

CLOSING PRAYER:

~A Prayer of the Yearning Heart~

God,
sometimes this world
is hard to understand.
And even when we trust you,
our hearts still ache.

So we come to you today
asking for the hope we need.
Hope that sees past the here and now
to the then and there.

Hope that believes
what we cannot yet glimpse.
Hope that holds our hearts up in the moments when life
brings us to our knees.

You are the only one
who can sustain us.
You are the only one
who can save us.
Be the rescuer of our souls,
the deliver of our dreams,
the holder of our hearts.

We believe
that even the darkest night
must lead to dawn.
We wait with expectation.

Give us Courage.
Surround us with Comfort.
Love us through to the other side
in a way that only you can.
We put our hope —
and our hope for those we love —
in you alone.

Amen.

—Holly Girth

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.

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.

**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! Father John has begun a very limited schedule, including presiding at the 10 AM Sunday Mass. 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 19th. Sunday morning Mass will continue to take place throughout this time at 10 AM.** 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.

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

Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is Sunday, July 9th. 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.** **This year, due to construction around Tudor House, the Picnic will take place on the grounds behind the Lower School, at 35001 Cedar Rd.** 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. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, Ice-cream treats, Cookies, and beverages are provided. So here it comes once again. It will be a great event for the entire family. **Even if you have not signed up but are able to come following Mass today, please join us.** Come and enjoy family and friends. **Swiftly and a face-painter friend will join us, as will the Euclid Beach Rocket Car.** Hope to see you there.

**COME TO THE FEST — AUGUST 6th:**

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. 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 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."

**BE YOURSELF:**

We don't have to pretend to be fine when we are not. We don't need to push through and be strong. Gratitude is a soft landing place that requires us to be honest, open, and willing to look at everything we're facing and not turn away.

—Alex Elle

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Joe Bucar, housekeeping employee, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease
- For Tim LaGanke, grandfather of Casey Lennon ['30], who is critically ill with Lymphoma.
- For Kathy DeMarco, sister of Chapel Associate, Patty Szanislo, 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 Beth Budaji, mother of Kate Budaji Mckay ['06], who is seriously ill.
- For Father George Mulligan, C.S.C., who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Brian Ponader, who is seriously ill following a stroke.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Sharon Wilson, wife of Brother Ken's nephew.
- For Robert Kruger, father of Father Brent Kruger, C.S.C.
- For Sister Joan Buda, S.N.D.
- For Dorothy Coerd, former Gilmour/Glen Oak Teacher, mother of Thomas ['78] and Timothy ['80], grandmother of Elizabeth Coerd Colvin ['11].
- For Sister Elizabeth Raffo, C.S.C.
- For Vincent Panichi, father of Michael Panichi ['84].

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For an end to Christian Genocide in the state of Manipur in northeast India.
- For an end to the war in Ukraine.
- 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.

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.

**PAYING ATTENTION:**

Gratitude is not a passive response to something we have been given; gratitude arises from paying attention, from being awake in the presence of everything that lives within and without us.

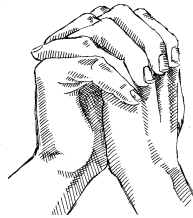
—David Whyte

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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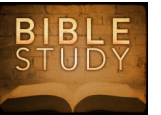
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 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 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 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 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 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.
- For Susan Lennon, wife of John Lennon [*55], grandmother of Jimmy [*30] and Katelyn [*32] Lennon, who is recovering from leg amputation surgery



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JULY 19th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, July 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: Women 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:

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| Sunday, July 9: 14 th Week in Ordinary Time | 10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream |
| Monday, July 10: | NO MASS |
| Tuesday, July 11: St. Benedict | NO MASS |
| Wednesday, July 12: | NO MASS |
| Thursday, July 13: | NO MASS |
| Friday, July 14: St. Kateri Tekakwitha | NO MASS |
| Saturday, July 15: 15 th Week in Ordinary Time | NO MASS |
| Sunday, July 16: 15 th Week in Ordinary Time | 10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream |

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 4th - Sunday, August 6th.** **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. Contact St. Paschal Baylon Parish to register.



THE TIME IS NOW:

The beginning is always today.

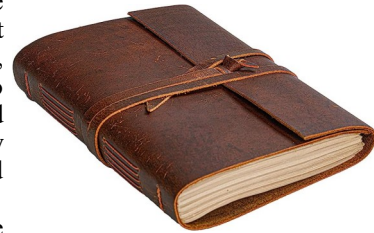
—Mary Wollstonecraft

REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

This past week in the United States we celebrated our Independence as a nation from England in 1776. The resulting war of that separation was bloody and a sad way to begin a nation's history. War has been a major part of our history. We have tried to preserve our union and our liberties and assist other areas of the world in gaining or retaining their identities.

This would be a good time for us to reflect on what is going on within our own souls and outside our own bodies — what are the dominating forces in our lives? It is also important to become aware of the sacredness of other dependencies and relationships which assist our God-given identities. We must determine what dependencies are sacred and which ones are sick; similarly we need to know when our independencies are healthy or ill as well. We all need to grow in our healthy dependency on God's love and the challenges to use freely God's many gifts in the service of peace and justice.

This was brought home to me the other day when I pulled out some of my old journals — a reflective journal in which I try to record my thoughts and events as well as special quotes, sayings, prayers or poems when I read. What was interesting about them was this fact — during the chaotic and hectic times of my life, my writings appeared light and carefree as if I was managing the hectic times with ease. At other times, I have writings that communicate an extreme “tiredness” and/or “anxiety”. As I parallel these times, I find that during the most chaotic and hectic times, my daily rituals with prayer, attending church, and prayer group is consistent and I am attentive to my faith; when my writings communicate extreme tiredness and anxiety, I find I interrupt my prayer life routine — I do not attend to my morning reflection, I miss church, I do not keep up on my readings and I do not have my daily conversations with God.



