

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for Guidance ~**

Teach me Father  
To do your will.  
Show me Father  
How you feel.

Open my mind  
And let me see  
The way I should live,  
The way I should be.

Teach me to love  
The way you do;  
Cleanse my heart  
And make it new.

Help me understand  
The things I read;  
Give me knowledge  
Of the things I need.

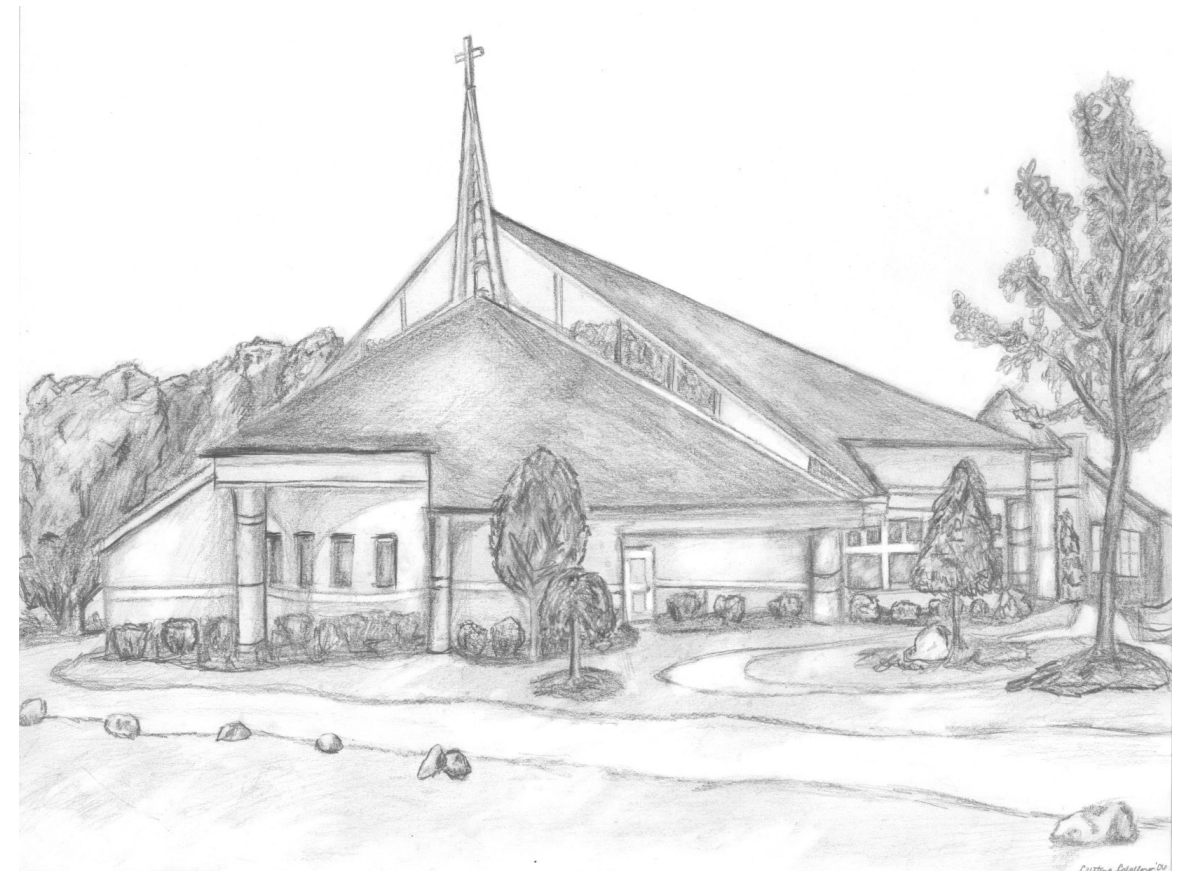
Give me boldness  
Like the Apostle Paul;  
Open my ears  
When you call.

Give me strength —  
Like your loving son.  
Thank You Father,  
I know it's done.  
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.*

**FATHER JOHN CONTINUES HIS RECOVERY:**

Father John is doing very well, and continues to recover at home in Holy Cross House on campus. His physical therapist and nurses are making sure he is on track! He would like to thank everyone once again this week, for the prayers, cards and greetings that he has received. They are all making his recovery that much easier!

