

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Someone ~

Lord,
when I am famished,
give me someone who needs food.
When I am thirsty,
give me someone who needs water.
When I am cold,
give me someone to warm.
When I am hurting,
give me someone to console.
When my cross becomes heavy,
give me another's cross to share.
When I am poor,
lead someone needy to me.
When I have no time,
give me someone to help for a moment.
When I am humiliated,
give me someone to praise.
When I am discouraged,
send someone to encourage.
When I need another's understanding,
give me someone who needs mine.
When I need somebody to take care of me,
send me someone to care for.
When I think of myself, t
urn my thoughts toward another.
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 29th**. Mass on **Sunday, May 29th** will be at **9:00 AM**. **This is a one time change because of graduation which takes place later that morning.**

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 4th**. 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.

**BACK TO THE BALLPARK:**

Our Lady Chapel is going back to the ballpark. Join us on Friday, July 15th as we head to Classic Park in Eastlake to watch the Lake County Captains attempt to slay the Dayton Dragons at 7:00 PM. Tickets are \$25.00 each and include game ticket, picnic dinner and postgame fireworks. The picnic begins at 6 PM and will continue through the first part of the game. Sign up on the easel in the narthex. Final day to RSVP is Sunday, June 26

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — MAY 21st:**

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



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

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

DON’T RUN AND RUSH:

The duties and cares of the day crowd about us when we awake each day — if they have not already dispelled our night’s rest. How can everything be accommodated in one day? When will I do this, when that? How will it all be accomplished? Thus agitated, we are tempted to run and rush. And so we must take the reins in hand and remind ourselves: “Let go of your plans. The first hour of your morning belongs to God. Tackle the day’s work that he charges you with, and he will give you the power to accomplish it.”

— Edith Stein

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Blasé Iuliano, son of Gary Iuliano [‘77], who is encountered problems in preparing for brain surgery.
- For Matthew Gebhart, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Thomas Hughes [‘56], who is undergoing treatment for memory issues.
- 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 Zingales, 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 Sam Barrick, who has been diagnosed with cancer.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- 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
- For Ernie Mansour, father of Mark [‘76], Robert [‘79], Thomas [‘89], and Drew [‘91] Mansour, and Grandfather of Brett [‘08], Brian [‘10], Paige [‘14], Eric [‘22], Evan [‘26] Anton.
- For James Costabile, grandfather of Marco Costabile [‘20].
- For Beatrice Stiver
- 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.
- For Maureen Ashdown.
- For David Pettine, Sr.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

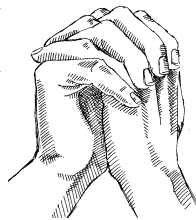
- For the people of the Ukraine and the people of Russia; for an end to the war; and for all people of the world to work more ardently for peaceful resolutions to political and social issues.
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- 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.

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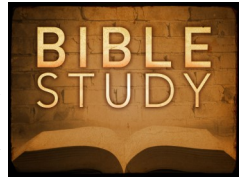
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 Fletcher Linsz, brother of incoming student, Logan Linsz [*26], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma.
- For Agnes Mirando, grandmother of David [*12], Agnes [*14] and Matthew [*25], who is seriously ill with a tumor.
- 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 Elaine Hocevar, mother of Greg [*97], Matthew [*98], Ryan [*00], and Sarah [*01] Hocevar, who is 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 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 — WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, June 1st 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 Holy Spirit. 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 15: 5 th Week in Easter	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, May 16:	NO MASS
Tuesday, May 17:	NO MASS
Wednesday, May 18:	NO MASS
Thursday, May 19:	NO MASS
Friday, May 20:	NO MASS
Saturday, May 21: 6 th Week in Easter	NO MASS
Sunday, May 22: 6 th Week in Easter	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

LET YOURSELF BE USELESS:

Prayer is not a way of being busy with God instead of with people. In fact, it unmasks the illusion of busyness, usefulness, and indispensability. It is a way of being empty and useless in the presence of God, and so of proclaiming our basic belief that all is grace and nothing is simply the result of hard work. Indeed, wasting time for God is an act of ministry because it reminds us and our people that God is free to touch anyone regardless of our well-meant efforts. Prayer as an articulate way of being useless in the face of God brings a smile to all we do and creates humor in the midst of our occupations and preoccupations.

Thinking about my own prayer, I realize how easily I make it into a little seminar with God, during which I want to be useful by reading beautiful prayers, thinking profound thoughts, and saying impressive words. I am obviously still worried about the grade! It indeed is a hard discipline to be useless in God’s presence and to let him speak in the silence of my heart. But whenever I become a little useless I know that God is calling me to a new life beyond the boundaries of my usefulness.

Henri Nouwen

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Liturgy — speaking cynically — is doing “the God thing”. More gracefully-speaking, it is actually God doing “the human thing”. Our concept of God is that the Divinity is tending reverently to creation and the continuous creation of us as God’s highest art work. God does this “human thing” by coming to us where we are at, and as we are. And the beauty of this is that because God loves us, He does not just leave us there. There are so many ways in which God continues his “human thing” by effecting our individual and universal creation and salvation. None is greater than what happens to us in the Eucharist.

This weekend is one of those days that you might be glad that you are not the reader for the First Reading. While the reading is not long — the question that people ask first — there are many big words in it — people’s second question.

Paul and Barnabas have been moving around — and the list of town’s sounds like something one might hear in a bus station [Acts 14:20-27]. The Book of Acts of the Apostles relates the growth of the early Church through confrontations and hardships. The apostles and disciples believe what they have heard and seen, and they keep moving on to spread the faith.

