

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Those Who Want ~

O Lord,
There's a lot of suffering in the world —
poverty, sickness, and hunger;
pain, violence, loneliness, and fear.

You never promised us paradise in this world;
But when I look at what I have
And how little they have,
How can I not feel guilty?

I know their suffering is partly my fault,
For while I don't actively will it,
I know that I affirm it
by living the comfortable kind of life that I do.

Please forgive me, Father;
but more than that,
instill in me
an active, genuine awareness, and concern
for those whose suffering
I don't really know,
so that I might identify more
with their suffering and need,
and do what little I can
to help their situation.

I know that there are basic things
that should be theirs regardless.
Help me to find a way —
because they are my brothers and sisters
and your sons and daughters.
Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.
phone: [440] 473-3560 [office] 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.

WELCOME BACK TO “ORDINARY TIME”:

While we have been in “Ordinary Time” since the end of the Easter Season on Pentecost Sunday — June 4 — most of us have not “seen it”. **But this week we resume with the 13th Week in Ordinary Time.** Recall what we said earlier about this time of the Liturgical Year. Ordinary Time is not “dead time” in the Church calendar — it is not Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter. Ordinary Time refers to the counting of weeks in which we take time to study and reflect on the Teachings and Life of Jesus. Pondering the life and work of Jesus is the work of a life-time. It is the time when the Holy Spirit will invite us to go deeper into the mystery of what our life and faith really mean. Ordinary time is a beautiful time of the year. Eagerly enter into the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst and let your faith shine forth for all to see. God bless you.

**CHAPEL PICNIC IS COMING BACK:**

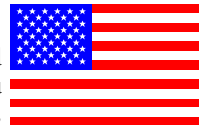
Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Sunday, July 10th is the date for our annual Chapel outdoor picnic, which will be returning this year. Every year, the Chapel picnic has been a great event for the entire family. The picnic will be held rain or shine from **11:15 AM – 1:30 PM. Family Mass takes place at 10:00 AM** and the picnic begins right after Mass — what a wonderful way to continue our celebration of community. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, and beverages are provided. **Please RSVP for the Picnic** on the sign-up sheet on the easel in the narthex of the Chapel. Or you may call the Chapel office [440-473-3560].

**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 6:30 PM and will continue until 8 PM. Sign up on the easel in the narthex. **We have less than 10 tickets left, so sign up now to assure yourself a place.**

**INDEPENDENCE DAY MASS — JULY 4TH:**

Our nation has such superb mottoes: “Liberty and Justice for all.” “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” “All are created equal.” “In God we trust.” How do you make these words ring true? As Christians, how do we live in peace and good will as one nation with other peoples? On July 4th, we give thanks to God for the land placed in our care, and for all peoples who call this land their home. On **Monday, July 4th**, we will observe the holiday with a **Mass at 9:30 AM.** We hope you will be able to join us and celebrate the heritage of our nation.

**WORDS CALL US TO COMMUNITY:**

Words are always a word for others. Words need to be heard. When we give words to what we are living — these words need to be received and responded to. A speaker needs a listener; a writer needs a reader.

When the flesh — the lived human experience — becomes word, community can develop. When we say: “Let me tell you what we saw. Come and listen to what we did. Sit down and let me explain to you what happened to us. Wait until you hear whom we met,” we call people together and make our lives into lives for others. The word brings us together and calls us into community. When the flesh becomes word, our bodies become part of a body of people.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Peter Mulligan [*80], brother of Laurie Mulligan White [*75], who is recovering from a stroke.
- For Luca Palazzo, who is critically ill with cancer.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Joanne Steele.
- For Bill Leamon.
- For Brian Fitzgerald
- For Louis Lamosek, father of Gilmour trustee, Russell Lamosek, and grandfather of Matthew [*11], Kaitlyn [*12], Joseph [*17], Christopher [*19], and Mitchell [*21] Lamosek.
- For Jessica Kunevicius [*95], sister of Olivia [*97]
- For Christina Carnevale
- For Silvana Colantuono
- For Jeanne McCloskey
- For Mary Kay McGorray

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For our country. With God’s help may be more courageous in confronting the issues that surround us.
- 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.

CHAPEL ENVELOPES:

There are many ways that you can support our Holy Cross Mission and support Our Lady Chapel. You can place your offering at the door of the chapel as you enter; you can use our on-line donation link; or you can mail in your offerings to the Chapel itself — whatever best serves your needs. If you need a supply of envelopes, please pick them up off the table in the Narthex of the Chapel when you come to Mass. Or you can call the office or stop in to request them. **If you would like us to send you a supply of envelopes, please call Father John or Patty at [473-3560], and we will get them right out to you..**

WEEKLY OFFERING:

Thank you to those who have begun to send in weekly offerings. We really appreciate it. Thanks for not forgetting about us.

Offerings-----[Saturday, June 18]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in] ----- \$ 190.00
Offerings-----[Sunday, June 19]-----\$ 145.00

REMEMBER:

Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice.

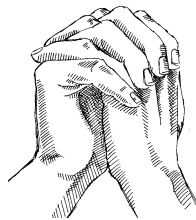
—Steve Jobs

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

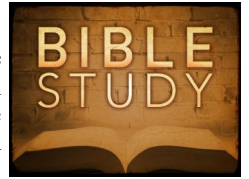
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish [‘30], who is undergoing treatment for many medical issues.
- For Sabrina Hood Kumer, who is recovering from Brain Surgery to remove a cancerous tumor.
- For Ann Griggs, mother of Father Gabe Griggs, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Liz Rybka, who is undergoing treatment for Gastric Cancer.
- For Tricia Ashkettle, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Brother Philip Smith, C.S.C., who is recovering from Surgery.
- For August Speziale, son of Aquatics Director, Jackie Speziale who is undergoing medical treatment
- 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 Tom Hanna, who is recovering from heart bypass surgery.
- For James Law, husband of LS resource associate, Elana Law, who is undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- For Sam Barrick, who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- For William Zhun [‘70], brother of Peter [‘66], Paul [‘69], and Bob Zhun [‘71] who is experiencing complications following surgery.
- 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 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 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 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 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.
- 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, JULY 6th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, July 6th 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: What is true freedom and responsibility in religion?**

