

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ An Advent Prayer ~**

Lord God,  
we adore you  
because you have come to us in the past.  
You have spoken to us  
in the Law of Israel.  
You have challenged us  
in the words of the prophets.  
You have shown us in Jesus  
what you are really like.

Lord God,  
we adore you  
because you still come to us now.  
You come to us  
through other people  
and their love and concern for us.  
You come to us  
through men and women  
who need our help.  
You come to us  
as we worship you  
with your people.

Lord God,  
we adore you  
because you will come to us at the end.  
You will be with us  
at the hour of death.  
You will still reign supreme  
when all human institutions fail.  
You will still be God  
when our history has run its course.  
We welcome you,  
the God who comes.  
Come to us now  
in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.  
phone: [440] 473-3560 [office] or 216-570-9276 [cell].  
e-mail: blazekj@gilmour.org

# Our Lady Chapel



*Our Lady Chapel is a Roman Catholic community founded in the love of the Father, centered in Christ, and rooted in the Holy Cross tenets of building family and embracing diversity. We are united in our journey of faith through prayer and sacrament, and we seek growth through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and outreach, while responding to the needs of humanity.*

**FAITH EDUCATION:**

**Faith Education meets next Sunday [December 4<sup>th</sup>] and then again on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 AM.** There will be no class on Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup> due to Thanksgiving Break. As has been our custom in the past, our Faith Education Classes are followed by our 10 AM Mass which is held in the chapel. **If you have any questions, please contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560].** Thank you.

**THE GIVING TREE:**

Our annual **Giving Tree** can be found in the narthex of the chapel. Next to the tree is an easel containing gifts for you to obtain. Choose whatever gift you would like, and then bring it back and put it under the tree. Gifts do not have to be wrapped...just label the package or bag with the gift you are giving. There are a number of community organizations that we are helping with this project: St. Adalbert Parish School, Fatima Catholic Center, and several local retirement Centers. **All items need to be at the chapel before Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.** Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] if you have any questions.

**OLC “ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:**

For many years, Our Lady Chapel community has worked with St. Adalbert Parish in adopting families to help them celebrate the Christmas Season. In recent years, we have had many requests from our families to begin this project earlier in order to take advantage of pre-Christmas sales, etc. We are collecting the names of families from St. Adalbert at the present time. **The need is greater than ever.** St. Adalbert identifies families — most often single parent, below poverty level families; we are given the grade levels of the children & other family information, so that you can purchase gifts appropriate to each member.



As we did last year, we will be procuring gift cards from various places, and the families will be purchasing the gifts for their families. This worked very well for everyone. Those from our chapel family who participated in this project last year spoke very highly of the benefit of this project to their own families. Even our Life Teen and EDGE Groups have adopted families and gone shopping together on a Sunday afternoon. This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. **Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or szaniszlop@gilmour.org] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions. The lists are in the chapel office now.**

**CAMP GILMOUR IS BACK FOR WINTER CAMP 2022:**

Camp Gilmour is hosting six one-day camps for campers ages 5-12 during winter break. Campers can return to campus and renew old friendships, make new ones and have a great time! Winter Camp has something for everyone! Join us for seasonal games and crafts, swimming, ice skating, field trips and a New Year's party.



**Camp is in session from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on the following dates: Tuesday, December 20, Wednesday, December 21, Thursday, December 23, Tuesday, December 27, Wednesday, December 28, and Thursday, December 29.** Each day is a separate camp. Registration opens November 11<sup>th</sup>. Sign up today for one or all six days at [gilmour.org/wintercamp](http://gilmour.org/wintercamp)!

**JOY:**

Choosing to have joy is not naively thinking everything will be easy. It is courageously believing that there is still hope, even when things get hard.

—Moran Nichols

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Paula Smith, mother of Tyler [\*10] and Alec [\*13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Baylea O'Brian, friend of former Gilmour Teacher, Erin Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma
- For Fred Miller, uncle of Jessica Hammer Debick [\*09], and brother in law of Pete Hammer [\*78], who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For a person who is struggling with mental health issues.
- For Ethel Nagy, mother of Lazlo Nagy, grandmother of Rich [\*16] and Josh Nagy., who is seriously ill.
- For Mike Lamonica, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Amy Boyle, Gilmour Communications Associate, mother of Molly [\*21] and Maddy [\*23] Boyle, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Lyle Schulte, who is recovering from Lung Transplant surgery.
- For Toni Gjonaj, sister-in-law of Marketing Associate, Mary Stretar, who is recovering from a stroke.
- For Carol Lowen, mother of Denise Shade, grandmother of Madeline, Michael, and Charles Shade, who is undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer.
- For Kim Clark, who is undergoing treatment for an aggressive form of cancer.
- For Beverly Jacklitch, mother of Kitchen Associate, Susan Jacklitch, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Mike Kalal, long-time Maintenance and Ice Arena employee
- For Pam Krentz
- For Sister Linda Bellemore, C.S.C.
- For Joseph Columbus, cousin of Jill Rogal.
- For Sister Leonora Donnelly, C.S.C.
- For Brother Jerome Kroetsch, C.S.C.
- For Ralph Haag, Sr., father of Father Ralph Haag, C.S.C.
- For Cindy Patrick

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For the Holy Cross Religious in Haiti, and for the people of that country, which is under siege because of political and civil strife.
- For the victims of the earthquake in Indonesia.
- For a family going through a difficult time.
- For an end to violence and racial injustice in our society.
- 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.

**WISDOM:**

Don't aspire to make a living, aspire to make a difference.

