

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for Spiritual Life ~**

**Gracious and holy Father,  
please give me  
the intellect to understand you,  
the diligence to seek you,  
the wisdom to find you,  
a spirit to know you,  
a heart to meditate upon you,  
ears to hear you,  
eyes to see you,  
a tongue to proclaim you,  
a way of life pleasing to you,  
patience to wait for you,  
and perseverance to look for you.**

**Grant me a perfect end,  
your holy presence,  
a blessed resurrection,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.**

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**  
The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.  
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# 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.*

**DISPENSATION FROM LENTEN ABSTINENCE:**

Bishop Malesic has granted a **dispensation from Lenten abstinence on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>** so that all might celebrate St. Patrick's Day. In doing so, Bishop Malesic has requested that **you choose another day that week in which to abstain from eating meat.**

On another note, Bishop Malesic has **NOT** granted a dispensation from fast and abstinence for Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, which is the day of the Guardians Home Opener. April 7<sup>th</sup> is also Good Friday, and this day will not be dispensed, for obvious reasons.

**PENANCE SERVICE:**

Our community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place on this **Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.** Our service is centered around reflections of the various characters involved in the passion and death of Jesus. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to bring ourselves from our sinful ways back to the Lord. As we confront our own sinfulness, we realize that we, too, have a part to play in the death of Jesus. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be a time for individual confessions following the service, for those who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Please join us.

**SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL LENTEN EVENTS & SERVICES:**

- **Lenten Communal Penance Service** will be on **Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**
- **Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.**
- **Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM.**
- **Proclamation of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross and Communion Service on Good Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM.**
- **Blessing of Easter Foods** will be at **12:00 noon on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.**
- **Easter Vigil Service** will be at **8:30 PM on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.**
- **Easter Sunday Mass** will be at **10:00 AM on Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**FAITH EDUCATION:**

**Faith Education meets next on Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:45 AM.** There are no classes on Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup>, or March 26<sup>th</sup> because of Spring 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.

**PATIENCE:**

The mother of expectation is patience. The French author Simone Weil writes in her notebooks: "Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life." Without patience our expectation degenerates into wishful thinking. Patience comes from the word "patior" — which means "to suffer." The first thing that Jesus promises is suffering: "I tell you, you will be weeping and wailing, and you will be sorrowful" [see John 16]. But he calls these birth pains. And so, what seems a hindrance becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door; what seems a misfit becomes a cornerstone. Jesus changes our history from a random series of sad incidents and accidents into a constant opportunity for a change of heart. To wait patiently, therefore, means to allow our weeping and wailing to become the purifying preparation by which we are made ready to receive the joy that is promised to us.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Susan Vance-Johnson, sister of Chief Advancement Strategy Officer, Ray Murphy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Bob Wolfe, who is undergoing treatment for serious health issues.
- For Don Glover, who is critically ill resulting from an infection.
- For Kathy and Jim Pender, parents of Mark ['83] and Michael ['90] Pender, grandparents of Matthew ['11], Charlotte ['13] Pender, and Katherine ['17] and Tyler ['19] Clark, who are both seriously ill with health issues.
- For Kevin Kennedy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic and lung cancer.
- For Ken Matty, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Maryann Lucas, aunt of Art Instructor, Susan Southard, who is recovering from open heart surgery
- For Sally Smith, who is recovering from serious kidney surgery.
- For Jackie Rusnik, aunt of Jakub Bennish ['30], who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakub Bennish ['30], who is undergoing treatment for various medical issues.
- For Father Diego Irrarrazaval, C.S.C., who is critically ill following a stroke.
- For Tony Musca ['84], brother of Kathy Yoakum ['87] and John Musca ['90], who is undergoing open heart surgery on Monday.
- For Megan Schaefer Wenker ['09], who is undergoing treatment for lung cancer.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Louis Figueroa, father of Chapel Director of Music, Andy Andino.
- For Lois Luther, the sister-in-law of Brother Ed Luther, C.S.C.
- For Theodore Ursu, grandfather of Caroline Ursu ['16] and former Gilmour Student, Emily Ursu
- For Father John Crawford [St. Francis de Sales, Parma].
- For Carolyn Barr, mother of David Barr ['93]
- For Jesus Lázaro Rodríguez, the father of Deacon Ángel Lázaro de la Cruz, C.S.C.

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For the victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria; also for their families and all the first responders.
- 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 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.

**YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS:**

The 3 most difficult things for a human being are not physical feats or intellectual achievements. The are: [1] returning love for hate; [2] including the excluded; and [3] admitting that you are wrong.

—Anthony de Mello

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- 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 Brother Walter Gluhm, C.S.C., who is under to care of hospice.
- For Chuck Shade, father of Loren Shade, grandfather of Michael, Madeline, and Charles Shade, who is in seriously ill with several health issues.
- For Chuck Campanella, father of Anthony Campanella, who is in rehab following serious surgery.
- For Bill McGinley, father of Chief Academic Officer, Elizabeth Edmondson, and grandfather of Mollie [\*21] and Abby [\*23] Edmondson, who is recovering from health treatment.
- For Laurie Lozier, sister of Fathers Bill and Jim Lies, C.S.C, who has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of dementia.
- 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 Paula Smith, mother of Tyler [\*10] and Alec [\*13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 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 Carol Triplet, 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 Melita Chiacchiarri, mother of Mark [\*94], mother-in-law of Michelle DeBacco [\*96], grandmother of Aurelia [\*28], and Olivia [\*30] Chiacchiarri, 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.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — THURSDAY, MARCH 9<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, March 9<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: Meaning of Redemption**

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, March 19: <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Lent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In Person & Live Stream
Monday, March 20: <b>St. Joseph</b>	<b>Check with Office for time</b>
Tuesday, March 21:	<b>Check with Office for time</b>
Wednesday, March 22:	<b>Check with Office for time</b>
Thursday, March 23:	<b>Check with Office for time</b>
Friday, March 24:	<b>Check with Office for time</b>
Saturday, March 25: <b>4<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b> In Person
Sunday, March 26: <b>4<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In Person & Live Stream

**FEAR OF THE LORD:**

One of the most confusing phrases in Scripture is the phrase “fear of the Lord”. Almost without exception, people look at that phrase and think about an angry God who sits waiting to come down upon any and every mistake or choice that we make. That kind of fear causes us to quake and tremble.

