

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A New Serenity Prayer ~

God,
grant me the serenity
to accept the people
I cannot change,
which is pretty much everyone,
since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not the last time I checked.

And while you're at it, God,
please give me the courage
to change what I need to change
about myself,
which is frankly a lot,
since, once again, I'm not you,
which means I'm not perfect.

It's better for me
to focus on changing myself
than to worry about changing other people,
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,
I can't change anyway.

Finally, give me the wisdom
to just shut up
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter
than everyone else in the room,
that no one knows what they're talking about
except me,
or that I alone
have all the answers.

Basically, God,
grant me the wisdom
to remember
that I'm not you.
Amen.

—Father James Martin, S.J.

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.

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

WELCOME TO “ORDINARY TIME”:

Because the term ordinary in English most often means something that’s not special or distinctive, many people think that Ordinary Time refers to parts of the calendar of the Catholic Church that are unimportant. Even though the season of Ordinary Time makes up most of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, the fact that Ordinary Time refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons — Christmas and Easter — reinforces this impression. Yet Ordinary Time is far from unimportant or uninteresting.

Ordinary Time is called “ordinary” not because it is common, but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. The Latin word “ordinalis” which refers to ordered numbers in a series. Thus, the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time in fact represent the ordered life of the Church — the period in which we live our lives neither in feasting — as in the Christmas and Easter seasons — or in more severe penance — as in Advent and Lent. Ordinary Time is the part of the year in which Christ, the Lamb of God, walks among us and transforms our lives. There’s nothing “ordinary” about that!

**2022 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:**

If you would like a copy of your 2022 Contributions to Our Lady Chapel, please call the chapel office [440-473-3560] and we will be glad to send it out to you. Since many have their own records and do not need to receive this statement, we have found that this is much more economical for us — as good stewards, we are trying to cut postage expenses from a mass mailing. Let us know if you need the statement sent to you and we will be glad to get it to you. Thanks for your understanding.

**FAITH EDUCATION:**

Faith Education meets next on Sunday, January 22nd and then again on Sunday, January 29th at 8:45 AM. There will be no class on Sunday, January 15 due to the school being closed for the Martin Luther King holiday. 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.

**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:**

The rabbi asked his students: “How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?” One student says: “When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?” “No” says the rabbi. “Is it when one can distinguish between a g tree and a grapevine?” “No” says the rabbi. “Please tell us the answer, then,” say the students. The wise teacher says, “when you can look into the face of another human being, and you have enough light in you to recognize your brother or your sister. Until then it is night, and darkness is still with us.”

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For David Martin, who is recovering from triple Bypass Surgery
- For Bill McGinley, father of Chief Academic Officer, Elizabeth Edmondson, and grandfather of Mollie [‘21] and Abby [‘23] Edmondson, who is hospitalized with a serious infection
- For Brother Walter Gluhm, C,S,C, who is seriously ill.
- For Chuck Shade, father of Loren Shade, grandfather of Michael, Madeline, and Charles Shade, who is in rehab following injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Rick DeBacco [‘99], brother of Michelle DeBacco Chiacchiarri [‘96], uncle of Aurelia [‘28], and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiarri, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatitis.
- For Sally Smith, who was injured in a fall.
- For Brother Walter Gluhm, C.S.C., who is under to care of hospice.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Elaine Wiley, sister of Father John [anniversary]
- For Susan Mendolera, mother of Chuck Mendolera [‘93]
- For Sister Elizabeth Loughran, C.S.C.
- For Dale Jakab, assistant principal at Benedictine HS.
- For Michael Farinacci, uncle of Mark Chiacchiarri [‘94], great uncle of Aurelia [‘28] and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiarri
- For Steve Ciuni, father of Joe Ciuni [‘77], grandfather of Joe [‘03], Jane [‘04], Thomas [‘06], and Michael [‘08] Ciuni, and grandfather of Ryan [‘07], Robert [‘12], Joseph [‘14], Vince Catanese [‘19].
- For James Hubman [‘58], brother of Donald Hubman [‘55]
- For Lawrence Wynn, Sr., father of Strength and Conditioning Coach, Lawrence Wynn, Jr.
- For Peter Mattera, cousin of Father Joe Sideras, C.S.C.
- For Mark Lechner [‘70]
- For Steve Adams, nephew of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C.
- For Ellen Henley, mother of Henry Verbsky [‘85]

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 a person who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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.

RUN THE RACE:

Humanly, we are all inclined to seek greatness, but it is a gift to know how to truly find it — to know how to find greatness in the littleness that God loves. For the Lord is encountered like this: in humility, in silence, in adoration, in the smallest and in the poor.

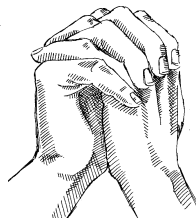
—Pope Francis

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Gary Russell , who is seriously ill with heart issues.
- For Kim Clark, who is undergoing treatment for an aggressive form of cancer.
- For James Routhier, husband of Grace O'Rourke Routhier ['08], who is recovering from brain surgery.
- For Beverly Jacklitch, mother of Kitchen Associate, Susan Jacklitch, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Paula Smith, mother of Tyler ['10] and Alec ['13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jacqueline Schmidt, ['13], Lower School toddler instructor, who is recovering from foot surgery.
- For Findley Stay, husband of former Gilmour Instructor, Emily Stay, father of Allen Stay ['87], who is undergoing treatment for a serious blood disorder.
- For Andy Andino, Sr., father of Music Director, Andy Andino, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jill Shemory, mother of Adam ['08], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Ethel Nagy, mother of Lazlo Nagy, grandmother of Rich ['16] and Josh Nagy, who is seriously ill.
- For Carol Lowen, mother of Denise Shade, grandmother of Madeline, Michael, and Charles Shade, who is undergoing treatment for Breast Cancer.
- For Sue Elliott, who is critically ill with complications of Parkinson's Disease.
- For Cameron Monesmith, who is recovering from Brain surgery
- For Baylea O'Brian, friend of former Gilmour Teacher, Erin Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma
- 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 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 recovering from cancer surgery.
- For Susan Plavcan, sister-in-law of Linda McGraw, 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 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 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 critically ill as a result of 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 — WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, January 18th 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: How Jesus unfolds the mystery of "God with us"

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, January 15: 2 nd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 16:	Check with Office for time
Tuesday, January 17: St. Anthony	Check with Office for time
Wednesday, January 18:	Check with Office for time
Thursday, January 19:	Check with Office for time
Friday, January 20:	Check with Office for time
Saturday, January 21: 3 rd Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, January 22: 3 rd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

A PRAYER:

O Lord, how hard it is to accept your way. You come to me as a small, powerless child born away from home. You live for me as a stranger in your own land. You die for me as a criminal outside the walls of the city, rejected by your own people, misunderstood by your friends, and feeling abandoned by your God.