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, June 26: 13th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, June 27:	NO MASS
Tuesday, June 28: St. Irenaeus	NO MASS
Wednesday, June 29: Sts. Peter and Paul	NO MASS
Thursday, June 30:	NO MASS
Friday, July 1: St. Junipero Serra	NO MASS
Saturday, July 2: 14th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, July 3: 14th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

WE LOVE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN LOVED FIRST:

Solitude is the ground from which community grows. Whenever we pray alone, study, read, write, or simply spend quiet time away from the places where we interact with each other directly, we are potentially opened for a deeper intimacy with each other. It is a fallacy to think that we grow closer to each other only when we talk, play, or work together. Much growth certainly occurs in such human interactions, but these interactions derive their fruit from solitude, because in solitude, our intimacy with each other is deepened. In solitude we discover each other in a way that physical presence makes difficult if not impossible. In solitude we know a bond with each other that does not depend on words, gestures, or actions, a bond much deeper than our own efforts can create.

In solitude we become aware that we were together before we came together, and that life is not a creation of our will but rather an obedient response to the reality of our being united. Whenever we enter into solitude, we witness to a love that transcends our interpersonal communications and proclaims that we love each other because we have been loved first [see 1 John 4:19]. Solitude keeps us in touch with the sustaining love from which we draw strength.

—Henri Nouwen

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

It's a good thing that salvation is a gift rather than something we have to earn — we would all be in trouble. Based on Luke's Gospel, even the best people we know fail the standards that Jesus sets — let alone us ordinary people [see Luke 9:51-62]. Who among us would not take time to bury members of their family; who of us would walk away from our family and not say "good-bye"? That's tough stuff! We can understand why people walked away — who would want to follow someone so harsh?

But the truth is that most Christians failed to live up to Jesus's commands — most of us would receive an "F" for our efforts. But fortunately, Jesus still loves us. Maybe there's hope even though I can't think of anyone who is "fit for the kingdom of God" based on the criteria in Luke's Gospel.

Despite this, the "A" student in me still asks what I can do to make the grade. Maybe our ordinary efforts will suffice even as Jesus challenges us to raise our standards. Unfortunately, it's shockingly easy to fail to meet even my own modest standards. I proved this to be true during a trip to the grocery store. My local chain offers us a chance to donate our change to the food bank by pushing an "agree" button on the computer screen. But I didn't. Why? I'm still asking myself this since I would never miss the 75 cents, and I donate regularly to the Food Bank!

Jesus asks his followers to abandon everything to proclaim the kingdom, and I can't even push a button on a screen to make a tiny donation to feed the hungry??? What's wrong with me? It's humbling.

At the Eucharist we meet Jesus face-to-face. We present our gifts — including our poverty, our worries, and our attempts at being more than he knows we are. Jesus offers us his embrace of our truth with the truth of his compassion. Jesus knows the darkest corners of our lives — these closets into which He chooses to come so unashamedly gentle.

Elijah has had a hard time of it lately — his being a prophet has involved his having other false prophets put to the sword. He has fled the land to a distant place. He has heard God speaking that he, Elijah, must return and anoint several new kings — but more importantly, he has to anoint his successor, Elisha.

Elijah comes to Elisha and throws his cloak over Elisha — the prophetic garment was a symbol of property rights [1 Kings 19:16-21]. Elisha receives his state as both servant and possessor of Elijah's powers of miracles. The transmission is instantaneous and as many times happens in God's ways of calling, Elisha has an excuse to not respond quickly. As also happens in Scripture, Elisha gets the picture quickly, leaves his former ways and trustingly follows his call.

Luke's Gospel has several distinct and important features [Luke 9:51-62]. It is a turning point — literally. Jesus from this point on has turned toward Jerusalem where he will be lifted up on the cross and raised up after his resurrection. The word "resolutely" speaks of his determination to fulfill his identity as priest, prophet and king. From here on, Luke presents Jesus as working slowly upward and directly to the city of Jerusalem.

The focus here — for Jesus and for us — centers on the theme of "call and response." Three persons are attracted to Jesus and the disciples. Jesus presents them with the basic principles of being one of his followers. There is an invitation offered to face the tensions between self-possession of one's personal kingdom and self-donation for the Kingdom of God. There are healthy and normal desires for home and family-relations. The Gospel closes with an image of perseverance. Jesus seems to be talking of himself as well as to those who wish to follow him. Fidelity is never an easy journey.

Fifty-three years ago this summer I kissed my last girlfriend goodbye — as well as my parents and even my older sister — and turned my face resolutely toward Florissant, Missouri and the Jesuit

**HOW FREE ARE YOU?**

No two biblical calls are exactly the same. Though they contain the same basic elements, each is just a little bit different. For example, Elijah permits Elisha to return home to kiss his mother and father goodbye [1 Kings 19:16,19-21] — something Jesus forbids his prospective disciple to do [Luke 9:51-62]. Perhaps that's why it's good to zero in on the elements of the calls that are the same — the elements which apply to everyone, no matter his or her historical situation.

In every biblical call, God expects the person to change his or her basic focus. What they once thought important, they now relegate to the perimeter of their priorities; what they once kept on the periphery, they now put front and center. At the start of his public ministry, the gospel Jesus labels this turnabout "repentance" — metanoia in Greek. In his mind, it's an essential personality trait in anyone who would dare follow him — a 180 degree change in one's value system.

In the situation of receiving a "call," it includes a demand that one's relationship with Jesus be more important than other relationships — even those relationships we have with our parents. The classic passage on this topic is part of what Luke talks about. When Jesus invites someone to "Follow me," the man replies: "Lord, let me go first and bury my father." Jesus stuns us with the response: "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Scholars remind us that most probably the man isn't on his way to the local funeral home to make arrangements for his deceased father. That's simply not how people were buried in Jesus' day and age. Rather, he's telling Jesus, "I'll follow you, but because my father wouldn't understand such a drastic move, let me wait until he dies and I bury him. Then I'll follow you." That seems to be why Jesus says: "Let the dead bury their dead." In other words: "Haven't you noticed that your father — by not being part of my reform of Judaism — is already dead? Let someone just as dead as he is bury him. Nothing, or no one — not even parents — should stop you from being truly alive."