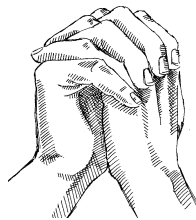
—Denzel Washington

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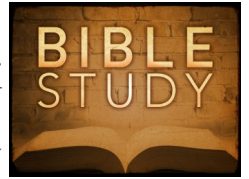
**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Brother Thomas Moser, C.S.C., who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Mary Lou Beers who is undergoing treatment for Anemia
- For Lincoln Rhode, 6 year old son of Matthew Rhode ['96], grandson of Ray ['51] and Noreen Rhode, nephew of Patrick ['88] and Chris ['93] Rhode, who is undergoing continued treatment for a stroke
- For Walter Carey, who is undergoing treatment for leukemia.
- For Pat Malak, who is seriously ill.
- For Carol Triplett, sister of Linda McGraw, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Judy Collins, aunt of Chief Academic Officer, Elizabeth Edmondson, great-aunt of Mollie ['21] and Abbie ['23] Edmondson, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Madeleine Popp, mother of Gilmour CFO, Kathy Popp, who is ill.
- For Marina McCarter, grandmother of Aaron ['25] and Mason ['28] McCarter, who is ill
- 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 Susan Plavcan, sister-in-law of Linda McGraw, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken's nephew, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Tricia Ashkettle, who is undergoing treatment for brain cancer.
- For Matthew Gebhart, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For John Roddy, brother of Tim Roddy ['87], 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 David Mattis, 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 Logan Linsz ['26], who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma.
- For Michael Nestor ['98], who is undergoing treatment for a rare form of cancer.
- 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, and great-aunt of Mackenzie DeCrane ['36], 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], grandmother of Aurelia ['28], and Olivia ['30] Chiacchiari, 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.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29<sup>th</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Tuesday, November 29<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: The life of Faith as reflected in Vatican II [part 2].**

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, November 27: 1 <sup>st</sup> Week in Advent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, November 28:	NO MASS
Tuesday, November 29:	Check with Office for time
Wednesday, November 30: St. Andrew	Check with Office for time
Thursday, December 1:	Check with Office for time
Friday, December 2:	Check with Office for time
Saturday, December 3: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, December 4: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL SUPPORT CONTINUES:**

Student enrollment at St. Adalbert School has doubled. The need for ongoing support is important — especially at this time. **Therefore we have decided to continue to support for school supplies, responding to their monthly needs. Currently they have a great need for Backpacks, socks and underwear — grades K-8. They also requested 1-Subject Spiral Notebooks.** 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** whenever you come 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.** 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.

**WISDOM:**

Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?

—Frank Scully



**A REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:**

This year we have four full weeks of Advent. If you are a child, that might seem way too long! But for those older and interested, a longer Advent allows us just a bit more time to consider just how deeply each of us needs to be visited, embraced, and rearranged. It is a four-week liturgical and personal journey inward so as to live more towards the outward.

In this first week of Advent we are asked to allow Jesus to be the holy presence which will center our lives. As the Temple and the city of Jerusalem centered the life of the faithful Jewish people, Jesus has come to teach us about how to change warring into growing. We all have to admit that we need some help in managing our human lives. As we enter this time of Advent Grace, may we become more alert, awake and receptive to the invitations and presences of the Jesus who is always “adventing” in this world. Do we need a Savior? Do we know how to exist without swords and spears? There needs to be “rearranging” in our lives.

But let's be honest. Advent is a season of preparing — parties, presents, houses, and clothing are being readied for gatherings which celebrate many things. One would hope that the birth of Jesus would be central — but often it is not. There are other human experiences which foster the “holiday spirit”. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our family gatherings, special meals, musical presentations, and plays for which we prepare would also prepare us to receive, believe, enjoy, and be enlivened by God's becoming one of us on earth?

So let's be honest. The Scripture Readings for this 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Advent are full of good news and reminders to pay attention. Something new is being announced! About seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah had a vision of a new place for the presence of the Holy and one God [Isaiah 2:1-5]. The message of Isaiah is for a people who were beleaguered — as we are — by conflict, war, divisions and unjust rulers. But to them — and us — Isaiah brings God's message of peace and hope. A holy mountain will rise above all others; and all nations of the world will come to visit and learn the instructions and the ways of the Lord. The new presence of the Lord will bring a new light into the world and by this light there will be no need for preparing for wars. If all the nations continue walking up the hill towards the light — toward the temple of Jerusalem — then they will walk together, and live together within that light.

The mountain — the temple, the city — are all to center the lives of all the nations. God is taking up residence in a new way and inviting the nations to a new way of living from that center. Warring needs distance and God has come to gather the peoples together to prevent the absolute necessity of relating with others at “arms” length.

Matthew's Gospel [24:37-44] encourages us to look for God's presence each moment in our lives. “Stay awake! You do not know on which day your Lord will come.” We need to put our heads up and be alert for the loving presence of God with us each moment of the day.

Matthew's Gospel begins with Jesus speaking about the downfall of the Jerusalem temple, which does happen at the hands of the Romans around the year seventy. But let's not get confused or distracted — the real issue here is that the disciples need to stay alert rather than their being prepared by certain knowledge. In other words, the apostles and disciples needed to rearrange their way of thinking. They needed to be more people of faith — entering into a personal covenant with God. If they and the early church for which Matthew is writing can trust Jesus as they trusted the permanence of the temple, then the exact time of the “final” coming will not remain important.

Jesus uses the community's awareness of Noah and the story of the flood to make his point. At the

**SET YOUR ALARM CLOCK:**

Biblical followers of God live in the middle of the tension between what's actually happening in their lives right now, and what they expect to happen in the future. Over the centuries, some religious leaders have been accused of focusing their people's eyes so intently on the future that they conveniently ignored the painful here and now of their daily lives — a here and now they should — and could — have changed. They didn't lift a finger, for instance, to help eradicate slavery — they simply taught that there'd be no slaves in heaven.

The prophet Isaiah could never be blamed for employing that maneuver to avoid responsibility for the world's problems. Though he speaks about an ideal future, he was active during a period in biblical history in which no one believed in an after-life as we do today. Isaiah's ideal future was restricted to the confines of this life [Isaiah 2:1-5].

That is why the prophet is so concrete when he speaks about that longed-for future — “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another.” There is no eternal bliss waiting for anyone in heaven. We can only hope for peace and tranquility right here and now.

Yet there's a condition for acquiring this peace and tranquility. We must be open to hearing God instructing us in his paths and walk in his ways. The problem is that some people hear God's word and carry it out, while others go through life without even noticing the path God expects them to travel. Our sacred authors presume this awareness — or lack of it — effects both our here and now and our future. But the question remains: why do some hear while others don't?