As I reflect upon your birth, I am trying to feel loved, accepted, and at home in this world, and I am trying to overcome the feelings of alienation and separation that continue to assail me. But I wonder now if my deep sense of homelessness does not bring me closer to you than my occasional feelings of belonging. Where do I truly celebrate your birth — in a cozy home or in an unfamiliar house, among welcoming friends or among unknown strangers, with feelings of well-being or with feelings of loneliness?

I do not have to run away from those experiences that are closest to yours. Just as you do not belong to this world, so I do not belong to this world. Every time I feel this way I have an occasion to be grateful and to embrace you better and taste more fully your joy and peace.

Come, Lord Jesus, and be with me where I feel poorest. I trust that this is the place where you will find your manger and bring your light. Amen.

—Henri Nouwen

A REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

For most people “in the pew”, the term, “Ordinary Time”, is confusing. Not long ago, we enjoyed the season of Advent — a season of longing, desiring, waiting. We listened to the beautiful prose and poetry of Isaiah taken from Hebrew scripture. Isaiah painted with elegant expression what was to come — overriding peace, joy and prosperity for all. Spending time in silence and quiet during those days allowed for deeper appreciation of the season and a fuller awareness of our mutual desires — mine and Gods.

Advent is followed by Christmas — a season of joy. The birth of the infant Jesus is the incarnation of Godself and the incarnation of the fullness of Joy and Light. Following the promises of Isaiah, comes the fulfillment of Isaiah’s words — the Kingdom of God. The birth of Jesus changes everything! There is no going back to “normal” or “ordinary”. There is no ordinary. Add a child, an infant, in any scenario and everything and everyone changes — for better or worse. No going back to what once was.

And so in Ordinary Time we are invited to heed God’s invitation to move forward — to move into. The prophet, Isaiah, tells us what this is all about: “it is too little for you to be my servant. I will make you a light to the nations” [Isaiah 49:1-6] — we are not servants, but carriers of Christ’s light into the world. We are meant to be more, to do more. This is all about relationship — we are called to grow, to become!

As during Advent/Christmas season, we hear once again from the prophet Isaiah who is singing out inspired words to his people in captivity. Israel is quite dispirited and far from the glory it enjoyed back in its native and covenanted land. The prophet speaks to their hearts and memories. Isaiah is not speaking boastfully of himself, but of the whole people of Israel who are formed to be God’s “Servant”. By his personal call from God, Isaiah is reminding Israel that they too are God’s people and meant to reveal God’s glory, and that glory will be revealed in the strength of their faith.

God is not done with the re-creation of the world; what was begun in Israel is meant to spread to the entire world. Salvation or light will come to the ends of the earth through Israel’s being a Servant of God; and the Servant, Jesus, will extend God’s saving love, beginning in Israel. The Epiphany that we just celebrated last week will continue. The Messiah — the Light, the Word — is given to Israel, and through Israel will bring the world to the kingdom of God.

John’s Gospel recalls John the Baptist’s narrative of the life of Jesus [John 1:29-34]. Right from the beginning, John is pictured as stating most clearly that he, himself, is not the Christ — he is only a witness to Christ, the one who is to point out the Christ. John testifies and declares that Jesus is the “lamb of God Who will take away the sins of the world”; Jesus is the Son of God”.

Each person who comes to believe in Jesus will come to identify Jesus in similar words. The entire Gospel of John is a presentation or introduction for anybody wishing to enter the Way, by hearing the Truth and experiencing the Life. In a sense, John is the first convert. He is baptizing, but according to the ritual traditions of Israel. John testifies that Jesus will be the One to cleanse and then enliven or bring into community those whom He will baptize both with water and the Holy Spirit. John tells us that he himself has seen the Spirit descend upon Jesus and He turns all those who seek life to see Jesus and believe — this is the whole purpose of our witness also.

This year, we will be spending most of the Ordinary Time watching Jesus through the eyes of Matthew. Jesus does much teaching in Matthew’s Gospel. In John’s Gospel, Jesus presents Himself as the One who takes away the sins of the world. We hear the Baptist call Jesus the “lamb”. This “lamb” will be sacrificed like the lamb of the Passover. He will be poured out for the sins of all. For John, Jesus teaches by His doings and His “signs” which reveal God’s saving love. It is easier for us to let Jesus be

**SET APART TO BE SOMETHING SPECIAL:**

I presume Scripture scholars didn’t choose our liturgical readings for any given week. If they did, there’s no way the most important verse of Isaiah’s experience would have been left out. Isaiah’s reading for this 2nd Week in Ordinary time comes from the second “Servant Song” [49:1-6], and it revolves around his belief that he’s totally failed as the Lord’s prophet. Immediately after God assures him: “You are my servant through whom I show my glory,” Isaiah shakes his head and says: “I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength.” In other words: “How could I have shown your glory when I screwed up the only ministry you gave me?” There’s no deeper mystery in all of Scripture. God’s actually held in higher esteem when we fail than when we succeed.

Not only that, but our failures lead God to expand our God-given work — not decrease it. “It is too little,” God tells the prophet, “for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Instead of just proclaiming God’s word to Jews, now Isaiah will proclaim it to every person on the face of this planet.

