

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Easter ~

Yours be the glory,
Jesus, Holy One,
Risen up in triumph,
splendid as the sun.
To anoint your body,
grieving women came
and with joy departed,
hast'ning to proclaim:
Yours be the glory,
Mary's only Son,
Risen up in triumph,
Jesus, Holy One!

Radiant you meet us,
risen from the tomb,
Lovingly you greet us,
scatter fear and gloom.
Let your Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing;
You live now among us;
death has lost its sting.
Radiant you meet us,
gracious as a groom;
lovingly you greet us,
risen from the tomb.

Yours be the glory,
never-setting sun,
Star yet brightly burning
when life's day is done!
Dawn breaks forth from darkness,
overcoming night.
Star of Morning glorious,
flood our world with light!
Yours be the glory,
God's beloved Son,
Star forever burning,
never-setting sun!
Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

Our Lady Chapel



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

THE EASTER SEASON:

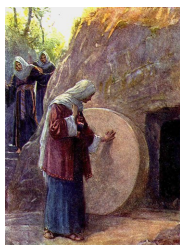
In the midst of the early dark of night a fire begins to flicker outside the church. An Easter Candle, boldly marked with the symbols of the current year and of Christ's divinity and glorious suffering, is lit from the new fire. It is carried prominently into the midst of the people. There it is heralded with joyful song: **Light of Christ — Come, let us adore him.** From this one light, the candles of hundreds of assembled believers are lit until the church is ablaze with new light. A cantor sings an ancient and beautiful song [*Exultet*, "Rejoice"] before the Easter Candle. Powerful Scripture readings about water and new creation are proclaimed. Easter water is blessed with the singing of the Litany of Saints and with sacred oils consecrated just days before. Catechumens step forward, speak their baptismal vows with the supportive voices of the congregation around them, and are baptized. Bells ring out. Flowers — especially Easter lilies — and joyful banners decorate the sanctuary. Alleluias are sung for the first time in six weeks. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead! No other moment of the church year is as rich in powerful and early symbolism as the Easter Vigil. It is the night of all nights. It is the heart of Christianity. It is Easter.

**WELCOME and CONGRATULATIONS:**

Easter is the time to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation in the Church. Here at Our lady Chapel, we were blessed to celebrate these sacraments with 6 of our Gilmour Students. Senior, **Ben Douglas** — Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist; Senior, **Sophie Healey** — Eucharist and Confirmation; Senior, **Alex Cistolo** — Confirmation; Senior, **Carolyn May** — Confirmation; Sophomore, **Darby Marshall** — Confirmation; and 2nd Grader, **Addalyn Malanaphy** — Baptism. God bless each of you as you continue your journey of Faith in Christ Jesus.

**ALLELUIA! JESUS IS RISEN!**

This is the greeting that we proclaim today, and the song that we joyfully sing. However, the first Easter did not begin as a joyous day. Peter and the ten remaining apostles were hiding in the upper room, both grieving the death of Jesus, and fearful of what might happen to them. Mary of Magdala goes to the tomb early in the morning to perform the burial rituals that could not be done earlier because of the Passover. She is not going there to see the Risen Lord — she is going to anoint a dead man who changed her life. She arrives at the tomb and discovers that the stone was removed and the tomb was empty.



This is not a moment of: "yes, He did it," but one of deeper grief as she runs to the upper room to tell Peter that someone took the body from the tomb. Only further reflection by Peter and John — after they had run to the tomb — turned their mourning into joy.

During the Easter Season we will hear the Gospel accounts of the Risen Lord and how the news of his Resurrection spread. It serves as a time for us to celebrate this great event. It is the act of God's love that freed us from sin and opened for us the way to the glory and joy of eternal life in Heaven. This is a season for us to celebrate — not just the historical event of two thousand years ago — but also the reality that this event is timeless.

The Risen Lord still touches and changes the hearts of men and women. One way to see this is by noting the number of people in the RCIA who entered the church at the Easter Vigil. His presence continues to draw others to know him personally, and is the call for us to lift up our hearts and souls with renewed faith and joy. Like Mary Magdala, we are the apostles of our own time who are called to run with joy to proclaim to others that Jesus is Risen.

—taken from the writings of Father Killian Loch, O.S.B., which appear on the internet

YOU HAVE A CHOICE:

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make. —Jane Goodall

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For our Jewish brothers and sisters, who are observing Passover.
- For our Muslim Brothers and Sisters who are observing the time of Ramadan.
- 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.

THE CALL TO NEW LIFE:

Easter — the great feast of the Resurrection — is the central truth of our Christian faith, and the high point of the liturgical year. In the Gospels, there are two main ways to speak about God raising the crucified Jesus to life — [1] the many appearances of the risen Christ to the disciples, including Mary Magdalen, Peter known as Cephas, Thomas the Twin, and Cleopas with his companion; and [2] the empty tomb stories which recount the fascinating story of Peter and John, alerted by Mary Magdalen, that someone had taken the body of Jesus from the tomb. They ran to the tomb to see for themselves. The Beloved Disciple gets there first, waits and lets Peter enter, then goes in himself, sees the burial cloths, and he believes [John 20:1-9].

The epistles — written for the most part before the gospels — have their own distinctive ways of indicating the centrality and significance of the resurrection. Paul, for example, speaks to the Church at Colossae, of Christ "seated at the right hand of God" [Colossians 3:1-4]. The Father has raised the man, Jesus, to life and taken him to heaven, where he sits at God's right hand. The Word who descended from heaven has now ascended back to God. With the Ascension of the Lord, our human nature now has a permanent place in the heavenly realm.

Seated at God's right hand, Christ permanently exercises his priesthood — interceding on our behalf, presiding over the extension of God's reign in the world, and serving as the high priest in the liturgy of the Church. As the risen Lord, he is the mediator between God and us — our access to the Father. From his permanent position of power and influence, Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead.