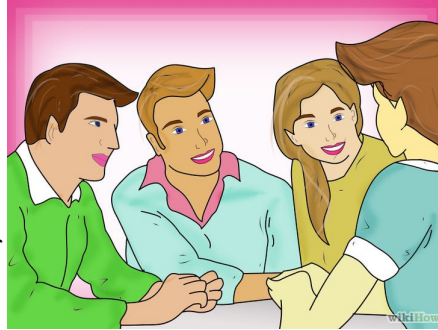
Perhaps an image might help here. A flashlight beam shines upon the surface of a globe resting in a dark room. That light illumines only that small circle of the surface. The light of Christ — the Light that is Christ — shined into the dark in one place at one time of history. But the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised to His early companions came upon them in time, and moved the Light from Jerusalem to the “gentiles.” The Light and the Spirit are for the entire world and for all times. Paul and Barnabas carry that Light, and the Spirit urges them to keep on moving even to the ends of the known world.

What is amazing here is that Paul has just risen from his being stoned by some Jews who had followed him from Antioch where Paul had been previously preaching. They dragged him out of town and left him for dead. Preaching the Good News was, and still is, dangerous to one’s health. Yet Paul’s zeal for ministry is undiminished; he returns to Antioch and exhorts the believers to hang in there — even though there might be a little resistance.

John’s Gospel [13:31-35] relates Jesus’ speaking to His disciples immediately after Judas has left the group in the Upper Room — Judas went to betray Jesus. Jesus is pictured in a prayerful spirit of surrendering to time. His hour for glorification is arriving. In John’s theology, “glory” has to do with the more complete revelation of Jesus. The highest expression of this glory will be Jesus on the throne of His Cross. In a sense, Jesus is telling his disciples that it is from the Cross that “you can see the depth of God’s love for you through me.”

Have you ever noticed that at the end of a house party, there is much standing at the door — or out on the steps of the house — and many important things are said. Future dates, or phone calls are arranged, someone forgets something that was promised during the evening and is back in the house. Kind words of affection and thanksgiving are exchanged, and promises of future dinners or social activities are shared. It all happens at the end and quite quickly. These are sometimes the most sincere and loving things explicitly spoken.

Jesus has washed the feet of the disciples and given them an instruction about how they will live His presence. That was the gesture of loving care. Now Jesus says His important words at the end, on the doorstep of time — “love one another as I have loved you”. For John, there is no narrative of Jesus’ instituting the Eucharist. Here at the Last supper He is saying, “Do this in memory of Me.” Loving one another is how we remember, how we do the “remembering”. We remember Him in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. We live lovingly as a remembrance of His love for us.

**THE NEW COMMANDMENT:**

What do we do when the opposite of what we expect will happen actually happens? Are we so busy concentrating on what should have been that we don’t even notice what actually took place? Years ago I experienced some of “that” while visiting friends in Paris. One evening they took me to meet their pastor in Belleville, France. During the introductions, the priest smiled, shook my hand and said something to me. I quickly turned to one of my friends and instinctively said: “Tell Father I’m glad to meet him, but please tell him I don’t speak French.” My friend hesitated for a few seconds, then quietly informed me: “He’s speaking English to you!”

We saw something similar in last week’s Scripture readings when, beyond all expectations, most Jews who encountered the good news rejected the faith of Jesus while many Gentiles accepted it [see Acts 13:43-52]. Jesus’ first followers originally presumed non-Jews would have little in common with this Jewish carpenter and the reform he preached. Yet by the time Luke composes his Acts of the Apostles in the mid-80’s, Gentiles are making up the vast majority of the Christian community while the percentage of Jews in the church falls year after year.

A unique Christian pattern is being created. Followers of the risen Jesus are expected to constantly “hang loose.” Those who are serious about accepting faith can never be certain where that faith is going to take them next. The invitation could come from the most unexpected people, and lead down the most overlooked roads. Luke zeros in on this phenomenon when he talks about Paul and Barnabas [Acts 14:20-27].

When Paul and Barnabas returned to the community in Antioch which had originally commissioned and sent them out to spread Jesus’ faith, the church couldn’t help but be amazed at the report they gave. Though they sent them to evangelize Jews, they actually converted Gentiles! And when they backtracked through these new communities the pair discovered they were so generously adapting their lives to Jesus’ faith that they could begin appointing leaders among them. Christianity was much more than just a fad.

Slowly but surely, Jesus’ followers are discovering their faith is creating what the author of Revelation often refers to as a “new heaven and a new earth” [Revelation 21:1-5]. Right before their eyes, “the former heaven and the former earth had passed away.”

Yet in the midst of all these changes, there’s one constant in the faith of Jesus — love. Everything isn’t up for grabs. John’s Jesus couldn’t be clearer in his Last Supper discourse — “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” [John 13:31-35]. It’s this love which demands the frequent changes. The same act of love doesn’t always show love to everyone at the same time. As Paul and Barnabas discovered, other Christs have to reflect not only on what should be, but what actually is.

I, for instance, was always taught to expect dire “things” to result from inviting non-Catholic Christians to participate in the Mass. Yet in my personal experiences I’ve encountered nothing but good. Even differences in the Eucharistic belief cannot get in the way of creating a oneness among the participants that can’t be accomplished any other way. Eucharist is no longer a reward, but a help.

During those times, is the risen Jesus is actually speaking English to us?

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

A NEW DAY:

May you embrace this day, not just as any old day, but as this day. Your day. Held in trust by you, in a singular place, called now.

—Carrie Newcomer

hardships pave the road toward the reign of God [Acts 14:20-27]. This reiterates Jesus' message in John's Gospel where, just as Judas has gone off to set the Passion in motion, Jesus announces that his glory is about to be revealed [John 13:31-35].

As we revel in spring, we might prefer to take a pass on the difficult character of the Easter messages and simply enjoy the weather as we anticipate the graduations, weddings, and other events that mark this time of year. That's precisely what John wants to prevent. It's not that John wants us to mope around dwelling on the worst. Rather, he wants us to believe that, like Jesus, we enter most profoundly into the realm of grace when we confront the powers of evil. Let's pinpoint this even more. What in the U.S. is the "old order" that needs to be replaced?