It is within this framework that we need to examine the Scripture Readings for this 14th Week in Ordinary Time. The prophet Zechariah has been relating various words from God. He has spoken about the Oneness and power of God. He has also been relating threats and promises against the adulterous, unfaithful kings and shepherds of God's people. It is within this context that Zechariah speaks a messianic prophecy about the One Who is to come and what He will be doing [Zechariah 9:9-10].

Riding on a donkey is not a lowly or humble picture. This person will be princely and will be the recipient of God's favor which will be justly deserved. His personal mission will be to establish peace from “sea to shining sea”. The trappings of war will be banished because God's people will trust His Words and His Ways. This will be a cause for a great celebration of independence from the protective instruments of war, and a growing dependence on God's peace to be on their own.

Matthew's Gospel finds Jesus turning toward those who consider themselves wise and learned — namely the teachers and the Pharisees. Jesus talks of this in a prayer or direct address to His Father [Matthew 11:25-30]. Jesus speaks in a tone of gratitude for the mysterious ways God has been revealing true wisdom to these simple, yet open, hearts. They have not relied on logic, signs, or execution of laws to gain freedom of soul. They have been experiencing Jesus and His ways and the call to the Kingdom's ways.

Yes, there have been miracles, but some people have not responded to these in acts of faith. The church to which we belong is for those who hear something inside themselves — they are being called to something beyond themselves. The “little Ones” are those who hear something inside them which is unexplainable, but real — it calls them to go outside themselves. Logic can help, miracles can help, and insights can help, but these are never enough to calm that inner call. As we call out to the Infinite, God tends gently to our longings. God will never take that longing away in some totally satisfying manner. Longing is to be revered by our own selves as God does reverence to those longings within us as well.

The invitation of Jesus — “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you

LIVING IN AN “UPSIDE-DOWN” WORLD:

According to some traditions, during the official ceremony of General Cornwallis' October 19, 1791 surrender to George Washington at Yorktown, ending the Revolutionary War, the British got the last laugh. Its band sarcastically played a well-known musical ditty entitled: *The World Turned Upside Down*. The song's lyrics pointed out the absurdity of the world's military giant surrendering to the 13 Colonies' rag-tag army: “If buttercups buzzed after the bees, if boats were on land and churches on sea, if ponies rode men and grass ate the cows, then all the world would be upside down.”

Whether that particular song was actually played during the surrender or not, *The World Turned Upside Down* could certainly be a valid subtitle for the Sacred Scriptures for this 14th Week in Ordinary Time.

The prophet Zechariah sets the theme. Probably active shortly after the Chosen People's 6th century BCE Babylonian Exile, he paints an ideal picture of a restored Holy Land. But the Messiah/King he depicts isn't the leader most people are anticipating. Though “his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River — the Euphrates — to the ends of the earth,” he won't be a king who depends on military might. According to Zechariah, this king “shall come to you meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass” [Zechariah 9:9-10]. Military leaders don't ride donkeys — they ride horses. Israel's future messianic king will be unique. He'll not only refuse to ground his monarchy on military might, he'll actually disarm the entire country! No one has ever experienced such a king or such a nation. If by now you're suspecting the four evangelists based their narratives of Jesus' “Palm Sunday” entrance into Jerusalem on Zechariah 9, you're not alone. Every Scripture scholar I know shares your suspicions.

This image of an upside-down world is certainly carried over into the Christian Scriptures.

Paul, for instance, warns the Christian community in Rome not to go through life depending solely on what they can experience through the “flesh” [Romans 8:9-14]. For followers of the risen Jesus, there's a whole other world — a world which the Spirit creates every day of our lives. It's in this dying/rising world that we're expected to live. That's why the Apostle assures us: “If you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Only by giving ourselves over to Jesus' Spirit can we faithfully imitate Jesus' upside-down behavior.

Once we do that, Matthew's Jesus tells us we'll begin looking at the people around us through different eyes [Matthew 11:25-30]. No longer do we focus on the rich and powerful, neither do we zero in only on the “wise and learned.” For followers of Jesus, the most important inhabitants of this planet are the “little ones:” those who daily go through life laboring and burdened. Imitating Jesus, our task is to provide “rest” for them, something people would logically put at the bottom of their “to do list” — if it even appears on it at all. For other Christs, the world's top becomes the bottom, and the bottom, the top.

It's ironic — or providential — considering America's participation in World Wars I & II, if it weren't for those victorious thirteen colonies, Great Britain, as we know it, might not even exist today.

Perhaps the only way to definitively save this world is to turn it upside down. Our sacred authors and the historical Jesus might have been centuries ahead of themselves in expecting their readers and followers to be motivated by such a preposterous value system. But, if it works . . .

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

UPSIDE DOWN CONTINUED:

Whereas the way of the world is to insist on publicity, celebrity, popularity, and getting maximum exposure, God prefers to work in secret. In God's sight the things that really matter seldom take place in public.

—Henri Nouwen

doormat or an enabler of abusive behavior, but do consider, willingly and without resentment, laying down your life for others by living this more sublime challenge.

And it's exactly on this point — to do this willingly and without resentment as its practice grows difficult. It's not easy to do this and not grow resentful and manipulative. More commonly, we carry others' crosses — but end up being bitter about it and sending them the bill. The scribes and pharisees had this down to a fine art. That too was part of their virtue. Growing resentful or manipulative while serving others is a perennial danger; though, as Goethe says: "the dangers of life are many and safety is one of them."

And so, the invitation of Jesus to what's higher, more sublime, more noble, remains; so does the gentle, understanding, faithful, non-threatening, non-coercive, non-guilt-inducing, but persistent and uncompromising, presence of God.

