

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for strength ~**

**Give me courage, O Lord,  
to stand up and be counted,  
to stand up for others  
who cannot stand up for themselves.  
to stand up for myself,  
when it is needful to do so.**

**Let me fear nothing more  
than the thought of losing you.  
Let me love nothing more  
than I love you,  
for then I shall fear nothing.**

**Let me have no other God than you.  
Let me seek no other peace,  
but the peace which is you.  
And make me its instrument,  
opening my eyes  
and my ears  
and my heart,  
so that I can know always  
what work of peace  
I should do For you.  
Amen.**

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**  
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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.*

**COME TO THE FEST — 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

**BLESSING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS — THIS WEEKEND:**

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.

**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 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.**

**RUN THE RACE:**

If you give alms without touching the reality, without looking into the eyes of the person in need, those alms are for you, not for that person. Think about this. Do I touch poverty, even the poverty that I am helping? Do I look into the eyes of the people who suffer, of the people that I help? I leave you with this thought — to see and to have compassion. May the Virgin Mary accompany us on this journey of growth. May she, who "shows us the Way", that is Jesus, help us also to become ever more "disciples of the Way". —Pope Francis

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- 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 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 undergoing treatment for cancer.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Elizabeth Kryszan, mother of Jennifer Kryszan 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]
- For James Sberna.
- 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.
- For Father James Vesely, pastor emeritus of St. Thomas More.
- For Richard Geier
- For Maury Petrak.
- For Rudolph Kastelic, father of Dianne Shafer ['85], Catherine ['92] Kastelic, and Elizabeth Burgei ['94].
- For Therese Hummer, grandmother of Therese Hummer ['04]
- For Nicole Ferrara Hazen ['95], sister of Rick Ferrara ['97]
- For Jeanne Wagner Krupp.

**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.

**ON BEING OPEN TO THE LORD:**

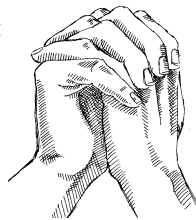
God wants useable instruments who will carry the mystery, the weight of glory and the burden of sin simultaneously, who can bear the darkness and the light, who can hold the paradox of incarnation — flesh and spirit, human and divine, joy and suffering, at the same time, just as Jesus did. —Richard Rohr, OFM

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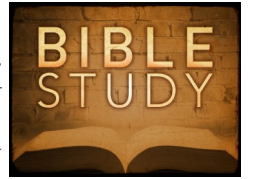
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- 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 17<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



**Our topic: Mary’s Assumption — a life that leads to heaven.**

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, August 7: 19 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, August 8: St. Dominic	NO MASS
Tuesday, August 9: St. Teresa Benedicta [Edith Stein]	NO MASS
Wednesday, August 10: St. Lawrence	NO MASS
Thursday, August 11: St. Clare	NO MASS
Friday, August 12:	NO MASS
Saturday, August 13: 20 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, August 14: 20 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**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.



**FRIENDSHIP:**

A true friend is one who holds your hand and touches your heart.

—Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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

One of the wonderful ways of continuing family identity is to tell stories, show pictures, and relate how things were in the “good” or “bad” old days. Even if these stories have been told and shown many times before, there is a comfort of re-membering with the characters and events of our formation. With each telling of a story, a little varnish and garnish is added, and the great events are even more so, and the lesser times and relatives tend to be shined up. The Book of Wisdom has many aspects of a family album. The Book of Wisdom has many differing sections all centered around God’s creation and love for the people of Israel. For the author of Wisdom, the creation of Israel as the People of God was even a greater manifestation of God’s love than the creation of the universe.

It is within this backdrop that we recall just how faithful the people of Israel’s history had been [Wisdom 17:1, 18:5-8]. They were in slavery in Egypt, but they kept faith in the Covenant of their faithful God. They kept faithful to their religious traditions and so found courage to persevere during the many years of slavery. God eventually punished the Egyptians — there is no greater God than our God.

This is a great praise-poem, based in history; it is a national self-celebration of their past. It is a general truth that the victors in a war tend, as time goes on, to exaggerate their own glories as a group. Israel is no exception. God was very good and so were we. It is meant to be a history and a reminder of just who Israel was and desires to continue to be.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus has just finished reminding the people that they are more important than the lilies of the field and birds of the air who are beautiful and known by God [see Luke 12:27-28]. Now Jesus wants to focus on the implications of that thought upon each of us — we are so precious and cared for. The “kingdom” is being given to us who have faith in the Giver. If we do so trust, then our “treasure” does not rely on or support the temporal kingdom here on earth.

But there are implications to belonging to this kingdom [Luke 12:32-48]. Our preciousness in God’s eyes is contrasted with the preciousness of material treasures. We get our value from the Creator and not the accumulation of other creatures. Our heart’s desires will announce to which kingdom we belong. For what do we wait and with what degree of patience and watchfulness? Jesus is an investment of God’s love in us. We are invited to make a similar investment in the holiness of humanity and the dominion of God. As usual a parable makes the tension quite clear. We have some choices to make.

There is a master who has gone away, promising to return — but the when is indefinite. The servants who remain in the house are to act justly, live soberly, aware, and above all, expect the Master’s return at any moment. This is a direct charge to the listening-disciples. The disciples are the servants in whom Jesus has invested the treasures of his teachings. Unlike the Pharisees they are to be faithful in tending the household and the men and maidservants of the household. The emphasis is on the living the teachings of Jesus until his return.