Paul's letter to the Church at Colossae admonishes us who have been raised with Christ "to think of what is above" and "to seek" heavenly things. We could hear this as a call to raise our hearts to God in prayer and to live the high ideals of the Gospel. It is not a matter of ignoring the concerns of this world, or disdainful everyday life. We are called to maintain a faith perspective on our personal journey and to follow Christian principles in dealing with social issues. We should live everyday life, recognizing we already participate in the risen life of Christ and will one day share in his final victory.

Our celebration of Easter can transform our lives. Jeff becomes more joyful when he reflects on sharing in the risen life of Christ. Mary becomes more confident when she remembers that the risen Christ intercedes for her as she faces the challenges of life. Bill becomes more loving when he reflects on the self-sacrificing love of Jesus which led to his death and glorious resurrection. Sue becomes more hopeful when she realizes that the Christ — seated at the right hand of the Father — defeated death, thus assuring the final victory of good over evil. How can Easter enrich your faith?

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

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 Maryann Lucas, aunt of Art Instructor, Susan Southard, who is recovering from open heart surgery
- For Jackie Rusnik, aunt of Jakob Bennish [‘30], who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish [‘30], who is undergoing treatment for various medical issues.
- For Father Diego Irarrazaval, C.S.C., who is critically ill following a stroke.
- For Megan Schaefer Wenker [‘09], who is undergoing treatment for lung cancer.
- For Anna Heryak, Aunt for Mike Heryak, great aunt of Lilian Heryak Tran [‘09], Rosa [‘12] and Edwin [‘17] Heryak, who is under the care of Hospice.
- For Patti Gorman, who is ill.
- For Myron Shibley [‘58], who is in rehab following back surgery.
- For Paul Hannon, who has serious health issues.
- For Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken’s nephew, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Martin Murphy, father of Maureen Linz [‘84], Baseball Coach, John Murphy [‘88] and Julie Cathey [‘90] , father-in-law of Amy Sullivan Murphy [‘88], grandfather of Michael [‘16], Molly [‘18] and Megan [‘19] Murphy, who is in intensive care following a stroke.
- For Ralph Elwart, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For William Schiedel, who is experiencing complications with cancer treatments.
- For Joe Columbus, uncle of Jill Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for an infection following surgery.
- For Janis Barnes who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Lisa Samples, who is recovering from multiple injuries sustained in a fall.
- For Frank Potenziani, father of David [‘95] and Cyrena [‘01], who is seriously ill.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Brother Walter Gluhm, C.S.C.
- For Kathleen Kempinger, mother of Father Steve Kempinger, C.S.C.
- For Edward Kaczuk
- For Mary Jane Sonnhalter, mother-in-law of Lower School Toddler Assistant, Kathy Sonnhalter, and grandmother of Kevin [‘13] and Christopher [‘17] Sonnhalter.
- For Catherine Kellogg, sister of Father Gary Chamberland, C.S.C.
- For Greg Ross, father of former Trustee, Cindy Trotter [‘73]
- For Robert Poorman, father of Father Mark Poorman, C.S.C.
- For Ronald Ritt
- For James Puette
- For Richard Wild
- For William and Dorothy Aylward
- For Leonard DeFino, father of Leonard [‘09], Madeline [‘10], and John [‘12]
- For Lee Tavis
- For Rob Kaleta, friends of Linda and Bob Monitello.
- For Iris Davila, aunt of Wendy Andino.

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, April 19th 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: What is next? — grieving and the Resurrection

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, April 9: Easter Sunday	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, April 10:	Check with Office for time
Tuesday, April 11:	Check with Office for time
Wednesday, April 12:	Check with Office for time
Thursday, April 13:	Check with Office for time
Friday, April 14:	Check with Office for time
Saturday, April 15: 2 nd Week in Easter	5:00 PM In Person
Sunday, April 16: Divine Mercy Sunday	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

EASTER FLOWERS:

Once again, we would like to ask for help in offsetting the cost of our Easter flowers. As has been our custom, we will remember your loved ones in prayer throughout the entire Easter Season. Following Easter, the flowers will be planted outside in areas surrounding the chapel. As we celebrate together the new life of Easter, we share also in the renewing of the world of nature. We would like to remember: **Eveyln Bibbo, James Maruna, and Members of the Blazek and Rezabek Families.** Please say a prayer for our loved ones and for their families. **If you would like to add your loved ones to this list of remembrances, please turn in your list of names to Father John.** We will publish this list throughout the Easter Season.



FAITH EDUCATION:

Faith Education meets next on Sunday, April 16th and April 23rd at 8:45 AM. 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.



REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

On this Easter day we want to receive the news of Jesus Risen not as an announcement of an event from long ago and far away; we want to receive this Good News now — today. “Today is the day that the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice [Psalm 118].

We have been preparing for the renewal of our baptismal commitment for the past forty days. During this past week — Holy Week — we have been celebrating the renewal of God’s life-giving commitment to humanity. Christ’s resurrection is greater than the rising sun. Think of a world with the sun, without solar warmth and light to give us life. In the dark of night, we trust that the sun will return, and we will — by its light — be enabled to see both the sun and the creation around us and also something of ourselves.

Jesus rose in some mysterious manner. The real joy of this season — and all the liturgies that we celebrate — is the belief that He raised others from their darkness about life — especially each one of us. We can rejoice that like the sun — the Son has risen to — and raise our minds and hearts for lives of loving. By that Light we can look around and within, in a spirit of hope and joy. His Resurrection is the beginning of our own.