But the fear of the Lord that engenders God's surpassing kindness — a different Hebrew root altogether — is a nuanced, richly expressive term. It is not a command to terror and paralysis, but a call to reverence and clear vision. It means to acknowledge and revere God as all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving. It means — in the ancient words of Deuteronomy — to walk along the path God lays out for us, to love him, to serve him with all our heart and with all our soul. As the German Jesuit priest Alfred Delp wrote: “Fear of God does not mean being afraid. It does not mean slavish cowardice or breaking down before God the Lord. Rather, it means knowing the absolute, inalienable dominion of the Lord of all. Much in our lives would be different if more people knew the easy, simple sentence — and vividly understood — that God is the Lord.” Fear, then, means giving God his due. And when we do that, it becomes not a negative, but a positive. —taken from the writings of Betsy Cahill which appear on the internet

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

Beginning this weekend, we will be reading and hearing stories from John's Gospel for the next several weeks. There are many symbols and images that will appear for our pondering and profit. For a deeper understanding of these Scripture passages, it would be helpful to return to the first nineteen verses of John's Gospel — The Prologue — in which key symbols are presented as hints to a clearer understanding and receiving the Jesus within John's whole Gospel.

For John, Jesus is "The word" to be heard, "The Life" to be lived, and "The Light" to be seen. This Word, Life, and Light becomes flesh to speak and be taken in. This Life is to be lived and shared. This Light is both to be seen and to be displayed by all who hear, live and see [John 1:1-19].

John uses often the light of the sun and the darkness of night as images of good things happening. In the Gospel passage for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Lent, the event takes place at noon [John 4:5-42]. Obviously, there is also much in this week's Scripture Readings about water and thirst and grumbling. In the book of Exodus, the question is raised: "Is the Lord in our midst or not?" [Exodus 17:1-7]. John's Gospel answers this!

Light is both seen and shines so that all else can be seen. In the mid-day light, Jesus offers Life to not only a woman of her culture, but a woman from an alien group. She gets more than she is asking for. The Word, the Life and the Light are offering a new way of her seeing herself and she hears, receives and returns having a changed vision of herself, her identity, her dignity. She leaves her old water jar and returns inviting other villagers to "come see" — a man Who has given her a new sight of belief in Him and herself.

All living nature longs to escape emptiness. Nature abhors a vacuum. Everything that lives is a celebration of self-insufficiency. A drowning person struggles for air while a thirsty person aches for water. Everything that lives depends on something outside them to continuing life — vegetation needs rain, but also sun.

We have great longings beyond the physical — many though those needs are. We are urged to reflect on these deeper longings. Lenten fasting and the denials of our appetite are meant to help us face our deeper longings. We do not like to admit it, but we long for God in every other hunger, thirst, or want. Not everything we seek can complete us, and we grumble when this happens. We want God, but we do not want mystery. We want completion, but something that will last for more than a little while.



The Jews were freed from their bondage in Egypt to worship and serve the Lord. Their experience of this freedom was not also a freedom from experiencing their humanity. They had sung great hymns of joy at their victory over their masters in the crossing of the dry sea. It was easy to boast of their faith as they enjoyed their freedom. They were in a long process of learning about a deeper trust called faith. God was with them — but not according to their expectations. It wasn't the Promised-Fullness just yet. They grumbled — of course as we do still.

Moses knows that God's people are thirsty in the desert and he becomes again their intercessor with God. God asks an act of faith on the part of Moses who does respond by striking the "rock" with his staff. Presumably it is the same staff with which he struck the waters of the Sea of Exodus. As the waters flowed back to give them their freedom, now the waters flow forth to give them life. They will grumble again for food, but for now they are satisfied — but not totally or forever.

John's Gospel is a long story containing all kinds of symbols — it takes place at "noon" which is full daylight, and for John very good things happen in the light. Water is the central symbol of this story. Jesus is thirsty — this gives the story its setting. He meets a woman — a Samaritan from whom Jews keep their distance. He has no bucket, and so the process of revelation begins.

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**GOD OF THE MOMENT:**

We know we're dealing with the Yahwistic source of the Torah when during those passages describing the Chosen People's Exodus and wilderness wanderings, the author goes into detail about the Israelites' griping, grumbling, and complaining — the people grumbled against Moses, saying: "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst?" [Exodus 17:1-7]. Scholars believe this 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE author had a good reason for zeroing on that embarrassing aspect of her ancestors' personality.

Our sacred authors always write for specific groups of people; they never compose their works for "everyone" — and certainly not for us. The faces of the communities for whom they write are always before their eyes. Their unique problems prompt them to write. If there were no problems in our ancient faith communities, we'd have no Scripture.

It's easy to conclude that there must have been lots of griping, grumbling and complaining in the Yahwist's community. Thankfully the author actually tells us what the whining was about — a simple question: "Is God in our midst or not?"

Like all faith communities, the Yahwist's community fell into the trap of creating a "sacred history" — a time like no other, when God worked in special ways for special people, a time which made their own day and age pale in comparison. If only they could have taken part in the Exodus when the Lord worked those famous signs and wonders, or even participated in the 40-year trek through the wilderness when the Lord constantly appeared to the Israelites, assuring them of his presence. But now, over 200 years later, God no longer did what God did during their sacred history. It was left to them simply to complain and grumble about the Lord's absence.