You might make a financial investment in some company — and they might in turn think quite highly of their venture because of your confidence. The company might conduct themselves by good management and produce a profit for you. On the other hand, it might think you have lost interest, or conduct business in such a way that you do not receive any interest for your investment. God — in Christ — has bought into the human company. God invested totally in our human recovery. We believe in this and desire to live reverently and gratefully for this infinite affirmation of our company. We can also live unjustly, unsoberly, unaware of our dignity, and so deflate our value and the whole human operation.

**THE INVISIBLE GORILLA:**

Practically nothing in Scripture was written by eyewitness — not even our gospels. Only after years, or even centuries of reflecting on God’s actions in their lives did our sacred authors eventually compose the writings that make up our Sacred Scriptures. Though many of the people involved in their narratives seemed to understand the implications of those divine actions as they were actually taking place, scholars constantly remind us that such insights most probably didn’t become part of their faith lives until far down the road. Even today we often catch ourselves saying: “I didn’t notice it at the time, but . . .”

One need only Google Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons’ famous “Invisible Gorilla” experiment to see how easy it is to miss things that happen right before our eyes. The two professors demonstrated that our eyes normally see only what our minds program them to see. If we’re not expecting it, we usually don’t see it. On a practical level, experts tell us that’s why motorcycles are so frequently involved in highway accidents — drivers of cars are geared to see other cars — not motorcycles. Based on that insight, highway signs have recently appeared encouraging us to “Watch Out For Motorcycles!”

On a Scriptural level, that also seems why we have these three liturgical readings for our 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. Our sacred authors are concerned that we not only discover what happened to them, but that we also be prepared to discover those same things and events happening in our own lives. If we’re not prepared to have them take place, we’ll rarely notice them taking place.

Our Wisdom author [17:1, 18:5-8] is convinced that only those enslaved Israelites who were anticipating God to destroy their foes actually interpreted the Exodus correctly. Historically, according to the Exodus author, the majority of Jews in Egypt argued against Moses. What turned out to be the greatest saving event in Jewish history started as a huge aggravation. Especially the Torah’s “Yahwistic author” reminds us of the people’s constant “gripping.” They were more content eating watermelon as slaves along the Nile than crossing the Reed Sea as free people. What a chosen few saw, most ignored.

The author of Hebrews [11:1-2, 8-19] wants to make certain such blindness never happens to Jesus’ followers. So, he constantly hammers away at Abraham and Sarah’s faith. Presuming they’re the first Jews, they don’t have God’s track record to fall back on. Only their faith helps them see God’s hand in the daily events of their life. They didn’t emigrate from Ur to Canaan, for instance, simply to acquire more food in a foreign land, but because God had a unique plan for them and their descendants. Likewise, they didn’t engage in intimate relations because of any physical attraction, but because that was an essential part of God providing them with an heir. Our sacred authors are convinced that faith enables us to notice what others ignore.

That seems to be why Luke’s Jesus wants us to be certain about where our “treasure” is located [Luke 12:32-48]. Those who consistently “sell their belongings and give alms” will also be the ones who are consistently prepared to notice the risen Jesus present in their lives. Those who focus on caring for the needs of others will also be focusing on experiencing God’s kingdom in their midst. The historical Jesus presumed his followers would see what he chose to see during his earthly ministry. That was the only way they would be his faithful and prudent stewards.

Perhaps it would be more faith effective to replace some of our elaborate church decorations with simple yard signs reading: “Watch For God Working In Your Lives!”

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



Daddy to get home, pick them up and play with them. But what if he doesn't show up on time? There's something ominous about how the second and third watches of the night remind us of the Passion and the hours of Jesus' arrest and Peter's denial, when fear seemed to overwhelm hope. Who among the disciples knew at what hour they would be put to the test? What kind of servants remain ready even when it seems the master may not return at all?

The author of the Book of Wisdom tells us that at God's instructions, the ancestors celebrated their Passover supper so that they would be ready to follow Moses to freedom. Sharing a solemn meal with their loins girt and their sandals on prepared them for flight.

The Letter to the Hebrews provides a theological perspective to make sense of this: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen" [Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19]. While that may sound like a riddle, it is actually a very pragmatic explanation of the effect of belief in God's providence. In effect, Hebrews tells us that Abraham's faith led him to venture into the conditions in which his hopes could become reality.

What Jesus asked of the disciples — to give away their goods, to be on the move, to be ready for what is coming rather than satisfied with what is — all of that was an invitation to put faith into action [Luke 12:32-48]. He wanted them to act like they believed because that was the way to bring about the world they hoped to see.

This helps explain what Jesus says about what goes on behind closed doors when the master is out of town. Faithful servants act in the style of the master whether or not there is a security camera recording them. Their belief in the message continues to make the reign of God visible, even when they have nothing more than their hope that it will be fulfilled. Unfaithful servants create a different reality — a tragic, karmic situation in which they get what they gave.



"Do not be afraid." That's where Jesus started. Do not be afraid to let go of those things, places, and attitudes that you have relied on for security. As Pope Francis says, when we realize that everything is a gift, our goods and even our beliefs take on new meaning. In *Fratelli Tutti*, he reminds us that "Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except 'in the sincere gift of self to others.' ... 'Life exists where there is ... communion ... and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships.'"