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

THE COST OF SPIRITUAL JOY:

I remember getting the message that my godson was about to be born. Weeks previously, I was honored when my friends asked me to be the godfather for their second child, and then I was shocked that they'd also asked me to be present when that child was born. After a stressful day, I found myself in the hospital. With her husband by her side, and the nursing staff assisting, this soon-to-be mother gave a few strong final pushes. After the initial excited announcement of "it's a boy," silence fell. There was still more activity going on, but everything seemed a lot more peaceful. After about fifteen minutes, this tiny, seven-pound, wrapped bundle of human "miraculousness" was placed in my arms for the first time.

Having been present for his birth continues to teach me an all-important life lesson — the experience of true spiritual joy comes at a price. It's not cheap, and it's surely not free. I'll never forget the image of labor pains nor the relief and delight when this baby boy was first given to his mother. Oftentimes I sit in the darkness of my hermitage at night — with only a candle lit in front of my crucifix — and I think of the excruciating pains that Jesus endured — the misunderstandings from his closest friends, the intense grief of the death of his friend Lazarus, the heartbreaking image of seeing his mother along Calvary's path, the vicious torture at the hands of the Roman soldiers, and the utter humiliation and indescribable precision of his execution and the accompanying ridicule of the onlookers.

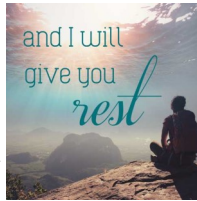
It is in these quiet nights of prayer when I feel perplexed by life or frustrated by my weaknesses that I have often been reminded that this is not the end of Jesus' story — nor is it the end of mine. When all hope seemed lost, God's mysterious plan continued. After grief and confusion had settled among Jesus' followers, Jesus did the unthinkable.

And he continues to do so with us.

Recall what the prophet Zechariah says: "Rejoice heartily" [Zechariah 9:9-10]. This is not merely the sense of family sentimentality around a holiday dinner; it is not based on someone's natural personality type. "Rejoicing" is the only proper response of the soul to the Father's tender, powerful, and uniquely applied initiative in our lives — particularly in those complex realities that we face. When, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest," the "rest" is not only a cessation of work responsibilities [Matthew 11:25-30]. This "rest" is not only a temporary relief from unresolved stress. The "rest" that is implied here is the recognition that the Father is in control. The "king shall come." The "rest" implies that "we are going to get through this together. Let me show you how."

Joy and struggle in this life are inseparable from each other. The conviction of deep personal faith remembers that "the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you; he will give life to your mortal bodies." [Romans 8:9-14]. As I learn to let him resurrect me day after day from the false security of my worries, doubts, anxieties, fears, insecurities, addictive behaviors, and jealousies, the intensity of my joy increases as I follow his invitation to "Come to me" from the cave of sin and into the light of life and radiate this light towards others. The more I feel this resurrecting power active in my life through the action of the Holy Spirit, the more I want to come to this inexhaustible fountain of life and joy.

—taken from the writings of Brother John Villa, which appears on the internet.



rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light" is a powerful message, and a reminder of how God wants my burdens, my anxieties, and my troubles. When I "hand them over" my ability to manage them gives me an entirely different experience than if I try and handle them myself. It also affects my colleagues, my family members, my friends and all those who interact with me while I carry my worries and concerns and burdens. When I hand over my burdens to God I am more engaged, kind, forgiving, joyful with colleagues, family and friends.

The promise of God is unending. Jesus invites us to keep learning His ways. The "yoke" — which is the heaviness of the Law and especially the interpretations of the Pharisees — is being replaced by the gentleness and personal relationship offered by Jesus.

The "yoke" of Jesus is personal as well as cultic or institutional. Jesus is calling us to community — church — because love labors together. He calls to our need to be at peace and to let go of our inner-personal war-makings. He is telling us to be as gentle with our personal struggling selves as He is with us. He implies that if we learn of His gentleness with us, and we buy into that way of relating inside, then we will be more likely to call off the dogs, drop our defenses and regain our unity as members of His kingdom.

The "rest" to which Jesus invites us is then interior. Those who labor without interior peace and unity are mostly likely building their own kingdoms — and those kingdoms do not allow for rest; they are constructed for defensive war-making.

—taken from the writings of Cindy Costanzo and Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT:

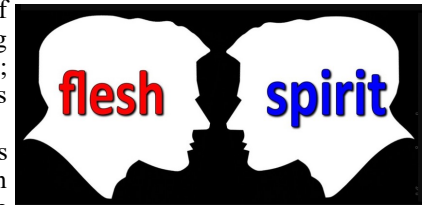
St. Paul's letter to the Church at Rome is one of the most important theological writings in Scripture — so much so that we spend all summer reading it. Not only that, but we spend the next 4 weekends reading from the 8th chapter of that writing. Paul uses the word "flesh" to designate all the factors in human nature that incline us against God; he uses the word "spirit" to designate the dimension of the unified human person that is fundamentally open to union with the Spirit of God — and, more broadly, all that attunes us to God. Employing this distinction, Paul reminds Christians: "You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you" [Romans 8:9-14].

The Apostle uses the word spirit in a second way as God's own spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, and who dwells within us. We call that Spirit the "Holy Spirit" — the third person of the Trinity. The Spirit unites us to Christ, who shares his risen life with us. Paul concludes his reflection by saying: "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." This reminds us that our everyday decisions have consequences — contributing to our fundamental option for either evil or good, for flesh or spirit, which ultimately leads to either eternal damnation or eternal life with God.

This fundamental spiritual insight could serve as a warning to individuals tempted to specific deeds of the flesh. Kirk, an alcoholic, must be careful not to take even one drink of alcohol because one could lead to another — to a binge and a total relapse. When Jill is depressed she must be extra careful not to overeat which could set back her efforts to establish better eating habits. When Bill attends a social gathering he must concentrate on being a good listener because otherwise he will dominate the conversation and fuel his egocentricity. Dan must always tell his wife about interactions with a female colleague at work as a way of keeping that relationship from becoming inappropriate.