It's clear from Matthew's Gospel [24:35-44] that the early Christian community frequently reflected on that same question. Though Matthew projects this query into the future Parousia — Jesus' Second Coming — many Scripture scholars believe this passage originally revolved around the situation many Christians encountered in their daily lives. How come two people from the same background — even the same family — have different reactions to Jesus' message? Two men will be in the field, two women grinding at the same mill; one will be taken by Jesus, the other won't. The only way to explain it is that one was awake to what was happening around him or her; the other wasn't.

Just as someone pre-warned that a robber was going to hit their house tonight “would stay awake and not let his house be broken into,” so we've been pre-warned that the Son of Man is coming — not only in his Parousia, but also in our day by day lives. Psychologists often mention that unless we're actually looking for someone or something, we won't recognize them when they actually arrive. Staying awake is key to carrying on the risen Jesus' ministry.

That appears to be one of the reasons that Paul zeroes in on the same theme in his letter to the Church at Rome — “It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” Scripture scholars point out that biblical salvation isn't just something which will start after our physical deaths; it also begins right now, whenever we die to ourselves, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the desires of the flesh” [Romans 13:11-14].

As other Christs we're expected to challenge the same unjust situations the historical Jesus challenged. Those who believe everything in this world is just going along hunky dory have obviously forgotten to set their alarm clocks. —taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet

**GOOD TO KNOW:**

Listen to your prayers, because they locate your level of spiritual maturity.



which God's plan for peace and well-being is the divine design for all peoples.

Then we have Matthew's presentation of God's future plan summarized in the image of the coming of the Son of Man [Matthew 24:37-44]. It is important to remember that the word "coming" translates the spectacular Greek word, "Parousia" — a word that combines the concepts of presence and essence. The Parousia brings us into the presence of the essence of Christ. It's easy to understand why many have understood the Parousia as a reference to the end of the world and Christ's coming in glory — but that is not Matthew's original intent. He is talking about the "here and now."

This year, we celebrate the longest possible Advent season, with four full weeks to seek and receive the grace this season offers. We need each of these days as Advent invites us to reconsider time and history. On one hand, we will recall the long story of God's interaction with humanity, how everything from creation, through the saga of Israel, led toward the birth of Christ as the centerpiece of history. On the other hand, Advent focuses on time's horizon when we will finally experience Christ bringing all creation into union with himself so that God becomes all in all. Standing in the tension between these two intimately related moments invites us to identify with our ancestors in faith who slowly perceived how God was drawing them toward ever-greater life and ever-deeper relationship with God and all of creation.

As we read Matthew's Gospel, we almost feel taunted or teased by Jesus' message. Three times he gears us up to hope for details about the future with the phrase: "So it will be." Then, each time he lets us down by illustrating the unpredictability of his Parousia. It's as if he is saying: "You can count on this for sure! You won't have any idea of when or how it will happen." The message? — "Stay aware! Be ready for the unexpected!"

How do we do that? Obviously, much as we would like to, we can't draw a map to guide us into an unknowable future. How can we plan a journey to the unexpected? The first chapter of Isaiah offers us an essential hint. Isaiah described Israel as God's rebellious offspring — as people who had forsaken God. They had mistakenly presumed that mimicking the obsequious cults that pagans practiced would appease the God of Abraham and Moses. But, beyond empty ritualism, their real apostasy, their worst betrayal of the God who loved them, was their refusal to care about all God's beloved. No incense or sacrifice could make up for not heeding the cry of the orphan and widow. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis adds Earth to this list, calling her, "burdened and laid waste among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor."

In response to this situation of disorientation and rebellion, Isaiah offers the one solution possible. He invites Israel — and us as well — to join with "the nations," with all those who seek God, and to say: "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain," so that God can instruct us in the divine ways and that "we may walk in his paths."

Isaiah describes this pilgrimage as a climb because Jerusalem was a city on a hill. Even more, this journey requires a strenuous movement beyond self, beyond the boundaries of family, clan and nation, beyond a fixation on humans as the center of creation. It is a journey toward the heart of God who is present in everything created and who beckons us toward a future that is broader, deeper, and more varied than we would ever imagine.

In the days to come — especially during these 28 days — we have a unique opportunity to wake up to Parousia, the myriad simple and spectacular ways in which God is present, drawing us forward together. Like Israel, we are called to form integrated communities rather than remain as individuals, denominations or nations. Unknowable as the future is, we can trust that, to the extent that we give ourselves to the quest, we will find what we seek — no matter how impossible to imagine.

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



time of the flood, people were living with their disorders, and they remained unaware of God's call to them until it was too late. This is quite a dramatic historical picture for Matthew's readers. Jesus did come, after all, through the pages of the Gospels, to get the attention of the reader.

The Liturgy of Advent asks us to make some "teaching-room" in our lives — this will become the avenue leading to rearranging our lives. Jesus is asking for a more personal, individual response — more than a collective national relationship. Instead of relying on a tribal history, each follower of Jesus is called to learn about trusting their personal futures. In the past there was the need for swords and spears; in the future there must be no more training for personal and family, and racial, and national wars. The past is history, the future is mystery. In the past there was the solidity of the temple; in the future there will be the learning time to trust the solidity of each person's relationship with Jesus.

As we begin our Advent, we may feel unready and have the urge to re-create ourselves into someone perfect. Deep down, we know our own flaws: we might drink too much; take our spouse for granted, or ignore those around us who are suffering. We pray for help — but at a distance.

We may believe that if we aren't perfect, we probably aren't worthy of God's love and affection. But that is not what God wants. We can't save ourselves, but it is God's delight to come to save us. Jesus is not waiting for our perfection, but for our attention.

Paying attention five minutes a day could change us and our Advent. We could read the daily scriptures and the message of the season. Perhaps we could set out a nativity image or a favorite creche scene. We can start our day by imagining the smelly, cold stable and harsh and undignified place that was Jesus' first home. This child, this savior, born into the stink of a shed full of animals, can certainly love us with all of our own embarrassing stench.

