

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer of Praise ~**

**Sing a joyful noise to the Beloved  
all people of the earth.  
Serve the God of love  
with a glad heart!  
Join hands in the great dance of life!**

**Know that the Beloved of your heart  
is the Divine presence!  
Love created us,  
we belong to the Most High;  
We are born to be loving,  
expressions of the Creator's Divine Plan.**

**Open the gates of your heart with gratitude  
and enter Love's court with praise.  
Give thanks to your God  
bless God's holy name.**

**For God is a God of live.  
God lives in your heart forever  
with faith, truth and joy,  
now and in all that is to come  
Amen.  
Alleluia.**

—Psalm 100

**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.*

**FAITH EDUCATION:**

Faith Education returns to being “in person” this year. With that in mind, it is very important that you register your child early so that we will know how many teachers we will be needing. Even if your child attended class in the past, because we are resurrecting our program, you will need to register. Our Faith Education classes for the year will begin on **Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 AM.** Please join us as we come together to begin our faith journey for this year by entering into prayer and worship together. **If you have any questions, please contact Patty in the Chapel Office** [[440-473-3560]. Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE AND GOODNESS CONTINUES:**

Once again this year, we are going to undertake our **Planting Seeds of Hope and Goodness school supply program.** Our Lady Chapel is working to assist the needy children of **St. Adalbert’s Parish School.** Come join us as we work together to help these children get the next school year off to a good start come this Fall. Please follow this list when you are shopping. Only the following items are needed at this time — **No. 2 Wooden Pencils, Glue or Glue Sticks, Kleenex, Paper Towels and there is a special need for Backpacks.** Any and all quantities of these supplies are welcome!



Here is how you can be a part of this outreach. Simply shop for items on the list. Kindly **return the items between now and August 7<sup>th</sup>** to Our Lady Chapel. **If you do not have time to shop, simply place an envelope in the collection basket and mark it “St. Adalbert’s” or drop it off in the chapel office.** “Come Grow with us” — as together, we work and plant our seeds of hope and goodness to this community. Thank you in advance for your generosity and helping the children of St. Adalberts! Contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] if you have any questions.

**BLESSING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS — AUGUST 6-7:**

As so many of our college-aged young men and women are beginning to prepare to depart for the up-coming orientations and new school year, we will do a blessing over all college [undergrad as well as graduate] students at our Masses on the weekend of August 6-7. As a faith community, we want your school year to be filled with the joy and excitement of life, as well as the presence of God. Join us for this special blessing.

**BLESSING OF OUR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS — AUGUST 27-28:**

Our school year begins on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Giving everyone a few days to “settle in”, we would like to gather our Students and Teachers as they begin the journey of 2022-2023, by sharing a blessing of God upon them. As a faith community, we want your school year to be filled with the joy and excitement of life, as well as the presence of God. **Join us at our Masses this weekend of August 27-28 for this special blessing of our students and teachers.**

**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.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Robert Bonner, uncle of AVI associate Director, Bobbie Bonner, who is recovering from Brain Surgery.
- For Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken’s nephew, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Bob Hovel who is critically ill, resulting from a brain tumor.
- For Raymond Buganski, father-in-law of Athletic Director, Sean O’Toole, grandfather of Owen [‘18], Connor [‘20], Kelsey [‘24], and former Gilmour Student, Erin O’Toole, who is under to care of hospice.
- For Bill Anton, father of Alexis Anton [‘13] who is recovering from major heart surgery
- For Michael Bares, brother of James [‘80] Bares and Religion Instructor, Eileen Pryatel, uncle of Michael [‘08, Meghan [‘13] , and Kevin [‘15] Pryatel, who is seriously ill.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Tom Rakovec, father of Housekeeping person, Matt Rakovec.
- For Sister Ruth Evelyn Mauch, C.S.C.
- For Elvera Gruttadauria, mother of Frank Gruttadauria [‘76], and grandmother of Jenna Gruttadauria [‘03]
- For Gene Delauder.
- For Father Robert Glepko, pastor emeritus of Nativity of BVM [Lorain]
- For Elizabeth Kryszan, mother of Jennifer Kyrzan Kramer[‘97]
- For Nick DeLorme
- For Sister Miriam Pinchot, O.S.U.
- For Thomas Sponseller
- For Sister Margaret Friel, S.N.D.
- For Father Bob Begin, pastor-emeritus of St. Coleman..
- For Sister Roberta Goebel, O.S.U.
- For John Ambrose, father of Dominick Ambrose [‘81]

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- 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.

**HERE WE GO ALONE:**

We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others. Human beings do not go hand in hand the whole stretch of the way. There is a virgin forest, tangled, pathless, in each; a snow field where even the print of birds’ feet is unknown. Here we go alone, and like it better so. Always to have sympathy, always to be accompanied, always to be understood would be intolerable.

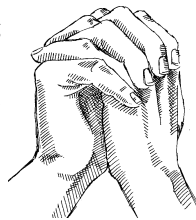
— Virginia Woolf

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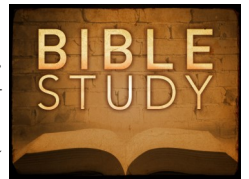
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For David Francisco, who is recovering from triple bypass surgery.
- For Tom King, who is recovering from a stroke.
- For Marty Szakaly, brother of Father Tony Szakaly, C.S.C., who is seriously ill.
- For Gary Buck, who is recovering from prostate surgery.
- 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 Pat Malak who is critically ill.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish ['30], who is undergoing treatment for many medical issues.
- For Tricia Ashkettle, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- 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 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 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 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 Chiacchiari, mother of Mark ['94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco ['96] who is undergoing further treatment for cancer.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian ['09], Rosa ['12] and Edwin ['17] Heryak, who is seriously ill.
- For Tom Podnar, father of Lower School art teacher, Eileen Sheehan, who is awaiting a heart transplant.
- For Father James Caddy, former pastor of St. Francis, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Paul Tuggey, grandfather of Charlie Tuggey ['21], seriously ill following a heart attack.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 PM. Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God's word. It's a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can't come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God's word.