What temptation of the flesh poses the greatest danger to your spiritual life?

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



SHARING OUR BURDENS:

Most people that we know are carrying heavy burdens these days. Anxieties and fears burden us all — fears about our economy, the cost of food and fuel, home values and mortgages, what’s happening to our children, terrorism, our national debt, and on and on it goes! The list seems both overwhelming and endless. People are trying to stretch our paychecks — paychecks that near seem to go quite far enough. They are working on stressed marriage relationships that they fear are breaking up. They’re unemployed, or they’re under-employed, and are looking for a better job that will give them a reliable and adequate source of income.

Others are waiting for biopsy reports on certain abnormal cells that are growing in their bodies; they are filled with fear that they may have cancer. Or they’re trying to provide for and shape the characters of their children — children that are so influenced by all that is immoral and degrading in our culture. Many parents feel that they are taken for granted, not appreciated, and that they are simply being used while getting nothing back out of life for what they’ve put into it.

All of us are laboring under burdens. In addition to the few things I’ve just mentioned, many folks have piled on to themselves burdens of self-doubt, self-blame, shame, and guilt. Then they say to themselves: “The predicaments I’m in are all my fault.” “If I were a better wife or husband, my spouse would notice me more and be more sensitive, considerate, and loving toward me.” “If I tried harder, I would have a better job or position where I work, and we wouldn’t be so strapped for money.” “If I were more loving, my teenagers wouldn’t be so hostile.” And on and on it goes, with those internal put-me-down tapes constantly playing in our minds.

Laboring under so many burdens, we hear Jesus say to us: “Come to me, all you who are weary, and find life burdensome, and I will give you rest” [Matthew 11:25-30]. How could anyone not be attracted to what Jesus offers us? Why is He so ignored by so many who don’t think He is important or relevant?

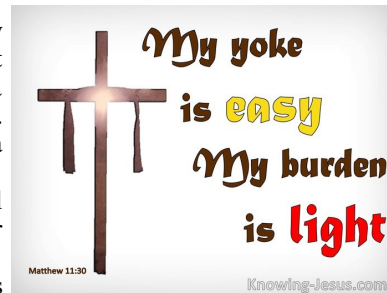
For some, the Christian message has been so distorted that they no longer take it seriously. Some who preach the Gospel claim that faith in Jesus removes all desire for sin. Rubbish! Others preach a message that faith in Jesus removes all doubt and fear in one’s life. Nonsense! Still others tell us that in Jesus you will have such a feeling of acceptance that you will never feel lonely again. Not true! And, we been told that if you believe in Jesus, your children will grow up good, you’ll get promotions where you work, and that your illnesses and sicknesses will be minor. Bunk!

The Christian faith is not magic. Christ’s life was not painless and totally free of burdens. Quite the contrary! But what Jesus does offer you is His invitation to be yoked to Him, to pull your burdens and tasks through life with Him, sharing His yoke, drawing on His strength, and letting Him help you while you help Him accomplish His tasks in your life. Christ doesn’t do things for you; He does things with you.

The Jews among whom Jesus lived were suffering a lot. Life imposed heavy and painful burdens upon them. Their religious leaders imposed even more burdens, presenting them with an impossible set of laws, rules and regulations that could never be met, while at the same time presenting them an angry and vengeful God who could seemingly never be satisfied.

Jesus, a Jew, had burdens — many burdens. But his religion was never a burden — it was a support; it carried Him; His relationship with His Father empowered Him, filling Him with God’s Holy Spirit. He knew that His Father was a gentle, caring, and generous Father who loved with a love infinitely greater than any human love.

I don’t know what your image of God is, and I don’t know how you feel about God; but I do know that you need to be yoked with Jesus in accomplishing God’s work, and in carrying out his tasks. If you

**AN INVITATION TO A DEEPER VIRTUE:**

Perhaps the most misunderstood text in all of scripture is the one where Jesus says to us: “unless your righteousness [virtue] exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” [Matthew 5:20]. We generally misunderstand that because we wrongly think that Jesus is referring to the vices of the scribes and pharisees — not their virtue. We look at the hypocrisy, jealousy, double-standard, and rigid legalism of the scribes and pharisees and easily distance ourselves from that. Yet it wasn’t their vices that Jesus was referring to, but their virtues.

What was the virtue of the scribes and pharisees? In fact, they had a pretty high standard — the ten commandments, strict justice in all things, compassion for the poor, and the practice of hospitality — these constituted their ideal for virtuous living. What’s wrong with that? What’s required beyond these?

In Jesus’s view, what’s wrong is that, in the end, it’s still too easy. Any good person does these things, simply on the basis of decency. What’s wrong is that ultimately we still give back in kind, an eye for an eye—dollar for dollar, goodness for goodness, kindness for kindness, slight for slight, hatred for hatred, murder for murder. Nothing is ever really transformed, moved beyond, redeemed, transcended, nor forgiven.

Simply put, if I’m living the virtue of the scribes and pharisees, I react this way: if you come to me and say: “I like you! You’re a wonderful person,” my response naturally will be in kind: “I like you too! Obviously, you’re a wonderful person!” What I’m doing is simply feeding your own good energy back to you. But that has a nasty underside: If you come to me and say: “I hate you! You’re a charlatan and a hypocrite,” my response will also be in kind: “I hate you too! Clearly, you’re a very petty person!” This is ultimately what “an eye for an eye” morality, strict justice, comes down to. We end up feeding back the other’s energy — good or bad, replicating the other’s virtue, good or bad. That’s the natural way — but it’s not the Christian way.