We can sit in silence and speak to Jesus about our upcoming busy, chaotic and confusing day. We bring our worries and joys to Jesus and ask that our hearts be opened in new ways. We can close by asking for the grace to carry that peace with us to all those we encounter that day. We can end our simple meditation by saying: "Come, Lord Jesus."

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

## FOLLOWING JESUS — ACCORDING TO THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT?

What makes us genuine disciples of Jesus is living inside his Spirit — the Holy Spirit; and this is not something abstract and vague. If one were searching for a single formula to determine who is Christian and who isn't, one might look at St. Paul's Letter to the Church at Galatia. In it, St. Paul tells us that we can live according to either the spirit of the flesh or the Holy Spirit [see Chapter 5].

We live according to the spirit of the flesh when we live in anger, bitterness, judgment of our neighbor, factionalism, and non-forgiveness. When these things characterize our lives, we shouldn't delude ourselves and think that we are living inside of the Holy Spirit.

Conversely, we live inside of the Holy Spirit when our lives are characterized by charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, longsuffering, constancy, faith, gentleness, and chastity. If these do not characterize our lives, we should not nurse the illusion that we are inside of God's Spirit — irrespective of our passion for truth, dogma, or justice.

Sometimes I see more charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, and gentleness among persons who are Unitarian, New Age, or Baha'I, than I see among those of us who do stand-up so strongly for certain ecclesial and moral issues but are often mean-spirited and bitter inside of our convictions.

We need, I believe, to be more self-critical in regard to our anger, harsh judgments, mean-spirit, exclusiveness, and disdain for other ecclesial and moral paths. As T.S. Eliot once said: "The last temptation that's the greatest treason is to do the right thing for the wrong reason."

We may have truth and right morals on our side. But our anger and harsh judgments towards those who don't share our truth and morals may well have us standing outside the Father's house — like the older brother of the prodigal son, bitter both at God's mercy and at those who are receiving that mercy.

—Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I.



**AWAKE FROM YOUR SLEEP:**

The Scripture Readings for this 1<sup>st</sup> Week in Advent are profound. We begin with the Prophet, Isaiah, calling us to climb to the top of the mountain and look for the Lord's advent — the Lord's coming into our lives. This leads Isaiah to cry out: "O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!" [Isaiah 2:1-5]. We need to understand that Isaiah isn't simply talking about nature's daylight nighttime's darkness, he is talking about what we see with our minds and hearts. He's calling us to rise above our daily worries, concerns, and anxieties in order to take a look over the whole of our lives with all of their peaks and valleys. As Christians we do that in the vision of Christ, the Light of the World — God's gift to us.

The problem you and I face comes not from the fact that we are unconcerned or apathetic or lazy. The problem you and I have is that we're far too concerned about so many other things. Often these are legitimate concerns — worries that are thrust upon us by the world in which we live. We are so caught up in all of the events of our days that we do not pay attention to our souls, our inner spirits, and our inner selves. This spiritual blindness is spoken of in biblical language as darkness. And what do we do in darkness? Usually we sleep. We sleep because we shut down, tune out, and turn off.

When we, through accident, through chance, or in some other unexpected event, become aware of God's activity in our lives, we suddenly pay attention — we wake up. And in that moment of waking up we likely think that God's coming to us is sudden, unexpected, startling. God has, however, always been there. He is actively present to us all of the time, each and every day. It's our awareness of Him that has changed. God hasn't changed in the slightest way. He is constant; He is always present. It is we who are inconstant, changeable and inattentive.

We often speak of Advent as being a season of time in which we prepare for the Lord's coming into our lives.

Perhaps we should see it as a season of heightened awareness — for the truth is that we should be looking for God already at work in our lives every day. God is always offering Himself to us. We, however, are not always responding because we're not paying attention. Advent is a time to conscientiously, deliberately, and with awareness respond to His offer of Himself to us. We have to "see the Light," so to speak.

It's all a matter of seeing eternity in every season of our lives. It's all a matter of paying attention to God's presence to us in our lives as children, as teens, as young adults, in our middle age, and in the final seasons of our lives when we mirror the time when the leaves fall from their branches and the world goes to sleep under a blanket of snow. In each of those seasons of our lives God's ever-present and everlasting love can break in upon us. We all — each one of us — feel it to be unexpected. But what is so unexpected about it? Why should we be surprised? God is always calling us to climb to the top of the mountain, look for His coming, and take a look over the broad range of our lives.

Our lives are cluttered with too many things demanding our attention, draining us of our energies, and blinding us to the big picture. Money only goes so far. Technology can only do so much. Medicines have a short shelf life. All of our human resources are limited. Only God has what we need. He has all that we need in an inexhaustible supply.

Can we look ahead? Yes, we can — if we take the time and make the space to do so. Can we trace the writing of God's finger as He sends us His messages? We can. Can we seize the opportunity to make time during Advent to come to some daily Advent Masses? Attend Communal Penance Services? Read from the bible? Spend extra time in thoughtful reflection and quiet prayer? We can. But that is not the issue. The big question is not what we can do — it's what we will do. It's our will that is controlling, not our wishes.



world. But that was the only route to Easter Sunday, and he had the moral intelligence to see it.

And what the crucifixion produced is moral wisdom. That's why the cross of Christ — as Rene Girard puts it — is the single most revolutionary moral event that has ever happened on this planet. What the cross of Christ does, as the gospels tell us, is rip away the veil that separates us from seeing inside the holy of holies. And our own crosses and humiliations can do that for us too. They can rip away a blindness and wake us up morally.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — DECEMBER 17<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).** This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

**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, November 19]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 470.00**

**Offerings-----[Sunday, November 20]----- \$ 245.00**

**Offerings-----[Thursday, November 24]-----[Thanksgiving]----- \$ 113.00**

**SEEKING GOD:**

"In the days to come" [Isaiah 2:1-5] — these words set the tone as they invite us into Advent — 28 days of seeking to better perceive where and how God is active in our midst. Isaiah ushers us into Advent with his vision of the future God has in mind. We do well to remember the situation Isaiah was addressing when he outlined his vision. In the opening chapter of his work, the prophet described Israel's sorry state — Israel's culpable ignorance about God's presence has left her dumber than the ox and more stubborn than the donkey. As an alternative, Isaiah depicts a new possibility, a transformed future in

**MORAL INTELLIGENCE:**

There are different ways of being intelligent — of being awake. Not everyone is bright in the same way. Some people are gifted mathematically and philosophically. That's the intelligence of an Albert Einstein, an Alfred North Whitehead, and a Bill Gates. Some others are gifted with emotional intelligence. You see this, for instance, in the great novelists — the Iris Murdochs, the Anne Byatts, the John Steinbecks, and the Alice Munroes, who possess an emotional grasp of things that the greatest psychologists in the world can only envy.