Jesus presumes that just as we must eventually die physically to enter eternal life, so we must die right here and now to receive life right here and now. And the main way he expects us to die is to undergo a metanoia.

In just what does the life the risen Jesus offers us today consist? In Paul's Letter to the Church at Galatia, he states his belief that it's a freedom we can't achieve any other way — "For freedom, Christ set us free. For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters" [Galatians 5:1,13-18].

Yet because our basic metanoia revolves around focusing on the importance of others, we're never free to put others down or use them for our own purposes. On the contrary, we're called and expected "to serve one another through love." Other Christs simply can't go through life doing "what we want." We're to be as free as the historical Jesus was free — free to give himself to those around him, no matter the consequences. Such freedom eventually enabled him to accept death for those others.

Perhaps many of us are willing to follow Jesus in certain areas of our daily lives — those areas which don't cost us very much. But few of us are willing to slaughter the yoke of oxen around which our peaceful lives revolve. We haven't quite yet achieved that kind of freedom.

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

WHEN YOU REFLECT:

If you must look back, do so forgivingly; if you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However, the wisest thing you can do is to be present in the present — gratefully.

—Maya Angelou

Testament noun for followers of Jesus. The word disciples simply means “students”. The verb “follow” occurs 80 times in the New Testament, but it is never rendered as a noun.

There is no dogma, rule, or rite that makes one a follower. Following is not a status, but an activity. Luke’s Gospel reflects on four expressions of that activity.

Jesus and the group we meet on the road are quite vulnerable. Jesus had just told them that the temple authorities were determined to eradicate him [see Luke 9:22], and with that, Jesus “sets his face” for Jerusalem. When a Samaritan village refused them hospitality, the disciples, imagining that they possessed some magical or divine power, proposed destroying it as if it were Sodom. Jesus — how exasperated was he? — simply told them to look for a more hospitable spot. Contrary to some traditions, Jesus and his Father are not in the business of obliterating unbelievers and evildoers. Love cannot be coerced.

Even with the precariousness of their venture, someone soon volunteers to join the group. Jesus responds with a poetic warning, saying that foxes and birds — probable allusions to Herod and the Romans — make themselves at home in the land, but that, from his birth through the day he walked to Emmaus, he would possess no place to lay his head.

After this — perhaps because one volunteer bravely joined them — Jesus invites two others to follow. The first sounded a bit like the guests who made excuses for skipping a banquet [see Luke 14:15-24]. This person liked the idea, but wanted to defer Jesus’ offer because of family obligations. There is no indication that there was a funeral in the offing; rather, he saw care for his parent(s) as a more immediate priority. That didn’t work for Jesus. This was a decisive moment — he was on the road to Jerusalem; he had no time to waste.

After one person turned him down, Jesus invited another. The problem for the second seemed to be a love for the past that kept him/her longingly looking backward rather than plowing wholeheartedly into the future. Jesus told this person that God’s reign is about hope for what can be, not nostalgia for what once was.

What are we to learn from watching Jesus and these folks? Some followed and some didn’t. None of them were perfect, none totally lost. First of all, those who didn’t accept Jesus’ invitation weren’t put off by the threats or hardship. It was a question of motivation.

When we act like the first one, we avoid the urgency of following Jesus. Whether it’s a question of making a life choice or deciding when to dedicate time to prayer, we put it off, forgetting that, as a popular saying intimates, not to decide is to decide not to.

We can recognize ourselves in the person who kept looking back whenever our comfort with the familiar or fear of being wrong prevents us from venturing out in risky hope. Disciples will surely make mistakes, but the worst mistake is to become stagnant.

St. Paul reminded the Church at Galatia that the love that leads to following Jesus is a free response to God’s love [Galatians 5:1,13-18]. Those who had left behind their nets and boats, like Elisha who used the tools of his trade to throw a farewell feast, were so captivated by Jesus’ offer that they kept following him and kept learning [1 Kings 19:16,19-21].

Love alone frees us to follow Christ. When that love captivates us, danger, uncertainty and the lure of the past lose their power. We must not forget that while Jesus said he had no place to lay his head, he also said that those who leave home for him and the Gospel will find themselves enjoying hundreds of homes [see Matthew 19:29].

Who in their right mind will follow him now? Only those who allow themselves to be so loved and captivated by his vision that they decide nothing else could matter nearly as much.

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



Novitiate. My two best friends drove me and all my worldly possessions toward my adventurous destiny. When we arrived at the beginning of the driveway — half way in — Jim turned off the ignition, turned to me and said: “Gilly, if you want to go any further into this God-forsaken looking place, you turn the key.” Without a second thought, I did, and the rest is “His-story”. My two companions dropped me off and told me that they were staying overnight in St. Louis and would be back at ten the next morning in case I came to my senses — they would be waiting out on the road. At ten the next morning, I stood at my window and smiled when I heard them beep the car horn several times as they set their faces resolutely to get as far away as fast away as possible. For my part, I turned my face and creative mind toward the possibilities of regaining all or part of the goodies I had brought and turned in so generously the afternoon before. Fidelity to being resolute, I was to find, is not as easy as reading about.

Jesus stayed faithful to his being raised on the cross. He remains faithful to our irresolute turnings toward our own personal “establishings” of our little kingdoms. Our fidelity is not totally to our commitments, but to his faithful commitment to being our Savior. He saves us from ourselves, our attempts at perfection. How can we live with ourselves who so constantly are not constant? To whom are we faithful? With Paul we moan that all the good we want to do, we do not and those things we would rather not do, well, we easily do them [see Romans 7:19]. Our baptismal promises center around Jesus being our personal and universal Savior. We live with ourselves, because he does.

Fifty years later I find myself still trying to figure out ways to compromise my commitment. And so I still stand in the “F” line as a “wanna be Christian” who trusts in God’s mercy and second chances. You’d better believe I’ll be touching that “agree” button from now on and sent a check for more than 75 cents to the Food Bank!