When we are honest, we admit that our culture has schooled us in security — seasoned with a good dose of obliviousness. We can obtain emergency health care, security cameras, good locks, metal detectors and insurance for everything from our bank accounts to our pets. For those for whom that is not enough, we protect gun rights and assure the ironic combination of the freedom to refuse vaccinations while we are required to wear seat belts. Our entertainment industry helps us avoid vulnerability with sports and comedy. It presents "reality" as a cut-throat, zero-sum game, or it keeps alive a fairytale world through which we can vicariously face danger for 42 minutes and then live happily ever after.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis sums this up with almost apocalyptic language as he warns that we have "fed ourselves on dreams of splendor and grandeur, and ended up consuming distraction, insularity and solitude. We gorged ourselves on networking, and lost the taste of familiarity." Familiarity offers a nongendered, inclusive alternative to the word fraternity.

How in this world can we hope to understand the paschal mystery? What does the "new order" offer us in exchange for our splendid contentment? Francis answers the question with the word: "hope."

In Francis' vocabulary, the virtue of hope is as costly as was Jesus' glory. Francis says that hope is "a thirst," a desire "for things that fill our heart." He explains that hope is bold enough to "look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon." Francis encourages us to broaden our vision and recognize that we "cannot live, develop and find fulfillment except in the sincere gift of self to others." That calls us to reevaluate cultural virtues like progress and hard work in the light of how they "foster openness and union with others."

Francis describes the goal of our humanity as "a striving for excellence and what is best for others" — a yearning and "desire to fill the lives of others with what is beautiful, sublime and edifying." That sounds like a perfect description of what things look like on the streets of the new holy city John describes in the Book of Revelation.

How are we to get to this new order — the reign of God where we understand the glory of the son of man?

Paul and Barnabas tell us that we will need to pass through many hardships. Here we are not called to deprivation, but the challenge of growing, of developing what Francis calls a "culture of encounter" through which we learn to appreciate the values of others, and particularly the poor. People on the margins can best reveal how our societies are structured to grant privilege to some at the expense of others, and, on the personal level, they can help us discern the difference between what we need and what we love to hoard.

When we listen deeply to people who suffer, we become one family. Their struggles become our own and we will be impelled to join them in confronting the evil that foments such suffering. Only then, after knowing the hope and pain of solidarity, will we know what it means for God to wipe away every tear that flows from our own and others' eyes.

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



So these words are his final instructions as they all begin to end the Passover party. Jesus has never before said these exact and explicit words to them — love each other. He has lived those words in His actions, but now He comes right out and lays down the law which He live explicitly through His passion and death.

Yesterday I hosted a group of students from our university who are dating "seriously". I had made a general invitation for such couples to come for an afternoon of reflection about, not dating, but dating "seriously". We began by asking what "seriously" meant to them. For some it could mean preparing to be engaged; for others it could mean involved beyond just "hanging out" — they were deciding to "hang in". The major prayer for them and later discussion centered on love, of course. Jesus loved by giving His life for and to others. Giving life to others means that I want to give you more and more awareness of your truth; and by my acceptance of your truth, I want to help you accept all of your gifts and goodness. This is a long process and love is shown in patience then.

In a "serious" loving relationship, I seriously receive your giving me more and more of me as well and helping me become aware and accepting of who I am. Jesus gave people themselves, gave them back their lives and dignity, but always for the purpose of their giving, donating, doing something with the truth of who they were. Loving one another means that both persons are the lovers and beloved. Both are "enloved" to love beyond just each other. It is true that we cannot give away what we do not have. Loving each other results in our being freed by being loved, to love what we have received — ourselves — and having received ourselves more gratefully, we can donate ourselves more generously, or "seriously".

Last night I received an email from a student asking me about just how he could approach a young female student and begin a "serious" relationship — he was not at the afternoon gathering. The "how" of fulfilling the command to love is the subject of many books and movies, I guess. The "why" is more important. Jesus washed feet, dried tears, fed folks, cured them, and helped them have a good time of it. He had many "hows", but only one "why". God so loved this world and Jesus lived that love for this world and His presence in this world is expressed by our living that same love in as many "hows" as we have moments.

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

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH:

On this 5th Week in Easter, we hear Jesus say: "I give you a new commandment — love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" [John 13:31-35]. In last weekend's Scripture Readings, we heard God loves us by wiping away tears. Think of the tears of parents who have lost a dear child; I think of my sister-in-law who lost her son in a tragic fire. She is a woman of great faith, but the tears continue. She looks forward to what John describes as the "new heaven and the new earth" — God "will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away" [Revelation 21:1-5].

When I was younger, a wise person told me: "Treat each person like he or she has a broken heart and you will not be wrong." We live in a valley of tears. Still, this valley does have plenty of beauty — even joy. I think of the beauty of nature that surrounds us. Babies and toddlers bring us joy. Adolescents and young adults — even though we sometimes have a time understanding them — also bring joy.

A tasty, nourishing meal, a good night's sleep — these are blessings God gives in midst of sorrow and fatigue. And we have the gift of friendship — even those friends we no longer see very often. This past week, I attended a reunion of my classmates from seminary; we spent four years together in Rome, and even though I've had little communication with them, I still look forward to reconnecting.

These blessings and joys give us a sense that even though tears and drudgery fill our lives, still there is something beyond — a new heaven and a new earth where God will wipe away every tear. With that vision of a new heaven and a new earth we work to make better this world below.

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

AS I HAVE LOVED YOU:

I recently read about a Muslim teacher who made the following statement at an inter-faith gathering. He said: “Islam is a religion of faith; Judaism is a religion of hope; Christianity is a religion of love.” Well that might be a bit of an oversimplification. We’d like to think, I’m sure, that Christianity is a religion of all three — faith, hope, and love.

On the other hand, the Muslim teacher might have caught something that Jesus said to his disciples — “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” [John 13:31-35]. He even went so far as to say: “Love one another as I have loved you” — as I have loved you.