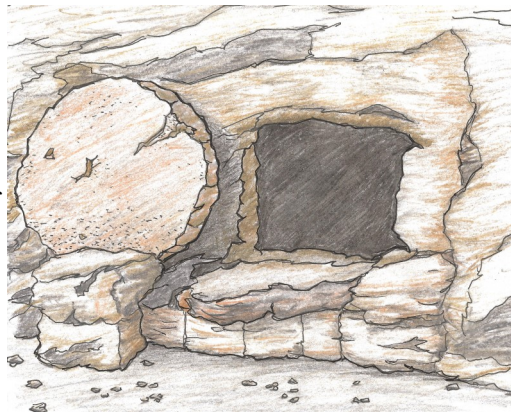
St. Paul reminds us of this intimate connection between ourselves and Christ in his Letter to the Colossians. In these few brief lines, St. Paul uses the word “with” three times — each one building upon the previous one and leading to an increasing depth of meaning and feeling [Colossians 3:1-4]. First, Paul reminds us that “You were raised with Christ”; Christ’s resurrection is not some isolated event from long ago and far away — the resurrection of Jesus in our own flesh and given to us in the grace of baptism assures us that resurrection is ours as well. Mysteriously, we already share in the resurrection. What might this mean?

Then Paul takes it a step further: “Your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Christ’s resurrection is not about something in the past or simply the promise of life in a distant future — the resurrection of Jesus means that our life is in and with his life now, invisible to all except to those with the eyes of faith. Nothing can steal that from us. It is a “buried treasure” of sorts — life with him, Jesus sharing life with us, day in and day out. He is risen and is with us! Where will this lead?

Finally, Paul reminds us that in our resurrection, “You too will appear with him in glory.” Our future life — the life of resurrection — is not just “more of the same.” No, we are promised glory. It’s like St. John reminds us: “We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is” [1 John 3:2]. St. Peter in his second letter also affirms it: “we shall share in the Christ’s divine nature” [2 Peter 1:4]. What might that mean?

The Book of Acts recounts Peter’s address given to an unusual assembly — Cornelius is a leader of a Roman guard, but he is God-fearing and respectful of the Jewish traditions. He has had some kind of vision and has called Peter to interpret it [Acts 10:34-43]. Peter’s words will result in the baptism of the Jews who accompanied Peter — as well as Cornelius and his family.

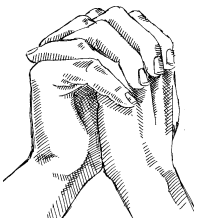
John’s Gospel [20:1-9] is quite familiar to us all. Day is breaking — the sun is just about to rise. Jesus has risen and is about to begin shining on His believers. Mary Magdala, Peter and John will have some vision problems. Believing is more than seeing, touching, and grasping. Peter and John did not see Jesus — but saw enough to believe. Mary did not see Jesus either, and her love for Jesus would result in her being the first to whom Jesus, in Scripture, appeared. From the very beginning, believing

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Kevin Kennedy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic and lung cancer.
- For Maria Ruiz, mother of Elina Gurney, grandmother of Joseph and Christina Gurney, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Susan Vance-Johnson, sister of Chief Advancement Strategy Officer, Ray Murphy, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.
- For Ken Matty, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Rick DeBacco [‘99], brother of Michelle DeBacco Chiacchiari [‘96], uncle of Aurelia [‘28], and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiari, who is undergoing treatment for pancreatitis.
- 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 Paula Smith, mother of Tyler [‘10] and Alec [‘13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 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 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 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.



COMING TO BELIEF:

It's important to realize that it took time for those who originally discovered Jesus' empty tomb to understand its significance. Though our four evangelists employ the oft-used biblical literary device of having angels provide that significance to us the readers, we can't presume the original participants were so fortunate as to have "everything" explained on the spot. The tradition behind the thought that Jesus' disciples returned to Galilee and moped around for days before they finally returned to fishing, and discovered that Jesus was not only alive, but risen, making breakfast for them on the seashore, was created by John's community to exemplify this [see John 21].

Normally Simon Peter is the one credited with being the first to realize the empty tomb meant Jesus had risen from the dead — that's one of the reasons the early Christian community was convinced its faith was built on the rock of Peter's faith. But John's gospel gives us a different theology. The Beloved Disciple and Peter simultaneously receive Mary Magdala's message that Jesus' body is no longer in the tomb [John 20:1-9]. Though the former beats the latter to the burial place, the Beloved Disciple, honoring part of the tradition, steps aside and lets Peter go into the tomb first. Yet it's important to note the evangelist states that it was this "other disciple," not Peter, who first "saw and believed."

What's with this Beloved Disciple who often stands out in contrast to Peter in John's gospel? Scholars no longer believe he's the gospel's author. Instead, most contend he was one of the historical Jesus' unnamed disciples — the person who initially evangelized the community for whom this gospel was written. Since he played an essential role in their faith lives, he's given important roles in their gospel. He, for instance, is the one who rests his head on Jesus' chest during the Last Supper [John 13:25], later follows him to Golgotha and receives the commission to care for Jesus' mother [John 19:26-27].

In a very real sense he's someone who not only came to believe in Jesus' resurrection, but was able to help his community achieve that same faith. No wonder the late Raymond Brown entitled his classic book on the Johannine writings: *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. There would have been no such community — nor a fourth gospel — if that particular disciple hadn't eventually realized the meaning of Jesus' empty tomb.

All our biblical Christian writings depend on a resurrected-Jesus interpretation of his missing body. If someone had stolen the body or Mary and her companions simply went to the wrong tomb that morning, then Paul's letter to the Church at Colossae could never have encouraged it's readers to die with Jesus [Colossians 3:1-4]. There would have been no reason for them to "think of what is above." Neither could Luke's Peter have assured his listeners in today's first reading that "everyone who believes in him — Jesus — will receive forgiveness of sins through his name" [Acts 1:34-43]. That forgiveness didn't happen because they went to confession, but because, by imitating Jesus' death and resurrection, they, like he, became a new creation. They didn't even have to confess those sins. The person who had committed them had died, and a new person had come into existence.

Just as I presume it took Jesus' original followers a long time to appreciate the implications of his empty tomb, so I presume some of us today might not yet have achieved that insight. We do what he asks because we want to get into heaven. But to actually experience him alive and working effectively in our daily lives might still be something down the road.