What if we really believed that? What if we believed that we have nothing to fear in sharing what gives us security because it is all a free gift in the first place? What if we believed, like Abraham, that the unknowable future God offers us is worth more than the present we are used to? What if we believed that loving relationships are the only treasure that will never wear out and that our greatest potential is to be in communion with all of God's creation?

Today, we are invited into the future we long for at the deepest level of our being. We will get there only by leaving behind our fears and pessimism. Donating our riches, venturing beyond our normal surroundings, treasuring our connections with all God's people, watching for God to show up unpredictably and in unfamiliar disguise — those are all steps that make it possible.

So, as we participate in our liturgy, instead of girt loins and sandals, let's don our metaphorical hiking boots and let our celebration launch us into the venture of faith that transforms hopes into reality.

—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., 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].



Jesus calls us his flock and possessors of the whole investment portfolio. When we hear who we are through the stories, pictures and deeds of God for us, then we re-member ourselves to the company of Jesus. The real problem for us humans is having the faith that there is a kingdom to come in which we are to invest now and the payoff is in the "then" to come. Then, when we realize that, we also need to know that living fully in the Kingdom of God will require some work on our end. It is here for us right now in this very life that we are presently living, but we must make a movement towards it in order to experience it. There must be purposeful intention on our part. There is the "here" and the "here-after" — where is our heart?

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

## PREPARATION IS A "NOW EVENT":

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man, who may arrive at an unexpected hour. They are to be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding feast — well prepared to open the door for him whenever he arrives — even late into the night. Appreciative of their vigilance, the master will tuck in his robe, have them recline at table and will serve them a lavish banquet [Luke 12:32-48].

However, it is important that we not only see Jesus' teaching as a call to be prepared for the coming of Christ not only at the end of time, but even more importantly as a call to be prepared in our daily lives. We are to be vigilant, on alert, for any word from the Lord that comes to us in and through special moments of grace as well as our everyday experiences. Prepared by prayer and reflection, our task is to discern the authentic voice of Christ and to respond to his personal call.

Here is an example: A young couple deeply in love took very seriously their responsibility to prepare for a happy, challenging Christian marriage. They participated wholeheartedly in the parish marriage preparation program — meeting three times with their pastor; filling out a Prepare and Enrich questionnaire which prompted serious discussion on their quite different attitudes toward spending money; participating in a whole day of guided discussion led by married couples on various aspects of marriage such as communications, sexuality and spirituality. They made a mutual decision to exercise restraint in their sexual relationship, saving intercourse for marriage. This led them to search for other ways to enjoy one another's company. Although their interests were different — sports for him and music for her — they found a mutual love for nature — walking in the metro park, gardening, spending time by the water. They wanted their marriage ceremony to be a spiritual event and not a show. With this in mind, they spent a good deal of prayerful time choosing the scripture readings and writing a commentary on them which the priest used in preparing his homily. Before the wedding, they experimented with various ways of praying together, finding that it worked best if they actually set aside time to read a passage from the Gospel and discuss something that struck them.

Reflecting on their first ten years of marriage, they can see that their preparation has attuned them to the presence of Christ in their shared life together. At times, their love making feels graced, bringing them closer to each other and to the Lord. Their regular prayer together has gotten them through difficult times. Their shared enjoyment of nature helps renew their spirits. They are grateful that their spiritual approach to marriage has enriched them individually and as a couple. They prepared well and have been blessed with Christ's presence in their marriage.

How can you better prepare for encountering Christ in your life?

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



**LIVING BY FAITH:**

What awaits us in our future? The Scripture Readings for this 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time put that question to us. What does the future hold in store for us? Is what is awaiting us when we die determined by what we did or didn't do in this life? These are the big questions we face today and in all of the days of our lives.

Jesus talked with His disciples — and us — about the future, telling them they were to face it not with fear but with hope and in a spirit of positive expectancy. He spoke to them in terms of making investments — investments in their future. “Sell what you have,” He told them, and buy into the sort of retirement plan I am offering you — a never-failing treasure with my Father and with me in heaven. “Wherever your treasure lies,” Jesus told us, “there your heart will be.” Stated the other way around he's telling us: “Wherever your heart is, there will your treasure be found” [Luke 12:32-48].

But how can we live in a world and with a future that is not yet? Only by living it in faith. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us: “Faith is the confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see” [Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19]. And it is counter-cultural to live that way. The secularists tell us not to have faith in anything — accept only what you can touch, taste, smell, measure and control. Suspend your beliefs, the world tells us, and don't accept anything else.

In the Culture Wars, the secularists have managed to present people of faith as foolish and even dangerous. Religion, they claim is divisive, and is harmful to human progress. The abortion issue which is currently a “hot topic” is a great example. Those who favor abortion regard babies in the womb as merely a part of a woman's body and totally under the control of women. Ironically, abortionists would have us overlook scientific facts. The fact is that a fetus has its own DNA coding — not that of the woman. It has its own blood type — not the woman's. If protected and nurtured human life of a fetus will eventually grow to be eighty or ninety years old. Those are not statements of faith — they are scientific facts, facts that abortionists would have us overlook.