That certainly goes way beyond that other commandment to “love our neighbor as ourselves” [Matthew 22:38-39]. Jesus loved us to death — literally. He died on the cross out of love for us and to show us how much God loves us all. So, if we are to love one another as Jesus loved us, that means we must be willing to die for one another. Now that’s an awful lot to ask of us. And maybe we are tempted to throw our hands up in despair and say: “Who can do that?”

My own reaction is this: if Jesus asked us to do it, that means it is possible to do it. God never asks more of us than we can actually accomplish. But there are times when what God asks of us seems very, very difficult — and this is one of them.

But then on the other hand, think what an extraordinary world this would be if only those of us who call ourselves Christians could live this way. It would begin to seem like paradise.

So, what to do? Well, the first thing to do is to get close to the Eucharist. When we receive the bread of life and the cup of salvation, we feast on the one bread and the one cup that make us the one body of Christ. St. Augustine said it well many years ago: “When you come to the altar, and the priest says: ‘The body of Christ’, you must answer: ‘Amen.’”

But when you say “Amen”, it is not just to what you receive but also to what you are — the Body of Christ. That’s really awesome. And if indeed we are the body, we love one another as he has loved us.

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

A LOVE THAT IS UNCONDITIONAL, SACRIFICIAL, AND PERMANENT:

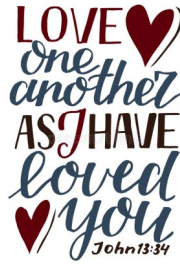
We are called to love as Jesus loved, even when it hurts — “Love one another as I have loved you” [John 13:31-35]. One of the untold stories about our country’s armed forces is of the priests who serve the spiritual needs of those who defend us.

One priest who served bravely and faithfully was Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun. A few years after he was ordained, he decided to serve as an army chaplain and was eventually sent to minister to the troops fighting in Korea in 1950. During one especially fierce battle, he was given the opportunity to fall back to a safer location in the field. However, he refused, preferring to stay by the side of the wounded and dying. He was finally captured by the Chinese forces and was marched 87 miles to a prisoner of war camp in North Korea.

During his stay at the camp, he regularly risked punishment to visit the other prisoners — offering them comfort, hearing their confessions, and celebrating Mass. Often he would go without food to share it with the sick. He died in the prisoner of war camp of starvation and pneumonia on May 23, 1951.

Those soldiers who knew Fr. Kapaun called him their hero. His humility and love helped them endure imprisonment, torture, and hours of interrogation. He was also remembered for the holiness of his life which radiated through all he did.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus encourages us to love one another as he has loved us. He tells us in another place in Saint John’s gospel that there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for another. Jesus showed this love by his willingness to be humiliated, scourged, and crucified for our sins. Fr. Emil Kapaun also gives us an example of such love in everything he did — especially in his willingness to



always consists in being famous, in standing out, in achieving a success that makes others envious, in somehow being the best-looking or the brightest or the most talented person in the room. In our fantasy, glory means having the power to actuate ourselves in ways that set us above others — even if that is for a good motive. For instance, some of our fantasies are daydreams of goodness, of being powerful enough to squash evil. Indeed, that was the messianic fantasy.

Before Jesus was born, good-hearted and religious people prayed for a Messiah to come, and, in their fantasy, that Messiah was generally envisaged as a worldly superstar — a person with a superior heart and superior muscles, a Messiah who would reveal the superiority of God by out-muscling the bad.

But, as we see from the gospels, real glory doesn’t consist in out-muscling the bad, or anyone else. When Jesus was being crucified, he was offered precisely the challenge to prove that he was special by doing some spectacular gesture that would leave all of his detractors stunned and helpless: “If you are the Son of God, prove it, come down off the cross! Save yourself!” [Matthew 27 and Mark 15].

But, with a subtlety that’s easy to miss, the Gospels teach a very different lesson: On the cross, Jesus proves that he is powerful beyond measure, not by doing some spectacular physical act that leaves everyone around him helpless to make any protest, but in a spectacular act of the heart wherein he forgives those who are mocking and killing him. Divine kingship is manifest in forgiveness, not in muscle.

That is real glory, and that is the one thing of which we really should be envious — namely, the compassion and forgiveness that Jesus manifested in the face of jealousy, hatred, and murder.

We see this illustrated in the gospels of the incident where James and John come to Jesus and ask him to give them the seats of glory at his side. Jesus takes their request seriously and does not, on that occasion, caution them against pride. Rather he asks them: “can you drink from the cup of suffering that I shall drink?” [see Mark 10]. In naiveté, they answer: “we can!” Jesus replies: “The cup that I shall drink you shall drink, but as for the seats [of glory] at my right hand or left, these are not mine to give.”

What Jesus is saying, in effect, is this: You will taste suffering, everyone will, and that suffering will make you deep. But it won’t necessarily make you deep in the right way. Suffering can make you deep in compassion and forgiveness, but it can also make you deep in bitterness and anger. However only compassion and forgiveness bring glory into your lives.

Jesus defines glory very differently than we do. Real glory, for him, is not the glory of winning a gold medal, of being a champion, of winning an Oscar, or of being an object of envy because of our looks or our achievements. Glory consists in being deep in compassion, forgiveness, and graciousness — and these are not often spawned by worldly success, by being better-looking, brighter, richer, or better muscled than those around us.

We all nurse the secret dream of glory. Partly this is healthy, a sign that we are emotionally well. However, this is something that needs to grow and mature inside of us. Our secret dream of glory is meant to mature so that eventually we will begin, more and more, to envision ourselves as standing out, not by talent, looks, muscles, and speed, but by the depth of our compassion and the quality of our forgiveness.