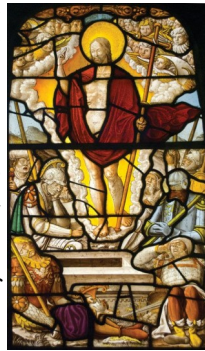
What a happy irony if we actually came to understand those implications during our celebration of Easter.

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

REMEMBER:

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

—Charles Dickens



was a way of seeing. Jesus was beginning the process of introducing them all to the unexplainable.

It seems that this annual re-celebration of national as well as religious holidays can easily blur the event or person being celebrated. For example, the celebration of St. Patrick's Day is often dimmed by excessive alcohol — and even by some Irish folks. Veteran's Day and Memorial Day get lost in history's hallways by many. Christmas and Hanukah can often default to being for the children because the historical and spiritual realities which lie at the heart of these feasts can be too much to believe and receive.

A young mother told me recently that her four-year old son asked her about the rabbit who brought the colored eggs at Easter. She sang him the song about Peter Cottontail hopping down the bunny-trail. The boy thought a little while and then asked: "Where is the bunny-trail?" "Why" and "where" and "How come" are such familiar questions from the minds of the young. Having answers is the joy of the elders — if they know the answers. And if they don't, well, then they make up some good ones.

Today a portion of the Christian community celebrates a mind-blocking, but soul-freeing mystery. A historical figure in whom a small group of people trusted as a leader, but who died, came back to life! Jesus of Nazareth, who came out of the womb now has come forth from the tomb. He was a walking-talking invitation to a new way of looking at life. He came not to solve the human experience, but to save the human experience from being fooled by easy answers.

Chickens coming out of eggs, bright flowers appearing before their spring-time, sunrise watchers rising early to be blest by its first-lights are all attempts to experience a small glimpse of this unanswerable mystery. We do not like mystery, and we fear desperately our being fooled.

So for some, is Easter reduced to bunnies and flowers to avoid a mystery or a celebration of something just foolish enough to be real? Maybe religious believing is as soft and sweet as the inside of a chocolate Easter Egg. I find debunking skepticism attractive, but as unnourishing as those same addictive delights. The Resurrection of Jesus is a bit of an insult to my mind — but a comfort to my spirit which fears abandonment. Jesus was raised, not as a reward for a good life well spent, but to untomb His sisters and brothers. If it is too embarrassing, too humbling to admit that we needed personal and universal "un-tombing" then any reason to celebrate in early spring is a convenient avoidance of the question about "Why?"

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

MAKING SENSE OUT OF MYSTERY:

After the desolate emptiness of Good Friday, we celebrate the fullness of budding life. Today, the unfolding splendor of creation is retold — flowing springs, birds singing in the branches, the earth brimming with the fruit of the works of God. This is how it is for us, too. We become depleted by our difficulties of life. Lent is long, and repentance hard. And we feel empty. But in cleaning out our interior spaces through the hard work of prayer and penitence, we have created room for inundating joy. Over the past forty days, each of us has had to give up more than we ever thought possible, certainly more than we would have voluntarily sacrificed — school shootings; devastating storms; and a higher cost of living. Life has provided plenty of individual crosses to be carried. Many of us have tried, as much as we could, to go into the darkness and confront what is there — the imperfections, the flaws, the brokenness. We surrender them to God, and offer our empty selves to him, as Christ did. And then, miraculously, those dead spaces become alive again. Our brilliant Jesuit poet G. M. Hopkins, chastened by pangs and forepangs as he was, also knew joy: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." And he saw and felt the life that asserts itself, against all odds: "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things." As we enter into Easter's dawn, beset as we are by uncertainty over the future, let us surrender to the animating spirit of love, gratitude, and hope, as we prepare to rejoice in the glory and majesty of the risen Christ.

—taken from the writings of Betsy Cahill, which appear on the internet

OUR RESURRECTION IN CHRIST:

We have come here to this sacred place, in this holy time, both of which are set apart from the rest of the world around us, in order to hear what God is saying to us. We are here, hopefully, to respond to God's call, to surrender to God's love, and to receive the Bread of Life that Jesus won for us on His Cross. May we now yield to God's love and respond to the gift He offers us here in this most important celebration in our Church.

As Catholics, we hold a sacred trust. It is our calling to remain integral with the Church of the eyewitnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Catholics, our integration with the Church of the Apostles is something that we hold precious. May we receive and always treasure what they have handed on to us.

More people come to Mass on Easter than on any other Sunday of the year — some making the effort only this one time each year. The possible motives might be habit, tradition, nostalgia, or perhaps simply because of family ties. Many are also here in profound faith. Perhaps some not of our Christian faith are here because they have heard the rumors of angels. But for all of us — whether devoted faithful or just marginally so — any spiritual indifference is jarred on this supremely important day of the year. It is important that we be grateful for all that God has done for us — and I, along with you, need to be here too.

Our egos are bruised by the truth that nothing human lasts for very long. Like April snowflakes, human lives quickly melt away. Fortunes are made and lost with unnerving ease. Entire civilizations — Aztec, Roman, Byzantine, and Renaissance, to name a few — come and go, along with philosophies such as Feudalism, Enlightenment, Fascism, and Communism. “The paths of glory head but to the grave”, wrote the British poet Thomas Gray.

Why, we ask, must everything end in death? If death is the end of life, then ultimately nothing lasts except this endless, senseless process of not lasting! If it is by happenstance that we live because of some cosmic chance, then we also died by chance — without meaning or purpose. Is there anything at all that is lasting? Is death our entrance into oblivion?

Our American culture answers the question by not facing it — by living in colossal denial and endless skepticism. Why, the skeptics ask, did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb “while it was still dark” [John 20:1-9]. Did she lack common sense? Why bother to put more expensive spices on Jesus' dead body? She did it once before, the Scriptures tell us [see John 19:38-40]. The money, Judas suggested, should have been given to the poor who could have used it to a far greater avail [see Matthew 26:9]. Dead bodies rot, the skeptics tell us. They corrupt, decompose, and eventually turn to dust.