That seems to be why the Yahwistic author constantly reminds his readers that even during that unique Exodus event, their ancestors also griped and complained about what God was and wasn't doing. There never was a special sacred history — a time when everything was "hunky dory". The Yahwist author was convinced that God was working today, just as God worked in the past. We know how to surface that work and presence in the past, but we find it difficult to uncover it in the present. The answer to the question above is: "Yes, God is in our midst. We just don't take the time and make the effort to notice His presence."

Paul of Tarsus is a firm believer in the risen Jesus working in our lives right here and now. God isn't just killing time, patiently waiting in the wings for us to first change into authentic other Christs before springing into action. Our state of soul isn't a condition for such action. The Apostle reminds the community in Rome of one of our faith's most amazing facts: "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" [Romans 5:1-2, 5-8]. That insight applies not just to the past or distant future; it means that our sacred history is happening all around us — even at this very moment.

Perhaps the most important part of the story of Jesus and the woman at the well is when Jesus tells the woman: "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" [John 4:5-42]. John obviously presumes that "living water" is part of our everyday lives. But it's a part almost no one notices.

Instead of griping and complaining about God abandoning us in crucial situations, we should begin to understand that we've probably abandoned God.

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

**WHAT WE WORSHIP:**

Life has a sensitive nervous system through which everything is connected. Since the name of God is no longer the first and foremost of all names in the land and the voice of the people, then everything else that was once precious and prized has lost its name and been subjected to false and falsifying labels.

—Alfred Delp 17

20], demonstrating that for God, nothing is impossible.

The desert wanderers really did have legitimate cause for worry. Like so many people today, they had no idea where their next meal would come from, and clean water had become a luxury they could only remember. When we consider how little time they had spent in freedom, we can appreciate that they were like dependent children, frightened because the situation was entirely out of their control.

Israel's thirst sets up John's account of the woman at the well [John 4:5-42]. Although we rarely note it, a key aspect of this story is that Jesus was the one who was thirsty. This gives us a pretty iconoclastic image of God! We, who usually turn to God for help, are faced with Jesus — the Christ — sitting thirsty by a well without a bucket. Then, along comes a feisty Samaritan woman. The Savior of the world makes a request: "Give me a drink."

Water is a precious commodity in the desert. Sharing water symbolizes hospitality, openness to the stranger and respect for life. In an inside out image of the God who draws water from stone, the vulnerable Jesus must ask for life-giving water and acceptance, and he does it at the well that symbolizes her heritage of faith in the God of Abraham. Once they have begun their conversation, the tables turn again and Jesus reveals that the divine thirst is not for water, but for a life-giving relationship with humanity.

What happened in the interchange between Jesus and the woman should have been more threatening to the guardians of Jewish and Samaritan religion than anything else Jesus preached. When the Samaritan woman tried to pit the Jewish and Samaritan approaches to God against one another, Jesus led her beyond every expression of denominationalism and dependence on ritual. All that mattered to Jesus was that the woman would know God as he did; he thirsted for her to be moved by God's own Spirit and to abide in the truth-generating relationships that flow from that.

This is exactly what happened. As the Samaritan woman began to comprehend what Jesus was saying, her feistiness turned to curiosity and then to faith. As the representative of a people who had sought God through a series of shallow affiliations — five husbands — she found a truth and love worthy of her and was impelled to share it.

Too often, we focus on the woman's "five husbands," as if this story were about the conversion of a loose woman. That overlooks the astounding theology and universality of this Gospel message. Theologically, this Gospel story reminds us that our creator invites humanity into relationship, but never imposes. This paints a picture of God as both vulnerable and thirsty, ever waiting near some well to offer life to those who can listen, wonder and respond. The universality of today's message comes through Jesus' proclamation that real worship and relationship with God does not depend on place or ritual, but on how the people become vulnerable to the Spirit's action in their lives.

Paul preaches this very same message in the Letter to the Romans when he assures us that our "justification" is based on faith [Romans 5:1-2, 5-8]. If we were to put Paul's idea in the context of the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, we would say that salvation springs from relationship with God; it is never bound by any particular deed, creed, or ritual. Salvation happens when we attend to God's thirst and respond with personal hospitality. Once we have been affected by a relationship with God, it automatically begins to flow into all our other relationships, making us not just believers, but almost irresistible evangelizers.

Today, the Samaritan woman may appear to us in many guises. We will recognize her not by her name, geography, or appearance, but rather by her enthusiastic love and the way she invites us to respond to God's thirst and enjoy living water forever. Like her, all we need do is respond. As a result, the world's thirst will begin to be quenched.

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



John uses such elements to get Jesus into a position of presenting Himself as the "Living Water". The story is not about the woman's having five husbands — rather it is about Jesus' being the Messiah. Actually the "five husbands" represent the foreign gods which the Samaritans have taken into their cultic lives. Jesus presents Himself as the place of true worship and relationship between God and humanity. John is presenting Jesus as the replacement for the Temple which the Romans have destroyed in Jerusalem. Jesus replaces the Temple, but continues the relationship of God through the Covenants with Israel.

Jesus is the "living Water" which humanity needs and God desires to offer. Though natural water satisfies for a while, this Water — Jesus — will bring peace and soul-satisfaction to those who drink. Our natural thirsts, hungers, drives and longings will remain of course, but a deeper search will be calmed — this relationship will be and lead to "eternal life".

Jesus offers Himself as the "truth". He is offering a life grounded in faith. The woman tells her kinsfolk that she met a man who could tell her everything about her. He has the facts. This is attractive, but Jesus is offering more than facts — rather, faith. The most important lines in the story comes at the end as it usually does in John. The town's folk say to the woman: "We no longer believe in him because of your words; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

Important for us who also believe is the little instruction Jesus offers to the disciples. Jesus is to finish the work which He was sent to do. The harvest of souls will be reaped by His life, His death, and His resurrection. The followers will be the "reapers" who collect and care for the soul-crop. We will do this within the context of our human longings for success, completion, and full understanding. We will grumble when we are thirsty for evidence of God's faithfulness and our being sufficient for the task. Faith is not an answer to life's questions — it is the encouragement to keep living the questions.