Though as Christians we believe that the risen Jesus shares his/her ministry with every disciple, none of us can be certain about the limits of that ministry. In some sense, that ministry is always in flux — it never stays the same. Not only Isaiah, but also Paul of Tarsus provides us with an example of a mobile ministry.

Originally biblical followers of Jesus were divided into three categories. A “disciple” was anyone committed to carrying out Jesus’ message and lifestyle. An “apostle,” is a disciple called to go out on a special, specific ministry — like the “72” in the Synoptic gospels. The “twelve,” a group of apostles who frequently accompany the historical Jesus on his itinerant preaching trips. Membership in the twelve could change, but always had to be twelve to symbolize Israel’s twelve tribes — among other things, an outward sign Jesus was directing his reform to all Jews, not just to a couple of tribes. Sadly, Luke is the one who confuses the terminology by employing the now-familiar phrase the “twelve apostles.”

Paul wrote his letter to the Church at Corinth more than 25 years before Luke wrote his gospel. So when in the letter Paul calls himself “an apostle of Christ Jesus”, we presume that he’s simply saying the risen Jesus set him aside for a special ministry — not that he’s one of the twelve. And because biblical “call narratives” were composed long after the original event, we also presume the details of that ministry weren’t outlined the instant he felt called. That his ministry would eventually revolve around evangelizing non-Jews probably didn’t occur to him until long after he sensed he had an apostolic call. As we see in Acts, he first tried to proclaim the faith to Jews in synagogues, failed and only then turned to Gentiles [see Acts 18].

Parallel things can be said about John the Baptizer. It’s one thing for Matthew — a Christian author writing almost 50 years after John’s martyrdom — to label this wilderness prophet Jesus’ precursor; it’s a totally other thing to surface what the historical John thought of himself and his failed ministry. Today the vast majority of scholars agree the coming of Jesus as such played no part in his preaching.

All these biblical failures force each of us to examine our own lives and the callings we’ve received. Have we ignored other callings from the risen Jesus simply because we somehow screwed up past ones?

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

REMEMBER:

Through me course wide rivers and in me rise tall mountains. And beyond the thickets of my agitation and confusion there stretch the wide plains of my peace and surrender. All landscapes are within me. And there is room for everything.



—Etty Hillesum

a conscious forerunner to the Christ. Never claiming to be a messiah, he preached to prepare the way, probably never guessing how different Jesus' preaching would be from his own.

Surprisingly, the Baptist's essential characteristic — at least as he appears in the Gospel of John — is his humility. The rousing prophet, the desert ascetic who invented the baptismal ritual that continues to our own day, proclaimed that the unknown one to come after him ranked ahead of him. Although John's Gospel avoids admitting that Jesus submitted to baptism, the Baptist testifies that he saw the Spirit come down upon Jesus at the moment the other Gospels describe as the baptism.

Although he was not a disciple, John the Baptist gets a more detailed and personal description than the Gospels give any other character except Jesus himself. Historically, John was probably as well-known as Jesus and his following rivaled that of Jesus. But, with all that John accomplished, his greatest Gospel witness came through his saying that he was not "the one." The picture we get of John is that he not only had enough faith to believe in his own unique and crucial vocation, but enough to see beyond his own call, talents and insights.

If there were one phrase that could sum up John's essential message, it might be our Muslim friends' cry, "Allahu Akbar" — "God is greater". With all his accomplishments, with everything he saw around him — be it the might of Rome or the uncountable stars in the sky — John lived and breathed an attitude of "Allahu Akbar."

That is the attitude that allowed John to recognize Jesus. With a profound grasp of his own prophetic vocation, John recognized something greater in Jesus — something that reflected more of God and more of God's promised future. Thus, John uttered those mystery-filled words we repeat in each Eucharist: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". The grace that impelled John in his vocation led him to recognize the grace that filled Jesus.

What did John mean by calling Jesus: "Lamb of God" [John 1:19-24]? Was he referring to the lamb that replaced Isaac in Abraham's sacrifice? The lamb of Exodus whose blood saved the people from destruction? The lamb of atonement sacrifice that restored the people's broken relationship with God? To the apocalyptic lamb whose death brought life? The servant of God who went to death like a lamb to the slaughter?

The simplest answer to the question is: John saw Jesus and could only say: "Allahu Akbar."

The Gospels tell us about John so we may learn from him and to see ourselves in him. Like John, we have been called from birth. The mystery of our lives is that we are created in the divine image and called to become images of the divine. That's what Paul means when he says we have been sanctified and are called to be holy. John could recognize Jesus and say: "Allahu Akbar" because he too shared the divine life — like knew like. We too know our moments of crying out "Allahu Akbar" because what we see in others and in creation reminds us of both God's unfathomable greatness and God's intimate love — a love that dwells in us as well.

John comes to us today inviting us into his own attitude of humble wonderment. First, listening to Isaiah like he did, we remember that we are created in the divine image and that sharing divine life is the reason for our being. Then, lest we ever settle for less or even just settle, John shows us how to open ourselves to the wonder of the God who is greater than we can imagine.

As we begin "Ordinary Time," John invites us to learn over and over to recognize Christ for who he is and what he offers. Then we too will cry out: "Allahu Akbar" in any and every language we speak.

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



our Teacher and we the learners. It is more difficult and yet more important, for us to let Jesus be our Savior. It is easier to admit that we do not know that we need to know. It is far more humbling to admit that we are in need of being saved from spiritual death to live toward life eternal.

The Baptist says to his followers: "Look, see, take in, over there is the Savior; I am His advertising agent." This is the beginning of how John's gospel is really a kind of introductory or initiating catechism. The Gospel invites its readers to "look, see, follow" and when you have seen, then as with Peter at the end of the Gospel, you will want to follow Jesus into the heart of the Christian Way or community. For John it is all about seeing the signs, the gestures, the doings of Jesus, and our being attracted by those signs to be a member of Christ's Way, Truth, and Life.