**Our topic: The Difference between Gratefulness and Gratitude in meeting the person of Jesus**  
 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, July 31: 18 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, August 1: St. Alphonsus Liguori	NO MASS
Tuesday, August 2:	NO MASS
Wednesday, August 3:	NO MASS
Thursday, August 4: St. John Vianney	NO MASS
Friday, August 5:	NO MASS
Saturday, August 6: 19 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, August 7: 19 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**COME TO THE FEST — NEXT SUNDAY:**

We are excited, and blessed, to announce that *The FEST* is back HOME for 2022 at the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe. Join us on **Sunday, August 7, 2022** to enjoy the BEST national Christian artists — **Crowder, Phil Wickham, We the Kingdom, Micah Tyler, and Rhett Walker** — along with inspiring displays and vendors, and meaningful crafts and activities for the kids. There is plenty of **FREE parking near the seminary**, along with the opportunity to purchase a parking pass right on the FEST grounds. Find out all the details by going to: [www.theFEST.us](http://www.theFEST.us). Even if you can't make it during the day, **join Bishop Malesic at 8 PM for an inspiring outdoor Mass.** Join thousands and thousands as we come together as one at the Table of the Lord. The Mass will also be live-streamed at [www.theFEST.us/Mass](http://www.theFEST.us/Mass). It's the perfect one-tank trip



**HOW TRUE:**

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.

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

In this part of the world we have a little cat-like animal — the skunk. Its main defense against intruders and enemies is the ejection of a most terrible smell which lingers for days. We also have porcupines whose defense is the ejection of very sharp needle-like quills that stick deeply into nosey dogs and persons who get too close. Persons and most nations have defenses. As we prepare for the Divine Intruder this week, we might get in touch with the various stinks and pricklers with which we can keep others at a safe distance. How do we keep God and the calls of Jesus far from our doors marked “Private, Keep Out”?

The Meriam-Webster dictionary defines “greed” as “a selfish and excessive desire for more of something — such as money — than is needed.” Jesus is urging us to guard against something deeper and more dangerous, by crafting a story about a person who has had a very good year. He is fortunate to have more grain than he can store. And so he asks himself: “What shall I do?” He decides to build a bigger barn to store up this fortune for himself in order to take care of his security for a long time.

The person who was blessed has missed two other answers to his question. He could have answered: “I have more than I need; I’ll share my good fortune with someone who didn’t have such a good year.” He also could have answered: “I’ll give thanks to God, and focus on God’s goodness to me, and ask for the grace to be freer, more trusting in God’s love, so that I will fill my barn, share the rest, and ‘be rich in what matters to God.’”

Jesus is alerting us to guard against losing perspective about the meaning of our lives. Accumulation of wealth and security, without being focused on our relationship with God, and the needs of our brothers and sisters, will never lead us to the happiness it seems to promise. Greed is, by its very nature, self-destructive.

Our scripture readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time begin with a Book of Scripture which is very unknown to us — the Book of Ecclesiastes. The title of this book means “Preacher” or “Spokesman” — or perhaps even the “voice of the assembly”. “Qoheleth” is a common noun — not a personal name. “Ecclesiastes” comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew — a word which gives us the English word for “church-things” or things ecclesiastical. This book fits into a larger group of writings called “Wisdom Literature” — Proverbs, Song of Songs, Sirach, Wisdom, to name of few — these books deal with life’s problems, ponderings and practices.

Vanity or illusion is all there really as in life. Knowing many things or having great possessions, while good in themselves, actually avail humans of nothing [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23]. Time and life go on while we are here and after. Vanity is like smoke or wind — it all vanishes. Nothing is of much value or importance. One person can labor for a lifetime and when that person dies, the profits and accumulations might be given to one who did nothing to deserve it all.

Qoheleth is a figure who represents the community’s voice expressing its wisdom. Vanity for the writer is more like mist or smoke rather than the falseness of glamour. The voice of the people is wondering about what life is really all about. The wise and skilled person has to leave eventually all that knowledge has gained that person.

A person labors, frets and sweats and for what? As with mist and smoke, everything vanishes eventually. These are words inspired by the communal voices of the human heart which desires solidity,

**DON'T GET DISTRACTED IN YOUR JOURNEY:**

Our Scripture Readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time opens with a very famous passage from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Its message contradicts the writings of many other sacred authors. Those who composed our Hebrew Scriptures usually challenge Qoheleth’s belief that “All things are vanity!” [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23]. Knowing nothing of an afterlife — as we know it — until shortly before Jesus’ birth, most of them looked upon wealth as God’s reward for being good in the here and now. They believed if you kept your nose clean, doing what the Lord commanded, God would grant you a long life and take good care of you during that life.

Qoheleth, on the other hand, doesn’t see any sense in spending a lifetime acquiring wealth. He’s observed that someone who hasn’t “labored over it” will eventually inherit it — “For what profit comes to someone from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which he/she has labored under the sun? All their days sorrow and grief is their occupation.”

How are we supposed to deal with these biblical contradictions? In some sense we’re invited to spend our money and take our pick. The same theology doesn’t run from Genesis to Revelation. Our ancestors in the faith were convinced there are many implications — often contradictory implications — to our following God or the risen Jesus. The Scriptures they saved and collected provide us with a bunch of them.

Yet at the same time, a common theme runs through all our sacred writings — people of faith are constantly trying to discover what God wants of them.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus tells us what God doesn’t want — a senseless accumulation of wealth [Luke 12:13-21]. Following Qoheleth, he warns his followers that the wealth they acquire here isn’t going to follow them into eternity. If they’re smart, they will work at storing up real “treasure” — the things that matter to God, the things which are transferable from this life to the next.