For us — His followers — every moment is "noon". As the Jews were freed from bondage to worship and serve God, so we who have been freed from meaninglessly wandering around until we die, are to live as true soul-food for God's people. We now carry life in the buckets of our humanity — even though they sometimes leak and we grumble at the weight and the wait. We have much in common with our Jewish ancestors. Salvation has come through the Jews and continues flowing through all those who live in faith. Thirst, hunger, longing, grumbling, hoping — these are elements of believing, but always there is the God "who seeks such people to worship him." We each are a part of just how God does the seeking and finding. The old "jar" is the symbol for our old image which keeps us less relational. Jesus as Light shines upon our whole self, not just our darkness. Jesus invites rather than indicts and this leads us to Easter. Like the town's folk, others will come to believe — not through what we say in words, but how the Word takes flesh in our human buckets.

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

### **SPIRITUALITY OF WAITING:**

Increasingly in our society we feel we have less and less influence on the decisions that affect our own existence. Therefore it becomes increasingly important to recognize that the largest part of our existence involves waiting in the sense of being acted upon. The life of Jesus tells us that not being in control is part of the human condition. His vocation and ours are fulfilled not just in action but also in passion, waiting.

Imagine how important this message is for us and for the people in our world. If it is true that God in Jesus Christ is waiting for our response to divine love, then we can discover a whole new perspective on how to wait in life. We can learn to be obedient people who do not always try to go back to the action, but recognize the fulfillment of our deepest humanity in passion, in waiting. Our service to others will include our helping them see the glory breaking through — not only where they are active, but also where they are being acted upon. And so the spirituality of waiting is not simply our waiting for God. It is also participating in God's own waiting for us and in that way coming to share in the deepest love, which is God's love.

—Henri Nouwen

**THE WATERS OF NEW LIFE:**

Have you ever been in a conversation when you and the person you are talking with seem to be on different wave-lengths — even when you are using the same words, but they seem to have different meanings? Well, that's something like what is happening in John's Gospel for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Lent [John 4:5-42].

It all begins easily enough with Jesus asking for a drink of water. But then everything changes. Jesus in return offers the woman living water. She thinks he is talking about what just came from the well. He is thinking in metaphors like a poet. Jesus offers something better than what comes from the well — He offers her life, eternal life, but she doesn't understand that.

It happens often in the Gospels. Perhaps it happens to us too when we read the Gospels. The words don't always mean what we think they mean. At any rate this is an extraordinary encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and in a conversation the like of which we see nowhere else in the Gospels, Jesus leads this woman deeper and deeper into the mystery of who he is. And when she finds out, it transforms her life.

But what happens before the revelation is revealing in its own way. Before she can come to know who he is she must admit her sinfulness. Jesus says to her: "Bring your husband here." "I have no husband." "Yes, you have had five men and the one you are living with now is not your husband." And what is her reaction? You might expect her to grow taller with indignation and walk away, or hang her head in shame and slink away, or grow angry — and perhaps to curse this stranger for the accusation he makes. But no, she does none of these things. Instead she runs back to the town and says to the people: "Here is someone who has told me everything I have done. He must be the Messiah." She admits her sinfulness.

The result of that is that the whole town comes out to see for themselves, and when they do — when they have heard him talk — they accept him as well. But none of that would have happened if she had not admitted her sinfulness.

There are so many things going on in this story. But one of the most striking to me is the reconciliation that occurs as a result of the woman's admission. Jews and Samaritans come together — people who had been enemies for centuries. It reminds me of the situation in Israel today where Jews and Palestinians are so badly in need of reconciliation. Certainly a large part of our prayer today — and for the foreseeable future — must be that this reconciliation take place so that these people can live side by side in peace.

But in our story today there is still more. There is reconciliation between male and female as well. Jesus' action, speaking to a strange woman in public is shocking. It's something that just isn't done. But he does it anyway because he has something more important in mind. What he has in mind is not just revealing who he is, but also doing the work of salvation that the Father had given him to do — and that work will consist of bringing people together, reconciling them to one another, healing the wounds of sin and division.

The Church has always seen this story in connection with baptism because of the water imagery. The Book of Exodus reinforces that interpretation. The Jewish people have been liberated from slavery. But they grumble against God and against Moses because they are in the desert, and they are thirsty. Their thirst is physical. What they don't realize is that they are suffering, too, from another thirst — a deeper, spiritual thirst that only God can slake. The water that comes gushing from the rock becomes a symbol of the living water that Jesus promises — living water that we all experience in baptism, water that fills us with the power of the Spirit, water that brings us together into the community of the Church where we, too, experience the saving power of God.

During this time in RCIA, the catechumens — those who are to receive the sacraments of initiation

We are one with the saints in singing God's praises when we live in hope — when we ground our vision and our energies in the promise of God and in the power that God revealed in the resurrection of Jesus. We are one with the saints in singing God's praises when, like Julian of Norwich, we live in the belief that, irrespective of any present darkness, the ending of our story is already written, that in the end all shall be well and every manner of being shall be well.

We are one with the saints in singing God's praises when, rather than living inside of envy, resentment, bitterness, vengeance, impatience, anger, factionalism, idolatry, and sexual impatience, we live instead inside charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, mildness, and chastity.

We are one with the saints in singing God's praises only when we live our lives as they lived theirs.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — MARCH 18<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.

**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.

**GOD'S THIRST:**

The Scripture Readings for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Lent begin with the Israelites and Moses in the desert [Exodus 17:1-7]. After accepting God's invitation to abandon slavery for freedom, the people quickly started complaining — they missed the food the Egyptians let them have, they feared they would die of thirst — and on and on.