But can anyone really live without any faith? The answer is “no” — everyone has faith. You cannot get married and not live in faith; you cannot buy a computer in a store and not have faith in what you've bought; you cannot step onto an airplane and not have faith — faith in the engineers who designed it, faith in the ground crews who perform maintenance on it, and faith in the pilot and copilot who fly under the direction of the ground controllers who in their responsibilities control the paths of the planes placed in their care. You can't drive on our highways without having faith in the competence of the drivers of those vehicles you will either meet or pass; you can't buy groceries without having faith in those who both produced the food and those who have marketed it for you.

Faith is not something that belongs only to religion — it belongs to everyday living. Each and every day, we take risks and act on probabilities — hardly ever on certainties. We take risks in depending upon the decisions of others, never knowing with certainty what the outcomes will be. Even scientists operate on theories — even the Theory of Evolution.

Our greatest leaders have presented us with leadership based on faith. It was faith that motivated George Washington and the founders of our nation. Our Declaration of Independence is a document based on faith. Abraham Lincoln led us through one of the darkest nights in our nation's history basing his vision solely on faith. If you read writings of Abraham Lincoln, you will find yourself reading some of the most faith-filled thoughts you will ever encounter. It was Lincoln who said to the American people: “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty.”

What I am saying is that to live out life on this tiny little speck in the cosmos — this little blue dot in the Milky Way — is to live in faith in a wondrous adventure. To graduate from school having chosen a

heart to God. Too often in our efforts to pray formally — both communally and privately — we fail to do that — namely, to actually lift our hearts and minds to God. Why? Because what is really in our hearts and minds, alongside our gratitude and more gracious thoughts, is not something we generally connect with prayer at all. Our frustrations, bitterness, jealousies, lusts, curses, sloth, and quiet despair are usually understood to be the very antithesis of prayer, something to be overcome in order to pray.

But a deeper thing is happening under the surface. Our frustration, longing, lust, jealousy, and escapist daydreams, things we are ashamed to take to prayer, are in fact already lifting our hearts and minds to God in more honest ways that we ever do consciously.

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

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

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

**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.

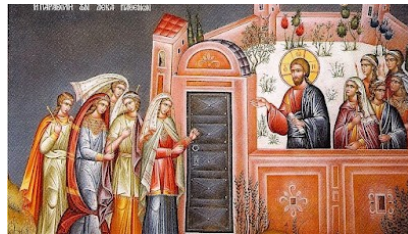
**Please let Elina Gurney know if you would like to help. You can do this through the chapel office [440-473-3560] or by emailing Elina Gurney at [gurney.oh@gmail.com](mailto:gurney.oh@gmail.com).** In this critical time, this is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

**VENTURING INTO THE UNKNOWN:**

Do not be afraid. Gird your loins. Sell your goods and give generously to those in need. Don your traveling duds. Keep the porch light on, and stay by the door. Secure what your treasure, knowing that its hiding place is also your heart's home.

Luke's Gospel for this 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time opens with these eight statements. Are they commandments? Suggestions? Warnings? Maybe numbers two through eight are actually a list of instructions for how to accomplish the first.

Jesus illustrates his instructions with metaphorical stories about servants and masters. He speaks of servants who can hardly wait for the householder to return; they linger at the door like kids waiting for



## GROANING BEYOND WORDS — OUR DEEPER WAY OF PRAYING

St. Paul writes in his letter to the Church at Rome: “When we no longer know how to pray, the Spirit, in groans too deep for words, prays through us” [Romans 8:22]. Saint Paul wrote those words, and they contain both a stunning revelation, and a wonderful consolation — namely, there is deep prayer happening inside us beyond our conscious awareness and independent of our deliberate efforts. What is this unconscious prayer? It is our deep innate desire, relentlessly on fire, forever somewhat frustrated, making itself felt through the groaning of our bodies and souls, silently begging the very energies of the universe, not least God Himself, to let it come to consummation.

Allow me an analogy. Some years ago, a friend of mine bought a house that had sat empty and abandoned for a number of years. The surface of the driveway was cracked and a bamboo plant, now several feet high, had grown up through the pavement. My friend cut down the bamboo tree, chopped down several feet into its roots to try to destroy them, poured a chemical poison into the root system in hopes of killing whatever was left, packed some gravel over the spot, and paved over the top with a thick layer of concrete. But the little tree was not so easily thwarted. Two years later, the pavement began to heave as the bamboo plant again began to assert itself. Its powerful life force was still blindly pushing outward and upward, cement blockage notwithstanding.

Life — all life — has powerful inner pressures and is not easily thwarted. It pushes relentlessly and blindly towards its own ends — irrespective of resistance. Sometimes resistance does kill it. There are — as the saying goes — storms we cannot weather. But we do weather most of what life throws at us and our deep life-principle remains strong and robust — even as on the surface the frustrations we have experienced and the dreams in us that have been shamed slowly muzzle us into a mute despair so that our prayer-lives begin to express less and less of what we are actually feeling.

But it is through that very frustration that the Spirit prays — darkly, silently — in groans too deep for words [see Romans 8:22]. In our striving, our yearning, our broken dreams, our tears, in the daydreams we escape into, and even in our sexual desire, the Spirit of God prays through us, as does our soul, our life-principle. Like the life forces innate in that bamboo plant, powerful forces are blindly working inside us too, pushing us outward and upward to eventually throw off whatever cement lies on top of us. This is true, of course, also of our joys. The Spirit also prays through our gratitude — both when we express consciously it and even when we only sense it unconsciously.