Our Christian response is to ask if souls do likewise? Does the human personality and character — the essential elements of a human soul — come from a senseless and purposeless origin, only to return by blind chance into an empty nothingness? Does human love have nothing of anything that lasts? Another Englishman — the writer Hugh Walpole — once had one of his characters declare: “There is a sniff of immortality about our love for one another.”

Some claim that the followers of Jesus fabricated Easter's fantastic story simply to calm their own fears of dying. They knew well where Jesus had died; they knew where His body lay buried [see Matthew 27:64].

Having left their careers and businesses, having left everything in order to be with Him, all of their hopes had been smashed. But for them to construct a fable out of such ash and debris would have made no sense whatsoever — an absurdity out of absurdities dwarfing the simple truth of what those disciples did in fact report. The Church always remembers that those very same Apostles went on to die for what they had witnessed that First Easter. They did not die for a fable that they had made up.



To celebrate Easter is to affirm that all of this is true. But that also asks something of us. As the critic in the *New York Times* so aptly put it, that we strain to hear the sound of that girl's singing, that we struggle to keep her, and her song, in our hearts. She is still alive in God's heart, and we must keep her alive in ours as well.

Why? Not for sentimental reasons, nor simply because her story is exceptional. No. We must keep her alive in our hearts because her song is the leaven, the yeast, of the resurrection and that, that alone, can raise us up to become exceptional too.

One of the tasks of Easter is to strain to hear the voices of Good Friday.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Acts 2:14-33, Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday: Acts 2:36-41, John 20:11-18

Wednesday: Acts 3:1-10, Luke 24:13-35

Thursday: Acts 3:11-26, Luke 24:35-48

Friday: Acts 4:1-12, John 21:1-14

Saturday: Acts 4:13-21, Mark 16:9-15

2nd Week in Easter: Acts 2:42-47, 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 20:19-31

EASTER'S QUESTION:

Easter comes out ringing in terms that we all hear if we seek to hear it — that the soul of the human person is immortal. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have fit testimony that this earthly life is not the end, that death is just something of a turn in the road, that life moves down a continual moving river, and that death is just a little turn in the river, that this earthly life is merely an embryonic prelude to a new awakening, that death is not a period which ends this great sentence of life but a comma that punctuates it to more loftier significance. That is what it says. That is the meaning of Easter. That is the question that Easter answers — that death is not the end.

—Martin Luther King, Jr

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, April 1]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 2,570.00

Offerings-----[Sunday, April 2]----- \$ 222.00

A VOICE THAT NEVER DIES:

Easter is about many things. We celebrate God's power to overcome death, sin, and injustice, but we also celebrate the voices and wounds of the ones who died on Good Friday. To illustrate this, I would like to recount one such voice — that of an anonymous, young woman who was brutally raped and murdered by the Salvadoran military in 1981, at a place fittingly called: "La Cruz." The story was reported by Mark Danner, a journalist.

He describes how, after this particular massacre, some soldiers told how one of their victims haunted them and how they could not get her out of their minds long after her death. They had plundered a village and raped many of the women. One of these was a young woman — an evangelical Christian — who had been raped many times in a single afternoon and subsequently tortured. However, throughout this all, this young woman, clung to her belief in Christ and sang hymns. Here's how one of the soldiers described it:

She kept on singing — even after they had shot her in the chest. She had lain there in La Cruz with the blood flowing from her chest, and had kept on singing — a bit weaker than before, but still singing. And the soldiers, stupefied, had watched and pointed. Then they had grown tired of the game and shot her again, and she sang still, and their wonder began to turn to fear — until finally they unsheathed their machetes and hacked her neck and at last the singing stopped.

Gil Bailie, who recounts this story in his monumental book on the cross and non-violence, notes not just the remarkable similarity between her death and that of Jesus, but also the fact that, in both cases, resurrection means that their voices live on when everything about their deaths suggest that their voices should have died.

The task of Easter is to rekindle the creed within ourselves.

In Jesus' case, nobody witnessing his humiliating death on a lonely hillside, with his followers absent, would have predicted that this would be the most remembered death in history. The same is true for this young woman. Her rape and murder occurred in a very remote place, and all of those who might have wanted to immortalize her story were also killed. Yet her voice survives — and will, no doubt, continue to grow in importance, long after all those who violated and killed her are forgotten. As both Jesus and this young girl illustrate, powerlessness and anonymity, are linked to a heart that can sing the words: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!" while being raped and humiliated, ultimately become their opposite, power and immortality.

A death of this kind not only scars morally the conscience of its perpetrators and their sympathizers, it leaves something that can never be forgotten — a permanent echo that nobody will ever silence. What God raises up after Good Friday is also the voice of the one who died.

A critic reviewing Danner's book in the *New York Times*, tells how, after reading this story, he kept "straining" to hear the sound of that singing.

The task of Easter is to rekindle the creed within ourselves. The earliest Christians, immediately upon experiencing the resurrected Jesus, spontaneously voiced a one-line creed: "Jesus is Lord!" That does, in fact, say it all. When we affirm that Jesus has been raised from the dead and is Lord of this world, we are saying everything else within our faith as well.

In essence, we are saying that God is ultimately still in charge of this universe, despite any indications to the contrary; that brutality and rape notwithstanding, at the end of the day violence, injustice, and sin will be silenced and overcome; that graciousness and gentleness, as manifested in Jesus, are ultimately what lies at the root of all reality; that this young woman, so brutally violated, has now been raised and lives, joyfully, in the heart of God; and that her death, like Jesus', is redemptive precisely because, like him, she too, in the face of helplessness before the worst brutality the world could perpetrate, could still say: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!"