It’s precisely here where Jesus invites us “beyond” — beyond natural reaction, beyond instinct, beyond giving back in kind, beyond legal rights, beyond strict justice, beyond the need to be right, beyond even the ten commandments, beyond the virtue of the scribes and pharisees. Indeed, the litmus-test for Christian orthodoxy is not the creed — can you believe this set of truths? — but this particular challenge from Jesus: can you love an enemy? Can you fail to give back in kind? Can you move beyond your natural reactions and transform the energy that enters you from others, so as to not give back bitterness for bitterness, harsh words for harsh words, curse for curse, hatred for hatred, murder for murder? Can you rise above your sense of being wronged? Can you renounce your need to be right? Can you move beyond the itch to always have what’s due you? Can you forgive, even when every feeling inside of you rebels at its unfairness? Can you take in bitterness, curses, hatred, and murder itself, and give back graciousness, blessing, love, understanding, and forgiveness? That’s the root invitation inside of Christianity, and it’s only when we do this that we move beyond “an eye for an eye.”

Admittedly, this isn’t easy — either in theory or in practice. Much inside of conventional wisdom, pop psychology, and contemporary spirituality, will object to the very theory of it, pointing out that carrying tension isn’t healthy for us, telling us that we have a duty not to enable abusive behavior, and challenging us not to be doormats and victims, but mature persons who claim the legitimate space that’s needed in order to be free, giving persons, responsible to God, others, and self-opposite to developing our innate potentials and bringing our gifts to the world. All of these objections are right, of course, though none of them negate Jesus’ challenge.

His invitation, cleansed from overly-simplistic interpretation, remains: Don’t be a victim or a



the Spirit. We should understand that this is not a rejection of the body; rather it is realizing that the physical ought to be subject to the spiritual. This will then mean that we use our bodies and all that is material in the proper way.

In Matthew's Gospel, we find one of Jesus' most compassionate statements — "Come to me all you who labor and are overburdened and I will give you rest" [Matthew 11:25-30]. Countless generations of believers have taken great hope from these words. Oftentimes they have helped people get through the very worst situations in life. When all other hope has been used up, these words of Jesus remain and give people the courage they need to carry on in the very direst of situations.

Some have interpreted Jesus' words as referring to those who have exhausted themselves in the search for truth. They see this search for God as intellectually exhausting. However, according to Catholic belief, it would be very unusual to find God in this way — we do not generally believe that God can be found through an intellectual struggle.

We do not find God; rather God who finds us when we open our hearts. In fact, it is only when we have given up our intellectual search for God — and enter into an experiential search — that God comes into our lives. Our understanding is that is when we try very hard to find God we are most likely to overlook him. God usually comes to us in unexpected ways — and more often we find him in beauty and in relationships rather than through the use of reason or logic.

With this in mind, Jesus is probably not referring to a tiredness resulting from a search for God; it is much more a tiredness resulting from the cares of the world. Jesus is holding out hope to all who are heavily burdened or who suffer in any way. He invites them to come to him and to experience his loving embrace.

Jesus has certainly experienced suffering, and so these feelings of exhaustion are very familiar to him. He has a warm and loving heart, and he wants those who suffer to realize that he understands them, and that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Most of all, he wants them to understand that in due time they will experience salvation and healing.



You might tend to think that Jesus addresses these words to those who are up in years — or at the very least to the mature among us — since they are the ones most likely to be carrying burdens and to have experienced tragedy in their lives. However, it is interesting to note that these beginning part of Jesus' message is directed to those who are young — children. Jesus appears to be addressing his Father in prayer, and is thanking him for revealing the mysteries of the Kingdom to mere children — while presumably hiding the mysteries from the worldly wise. But the truth is that Jesus is talking to all those who accept the Gospel in a childlike way. What it requires is openness and the willingness to accept the truth of Jesus words.

St. Paul reminds us of this in his letter to the Church at Rome [8:9-14] when he emphasizes the priority of the spiritual over the material. The innocence that Jesus is referring to is the openness to the things of the spirit — the willingness to accept that there is another reality that is far more important than anything we can see or touch here on this earth.

You can imagine that Jesus — after several long years of teaching in the towns and villages of Palestine — was probably exasperated at the difficulty the educated people of the land had in understanding his message. But here we see the delight he takes in the poor and simple people who embrace his Gospel wholeheartedly. Indeed, Jesus is so happy that he praises God for the depth of their faith. The key element here is not education or social standing, but our attitude — the willingness to make the necessary changes in our lives.

If we have the right attitude, we will easily see that love is at the heart of all that Jesus is teaching, and we will instinctively know that our task in the world is to live a life of love and so bring peace and joy to those around us.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister S.D.S., which appear on the internet

give up your tyrannical deity, Jesus will give you His wise and loving Father along with His strong and understanding mother. He wants to be yoked with you.

For those of us who are weighed down with shame and guilt, please know that few of us have heavier loads to carry. Jesus' mission in life was a mission of forgiveness. Are you yoked with Christ in that task? Christ never met anyone whose sins were so great that they couldn't be forgiven. The only thing that Jesus could not forgive was an unforgiving spirit — a spirit that simply doesn't care.

It is often said that Jesus' love for us is unconditional. Well, yes — but not quite. He did attach one supreme condition on His love for us — namely that in order to receive His forgiveness and be relieved of our burden, we have to forgive others. We receive forgiveness and we have burdens taken off of our backs as we forgive and remove burdens from others. Carrying unforgiving resentments burdens you — not the ones you resent.

No one has a heavier load to carry than those who are constantly resentful and constantly concerned about themselves. Resentfulness is, after all, a form of self-centeredness. And Jesus, as you will recall, spent no time at all with such things. Jesus was far too concerned with helping others than He was with fretting about His own problems. He didn't waste time with His own self-pity parties.

If we take Christ's yoke up ourselves, we will find our own burdens to be much lighter. For all of us are carrying some heavy loads — the worst of which are our feelings about ourselves and about our relationships with others — particularly those who are closest around us. Life is, after all, essentially hard because relationships are hard.

But Jesus offers you something that can make life essentially beautiful for you — and for others. "Come to me", He cries, "all of you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. And your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Everything depends upon how close you will let Jesus come to you.