Our deepest prayers are mostly not those we express in our churches and private oratories. Our deepest prayers are spoken in our silent gratitude and silent tears. The person praising God’s name ecstatically and the person bitterly cursing God’s name in anger are, in different ways — in radically different ways of groaning — both praying.

Our frustrations, bitterness, jealousies, lusts, curses, sloth, and quiet despair are usually understood to be the very antithesis of prayer. There are many lessons to be drawn from this. First, from this we can learn to forgive life a little more for its frustrations and we can learn to give ourselves permission to be more patient with life and with ourselves. Who of us does not lament that the pressures and frustrations of life keep us from fully enjoying life’s pleasures, from smelling the flowers, from being more present to family, from celebrating with friends, from peaceful solitude, and from deeper prayer? So, we are forever making resolutions to slow down, to find a quiet space inside our pressured lives in which to pray.

But, after failing over and over again, we eventually despair of finding a quiet, contemplative space for prayer in our lives. Although we need to continue to search for that, we can already live with the consolation that, deep down, our very frustration in not being able to find that quiet space is already a prayer. In the groans of our inadequacy the Spirit is already praying through our bodies and souls in a way deeper than words.

One of the oldest, classical definitions of prayer defines it this way — prayer is lifting mind and



career and to enter into it with all your heart and all your soul is one of life’s greater acts of faith. To get married and have children is a profound act of faith. To enter each day that God gives us with hope and expectancy that we will do good and make the world a little bit better for those around us is a tremendous act of faith. And to die, going forth from this life without knowing exactly where we are going except into the hands of God, is our ultimate act of faith. Everywhere throughout life people live in the confident assurance that what they hope for will one day come to be. Every day we live with convictions about things that are not yet seen.

To be realistic, however, we must pay attention to the fact that a good deal of our recent history attacks our faith. We have been betrayed and betrayed often by people in our lives — all of which erodes our basic need to believe in others. Life is unfair, and bad things do happen to good people. And, yes, many people are unreliable. But, for all that is wrong in life — in our world and in others — we cannot afford to give up, stop believing, and lose faith. Jesus knew that back then, and He knows that right now — which is why Christ presents Himself to us. He comes to us, after all, in faith, placing Himself in the Eucharist in our hands with the belief in His heart that we accept Him in love and with a firm purpose to live with Him as He would have us live.

Yes, this world belongs to God. And yes, God has given us the dignity and the responsibility of working with Him to bring the world to completion, to wholeness and to that unity in which He made it to exist, and us in it, in the first place. For God, you see, has made a tremendous act of faith in you. God believes in you enough to give you the freedom to choose His love, the freedom to choose to accomplish His work, the freedom to do good. For God, you see, made us to love Him and to live with His faith in us.

How comforting it is to know that others have faith in us. How tremendously comforting it is to know that God Himself trusts us, has high hopes for us, and believes in us. What a fantastic honor it is to realize that when we receive the Eucharist, God our Father has believed in us enough to put His only begotten Son into our hands. Faith is forever an adventure in living — an adventure in which God Himself lives and wants to share with us.

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

## 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 30]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 1,345.55**

**Offerings-----[Sunday, July 31]----- \$ 358.00**

## 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.



**LOVE AND DETACHMENT AS TREASURE:**

“Where your treasure is there will your heart be also” [Luke 12:32-48]. This is an extremely important line in Luke’s Gospel. It tells us that what we treasure will control our hearts. What we value will determine the way that we live. This is so important because we do not have enough time and energy to treasure all things equally. We, therefore, need to make decisions for what we will place first, what we will value most, what our treasure will be.

I do not think that most of us go from day to day conscious of our treasure. I think we move along trying to do everything. Then, when our time or our energy run short, we end up responding to that which speaks the loudest or to that which seems most attractive. We do not necessarily choose what is most important. Work is important, but is it the highest value in our life? Money is essential, but should we set that above everything else? Popularity and influence are good, but are they worth having at any price? We need to know what it is that we value. We need to be conscious of our treasure.

How do you find out what your treasure is? Take your calendar or your smartphone and examine it. See where you have been placing your time over the last six months. To what do you give your time? How much to work? How much to friends? How much to yourself? Where your time is there will your heart be also. Take out your checkbook or look at last year’s tax return? Where is your money going? How much to your own comfort? How much to your family? How much to those in need? Where your money is there will your heart be also. Examine the data at your fingertips. Roll through your rolodex. Check out your address book in your email. Look at the family schedule on the refrigerator. Notice which web pages you bookmark. Where you place your energy and attention, your heart will follow.

If in these exercises you discover that your heart has been given to something rather secondary — to something that is not worthy — then the gospel calls you to invest in a treasure that will last — a treasure that cannot be stolen or destroyed.

How do we secure such a treasure? In two simple, but somewhat contradictory choices — a choice for love and a choice for detachment.

I think most of us in our heart of hearts know that love is necessary to build a lasting treasure. The love we give to others is something eternal. The time and energy that we give to our children, our spouses, and our friends, even to strangers will not die. I can witness to this from personal experience. I have been privileged to be with people at the moment of death. I will tell you in those last hours the only thing that matters is love. Nothing else has importance. It is the pride parents feel in their children, the years that someone has shared with a spouse, the good times and the intimacies that have been shared between friends which count. When the heart is given to love, when love is its treasure, then the heart is at peace. Even in the face of death, the heart knows that it possesses something which time cannot destroy.