Then there is something that might be called practical intelligence. I saw this in some of my high school friends — young men who couldn't pass enough courses to graduate, but who are wonderfully gifted with life-skills and are the ones the rest of us lean on whenever we need to sort out our plumbing, our automobile woes, our leaking roofs, and the thousand other things that mathematics, philosophy, and literature don't equip us to handle.

There is, too, a certain aesthetic intelligence — that unique brightness of the artist which sometimes combines with the emotional or even the mathematical — especially in the case of music — but is often an intelligence all to itself.

Finally, there is still another kind of intelligence — moral intelligence. What is this? Sometimes we call it depth or wisdom or character. Whatever its name, moral intelligence is a sensitivity to the deeper contours within life. It is a certain grasp of those things which hold life together at its root, and which must be respected so that life doesn't go sour, unravel, disintegrate, and turn against us. Moral intelligence intuits the imperatives innate within the DNA of life itself. It grasps the things we have to do — and not just the things we like to do. It lays bare the hard-wiring inside the mystery of life and love.

Where does it come from? Like other forms of intelligence, it is perhaps mainly a natural endowment, a temperament, a grace given by God as a gift to the world. But, I suspect, in most cases it is also the product of something else — namely, a certain kind of suffering and humiliation. What do I mean by that?

If we look at our lives and ask ourselves: What has made us deep? What has helped us to understand the deeper things in life? If we are honest, we will have to admit that what made us deep were not our successes or achievements. These brought us glory, but not depth or character.

What the crucifixion produced is moral wisdom. What brought us depth and character are the very things we are often ashamed to talk about — namely, our inferiorities — getting picked last on the school team, being bullied on the playground, some physical inadequacy, our mother's weight problem, our dad's alcoholism, an abuse inflicted upon us that we were powerless to stop, a slow-wittedness that perpetually left us out of the inner circle, our failure to achieve what we'd like to in life, a pain about our sexual orientation, an addiction we can't master, and many, many other small and big wounds and bruises that helped shape our souls.

James Hillman — our generation's maverick intellectual — speaks eloquently on this. Depth, he suggests, never comes out of our successes, but only out of our inferiorities and failures. And this, he says, gives us character. Our scars are like huge stones in a riverbed; they may do nothing but stay still and hold their ground, but the river has to take them into account and alter its flow because of them and it's precisely this which gives a river — and a face — some character.

This truth lies at the very heart of Jesus' life and message. When the disciples can't fathom or accept the crucifixion, Jesus asks them: "Wasn't it necessary?" [Luke 24:26]. Isn't there a necessary connection between the humiliation of Good Friday and the glory of Easter Sunday? Isn't there an intrinsic connection between going through a certain kind of suffering and reaching a certain kind of depth?

Indeed, Jesus' struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane — his asking God three times to spare him from the pain and humiliation of being crucified — was precisely his own reluctance to accept that a certain kind of depth can only be arrived at by journeying through a certain kind of humiliation. And, in his case, Jesus wasn't just going to be picked on by the playground bully, he was going to be hung naked before the whole



We live in the time well after the arrival of the year 2,000 A.D. Do you remember our worries when the year 2000A.D. arrived and we were told that our computers were not programmed for those digits and might shut themselves down and everything with them? We also live in the time after September 11<sup>th</sup>. We live in an age of terrorism. We live in an economic mess. We live with a lot of emotional anxieties. We would do well to ask ourselves the question: "Where is God in all of this?" and then seriously, during this Advent, pursue answers to that question. For questions are not denials — they are quests. And God always wants to be sought. All lovers do.

As your teachers taught you in school, the Greek philosopher Plato — who lived four hundred years before Christ — declared: "The life which is unexamined is not worth living." Every Advent — and indeed every time we come to Mass — the Mother Church bids us to examine our lives.

Once again we enter into and begin our journey through Advent, hopefully looking for the coming of the Lord into our lives. And so, I repeat to you the words of St. Paul — words that he wrote to the Church at Rome — remembering that the Romans back in those days lived in a culture not altogether different from the one in which we presently live: "Brothers and sisters: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; Let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the desires of the flesh" [Romans 13:11-14].

In the words of Jesus you just heard in today's gospel account: "So, too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" [Matthew 24:37-44].

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

**THE ROAD TO GOD:**

Paul's letter to the Church at Rome encourages us to "throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" [Romans 13:11-14]. He urges us to act properly, "not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy." Positively, he admonishes us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and make no provisions for "the desires of the flesh," which is anything that detracts from following the guidance of the Spirit. It seems Paul expected the risen Christ to return soon to complete his saving work, making it imperative for his followers to move from the slumber of night to the mindfulness of day.

Paul's letter to the Church at Rome played an important role in the conversion of St. Augustine [354-430]. Sometime in 386, while teaching rhetoric in Milan, Augustine had a deep conversation with his friend — Alypius — which led to an intense inner struggle over the direction of his life. Deeply agitated and weeping profusely, Augustine went into a garden to be alone. There he heard a child's voice repeating "take and read," which he interpreted as a divine command to open the book of Paul's letters and read the first passage he saw — "not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ." He no sooner finished the passage than relief from all guilt and shame flooded into his heart and "all the shadows of doubt were dispelled." Augustine went on to become a disciplined Christian, a dedicated bishop, an influential theologian, and a great saint.