So, the question becomes: What does this have to do with me? I desire to listen more closely for the Spirit and to trust; to respond clearly and honestly: "Here I am Lord" [see Psalm 40]; to act in faith. I desire not to be who I once was, but to recognize the presence of the Spirit in me, with me, in others, in nature and in all expressions of life — even if it is hard to swallow. Following the seasons of Advent and Christmas, and Lent and Easter we are meant to appreciate, enjoy and to live into the graces and gifts of those seasons. This is not an Ordinary Time — it is an Extra-Ordinary Time!

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

WHO DO YOU NEED TO CARRY YOU?

There's a story in Mark's Gospel where 4 men carry a paralytic to Jesus, but are unable to get near to Jesus because of the crowd. So, they opened up the roof above him [see Mark 2:3-4]. That led me to reflect on an occurrence that took place in my life not too long ago.

"I know you can't pray right now, so I'm praying in your place." The text from my best friend came through as I coaxed my cheek off the cool tile floor. I wiped the remaining vomit from the corner of my mouth — was it the grief or the early pregnancy? — and responded: "Thanks." Then I laid back down near the toilet, continuing to not pray.

Mark's Gospel is profound. Often, I sense the eagerness of the paralytic — the hope he must have had in meeting Jesus, the gratitude he felt toward his persistent friends, the deep desire to be healed. But sometimes I imagine he felt the opposite. What if he did not want to go see the Teacher that day? What if he had ceased to hope? What if he was resigned to his suffering?

And what if his friends brought him to Jesus anyway?

During that particularly intense season of suffering in my life, I was overwhelmed by "the crowds" of distraction, disappointment, and despair. I had to humbly rely on my community to do the heavy lifting to the roof and the lowering before the Healer. I often quipped that I couldn't leave Jesus because the people in my life kept dragging me back to Him. Thank God for them.

There will be challenges in our lives that are crushing. But we must not lose hope. Jesus continuously calls us to Himself — ready to receive us at our weakest. He promises us forgiveness and healing that this world cannot provide. And if you can't bring yourself to His feet, ask your friends to carry you there. After all, this is what we do every time we intercede for one another.

Who in your life can you pray for today? Think about it; name them; and do it. Drag them to the Lord and don't stop.

—taken from the writings of Olivia Spears, which appears on the internet in *Blessed is She*

READY YOURSELF FOR CHANGE:

Ready yourself to be steadfast in night and darkness. Change the night into day by keeping your sights set on the Savior, who is the final victor — the first and the last. With Jesus, daylight always returns. Consider him who endured much more than you ever will. And when you know of someone else who is especially under attack, assure them of your intercession.

—Johann Christoph Blumhardt

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD:

John the Baptist introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29-34]. It is a most unusual description. A lamb suggests gentleness. It suggests that Jesus will not condemn us when we sin, but will gently encourage us to get up again. We see this later in John's Gospels; he writes: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" [John 3:17]. On another occasion, Jesus said to a woman brought to him by the Pharisees: "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore" [John 8:11]. And finally, later again in the Gospel, Jesus said to his disciples: "I did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world" [John 12:47].

A lamb suggests gentleness. Jesus does not lock people into their past; rather he frees them to live a new life in union with him. We see many men and women in the Gospels whose lives were turned around after meeting Jesus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector known for defrauding, but Jesus accepted hospitality in his house, and afterwards Zacchaeus was completely changed Luke 19:1-10]. One of the twelve apostles, Matthew — also called Levi — had previously been a tax collector, and we can assume he also had been suspected of fraud before he met Jesus [Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-28]. Peter denied Jesus three times in the courtyard of the high priest, but three times by the Sea of Galilee Jesus asked him if he loved him and asked him to feed his sheep [see John 21]. The woman who entered the house of Simon the Pharisee, while Jesus was having dinner there, showed hospitality to Jesus — which the Pharisee as host should have shown to Jesus but neglected to do so. Jesus defended her and said: "her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love" [Luke 7:47]. In the Gospels, we truly see Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

When John the Baptist said Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, he was asking his contemporaries to think in a new way, because for them it would have been unthinkable to imagine that Jesus could forgive sins. When Jesus forgave the paralytic man his sins, the scribes complained and said: "Who but God alone can forgive sins?" [Mark 2:7]. Until then, when someone wanted his sins forgiven, he went to the temple and the priests offered an animal to God in sacrifice on his behalf.

On Yom Kippur every year — the Day of Atonement — a bull and two goats were offered in sacrifice to God by the high priest in the temple to forgive sins [see Levi 16]. Every morning and evening all year round, a lamb was sacrificed in the temple to God in atonement for sin, and all Jews contributed to the payment of that sacrifice in a once yearly collection about a month before Passover [see Exodus 30:14-16; Matthew 17:24]. So, when John the Baptist described Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, he was describing Jesus in terms that the people of Jesus' time would understand; but at the same time, John was asking them to think of God's forgiveness in a new way. Lambs no longer had to be offered in sacrifice for sins after Jesus became the lamb offered in sacrifice for our sins on the cross. His one sacrifice of himself for us for all time replaced all the Old Covenant sacrifices every day. In every Mass, we are spiritually present at Calvary and receive the graces of Jesus' sacrifice. We also receive God's forgiveness every time we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Jesus is the gentle lamb always waiting for us, always waiting to lift us up again after we fall down. The prophet, Isaiah, talked about Jesus when he promised that Israel would become the light to all nations [Isaiah 49:1-6]. Jesus is always waiting to lead us into his light out of whatever darkness we are in. Jesus wants the best for you, and the best for you is his light — not darkness. Let no prejudice of any kind prevent us from going to Jesus for his forgiveness, mercy, and healing. He is the gentle lamb who offered himself in sacrifice for us once for all time, and he is always ready to make us new and take away our sins.

—taken from the writings of Father Tommy Lane, which appear on the internet



heartaches, illnesses, losses, demands, and seemingly perpetual interruptions that beset our lives, though perhaps not normally recognized as "interesting times," are indeed the antithesis of routine, regularity, domesticity, predictability, and ordinariness. And they deprive us of "ordinary time."