Acting as if God had made no plans and was incapable of providing for them, they groused so much that Moses expected a mutiny. So harsh is their complaint that Moses accuses God of being a negligent mother and complains that his task is more than he can handle [see Numbers 11]. In response, and to show how shortsighted they were, the creator of snow and rain brought water from stone [see Numbers



**ON BEING ONE WITH THE SAINTS IN PRAISING GOD:**

We are all familiar with a refrain that echoes through many of our Christian prayers and songs — an antiphon of hope addressed to God — grant that we may be one with all the saints in singing your praises! But we have an over-pious notion of what that would look like. We picture ourselves, one day, in heaven, in a choir with Mary, Jesus’ mother, with the great biblical figures of old, with the apostles and all the saints, singing praises to God, all the while feeling lucky to be there, given our moral and spiritual inferiority to these great spiritual figures. We picture ourselves spending eternity feeling grateful for having made a team whose talent level should have excluded us.

But that is a fantasy, pure and simple — mostly simple. What would it mean to be among the saints singing God’s praises? We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we are one with them in the way we live our lives — when, like them, our lives are transparent, honest, grounded in personal integrity, with no skeletons in our closet. Being one with the saints in singing God’s praises is less about singing songs in our churches than it is about living honest lives outside of them.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we radiate God’s wide compassion — when, like God, we let our love embrace beyond race, creed, gender, religion, ideology, and differences of every kind. We are one with the saints in praising God when our heart — like God’s heart — is a house with many rooms. Being one with the saints in singing God’s praises means being compassionate as God is compassionate, it means letting our sun shine on the bad as well as the good and letting our empathy embrace those too whose ideas oppose us.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we tend to “widows, orphans and strangers” — when we reach out to those most vulnerable, when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick and imprisoned, when we work for justice. Being one with the saints in singing God’s praises means reversing nature’s proclivity for the survival of the fittest and working instead to enable the opposite, the survival of the weakest.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we work for peace — when in both our personal lives and our politics we strive to radiate God’s non-violence, when we refuse the temptation to try to end a cruel violence by a morally superior one.

In the end, all shall be well and every manner of being shall be well. We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises whenever we forgive each other — particularly when that forgiveness meets a bitterness that does not seem worthy of the gift. We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we absorb hatred, anger, violence, and murder itself and, like Jesus, not give back in kind, when we forgive our enemies.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when, like them, we give away our time, talents, and our very lives in self-sacrifice without counting the cost — when we live altruistically, accepting that our own personal fulfillment is not the first aim of our lives.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we live in a healthy self-effacement, when we dethrone ourselves as the center of the universe, when we take the lower place without resentment, when the conversation needs no longer be about us.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we are one with them in prayer — when, like them, we regularly lift our eyes upward beyond the horizon of the present world to ground ourselves in a reality beyond this world.

We are one with the saints in singing God’s praises when we live in patience and endurance — when we accept without bitterness that all symphonies must remain unfinished and that we must live in inconsummation, when we live among the frustrations of this life without murmuring so that life can unfold in God’s good time.



on Holy Saturday night — are introduced to the mysteries of the faith they will profess at their baptism. After their baptism they will be sent forth to evangelize, to tell others about the wonderful things God has done for them — like the Samaritan woman, like the man born blind, like Lazarus. And in the telling, they will grow. They will grow in knowledge and love.

Dear friends, these Scripture Readings are not just for our catechumens and candidates — they are for us as well. As we listen to the Lenten Scripture from here on, we must ask ourselves three questions: “How do we thirst?” “How are we blind?” “How are we dead?” And we know for sure that God wants to slake our thirst. God wants to open our eyes to see the beauty and wonder of God’s love in our world and all around us. God wants to give us life — real life, and God wants us to live, to really live. It’s the gift of God’s grace that is freely offered. We have only to open our hearts to receive it.

—taken from the writings of Father Leo Murphy, S.J., which appear on the internet

**JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE?**

In Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome, he begins with his fundamental conviction that we are justified by faith. But he goes on to explain what this means and how it was accomplished [Romans 5:1-2, 5-8]. To be justified means that we are in a right relationship with God — that we are at peace with our Creator, that we share in divine righteousness, and that we can “boast in hope of the glory of God.” We are justified not because of our own merits, but because Christ died for us “at the appointed time,” while we were still sinners. This proves God’s love for us “which has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” Paul insists that Christian hope “does not disappoint” because God’s grace is given to us so abundantly, poured into our hearts like water that gives life and refreshment.

That image prepares us for John’s Gospel which recounts the remarkable encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman who received the gift of living water “welling up to eternal life” [John 4: 5-42].

Our hope for the ultimate fulfillment of our deepest longings is based not on our own efforts or achievements, but on God’s overflowing love for us manifested by Christ’s death and resurrection, and communicated by the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts. Christ has won salvation for us, and the Holy Spirit resides within us. For our part, we have to cooperate with God’s grace by putting on the mind of Christ and responding to the promptings of the Spirit. As justified believers, we now share in the righteousness of God which promotes human flourishing and promises eternal life.

Let us imagine individuals who have grown spiritually by reflecting on what Paul says. An elderly woman who spent long hours at night worrying about the salvation of her soul developed greater trust in a God who loves her despite her sins, which led to more restful nights. A surgeon meditated for weeks on the image of the Holy Spirit poured into her heart and gradually became more attentive to gentle nudges from the Spirit throughout her day including the hours in the operating room. By reading Scripture more carefully, a religion teacher gained a better understanding of the Protestant position on justification by faith alone. A waitress struck on the all-inclusive character of justification, resolved to treat all of her customers with respect even those who didn’t deserve it.

Which part of Paul’s treatment of justification most speaks to your heart?