The message of Paul's letter can serve as an invitation to all of us to reform our lives and come closer to Christ. To the alcoholic it says not in drunkenness but turn your life over to Christ and join AA. To the young man who spends too much time on internet porn sites, it says not in promiscuity but seek the Lord's help and develop healthier attitudes toward women and sex. To the woman who harbors a grudge against a former friend, it says not in rivalry but follow the example of Christ and initiate reconciliation. To the collegian who is envious of her roommate, it says not in jealousy but put on the mind of Christ and look for good qualities in her.

What moral conversion do you need in your life?

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



**REBUILDING THE TRADITIONS OF OUR LIVES:**

There is a saying in architecture, “First we shape the building and then the building shapes us.” This insight points to an interplay—a give and take—between ourselves and the spaces we inhabit. Buildings don’t just happen, someone shapes them, someone designs them, someone decides how many rooms there will be, how many windows, how much open space. But, once those decisions are made and we live in the buildings, the buildings then shape us. They influence our lives either for good or for ill. What is true about buildings is also true about traditions. We shape our traditions. But then our traditions shape us. Our decisions about what we are going to do or not do, how we’re going to gather with other people are decisions we make. But once we put them into practice they influence us and help shape who we are as people. As in architecture, there is a give and take; an interplay between ourselves and our traditions.

Now this is a very important point to consider because in the upcoming weeks we are going to enact a number of traditions. We all carry customs for the season of Christmas, traditions that we bring from our childhood, from our heritage. These customs are an important part of the holidays. But for them to work well, for them to do the job they are intended to do, those traditions need to fit our lives, and the truth is our lives are changing. We are not the same people we were when we were children. We are not even the same people we were last year. Therefore, every so often in the interplay between our traditions and our lives we need to ask the question, “Is there something about our traditions that we need to change? Do we need to reshape our traditions so that they in turn can reshape us?”

Now, to make this kind of shaping and reshaping clear, we have to know what is going on in our lives. We need to read the signs of the time and be in touch with what is really happening around us. This is what the Gospel today addresses. The people of Noah’s time are criticized because they were not in touch with what was going on around them. They did not see the upcoming flood and they continued on with life as usual up until the very day that Noah entered the ark. This is why the Gospel is telling us, “Stay awake. Be ready. Be attentive. Be in touch with what is really happening in your life so that you will be able to sense what needs to change, what needs to stay the same.”

What are some of the changes that might be going on in our life that could impact our holiday traditions? There might have been someone in our life recently who has died: a parent, a grandparent. With that person missing the whole pattern of our family network changes. We might need to replace that person’s role in our holiday traditions by asking someone else to assume it or perhaps sharing that role among a number of people. Children in our life might have married or moved away so that once where there were twelve people around the Christmas table, this year there might be six or two. Our children might be growing older, entering high school or college and there might be issues going on in our life so that we are looking now in our traditions for more than Santa Claus and opening presents. We need to be reading the signs of the times in our life and asking ourselves, “How do our holiday traditions need to be reshaped to fit the people we are?” Now these are questions that you must answer.

But let me this morning offer a few examples of the kind of reshaping that could be useful. If you sense in your family that people are maturing and looking for more from the holidays than simply opening presents, why not take action as the host of the holiday celebration to call ahead and invite one or two people to share what is happening in their lives? Christmas after all is about Emmanuel, God with us. Why not find a space within your traditions for one or two people to say, “How did I know that God was with me this year?” It will deepen and spiritualize your traditions.

If someone has died, then there should be a place in your holiday traditions to remember that person, perhaps including them in the prayer before the meal, or perhaps asking someone to share a story about them that would capture their spirit. If divorce has happened in your family, then perhaps it would be good to find a way in the traditions of the season where you could still maintain some connection with



schools. There is darkness wherever there are people trying to destroy other people.

There are also times that we join in with the darkness. Someone says something about someone, and we add a few nasty comments of our own. Someone is declared to be unworthy of association with the important people in the neighborhood, the office or the school, and we join in by ignoring that person. We can decry the way that some people destroy the lives of other people, but we need to recognize that we are inclined to join them in these sins. St. Paul tells us that we must not be part of the evils of the world. We need to come out of the darkness and walk in the light of the Lord [Isaiah 2:1-5]. It is easy to point the finger at other people and to declare that the world is in bad shape because of them. It is difficult to point the finger at ourselves. It is easy for me to stand up here as a priest and say: “Because of this person or that group of people, our world is being destroyed.” And it is easy for you to sit there in those seats and agree with me. Maybe you might even applaud because, you think, it is about time that somebody told it as it is and stuck it to those sinners. But we also have to admit that it is much harder to reform our own sins than to point at the sins of others.

Here’s a cute story to bring home the point. Father Smith was preaching on Sunday morning. He said: “You people with your lies and your promiscuous ways... if you keep this up you are all going to go to hell. Is that what you want? You want to go to hell? Stand up if you want intend to continue your sinful ways and choose hell. Stand up if you want to go to hell.”

And, of course, no one got up. But after a few minutes of absolute silence Frank Jones arose from his pew. Now Frank was a kindly old man — even saintly. People often asked him for his advice. The people truly felt the presence of God in his words. Frank got up. The congregation gasped. Fr. Smith’s jaw dropped. Finally, Father Smith composed himself and said: “Frank, do you really want to go to hell?” “No, Father,” Jones said. “Then why did you get up?” “Well, Father, I didn’t think it was right that you be the only one standing.”

Whether we are priests or lay people, we have got to be concerned with coming out of the darkness ourselves — not with what we perceive are the sins of others. And we do need to come out of darkness. We need to put up the fight against evil in our own lives. If we do this then we will be ready for our final union with the Lord. We need to stay awake. For the Lord is coming to fulfill our hope and the hope of all people. He is always ready for us.