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

FROM BEING DRIVEN TO BEING DRAWN:

When I was a young man, I liked ideas and books quite a lot, and I still read a great deal. But each time I come back from a long hermitage retreat, I have no desire to read a book for the next few weeks or even months. For a while I know there is nothing in any book that is going to be better, more truthful, or more solid than what I have just experienced on the cellular, heart, and soul level.

If you asked me what it is I know, I would be hard pressed to tell you. All I know is that there is a deep "okayness" to life — despite all the contradictions — which has become even more evident in the silence. Even when much is terrible, seemingly contradictory, unjust, and inconsistent, somehow sadness and joy are able to coexist at the same time. The negative value of things no longer cancels out the positive — nor does the positive deny the negative.

Whatever your personal calling or your delivery system for the world, it must proceed from a foundational "yes" to life. Your necessary "no" to injustice and all forms of un-love will actually become even clearer and more urgent in the silence, but now your work has a chance of being God's pure healing instead of impure anger and agenda. You can feel the difference in people who are working for causes; so many works of social justice have been undone by people who do all the fighting from their small or angry selves.

If your prayer goes deep, your whole view of the world will change from fear and reaction to deep and positive connection — because you don't live inside a fragile and encapsulated self anymore. In meditation, you are moving from ego consciousness to soul awareness — from being driven by negative motivations to being drawn from a positive source within. Through a consistent practice of contemplative prayer, you will find yourself thinking much more in terms of both/and rather than either/or. This is what enables mystics and saints to forgive, to let go of hurts, to be compassionate, and even to love their enemies.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

FEAR AND LOVE:

Fear can paralyze us. Fear can undo the good that we are trying to accomplish. A young priest, who had only been ordained three months, was having a very difficult time preaching. Every time he approached addressing the assembly, he was so overcome with fear that he found himself tongue-tied and confused. The problem became so severe that he decided to schedule a meeting with the bishop.

He outlined the problem. He was uncertain of how to continue. The bishop listened patiently and assured him that with practice, things would improve. But then the bishop said: “If I could make a suggestion, I find it always helpful to begin my homilies with a joke. Not only does it get the audience’s attention, but it breaks the ice and relaxes everyone — including myself. I would suggest that you adopt this procedure.”

The young priest said: “Well, you know, bishop, I’m not very good at jokes.” The bishop said: “Nothing complex; something short. For example, last week I began my homily this way: ‘My dear friends, I spent last evening in the loving embrace of the woman I love.’ And then, after a long pause to build the tension, I said to everyone’s relief and laughter: ‘I had dinner with my mother!’ You see how that kind of a light-hearted approach breaks the ice and can relax you?”

The young priest thought he should take the bishop’s advice, and so all that week he worked very hard on his homily. He kept practicing the bishop’s joke. But by the time it came for Mass to begin, he found himself fearful and confused. And by the time he was ready to give the homily, he was in a near panic. He addressed the assembly: “My dear friends, I spent last night in the arms of a hot woman!” A gasp went throughout the assembly. The priest’s mind went blank, so he continued: “But for the life of me, I can’t remember who she was.” And then in desperation he added: “But she was recommended by the bishop.”

Fear can paralyze us. Fear can undo the good that we are trying to accomplish. This why Jesus’ words in Matthew’s gospel are so important. Jesus tells us that if we come to him — if we place our fear into his hands, he will put our souls at rest. He will calm our hearts. Now notice that Jesus does not promise to take the causes of our fear away or to lift the burdens from our shoulders. But he says that if we trust him, we can carry those burdens, because his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Now this promise of Jesus is extremely important. There are real fears in our life. We have fears about our health; we have fears about the economy; we have fears about the decisions our children might make; we have fears about divisions that exist in our family, or security in our country. All of these fears can paralyze us. But if we give those fears to the Lord — if we can trust in his presence — then we can face the future with the confidence of his love. And that is good news indeed.

Thirty years ago members of this community founded this parish as a place where men and women of faith could gather together to worship and to encourage one another in the belief that God is real and that God’s presence can help us cope with the fears and burdens of life. God has blessed our community. All that we do here is an attempt to build that faith that we share in God’s presence and care. Everything we do in this parish, from GIFT to Bereavement to Vacation Bible School to Youth Ministry, is an effort on our part to support one another in the belief that God is real and that our faith in God can help us live. So, as we share together this Eucharist today, let us encourage one another in the reality of our faith and the power of the good news. There are always reasons to be fearful. But fear need not overcome us. God is real, and with God’s grace we can carry our burdens. With God’s help we can replace fear with love.

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

BE ALERT:

Only that day dawns to which we are awake.

—Henry David Thoreau



killed by the wild animals in the Colosseum in Rome.

Rome was far away from Antioch, so it would be a long trip of two to three years for the elderly Ignatius and the soldiers guarding him. There were many Christians who wanted to save him. The Roman soldiers could easily be bribed to release him. A judge could be bought to overturn the verdict. But Ignatius wrote to those well-meaning Christians and told them not to interfere. He valued it a gift to be allowed to suffer for being a Christian. He pleaded with them to allow him to die in joy.

We believe that God became one of us to join us in our turmoil so he could lead us to the joy of his peace. “But, Father,” you might say. “You have no idea of the grief I have. A loved one has died recently. Am I not to grieve, not to cry?” No, grieve, cry — that is a sign of the love you have. No one cries over the death of someone they did not love. But remember, in your grief, your inner turmoil, even with that brick of sorrow you feel in your stomach, remember that the life of your loved one is transformed, not ended. Mourn missing him or her here, but know that your loved one is in the peace and love of Jesus Christ. Even in sorrow we Christians have fundamental joy.