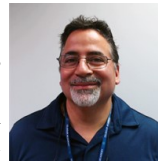
During Father's time of recuperation, **Saturday evening Masses will be cancelled; they will resume on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Sunday morning Mass will continue to take place throughout this time at 10 AM. Father John Keenan, S.S.S., a Blessed Sacrament Priest, will be the presider for our Sundays in June.** If any further changes need to be made to this schedule, we will certainly inform you. In the mean time, please continue to hold Father John in prayer for his speedy recovery.

**Welcome, Fr. Keenan, and thank you for your service to our community during this time!**

**ANDY ANDINO—FAREWELL RECEPTION AFTER MASS:**

We say good-bye to our multi-talented **Music Director, Andy Andino**, after Mass this Sunday with a Coffee & Donut Reception outside at the Shrine. Sunday is Andy's last day with us, before he leaves to accept a position at St. John Bosco Parish in Parma. For the past 5 years, Andy has shared his amazing musical talents, his faith and love of the Lord with us, and we have all grown and encountered the Lord Jesus through his ministry. God bless you and journey with you in the days ahead, Andy, and know that our support and prayers go with you.

**CHAPEL OUTDOOR PICNIC — SUNDAY, JULY 9:**

**Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>.** Every year, the Chapel picnic has been a great event for the entire family. The picnic will be held rain or shine from **11:15 AM – 1:30 PM. Family Mass takes place at 10:00 AM** and the picnic begins right after Mass — what a wonderful way to continue our celebration of community. **This year, due to construction around Tudor House, the Picnic will take place on the grounds & in the dining room of the Lower School, at 35001 Cedar Rd.** Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, Ice-cream treats and beverages are provided. It will be a great event for the entire family. **This year we will have no way to refrigerate your pot luck dishes, so please bring you own cooler, or consider non-perishable recipes & desserts.** Come and enjoy family and friends. **Swiftly and a face-painter friend will join us, as will the Euclid Beach Rocket Car.** In order to properly prepare for our picnic, we ask that you please **RSVP by July 2<sup>nd</sup> to Patty [440-473-3560]** in the chapel office, or simply **sign the sheet on the easel in the narthex of the chapel.**

**ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPEL:**

Due to the construction around the Commons, the entrance by Fr. John's office [double white doors] has been closed to all traffic. **Please enter the Chapel and/or offices at the main front entrance by the Shrine, ONLY!** Thank you.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- 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 Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken's nephew, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Frank Potenziani, former Trustee, and father of David ['95] and Cyrena ['01] Potenziani, who is seriously ill.
- For Gia Cefferati, aunt of Ryllyn ['23] and Jackson ['25] Anderson, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Carl Grassi, father of US Science instructor, Jessica Simonetta ['05] and grandfather of Clare Simonetta ['39], who continues to recover from open heart surgery.
- For Bob Anderson, grandfather of Rob Belknap ['21], and father of former Gilmour instructor, Cindy Anderson., who is recovering from serious surgery.
- For Joe Bucar, housekeeping employee, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease
- For Susan Lennon, wife of John Lennon ['55], grandmother of Jimmy ['30] and Katelyn ['32] Lennon, who is recovering from leg amputation surgery
- For John Lennon ['55], grandmother of Jimmy ['30] and Katelyn ['32] Lennon, who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.
- For Tim LaGanke, grandfather of Casey Lennon ['30], who is critically ill with Lymphoma.
- For Kathy DeMarco, sister of Chapel Associate, Patty Szaniszló, who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.
- For Vivian Klick, mother of Linda Monitello, grandmother of Anthony ['17] and Angeline ['19] Monitello, who is undergoing medical testing.
- For Father John who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Marie Chess, who is in rehab following a 10-day hospital stay.
- For Stella Rogal, mother of Jill Thompson, who is in outpatient physical therapy following hospitalization for a heart procedure.
- For Bernadette Ritley, mother of Rosanne Rayborn, who is recovering from shoulder surgery.
- For Dorothy Coerd, former Gilmour/Glen Oak Teacher, mother of Thomas ['78] and Timothy ['80], grandmother of Elizabeth Coerd Colvin ['11], who is critically ill following brain surgery.
- For Beth Budaji, mother of Kate Budaji McKay ['06], who is seriously ill.