We need to be ready for Him. In the letter to the Hebrews, the author tells us that faith is the assurance of what is hoped for and the evidence of things unseen” [see Hebrews 11:1]. “Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed,” Paul tells us. There is no reason for us to be negative with our world v — with others or even with ourselves. We believe that Jesus Christ is coming again. We are people of faith. We are people of hope. —taken from the writings for Monsignor Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Isaiah 4:2-6, Matthew 8:5-11
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Isaiah 11:1-10, Luke 10:21-24
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Romans 10:9-18, Matthew 4:18-22
<b>Thursday:</b>	Isaiah 26:1-8, Matthew 7:21-27
<b>Friday:</b>	Isaiah 29:17-24, Matthew 9:27-31
<b>Saturday:</b>	Isaiah 30:19-26, Matthew 9:35-10:8

**2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent:** Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:4-9, Matthew 3:1-12



**STAY AWAKE AND HOPE:**

This week we begin the Church year with a call to stay awake. Paul tells us that we must wake from our sleep because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed [Romans 13:11-14]. Jesus tells us in apocalyptic terms that we do not know exactly when the Lord is coming — we just need to be ready for Him [Matthew 24:37-44]. This is Advent — the season of hope. Our hope is that Jesus Christ will come a second time. Our hope is that the Lord’s Second Coming will bring lasting peace. Our hope is that we will all experience this peace — either in this world or, if our lives end before the Second Coming, in the next world. Because we believe, because we have hope, our view of life must be positive — not negative. We are Christian. We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that He has begun the wonderful victory of love over hate. We believe that the world as we know it is passing away, and is being transformed into the eternal kingdom of God. We cannot allow ourselves to be negative people. It is easy to be negative. It is easy to focus on the immoral aspects of our society and cry out: “the world is going to hell in a handbasket.” The media delights in giving us daily reminders of all that is wrong in the world. But the media doesn’t shoulder all the blame for our negativity.

Many people are negative about everything — whether that be the nation, the world, the future, or even the Church. Perhaps some older people have had so many difficult experiences in their lives that they allow the negatives to dominate their whole world view. Some younger people do this too. Maybe there are times that we all do this. When we see everything in a negative light, then we are implicitly denying Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Victor. He has won. He is winning. He will win. He has won. He has eliminated eternal death through his own death on the cross. He has defeated the power of hate through the power of His love. He is winning.

But many young families have discovered this hope that Jesus promises. They are concerned with raising children for God rather than worrying about how children will affect their lives. They are more concerned with the love their children reflect than with the financial cost of raising a child. And they really work hard to give the gift of faith to their children. Church is not a “Sunday thing” for them — it is lifestyle. So many of our high school and college people are making conscious decisions for Jesus Christ. Youth conferences, parish youth programs, and college campus ministries are flourishing due to the work of the Holy Spirit and the determination of parishes, colleges, and dioceses to provide the best they can for the young. We are beginning to see an upswing of young men and women entering seminaries and convents.

They want Jesus, and they want to bring Jesus to others. They want to be heroes for Christ. How can we look at these young, and all those who are making daily decisions for the Lord and not realize that Jesus is winning? There is great hope. The world is not going to hell in a handbasket — it is going to heaven with committed Catholics and other Christians are leading the way to the Lord. And He will win. We believe with every fiber of our being that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Victor. The dark elements of the world will fade away. Evil will no longer attack us. Jesus Christ will return the world to its original state — the world as God always intended the world to be, a place of loving God and loving neighbor.

So, does that mean that we should ignore the immorality we are bombarded with? No, we need to stand for that which is right. — orgies and drunkenness, promiscuity and lust, rivalry and jealousy. St. Paul tells us that we should have nothing to do with the darkness that envelopes so many. He lists a few of the sinful ways of his times. We could add many of the ills of modern society as part of the darkness. Notice, though, that St. Paul’s emphasis is not on others — it is on us. He says that we need to be people of the light. We need to put on the amour of Jesus Christ. Our focus should be on our coming out of darkness and into the light — not on others. Let me make this concrete. People tell horrible stories about other people. There is gossip in the neighborhood, the office, the school. There is bullying in the



people who used to be part of your lives but will no longer be sitting around the table.

If your children have grown and moved away and you find yourself with less activity and more time on your hands, then perhaps service should become a part of your holiday traditions. You could volunteer in a food bank or perhaps change your work schedule to work on Christmas morning freeing up someone else to be with their family. If there are less people around your table then perhaps you should think of asking someone to join you, another couple whose children have moved away or someone who is living alone. Remember these traditions do not all have to center on Christmas itself. People who are alone are alone on more than just December 25<sup>th</sup>. You could invite them over the day after Christmas or the Sunday after Christmas. If there are new people as a part of your family, new in-laws or children from a blended family, then it’s important to find a way of including them and welcoming them as part of your traditions.

As long as we are alive, we are changing, and our holiday traditions should change as well so that they reflect the people we are today. Do not put this responsibility aside. You have only a few weeks before the holidays. Do not go blindly into the traditions you did last year without first asking, “Do my celebrations need to be adapted to fit the life I am living now?” God becomes present to us when we gather together and so it is important to gather together well. Make your plans now. Plan to reshape your traditions so that they in turn can reshape you. We have the power to change the way we celebrate and therefore, give to our traditions a greater power to call us closer to one another, to bring us closer to God.

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

**LET US GO REJOICING TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD:**

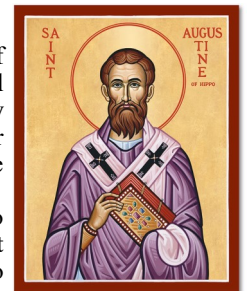
Here’s the choice we face — misery or happiness? Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord! [see Psalm 122]. Welcome to Advent! These four weeks of Advent are all about seeking happiness. Everyone wants to be happy and we want others to be happy — parents want their children to be happy; a boyfriend or girlfriend wants happiness for the other person; business people want colleagues and customers to be happy; we desire happiness for others and ourselves. So at first sight, this sounds like an easy theme.