The Lord says: “Come to me all you who are weary with life, and I will give you rest.” Yes, we commemorate the Passion of the Lord solemnly during Lent. But the tears of Good Friday magnify the joy of Easter Sunday. We are the Easter people, filled with the joy of the Risen Lord. Death has been defeated by eternal life. We should not be so somber, so serious, so negative, so out and out gloomy. Maybe we all need this reminder: if your heart is filled with the joy of the Lord, kindly tell it to inform your face.

Recently, I spoke to a young man who told me that he had stopped worshiping because his life was not unfolding as he had planned. He did something that many people do with little repercussion. Only, in his case, he was caught and his whole life was changed. “Why did God let this happen?” the man protested. In his anger he stopped praying. I asked him a simple question: “When were you happier, when you had God in your heart or when you went your own way?” He thought for a while, and then said something to me that I have heard many of our young people say: “Father, I want to be who I was, not who I am becoming. I want to be happy again.” The presence of the Lord brings joy, peace and refreshment to the soul.

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

A CALL TO OPENNESS OF HEART:

Reading Old Testament prophecies often needs “translation” because the language used is what would be understood by the people at the time of writing. That would explain why Zechariah presents the Savior as a King. But instead of the usual conquering-hero kind of King that we might have expected, this King is presented as a humble peacemaker who goes so far as to banish weapons from his Kingdom.

Through our study of the Old Testament we understand that with each passing generation, the hopes of the people in a future Messiah are gradually being modified. Slowly — over long periods of time — the prophets gradually change their presentation of the kind of hero the Messiah is going to be. They start out predicting a great warrior who wins battles and only slowly end up predicting the kind of Messiah that Jesus is actually going to be.

In Zechariah’s prophecy, we see this process at work [Zechariah 9:9-10]. Although the Messiah is still an earthly King, he is one who has relinquished the trappings of majesty — which is why he comes riding on a donkey. Indeed, this prophecy could be seen as a direct prediction of Jesus as he entered the Holy City riding on a donkey on the first Palm Sunday. And like Jesus, Zechariah’s Messiah preaches a message of peace which is strikingly different from previous mentions of the Messiah in the scriptures.

Following in these same steps, Paul addresses the Christians of Rome and reminds them to focus on the spiritual and not the material — most especially not on the things of the flesh [Romans 8:9-14]. He holds out hope for those who get their priorities right, and who put their faith in all that is spiritual — “if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

Our true fulfilment is to be found by putting our physical bodies under the control and direction of

ON BEING A JOYFUL CHRISTIAN:

I want to begin today by telling you a story about two young fellows from New Jersey — Vinnie and Rocco. On a rainy night they were in Manhattan driving on the Henry Hudson Highway, on Manhattan's West Side. Their car suddenly spun out of control, and they ended up visiting Henry at the bottom of the Hudson. The next thing they knew, they were standing before the Pearly Gates where a big man with a short beard and a large set of keys was staring at them.

“I've got this,” Vinne said to Rocco.

Then he said: “Yo, Pete, it's Vinnie and Rocco from Joisey.”

St. Peter took one look at them and said: “I don't think so.”

“Hey” said Vinnie, “there are a lot of good people in Joisey.”

St. Peter said: “I'm sure you are right, but I don't know if you are part of them.”

Rocco protested: “ask the boss.”

So, St. Peter went into Jesus' office and told him that there were too greasy looking guys from New Jersey trying to get in. Jesus said: “Good people come from New Jersey, Peter. Give them another look. Maybe if you knew them better you'll want to open up the Pearly Gates.”

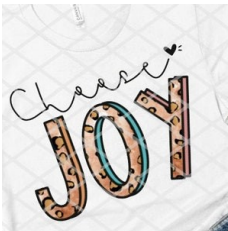
Peter went down, took a look and then called Jesus on the emergency phone. “Lord, we have a problem,” he said, “they are gone.”

Jesus said: “The guys from New Jersey. Where could they have gone?”

“No,” said St. Peter, “not them; the Pearly Gates are gone.”

Sometimes, homilies and reflections at Mass can get pretty somber. Some people look at only the challenging parts of faith, and do not see the joyful side of their belief. In addition to this, there are many “negative” things to talk about going on in our world these days. However, it appears to me that preaching about negative things — the bad news — has become more prevalent than preaching about the positive — the good news. Far too often, people are leaving Church feeling down about themselves and about society. For them Christianity is not joyful; it is a somber burden inflicted upon them.

Jesus Christ did not come to berate us. He came to give us rest. When we look at the New Testament — the Christian scriptures — when we study the lives of the saints, the Good News is always joyful. Consider the Scripture Readings for this 14th Week in Ordinary Time. Matthew's Gospel tells us to be united to the Lord, to turn our burdens over to him and to allow him to refresh us. Jesus tells us that our souls will find rest because his yoke is easy and his burden is light [Matthew 11:25-30].



Jesus says: “Give me all your problems and all your concerns, your many difficulties and trust me.” We need to turn everything over to the Lord — our feelings of being overwhelmed with financial burdens, the down times in our relationships, the boring aspects of our jobs, our continual concern for our children, our concern for our parents or our children or our own health. We need to turn it all over to the Lord and be at peace. We need to have faith that no matter what happens, if we have union with the Lord, as Julian of Norwich — that mystic of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century — wrote: “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

The prophet Zechariah tells us to rejoice because the Savior has come. God is not far away from us. He is right here, in our hearts [Zechariah 9:9-10]. The saints — especially the martyrs — were people of joy. It is said that the martyrs marched into the Coliseum singing. No matter what happened to them, they died at peace. St. Ignatius of Antioch, who lived from 32 to 120, was the bishop of what was at that time the second largest city in the Roman Empire. He was honored and respected. He wrote to the various Christian communities to be strong and courageous in the faith. When Ignatius was quite elderly, he was arrested and put to the test — either offer incense to the Emperor and deny Christ, or be killed. He would not turn from the Lord. Ignatius was found guilty of being a Christian, and sentenced to be

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SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JULY 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.