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

**GOD’S GIFT TO US:**

Since God exists only in gift form, his life, even in principle, cannot become a possession. Instead, it is “had” only on the fly, only in the measure that it is given away. When we cling to it, it disappears, according to a kind of spiritual physics.

—Bishop Robert Barron

**STAYING IN THE CONVERSATION:**

No other evangelist takes more time with a story than does John. Matthew, Mark and Luke give us a narrative in a few verses. John routinely takes a whole chapter. John’s Gospel for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time is the story of the Woman at the Well [John 4:5-42]. One of the advantages of such lengthy narratives is that we can watch and detect development in the characters that are within them. In the story of the Woman at the Well begins as an encounter marked with suspicion and hostility; it eventually reaches the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

What John is trying to do in these lengthy narratives is to reveal to us the circumstances in which we can expect to encounter Jesus. John prepares us to see in concrete circumstances the possibility of meeting the Risen Lord. In this story of the Woman at the Well, John tells us that we can expect to meet the Lord in conversation — especially in conversations with those who think differently than us. Opposition is certainly the context of this story. The narrative depends on us understanding that there was antipathy, suspicion, and hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Both culturally and religiously, they were groups opposed to one another. This is why Jesus’ request for a drink was such a brass move, and why it would seem to have little chance of success. The ordinary Samaritan would have laughed and turned away from a thirsty Jew asking for a drink. The Samaritan woman in the gospel does laugh, but then she stays to listen and, in the conversation, she discovers a deeper truth.

This story tells us that it is when we enter into conversation with those who think differently from us, we can expect to meet Christ. It is hard to imagine a more relevant topic for our society. For, as commentators have noticed over the last several years, America is a polarized nation. We are a nation divided into distinct and clear camps. There are red states and blue states, Democrats and Republicans. We are divided over the role of religion in politics, over our involvement in the affairs of other nations. We are in disagreement over the future of Social Security. We do not agree about gay marriage or over the norms for family life. This Gospel tells us that, instead of withdrawing and remaining only in our own thoughts and convictions, we should reach out to those who think differently. We should talk and listen, believing that in that conversation we can discover a deeper truth.

The story even points out what we should be listening for. It tells us that we should listen for common threads of our humanity, for failures, and for our highest ideals.

The conversation between Jesus and the woman begins with a conversation about the basics of life — about water. Jesus and the woman have a different understanding of what water is, but they are in agreement on the common thirst to drink. This common understanding moves their conversation forward. When we discuss with those who think differently from us, we should be looking for a common thirst, a common thread of our humanity that can unite us. Even if we do not agree, we can at least identify what we share.

The story also points to the importance of recognizing our failures. The woman is faced with and accepts her disastrous past — her multiple failed marriages. In this honesty of her failure, a step is taken towards the truth. In the same way, when we talk with others who have a different point of view, any honesty on either side cannot help but lead us forward. Admitting that we have weaknesses — that we are imperfect — opens our mind to listen for the possible truth in another’s position.

Finally, the woman and Jesus end up speaking about religion — about their highest ideals. In discussing the most important beliefs, they are able to move beyond the smaller issues. They move beyond where worship should take place and agree on the principle of worshipping in spirit and in truth. In the same way, when we discuss with those who have a different point of view, we will often be more successful if we can engage with them around our highest ideals rather than being caught up in the details of how to achieve them. If we can find a commonality on the good we hope to achieve, we may be able to resolve the strategies which divide



the bumps and bruises of our lives that we impose upon ourselves and others. He doesn’t condone our sins — be they big or little. He hurts for us. He wants us to be better. And His Love transforms us. We want to be better because we also want to have a constant experience of the Messiah’s love.

“Why did the townsfolk switch their reasons for faith from the woman they knew to this Jew?” They saw that the woman had changed, and for the first time that she was happy. They wanted a share in this happiness themselves, and thought that she must be right in what she was saying about this Jew. But then they experienced Jesus. Now the woman became secondary to them. Jesus was all that mattered. They allowed the words of the Word of God to change their lives. They believed and followed — not because of what someone had said about Jesus, but because of Jesus.

It is not what the preacher says about Jesus that matters. It is not what the writer writes about Jesus that matters. All that matters is Jesus Christ. We are not followers of Apollos, or Paul, or this priest, or that deacon [see 1 Corinthians 3]. We are followers of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ tells us that we can be better than we are. He makes us want to be better than we are. His overpowering love gives us the courage to change our lives and to embrace His Life. The blood that poured from his wounds on the cross has ignited our bodies with the fire of his Love. “You can be better than this,” He says to us in the tender, warm voice of Love.

And we will be better. Happy Lent.

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

- Monday:** 2 Kings 5:1-15, Luke 4:24-30
- Tuesday:** Daniel 3:25-43, Matthew 18:21-35
- Wednesday:** Daniel 4:1-9, Matthew 5:17-19
- Thursday:** Jeremiah 7:23-28, Luke 11:14-23
- Friday:** Hosea 14:2-10, Mark 12:28-34
- Saturday:** Hosea 6:1-6, Luke 18:9-14
- 4<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

**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, March 4]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 380.00**  
**Offerings-----[Sunday, March 5]----- \$ 630.00**



**WE CAN DO BETTER:**

The Third Week in Lent presents the account of the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman at a well [John 4:5-42]. I usually have to prepare a homily based on this Gospel every year since this is the Gospel for Masses with catechumens and candidates coming into the Church in the RCIA experience. This story is so rich that I am constantly finding new aspects of it that speaks to me. Then again, all scripture is alive — the Living Word of God. I am struck this year by two questions that are new to me. The first is: “Why did this woman make such a radical change so quickly?” The second question is: “Why did the townsfolk emphasize that their reason for faith had shifted from what the woman said to what Jesus was saying?”