**FOR THE DECEASED:**

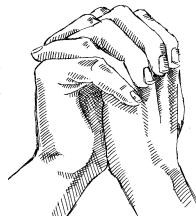
- For Brother Donald Blauvelt, C.S.C.
- For Brother James DeTemple, C.S.C.
- For James Masterson
- For Steve O'Neill, brother of Patrick ['80], Dan ['82] and Brian ['95], brother-in-law of Mary Jo McHenry ['87], uncle of Brennan ['23] O'Neill, and Cousin to many Gilmour graduates.
- For Joseph Soukenik, father of Anthony ['78] and Joseph ['80] Soukenik, and grandfather of Jack ['10], Anna ['12], Eliza ['16] and Mira ['19] Soukenik.
- For Brother James Miller, C.S.C.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For Dale Rusnik, uncle of Jakob Bennish ['30], who is undergoing treatment for various medical issues.
- 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 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 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 continues 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 undergoing 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 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 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's 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.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JULY 5<sup>th</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, July 5<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: Leisure Time and Vacation in Scripture**

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, June 25: 12 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, June 26:	NO MASS
Tuesday, June 27:	NO MASS
Wednesday, June 28: St. Irenaeus, Bishop & Martyr	NO MASS
Thursday, June 29: Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles	NO MASS
Friday, June 30:	NO MASS
Saturday, July 1: 13 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	NO MASS
Sunday, July 2: 13 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**PLAY BALL! THIS FRIDAY, JUNE 30<sup>th</sup>:**

This week, we will be reaching out to all those who signed up for the Captain's Baseball Game, in order to make arrangements for you to pick up & pay for your tickets, in the Chapel Office. If you are coming during the week, please call the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] to make sure someone will be here, due to reduced summer office hours.



Here are the details once more for "Game Night:" This **Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>** we will be going to Classic Park to watch the Lake County Captains take on Fort Wayne Tin Caps. Game time is **7:00 PM**. **Tickets are \$25.00 each and include game ticket, picnic dinner and postgame 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks.** The picnic begins at **6:30 PM** and will continue until 8 PM. We look forward to a great night for all!

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

“Fear no one!” Got it? That’s Jesus’ command. You would think that as someone walking around in a body that could trip and fall, bleed, bruise and even suffer a concussion, he would have gone a little easier on his disciples. Is his command supposed to be encouraging? What ever happened to “Hide me in the shadow of your wings?” [Psalms 17, 36, 57, and 63].

When it comes to fear, Shel Silverstein summarized it quite well in his poem: *What if*. “What if I get beat up? What if there’s poison in my cup? What if I flunk that test? What if green hair grows on my chest?” Practical, terrifying, social, physical and even genuinely mortal, we recognize and invent threats that can make fear the background music of much of our life.

Admit it, we are easily frightened — and that’s the root of many of the world’s problems. We lie or let others get away with it because we are afraid of the truth’s consequences. We are selfish or steal because we fear we won’t have enough or think we are not enough in ourselves without something that gives us status. We go along with the crowd, putting up with what we know is unacceptable because we are afraid that integrity will cost too much.

We are not mistaken about the price of integrity. Just listen to Jeremiah — “I hear everybody whispering against me. All my old friends are laying traps and just waiting for me to make a mistake!” [Jeremiah 20:10-13]. Jeremiah knows the cost of doing what is right. But poor Jeremiah. Even while he is striving to be godly, he gets caught up in the dance of his enemies — he complains about their attempts to take vengeance on him and then he asks God to wreak vengeance on them. Somehow, he misses the irony of using wicked power against the wicked.

In the light of this, what is Jesus’ advice? He tells us: “Don’t be afraid — at least not of those who can’t do more than kill you” [Matthew 10:26-33]. Let’s not use this Gospel passage to comfort children who worry about a monster under the bed or whether their friends will make fun of them for not having the guts to steal something from the store. Unpopularity and bullies are exactly what terrify them. It’s not easy to get over that!