—taken from the writings of Eileen Wirth and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

PAY ATTENTION:

At the time of Jesus officials wrote on very fragile materials like papyrus and vellum. Poor people among whom Jesus moved and who were His disciples didn’t have access to those materials. This caused Jesus to teach using very hard and cutting-edge images — images that His listeners would never forget. And so, we hear Jesus saying: “If your eye is a source of sin, pluck it out” and “if your hand is a source of sin, cut it off!” [Matthew 5:29-30]. People would never forget those words — words used in His teachings that everyone would remember. And so in Luke’s Gospel for this 13th Week in Ordinary Time, we hear these words: “Jesus said: “Follow me.” But the answer came back: “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said in reply: “Let the dead bury their own dead; come and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said to him: “I will be your follower, Lord, but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus answered: “Those who put their hand to the plow, but keep looking back, are unfit for the reign of God” [Luke 9:51-62].

In the Book of Kings, we find Elisha taking on the God given role of being Elijah’s successor — a prophet of God. In that context we hear Elisha saying: “Please, let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will follow you” whereupon in the most radical act of faith he cut all ties with his past and rid himself of all his possessions and then followed Elijah.

It’s all about decisions, isn’t it? Decisions — how decisive am I in following Jesus? That’s the big question not only today, but in each and every day of our lives. The reality is that God is calling us to be decisive. But while we want to be decisive and have the freedom to make our own decisions, decisions bring with them consequences. Elisha finds the need for security challenged by the decision to move into an unknown future [1 Kings 19:16,19-21]. In Paul’s letter to the Church at Galatia, we’re presented with the false freedom that anything goes versus the true freedom of loving for the sake of others — particularly the Other that is God [Galatians 5:1,13-18]. Finally, in Luke’s Gospel we find the challenge to move beyond the ties of family loyalty and affection into commitments beyond the pale of one’s immediate family — movement into the decisions and responses that go with belonging to God.

These are all hard, tough decisions. It's not easy to definitively leave one's childhood family in order to cling to a spouse in marriage and start a new family. We all know of husbands or wives who have never emotionally left father or mother and cannot totally surrender in love to their spouses in their new family. Being unable to leave their childhood, they become emotionally arrested and fixated, without any further development. Not only that, but when we marry, we quickly learn that there are things we cannot do; our freedom to do whatever we want is gone. So, too, when we have children, we quickly learn then that our freedom to do a lot of things is severely restricted.

Many folks never come to the full realization that sacrifice is not merely a nice ideal — it's a fact of life. We don't have a choice in the matter. The question is not whether we are willing to sacrifice. Life is filled with sacrifices. It's always a question of how much are we willing to sacrifice — and for what are we sacrificing? We cannot have things of value and at the same time live foot-loose and carefree lives. All commitments involve sacrifice.

Oh, to be sure, there are those who try to live free and unfettered lives, but what becomes of them? To say "yes" to anything requires saying "no" to a whole lot of other things. For instance, one cannot be "a little bit religious" for very long. You either commit or you end up saying: "I don't go to Mass very often anymore because of this, that or the other thing. To say "yes" to everything means we can't say "yes" to anything in particular. One cannot both commit and keep all of one's options open at the same time. "No one can serve two masters", Jesus reminded us [Matthew 6:24].

Keeping all of one's options open is just another way of avoiding full commitment. It's another form of denial. That's true in our close and intimate relationships with others, and that's true in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Commitment, love, marriage and friendships all impose things upon us. They require an uncluttered "yes."

But while love demands sacrifice, it also at the same time paradoxically lets us find freedom. True lovers give each to the other the gift of freedom, the freedom to be the very best selves found living deep down inside of them. True lovers give each other the freedom to become the best they can be.

And, paradoxically, don't you find it to be true that freedom is found in decisiveness? You and I all know of indecisive people; we find them among our friends and acquaintances. They can't make up their minds. They're paralyzed and immobilized in their lack of ability to make a decision. They get hung up on the hook, the paralysis of analysis.



Next week we celebrate the Fourth of July. Ideas of freedom will be on our minds. For many, the talk will be of our national freedom. All of that is of great importance, of course. But we ought to also talk about and think about our own personal freedoms and commitments? Ask yourself, can a person live in a free country such as ours and still be a slave? I'm not talking here about the institution of slavery that once existed here in America. Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* and the Civil War settled that issue. But there are other forms of slavery. One can be held in bondage by alcohol or drugs. The lust for money imprisons many. The sex trade, pornography, and living a totally sensual life holds many in bondage. Terrorists presently seek to hold us hostage in fear of their actions. The goal of a terrorist is to immobilize us.

In our popular culture some of the most vocal advocates of freedom are the biggest promoters of enslaving people in their own self-centered gratifications. A form of hyper-individualism is presented by many as a God-given right when, in fact, it is nothing more than self-ism, egoism, and consuming individualism that hurts others and demeans our commonly shared values. Self-ism costs others dearly.

Questions of freedom are continually put before our U.S. Supreme Court. Such questions should

There's a fervor that comes from the wetness of fertility that can make the soul swell with feelings of creativity, warmth, and immortality. God is in that. But there is also an aridity that comes from a deeper place — a heat that threatens to dry out the very marrow of the soul, a dryness that shrinks all swelling, especially pride, and leaves us vulnerable and mortal by bringing the soul to kindling temperature. God is in that dryness no less than in the wetness of fertility because in that painful longing we feel the Eros of God and the motivation of Christ.

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

RUNNING ON EMPTY:

We all have those days — you know, the ones when we hit snooze far too many times, when we are frantically trying to find something we misplaced, or showing up to school to find there's a test we had forgotten about. They are not fun days. On top of all that, we drag due to lack of sleep from the night — or month — before. Doing anything more strenuous than watching *Netflix* seems impossible.

In my own life, it seems like I am always playing catch up or struggling to plan ahead. Like many of you, I'm a doer — I love crossing items off my list and feeling a sense of accomplishment. It bothers me to sit around when I am an efficient multi-tasker.

While there is nothing wrong with being driven, there comes a time where Jesus is calling us to rest. And, by rest I don't necessarily mean take a nap — although there is nothing wrong with that. We can best be fruitful when we are giving from the surplus of our prayers and charity.

Jesus invites all those who are running on empty to Him — "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" [Matthew 11:28-30].

Being tired goes further than desiring sleep. While sleep is essential, we need to recognize how draining and demanding our busy schedule is. Time management needs to be a priority in our lives — not only to complete our tasks, but to help us keep Christ as our focus.