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

ABANDONING THE “OLD ORDER”:

After all its extravagant symbolism, the Book of Revelation ends with this dangerously comforting vision of God’s new heaven and earth. It’s dangerous, not because of what it promises, but because we are so sorely tempted to skip the process that leads to this conclusion. We’d like to enjoy the comfort of the new without abandoning the luxury and splendid isolationism of “the old order” it replaces — we just don’t like change.

Paul and Barnabas caution us about this the Book of Acts of the Apostles; they warn us that



people who are on the road to perdition simply because they know no differently — they are in ignorance because no one has ever told them the eternal truths, no one has ever helped them to see right from wrong. This is precisely what Jesus does — he tells people about God and his will for humankind. He condemns sin loudly and clearly — not out of any malice towards sinners, but rather in order to help them to return to the true path. He loves everyone and his main concern is that no one should ever be lost.

In everything that Jesus says and does, you will note that there is never any hint that he wants to violate anyone's free will. It is actually an important expression of his love that Jesus respects the personal autonomy of every single person. He might warn people of the consequences of their actions loudly and with power, but there is never any forcing of the issue. Each person is left completely free to make their own decisions in relation to the great issues of life.

But there is something peculiar about the way that Jesus presents this way of life — he uses the word “commandment” — “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” The use of this word seems out of place — how can anyone command someone to love? Of its nature, love needs to be a completely free act.

The answer to this lies in the fact that it is a reference to the Ten Commandments from the Old Testament. In the days of Moses when the people had only the most primitive understanding of the nature of God he issued them with the Ten Commandments as a set of instructions or as a rule for their lives. What is happening here in the New Testament is that God is replacing these old Commandments with one single new one — love one another. So we should not regard this new Commandment as we would any other order or instruction from a higher authority. Rather we should view it as a new principle which supersedes the much older Ten Commandments. This is no command or regulation — rather it is the revelation of a guiding principle behind the universe, a vital principle that we would do well to live in harmony with.

Thus Jesus teaches us that as Christians living in the modern world, we must respond to the words of Jesus by putting love at the very center of our lives. We must realize that sin is essentially anything that takes us away from love — anything that causes division or hurt between peoples and we instinctively want to draw away from anything like that. We must understand that the only way to live a truly fulfilling life is to live a life of in harmony with our creator.

For it was out of love for us that Christ gave his life on the Cross and opened up for us the way to eternal life. This knowledge is a great treasure, and it makes us want to return love for love — it makes us want to respond to our Divine Savior with a deep and yearning love. It is only this that will make us truly happy and truly fulfilled in all that we do — truly contented in being an Apostle of Jesus.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet

DIFFERENT KINDS OF GLORY:

We all nurse a secret dream of glory. We daydream that in some way we will stand out and be recognized. And so we fantasize about great achievements that will set us apart from others and make us famous. The daydreams vary but, inside them, always we are at the center — the most admired person in the room, the one scoring the winning goal, the ballerina star, the actor picking up the Academy Award, the author writing the best-seller, the intellectual winning the Nobel Prize, or even just the one in the circle who tells the best story.

What we are chasing in all this is notice, appreciation, uniqueness, and adulation so that we can be duly recognized and loved. We want the light to be shining on us. And this isn't all bad or unhealthy. We are built to stand in the spotlight. Our own reality is massively — sometimes oppressively — real to us and scientists today tell us that the universe has no single center but that everywhere and every person is its center. And so it is not a big secret that each of us feels ourselves at the center and wants to be recognized as being there. We nurse a secret dream of glory and, partly, this is healthy.

What is less healthy in our daydreams is how we envision that glory. In our fantasies, glory almost

sacrifice his comfort, his health, and eventually his life for his brother soldiers.

It is precisely this type of love that Christ is calling us to express in our everyday lives. We often think of love merely as a feeling of affection between spouses, family members or friends. It is an emotion or an attachment that is shared and reciprocated. If I love you, I expect you to love me back. We also know that this type of love does not always last. We lose touch with friends, or we get into conflicts with them that cause resentment. The minute one person stops loving the other, the relationship comes to an end.

However, this is not the type of love which Jesus is calling us to have. This is not the type of love that sets his disciples apart. Rather, the love of Jesus is not based on feelings, on whether the other person loves us back, or on how convenient the relationship is. Instead, Jesus' love is unconditional, sacrificial, and permanent.

The love of God is demanding. It requires much of us. The only way it is possible to live such a love is to realize that God has loved us first. When we experience the unconditional, sacrificial, and permanent love of our Heavenly Father, we will find the strength and inspiration to love in just the same way. It is the love that Jesus showed on the cross. It is the love that Fr. Emil Kapaun and countless other saints have shown in their ministries. And it is that love that we are called to show in everything we do.

—taken from the writings of Douglas Sousa, which appear on the internet.



“ENFLESHING THE LAW OF LOVE:

In John's Gospel, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and delivered a long farewell discourse. One thing is evident in this teach of Jesus — it is a clear statement of how we are all supposed to live [John 13:31-35]. After informing his disciples that he will be leaving them soon, Jesus declares: “I give you a new commandment — love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” Jesus adds that this shared love among his disciples will be a sign to others that they are truly his followers.

Love is central to the whole message of Jesus. God is love and God shares that love with all people. Jesus makes an essential connection between two commands found in his Jewish heritage — Jesus taught us to love God wholeheartedly and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The command to love others includes those who are different — even enemies.

Jesus not only taught the law of love — he practiced it in his own life. He ate with sinners, reached out to the marginalized, and forgave his persecutors. He gave himself completely to the cause of God and humanity — even to the point of dying on the cross for all human beings. He set his own life of self-giving love as the ideal to guide and encourage the efforts of his followers to be better lovers.