In Paul’s letter to the Church at Colossae, he couldn’t agree more — “Seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think what is above, not of what is on earth” [Colossians 3:1-11]. Paul is convinced that if we’ve died with Christ, we’re already operating in the “above.” That means we must not only sidestep all the evils this earth offers, but also put on a “new self.” We must actually become other Christs.

Following the insights of his mentor, Paul is convinced that the first step in this transformation is to recognize the risen Christ in everyone around us. Quite a task! Being human, we first have to overcome all the barriers this earth has built between one person and another — “There is not Greek and Jew,” Paul reminds us, “circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all.”

No wonder there are different theologies in the Christian Scriptures. There’s simply no one way to recognize that divine dimension in everyone. How do we prepare ourselves to experience that uniqueness? It isn’t just a matter of telling our minds to do so.

It takes time to pull that off — it doesn’t happen instantly. Different people are at different stages of that recognition. The American Georgetown University Jesuits, for instance, were still owning and selling slaves in 1838, based on the belief that legitimate slaves — individuals created by God as slaves — were “ontologically different” from non-slaves. It took another generation and then some for all Christians to realize that theology didn’t hold water.

Today some still struggle with recognizing the risen Jesus in gays, lesbians and transgendered persons. We’ve obviously got a long way to go, and a lot of contradictions still to explore.

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



millions of dollars to secure successful campaigns and winning elections — past and present. Beneficiaries include politicians Donald Trump, Josh Hawley, Blake Masters, J.D. Vance and Ted Cruz, among others.

Thiel aims to transform American culture through “anti-woke” business ventures that pressure CEOs to avoid environmental, social, and political causes. He does not support socially responsible investing, the reduction of oil production to meet environmental goals, or anything that will hurt “the bottom line.” He does favor the controversial cryptocurrency.

Added to this situation is the judicial politics of Knights of Malta member, Leonard Leo — former executive vice president of the Federalist Society, and board of trustee member of the Catholic University of America. In an article by Coral Davenport of the *New York Times*, Coral discusses how Leo’s influence, along with powerful donors like the Koch brothers, helped secure the nomination and confirmation of five Supreme Court justices — John Roberts, Samuel Alito Jr., Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett.

The decision on “Roe v. Wade”, the decision to severely limit the federal government’s authority to reduce carbon dioxide from power plants, and Thiel’s successful “investments” attest to the statement that money has power, and power is gained through money.

The Scripture Readings are a clarion call to realize that all efforts rooted in self-aggrandizement and enrichment are nothing more than “vanity of vanities” [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23] steeped in political and economic greed that has funded people into powerful positions who create and support new forms of ideology and idolatry — often sustained by untruths.

For a country professing “one nation under God” in its Pledge of Allegiance, how far away many of the nation’s oligarchs and leaders are from the Divine spirit, instead embodying a belief in an imperial, hegemonic deity as portrayed by male biblical writers and now embraced by many Christian and Catholic evangelical fundamentalists.

Paul’s letter to the Church at Colossae indicates that he, too, was dealing with many of the same issues facing people of conscience today [Colossians 3:1-11]. Then and now, people continue to struggle with and disrespect diversity — especially within the Roman Catholic institutional church that, at times, cannot accept unreservedly that Christ is all in all.

Racism, sexism, and homophobia continue to fuel laws that divide instead of unify. Paul reminds us that “here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free,” gay, straight, rich, poor, Black, white, Indigenous, male, female — only Christ, only the divine in all. Paul’s message to the Colossians is as timely as ever.

For two-thirds of the globe’s population living in poverty, and with many impoverished people living in “the land of plenty,” Luke’s Gospel offers a word of hope. The Lukan parable highlights the folly of selfishly hoarding wealth that cannot secure life [Luke 12:13-21]; furthermore, as the author of Ecclesiastes reminds us, human life is short and we have no control over when it ends. What matters in life is having a generous and open heart — a characteristic that many who are disenfranchised already possess.

Finally, if the Lukan Gospel is read from the perspective of the disenfranchised and from the margins, then this parable presents a stirring challenge to all who profess to being Christian — especially to all who are Christian-Catholics with Catholic social teaching as part of their tradition. The challenge is to tear down the “barns” of all who greedily amass more and more power and wealth at the expense of the world’s most vulnerable, human and nonhuman alike, whose lives and countries’ resources and habitats are repeatedly exploited, leaving species and a planet devastated.

The world is in turmoil, experiencing seismic shifts. But as long as people of conscience are breathing, hungering for, and committed to transformative justice, hope remains alive, negating the statement that “all is vanity.” —taken from the writings of Sister Carol Dempsey, O.P., which appear on the internet

permanence, and security. For all the laboring, holding fast, nothing seems to last. It does sound like the familiar saying, “Don’t sweat the small stuff and everything is the small stuff.” These verses could encourage a selfish passivity, or a negative view of all efforts and relationships. Skillful planning and hard work will eventually create something, but because it is a “some-thing” it will not last. These words are not meant to be depressing; rather they are a call to keep things in perspective. It is God and who our worldly lives lead us to God that really matters.

Luke’s Gospel too has words in a similar style [Luke 12:13-21]. Here’s the background. Jesus is speaking to his disciples while a large crowd is listening in. Jesus has hard words about their not living the ways of the Pharisees. He tells them not to worry about their futures — that the Holy Spirit will be with them. Right when Jesus is telling them about how they will be mistreated, a voice from the standing-around crowd pipes up with an absolutely self-centered question — a question that is opposite to what Jesus is saying. The interrupter wants the Prophet to adjudicate a family situation of inheritance.

Jesus brings the person up short with a few well-aimed words, but he then takes the opportunity to spin a parable for him, the crowd, the disciples — and for us.