The reality of our days are crammed with so many different things. It's seldom that we take time to be still. Even when we are at rest our minds are usually still active and easily distracted by the constant texts or Instagram notifications. Christ tells us to "be still and know that I am God" [see Psalm 46:10]. It comes to a point where we need to stop striving to do what seems like the next best thing, and just "be." We need to make a point to carve out a time for silence in our day — a time where we can truly be still to encounter the one who loves us for just being.

There are many people who God has put on our path — some lift us up, and some may drag us down. We need to discern those relationships that we are being called out of as well as being open and available for new relationships. Authentic friendships are a gift from God. He created us to be in community. And when we are, we are most fully alive. Let's allow the positive relationships to help fill us up.

When we continue to run on empty — or halfway — we sell ourselves short and we don't give 100% to our relationship with God. He desires all of us — whether we are running on empty or if our tanks have been full — we need to continue to seek him.

—taken from the writings of Kelly Colangelo, which appear on the internet

FOLLOW ME:

Who in their right mind would take up with an unarmed, violence-avoiding preacher headed to the big city to face jealous, powerful foes who will stop at nothing to get rid of him? He seems as naively hopeful as the "tank man" of Tiananmen Square who stood before oncoming armored vehicles, and as imaginatively courageous as Ukrainians who hand cellphones to young Russian soldiers so they can call their mothers. Facing impossible odds, such people proclaim that hope and love are stronger than brute force. While these latter examples come from our era, we meet the first in Luke's Gospel — his name is Jesus [Luke 9:51-62].

What the theme of this 13th Week in Ordinary Time asks is: "What does it take to be a follower of Jesus?" In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, theologian Fr. Gerhard Lofink comments that there is no New

FOLLOWING JESUS — BE READY FOR SURPRISES:

Following Jesus is not without its surprises. It's best to be forewarned. So, here's fair warning! Soren Kierkegaard once said that what Jesus wants is followers — not admirers. He's right. To admire Jesus without trying to change our lives does nothing for Jesus — nor for us. Yet how exactly does one follow Jesus? Classically we have said that we do this by trying to imitate him. But that posits a further question: How do we imitate Jesus?

A negative example might be useful here. Some of us remember the “Jesus people” of the late 1960's — with their rather raw, literal approach to following Jesus. They tried to look like he looked. They put on flowing white robes, grew beards, walked bare-foot, and tried, in appearance and dress, to imitate the Jesus that centuries of Western artists painted for us. Obviously, this is not what discipleship means not only because we don't know what Jesus looked like — although we do know that he was not the fair-skinned, fair-haired young man of Western art — but, more importantly, because attempts to mimic Jesus' physical appearance miss the point of discipleship entirely.

More subtle is the attempt to imitate Jesus by trying to copy his actions. The algebra here works this way. Jesus did certain things, so we should do them too. He taught, healed, consoled the downtrodden, went off into the desert by himself, stayed up all night occasionally and prayed, and visited the homes of sinners. So, we should do the same things. We should become teachers, nurses, preachers, counselors, monks, social workers, and non-judgmental friends to the less-than-pious. In this view, imitation is carrying on the actions of Jesus.

This kind of imitation — however valuable as ministry — still is not quite what is required in terms of real discipleship. In the end, it too misses the point because one can be preacher of the gospel and not really be imitating Jesus, just as one can be a truck driver and be imitating him. True imitation is not a question of trying to look like Jesus, nor of trying to duplicate his actions.

So then, what is it? Perhaps one of the better answers to that question is given by John of the Cross — the great Spanish mystic. In his view, we imitate Jesus when we try to imitate his motivation, and when we try to do things for the same reason he did. For him, that is how one “puts on Christ.” We enter real discipleship when, like Jesus, we have as our motivation the desire to draw all things into one — into one unity of heart, one family of love.

John of the Cross then offers some advice regarding how this can be done. We should begin, he says, by reading the scriptures and meditating the life on Jesus. Then we should pray to Christ and ask him to instill in us his desire, longing, and motivation. In essence, we should pray to Jesus and ask him to make us feel the way he felt while he was on earth.

Some surprises await us however, he points out, if we do this. Initially, when we first begin seriously to pray for this, we will fill with fervor, good feelings, a passion for goodness, and a warm sense of God's presence. We will feel that we feel like Jesus — and that will be a very good feeling indeed. However, if we persevere in our prayer and desire to imitate him, things will eventually change, and in a way that we least expect. The warm feelings, fervor, and passion — that snug feeling that we feel like Jesus — will disappear and be replaced by something infinitely less pleasant. We will begin to feel sterile, dispassionate, dry. God's presence will feel neither warm nor steady and we will be left wondering “what's wrong? How did I lose the way?”

But, as John of the Cross assures us, nothing is wrong. Rather our prayer has been answered. We prayed to Jesus, asking him to let us feel like he felt, and he granted our request. Exactly. For a large part of his life and ministry Jesus felt exactly as we are now feeling — dry, sterile, and not buoyed up by any warm feelings of God — even as he remained faithful in that darkness. Strange how it can feel, feeling like Jesus.



likewise be put before our own minds, and in the topics of conversations we have within our own families. Freedom is a wonderful gift. But it brings with it certain questions — Freedom from what? Freedom for what? Freedom to do what?

Finally, we need give ourselves the freedom to focus on where we're going and not be held captive by constantly looking back at our past. Do you drive a car looking through the front windshield or do you drive looking through the rear window? If you drive your car by looking through the rear window, you will certainly crash! We should not let ourselves be enslaved by our pasts.

Jesus said to His disciples: “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.” He was talking about fitness and abilities, as well as vision. We can be crippled and disabled if we're constantly dwelling on our past mistakes, if we're constantly feeling sorry for ourselves about what's happened in our past, or what we've given up. To be truly free our eyes must be fixed on what's ahead, not what was in the past.

God created you with an inner nature that is centered on your free will. You were created to decide, to be decisive, to freely choose to love Him and respond to His callings, callings to bring His way, His truth, and His life into your inner world and into the world around you. Therefore, you and I are constantly called to decide and to decide to act not on emotions and feelings, but rather on our convictions. What influences my decisions the most, feelings or convictions? Urges or decisions to choose what God wants me to choose?