The second way to secure a lasting treasure is detachment. This at first seems contradictory to love. Love reaches out and holds on, whereas detachment lets go and sets free. But the deepest of love always involves detachment. It realizes that no human love, however deep, will stay the same. The deepest love of a parent includes enough detachment to let go of his or her children so that they might develop their own lives. The deepest love of a spouse carries enough detachment that life can go on even when death intervenes. The deepest moments of friendship contain enough detachment to allow cherished memories to fade without regret.

Love without detachment can become manipulative and stifling. Love that is willing to let go is freeing. It does not seek to control and realizes that every human love, no matter how deep, is only a reflection of a greater love. God alone can satisfy us forever.



keeps us busy. Those of you who are not married know how difficult it is to live as a decent Christian single. It is sad that for many Americans unwed implies immoral. There are some who feel that if a guy or a girl is a bachelor, then somehow, he or she has the right to be, to put it bluntly, a lecherous drunk. This is not the way of the Catholic who treasures the Divine Presence within him or her. But the single person has to make an effort to fill his or her life with actions that reflect Christianity. He or she has to be busy, filling life with meaningful, Christian experiences. The Church depends on our committed singles to be generous with their time.

Those of you who are married will often say that it takes work for a marriage to be successful. This work is the work of the Lord when it involves His Love — Sacrificial Love. It is not easy to express love as the Lord created Love — an act of giving — when you live in a culture that says love is a way of taking satisfaction from someone else. The sex culture has degraded marriage to measuring its success in proportion to the satisfaction generated by a blue pill. Married Christians can withstand this exploitation of their sacrament by seeking ever new ways to give themselves to their spouses in loving, selfless care and concern. It takes work; you have to be busy to make a marriage a Christian marriage.

Many of you are married, but you do not have children, or your children have left the nest. [Yes, you are allowed to say “Alleluia, Alleluia.”] They never really leave, you know. They still look to Mom and Dad for their stability before the Lord. Along with your children — and, perhaps, their children — you are obligated to make the love of Christ real in other people.

You have to reach out to those in your office, your neighborhood, your family, and let them realize that they are lovable not just to you, but to the Lord. “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have the servants recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants.”

The Lord is here. It is not enough for us to just look busy. We have to be busy. And we have to trust in Him. He will respond to our determination to live our faith by caring for us.

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

**LETTING GO OF OUR INNOCENCE:**

We come to God not by doing it right, but by doing it wrong. And yet the great forgiveness is to forgive ourselves for doing it wrong. That’s probably the hardest forgiveness of all — that I’m not perfect, that I’m not unwounded, I’m not innocent. One always learns one’s mystery at the price of one’s innocence. If I want to maintain an image of myself as innocent, superior, righteous, or saved, I can only do that at the cost of truth. I have to reject the mysterious side, the shadow side, the broken side, the unconscious side of almost everything.

The art of letting go really is the way to heaven because when we fall down there to the bottom, we fall on solid ground, the great foundation. On that foundation where we have nothing to prove, nothing to protect, we have met the enemy and the enemy is us. I am who I am who I am, and for some unbelievable reason, that’s what God has chosen to love.

Letting go is different than denying or repressing. To let go of it, we have to admit it — we have to own it. Letting go is different than turning it against our self. Letting go is different than projecting onto others. Letting go means that the denied, repressed, rejected parts of our own self which are nonetheless true are seen for what they are, but not turned against self or against others — so letting go is not denial. It’s not “pretend”. The religious word for letting go is the word “forgiveness.” This is the positive way to deal with our own woundedness. We see it and we hand it over to God. We hand it over to history.

The mode of weeping, of crying, is different than fixing. It’s different than understanding. That’s why we often cry when we forgive. When we can’t fix it, when we can’t explain it, when we can’t control it, when we can’t even understand it, we can only forgive it. Let go of it, weep over it. It’s a different mode of being.

I can see why forgiveness is almost the heart of the matter, and Jesus’ prerequisite for being forgiven by God is simply to forgive one another. Jesus said we will receive the forgiveness of God to the degree that we can be conduits of forgiveness for one another. In other words, forgiveness is of one piece. Those who give it can receive it. Those who receive it can give it. If we’re in the conduit of love — if we’re in the ocean of mercy — frankly, it’s the only thing that makes sense.

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., which appear on the internet 13



**DON'T JUST LOOK BUSY — BE BUSY:**

Luke's Gospel reading reminds me of the old story of the apparition on the corner of Main and Market in a busy city. It was Saturday morning when Fr. Pascucci heard a knock on the rectory door and an extremely excited lady said: "The Lord has appeared on the corner of Main and Market." Father was in the process of trying to decide if she was suffering from stress or whatever, when a second person came running, saying: "Father, father, the Lord has appeared on the corner of Main and Market." "When?" Fr. Pascucci asked. "He's there right now," they both answered. So Fr. Pascucci went down the block where a large crowd had formed, and sure enough, he saw Jesus.