The church challenges us to be attentive to the various seasons of the year — Advent, Lent, Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. Today, I submit, it needs to challenge us particularly to be attentive to "ordinary time."

Our failure to be attentive here is perhaps our greatest liturgical shortcoming.

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

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON GOD?

This is the seeming anomaly: they're good people, people whose lives radiate a basic — and sometimes very generous degree — of honesty, generosity, goodness, warmth, and healthy concern for others. Moreover, they are often robust and witty, the ones you want to be next to at the dinner table, even as they seem to be living and dying merely as devoted children of this earth, not much given to abstraction or religion. A good family gathering, a win by the home team, a good meal or drink with a friend, and a healthy day spent working, are contemplation enough. Their default consciousness focuses on the things of this world, its joys, and its sorrows.

By their fruits you will know them! Jesus said that and it must be our criterion here: If people are living inside an honesty, generosity, goodness, warmth, health, solicitousness, intelligence, and wit that is life-giving, can they be much out of harmony with God?

Perhaps God is mature enough to not ask for, or want, our conscious attention most of the time. Perhaps God wants us to enjoy our time here, to enjoy the experience of love and friendship, of family and friends, of eating and drinking, and of at least occasionally seeing our favorite teams win a championship. Perhaps God wants us, in the famed words of Yogi Berra, to sometimes just to sit back and enjoy the game!

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**

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, January 7]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 495.00

Offerings-----[Sunday, January 8]----- \$ 107.00

GOD IS GREATER:

Have you ever glimpsed pure goodness in another person? Sometimes we see it as we gaze on a baby — goodness, innocence and seemingly limitless potential. On rarer occasions, we get caught up in a similar perception of a young person or an adult. Some people seem to exude peace and integrity. They are a blessing to be around. That must be what John the Baptist perceived in Jesus: a person whose very being illustrated holiness.

Who was John that he could recognize Jesus for who he was? According to Luke, John was a new Isaac — a son of the promise born to an aged couple [see Genesis 17]. The Scripture Readings for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time suggest that John be identified with the servant Isaiah described — called from the time of his conception to be a light to his people [Isaiah 49:1-6]. All the Gospels depict John as

ORDINARY TIME:

In a marvelous little book entitled, *The Music of Silence*, David Steindl-Rast highlights how each hour of the day has its own special light and its own particular mood, and how we are more attentive to the present moment when we recognize and honor these “special angels” lurking inside each hour. He’s right. Every hour of the day and every season of the year have something special to give us, but often times we cannot make ourselves present to meet that gift.

We grasp this more easily for special seasons of the year. Even though we are sometimes unable to be very attentive to a season like Christmas or Easter because of various pressures and distractions, we know that these seasons are special and that there are “angels” inside them that are asking to be met. We know what it means when someone says: “This year I was just too tired and pressured to get into the Christmas spirit. I just missed Christmas this year!”

And this isn’t true just for special seasons like Christmas and Easter. It’s true too — perhaps especially true — for the season we call Ordinary Time. Each year the church calendar sets aside more than thirty weeks for what it calls “Ordinary Time” — a season within which we are supposed to meet the angels of routine, regularity, domesticity, predictability, and ordinariness. Like seasons of high feast, this season too is meant to bring a special richness into our lives.

But it’s easy to miss that season and its intent — both of them. The term “Ordinary Time” sounds bland to us — even as we unconsciously long for precisely what it is meant to bring. We have precious little “ordinary time” in our lives.

As our lives grow more pressured, more tired, and more restless, perhaps more than anything else we long for ordinary time, quiet, routine, solitude, and space away from the hectic pace of life. For many of us the very expression, “ordinary time,” draws forth a sigh along with the question: “What’s that? When did I last have ‘ordinary time’ in my life?” For many of us “ordinary time” means mostly hurry and pressure — “the rat race,” “the treadmill.”

Many things in our lives conspire against “ordinary time” — not just the busyness that robs us of leisure, but also the heartaches, the obsessions, the loss of health, or the other interruptions to the ordinary that make a mockery of normal routine and rhythm and rob us of even the sense of “ordinary time.” That’s the bane of adulthood.

Many of us, I suspect, remember the opposite as being true for us when we were children. I recall as a child often being bored. I longed almost always for a distraction, for someone to visit our home, for special seasons to celebrate — birthdays, Christmas, New Year’s, Easter — for most anything to shake up the normal routine of “ordinary time.” But that’s because time moves so slowly for a child. When you’re seven years old, one year constitutes one-seventh of your life. That’s a long time. In mid-life and beyond, one year is a tiny fraction of your life and so time speeds up — so much so in fact that, at a point, you also sometimes begin to long for special occasions to be over with, for visitors to go home, and for distractions to disappear so that you can return to a more ordinary rhythm in your life. Routine might be boring, but we sleep a lot better when our lives are being visited by the angels of routine and the ordinary.

Today there’s a rich literature in both secular and religious circles that speaks of the difficulties of being attentive to the present moment — of meeting, as Richard Rohr puts it, “the naked now,” or what David Steindl-Rast calls, “the angels of the hour.” The literature varies greatly in content and intent, but it agrees on one point: it’s extremely difficult to be attentive to the present moment, to be truly inside the present. It’s not easy to live inside “ordinary time.”

There’s a Chinese expression that functions both as a blessing and a curse. You make this wish for someone: may you live in interesting times! As children, had someone wished that on us it would have meant a blessing; our lives then were replete with routine and the ordinary. For a child time moves slowly. Most children have enough of ordinary time.

However, as adults, for most of us, that wish is probably more curse than blessing — the pressures,

**BEHOLD THE TRUE LAMB:**

During this time of the National Eucharistic Revival, the faithful should take every opportunity to reflect on the Real and True Presence of Jesus. As John the Baptist urges, don’t miss the Messiah in your midst — “Behold the Lamb of God” [John 1:29-34]. For us living in this particular age, the best way to behold the Lamb is to gaze upon Him in the Blessed Sacrament — the Eucharist — or to encounter His presence — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — in the Mass or Eucharistic Adoration.