As we celebrate our freedoms this coming July 4th, you might want to ponder on these things. For God has given us freedom — the freedom to do good, the freedom to accomplish His purposes. What could possibly make us happier? —taken from the writings of Father Charles Irvin, which appear on the internet

THE IMMENSITY WITHIN:

On one level, soul, consciousness, love, and the Holy Spirit can all be thought of as one and the same. Each of these point to something that is larger than the self, shared with God, and even eternal. That's what Jesus means when he speaks of “giving” us the Spirit, or sharing the Spirit's consciousness with us. One whose soul is thus awakened actually has “the mind of Christ” [see 1 Corinthians 2:10–16]. That does not mean the person is psychologically or morally perfect, but such a transformed person does see things in a much more expanded and compassionate way. St. Paul calls it “a spiritual revolution of the mind” [see Ephesians 4:23] — and it is!

Jesus calls this implanted Spirit the “Advocate” who is “with you and in you,” makes you live with the same life that he lives, and unites you to everything else [John 14:16–20]. Jesus goes on to say that this “Spirit of truth” will “teach you everything” and “remind you of all things” [John 14:26] as if you already knew this somehow. Talk about being well-equipped from a Secret Inner Source! It really is too good to believe — so we didn't believe it.

Consciousness, the soul, love, the Holy Spirit, on both the individual and shared levels, have sadly become largely unconscious! No wonder some call the Holy Spirit the “missing person of the Blessed Trinity.” No wonder we try to fill this radical disconnectedness through various addictions.

There is an Inner Reminder and an Inner Rememberer [see John 14:26, 16:4] who holds together all the disparate and fragmented parts of our lives, who fills in all the gaps, who owns all the mistakes, who forgives all the failures — and who loves us into an ever-deeper life. This is the job description of the Holy Spirit, who is the spring that wells up within us [John 7:38–39] — and unto eternal time. This is the breath that warms and renews everything [John 20:22]. These are the eyes that see beyond the momentary shadow and disguise of things [John 9]; these are the tears that wash and cleanse the past [Matthew 5:4]. And better yet, they are not only our tears but are actually the very presence and consolation of God within us [2 Corinthians 1:3–5].

You must contact this Immensity! You must look back at what seems like your life from the place of this Immensity. You must know that this Immensity is already within you. The only thing separating you from such Immensity is your unwillingness to trust such an utterly free grace, such a completely unmerited gift. —taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., which appear on the internet.

DEAD HORSES AND EXCUSES:

Nine young marines received a weekend pass after their first month of boot camp. Because the camp was in a rural part of Georgia, they all needed to take the bus to the nearest city, which was some thirty miles away. On Monday morning at roll call, none of the nine were present as they should have been. About mid-morning the first marine straggled back into camp and was immediately brought to the Commander. “I’m sorry to be late, Sir,” he said. “But I was on a date and I lost track of time and because of that I missed the last bus back to camp. I knew I needed to be here so I hailed a cab. But about halfway back the cab broke down. So, I went to the nearest farmhouse and borrowed a horse. But after a few miles the horse lay down and died. So, I walked the last five miles on foot. But here I am.”



Now the Commander was highly suspicious of this involved story. But the cadet was young, and this was his first offense. So, he gave him a lecture on the importance of punctuality and sent him back to training. But throughout the day the Commander’s suspicion grew even more intense because the next seven marines who returned all told him the exact same story. About sundown the ninth marine came into camp and was brought before the Commander. He started like all the rest: “I was on a date; lost track of time; missed the bus; hailed a cab . . .”

“Wait a minute,” said the Commander. “You’re not going to tell me that that cab broke down are you?”

“Not at all, Sir,” he said. “The cab was fine. But it was unable to get through all the dead horses on the road.”

Our excuses are like dead horses on the road to life. They prevent us from moving forward to the place where God wants us to be. This truth explains Jesus’ peculiar remarks in Luke’s gospel. In the incident that Luke records, Jesus is unwilling to accept any excuse — not going home to bury your father; not saying farewell to your family. No excuse is acceptable [Luke 9:51-62]. Now we could be distracted by debating the reasonableness of Jesus’ stance. But this is not the point of the gospel. The gospel challenges us to admit that our excuses hold us back from the place God wants us to be.

Most of the time, we know exactly what we need to do. We understand to what God is calling us. But then the excuses begin. “I’m not ready yet.” “I’m too tired.” “I’m not worthy.” “I’m too afraid.” Those excuses, much like those in the gospel, might well seem reasonable. But they are nevertheless preventing us from moving forward. If we build our life around excuses, we will end up going nowhere.

So how do we move beyond excuses? Not on our own. It takes more than our effort to convince us that we are ready, that we are not too tired, that we are worthy, that we are no longer afraid. The only way we can move through and beyond our excuses is to turn to Christ and ask for help. The way forward is not by depending more on ourselves, but trusting in the God who loves us.

Saint Paul says it beautifully in his letter to the Church at Galatia: “For freedom, Christ has set you free” [Galatians 5:1,13-18]. Paul is telling us that God loves us. If we claim that love — if we believe that God is with us — we can find the freedom to move through our excuses. We can be freed from our weakness, from our lethargy, from our unworthiness, from our fear. With Christ’s help we can find the courage to speak the truth to our spouse or to our boss. We can find the energy to meet our responsibilities. We can build God’s Kingdom. With Christ’s grace we can begin — even though we are not sure how we will finish. We can minister to others, even when we know that we are far from perfect.

Today and everyday, Christ is calling us to himself. He asks us to move forward to deeper satisfaction and a fuller life. We can always come up with reasons not to move, to stay exactly where we are. That is why we need to believe in God’s love and let that love free us. Let us then claim God’s presence in our life. Let us believe in God’s love for us so that through that love we can find the freedom to do God’s will — without excuses.

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

at the same time teach them.

Not everyone can set their face to achieve every goal. But everyone can become a vital member of the Kingdom of God. Everyone can be resolutely determined to join Jesus all the way, all the way to Calvary — all the way to the Kingdom. Every one of us can harness the power of God — the power of the Spirit — and complete the monumental task we have been created to perform. We can do all that God wants of us in our lives, but we have to be determined, we have to set our faces like flint and look towards the ultimate goal of our lives, service of God. When it comes to living our Christianity, we have to have our game faces on.