John's Gospel puts the emphasis on love within the community of faith — among those who call themselves Christians. We find examples of this love wherever Christians gather in small base communities and in large parishes. A very conservative Catholic went out of his way to befriend a progressive fellow parishioner, which led to periodic conversations over lunch where they have found some common ground and learned to respect each other's distinctive faith perspectives. The permanent members of a university parish provide free meals for collegians after the Sunday evening Mass. A middle-aged man who was unemployed for two years before finding a job started a support group for parishioners facing a similar predicament. A wealthy woman established scholarships for students to attend Catholic grade schools, high schools, and universities, enabling them to graduate free of debt. A Eucharistic Minister who takes communion to the sick, spends extra time with each homebound person, befriending some and helping them in other ways. These are simple acts of love within the community of faith, and they make the Christian claim more credible — especially in our cynical world.

How could you be more responsive to Christ's command to love one another?

—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet 7



LOVE AS POWER:

Usually when we think of the word “love,” we think of romance, of hearts and flowers. But love is more than warm affection and sensual intimacy. There is a larger meaning to love which is revealed in John’s Gospel. For Jesus gives a new commandment: we are to love one another as he has loved us [John 13:31-35].

So how has Jesus loved us? With warm affection? Of course. But more than that, Jesus has loved us with action. Jesus has laid down his life for our salvation. In this action of sacrifice, in this action of love, God has raised him up and made him the head of a new creation. In Jesus’ active love, the reign of God has begun in our midst. Evil is being destroyed. God’s will is being established among us. So, in Jesus, love is more than kind regards — Love is action. Love is more than amorous feelings — Love is power — the power to change the earth.

Love is power. In fact, there is no other power on earth for good stronger than love. It is love that calls tired parents out of their bed to care for a sick child. It is love that motivates a hospice worker to be present to a dying woman. It is love that leads a young man or woman to give two years of their life in the Peace Corps, serving in an inner city or a third world country. It is love that animates thousands of soup kitchens and homeless shelters and AIDS hospices. Love is a father or mother working two jobs to feed their children and pay the rent. Love is the choice to forgive an enemy or to sacrifice for peace.

Love is what makes the real heroes of our world — a young man or woman who could work in a prestigious law firm, but chooses instead to work among the poor; a firefighter willing to rush into the World Trade Tower and rescue screaming victims. There is no force for good greater in our world than the power of love.

But we do not have enough of it. For all the love that there is, there is still not enough to bring about God’s kingdom. For some reason, we think that we should hold on to love, to preserve it. But love only has power when we let it go and let it flow out. It is then that it can make its effect upon others in our midst. For some reason, we think we should limit love to only certain groups, to our family and friends, to those who think and act like us, to those who we know and with whom we are familiar. But if we are to love as Jesus has loved us, we must push beyond the limits which we place on love. For who did Jesus love? For whom did Jesus give his life? Jesus did not give his life only for his mother and his disciples, only for the Jews and the poor, only for those who were gay or educated, only for those who were black or those who were good. Jesus gave his life for everyone, for all of humanity. If we are to love as he loved us, then we must love in a way which is wider and deeper than the way to which we are inclined. We must push beyond whatever limits we place on love and join ourselves with others who love, so that God’s kingdom might be built up, so that we might participate in recreating the earth.

This truth is expressed most beautifully by the Jesuit theologian Teilhard deChardin. Over fifty years ago he wrote: “Some day, after we have mastered the winds and the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And then for the second time in the history of the world, humans will have discovered fire.” We need that fire — the fire of love. We need that power, the power to unite rather than divide, to build up rather than destroy, to heal rather than attack, the power to work for justice rather than to feed off greed. We need the power of love. We can release it, if we love as Jesus has loved us.

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

SILENCE:

The trees, the flowers, the plants grow in silence. The stars, the sun, the moon move in silence. Silence gives us a new perspective.



—St. Mother Teresa

take place in the New Jerusalem. The Blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will walk and the poor will have the Good News preached to them. Jesus Christ has won the battle. He is the victim who has become the victor. We are part of the New Jerusalem. The trials and pains of our lives have meaning and purpose because they are part of the witness of the Christians of the ages that Jesus wins.

Don’t be negative. Don’t be pessimistic. No matter what you are facing physically, in your home, or in your lives. No matter what you may fear for your loved ones, no matter what questions you have for the future, be positive. It’s a whole new world. God is in charge. We are citizens of the New Jerusalem. Christian optimism must permeate every action of our lives. Sin will never win the final battle. Evil — no matter how powerful it may seem — will never conquer the world. Jesus Christ has won. God is in control. So what is the New Jerusalem that Christians believe will someday rule the world? The New Jerusalem is not a physical place. The New Jerusalem is the Kingdom of God among us. And we are called to be its citizens.

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

LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES:

On this 5th Week in Easter, Jesus gives us a new commandment — the commandment to love [John 13:31-35]. He tells us that it is by our putting into practice this commandment, everyone will know that we are Christ’s disciples. What we have to understand is that this command to love is the key to everything. What is revealed here by Jesus is nothing less than the underpinning principle behind everything that God does — love.

Jesus is telling us that love is the secret of the universe; it is the motive behind everything God does — beginning with the act of creation and the granting of humanity free will, through to the great act of salvation which occurred on Mount Calvary, and then leading on to our eventual welcome into his eternal Kingdom. And more than this — Jesus also wants us to realize that this ought to be the underpinning principle behind everything that we do too.

What Jesus is telling us is that there is nothing more important or more relevant for our lives than love. It should be the motivating force behind everything that we do, and it should permeate every single aspect of our lives. According to him, love is the only thing that can bring us true fulfillment in life because it is only by living a life of love that our actions will be in full harmony with the divine will.

In the pages of the scriptures we see love revealed in the life of Jesus. Love is the motive behind each of his miracles — whether it be healing or multiplying loaves. Whatever Jesus did to aid the people, he did it out of nothing other than love and concern.

Take the times when Jesus met a difficult case, and in his heart was moved with compassion for the person in difficulty. For example we know how he restored the son of the widow of Nain to her, realizing what a predicament her son’s death would put her in. He is moved with pity and with great compassion in his heart his response is to raise her son from the dead [see Luke 7]. We see in this — and in many other examples — how Jesus was motivated by love for those around him. Even in his last agony as he is dying on the Cross, he shows his love for his mother as he places her in the care of the Apostle John — thus ensuring that she has a home and someone to look after her in her old age [see John 19].