It is not exactly what we possess, but rather what possesses us. We can express our identities by what we drive or the clothes we wear, but they are an expression of and not our true identities. The person in Luke’s Gospel says to himself that now he can take his rest. This is his second big mistake. The first is that he conveniently forgot where his harvest came from. Resting for him means that he will not have to plant again, not have to rely on the lands again, and not have to realize his dependence on God. Rich in the things of this world depends upon how we look at them. Everything has God’s creative fingerprints on them and when we miss that truth we fingerpress them as what makes us rich. As has been said: “What we ultimately take with us is all that we have shared.”

The Scripture Readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time, offer us a wonderful opportunity to realign our perspective. What is it that I cling to? Perhaps it is material possessions, and their associated status, and sign of success. Perhaps it is holding on to security in other ways. Perhaps it is a deep reluctance to share what I have, freely.

A friend recently shared with me, with a smile, how her grandchild is at the stage of grabbing everything and claiming it as “mine.” Sometimes it is humbling to realize, as adults, that we are still claiming way too much as “mine.” Generosity comes from gratitude and freedom. We’ve all had the experience that when we were blessed to share to help someone else, we were richly rewarded by the experience.

The ultimate freedom is experienced when our lives are humbly placed with Jesus — in God. That’s where we’ll find happiness and real self-fulfillment. Surrender, and traveling this road of life with a lighter load of “possessions,” trusting in the mystery of God’s love for us, is tremendously freeing and the source of our happiness here, and for all eternity.

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

## GOD IS PERFECT LOVE:

Often we use the word God. This word can suggest something fascinating as well as horrible, attractive as well as repelling, seductive as well as dangerous, all-absorbing as well as nourishing. It is like the sun. Without the sun, there can be no life, but if we come too close to it, we are burned. The Christian, however, believes that God is no “something,” but rather a person who is Love perfect Love. The Christian knows it is possible to enter into dialogue with this loving God and so work at renewing the earth. Praying, therefore, is the most critical activity we are capable of, for when we pray, we are never satisfied with the world of the here and now and are constantly striving to realize the new world, the first glimmers of which we have already seen.

—Henri Nouwen

**WHAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING?**

I think the Book of Ecclesiastes had a favorite song — it was the ancient Hebrew equivalent of “I’m forever blowing bubbles.” The refrain was: “Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!” [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23]. Is life worth living? Of course, it is! Then what makes it worth living? All we are really told by the author of this Book is what doesn’t make life worth living. It is clearly not the accumulation of things. Greed is a predominant theme running through the Scripture Readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time.



Jesus suggests that there are other ways — good ways — of being rich. “Be rich in what matters to God.” We can intuit what that might mean. St. Paul — with another one of his lists — helps us to understand — again in a negative way — what Jesus does not mean. But earlier in the same letter, he writes: “Seek what is above” [Colossians 3:1-11]. And later he says: “put on a new self.”

In the Old Testament, “rich” is often a synonym for “wicked, selfish, cruel.” It is clear there is nothing wrong with having possessions. True, some saints adopted a severe life style of extreme poverty; this was their response — the only one possible for them — to the universal call to holiness.

The Scriptures often reflect a society of haves and have-nots. We read, for example, in the Prophet, Isaiah: “Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: that a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.” [Isaiah 58:5-8].

The challenge of the Scripture Readings is for us to find a way in our own lives — even if it is a way that we don’t prefer — to make Christ and God the center of our lives. In other words, the challenge for us is to become rich in what matters to God, instead of blowing pretty bubbles.

—taken from the writings of Father René J. Butler, M.S., which appear on the internet

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord’s invitation: “I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart” [Jeremiah 24:7].



**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, July 23]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 901.55**

**Offerings-----[Sunday, July 24]----- \$ 290.00**

the religious and psychological tools with which to handle that. What are these tools?

Psychologically, we need images of the human person that allow us to understand ourselves healthily but in ways that include an acceptance of our limitations, our frustrations, our anonymity, and the fact that our lives must make gracious space for everyone else’s life. Psychologically, we must be given the tools to understand our own life, admittedly as unique and special, but still as one life among millions of other unique and special lives. Psychologically, we need better tools for handling our grandiosity.

Religiously, our faith and our churches need to offer us an understanding of the human person that gives us the insights and the disciplines — discipleship — to enable us to live out our uniqueness and our specialness, even as we make peace with our own mortality, our limitations, our frustrations, our anonymity, and create space for the uniqueness and specialness of everyone else’s life. In essence, religion has to give us the tools to healthily access the divine fire inside us and act healthily on the talents and gifts God has graced us with, but with the concomitant discipline to humbly acknowledge that these gifts are not our own, that they come from God, and that all we are and achieve is God’s grace. Only then will we not be killed by failure and inflated by success.

The task in life, Robert Lax suggests, is not so much finding a path in the woods as of finding a rhythm to walk in.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — AUGUST 20<sup>th</sup>:**

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



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

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

**POVERTY and WEALTH:**

The Scripture Readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time address the 1% of people who own the world’s wealth. It is no secret that money has power, and power is gained through money. Some of the wealthiest oligarchs reside in the world’s wealthiest empire nation — the United States. These oligarchs, together with the techno feudal lords, are reshaping the global economy and the future of the planet.

In an article by Elizabeth Dvoskin in the *Washington Post*, she outlines the plans of billionaire investor Peter Thiel — longest-serving board member of Facebook — who stepped down from the social media giant, dissolving one of Silicon Valley’s most powerful partnerships. Why? Because he seeks to create a parallel economy fueled by the far-right and their political candidates to whom he has contributed

abandoned; the lonely; the destitute — anyone who needs us over and over again because there is no one else there to care for them. That, the old man says, is holiness. It is that holiness that ought to be the fruit of all our religious practices. And it cannot be substituted for by “playing holy” for all to see while living only for ourselves.

“Abba, give us a Word,” the disciples cry. And the Word that comes back is this one: Don’t think that the spiritual life is about the self. It is a hard Word. But it is the only Word that counts.

The fact is that the only purpose of the spiritual life, the Desert Monastics tell us to this day, is to begin to see the world as God sees the world. It is about becoming the self that sees life through the eyes of Jesus, and then, like Jesus, bends to become the miracle the world awaits.