After a while the Lord left. Fr. Pascucci didn't know what to do, so he called a Monsignor friend of his. His friend told him to call the bishop. So, Father Pascucci called the bishop and told him the news: "The Lord has appeared on the corner of Main and Market. What should I do if he comes back?" The bishop thought for a while, and then told Fr. Pascucci that he'd get back to him.

The bishop then called Rome, and, being an important bishop, he got the pope: "Holy Father, he said, one of my priests, Fr. Pascucci, reports that the Lord has appeared on the corner of Main and Market in his parish. He wants to know what he should do in case the Lord comes back." After a few moments the pope replied: "Tell Fr. Pascucci to look busy."

Good advice for us all. The Lord is coming back. How should we prepare? Not just by looking busy, but by being busy.

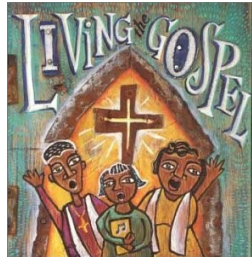
There is a lot to keep us busy. People are seeking meaning in life. We Christians and Catholics have been given the gift of recognizing the reason for existence. The answer to all questions is simple: the answer to all questions is Jesus. We can provide the answer by our attitude in life. We have to be devoted to the Lord, out there, here among us, and here within each of us. This complicated world of ours becomes very simple when we make it clear to ourselves that we are enriched by the presence of the Lord. As I come to a deeper understanding of Jesus' presence in my life, as you come to a deeper understanding of his presence in your lives, then He becomes the pearl of great value that the merchant in Luke's Gospel sacrifices all he has to obtain [Luke 12:32-48].

When every aspect of our lives revolves around Jesus, we just don't want anything in our lives that distracts us from His Divine Presence. We don't avoid immorality just because the Church says that this or that are bad. We avoid immorality because we refuse to allow immorality to cloud the presence of the Lord within us, or even, to steal Jesus from us.

Holding on to Jesus keeps us busy. We are always fighting against our imperfections. We are always fighting against temptations. We are continually fighting against those who mock us for our dedication to Catholicism. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the negativity around us. That is particularly when we have to put up a fight for the Lord. That is particularly when we have to be busy.

Those of you who are blessed with children — including those of you who would like to share these blessings with anyone who will take them off your hands this week — know that you cannot allow your children to flounder. Children take a tremendous amount of work to grow into decent Christian men and women. Children need a tremendous amount of love to help them manifest their Christian identity. When you do this work — when you provide this love — children experience Jesus in their homes. Be busy doing the important things in your home. Pray together as a family. Many of our families pray the rosary every evening. Others read a chapter from the New Testament and talk to God about it. I am sure that all of our families say Grace before dinner and help the little children with their bedtime prayers. Folks, there is nothing in the world that you will do that is greater than opening your children to their spiritual potential.

But, as you know, that takes continual, hard work. That keeps you busy. Standing up for the Lord



Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. So, give your hearts to love, and love with detachment. In this way you may savor as deeply as possible every person whom you love and at the same time realize that no matter how deep that love is, you will in time need to let it go. Loving deeply and letting go will not betray us. They will lead us to the deepest love — the love of God who alone is our treasure.

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

**BE PREPARED:**

Pope Francis has often reflected on martyrdom. He said this regarding the Central American martyr, Archbishop Oscar Romero: "Each Christian ought to be ready to give his life for the faith. A martyr is not born. It's a grace that the Lord allows, and that in a way concerns every baptized person." But then the Pope continued: "To give one's life doesn't only consist of being killed; to give one's life — to have the spirit of a martyrdom — is to surrender it in duty, in silence, in prayer, in the fulfillment of duty; in this silence of everyday life; to give one's life little by little."

Jesus tells us: "Be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" [Matthew 24:44]. In saying this Jesus is giving us advanced warning. Before considering the warning, we should note that the saying is very hopeful. No matter what you and I have done, no what condition we are in right now, we can still make a new beginning. We can at least get started, ask God's help to put things in order. Jesus tells us that the important thing is what we are doing the moment he returns.

We might ask why that one moment is so important. Early Christian writers used to compare our lives to a potter forming clay. While the clay is moist it can take any form, but when you put it in the oven it retains its shape forever. Death is the fire which fixes us eternally — either with hearts open to receive Jesus or backs turned on him.

In the Hail Mary, we ask Mary to pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Those are the two moments that matter. Yesterday is gone; tomorrow may never come. Today is what matters. How small our arguments and our battles will be when Jesus comes for us!

We can easily forget how serious this life is. We can start thinking our lives are random — a kind of cosmic accident. Or that we will always have a second chance, so why worry? Some people believe in reincarnation, not because it makes a lot of sense, but because it seems to offer repeated chances to get it right. Jesus brushes that thinking aside. This life is serious, and there are four final things — death, judgment, heaven and hell.

Some people say that if we focus on the afterlife — heaven and hell — we neglect this world. But, perhaps surprisingly, it's just the opposite! People who focus on eternity are often the ones who do the most in this world. Think about Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa illustrates that those who focus on receiving Jesus will do good for people here on earth. The paradox applies not only to individuals, but to institutions.

In spite of our many sins, weaknesses and failures, God has done good things through those who strove to "be prepared" for Jesus' return. Pope Francis tells to be prepared for martyrdom, to surrender to Jesus.