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:**

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Monday: | Genesis 28:10-22, Matthew 9:18-26 |
| Tuesday: | Genesis 32:23-33, Matthew 9:32-38 |
| Wednesday: | Genesis 41:55-42:24, Matthew 10:1-7 |
| Thursday: | Genesis 44:18-45:5, Matthew 10:7-15 |
| Friday: | Genesis 46:1-30, Matthew 10:16-23 |
| Saturday: | Genesis 49:29-50:26, Matthew 10:24-33 |

15th Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 55:10-11, Romans 8:18-23, Matthew 13:1-23

YOU BELONG:

You belong. Everywhere. Yes, you — with all your history, anxiety, pain, everywhere — in every culture, community, circumstance. You belong in this body. You belong in this very moment. You belong in this breath — and this one. You have always belonged.

—Sebene Selassie

I NEED A FIDGET SPINNER FOR MY SPIRITUALITY:

Almost every time I talk about my prayer life to a friend, it starts like this: “Well, if I somehow stop thinking about my favorite sports team, or the best kind of noodle, or what’s going on in my life during the rest of the day — or tomorrow — God really speaks to me. My internal monologue sounds more like a babbling, excited toddler home from her first day of preschool than a wise, articulate saint — or even just a normal, conscious human being. Sometimes I’m worrying; sometimes I’m daydreaming or replaying old memories; sometimes my brain is just looping a Taylor Swift song while I stare blankly at a stained glass window. There are days when it feels like I’ll never be able to finish an “Our Father” without wondering what character I’d play in *Office*.

This can get frustrating, to say the least. I want to be mentally present in Mass; I want to say a Rosary in profound meditation; I want to be attentive to the nuances of the Holy Spirit speaking as I read through Scripture. Most days, though, I cannot make my intention — focused, deep, persistent prayer — match reality — a holy hour where I spend 58 minutes thinking about eating my favorite ice cream.

Actually, in prayer recently, this was one of my few coherent thoughts — I could really use one of those fidget spinners for my brain; then, maybe it’d calm me down just a bit so I could pay attention to God’s voice.

I’ve been blessed enough to have mentors and spiritual directors who have guided me to realize a few things. Usually, I start off by asking them for tips on how to be less distracted, but they — in their wisdom — remind me that “solving the problem” of distraction isn’t the only goal of prayer. According to the Catechism: “prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours” [CCC #2560]. Prayer springs forth from the fact that I seek God, and God seeks me. It is always God offering the invitation and seeking me first [see 1 John 4:10] — I can only respond.

This is freeing because it takes the pressure off. God wants me, loves me, and calls me. Prayer is not about earning His love or approval with my perfect piety or my astounding focus; He wants to hear what I have to say — whether it makes a ton of sense or not. Jesus is working in my heart and we are growing closer whenever I say “yes” to His invitation to pray. It’s not like He takes His mercy away if, while praying a Divine Mercy Chaplet, I think about the hilarity of dogs with human-sounding names.



It’s important to be persistent in prayer and to keep returning to it [see 1 Thessalonians 5:17], but I’m learning to trust that it’s God’s job to heal, to offer mercy, to give grace, and to transform me. Lazarus was literally dead when Jesus resurrected him [see John 11], so I’m sure Jesus can work on my heart even when my mind is occupied with an idea for the plot of the latest Captain Marvel Movie.

Though relationship — not perfection — is my goal in prayer, I still think there are some “fidget spinners” for our spiritual lives that can help us become more attentive to the voice of the Lord. If the goal really is relationship, then we should come to prayer ready to engage with Jesus and converse with Him. Jesus raised Lazarus, yes, but Lazarus also had to choose to walk out of the tomb! Here are some conscious choices we can make so that we don’t let the distractions stay in control.

- **Get in the zone.** This world is fast-paced and crazy, so entering into prayer can sometimes feel like slamming the brakes in a speeding car. To start to calm down, you can find a quiet space, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and repeat a simple phrase like “God is here” or “God loves me” before you launch into prayer.
- **Intercept the interruptions.** The things you think are drawing you away from your prayer could be the very things Jesus wants you to bring to Him. Worries, joys, or even the events of your day — if they keep “interrupting” your prayer, maybe they’re exactly what you should include in it. Offer whatever is on your mind to the Lord, no matter how silly or

“shallow” it may seem, and see if He wants to speak into those thoughts. Some of my most transformative prayer experiences started when I told Jesus how much I love the soundtrack from *Hamilton*.

- **All write.** Keeping a journal can be a great practice. It keeps you focused in prayer, because it’s a bit more active than something contained entirely in your brain, and you’ll be able to look back at the journey Jesus has taken you on and see just how deeply He’s worked in you.
- **Sleep** —before you get to the chapel. If you find yourself dozing off in prayer, or constantly in that weird state where you think you’re praying but you’re really just dreaming about Jesus enjoying some guacamole with you, maybe consider your sleep habits. Not getting enough shut-eye could be making it easier for your mind to drift. Don’t feel too bad about falling asleep in prayer. St. Thérèse and I — and maybe you — have frequent chapel naps in common. But if it’s affecting your ability to think and/or sit up straight, try to hit the hay a little earlier.

Whether you leave your prayer time with a heart full of the Lord’s movements or with a profound, unintentional reflection on the most ergonomic chair design, be encouraged by the fact that you desire to grow with the Lord and that He’s calling you to Himself. God delights in your efforts to pray well, of course, but He delights in you even more. It’ll surely be a lifelong learning process, and it isn’t nearly as simple as spinning a little toy in your hand, but going deeper in prayer is always worth the effort.

—taken from the writings of Courtney Kiolbassa, which appear on the internet

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

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, July 1]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 250.00

Offerings-----[Sunday, July 2]----- \$ 595.00

HOLINESS:

I don’t pray because I am holy; I pray because I want to become holy, and I need Jesus to teach me.

—Briege McKenna