No, the simple truth of the Resurrection is that it was God's unselfish love that has conquered all. It was not the Apostles' selfish fears that are the foundation of their account. It is the unconquerable reality of Christ's unselfish love — a love that cannot die. Death has no dominion over that sort of love, coming as it does from God's love made incarnate in human flesh and blood. Nobility of soul, heroic courage, priceless love, soaring character, selfless living without counting the cost, generative and creative commitment — these are the pieces of circumstantial evidence pointing to God's gift of human immortality given to us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Easter message is the rumor that there is more within us than we dare to believe. Hopefully that is what now brings so many back to the Church — particularly during her birthing time — Easter. Hopefully that will bring us all here each and every Sunday — those special days that are in themselves "little Easters".

In Luke's Gospel, we find the disciples leaving Jerusalem after the disaster they had experienced in Christ's crucifixion and death. There on the road to Emmaus, they were trying to make sense of it all [see Luke 24:13-27]. Many of us could well walk with them — especially those who live in war-torn Ukraine or in the parts of our country devastated by the recent Tornadoes. Each of us travels his or her spiritual journey. Each of us interprets events and tries to gain insights in our own ways. What we all are called upon to recognize is that Jesus is with us, not only collectively in His Mystical Body, but also individually.

In our quest to find answers, we must begin with the love of God — the God who has taken on our humanity and all that the forces of darkness in our world can hurl at us. God can be found in the passion and death of Jesus. God can be gloriously found in Christ's resurrection, and found in the power of God's Holy Spirit who comes to us in the Risen Christ. Our Ancient Enemy — Satan — lives in defeat and despair, a condition in which he wants all of us to live. God, however, cannot be outdone by our Ancient Enemy. He sent us His Christ to give us His life-giving Holy Spirit — that gift that Christ handed over to us when He died on the cross, that gift that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and that gift we all receive when we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost.

May the Spirit who infused the dead humanity of Jesus Christ and raised it in glory, likewise infuses us in our humanity, and fill us with God's life. If you surrender to His presence — to the Spirit-filled Christ who left nothing to chance — He will love you, and gather you into Himself, and raise your humanity in His, into a new and higher life — one in which the glory of God is revealed to all who know you.

Truly, as was said so long ago: "The glory of God is humanity fully alive." And that glory, if you surrender to Him who died to give it to you, is yours. For Christ is truly risen and can be found now in the likes of you and me. Alleluia!

—taken from the writings of Father Charles Irvin, which appears 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.



POVERTY and SALVATION:

Only those who are poor in spirit, in need of salvation, who beg for grace, present themselves before God without pretense or presumption. Having nothing, they therefore find everything, because they find the Lord.

—Pope Francis

THE EMPTINESS OF EASTER:

Easter is certainly a joyful feast. But the beginning of Easter is emptiness. There is not a gospel writer who tells the story of Easter by beginning with the risen Christ. Every gospel writer begins with the empty tomb. Matthew's Gospel proves this point [Matthew 28:1-10]. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come. But what they first see is not Jesus, but the empty tomb, and they hear the angel's announcement. Only then do they encounter the risen Christ and embrace him.

First comes emptiness; then comes rejoicing. First comes absence; then comes glory. Now Easter begins with emptiness because life begins with emptiness. Every time we take a step forward in life we must leave something behind. Before we can embrace new life, we must empty ourselves of the life we already possess. Before we can take our first breath, we have to leave the comfort of our mother's womb. Before we can commit ourselves to someone in marriage, we have to let go of our independence. Before we can respond to a vocation or a career, we have to let go of all the other things that we might be called to do. If we are going to receive new life, we must be empty enough to accept it.

This is why Jesus asks us not to fill ourselves up with other things. If we fill ourselves and are satisfied — if we fill our lives with resentment, anger, jealousy, or grief — Christ is still risen, but we might not be able to accept the Good News because there is no room for it. If we fill up our lives with goods and gadgets, if we spend our time with stratagems to increase our own importance, God still loves us. But we can never appreciate that love because there is no space to take it in. This is why Jesus spent so much of his time talking to those who were poor, hungry, and rejected. Jesus knew that they were empty enough to hear him. It is the suffering, the grieving, the poor, who have more than enough room to let God's love in.



St. Paul certainly knew this truth because he used it to describe our Baptism, our entry into Christ. He said that first we must die with Christ in the waters of Baptism so that we could rise to new life [see Colossians 3:1-4]. We first must be buried with Christ — emptied by Christ of whatever holds us back — so that we might rise from the waters and walk in the newness of life.

So if Easter begins with emptiness, the way to celebrate Easter is to locate our own emptiness. That could be the emptiness of loss because someone who we love is no longer with us. It could be the emptiness of fear — the fear of a medical condition, the fear of deteriorating health because of advancing age, or the fear of economic hardship. It could be the emptiness of disappointment — disappointment in ourselves or disappointment in others in whom we trusted. It might simply be that we have no direction in life — we do not know where we are going, and we know we need to find a direction soon. Whatever your emptiness is, do not deny it — claim it. Emptiness is not a liability — it is an opportunity. When we claim our emptiness, we own our dependence on God. When we claim our need we open the door to Easter. The Risen Christ calls us to new life. Let us stand before him today in our emptiness and let his resurrection in.

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

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

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



BELIEVING IN MYSTERY:

How easy it is to say: "I know" someone. Yet, the more we know one another, the more we realize that human beings are ever-unfolding mysteries. So too with our faith. Each week, we recite the profession of faith as if we really understood the words we are saying. On occasion, we even pay attention to them.

Today, we hear Peter proclaim a creed describing the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Peter was addressing Cornelius and his household — gentile people who were already following God's Spirit, ready to go where the Spirit would lead [Acts 10:34-43]. By telling the story of Cornelius about halfway through the Acts of the Apostles, Luke implies that Resurrection faith is not a one-time event, but a process. This realization helps us as we read John's multilayered account of "the first day."

John opens this story as the very beginning of the new creation — "On the first day of the week while it was still dark" [John 20:1-9]. This description awakens tremendous admiration for Mary of Magdala as someone who could face the darkness and chaos, if not with hope, at least ready to honor and lament what had been. Unlike the disciples who had vanished from the public eye, she was willing to confront the void in public.