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

### STRUGGLING WITH GRANDIOSITY:

We live in a world wherein most everything over-stimulates our grandiosity — even as we are handed less and less tools to deal with that. Several years ago, Robert L. Moore wrote a very significant book entitled, *Facing the Dragon*. The dragon that most threatens us, he believes, is the dragon of our own grandiosity — that sense inside us that has us believe that we are singularly special and destined for greatness. This condition besets us all. Simply put, each of us — all seven billion of us on this planet — cannot help but feel that we are the center of the universe. And, given that this is mostly unacknowledged and we are generally ill-equipped to deal with it, this makes for a scary situation. This isn’t a recipe for peace and harmony, but for jealousy and conflict.

And yet this condition isn’t our fault — nor is it in itself a moral flaw in our nature. Our grandiosity comes from the way God made us. We are made in the image and likeness of God. This is the most fundamental, dogmatic truth inside the Judaea-Christian understanding of the human person. However, it is not to be conceived simplistically — as some beautiful icon stamped inside our souls. Rather, it needs to be conceived of in this way: God is fire, infinite fire, an energy that is relentlessly seeking to embrace and infuse all of creation. And that fire is inside of us, creating in us a feeling of godliness, an intuition that we too have divine energies, and a pressure to be singularly special and to achieve some form of greatness.

In a manner of speaking, to be made in the image and likeness of God is to have a micro-chip of divinity inside us. This constitutes our greatest dignity but also creates our biggest problems. The infinite does not sit calmly inside the finite. Because we have divine energy inside us we do not make easy peace with this world, and our longings and desires are grandiose. Not only do we live in that perpetual disquiet that Augustine highlighted in his famous dictum: “You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you!” but this innate grandiosity has us forever nursing the belief that we are special, uniquely-destined, and born to somehow stand out and be recognized and acknowledged for our specialness.

And so, all of us are driven outwards by a divine gene to somehow make a statement with our lives — to somehow create a personal immortality, and to somehow create some artifact of specialness that the whole world has to take note of. This isn’t an abstract concept — it’s utterly earthy. The evidence for this is seen in every newscast, in every bombing, in every dare-devil stunt, and in every situation where someone seeks to stand out. It’s seen too in the universal hunger for fame, in the longing to be known, and in the need to be recognized as unique and special.

We must be given the tools to understand our own life — admittedly as unique and special — but still as one life among millions of other unique and special lives. But this grandiosity, of itself, isn’t our fault, nor is it necessarily a moral flaw. It comes from the way we are made — ironically from what is highest and best in us. The problem is that, today, we generally aren’t given the tools to grapple with it generatively. More and more, we live in a world within which, for countless reasons, our grandiosity is being over-stimulated, even as this is not being recognized and even as we are being given less-and-less



### WOLVES AND MONEY:

A research company was anxious to do an extensive study of wolves in one of our national parks. Wolves, however, are rather clever, and have no desire to cooperate with scientific studies. So, with the backing of a major donor, the company placed a bounty of \$5000 on any wolf that could be safely captured for research. Two young college students — Tom and Dave — decided this would be a way to make their fortunes. They were familiar with the park because they had camped there frequently. For two weeks they scoured the park without much success. Then one night, exhausted, they retired to their sleeping bags under the stars, and fell asleep thinking of their potential wealth. In the middle of the night, Tom woke up and realized that he and Dave were surrounded by at least 50 wild wolves with glaring eyes and bared teeth. He nudged his companion — “Dave,” he said, “Wake up! We’re rich!”

Rich? Maybe. Doomed? For sure, Jesus’ Parable also relates riches and death [Luke 12:13-21]. In the parable, a rich person is busy making plans to store his wealth for the future. He decides to build bigger barns to hold what he owns. But all of his industrious planning is cut short by his sudden death. The parable does not deny the need to plan for the future, but it asks us to look at wealth from the ultimate perspective. The man in the parable is called a fool, not because he is stupid, but because he does not appreciate the true purpose of his wealth. All his crops, all that he has, is a gift from God. That gift, of course, is meant to be used for his benefit, but not in an unlimited way. Once his own needs are met, his excess wealth should not be hoarded away for the future, but used. According to the gospel, it is to be used for the benefit of others.

This truth is not new to you. I think all of us are aware that God entrusts things to us to be used for the benefit of others. Yet many of us — like the person in the parable — go about from day to day without reflecting on what the purpose is for the gifts we have received. When God places money, or time, or ability into our hand, we are delighted. We begin planning how we can use these things for our own benefit. But how often do we think of the responsibility we have to use our gifts for the sake of others? Now this blindness might result in part from our culture which is always pushing us to accumulate excess wealth: more money, more friends, more possessions. Our culture persuades us that bigger is better, that growth is always desirable. How often do we ask ourselves: “Do I really need this? Shouldn’t some of this be given to someone else? What part of my excess wealth or talent or time should I give to someone who needs it?”

Clearly Jesus’ parable might not be intended for everyone. There could be people who have no excess wealth, no excess time, no excess talent. But the people with no excess of gifts are few. Most of us need to listen to this parable as it reminds us that the excess gifts that we keep for ourselves are not an advantage, but a liability. The scriptures even use the image of a storehouse in heaven — a storehouse in which we can invest. We can place things in our heavenly storehouse each time we give away some of our resources here on earth. The image of the heavenly storehouse should be taken seriously, because at any time, just like in the parable, God could choose to call us home. When John D. Rockefeller died at the age of 98 at the beginning of the twentieth century, he was the wealthiest man in the world. A reporter who was assembling his obituary asked his chief aide: “Just how much did your boss leave behind?” The aide answered: “All of it.”