On almost every page of the Gospels we find similar incidents which demonstrate Christ’s great love. We see his goodness and his kindness expressed on numerous occasions, but these are not always because the plight of individual people has affected him. Quite often we observe how Jesus wanted the mass of the people to understand the divine purposes. We recognize that it is also an act of love to help people to understand what God wants from them.

There is no better thing you can do for another human being that to help him or her to understand where they have come from and to where they are headed and what God expects from them. There could be no greater act of love that to help a person avoid eternal damnation. In our own day, there are plenty of

THE NEW JERUSALEM:

While on vacation a few summers ago I met a wonderful Moslem man who asked me about Jerusalem. His question shocked me. I don't know if his question represented a popular thought in Islam, but what he asked was: "Do Christians support the Jews because they believe that someday Israel will rule the world from Jerusalem?" Perhaps, his question was based on the Book of Revelation [21:1-5] which describes the New Jerusalem. In order to answer the man's question, thought, we need to look at what the Book of Revelation is about. First of all, the Book of Revelations is part of that form of literature called "apocalyptic" material. In fact, some bibles still call the book, the Apocalypse.

Apocalyptic material is actually a literary genre somewhere between prose and poetry. It is meant to stir up the emotions of the listener or reader and motivate him or her into action. In the Book of Revelations we hear about horrible scourges, those of the seven seals, the seven bowls, and the seven trumpets. These are meant to scare us into recognizing what sin is doing to the world. At the same time, in the midst of terror, God is triumphant. In fact, the main theme of the Book of Revelation and all apocalyptic material is that the world might seem to be out of God's control and in the control of the devil, but God knows and God will intervene.

For example, an angel of God opens the seals of the Book of God's plan for his people. A plague upon evil does accompanies each seal. When the fifth seal is opened, voices are heard under the altar of God's sacrifice. These are the voices of the martyrs — the witnesses of Jesus Christ. They call out: "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood" [see Revelation 6]. They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed. A little longer. God is in control. The horrors happening around us will continue for a little longer until more can be added to the saved, even if more will also be added to the martyred.



The Book of Revelation is a profound expression of the Christian experience. Only the Lamb that was slain can unseal the Book of God's plan for humankind. Only Jesus Christ can restore God's plan. He alone is our salvation. The death of the Lord, swept up into heaven, is the conquest of the Forces of Death. Evil no longer has a hold in the world of Jesus Christ. The New Jerusalem is in our immediate future. Those who hold out for the Lord will be citizens of "the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." They will hear a loud voice from the throne saying: "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race."

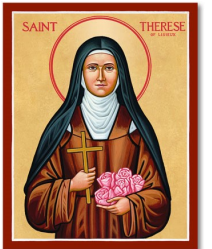
God will dwell with them and they will be his people; God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away. The former heaven and former earth will pass away. The sea, chaos, will be no more. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. The One who sits behind the throne says: "Behold, I make all things new."

There is no room for pessimism in Christianity. The basic attitude of the Christian is optimism. God is in control. God will cure the evils of the world and answer the questions of existence in ways that are beyond our imagination. I see this Christian optimism when I'm with a family gathered around the deathbed of a loved One — "He or she is in God's hands now," they proclaim in the midst of their grief. I see this Christian optimism in our parents and godparents who see a new world in the faces of their children.

I see this Christian optimism in the care givers and servants of the sick and poor. I see this Christian optimism whenever I am confronted with a seemingly impossible situation. Somehow or other, God will work it out. God is in control. What could never happen in the world that had rejected God, can now

BECOMING MORE AWARE OF OUR NEED TO LOVE:

Franciscan theologian Bonaventure [1217-1274] saw God as "a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." You fall into this Wholeness — which will actually hold you — when you stop denying or excluding things, even the dark parts of yourself. This mystery of including the negative was probably best taught by St. Thérèse of Lisieux [1873-1897], a Carmelite nun who became the youngest, least educated, and most quickly made Doctor of the Church. She was simply an authentic Christian.



Thérèse rediscovered the same thing that Francis did — we don't come to God by eliminating our imperfection, but by rejoicing in it because it makes us aware of our need for God's mercy and love and it keeps us humble. She called this her "Little Way" — a way which everyone can follow. Brother Joe Schmidt describes Thérèse's method as "the way of being aware of your need for love, willing to give yourself to God's loving embrace like a child abandons itself with confidence and love into the arms of its loving parent, and then freely sharing love with others in creative good works of peace and justice. It is the willingness to be the person God calls you to be."

Thérèse once told her sister, Celine, who was upset with her own faults: "If you are willing to bear serenely the trial of being displeasing to yourself, then you will be a pleasant place of shelter for Jesus." If you observe yourself, you will see how hard it is to be "displeasing" to yourself, and that this is the initial emotional snag that sends you into terribly bad moods without even realizing the origins of these moods. So to resolve this common problem, both Francis and Thérèse teach you to let go of the very need to "think well of yourself" to begin with! That is your ego talking — not God — they would say. Only those who have surrendered their foundational egocentricity can do this, of course. Psychiatrist and writer Scott Peck once said that Thérèse's quote was "sheer religious genius" because it made the usual posturing of religion well-nigh impossible.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Acts 14:5-18, John 14:21-26
Tuesday:	Acts 14:19-28, John 14:27-31
Wednesday:	Acts 15:1-6, John 15:1-8
Thursday:	Acts 15:7-21, John 15:9-11
Friday:	Acts 15:22-31, John 15:12-17
Saturday:	Acts 16:1-10, John 15:18-21

6th Week in Easter: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29, Revelation 21:10-14, John 14:23-29

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

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



I FOUND MYSELF WHEN I LOOKED FOR GOD:

It all finally stopped — all the spinning in my head of all the things I had to do, all the people I had to please, all the things I had to get right and prove — finally it all just stopped. First my knees, then my forehead hit the carpet, and everything inside of me went quiet. I had planned on spilling my guts to God. I had planned on ranting to Him about how stressful my life was, and hoping for a little consolation, because clearly this stress was being caused by everyone in my life but me.