Why did this woman make such a radical change so quickly? When Jesus encountered the woman, He broke the normal practice of Jews when he asked her — a Samaritan — for assistance. A conversation follows between the two which seems to have a lot of give and take — “I am shocked that you are asking me for water.” “If you knew who was asking you, you would ask him for water that would quench your thirst for eternity.”

There’s even a discussion on who’s correct in the theology department — the Jews who worship in Jerusalem, or the Samaritans who worship on the Holy Mountain. In the middle of all this, Jesus says something to the woman that causes her to allow him to change her life. He told her that He knew she was living with a man outside of marriage, and that she had been married five times before this. He told her that He knew she had been immoral and was continuing her sinful ways. This caused the woman to change her life. Why? It doesn’t make sense that a Samaritan woman would be so impressed with the accusations of a Jewish man.

There must be more to this. Jesus’ tone must have conveyed His concern for her. She must have felt that she was being addressed as a person — not as an object of scorn by Jews, or even by men in general. Jesus’ tone must have said to her: “My dear woman, you can be better than this.” He speaks to her heart and her heart turns to Him. You can be better than this.

Recently that phrase has been bouncing around inside my head — not just as something I say to others, but as something I say to myself. I can be better this. I can be better than an immoral society that sees sex as a recreation and morality as a trite vestige of the past. I can be better than a society that seeks fulfillment in material possessions and condemns itself to the meaningless acquisition of stuff. Perhaps, the problem is that I — and you — tend to see sin as either mortal or superficial fluff. So, if we haven’t committed a mortal sin, we think that we are not that bad, and we don’t see the weight our behavior lays on ourselves, or on others. We don’t see the pain we are inflicting on the Body of Christ because, after all we just stubbed its toe; we didn’t amputate its foot. Maybe some of the reasons why I am not better is that I have not really tried hard to be better. Maybe, it’s the same with you.

Perhaps that temper, that lack of patience, that bad language on the road, etc., that we bring to reconciliation quickly pops up again because we are not convinced that we can be better than we have been. Perhaps, if we are involved in serious sin, we don’t go to confession because we have given up the fight and feel that we will not be able to avoid the sin in the future. Maybe we are selling ourselves short. Jesus transformed the woman at the well because He was concerned about her. He wanted her to be the best person she could be. He told her that she could do it. And she heard His message screaming to her in her heart. She was determined to change her life, and then she wanted to shout out to the world that she had an experience of the Messiah.

That is why we seek penance during Lent. That’s why we go to confession throughout the year. We know that Jesus loves us. We know that He cares for each of us individually. We know that He sees



us.

The story of the Woman at the Well tells us that we can expect to find Jesus in dialogue with others — especially with others who think differently. It is not a naïve story, imagining that once we begin to talk all obstacles will disappear. But it does tell us that if we are willing to listen, looking for common threads of our humanity, the reality of failure, and the power of our highest ideals, we can make progress. We will probably not end up thinking the same way. But if we open ourselves to the dialogue, we can discover a deeper truth and find Christ in the interaction. There are many places we can find Jesus. John’s Gospel reminds us that we can find Him in conversation, in dialogue with one another. If that is true, we must not hold ourselves back or shut ourselves off from interaction with those who think differently. It is only by staying in the conversation, that we can hope to encounter the Risen Lord.

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

**WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH:**

Very often we go to God the Father seeking help in our various needs. In John’s Gospel [4:5-42], we learn what the Father is seeking. This revelation takes place during a very unlikely encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the well. It is unlikely because of the deep animosity that existed between the Jews and Samaritans. In Luke’s Gospel there is the account of the Samaritan Village that would not even permit Jesus and his Apostles to stay there because they were on their way to Jerusalem [see Luke 9].

When Jesus and his apostles stop at Jacob’s well, the only person there is a woman getting water. It is commonly thought that the reason why she was there alone is that because of having been married five times she was despised by the village, and would go at a time when no one would be there to harass her.

This particular day she encounters Jesus, and she notices that he is a Jew and no doubt expects him to speak disrespectfully to her because she is a Samaritan. Instead he humbles himself and asks her for water. She is amazed at this, and she and Jesus enter into a conversation in which Jesus tells her of the life-giving water that God desires her to drink. It is at this point that Jesus tells her about true worship, and that it is the Father’s wish that those who seek Him should worship Him. The question we are compelled to ask ourselves is: “are we true worshippers?” Jesus amplifies the statement by telling us that true worshippers worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. The gift of the Spirit is one that enables us to pray, but worshipping in Spirit is much more than this.

It is the Spirit of God dwelling within us, and not our own spirit. It is the Spirit of God that brings truth into our lives so that our worship is in the Holy Spirit and the Truth of Christ. We are transformed, and we see Jesus in a different light. He is our Lord and Savior — the one who gives us life-giving water, and eternal life. When we live in Spirit and Truth it is difficult to contain within us the joy of God’s love and presence. It comes forth from us in numerous ways — both intentional and unintentional.

The woman Jesus met at the well was transformed from the sinner who was an outcast into a missionary who wasted no time in telling the rest of the village about her encounter with Jesus. This happened very quickly, and the Spirit and Truth were so evident that those who despised her came to follow her to meet Jesus.

The hearts of the Samaritans were also changed, and they went from being people who did not welcome Jesus, to a village that begged him to stay. He did, and more and more of the people came to believe that Jesus is Savior of the World.

When we live “Worship in Spirit and Truth”, our lives are transformed. We might go out with the intention of inviting others to experience the Lord. Our personal testimonies do not have to be long and complex, but can be simple sharing of how blessed we are by God. When we are living in Spirit and Truth, even our regular everyday conversations reveal to those around us that there is something different about us. Maybe, it is a new sense of peace, an inner joy that others notice, or a confidence in speaking about God. May we become what the Father desires us to be — worshippers in Spirit and Truth, and may we allow him to transform us. —taken from the writings of Father Killian Loch, O.S.B., which appear on the internet<sup>9</sup>

**PLEASE STOP SAYING YOU'RE A "BAD CATHOLIC":**

I used to hate running. "I'm so tired," "I'm so out of shape," and "I can't do this anymore." would repeat over and over again as I ran. But then I read a psychological study that showed if you tell yourself encouraging statements like: "I'm strong" or "I can do this" while working out, it can dramatically change your workout. I thought it was cheesy, but when I tried doing it I realized just how much I was telling myself when I used these toxic phrases. When I encouraged myself, I found that I actually kind of enjoy running. And in fact, the first time I did this I ran twice as long as I usually did.