Then the void exploded into an unintelligible chasm — the tomb had been disturbed, the realm of death had been disrupted. The only possible explanation — someone had stolen the body. There was nothing more to do than to search for her friends who had gone into hiding. She announced the unthinkable truth as she understood it: "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him." When Peter and the other disciple followed Mary's lead and went to the tomb, the scene awaiting them looked nothing like a grave robbery. Who would steal a body and first remove the burial cloths? All of this to hint that Jesus' death was nothing like the death they understood.

John's Gospel ends enigmatically. On the one hand, the Gospel writer tells us that the other disciple "saw and believed." On the other hand, the last thing we hear is that: "They did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead." When we ask: "which was it?", perhaps the best answer is: "both."

The first time Jesus speaks in John's Gospel, he asks: "What are you looking for?" [John 1:38]. When dumbfounded disciples reply that they wish to know where he dwells, he responds: "Come and see." Through the entire Gospel, disciples try to understand who Jesus is — although they continually miss the mark, they remain with him and gradually grow in their knowledge. On the first day, after seeing all their hopes dashed, the disciples were confronted with the mystery. The very best they could do was believe in mystery, open themselves to hope that life was not what they thought it was after the Crucifixion. They believed even while they did not understand.

We would expect a better story for the principal liturgy on Easter Sunday. But that was the work of the Easter Vigil — the most exquisite of liturgical pageants that takes us through salvation history from creation to Christ's resurrection. At the Easter Vigil, we heard the announcement; on Easter Sunday, we begin the joyful pilgrimage of the Easter season that moves us bit by bit, not only into believing, but into understanding better what this feast means for our lives.

Paul's invitation to "seek what is above", is not an appeal to abandon this life, but to believe that Christ and his resurrection have revealed that everything is oriented to union with God [Colossians 3:1-4]. That's the mystery we know and try to understand.

Most of us would say that we know what Easter signifies. But the Easter liturgy invites us to a bit more humility about God's ever-new creation. Let us join Mary and the disciples who believed so firmly that they could accept the fact that they did not understand. Remember, the Easter celebration that begins today is 50 days long.

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

But, to use a biblical term, in the fullness of time — that means when God saw fit — the Eternal Word of God came as the new Adam, the one who would choose life [see Galatians 4]. Through a paradox beyond our understanding, Jesus' death was a means for restoring life to his brothers and sisters — to us.

Jesus rose from the dead and became the source of spiritual life to all who believe in Him. This is why we call out: Alleluia. We are dead no more, but alive in the Lord. The sign of our acceptance of the Life of the Lord is our baptism — or, more properly, our living our baptismal commitment.

But how about those who have never been baptized? What happened to the just Jew — like Martin Buber — or the spiritual Hindu — like Mohatma Ghandi — or the moral, humanitarian atheist, like so many we all know? How about these people? Do they have no future after death? We prayed for these people in the ancient petitions of Good Friday. Why did we pray for them? If they have no spiritual life, then they are dead. But, they are not dead. Our faith teaches us that Jesus descended to the dead. He called forth from death those who desired to do what was right and good, people of good will, who by choosing to be moral were therefore choosing to have union with God no matter what concept of God they had. Theologians have a name for their salvation — they call it Baptism of Desire.

Every Good Friday, I marvel at the people who came up to venerate the cross. I am blessed to know many of their stories — your stories. I see people come forward expressing a deep faith that the Lord will care for them and their loved ones — a deep trust that all will be well even if the future is uncertain. They represent all the people who are in pain right now, all those who are suffering. They represented those who are fighting cancer and other serious ailments. I also thought about and prayed for those whose marriages or families have fallen apart, the single parents, the parentless children. All of these came up to venerate the cross. All of these, like all serious Christians, have found happiness in their hope.

St. Augustine loved that phrase — happiness in hope. He used it several times in his greatest work, *The City of God*, to describe the Christian attitude in life. It is true that we have to do everything possible to bring peace and justice to the world — this is our way of serving Christ's presence in the poor and downtrodden. We certainly have to protect the lives of those who have been conceived but have not yet been born. It is true that we have to fight to end poverty in our country and in our world. We cannot turn our backs on people who are suffering — whether they be Americans or people in another country or continent. We have to demand that those in leadership use their authority justly in a Christ like way. And yet, we know that in the end, our society cannot provide lasting happiness for anyone. The human society can only provide lasting happiness if it is united to God — if it is a City of God.

We Christians have as our happiness the hope of eternal life. Easter is the celebration of hope. Our hope is that we will share in the fullness of the New Life Jesus won for us through His suffering and death.

Christ was raised so we can share His New Life. We need to grasp on to our faith with both hands. Only our faith brings sanity and meaning and purpose to our lives. Sickness and death, turmoil, unemployment, and all sorts of other crises enter our lives, but our faith gets us through because despite the suffering we have happiness in hope. No one can take the Risen Savior from us. No one and no situation — no matter how terrible — can take His Presence from us.

This is the Gift of Easter! We have entered the spiritual. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. May our spiritual lives have an infinite precedence over our physical lives. May the life of the Risen Lord flow through our veins, so that every thought word and deed of our lives may shout out: Jesus Lives!

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



ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

At all our Masses on the weekend, April 29-30, we will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Illness and suffering have always been part of human life. In illness, we experience our powerlessness, our limitations, and our mortality. Every illness can make us glimpse death. Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption — sometimes even despair and anger against God. It can also make us more mature — helping us discern in our lives what is not essential so that we can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to Him.

The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments, there is one very special sacrament which is intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness. The **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to by Mark in his gospel, but is recommended to the faithful and more fully explained in the letter of James the Apostle [James 5:14-15].

Most of us remember the time when the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was conferred exclusively on those who were at the point of death; it's very name — “Extreme Unction” [Last Anointing] reminded us of this practice. But it is clear from the scriptures that this was never the intent of the sacrament. The early Church had an entirely different approach to this sacrament; the Vatican council restored this approach and returned the sacrament to its original name. Today, this beautiful sacrament allows us a special encounter with God during those times of illness in our lives. The cross always leads to the resurrection; sickness leads to salvation.