The same is true for us. We will leave behind whatever we do not invest above. And how sad would it be, at the time of our death, if our bank account and coffers here on earth were bulging full and our storehouse in heaven was empty and bare

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



**VANITY OF VANITIES:**

“Vain” is one of those words that has multiple meanings and can be used in several different ways. We use it when talking about someone who is arrogant and self-centered. One can easily think of Hollywood movies stars or even some TV talk show hosts who are hollow and conceited. Home furnishings called “vanity tables” are built for the purpose of holding mirrors and various beauty aids. “Vain” can be used when describing our efforts that end up being worthless. People who are constantly letting you know about their accomplishments are vain and conceited. When we strive for something that is hollow or worthless, we eventually realize that all of our efforts were spent in vain.

But the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes uses the word “vain” in a different way — vanity is applied to everything that is not directed toward God, everything that is directed toward the things of this world. “Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!” [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23]. Here is a person who has labored with wisdom and knowledge and skill, and yet has to leave everything to another who has not labored over it. This is vanity and a great misfortune. “For what profit comes to a person from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which he has labored under the sun? All his days sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his mind is not at rest. This also is vanity.” That’s practical advice. How many sleepless nights have we spent tossing and turning with worries and concerns that either have not come to pass, or which we eventually realize were ultimately worthless?

St. Paul likewise gives us wise advice in his letter to the Church at Colossae when he tells us we should “rid ourselves of immorality, impurity, passion, lustful desires” and all of the fool’s gold offered us by the world [Colossians 3:1-11]. Why? Because in the long run, all such things are worthless and empty, and all of our energies devoted to those things will be vain. Is lusting the path to happiness? What will it all mean and what value will it have when we meet Christ face to face?



We live in a very competitive world — a world that tells us we are really somebody when we are popular, when we have clothes or money, or look more beautiful than others, a world that judges our value on what we have or how we appear. Our professions, the advertising industry, the world of fashion, and even our academic institutions are all built on measures of value that have nothing to do with how God sees us and values us. Who does not want to be Number One? Who among us in our competitive world does not want to come out on top? Who among us does not want to be the most popular? But the question you need to face and I need to face is: Who is measuring our value?

In the end, like the person Jesus was talking about in Luke’s Gospel — the person who was so concerned about the things of this world — we may hear God saying to us: “You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?” [Luke 12:13-21]. Jesus gives us fair warning in telling us: “This is how it will be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God.”

On the day we die, what can we give back to God that came to us from this life — a life that He gave to you and to me? Will it be our real estate holdings? A big bank account? Our popularity? Fine clothes? A fancy car? Death — the great leveler — will render what this world values to be valueless. “Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!”

God wants us to die rich; he wants us to give Him a life that has value — a life that was lived well, rich in meaning and not lived in vain. What He wants and what we can give Him — regardless of our economic position or our social status — is a spirit, a soul that is richly adorned with attitudes and

recognize the entanglements of what the world calls success.

A doctor is successful not if he or she has a prosperous practice, but if he or she becomes the healing hands of Christ for the sick. A lawyer is successful not if he or she is part of a profitable firm, but if he or she uses learning, knowledge and talent to protect people and the community, to do good for people and the community, or, simply, to be just. Many times, an incorrect view of success is based on honors and titles. Is a priest a success if he becomes a Monsignor or a Bishop? Monsignor Guido Sarducci from the old *Saturday Night Live* boasted that it was really important for him to become a Monsignor because he could get a better cut of veal in Rome. **No, success is not measured by titles. A priest is on the road to success if he can draw closer to God each day of his life while he also draws those he serves to join him on the journey to God. How can we determine if a marriage is successful? Certainly, longevity does not determine the success of a marriage.**

A marriage is successful if the man and woman are better and more loving people because of the marriage. The sacrament of marriage is celebrated when the husband and wife become the means of salvation for each other. How about parenting? What are the signs that people are good parents? Success in parenting is certainly not based on what your kids have, but who your kids are. For example, many of you parents have begun shopping for school clothes. Perhaps, some of you are shopping at Walmart or Target. Perhaps some of you are shopping at Macys or Nordstroms. The cost of the clothes that you put on your children has nothing to do with the success of your parenting.

The success of your parenting is evidenced in the decisions your children make throughout their lives. Many of our young people are going off to college determined to use their abilities to better the world. Their parents raised them well. The concept of success accepted by most in society is a fallacy. Success is not predicated on what we have, what honors we receive, what jobs we hold, etc. Success is predicated on how each of us is becoming more and more the reflection of God we were created to be. Success is predicated on our ability to assume the person of Jesus Christ. St. Paul says to the Church at Colossae that our lives are hidden with Christ in God in such a way that when Christ appears we appear. The personality of a Christian is so entwined with the person of Jesus Christ that Christ and the Christian, Christ in the Christian, must be one. That is success. Success is not a present reality — it is a goal, the goal of Christian life. The goal is reached — the life is successful — when every aspect of life reflects the person of Jesus Christ. That is success. All else is vanity.

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

**ONLY PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE:**

A brother said to an old man: “There are two brothers. One of them stays in his cell quietly fasting for six days at a time, and imposing on himself a good deal of discipline; the other brother serves the sick. Which one of them is more acceptable to God?” The old man replied: “Even if the brother who fasts six days were to hang himself by the nose, he could not equal the one who serves the sick.”

What are we hearing here? The question is clear: When it’s all over — when we have said our last rosary, made our final trip to church, made our last private retreat, fasted every day of our last Lent, and hung by our nose from the steeple of the church as a sign of our eternal commitment to God — will it have been enough to qualify us as saintly?

Only, the old man says, if we have spent our lives taking care of those who could not take care of themselves. Why? Because this is the Word that most echoes the life of Jesus, and upon which the monastic life is built. The Desert Monastics follow the Jesus who walks from Galilee to Jerusalem curing the sick, raising the dead, and contesting with those along the way who would say that keeping the Law is greater than addressing the needs of the people.