Maybe you have heard of the book: *Atlas Shrugged*. It posits that, like Atlas, a small number of key people hold up our world. An interesting premise, but Ayn Rand got it wrong. It's not the materially rich who hold up our society, but those rich in the things of God — those who in a hidden way give themselves to Christ, who strive to put their lives in order [see Genesis 18:32]. Our world depends on those who live his word: "Be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

Like Jesus, Pope Francis tells to be prepared, be prepared for martyrdom, be ready to surrender all to Jesus — "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival" [Luke 12:32-48].

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

**STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT GOD WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW HIM:**

You don't know me. You may have read some stuff I wrote, or maybe you follow me on Instagram and see little snapshots of my life. Maybe you know what I did last weekend, or how many sisters I have.

But you don't know me.

You don't know what makes me cry, or what my favorite joke is. You don't know how I really feel about Christian music. You've never hugged me when my heart was hurting. You don't know the "ins and outs" of my relationships. Those are the things only my close friends know about me because I've spent time with them, sharing who I am on a personal level.

If someone talks trash about me but they only know me through the internet, or they've just "heard" of me... I can't take their criticism seriously. I can't let their words trouble me because those strangers aren't an accurate judge of my character or the purity of my heart... they don't even know me.

I think about this reality every time someone complains to me about God. So often I hear things like this:

- "I don't pray because God doesn't respond."
- "I don't feel anything when I pray or when I go to church and I'm so tired of it."
- "I feel like God just doesn't like me."
- "God's all about 'rules' so why would I want to have anything to do with that?"

Have you ever caught yourself saying/thinking something like this? If so, did you really know the God you were talking about? Or have you based these complaints on some stuff you heard, or read about God?

It breaks my heart a little bit to hear those complaints because that's not the God I know and love. That's not the God that I've gotten to know in the gospels and through my relationship with Him in prayer and through the sacraments. That's not the God that the saints talk about and write about.

What I wish everyone knew and understood is that God is love [1 John 4:8]. This is the first thing we have to remember about who He is. He is love. And He is everything good that love entails and encompasses. Which means He is merciful, and patient, and a good listener, and He genuinely wants what is best for us. He is actively working to bring good out of the bad in our lives.

But God is also not a magician. We also have to remember this about Him. Sure, God can multiply bread and change water to wine, but He can't force the person who sits behind you in Math class to fall in love with you. God can't force your priest to give more engaging homilies, or force your brother or sister to stop bullying you. If humans didn't have the right to choose between things like short or long homilies, or good and evil, we would be robots. And robots who are programmed to love and serve God aren't authentically loving and serving God. God can do all things but He's not a magician, He respects our free will to choose.

God is love and He is not a magician — these two facts about God are like my anchors that hold me down when the craziness of life tries to pull me in directions like not trusting God, or feeling like He isn't listening, or isn't looking out for me.

God is listening; He is working to bring about good in my life because God is love. And He loves me — and you.

Do you know that God doesn't feel any differently about you than He does about the most virtuous saints and the worst sinners in the world? He loves you so much and wants you to get to know Him — the real Him!

Ready to start? Ready to get to know the actual, true God? The real Him — not the idea of Him based on what you've heard about Him instead of heard from Him. When you get to know Him, to really

know who He is, you won't complain about how He isn't listening because you know God is a God who is always present to you and your struggles, He knows them even better than you do! You won't complain that He isn't looking out for you because you know He will eventually bring good out of everything.

As I grew in my own relationship with God I learned that if He was all good, then He could bring good out of my own failures and brokenness too. As I grew closer to God, He asked me to be patient and to trust Him. It was tough. But eventually — not in my time but His — some of those things that I thought were only wounds in my life — those were the things God used to make me stronger and holier and bring Him closer to His own heart!

Getting to know who God is will take time like all good things do. You're going to have to put in work, and be patient when things get tough — like when you don't "feel" like praying, or you don't understand the words of Jesus — just to name a few.

I think a lot of people stop trying in their faith, and they throw in the towel and give up because they believe all these misguided things that they have heard about God. But they haven't really gotten to even know Him. Just like getting to know a friend takes time, so does your relationship with God. You can't think you know God personally if you've only heard people talk about Him, or read things about Him. So here are some practical ways to get started on your relationship with Him:

- **Set up a regular prayer time every day**, even if you're just starting with 5 minutes a day. Put it in your schedule to encourage yourself to stick to it.
- **Read the gospels.** This is one of the best ways to get to know who God is! When you're confused about something in Scripture, google catholic commentaries on that verse to learn how the Church has interpreted God's word for us.
- **Look for God throughout the day.** Look for the ways that He is loving you — like through a gorgeous sunset, or that one flower you saw on the sidewalk that's your favorite color. Acknowledge His goodness and say thanks! Choose to see the world through eyes of faith and not just chance.
- **Pray the Serenity Prayer every day** to remind yourself to be patient with God's way. We have to remind ourselves that God always listens, but His answers are mysterious and glorious and happen on our own timeline.
- **Be patient and persistent with your relationship with God.** It will take our whole lives, and still all of forever to get to "know" who He is. But we can start. And we can keep trying. And we can decide to not complain about who we "think" God is before we really know Him. Because He is love and that love will never fail you.

—taken from the writings of Christina Mead, a youth minister

**LIFE TEEN and EDGE:**

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

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

**REMEMBER:**

Detachment does not mean you should own nothing; it means that nothing should own you.