At one point, it sounds like even Jesus is proposing the power plays of the wicked. What does he mean by saying: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in the realm of the dead?” Is he saying: “Don’t fear murder by your enemy; watch out instead for what God can do to you?” That’s the sort of thinking that fire-and-brimstone preachers use to put the fear of God into their audiences — “Oh, you sinner! You think that gun can hurt you? You worry about thugs? Just imagine how much stronger God is! If somebody can hurt you for a day, what about the eternal God who can torment you beyond the end of time!”

Is that an adequate description of God? Of the tender-hearted Creator who watches over the dying sparrow and whose attention to you is so extravagant as to have numbered the hairs on your head? Something is off-kilter in this picture.

If Jesus is not warning us about a vengeful God, what is it that Jesus wants us to worry about? The best way to figure that out is to look at his life, because for Jesus, as for any human being, the way he lived interprets the words he spoke.

Jesus didn’t worry about those who could — and did — take his life. Nobody and no threat could shake his integrity. His self-possession and consecration to mission were grounded in his relationship with his Father. In light of that, it seems that Jesus was not warning his disciples about God, but about the demonic, the people and powers that could tempt even him to pride, domination and capitulation and who lured his disciples into competition and betrayal. Bodily harm can be inflicted by outsiders, but lack

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JULY 15<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 non-perishables 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.

**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.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Genesis 12:1-9, Matthew 7:1-5
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Genesis 13:2, 5-18, Matthew 7:6, 12-14
<b>Wednesday:</b>	2 Timothy 2:22b-26, John 17:20-26
<b>Thursday:</b>	Acts 12:1-11 & 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19
<b>Friday:</b>	Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22, Matthew 8:1-4
<b>Saturday:</b>	Genesis 18:1-15, Matthew 8:5-17

**13<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a, Romans 6:3-4, 8-11, Matthew 10:37-42

on a cross [see Philippians 2:8] for you and I. That was Him living His best life. A life full of misunderstanding and anger towards Him, a life with betrayal and lack of love, a life of suffering and dying to oneself, a mediocre life, yet a life worth living because of His love for us.

Jesus is the perfect example of #LivingMyBestLife — not because He always got to enjoy an easy life, but rather because He made the most out of His circumstances. He found simplicity in His everyday life and embraced it, focusing not on what He would get out of it, but on what would benefit others the most. Every step towards the cross for Him, meant a step closer to Heaven for those He loved most. That is the mediocre life we should all aim to post about. —taken from the writings of Juan Aznaran, a teen.

### PONDER THIS:

His story is the classic of classics. His message, when presented as intended, remains today as offensive as it did in the 1st century. He could squeeze infinity into a single sentence. He asked the impossible, did the incredible, and loved the unlovable. He spent thirty years preparing for the most effective three years of public life ever lived. He spoke to relatively small crowds throughout His life. Yet, He has changed the world more than any one person.

His preaching is aimed for the heart, not head. No one who genuinely meets Him ever stays the same. He involved Himself in the problems of any person who crossed His path. Not once did He turn down a direct request for help. He truly was a man for others.

He is a man with a thousand faces. He is pictured in different images in every culture and civilization. He was a fun person to be around because the Gospels reveal people constantly invited Him to eat with them. His words were short, precise, terrible, and full of refreshment. Unlike Confucius who searched for truth, He said: “I am the truth.”

He never met a disease He couldn’t cure, a birth defect He couldn’t reverse, or demon He couldn’t exorcise. Judas was not the last person to betray Him, merely the most famous. He left no home or belongings that could be enshrined in a museum. We would know nothing about Him except for the traces He left in us.

As we are, He was. As He is, we must become. He came to make bad people good and good people kind. Since we cannot give to Him directly, He has delegated the poor to be the receivers of our generosity. They are His ambassadors. We meditate on Him. Then we go out into alleys and look for Him in disguise.

It is extraordinary that our belief rests on a Man whose message was rejected, whose love was spurned, who was condemned as a criminal and executed. He came not to solve the problem of pain, but teach us how to endure it. He is God’s yes to all God’s promises.

He died to save us. He lives to keep us. There has never been a better storyteller than He. If the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, His life and death are those of a God. It’s remarkable that He who lived out his life 2000 years ago should have such a remarkable effect on our lives. Jesus is the best kept secret of Christianity.

—taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooly which appear on the internet



of integrity is an inside job that damages or can even destroy the soul.

“Fear no one,” says Jesus. The paschal mystery tells us that death need be no more fearsome than losing hair. Speaking today, Jesus might say it this way: “You who live in a fragile body. I know what it’s like. Don’t let fear reign! Accept it, you are going to pass through many transitions, including death, and you’ll find more life on the other side.”

Put more simply, Jesus is asking us: “What if you just lived in the freedom of the children of God?”  
—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appears on the internet.

### RENEWING OUR EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY:

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, in conjunction with St. Paschal Baylon Parish, is hosting a weekend conference on *Renewing Our Eucharistic Spirituality*, Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.

St. Paschal Baylon Parish is located at 5384 Wilson Mills Road Highland Heights, 44143. Featured Speakers include: Bishop Michael Woost, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland; Father Norman Pelletier SSS, former Superior General of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament; Sister Catherine Marie Caron SSS, former Superior General of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament; Father George Dunne SSS, Dublin, Ireland, former Provincial Superior, Province of Great Britain; Brother Michael Perez SSS, former Novice Master; Father John Thomas Lane SSS, Provincial Superior; and Father Darren Maslen SSS, Great Britain; and Mrs. Evamarie Cross, Youth Minister. Please contact St. Paschal Baylon Parish to register.



### COME TO THE FEST — AUGUST 6<sup>th</sup>:

Join us on Sunday, August 6, 2023 to enjoy the BEST national Christian artists

— **Katy Nichole, Big Daddy Weave, Jeremy Camp, and Chris Tomlin** — along with inspiring displays and vendors, and amazing activities, inflatables, rock walls and entertainment for the kids and grandkids, Marc’s Moms Station & the Man Cave. There is plenty of **FREE parking near the seminary**. Find out all the details by going to: [www.theFEST.us](http://www.theFEST.us). Even if you can’t make it

during the day, **join Bishop Malesic at 8 PM for an inspiring outdoor Mass, followed by fireworks**.

This year’s is also the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord — “Jesus took Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother, John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light, and they were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” As we come together for The FEST, it’s a moment where we, together, climb the holy mountain to spend time with the Lord. Jesus calls us out each of us to “Rise, and do not be afraid.”

### EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

We are currently discerning a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training within the summer months. We already have students from our Junior Class at Gilmour who are preparing to enter into instruction in this Ministry. 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 going into Senior year of 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.



### THE COURAGE TO BE A WITNESS:

This week I would like to speak with you about the call we have received to be witnesses to Christ. It takes tremendous courage to give witness to Christ. Perhaps we don't have to be afraid of being put to death for Christ as so many of the martyrs were — or as so many Christians still are in territories ruled by radical Islam, radical Hindi, etc. But we certainly risk being seriously hurt by the most influential people we might know.

Standing for the Lord, being His Witness, will trigger the worst in those who cannot fathom why we should be serious in allowing God to determine our lives. Sure, they will go to Church and give lip service to their faith, but when it comes to living that faith, they simply don't. And they cannot stand a person who refuses to join their immoral lifestyle. The person who does not sleep around, get drunk or stoned, who is faithful to marriage, who does an honest day's work — to name a few — is an abomination to those who engage in some if not all of these. So, what do they do? They denounce the person. They talk about him or her — “You know, she says she's virtuous, but she isn't;” “He didn't come to the party because he'd rather do drugs than alcohol;” “She makes believe that she is honest, but she is the biggest liar around.” And a person's reputation is instantly destroyed.

They think they have us — these so-called friends. They think they know us, but they don't. They know that it is natural to be concerned with what others are saying about us. But what they don't know is that this is not our main concern — our main concern is being witnesses for Jesus Christ.

And so, like Jeremiah, we trust in the Lord to protect us [Jeremiah 20:10-13]. Jesus said in Matthew's Gospel: “Fear no one” [Matthew 10:26-33]. Instead, proclaim from the housetops what you have heard. Don't be concerned with those who can destroy your body, but not your soul. Be concerned with losing your soul — your very self, for the sake of protecting your standing with these forces of darkness.