But who are they? They are the old woman across the street too weak to cook her own dinner; the child with no family at home to take care of her after school; the mother whose son is in jail for murder; the cold who live on the streets during the winter; the poor women in jail who have no money to get a lawyer; the ill; the





## HOW DO WE DEFINE SUCCESS?

The Scripture Readings for this 18<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time begin with the Book of Ecclesiastes' diatribe against those whose lives revolve around meaningless goals — “Vanity of Vanities,” the Preacher, Qoheleth, says, “All things are vanity” [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, 2:21-23]. People work hard for things that pass away. It is all in vain. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus tells a parable about a farmer whose goal is to be rich, and when he has far more than he needs, he merely stores what he has, and dies that very night [Luke 12:13-21]. “Seek that which is above,” Paul tells the church at Colossae. Then he lists some of the things that hold us back in our seeking God — immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed and lying [Colossians 3:1-11]. The readings ask us to consider our priorities in life.

What is it for which we work so hard? Certainly, we need to work hard to provide for our families. That is important. But what is the priority there? Why do we work hard for our families? What is it that we are so determined to provide? We want a decent home; we want food and care for all in that home; we want to provide for the children’s future and our futures. Why? Why do we want all these things? I am sure you will agree that the basic goal we have is to allow the children to be raised in a house full of love — true love, the sacrificial love of the Lord. That has to be our basic goal for ourselves too: we have to grow in the love of the Lord, expressed in the way accorded to our vocation in life — single, married, religious, or ordained. The problem is that we often forget our priorities in life and put all our energy on attaining those things that really are not lasting goals.

So, we work so hard for something that we always wanted. Once we have it, we enjoy it for a while, and then we work hard for the next thing. We often work in vain. What is a successful life? Is a person’s life successful if he or she is making a good salary? There’s a story about a grandmother who pulled out pictures of her three grandchildren — all under two. She showed the pictures to a friend saying: “That one’s the rich doctor, that one’s the rich lawyer, and that one’s the chairman of the board of a large corporation.” Is success predicated on salary? That is the way that most people calculate success. But are they correct? How about marriage? What makes a marriage successful? Is a marriage successful because a woman and a man have been together for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years and have avoided both divorce and homicide? Marriage anniversaries are important, but do they point to the success of a marriage — or only to its longevity? Scripture forces us to take a closer look at the whole concept of success. Luke’s Gospel tells us the story of a man who is convinced that he is a success because he is a rich farmer.



What should the man do now that he has succeeded in harvesting more grain than he can store? Build another silo, of course. The basis of his success is his grain. When he suddenly dies, his success remains here, and he goes on to God empty handed. There is a reason why you never find a luggage rack on the roof of a hearse. The whole mind-set that success is predicated on salary is based on a fallacy that was very clear to Qoheleth, the author of Ecclesiastes. The name Qoheleth means “Preacher”. This book from the Hebrew Scriptures is a very insightful and difficult book — “Vanity of vanities,” says Qoheleth, “All is vanity.”

There is a fantastic book of meditations on St. Francis of Assisi written by James Cowan — a lay novelist, who spent some time in Assisi trying to understand Francis. You are all well aware that Francis gave up all his worldly possessions as a radical prophetic action. Cowan writes that Francis recognized that wealth, family, social position and profession confined him in a web of relationships that made it impossible to define himself as a fully human being in the image of Christ. His prophetic action of stripping off his rich clothes in the square in Assisi was a sign that the inner person had to be exposed rather than cloaked in silk and velvet. Francis’ action was prophetic — a radical action to help us

personality characteristics that are similar to those of Jesus Christ. The riches of this world are extrinsic to our souls rather than intrinsic. We should be pursuing what is intrinsic and will be part of us forever rather than what is extrinsic and will disappear when we die.

Some Christians advocate a certain false sort of piety — one based on the notion that we are nothing and ought to consider ourselves to be nothing. It’s a sort of so-called humility that falsifies the riches that God wants us to have. We must be rich in the eyes of God. It’s true that by ourselves we can do nothing but it is also true that with God there is nothing we cannot do. After all, God wants us to grow, to mature, to develop characteristics that are rich in the gifts that God has given to us. God does not create junk, and He does not want us to consider ourselves to be junk. We do not honor God our Father in heaven by considering ourselves to be worthless.

Worldly people are afraid to die. Their feelings of self-worth are centered on things — not on virtues. The worldly would have us think the only place to have happiness is here in this world. They adorn themselves with the cosmetics of this world and attempt to cover death with cosmetics. The world values us by what we have of this world’s trinkets rather than by what we can give to God when we die.

We stew too much, stew over what we don’t have. We stew over our losses, about preserving what we’ve got. But the truth is that each day has its own gains, its own gifts along with some losses. We need to value what really matters, what is of lasting value, not what is passing. We need to value the love we have given — the love of God that can be present in the love we have given to others.

Each of our days is filled with the presence of the Son of God. The risen Christ is present in the day’s rising sun. Every sun rising carries within it the Resurrection of Jesus. Likewise, each tomorrow brings with it a fresh start, a new beginning, and the opportunity to live in the new life given us in the death and resurrection of Jesus. True, there will be gains and losses — just as there were in the life of Jesus. The crucial thing is for you and me to find Him in our todays and tomorrows, so that we can receive and share His presence with those around us. With that vision we can wake up from the night of death and rise in the presence of God where we will find that our losses in this world and our gains in the life God has given us will not have been in vain.

Without God, we can do nothing of lasting value. With God everything we do will have great value. May God prosper the work of your hands so that nothing you do will have been done in vain.

—taken from the writings of Father Charles Irvin, which appear on the internet

## EUCHARISTIC 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.



## LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

**Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board**

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



## RELIGIOUS — BUT NOT SPIRITUAL:

Have you ever had a conversation with somebody that went a little like this? You: “Do you go to Church?” Friend: “No, I mean... I’d probably consider myself more ‘spiritual’ than ‘religious.’ The whole world is my church. I can connect with God anywhere.”