—taken from the writings for Msgr. Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Amos 2:6-16, Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday: Amos 3:1-4:12, Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday: Acts 12:1-11, 2Timothy 4:6-18, Matthew 16:13-18

Thursday: Amos 7:10-17, Matthew 9:1-8

Friday: Amos 8:4-12, Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday: Amos 9:11-15, Matthew 9:14-17

14th Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 66:10-14, Galatians 6:14-18, Luke 10:1-20

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JULY 16th:

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.

GOOD ADVICE:

Do not let the past disturb you, just leave everything in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and begin again in joy.

—Mother Teresa

PUTTING ON OUR GAME FACE:

The phrase “put on your game face” is a very common expression in athletics. It is used in sports when an athlete is so determined to accomplish his or her goal, that his or her determination is written all over his or her face. You can just see it. Nothing was going to keep them from getting a hit, from making a tackle, from completing a pass, nothing is going to stop them from scoring a goal, from stopping a goal, and so forth.

In Luke’s Gospel for this 13th Week in Ordinary Time, Jesus has his game face on. The story begins “When the days for Jesus’ being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem” [Luke 9:51-62]. The actual words used is that Jesus resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem. Some translations used to say: “He set his face like flint.” From this point on the Gospel of Luke is a journey narrative with the goal — Jerusalem, always in sight. For it is in Jerusalem that Jesus would suffer, die and rise again. He would be taken up, up to Calvary, up from the grave, up to heaven.

Nothing was going to get in Jesus’ way. He was determined to complete the work of the Father. He was determined to initiate the Kingdom of God. If the Samaritans didn’t want to join in, so be it. That would not stop him. Nor was he going to let those brats — James and John, who wanted the best places in heaven — slow him down with their desire to show that they could share in his power and call down fire and brimstone on the Samaritans. Jesus rebuked them, and said something like: “Knock it off!” And then he went on to the next stop, the next village on the journey to Jerusalem.

Some people wanted to join Jesus. He told them that his journey would be vigorous — “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” He is saying that this journey will not be easy.

Other people received a direct invitation from Jesus to join him on the journey. But they had excuses: “I’ve got to bury my father, I need to say goodbye to my family, and so forth.” Jesus told them that nothing can prevent the true disciple from journeying with Him to Jerusalem, from journeying with Him to establish the Kingdom of God, from journeying with Him to the Cross and to the resurrection — to the Kingdom.

We also need to journey with the Lord. To do this, we need to have our game faces on. We cannot allow anything to destroy our focus on the goal — the Kingdom of God. That means we have to be determined to fight off the pressure we have from those around us enticing us to join in with the drinking, the drugs and the sex, the fun, the distractions. That means telling people in high school, college and beyond: “No, I don’t do that. I have a bigger goal in mind, a greater good.” We need to firm ourselves up, and resolutely set our faces to follow the Lord. I remember one young lady telling me how she survived the negative pressures of high school and college. She would say: “What effect is doing this or not doing that going to have on me Ten-Years-From-Now?” Nothing was going to stop her. Nor would she stop herself. She had her game face on. She had the determination of Joshua. When Joshua led the Hebrews into the Promise Land and after all their enemies were conquered, Joshua told them to choose God or choose the pagan idols, but “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” [Joshua 24:15]. Game face.

Now, not everyone can hit a home run — no matter how determined he or she is. Some people just cannot hit a baseball or softball even if it were the size of a beach ball. That would be me. Not everyone can score a goal for the USA Soccer team, or block one — no matter how determined they are! There are many, many young people who are great soccer players, but not good enough to make the national team. Not everyone can become a nurse or a doctor no matter his or her determination. Some people just cannot do science and math, and could never get into med school or nursing school. Not everyone can be a teacher. Some people just do not have the patience to care for a large number of children while

**LIVING THE GOSPEL IN A SECULAR WORLD:**

How do I fit the practice of my faith into the demands of everyday life? Putting our faith into action is the challenge of every believer. We are pulled between making time for prayer and good works on the one hand and raising a family and holding down a job on the other. It is difficult to pray the rosary or study the Bible when supper needs to be prepared, the kids need a ride to soccer practice, or when we have to work overtime on a project. It is difficult to keep our minds focused on the kingdom of God when so many other demands are made on our time and energy. Nonetheless, Jesus calls us to love him no matter what the circumstances of our life may be. We are to give ourselves totally in his service — whether we are a priest, or parking lot attendant, religious sister or brother, or nurse.

The Scripture Readings for this 13th Week in Ordinary Time give us some important clues on how to balance the practice of our faith with the demands of life in the 21st century. In Paul’s letter to the Church at Galatia, he reminds us to “serve one another through love” [Galatians 5:1,13-18]. Love is the calling of every Christian. It makes everything we do pleasing to God. By adding a little love, we can take whatever we’re doing and make it an opportunity to serve Jesus. When we offer our thoughts, words, and actions up to God in love, then the demands of job and family no longer get in the way of our life of faith; rather it actually helps us to grow closer to God and others. They become opportunities for prayer as we draw on the power of his Spirit to enable us to love as he does.

Luke’s Gospel gives us another clue. Jesus tells someone who wishes to follow him: “The Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head” [Luke 9:51-62]. Jesus had no permanent place in this world. It is a reminder to us that we have no permanent home here either. Our final destination is heaven. We are not meant to get too comfortable here on earth. Whether we have been blessed with abundance or are struggling to get by, our homes and possessions are not ours to keep. Remembering that helps keep our work in perspective. We are called to something greater than the status and prestige that money promises.

Finally, we must be always ready to serve the needy around us. In Luke’s gospel, two of the people who approach Jesus have excuses for not following him, but Jesus did not have time to wait around for them. It was “now or never.” How many times have we used the demands of family life or of our job as an excuse not to practice charity? Jesus tells us very plainly that when we fail to feed the hungry or give drink to the thirsty, it is really him whom we are ignoring. Are our heads buried so deeply in the details of our everyday lives that we miss Jesus when he passes by? If we are to become holy in the 21st century, we must not let our busy schedules be an excuse for not doing good.