A lamb is central and absolutely crucial to the Passover [see Exodus 12: 1–13]. Hearing John the Baptist refer to Jesus as a lamb would have evoked powerful connections for the Jewish people — particularly the lamb’s role in their salvation. While it would take years for the fulfillment to take place upon the Cross, at that moment, with those powerful words, John testified to Jesus’ true identity — the spotless victim whose blood would redeem the world. As John baptizes the Lord and recognizes this is the one for whom he had been preparing the way, these prophetic words affirm the redemptive sacrifice Christ would make. The Lamb, whose Precious Blood would do far more than the blood put on the doorposts and the lintel at the first Passover in Egypt. This Lamb would open heaven and offer salvation from the plague of eternal death.

John testifies to Jesus as the Messiah — the Anointed One, the Christ — as he “saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” [Mark 1:10-11]. How does Jesus refer this truth to you in your daily life? How do you witness and testify, as to prepare the way, for others to come to know and believe?

Jesus is the Lamb born to take away the sins of the world. Both in Baptism, and then again throughout our life, the mercy that Jesus the Lamb extends to us again and again is overwhelming. “The sin of the world” also refers to the consequences of our personal sins, and this “expression can also refer to the negative influence exerted on people by communal situations and social structures that are the fruit of men’s sins” [Catholic Catechism, #408]. Many wrongly believe their sin affects only themselves, but as the Mystical Body of Christ, our actions, words, and, yes, our sins ripple throughout the entire Church.

Pope St. John Paul II explained it this way: “By virtue of a human solidarity which is as mysterious and intangible as it is real and concrete, each individual’s sin in some way affects others. There is no sin, not even the most intimate and secret one, the most strictly individual one, that exclusively concerns the person committing it. With greater or lesser harm, every sin has repercussions on the ecclesial body and the whole human family. In this sense every sin can be considered a social sin.”

In this new year, make resolutions to behold the Lamb with more time in Adoration, or arrive early to Mass so you can pray and prepare your heart to receive the Eucharist. Also, as you add new events and appointments to your calendar, include regular participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This unselfish act for the good of the entire Church is the best way to ensure the Spirit of the Lord remains with you.

—taken from the writings of Alison Gringas, 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.



WORSHIP AND THE LAMB OF GOD:

If you pay attention to John's Gospel for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time, you are going to notice a line that is used in another place in our liturgy. John the Baptist speaks it: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" [John 1:29-34]. These are the very words which are said at every mass by the presider as he invites the assembly to communion.

If I were to ask you to guess in which of these two places did this saying first occur, you would probably guess the Gospel of John. It is easy to imagine that John wrote it into his Gospel and later it was taken from the Scriptures and made a part of our liturgy. But there are serious reasons to suppose that the exact opposite is true. You see, the Gospel of John was written at the end of the first century and by that time, Christians had been celebrating liturgy for many decades. Therefore, it is actually more likely that John chose to include this saying within his Gospel because his community had been using it in its liturgy for many years. Before there was the Bible, before there was the New Testament, there was a community — a church — which gathered for prayer. Before Christians could find the presence of Christ in the written word of the Scriptures, they found the presence of Christ as they gathered together to worship. This primacy of worship is a good topic for us to consider as we begin this New Year and as we return to Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Year.

Why is it so important for us to gather in worship? Or to put this on a more personal level, why is it that you come regularly here to share this Eucharist? Do you come out of obligation because you will feel guilty if you do not come? Do you come out of habit because you have been conditioned to do so? Those reasons will get you here, but they are not the best reasons. The fundamental reason we gather together as we do each weekend is because Christ is here. Christ has promised to be here. He has told us that where two or three are gathered in his name, there he is in the midst of them. He has commanded us to share this meal in memory of Him. So when the community gathers, Christ is present. And the community gathers in order that they might encounter the Risen Christ.



Now when I say this, I am not saying that this is the only place that Christ is present. Christ is present in many places. Often when you talk to Catholics who do not come to church, they point this out to you. They will say, I do not go to church, but I find Christ in my prayer. I find Christ when I read the Bible at home. I find Christ as I walk out into nature. I find Christ as I serve other people. I find Christ every weekend on the 18th tee. I will not argue with any of those statements. Christ is found in all of these places. However, the primary place where Christ has promised to be present is here — when we gather together to worship. From the beginning of Christianity, from the evening of the Resurrection, the community gathered, and when the community gathered, Christians encountered the Risen Christ.

So what does this mean for all of us? It means that we should come here every weekend expecting to meet Christ. We should not come out of obligation or habit but out of faith and anticipation, believing that Christ is here and we will encounter Him. It might be in a word, a line that you hear from the Scriptures being proclaimed. It might be from a point in the homily. It could be as you sing the acclamations during the Eucharistic Prayer or as you come forward to receive the real presence of Christ, the Body and Blood of our Savior. It might be as you meet other members of the community who you know or see faith in the face of a stranger. It might be in the music, it might be in the silence. Wherever it is, Christ is here, and we should come expecting to meet Him. The words of John the Baptist should ring in our ears and in our hearts, reminding us why we gather: "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Christ is Savior! Christ is here! Don't miss Him!

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

For some saints, the call to holiness demanded that they totally change the way they were living — they give everything away in order to be more committed to God. Some saints would begin religious communities to follow a life in which they depend upon others for their well-being. Some saints were fearless in taking risks to their very lives by ministering to those with contagious disease. The reckless abandon continues to inspire us.

For all the saints, Jesus' way is the way of Truth. We all want to have wonderful, full lives. We want this for ourselves and for our children. How do we get there? How do we do this? How can we get the most out of life? How can we live life to its fullest? We can live full and beautiful lives by committing ourselves to God, by abandoning ourselves to His Truth. This is how we respond to the call to be holy. There He is. There is the Lamb of God. He is there getting baptized by John. There He is, accepting the way that would lead to the cross. There He is calling us to join Him and sacrifice ourselves for others. John said that he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus. The Spirit has descended upon us too — calling us to holiness, calling us to trust in God, calling us to be light for the world.