When are the times when we can receive this sacrament? There are many occasions — during any serious illness; before surgery; the elderly; mental and emotional illness; spiritual struggle; approaching death. Who determines when an illness is serious? You do! Whenever you feel you need the sacrament you should receive it. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has been the vehicle of many powerful encounters with God in the lives of people. **If you have or know of friends or relatives who should receive this sacrament, please try to arrange for them to be here. If there is a problem with local transportation, please let us know.** Join us for this special occasion.

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — APRIL 15th:

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. This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.



FINDING CHRIST IN A SECULAR EASTER:

I recently heard someone ranting about how commercialized Easter has become, and how there is “no trace of Christ” left in His holiday. I understood the person’s concerns — and I agreed, in part, with their assertions. The more I got to thinking about it, though, I felt like their thoughts — while valid — were a little bit short sighted.

Christ is everywhere. His death and resurrection are everywhere. We just need to know where to look and how to uncover them. If your focus is on Christ and your heart set on His love, you can take almost anything the world dishes out and point it back to the message of the cross — the most important message of love and freedom.

Take, for instance, the staples of a secular Easter celebration — bunny rabbits hopping around; boiling, painting and hiding eggs; the Easter baskets with fake grass; chocolate bunnies and candy — you get the idea. Now, we know that these are counterfeit interpretations of the true meaning of Easter. It’s not like any of these have anything to do, really, with the Christ rising from the dead, right? What if we open our minds up a little bit more to make some less obvious associations between the items above the Gospel message?

You don’t have to read statistics to know what the sexual culture is on most college and high school campuses across our country. Young adults are mating like rabbits, hopping from broken “relationship” to broken “relationship,” from bed to bed, in search of a forever love that only the risen Christ can give. Your body is designed by God. It is a gift from God. Live chastity — that’s an Easter message.

Many people have become hardened like boiled eggs because when they find themselves in hot water situations. They form a shell around their heart rather than letting God crack them. Your heart was created by God. It is a gift from God. Only He can fill it — that’s an Easter message.

Many people paint themselves a “different color” than who they truly are or are called to be. Virtual realities like *Facebook*, *TicTok*, and *Instagram* have become a cult phenomenon where people can create the persona they most want to be, or that they most want others to see — afraid to show their true selves, a slave to culture and public opinion. Christ died because of public opinion. He rose because of Divine design. It doesn’t matter what the world says or thinks — only what God thinks. You are unique, created by God. Only God’s opinions matters — that’s an Easter message.

Many people hide themselves like eggs. They want to “stand out” in culture, but not to “stick out”. They hide those beautifully unique parts of themselves that others might not accept. Others hide the messy areas of their lives — their sins — in fear that God won’t forgive, accept, or love them. Christ came for sinners — not for the righteous [see Matthew 9:13]. Christ came to expose everything in His light. He is bigger than your sin and is setting you apart — the word “holy” means “to set apart”. Only God loves you perfectly — that’s an Easter message.

Many people are putting all their eggs in one basket — praying for fame or fortune — and promising that once they have it, they will then use it to point back to God. God doesn’t work that way. The cross teaches us that in order to become great, you must become weak — to be the most you must become the least. Not the other way around. Stardom is not a tool to evangelize people — holiness is the tool. Famous people who do lead others to God are to be commended; but fame is not the goal — sanctity is the goal. If it’s about the fame, your life will be as fleeting and useless as that fake grass in the basket holding all the eggs. You were created to put your faith — eggs — in God’s basket. Trust the Lord [see Proverbs 3:5-6]. Only God’s plan for you will make you happy — that’s an Easter message.

Many people want to be seen as attractive, pleasing, and alluring. They want to be the center of attention, the goal of others’ pursuits, and the most sought after of all. They are a lot like those chocolate



bunnies that people love so much. Of course, we all know that too much of those makes you sick, gives you acne, clog your arteries, can induce a sugar coma, and ruin your diet and appetite. Not to mention that most of them are hollow. Christ did not come for us to be more attractive on the outside — for God cares more about our “insides” [see 1 Samuel 16:7]. It isn’t about the wrapper or the sugar, it’s about the substance. You are not a hollow shell if Christ is at the center of your life. Only God’s life will fill you — and others — up — that’s an Easter message.

So, maybe Christ is more present in secularized notions of Easter than I thought upon first glance. In fact, when I take a deeper look, I not only see Christ more clearly in those situations. But I see how desperately this culture is in need of Him, and how urgently we, who seek to know and love Christ, need to become more like Him every day.

The answer is not in eliminating the secular images from the spiritual meanings. The answer is in showing the need for the spiritual within the secular — to shed light on all that culture deems “Easter” by loving them into a greater understanding of what Easter is really about — death to this world and life in the next.

—taken from the writings of Mark Hart, the Bible Geek.

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].**



NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

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



EASTER — HAPPINESS IN HOPE:

The flowers, the Easter appointments, the joyful music, the Alleluias, even the Easter suits and dresses — and for some, bonnets — all proclaim our joy in the renewal of the world, our Easter joy. The celebration of Easter stands in stark contrast to our commemoration of Good Friday. On Good Friday there were no flowers, no alleluias, no solemn music — there was the Cross. And yet, both Good Friday and Easter, as well as Holy Thursday, are bound together into one celebration — the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. The name paschal refers to the lamb who was sacrificed and whose sacrifice brought life.

You see, before Jesus’ sacrifice, humankind had lost the capacity to have a spiritual life. Our sin — our decision to push God out of our life — destroyed our spiritual life. God is the Lord of Life, but we had decided that we did not need God. Our choice of sin was a choice of death. Our pushing God aside allowed the devil to have free reign on the earth. Without God, without a spiritual life, our existence was limited to the here and now. There was no hereafter for us. No eternity. Life ended — and that was that.