I would honestly be shocked if you haven’t! A growing majority of Americans identify themselves in this way. More and more people are disaffiliating themselves from the Catholic Church — and even more from the idea of “church” in general. But this hasn’t stopped people from seeking truth, beauty, and goodness elsewhere. Our culture is increasingly seeking to experience kinds of spirituality that are not rooted in religious tradition, and many people feel that they are able to connect with the transcendental through self-actualization and whatever means they use to get there.

Simultaneously, though, we see a growing trend of Christians emphasizing religiosity over spirituality — so much so that their religion becomes devoid of spirituality altogether. I would like to explore these two extremes in the hopes of illuminating the middle ground on which we are called to stand. As Catholics, we can learn how to glean the good from each side and live out our faith in a more, holistic, and balanced way.

What do people mean when they say they are “spiritual, but not religious”? Usually, when a person identifies this way, it means that they would rather dissociate themselves from any institution or group. In a world that places great emphasis on labels and categorizations of people, they would rather not label themselves as “religious” so as to avoid being linked to what they perceive to be an oppressive institution.

The spiritual-but-not-religious recognize the deep longing of the human condition, and are open to seeking the divine. The spiritual-but-not-religious thirst for authenticity and real relationships; they have the confidence to ask questions many people are afraid of or unwilling to ask, and they place great value on self-actualization, often by means of engaging in wellness motivations and mindfulness practices.

Humans are spiritual beings. We are naturally and intrinsically made for something greater than ourselves, and we will always be searching for that place of total fulfillment. As humans, we are created to be curious and seeking, and to know truth, behold beauty, and see goodness in all things are at the core of our being. These natural movements and desires of our souls can easily be recognized in all people — especially in many who self-identify as spiritual but not religious.

Humans, however, are also religious beings. On its most basic level, we can define religion as an organized worship of a thing. A spiritual-but-not-religious person — whether they realize it or not — is still engaging in a type of religion. Whether we associate with a church or not, it is in our nature as human beings to claim something as our god and worship it — whether that be a sports team, a hobby, an idea, nature, a political cause or stance, self-healing or self-reliance, wellness practices, a facet of the culture, or even ourselves.

While there is a majority of people who would claim to be “spiritual but not religious”, there is also a trend toward religion devoid of “spirituality” — a strongly held belief system informed by religion but little spiritual investment or personal relationship with God.

These growing trends in the opposite trajectory are much more subtle. To the untrained eye, religious-but-not-spiritual are practically indistinguishable from any other “religious person.” In fact, from the outside, they look like they’re checking all the boxes. You see them in Mass every Sunday. They read all the right devotionals. They pray for all the right prayers. And they even look holy. But you and I both know that is not the exterior manifestation of devotion that makes someone holy. Jesus Himself warns us against inauthentic displays of piety in the Gospels all the time!

The religious-but-not-spiritual can be likened to the Pharisees praying out loud in the temple [see

Luke 18], or really, they can be likened to anytime the Pharisees are mentioned in scripture. They might have a holier-than-thou attitude. They’re quick to point out the failings and shortcomings of others rather than taking on a posture of humility. They are too-heavy handed with justice and quickly forget mercy. They are obsessed with meticulously following rules and trying to “measure” their own holiness. They get caught up in details and are exceedingly rigid. They keep their focus on the Letter of the Law and forget the Love of the Law.

The religious-but-not-spiritual person is rooted in the Catholic faith tradition and understands it to be the source and summit of all truth. But they are misguided in their theology. Instead of building a relationship with a personal, tender, loving and merciful God, they find themselves leaving offerings at the statue of a distant, cold and rigid “god” for fear of being punished. The danger here is that they will be like Martha, doing all the “right things”, but forgetting to sit and rest at the feet of Jesus [see Luke 10]. Or they will be like the Elder Son who did everything right — who never left home — but still lacked everything in that he still didn’t feel loved, celebrated or accepted by His Father [see Luke 15]. The religious-but-not-spiritual are governed by a Taskmaster, focused far too much on the structures and rules of religion. They are close to God in proximity, but not in heart.

On both sides, there can be a tendency toward self-healing and self-reliance, or the idea that I need to do “x, y, and z” thing in order to achieve or earn the good — whether that be salvation, self-actualization, healing, or a feeling of total fulfillment. On both sides, there is a search for truth, beauty, and goodness in alignment with the natural tendencies we were designed with. In both experiences, the deepest questions of humanity are being grasped at. So, we see that there is goodness to be found in the experience of a spiritual-but-not-religious person, as well as dangers. The same can be said about the religious-but-not-spiritual person. There needs to be a balance of the good found in both!

If you’re old like me — or if you just have an affinity for watching old commercials on YouTube — you might remember an old taco commercial which asked the hard questions: ¿Porque no los dos? Why can’t we have both? Well, good news, friends. We can!

We are called to both religion and spirituality. We have the best of both worlds! As Catholic Christians, we can imagine ourselves at the intersection of the Religious and Spiritual. That is, we hold that it is possible — and in fact necessary — to grow in a personal, intimate relationship with the Divine and that each person embarks on their own quest to wholeness — for the betterment of themselves and others — but that one can only find the fullness of Truth within the folds of the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. It is within the context of the Church, by her Wisdom and guided by her deeply rooted traditions, that a person can truly attain total self-fulfillment in union with God. In this union, we become who we are meant to be. We become whole and holy — the most vibrant version of ourselves.

As St. John Paul said: “It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.”

That is one of my favorite quotes of all time! Leave it to St. John Paul II to pretty much sum it all up in the most eloquent way possible! Whether you consider yourself religious or not, we are all on the journey together. Human beings are created with a deep, longing desire for fulfillment and spend our whole lives searching, questioning, and yearning for completeness. The fullness of healing and wholeness is only found in the person of Jesus Christ, who brings restoration and reconciles all things to Himself. What we seek — the fulfillment of our greatest and deepest desires — is found in the One who created us.

—taken from the writings of Laurie Medina, a young adult