But on the other hand, there is a problem. There are bumps in the road to happiness. Some people are under a great deal of stress; others face almost insurmountable problems. But even in these situations, there exists a universal desire to see happiness. We all dream about some moment when we will be happy. Some people try to create happiness in the wrong places. We might think: “Oh, when the Christmas rush is over and we sit down to that wonderful dinner, then I will be happy.” Some people feel awful right now but feel that they will be happy when they can get high, or go on a shopping binge, or rendezvous with some person. In seeking happiness these people create misery for themselves and those closest to them. And that’s the paradox — the seeming contradiction — in seeking happiness we destroy happiness.

Then there are people who resist happiness. Take, for example, a man who wasn’t a Christian, but he wasn’t an atheist either. He struggled mightily with sexual temptations. He used to say this prayer: “God, make me chaste, but not yet!” One day he was alone in a garden and he heard a voice say: “Tolle et legge” — take and read. He thought maybe it was child outside the garden fence, and he tried to think about what children’s game they might be playing. The voice became more persistent: “Take and read!” On a table was a book with St. Paul’s letters. He opened it to Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome — “Not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh” [Romans 13:11-14]. At that moment the young man made a choice — to pray for purity of heart. The temptations did not cease — maybe there was even some fall — but on that day, he made a radical choice. It was a choice between misery and happiness.

Maybe you’ve heard about this man. He went on to become the Church’s most influential preacher — St. Augustine of Hippo. Jesus makes it clear that, like Augustine, we also face that choice — misery or happiness. “One will be taken, and one will be left”, Jesus says [Matthew 24:37-44]. Happiness is within our reach, but we keep resisting. And so we enter into Advent with the hope that all of us will “go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.”

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



**I LOVE THANKSGIVING:**

I love traditions. My family is always cautious to start something new, worried that I'll suddenly exclaim: "this should be a new family tradition!" We have many, beautiful traditions in our family, but if we had a tradition for every time I declared a new one, we'd have hundreds — and then we'd probably have none because there's no way we'd be able to maintain them all.

Traditions are important because they help write our stories and engrave memories. They are a connection to the past, and they are a hope for the future. Traditions help us remember who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. This act of "remembering" is essential to faith.

One of my favorite traditions is Thanksgiving. The whole day, really; but particularly our family tradition of starting the day off with Mass. For years, at the end of Mass on Thanksgiving morning, our parish has given out little round loaves of sweet bread, baked by a parishioner, and blessed by the priest. At the end of Mass, there is, inevitably, extra loaves of bread.

Families are welcome to take extra, and the rest is donated to a food shelter.

It would be embarrassing to walk up and take six loaves of bread, but my cousins and siblings would strategically stagger our timing — each of us taking a loaf of bread. We would actually end up with 6 loaves. Embarrassing, I know — but also kind of brilliant.

This bread is magical. You could practically eat an entire loaf by yourself. It's so sweet and tastes so good. I'm not sure what makes it so magical — if it's because this bread is a labor of love, or if the holy water sprinkled upon it by the priest adds a special note of sweetness, or because it's the only food we're really allowed to have until the big feast. Probably a combination of all of that.

The slight drawback to going to Thanksgiving Mass is that we end up missing the majority of the Macy's Day Parade — but free, amazing bread, plus Jesus, so the "sacrifice" is nominal. One year, when I was particularly captivated by the floats passing by on our TV, I asked my dad why Thanksgiving was a Holy Day of Obligation. He looked at me slightly puzzled — "It's not," he replied, rather matter of factly. I was incredulous. I felt as though I'd been tricked into something my whole life — "It's not a Holy Day?!"

I blurted back "then why do we go??" If I had taken a moment to think this through, I could have answered my own question. But dad answered: "Caitlin, Thanksgiving is a day about giving thanks, which means we go to God, who has given us everything, and we thank him, for without God all of this is worthless."

As Catholics, traditions are an essential part of our faith as they help us understand our faith more fully. The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word "eucharistein" meaning to give thanks. Every time we gather at the Eucharistic table we come to give thanks to God and to remember the sacrifice of our Lord — we receive His body and blood in remembrance of him.

During this Thanksgiving Season — in the midst of the traditions that you and your family have — give thanks to God for the many blessings he has bestowed upon you; and the next time you receive the Eucharist, recall that this too is a form of giving thanks. This sacred tradition helps remind us who we are, who we come from, and gives us a hope for our future.

—taken from the writings of Caitlin Sica, a high school teacher

**GET OFF THE TREADMILL:**

Stepping out of the busyness, stopping our endless pursuit of getting somewhere else, is perhaps the most beautiful offering we can make to our spirit.

—Tara Brach

**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].**

**READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

What Jesus had in mind was not so much that we should try to attune ourselves intellectually to all the cultural, psychological, and religious trends of our time. To read the signs of the times, for Jesus, meant trying to read what is happening in our lives, communally and individually, in such a way as to discern the finger of God inside the outer movements of our lives. My parents called this trying to see "divine providence" — namely, trying to hear what God is saying inside the outer events of our lives.

There is a rich biblical background to this. Indeed, in many ways, this is central to the faith of Israel in the Jewish scriptures. For them, nothing happened that was purely an accident. God's finger was always inside of every event, no matter how secular or accidental it seemed, and the task of faith was to try to read what God was saying inside every event. For example, if Israel lost a war, it wasn't because the other army had superior soldiers — it was because God was trying to teach her something; there was something she was supposed to learn from this defeat. Likewise, if there was a drought, it wasn't because there was global warming. It was because, for reasons Israel had to try to discern, God wanted her to live on less that year. For her, nothing was purely accidental. God's finger was somewhere inside of every event, speaking to her.

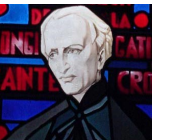
John of the Cross said that the language of God is the experience that God writes into our lives. Our task is to read that language, and we read it when we properly name the events of our lives. A proper naming does three things — it is prophetic, it names our faith and our faithlessness, our justice, and our injustice; it is diagnostic, it points to the correct prescription to help remedy our ills; and, most importantly, it is a form of prayer, it tries to hear what God is saying inside the outer events of our lives.

Not everything can be fixed or cured, but it should be named properly.

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

**NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:**

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

**GRACE:**

Grace begets gratitude, which, in turn, widens our hearts toward greater goodness and love.

—Diana Butler Bass