The same goes with our faith. Specifically, when we call ourselves a "bad Catholic."

I often hear it like this, "Yeah I haven't gone of confession in a while — I'm a pretty bad Catholic"; or "I'm kind of a bad Catholic, I don't really believe in the Church's teachings." I'm guilty of saying it about myself and even assigning that title to others. But I'm learning — we need to stop. Because the truth is — there is no such thing as a bad Catholic.

The literal point of the Church is to take in broken people wherever we are, and to allow Christ to make us whole. Holiness is a lifelong journey, and we'll always fail on earth. Failing us doesn't make us bad — it makes us humans who are in need of grace.

Here's why that phrase — "Bad Catholic" — is toxic:

**Holiness:** the underlying message with saying "bad Catholic" is that it makes holiness a checkbox list. Like if I do or don't do X, Y, Z, then I'm holy or bad. But that's not what holiness is. Holiness cannot be checked off, labeled, and quantified. Holiness is not about you and what you do. It's about allowing Christ to love you. It's trusting in Him. It's saying yes. Holiness is Christ in you.

**Who He is:** if we call ourselves bad Catholics — if all we think about while praying is how bad we are — then those are telling signs that we're actually not encountering Christ. Christ didn't come to tell us how bad we are — He came to tell us how good we are. He came to tell us how the world does not deserve us [see Hebrews 11:8]. And how precious and loved we are [see Isaiah 43]. Christ is merciful.

**Who we Are:** when we constantly tell ourselves that we're bad Catholics or a terrible sinner, that's who we become. We set limits. We become stuck and unmovable. We hide in a false identity. But our real and true identity is in Christ. We are children of God. And since God is so much greater than we can fathom, we also have unbelievable potential to be more saintly, more holy than we could ever imagine. Our capacity for greatness lies in the capacity of how great God is. And God has no limits. Always remind yourself of this. Drown out the lies. As Fr. Mike Schmitz said: "If Jesus is who He says He is, then you are who He says you are."

**It's not Humble:** we might say it because it sounds humble. On the same line, I often hear people say: "I'm just lucky if I get into purgatory." But that's not what humility is. Humility is all about knowing who you are in Christ eyes. It's recognizing both that you're not God and that we constantly need grace. It also means that the God of the universe created you with all the love infinitely possible. I learned from St. Therese of Lisieux that it actually pains God when we call ourselves bad Catholics or that we're such a terrible sinners because it doesn't recognize who Christ is, and it doesn't recognize who we truly are. God so desperately, so achingly, wants to pour His merciful love on us. He wants us to get to Heaven. But by saying these things, we reject His merciful love. We reject who Christ really is.

**The Right Way:** I'm not saying don't examine yourself and the ways we've fallen short. Absolutely examine yourself and ways you can grow. But there's a right way of doing it. It's seeing how Christ sees you. He doesn't see you wrapped up in sin. He sees you. He's not looking down at us saying: "How could they possibly do that again?!" Because He knows precisely why. He's never writes



us off as bad — we do that to ourselves. We even do that to each other.

But He calls us good — very good. And when we're firm in that reality, we find ourselves with a greater desire to conform to the good God whose image and likeness we are made in. We stop trying to conform to the world because we find that the world isn't worthy of us. Aware of the way Christ sees us, sin stops being as attractive as it once was, and we have more motivation to actively avoid it so that we can be free to seek Him. We find that we are so good, as sons and daughters of God, that sin stifles who we were made to be.

All of us — from the atheist to the saint — are all just pilgrims. We are travelers going from this world to the next. We sometimes get lost and take the long way, some days we may have no idea where we're going. But the point is to keep moving, keep learning to understand, and to keep trying knowing

**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].**

**"I THIRST":**

The story of Jesus and the woman at the well brings to mind a conversation between a young man and a priest. The young man came to the priest with tears in his eyes. His girlfriend had left him. The priest knew her and was not surprised by her capriciousness. Still, he tried to show as much sympathy as he could for the brokenhearted boy. At one point the young man stated that she was "the most perfect girl" he had ever met.

The priest stopped him: "Do you think you would have been happy with her?"

The young man was silent. He then answered honestly: "No." Then he quickly added: "But I would rather be miserable with her than happy without her."

The priest responded: "She is not the one you want." The young man looked perplexed. But the priest continued: "The one you want is God."

All of us have this longing — not for pleasure or comfort or tranquility. We would gladly sacrifice those things — and more — if we could only have that for which our heart yearns. Like the woman in John's Gospel, we thirst. St. Theresa of Avila wrote: "Thirst expresses the desire for something, but a desire so intense that we would die if we lacked it."

Our problem is that we think something in this world will satisfy our thirst. It will not. The woman in John's Gospel had five husbands. None of them filled her longing [John 4:5-42]. None of them could. No person, place, thing or combination of circumstances can satisfy our inner longing. The reason is this: Our thirst comes not from ourselves, but because Someone thirsts for us.

It is hard for people today to imagine God thirsting for us. After all, God is so far superior to us. Why would he need us? However, we know from the Bible that God goes to great lengths for our salvation. In Jesus we see how much God thirsts for souls. In the Creed we say: "For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven."

As we enter into these more intense weeks of Lent, we recognize a longing in our hearts — a thirst that has its source in God's thirst for us.

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