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

STRIVING FOR HOLINESS — NOT PERFECTION:

Many people seem to believe that creating a community is a matter of simply gathering together under the same roof a few people who get on reasonably well together or committed to the same ideal. The result can be disastrous! I have been living in some form of community since I was a sophomore in college. Not only did I truly believe that community was formed by just gathering a group of people together, but I also had the crazy notion that all those who follow Christ and live in community were in some sort of perfect world — especially, when I looked at religious orders, where I didn't think any worldly problems could arise. Even after hearing the gospel of Luke proclaim countless times how much the apostles quarreled — "An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest" [Luke 9:46] — I think I just ignored that part and thought they were always perfect in community.

While in training to be a LifeTeen Missionary, I was reminded of this unattainable expectation that I sometimes put on community. Don't get me wrong, living in community is great and it is definitely calling me to holiness, but one thing that it isn't — it is not perfect. It has always been a struggle for me to love others that I don't necessarily get along with in my life. But, if I do not love others as Christ did, do I really love Christ fully?

The Lord is calling me to truly dive into community by teaching me how to love others when I don't necessarily want to talk to — or even be around — different people in my community. Last year, I would just ignore a problem I had with someone and let it slowly build up over time. Well, that didn't really help the situation — it only made it worse — especially, when everything came full circle and a huge argument ensued that could have been avoided if I hadn't tried to bottle it up. So, right now, I am learning to express what I am feeling and how to love others — because, honestly, if I don't know how to do that, I don't really know the Lord as well as I think I do.

St. Paul wrote in his letter to the Church at Rome: "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law" [Romans 13:8-10].

So, one thing that I have to continue to remind myself about is that community isn't some Utopian place where everything is perfect and there are no struggles. On the contrary, community is definitely not easy and it doesn't just happen magically that everyone becomes best friends. One thing that is perfect is Heaven, and living in community is helping me get one step closer to the ultimate goal of getting there. Praise God that community is teaching me how to love others as Christ loves us and to die to myself, not out of spite, but with love.

—taken from the writings of Stephen Herrera, a LifeTeen missionary. 13



THERE HE IS; HERE WE ARE:

The Christmas Season ended last Monday with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The Scripture readings for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time follow immediately upon the Baptism of Jesus as John tells his disciples that this Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29-34]. He relates to them that after he baptized Jesus, he saw the Holy Spirit come upon the Lord. The prophet Isaiah also points to Jesus as the light to the nations of the world [Isaiah 49:1-6]. In Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth, he points out what following Jesus has done for us [1 Corinthians 1:1-3]. Imagine that instead of writing the Corinthians, Paul was writing to you and me.

The truth is that Paul was writing to us — through the Holy Spirit. “Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Gates Mills, to the Church that is in the Smith House, the _____ House [put in your name] — to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.” Paul is telling us that Jesus Christ came so we can be holy — set aside for God.

I have to tell you that I have never considered myself holy. A while back one of the children referred to me as “the holy guy”. I cringed. I am not holy — at least not in the way that the little one was referring. I think this child had “angelic” in mind. I am anything but that. I am sure that most of you also don't see yourselves as holy — and certainly not angelic! You might consider others that way, but not yourselves. But we have an obligation to strive to be holy. We can't think that we are not good enough and will never be good enough. Jesus Christ died on a cross to make us good enough. Paul says that we have been called to be holy. But what really is holiness — at least what did Paul mean by holy?

To be holy is to be set aside for God. Jesus came, suffered and died, and then rose again to give us His life and to set us aside for God. Christ died so I can be holy. He died so you also can be holy. Actually, by coming and sacrificing himself for us, he has made us holy. So, holiness is not something that we do, it is something that Jesus has done for us. He has set us aside for God. He has made us holy. But why are we called to holiness?

Isaiah the prophet points out that the Servant was called to be a light to the nations. We also are called to be a light to the nations. The world needs people to bring light to its darkness — it needs people who are going to put others before themselves. It needs people who are going to reach out to those pushed aside by society. The world needs to experience the presence of God in people who are committed to his Kingdom. The songwriter, Matt Maher sings: “I want to be holy, just like you.” How are we to do that? Well, Matt sings in his hymn *Just Like You*, that we need to have reckless abandonment to his truth. Reckless abandonment to the truth. At his baptism, Jesus publicly committed himself to the will of the Father. If this meant that he was to die to establish the Kingdom of God, well, so be it. Would this be easy? No. In the Garden of Olives Jesus sweat blood over what he would have to do. But He abandoned himself to the truth knowing that somehow the Father will conquer through him. All the saints did this. They all chose the Truth of God, abandoning their lives to whatever God was calling them to do. Some of the saints lost their physical lives.

The saints and martyrs in the early Church — and those right down through the ages up until today — abandoned themselves to God, declaring their Christianity openly, knowing that somehow God would conquer. We need to understand that saints throughout the ages had choices — they could have gone in the direction in their lives that would have protected themselves — they would not have died. But they all abandoned themselves to the Lord. And in doing this, they have become role models for all of us who are living our faith out in the 21st century.

**PLANTING YOUR FAITH:**

St. Paul begins most of his letters with a hymn of praise or greeting to the community. His letter to the Christian Community at Corinth is no exception. Corinth was a thriving seaport — one of the centers of Greek thought and commerce. Paul founded the church in Corinth around 51 AD on his second missionary journey; he actually lived there for about a year and a half. A few years later — while in Ephesus during his third missionary journey — Paul received word that various troubles had befallen the Corinthian community — including a divisive factionalism. Seeing himself as a father to the community Paul wrote his first letter to the Church at Corinth, instructing them in the fundamentals of their faith and encouraging them to overcome their divisions.