Do not be concerned if people call you names because you have the courage to live your faith. Don't be concerned if people make stories up about you because what they really want to do is deflect attention away from their own shortcomings. Instead, recognize this, when we stand with God we stand with the Victor. Jesus Christ will win the battle. After all, our battle as witnesses is His battle.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. So do not be afraid — you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.” God is aware of the times we say: “No, that's wrong;” or simply: “No, that's not my style.” God is aware of the times that we stay away from certain people or certain places. He is also aware of how we are treated by some when we give witness to His Presence.

We are worth more than many sparrows. Our Heavenly Father cares for us. His Son loves us. His Spirit fills us. Sure, it is a normal reaction to be concerned with what others are saying about us. Sure, we are all afraid of being the butt of other people's jokes. We hate being mocked. But we have to recognize that good is always going to be opposed by evil. We cannot be afraid. When we stand up for that which is right and true, the Lord will win the battles for us. Maybe we might not get that promotion we want. Maybe we might not be part of the in-crowd. But it is infinitely better to be part of the in-heaven crowd than the in-crowd on earth.

Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's knowledge. God is aware of our commitment to His Life. He is aware that we are His Witnesses. All we need to do is to proclaim the truth of the Lord, and let God do the rest.

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



### A CASE FOR A MEDIOCRE LIFE:

How long do trends last? As I scroll through social media more than usual during this time at home, it seems like there is always a new trend. First, we had the voice-over trends, then the dancing trends, even the pranking-family-members-and-friends trends. These trends seem to become a new “normal” of our lives so quickly now. Since the rise of TikTok, it seems like all families — including older generations — know that if anyone in your house is dancing weirdly near you, you are most likely going to end up on the internet at some point.

Though there's a huge diversity of trends — and one of the biggest overarching themes that seems to have been around for many years now is #LivingMyBestLife. As the hashtag itself states, the idea is simple — how do you display what your “best” life would look like? Maybe some nice beach, the perfect sunset, the biggest indulgence, the best cars, the newest tech. Naturally, we want to succeed in life, we want to be better at enjoying what we have, but what does it truly mean to live your best life?

In my curiosity, I turned to Scripture to find some nice Bible verse that I could “make hip” and interchangeably use it to describe Jesus' best life. I guess one could say: “On the next day, when the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” [see John 12] would be a great Palm Sunday Instagram caption to end with #LivingMyBestLife. Rightly so, the King of Kings coming into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, while his disciples tried to do some crowd control because everybody wanted to meet Jesus the Nazorean who had performed all these miracles? That's definitely a #JesusLivingHisBestLife moment.

However, Jesus knew from the very beginning that His life had meaning beyond His understanding. He knew that to embrace His best life meant that He had to humble himself to become man like you and me, to be born of a humble woman, to be a part of a humble family, to live a humble life as the son of a carpenter; He knew that living His best life meant embracing the simplicity of it. Jesus was never for the flashiness of certain moments — He simply embraced the little moments and rejoiced in them.

So, does this mean we can't keep using this awesome hashtag? Of course not. But it is a great reminder that our focus is not on our material life; as a matter of fact, our focus is not even on this life but the next. As we try to follow in the example of Jesus, He reminds us that a simple life is the best life. This idea of living our best life constantly, given that social media dramatically magnifies the “perfect moments” of people's lives and rarely ever seems to focus on the bad side, is futile. Every human being knows that life is not just about the great moments. Yes, those great vacations and moments where we feel at our best physically, mentally, or spiritually are amazing, but we know the reality is life has great moments and has bad ones too. And that is part of life. If anything, we can learn so much about ourselves from the bad moments, that sometimes we may need those moments for some perspective. The bottom line is that living our best life should not be focused on the visible things or experiences, but rather on the fruit that leads to eternal life.

The best life we can ever live is a life that leads us and those we love to Heaven, to rejoice with our Creator, and be in awe of His presence. Christ had no expectation of grandeur when He became human for our salvation — all He hoped for was to teach us how to love one another and to bring us home with Him and the Father. That Man, living his best life entering Jerusalem on a donkey, that very Man knew that what laid ahead was not His will but the Father's. He had no control over it, yet He trusted and humbly accepted. That same Jesus is the one that “humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death