But, when I arrived at the chapel, I was speechless. I had no energy to tell God about my woes, and, somehow, I felt silly even trying. I realized for about the thousandth time that what I do is not the same as who I am. I put so much unnecessary pressure on myself because I won't accept this very important fact — only God defines who I am. But, in that moment — with complete peace and certainty — my heart could say: "This is what I was made for. This is the one thing I need to do."

I believe that I was made to worship God — and so were you.

As beautiful and peaceful as it is when I realize that my identity is not in my sin, or in what other people think of me — but in Christ — I've still struggled to accept it. In the past, the answer didn't fulfill me or give me peace — it left me disappointed. One of the biggest reasons for this is that I didn't understand how everyone's identity could be in Christ. Doesn't that mean that we're all the same?

No, it doesn't. Everyone single person is created from the overflow of God's love. And every single person reveals something about God's love that only he or she can reveal. Each of us is a unique expression of God.

It took a long time and several explanations for me to understand this. But, once I did, so many things started to fall into place. I could finally accept that my identity truly is in Christ without feeling lost, or like I was just the same as everyone else. I could sit in prayer and just adore my God without an agenda, knowing that as long as I can still do this one thing I am made to do, my identity is secure. There's nothing left to figure out. There's nothing left to prove. There are no more expectations.

It is Jesus whom I seek when I seek to know who I am. It's only when I stop looking inside myself at the expectations I want to live up to — at the labels other people have given me; at the ways I want other people to see me — that I can understand that I was made for something far greater. I was made for God. I cannot know God but not know myself. I cannot know myself and not know God. When I realize that, I have the peace of knowing that my heart says something about God that you cannot say — that no one else can say — and, in time, God will reveal what that is.

Believing that God alone can reveal myself to me is simple, yet complicated. My identity is in Christ and nowhere else. Good. Done. Check it off — except that I keep finding pieces of my identity in places I didn't intend to put it — and I think the same is true for a lot of us. Finding our identity in Christ is largely about letting God show us all the other places we have put our identity throughout our lives, and allowing Him to draw us back to Him. That means that sometimes I need to fail. Sometimes I need to give all my energy to doing His work and still fail, so that God can teach me that I am not good because I do good things. I am not His because I do His work. I am His, because He made it so.

There are so many things that I've let define me — from my sins to my accomplishments, from my enemies to my friends. There are constantly more things trying to break in and steal my sense of self. Jesus has saved me from the bad things, but I rarely let Him save me from the good things. I rarely understand that it doesn't matter if my identity is in something good — like doing God's work or helping others. If it's not in Christ, it's not in the right place.

I'm constantly having to re-realize who I am, but every time I do I get just a little bit closer. I know

God a little better. I see myself a little more clearly. I can trust that letting go of everything else and seeking only to know God will bring me to know myself. I can trust that when I gaze upon Him, He is gazing back at me, seeing beyond the here and now, seeing beyond my doubts and mistakes, seeing who I am made to be.

Now I know what St. Paul means when he writes to the Church at Colossae: "For you have died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ your life appears in glory, you too will appear with him in glory" [Colossians 3:3-4].

—taken from the writings of Sophia Swinford, a recent high school graduate.

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].**



A NEW COMMANDMENT:

The word "new" belongs to that restricted number of magic words that always and only evokes positive feelings — "Brand new," "new clothes," "new life," "new year," "new day." The new makes news — the two words are synonymous.

The Gospel is called "good news" precisely because it contains the new — par excellence. Why do we like the new so much? It is not only because the new, the unused — a car, for example — generally works better. If this were the only reason, why do we welcome the New Year and a new day with such joy?

The deepest reason is that the new — that which is still unknown, inexperienced — leaves more room for expectation, surprise, hope, dreams. And happiness is the child of these. If we were sure that the New Year would bring exactly the same things as the past year — no more and no less — we would not be very pleased about it.

The new is not opposed to the "ancient", but to the "old." What is the difference? The old is that which with the passing of time gets worse and loses its value.

Now, with these premises, let us draw near to the word of the Gospel. A question arises immediately: "Why is a commandment that was already known in the Old Testament [see Leviticus 19:18] called "new"? Here the distinction between "ancient" and "old" proves useful. "Ancient" grows in value; "old" declines. In this case, "new" is not opposed to "ancient," but to "old."

John, writes in another place: "Beloved, I do not propose to you a new commandment, but an ancient one. Nevertheless, it is a new commandment about which I write to you" [see 1 John 2:7-8]. Is it a new commandment or an ancient one? Both.

Literally speaking, it is an ancient one because it was promulgated some time ago; but according to the Spirit it is new because only in Christ is the strength to put it into practice also given. As I said, new is not opposed here to the ancient, but to the old. The commandment to love one's neighbor "as yourself" had become an old commandment — that is, weak and worn, on account of its being transgressed since the law imposed the obligation to love but did not give the strength to do so. For this, grace is necessary. And in fact it was not when Jesus formulated the commandment of love during his life that it became a new commandment, but when, dying on the cross and giving us the Holy Spirit, he makes us able to love each other by infusing in us the love he has for everyone.

Jesus' commandment is new in an active and dynamic sense, because it "renews," makes new, transforms everything. And as St. Augustine says: "And this love renews us, rendering us new persons, heirs of the New Testament, singers of a new song". If love could speak, it could make the words that God speaks in the Book of Revelation its own: "Behold, I make all things new" [Revelation 21:1-5].

—taken from the writings of Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., which appear on the internet