Following the common pattern of Greek letters, Paul first introduces himself as “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” Although he did not interact with Jesus during his public life, Paul did encounter the risen Christ, who commissioned him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, according to the “the will of God.” And through his mission among them, the church in Corinth became a community “sanctified in Christ” and “called to be holy.” Reminding the Corinthians that they are united with the larger community of “all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours” is important. Paul concludes his greeting: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The opening part of this letter to the Church at Corinth reminds us of the decisive role that Paul played in the spread of the Christian faith around the world. He found a way to implant the fundamental message of Jesus — a Jew who spoke Aramaic and generally confined his mission to the house of Israel — in the Gentile world where it grew organically. To take just one example, Paul took the kingdom language of Jesus, rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures, and transposed it into language about the life-giving Spirit unleashed by the death and resurrection of Christ. Like Paul we could think of ourselves as apostles sent by the Lord to implant the Gospel message in our own setting. For example, a mother transforms her home into a domestic church; a manager creates a worksite which encourages employees to develop their talents; a teacher makes the classroom a fun place to learn; a coach creates an environment where athletes learn sportsmanship; a domestic judge runs a courtroom which favors reform and reconciliation; and a pastor develops a parish which fosters spiritual growth.

How can you plant your faith in your sphere of influence?

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

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JANUARY 21st:

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



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

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

WHO ARE YOU?

The Liturgical Season of Ordinary Time begins with a call to know who you are. That being said, many people feel very strongly that they know exactly who they are. But do you? We know the particulars of our lives, the nuances of our personalities, our successes, our weaknesses, and our personal histories. These traits define us and assist us in presenting ourselves to the world and interacting with others. But is this the end of the story? Who we really are is rooted in something we all share — baptism.

We have been baptized as servants and disciples of Jesus Christ. We share an intimate and unique relationship with our Father — a relationship that Jesus himself had. By being baptized, we have decided to put on Christ and be a light to the world. St. Paul tells us that his letter is intended for “you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy” [1 Corinthians 1:1-3]. Therefore, in addition to all the other adjectives used to describe us, all of them fall under the one umbrella — I am a baptized servant of Jesus Christ. The scripture readings for this 2nd week in Ordinary Time show us that everyone has a mission to accomplish — Israel is God’s servant; Paul is an apostle, witness, and guide to the early church communities; John the Baptist points the way to the Lamb of God; and Jesus, who is the Lamb of God, is the Son of God. If everyone has a mission to accomplish, what is your mission?

St. Paul directs us to holiness. But what is this holiness of which he speaks? What does holiness look like? While some of that answer is found in the word “piety” and growing in our relationship with God, it is really much more than this. Holiness is really wholeness and, in terms of discipleship, means carrying on the mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Gospel. Our baptism is far more than just an attempt to secure a place in heaven and meriting eternal salvation. It is all about living that same radical lifestyle that the One we seek to emulate lived himself.

This is no easy business and is also very risky. If we take who we are seriously, then we must stand in opposition to some popular philosophical and political views that attempt to pull us in a direction away from who we are and who we chose to be! We have a pope who embodies what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. He has spoken on numerous occasions about the need for mercy, a nonjudgmental attitude, equity for the poor, the dignity of the immigrant, an economic system that puts individual at the center not individual gain, an end to corruption, a loving concern for our environment, and a church that acts in service of all of God’s people.

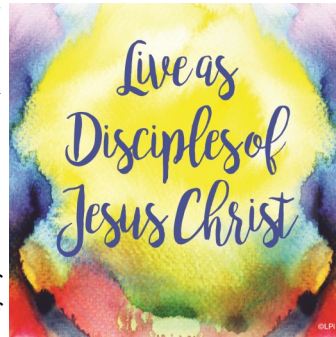
These are not always popular positions to hold, but they are positions rooted in the Gospel. They are positions and ideologies that speak of who we are as baptized disciples of Jesus Christ. We are called to live radically different lives. If we simply blend in with the world — living unnoticed lives not catching anyone’s attention — then we are missing something extremely important. We do not fully understand who we are.

Cardinal Tobin is the archbishop of The Archdiocese of Newark. He, too, is not afraid to act on behalf of the poor and vulnerable regardless of the unpopularity that may bring. This was evidenced recently when he chose to resettle refugees even when it went against the governor’s ban on resettling refugees in the state. Living the Gospel calls us to go against the grain.

Are we willing to be who we are? In a recent reflection, Richard Rohr correctly states that “we must be frank. In their behavior and impact upon the world, Christians are not much different than other people.” He goes on to say that “most Christians have not been taught how to plug into the ‘mind of Christ’ — thus they often reflect the common mind of power, greed, and war instead.”

The Psalm Response for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time [Psalm 40] says it all — “Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.” We cannot gloss over the beatitudes or pretend that Jesus really didn’t mean what he said. He was very pointed and specific with regard to what the kingdom of God is all about.

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Even the Hebrew Scriptures that preceded his coming speak in defense of the poor, the widow, and the alien. Right from the beginning of salvation history, it has been God’s desire that humanity set its relationships straight and bring healing and wholeness to our relationships with God, one another, ourselves, and the world. These are the realities to which the Gospel speaks. This is how the baptized Christian is called to leave her or his mark.

Those who really live the Gospel and act out a life as baptized disciples will never be popular. But they will be holy. In the end, holiness is what really matters most anyway. Integrity, justice, a sense of fairness, conviction, courage, love, faith, and hope are all some of the things that really matter. Getting ahead in worldly agendas without a true concern for one’s brothers and sisters may bring a person material wealth, but such a person will be spiritually impoverished. It is time to start from scratch, making the radical decision to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The church is quickly falling into irrelevancy. This year can be the time of restarting and rebuilding one step at a time!

As you look in the mirror tonight, ask yourself an important question: who am I?

—taken from the writings of Father Mark Suslenko, which appear on the internet

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Hebrews 5:1-10, Mark 2:18-22
Tuesday:	Hebrews 6:10-20, Mark 2:23-28
Wednesday:	Hebrews 7:1-17, Mark 3:1-6
Thursday:	Hebrews 7:25-8:6, Mark 3:7-12
Friday:	Hebrews 8:6-13, Mark 3:13-19
Saturday:	Hebrews 9:2-14, Mark 3:20-21

3rd Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 8:23-9:3, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, Matthew 4:12-23

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Lennon Board Room. If you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen website — lifeteen.com. There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs. **Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass.** And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. **Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].**

**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].

