to do it a second time. He proudly obliged. Then the patriarch stood up. In a cracked and halting voice, he began: “The Lord is my shepherd. There is nothing I shall want.” His family sat there hypnotized till the conclusion. They were too overwhelmed to applaud. One of their company later summed up the reaction of all: “The boy knows the psalm, but the old man knows the shepherd.”

A poet was sharing some of his work with an audience. He invited them to listen not only with the ears of their head but also with the ears in their hearts. We would do well to do something similar with John's Gospel [10:27-30]. It does much to flesh out the person of Jesus. He becomes less a mystery and more an open book.

The Teacher refers to His relationship to us as that of shepherd to sheep. Some of us might like to think that the application of shepherd to Himself was original with Jesus. But scholars are quick to point out that this is not the case. As a matter of fact, the term shepherd applied to leaders was quite common. The Greek poet Homer who lived out his life about a millennium before the Christ called the celebrated soldier Agamemnon “the shepherd of the people.” And a trip to even a third-rate museum on some city's back streets will show you images of the pharaohs of Egypt standing with the staff of the shepherd in their hands. Thus, when Jesus used the term in reference to Himself, no one was surprised. But, as we all know from history, not all shepherds are the same. Many generals and pharaohs oftentimes seemed to be direct blood kin to such as Ivan the Terrible or Messrs Stalin and Hitler. All in all, many shepherds do a pretty dreadful number on their sheep. But, as Arthur Tonne points out: the Christ took very special care of the physical needs of His sheep. Luke 18 tells us that Jesus restored sight to a blind man. John 2 tells us that Mary told her Son: “They have no wine” — and we all know what happened. Recall too the Roman officer who pleaded with Jesus in Matthew 8 for his ill servant. It almost goes without saying the servant was on his feet in an instant. Matthew 14 tells us what Jesus did with five loaves and a few fish for a famished mob. Surely our shepherd is one of a kind.

Jesus' concern as a shepherd went beyond the physical. Eagerly this shepherd listened to His sheep with both the ears of His head as well as the ears in His heart. He was a most effective counselor, advocate, and listener. There was about Him no condescension. He was quite willing to spend, as we like to say, quality time with His constituency. Check it out in the Gospels. Look up Nicodemus, the widow of Nain, the blind fellow, the leper, etc. If you wanted His time — consider it yours. His own agenda He put on the back burner. His time becomes your time. You need no appointment to approach Him. This shepherd is an all-time winner.



And, as John's Gospel indicates, Jesus was most anxious to get His sheep out of this transitory life and into eternal life. In the words of the union organizers of old, Jesus believed not only in bread on the table, but roses too. His agenda was twofold — making both this life more attractive and making heaven the final stop. In John's Gospel alone, there are 13 references to Jesus talking about eternal life — "I give them eternal life; they will never be lost."

If you are given the option of knowing either Psalm 23 or the shepherd, be smart — choose the shepherd every time out.

—taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooly, which appear on the internet

## THE LAST 24 HOURS:

You have probably heard this question before, but it's a question worth meditating on regularly — "What if you were told that you had 24 hours to live? How would you spend those hours?" Would there be some place you feel you needed to go? What would you do? Who would you do it with?

Looking at life from this perspective, it is amazing how many things that we think are necessary, how many fears that absorb our time, suddenly seem trivial and unimportant. I think most of us would clear our calendars and delete many marginal people from our appointment books. We would try to surround ourselves with the few precious people in our lives and engage in a number of relatively simple things — crying, laughing, and perhaps sharing a meal. But one thing would be clear. In those final hours we would know what we would say. Because in those circumstances there is only one thing to say which makes any sense.

This can be documented by the events of 9/11. During those terrible hours many people who were on the fatal hijacked airplane or who were isolated in the upper floors of the World Trade Center had cell phones. They used them, and we have records of those calls. The records that would break your heart. Nobody with those cell phones chose to call their financial planner. No one called the sports hotline to check on recent scores. They all called the person that meant the most to them, and they all said the same three words: "I love you."

Now why is it that those three words are the words that everyone says in such circumstances? Certainly, it is not a matter of providing information. The people who received those calls already knew that they were loved. No, those words were spoken because in the presence of death we reach out intuitively to what is most important in our lives. What is most important thing are the relationships we have with the people who we love. Somehow saying those words makes love present, makes love tangible, gives us something to hold on to as life slips away.

The words "I love you" are a sacrament, if you will. They make the spiritual present, the invisible real. In the last few moments of life the only thing that matters is our connection with others. When we face the reality of death, all we want is love.

So if this is the case, does it not make sense to take what is most important and make it the foundation of our lives? This is what Jesus does in John's gospel [John 10:27-30]. In the last hours of his life he gives his disciples a new commandment. They must love one another. In order to show them how to live out that commandment, Jesus, on the night before he died, gives us two gifts — a meal and an example. The meal is the meal of the Eucharist — the feast of love, the meal in which we celebrate God's love for us and our love for one another. The example is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples — the work of love, the action of service to the people we care for. To be a disciple of Jesus, then, is to be someone who knows the meaning of the meal and the meaning of the example. A follower of Christ knows how important it is to celebrate love and to work for love.

How do we celebrate love? We celebrate love by always appreciating who are the key people in our lives, by not taking them for granted, by regularly using the words "I love you" as a sacramental moment,



which is self-destructive in our lives. We continually petition the Lord for strength to fight that which destroys us. In little steps — sometimes too small to realize — we walk away from death and walk with the Lord. We live under the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Life — meaningful life — is about Jesus Christ. We are called upon today to recognize his presence in our lives. Like the disciples of Paul and Barnabas, the only real need we have in our lives is to learn how to be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit [Acts 13:14-15,43-52]. For the Mercy of God directs our lives to happiness. Jesus did this for us.

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

## WE ARE IN GOOD HANDS:

John's Gospel for this 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Easter speak about Jesus as our leader — our shepherd [John 10:17-20]. I would like to begin with this question: "What makes a person a great leader?" We can learn from one of the greatest leaders in history — Alexander the Great. You remember him. He was the guy, still in his twenties, who conquered most of the known world. When his army was crossing the Makran Desert on their way to Persia, they ran out of water. Some of Alexander's lieutenants managed to get enough water to fill a small helmet. They brought it to the general.

He asked: "Is there enough for both me and my men?"

"Only you, sir," they replied. Alexander then lifted up the helmet as the soldiers watched. Instead of drinking, he tipped it and poured the water into the sand. The men cheered — they knew their general would not allow them to suffer anything he was unwilling to accept.

Jesus is that kind of leader par excellence. In the Book of Revelation, John reminds us that "The Lamb will shepherd them" [Revelation 7:9-17]. As the Lamb, he gives his life for us. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has suffered for us and he continues to suffer with us. He does not ask us to take on anything that he himself is not willing to endure.

And what does Jesus ask us to take on? Well, St. John speaks about a "time of great distress." None of us knows what the future will bring. But we know it will include distress. Although Jesus does not promise us a rose garden, he does assure us that he will be with us. And so we say: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me" [Psalm 23]. Whatever distress we experience, Jesus the Good Shepherd, will be by our side.

The author of Revelation speaks about distress in terms of hunger and thirst. You and I have within us a longing — a thirst — that nothing here below can satisfy. Let me give an example. About twenty years ago, a young man arrived in our country from Mexico. He brought nothing with him and had limited English. But he had an ability to train dogs, and he made a lot of money helping people with problem pets. He even got his own television show. He seemed to have everything — money, fame, admiration. But a few years ago, he felt so empty that he tried to take his own life. I am thankful he did not succeed.

His life, however, shows that nothing in this world can satisfy our inner thirst. That's what God is talking about — the Lamb will shepherd us and will lead us to springs of life-giving water. The way we get to that spring is by following Jesus, by becoming part of his flock. What will matter in the long run is whether we belong to the flock of Jesus. Perhaps you have read the *Chronicles of Narnia*. In the final book, after the "Last Battle," the children find themselves again the lion who represents Jesus. It is joyful moment. Five of the children are there — Peter, Lucy, Edmund, Eustace and Jill. But one is missing — Susan. She had become involved in other things — lipstick, dresses, invitations — not bad things in themselves, but they made her forget about Aslan, that is, Christ.

We need to be aware of that possibility. You and I can make choices that separate us from Christ, from his flock. Jesus, nevertheless, gives us a wonderful assurance — "I know my sheep and they follow me. No one can take them out of my hand." No power can separate us from Christ.



**JESUS DID THIS FOR US:**

Let me begin with a story about Mother Theresa. A year or so before she died, she paid a visit to the United Nations. St. Teresa of Calcutta — Mother Teresa — was approached by a diplomat who said: “I am not a Catholic, Mother. But I want to know: how should I pray.” The frail little nun took his burly hands in hers and spread out five of his fingers on one hand. “When you pray,” she said, “think about the many blessings you have received; then, at the end of the day, count out on each finger these words spoken to you by Jesus — “You did this for me.” The diplomat left holding up his hand as though it were a trophy and saying: “You did this for me. “

In this simple prayer, Mother Teresa made real for the diplomat that the Resurrection can and does live within every person. The love and peace of the Good Shepherd is present to us in the many moments of compassion that bless our lives — in kind words, in the listening ear, in the generous actions of others for us, there is Jesus, doing this to me. Jesus is also present in the blessings we extend to others. The Good Shepherd of John’s Gospel [10:27-30] — God’s Word of love made flesh — guides us every day in our journey to the eternal life of the Father.

“In him, we live and move and have our being,” St. Paul says to the Athenians [see Acts 17]. We are protected from the rain of attacks on our lives with the Divine Umbrella he extends over us. We live under his merciful love for us.

Under the Mercy — that phrase was repeated over and over again in a wonderful book, entitled: *A Severe Mercy* by Sheldon Vanauken. Left to ourselves, we are inclined to destroy the purpose for our existence and eliminate any meaning to our lives. But committed to Christ, everything in our lives makes sense, has meaning, and has purpose. Our commitment to Christ protects us from being destroyed by those who mock us and attack us. Our commitment to Christ protects us from destroying ourselves. This is the deep mercy of the Lord.

“Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ,” St. Paul tells the Christians under persecution in Rome — “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” [Romans 8:35-36].

The vision of the Heavenly realm as described in the Book of Revelation [7:9-17] is that of the countless number of the saved who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Their robes are their baptismal garments. More than that, their robes are their baptismal lives. They have purified their lives, washed them — made them white, by accepting the cross of Jesus, the blood of the Lamb. Now they minister to the Lord before the throne of God in eternal happiness. They would be the first to admit that the yoke of Christ was light, the suffering they endured for standing up for him was minor, and the path they was led by Him was easy. The Divine Shepherd knows them, guides them, and protects them so that their happiness may be eternal.

This is the deep mercy of the Lord which we also enjoy. Your neighbors laugh at you for your devotion to the Lord. They mock you widow and widowers who have married each other in Christ because you have sacrificed financial plans and married rather than live together in sin. They mock you young parents who welcome the surprise pregnancy rather than have that life destroyed. They attack you honest people of various businesses for your just standards and try to eliminate you from your positions because less honesty is more cost effective. They insult you young people who are willing to be the so-called only one who doesn't drink, take drugs or have sex. They can attack us, but they cannot destroy the peace and the love the Jesus Christ within us. We live under the peace and mercy of the Good Shepherd.

Under the mercy of the Lord we are protected from our worst enemy — ourselves. We avoid that which destroys his presence in our homes and hearts. This is a great mercy. Each of us knows that



making present that which is so fundamental to our lives.

How do we work for love? By taking concrete steps to see that our relationships continue and grow, by learning how to speak the truth with the people that are connected to us, by listening to them, by saying “I’m sorry,” by asking “What do you need?” and then trying to make it real.

If we are going to be disciples of Jesus — if we are going to follow the commandment of love — we must celebrate love and work to deepen the relationships in our lives. A clear opportunity for doing this is Mothers’ Day which we celebrate this weekend. We can use the relationship to our mothers as an example of all the key relationships in our lives. If you are fortunate to still have your mothers with you, do more for them today than take them to brunch. Find a way to celebrate your love for them, find your own personal way of saying the words “I love you” so that it makes love real. Be willing to work for love, to deepen that relationship with your mother. Ask her what she needs. Listen. If necessary, say you are sorry.

The good news, of course, is that most of us here today have more than 24 hours to live. Hopefully we have many more years. But how foolish would it be to postpone the action of love until those final hours. Now is the time to celebrate the love of those who are in our lives. Now is the time to work to deepen and build those relationships. Today is the day that we should love one another as Christ has loved us.

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Acts 11:1-18, John 10:1-10
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Acts 11:19-26, John 10:22-30
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Acts 12:24-13:5, John 12:44-50
<b>Thursday:</b>	Acts 13:13-25, John 13:16-20
<b>Friday:</b>	Acts 13:26-33, John 14:1-6
<b>Saturday:</b>	Acts 13:44-52, John 14:7-14
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Week in Easter:</b>	Acts 14:21-27, Revelation 21:1-5, John 13:31-35

**WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US:**

If we are honest, we have to say that we cannot reach the goal. We cannot become what we ought to become — true men and women. Many let the matter rest there; they confess it, but take no action. They make themselves satisfied with half because they cannot have the whole. God demands all — not just half. And this “all” we are not capable of giving. What is impossible for us is what God wants — all love to him and to our fellow humans. If this is true, it would seem that we can have no good conscience, no trusting relationship with God, no inner peace, and no freedom of the soul. But God has in his mercy shown us a different way — “You cannot come up to me, so I will come down to you.” And God descends to us human beings. This act of becoming one of us begins at Christmas and ends on Good Friday.

— Emil Brunner

**LIVING RIGHTLY:**

My wish — indeed my continuing passion — would be not to point the finger in judgment, but to part a curtain, that invisible shadow that falls between people, the veil of indifference to each other’s presence, each other’s wonder, each other’s human plight.

—Eudora Welty

#### 4 WAYS TO SPREAD THE WORD THAT JESUS IS RISEN:

From yelling hallelujah, to chocolate bunnies, to egg hunts, to reuniting with whatever you fasted from during Lent, Easter is easily one of my favorite times of the year. But to find the greatest gift of Easter, you'll have to put down your basket and all that yummy, sugary stuff that fills you up, and instead run to something empty — a tomb where the body of Jesus, the King of the Jews, was laid to rest.

We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus loud and proud every Easter Sunday, not only because it begins the most important liturgical time of the year, but because His resurrection is the heart of our Christian faith and the most pivotal moment in human history. St. Paul reminds us that “if Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith” [1 Corinthians 15:14].

This is the classic “all-or-nothing” decision we have to make with Jesus. He either rose from the dead, or He didn't — there's no in-between. We either have to believe that He gave His life for us on the cross and then came back to life, or we have to cast off the whole resurrection story as factious.

But the fact is that there are plenty of logical reasons to believe that Jesus actually did rise from the dead. Jesus didn't just tiptoe out of the tomb and play hide-and-go-seek with the people of his time. He rolled back that stone all the way and proceeded to make His resurrected presence known to hundreds over the next few weeks. The resurrection is the event that altered the course of history forever.

Before I started to take my faith seriously, I often saw Jesus simply as the guy who died for our sins so that when I messed up, it wasn't that big of a deal. But the more I encountered people who were on fire for their Christian faith — and the more I started going to daily Mass and youth group — the more I began to question this box I had put Jesus in. I was faced with the question: “If all Jesus did was die for me, then why didn't the story end then and there? How are we still here worshipping Him today if His life just ended on the cross?”

Those questions are answered on Easter Sunday when we celebrate and proclaim His resurrection. Jesus is alive. He did so much more than just die for us — He went the extra step that only Jesus could take, and rose from the dead for us. If we truly and firmly believe in the miracle of Easter, then it's imperative that we do more than just celebrate for one Sunday; we need to go out and proclaim that He is risen!

There are plenty of reasons why it's important to proclaim that Jesus is alive. The resurrection is a world-shaking event that is confirming, conquering and continuing. **The resurrection is confirming** because it proved Jesus' divinity. Up until His crucifixion, He had been bold and controversial in His teachings of who He really was and who had sent Him. As Jesus is hanging from the cross, people walk by shaking their heads and taunting Him, saying things like: “if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” [Matthew 27:40]. But Jesus showed that He indeed was the Son of God and proved His divinity not in simply saving Himself from death on the cross, but by defeating death by living again.

**The resurrection is also conquering** because of this defeat of death — as well as defeat of Satan. St Paul reminds us: “We know that Christ, who was brought back to life, will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him” [Romans 6:9]. Satan also has no power over Jesus, nor over us, thanks to the resurrection. The devil fought savagely to overthrow the kingdom of heaven, and probably thought he had won on Good Friday. But instead of the cross and the tomb being a symbol of Jesus' defeat, they became symbols of His triumph. Sin and death were conquered that day once and for all.

Lastly, **the resurrection of Jesus is continuing** because He destroyed the notion that “You Only Live Once”. And in doing so, Jesus opened the door for us to join Him in resurrection when He comes again. Jesus walking out of the tomb won back for us what was lost because of Adam's sin in the garden.

It's important to understand not only why we should proclaim that Jesus is risen, but also how we should proclaim it. Easter is 50 days long, and according to the United States Conference of Catholic



Bishops, it should be “celebrated in joy and exultation as one feast day.” We can't simply leave the wonder and excitement of the resurrection on Easter Sunday and then pack it up along with all of the decorations until next year. Instead, we must spread the joy and exultation of Easter — along with our hallelujahs — far and wide. Here's some thoughts on how we can do this.

1. **Keep His commandments.** Jesus, at the Last Supper told His disciples: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” [John 14:15]. Imagine Easter as a sort of New Year's for your faith, and a great opportunity to make resolutions to keep His commandments. In the renewal of our baptismal vows, we are refreshed and renewed in our journey to heaven. If this is something Jesus decided to tell His apostles right before He headed to Calvary, you better believe it's important. It sounds straightforward, because it is: follow the Ten Commandments and in doing so, you will be proclaiming and glorifying our risen king's name.
2. **Jump into the sea.** Shortly after the resurrection, Simon and some of the other disciples decided to go fishing. At dawn, they see a guy standing on the shore, and eventually realize it's Jesus. When Simon Peter realized Jesus was back from the dead, he was so excited that he jumped right into the water with his clothes on and swam to the shore [see John 21]. In your own life, when you see Jesus, jump into the sea and swim towards Him. When you have the opportunity to encounter God, rush to Him! — whether in your youth group, through adoration, or however you can get to Him; you are the one He hung from the cross for, and who He rolled away the stone for — so go to Him.
3. **Don't just stand there.** When Jesus ascends into heaven, His disciples were probably a bit unsure if He was leaving for good this time — because they're still looking up when two men dressed in white appear next to them and say: “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven” [see Acts 1]. The message is clear — what are you waiting for? Jesus made it clear to His disciples before He left that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and that He expected them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Now that Jesus is risen, don't just stand in front of the tomb looking around for Him; it's time to go out and spread the word that He is alive and He is ready to enter into our hearts, and to prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Go Forth.** And so the fun begins! If we are to truly celebrate this Easter season as it is meant to be celebrated, we must spread the word of what has happened. The resurrection is too monumental of a moment to keep to ourselves. If one of your friends died and then showed up on your couch a few days later asking what they missed, wouldn't you tell the world? Jesus being nailed to a cross spoke volumes about His love. The rolled-away stone and empty tomb strongly displayed His power. This Easter, let us join together in one, loud voice and proclaim the power of the resurrection, so that all may come to know that Jesus is alive.
 

—taken from the writings of Jay Martin, an youth minister.

#### 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