We do not have to give up on the hope of becoming saints because we have jobs and families. By offering our work up to God in love, by not valuing the accumulation of wealth too highly, and by not allowing our busy lives to be an excuse to overlook the needs of others, we can discover a sure path to holiness in our everyday lives.

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

NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.

IT’S HERE:

In life’s mess is where Jesus invites us to remain in Him.

—Mytae Carrasco Wallace



THREE LESSONS FROM ST. GIANNA MOLLA:

I'm sometimes tempted to believe that all Saints are the same. I might create false faces for Saints, thinking them removed from the real world and the usual struggles that I experience. But, thankfully, when I take the time to look closely at the lives of the Saints, I see how interesting and particular each of them was. The holiness of the Saints brings out the deepest truths of their diversity — for in their unity with God do they become the fullest versions of themselves. St. Gianna Molla is a great example of this particular holiness. Her witness to God's power and love shakes me awake from the temptation to relegate Saints to boring pieces of memorized history. Gianna shows me the vibrance of life with Christ, and I hope her story can show you the same.

St. Gianna Molla was born in Italy in 1922. She grew up attending Catholic school and fostering a deep life of prayer. As a young woman, she earned degrees in medicine and surgery, opening her own medical practice near her hometown. She specialized in pediatric medicine, and she had special care for the poor and vulnerable. She saw her work as the mission God had given her to participate in His saving power.

She married Pietro Molla, and began a family in Italy. After the births of her first three children, Gianna experienced severe complications with her fourth pregnancy. She was presented with two options — to abort her daughter and save her own life, or to attempt to save her daughter's life and risk her own. She chose to try and save her unborn daughter. Her daughter's life was saved in the womb, and her daughter was born. Gianna continued to suffer complications throughout the rest of the pregnancy, and she died a week after the birth of her fourth child.

Gianna Molla was canonized in 1994, and her family attended the ceremony. In his homily during the canonization Mass, Saint Pope John Paul II said of her: "Gianna Beretta Molla was a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love. Following the example of Christ, who 'having loved his own, loved them to the end' [see John 13:1], this holy mother of a family remained heroically faithful to the commitment she made on the day of her marriage. The extreme sacrifice she sealed with her life testifies that only those who have the courage to give of themselves totally to God and others are able to fulfill themselves."

Gianna's situation is perhaps pretty unusual; even so, she has important lessons to teach us. So here are three things to learn from St. Gianna Molla.

1. **Saints Are Normal People.** St. Gianna Molla was a married doctor who liked hiking and skiing. She grew up going to Catholic school and playing with her children in her backyard. You probably know someone like this. Certainly, she did foster a deep life of prayer and devotion to the Sacraments, but she also did many other things that weren't explicitly "churchy."

When we see Saints frozen in our stained glass windows, we might forget that they moved and lived. We might be tempted to create caricatures of the Saints in which they have no fun and never do anything. I certainly did this. In fact, for much of my life, I didn't really want to be a Saint because I thought that Saints never did anything interesting. I wanted to have a personality and hobbies and friends, and I didn't want to surrender my individuality for the sake of being holy. However, I see that St. Gianna didn't have to forfeit her personality when I look closely. In the midst of her working life, she found a call from God to serve His people. Her mission existed amid things she already loved to do — accordingly, sanctity called her to meet God while being her truest self. We might imagine Gianna lacing up her hiking boots or commuting to work at a hospital.

2. **Be Holy Wherever We Are.** St. Gianna lived a holy life while doing what she had always wanted. She didn't travel the world, converting entire populations — in fact, her health kept her from the



foreign missions she once desired. Instead of being great by the world's standards, Gianna found her greatness and holiness in her hometown. She saw her practice of medicine as an excellent opportunity to serve the people of God, even if she wasn't able to travel across the world. She trusted that any kind of work she did might be sanctified by God's grace.

Being holy doesn't require a certain job or a certain vocation. Instead, holiness comes from an interior disposition toward loving God and His people. We might imagine Gianna as a famous author instead of a surgeon — even in a different role, her holiness would have led her to spread God's love. Gianna's mission was to love those before her as she provided them with medical care. She trusted that God wanted to work in the incarnate context of her life.

3. **Our Lives Are Not Just About Us.** Gianna recognized the danger she might face if she continued her fourth pregnancy. But, she trusted that her daughter's life was worth the risk. She looked beyond herself and recognized how deeply went her mission of love. Unselfishly, she wanted to give her daughter a chance at life. She knew that her Christian mission urged her to love others, even if it meant risking her life.

Gianna realized that she didn't "own" her life — she saw her life as a gift from God. As a result, she held her life with open hands — not clinging to it in fear. Because she understood her life to be a gift, she was open to giving her life away as a gift to her unborn daughter. Her openness to giving away her life reminds us of Christ. Gianna mirrors Christ in her willingness to sacrifice her life for the sake of another, and she inspires us toward that same willingness.

Gianna Molla didn't slay a dragon like St. George or fly across the city like Joseph of Cupertino. Instead, she lived with great love as a doctor and mother. She saw every piece of her life as an opportunity for God to work, and she trusted that no moment was too small to show God's love. She was willing to sacrifice her life so that her daughter might live, and she echoes the selfless love of Christ. May we all learn from her that God wants to work great things in us. St. Gianna Molla, pray for us!

—taken from the writings of Nick Bernard, a high school campus 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. 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].**

MORNING PRAYER ENABLES WORK:

The morning prayer determines the day. Squandered time of which we are ashamed, temptations to which we succumb, weakness and lack of courage in work, disorganization and lack of discipline in our thoughts and in our conversation with others, all have their own origin most often in the neglect of morning prayer. Order and distribution of our time become more firm where they originate in prayer. Temptations which accompany the working day will be conquered on the basis of the morning breakthrough to God. Decisions, demanded by work, become easier and simpler where they are made not in the fear of men but only in the sight of God. "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not humans" [see Colossians 3:23]. Even mechanical work is done in a more patient way if it arises from the recognition of God and his command. The powers to work take hold, therefore, at the place where we have prayed to God. He wants to give us today the power which we need for our work.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer