

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ Spirit ~

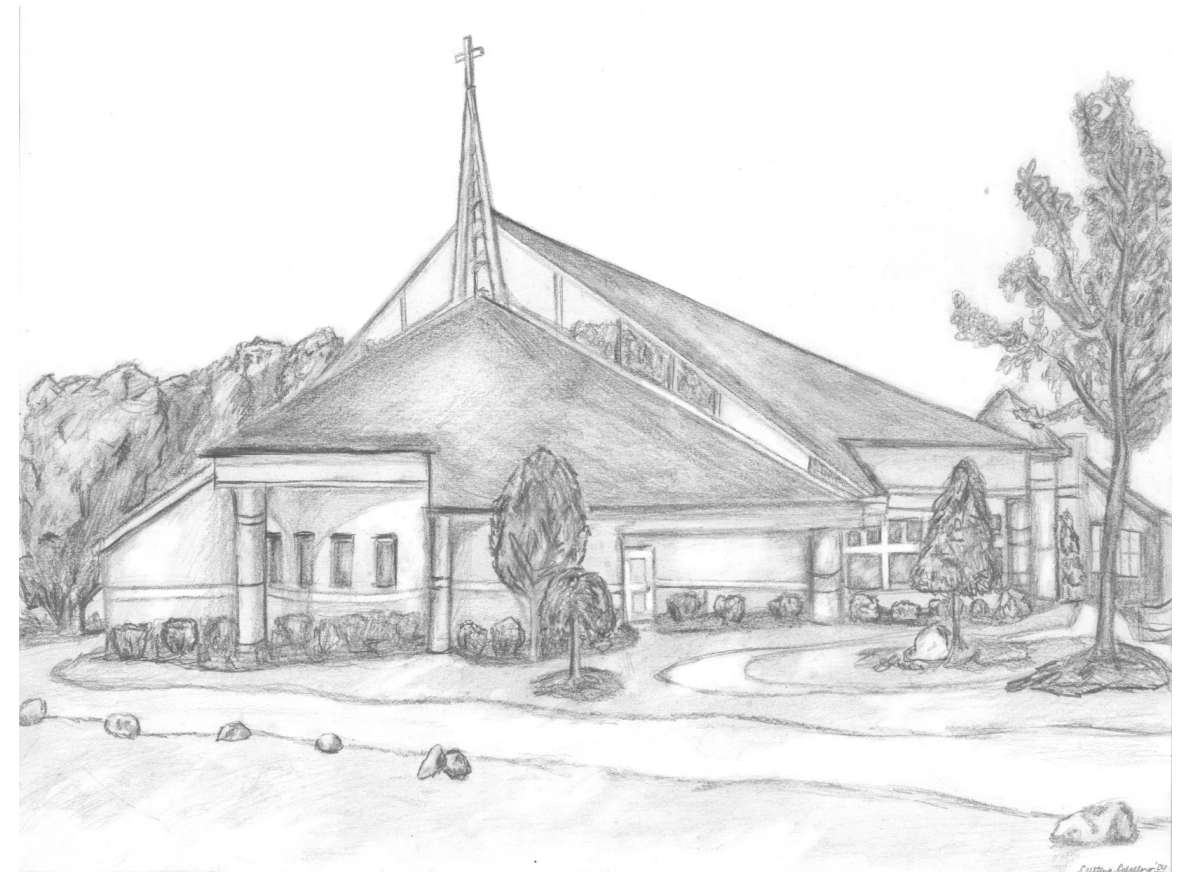
**Spirit,
let there ever be
silent waiting space in me;
that you may find
and fill dwelling,
if you will,
deeper down than thought can go
where only God can truly know me.**

**Where even now
his creating hand
unwinds my being
into the span of space
like a white hot fire
burning a breathless pace.**

**Yet here within some compelling force
rushes wild like a river off nature's course.
It leaps in grasping attempts
to be in intimate union with Divinity.**

**Then sudden
it would seem too beyond
to possess He stirs within,
Divine Peacefulness,
and rests aside all that is
and will be.
Spirit of God,
living in me.
Amen.**

Our Lady Chapel



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

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

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 — THANK YOU:**

A special note of thanks to all who assisted with the Chapel Picnic. It was a wonderful time, enjoyed by over 120 of our chapel members and families. Special thanks to Mike Hughes, Tina Newton, Janet Heryak, Elina Gurney, Jim Callam and the staff of Winking Lizard, Patty Szaniszló, Michelle from our AVI staff, Aubrey from our Maintenance Staff, as well as members of our Housekeep staff — all who contributed to making our picnic a great community day. **Sunday, February 11, 2024 is the date for our Chapel Indoor Picnic, and Sunday, July 14, 2024 is the date for our Summer Outdoor Picnic.** Mark Your calendars. 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."

**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.

**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 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 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 Corey Hargis, who is in critical condition following several strokes
- For Sister Antonee Pflanning, S.N.D., who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.
- For Sister Grace Corbett, S.N.D., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Helen Piggford, mother of Father George Piggford, C.S.C, who is under the care of hospice following a serious stroke.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- 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.

IT'S HOW WE LOOK AT IT:

The great conversion in our life is to recognize and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruptions in our projects, but the way in which God molds our hearts and prepares us for his return. Our great temptations are boredom and bitterness. When our good plans are interrupted by poor weather, our well-organized careers by illness or bad luck, our peace of mind by inner turmoil, our hope for peace by a new war, our desire for a stable government by a constant changing of the guards, and our desire for immortality by real death, we are tempted to give in to a paralyzing boredom or to strike back in destructive bitterness. But when we believe that patience can make our expectations grow, then fate can be converted into a vocation, wounds into a call for deeper understanding, and sadness into a birthplace of joy.

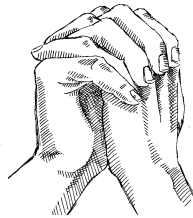
—Henri Nouwen

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 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:

Sunday, July 16: 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, July 17:	NO MASS
Tuesday, July 18:	NO MASS
Wednesday, July 19:	NO MASS
Thursday, July 20:	NO MASS
Friday, July 21:	NO MASS
Saturday, July 22: 16 th Week in Ordinary Time	NO MASS
Sunday, July 23: 16 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 BATTLE:

The good news is that we have the power to choose who we become from here on out. We can change, and we must. Change is about winning the war in our hearts. —John Wood

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

In this part of our country, the growing season is well underway. The sun is warming the fields. I have heard that the corn stalks store up the sun all day and then grow at night. Some people say that on a quiet night, if you listen carefully, you can hear it grow. Physically and spiritually, we are not aware and are not sure of our own growth. Like the corn, it just seems to happen — if we are available to the movements of God, Who like, the sun, is set on shining on us. If some corn stalks are positioned under a large tree or within some shadow there will be little chance of growing.

We all need to be grateful for God's shining love that enables us to grow. But we also need to check to make sure that we are not under some shadowy cloud which prevents God's shining upon us. Honest evaluation of our growth is important. We pray that God continues to shine upon us and that we are in the correct position for receiving.

The last part of the Book of the prophet Isaiah is called "The Book of Consolation". It is comprised of various poems, sayings, images and promises made by God to the people of Israel who have been in captivity — it is a book of hope and speaks mainly of God's covenant of everlasting love.

On this 15th Week in Ordinary Time, we encounter an agricultural image — moisture falling upon the earth to bring forth fruitfulness. The Word, the Covenant, the presence, the love of God is to be upon the earth like rain, and will not vanish until the earth becomes the reflection of God's Holy Will.

For Israel, this meant that God was going to give them back their land and their identity as God's "choicest Vine". They have been purified of their adulterous ways, and find hope in these words of the prophet. They will be cared for by the faithful God and they will again be God's people and live according to their name. God is faithful even when the earth rebels. God is faithful to the earth — the land — even when it refuses to receive the sun and the rain.

Matthew's Gospel has three sections [13:1-23]. The first is the relating of the parable of the Sower and the Seed; the second section is our invitation to fidelity — to be truly open to receive the grace of God; and the third section is the explanation of the parable which is easy to hear and understand.

Like the disciples, we too ask why Jesus didn't just come "straight out" and tell us "like it is". The background for the parable is the tension between the new teachings of Jesus and the Pharisees who are holding on to their position within the Jewish religious community. Jesus has not been asking them to denounce or let go of their relationship with the God of the Covenants; He has been inviting them to receive Him as a continuation or maturing of that relationship.

The leaders of the Jews have begun plotting to kill Jesus — He has continued to annoy them. Jesus has been telling the people that His true mother and brothers are not the ones who are outside looking for Him [see Matthew 12:47], but those who hear His words and live them. After all this, Jesus leaves home, gets into a boat, and begins telling these parables to the crowds on the shore. Parables are easy to hear, remember, and apply to life. They are similar to poems — they say it clearly to those who are available to the poetic style, but they are confusing to those who like the easy factual displays. Jesus does tell it like it is, but...

It is with this as a backdrop that Jesus answers the question of the disciples: "why do you speak in parables?" What has been "granted" is an interior knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom. The Pharisees were granted the opportunity to see and hear, but they did not see and hear mystery because they wanted the security of controlling knowledge. So even what they have will be taken away. We too need to be careful that we control our human desire to control even God. We do not like mysteries if they are our own and in our lives.

Many will try to figure out what kind of soil they are into which the Word comes. Don't go there; it



Real life is more ambiguous than the teenagers of *West Side Story* could understand. Not all of our projects will come to fruition as we hope, but neither are we ruled by fate. We believe that the story of the universe is one of transformation, not inevitable tragedy. That implies surprises. We never know when an unexpected seed will fall near and produce something very good.

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

IT'S WORTH THE WAIT:

We often forget that the oracles of individual prophets which have been collected into the books bearing their names weren't transcribed in the order in which the original prophets chronologically delivered them. The prophecies have been artificially — and carefully — arranged by the prophet's disciples who actually collected and "published" them — often years or generations after their mentor's death. By that time, events had frequently taken place which altered the way those followers both looked at and presented the prophet's words.

Even today we still engage in such "up-to-date" alterations. Perusing the classic movie channels, I can't help but notice when the actress Nancy Davis appears in pre-1952 movies, the credits almost always list her as "Nancy Reagan" — a name she didn't have until after her 1952 marriage to the future president. On the other hand, Jane Wyman — Ronald Reagan's first wife who wasn't fortunate to become the country's First Lady — is always listed as "Jane Wyman," no matter in what movie she appears!

After his martyrdom, Isaiah's followers not only saved his consoling statement about the power of God's word — they deliberately placed it at the chapter 55 end of their collection of his prophecies. Though the Babylonian Exile had ended around 530 BCE, and they were finally permitted to return to the Promised Land, much of what their mentor had assured them would happen had still not seen the light of day. Those longed-for events continued to be buried in the words the prophet had proclaimed. Yet they, like he, were convinced once God's words had been spoken it was only a matter of time before they would take effect — "For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, so shall my [God's] word be that goes forth from my mouth" [Isaiah 55:10-13]. Eventually it will "achieve the end for which God had sent it."

Placing this oracle at the end of their collection makes it both a sign of their faith in the Lord's word, and a reminder that God's disciples are committed to this faith thing for the long run. The years of water that passed unfulfilled under their life's bridge had convinced them of that latter reality. They couldn't have better summarized their experience of waiting.

Jesus' first followers had parallel experiences. In Paul's letter to the Church at Rome, Paul, shares some of his insights about waiting "for the redemption of our bodies" [Romans 8:18-24]. The Apostle is convinced that it's not enough that we've personally been transformed by our dying and rising with Jesus; we want the whole world to undergo the same metamorphosis. It's no accident that Paul's letter to the Church at Rome is one of his last writings. Paul's been waiting for a long time. No wonder he states his belief "that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now." It certainly hasn't been a peaceful wait.

Matthew's Gospel provides us with a classic example of an "original" parable of Jesus [Matthew 13:1-9] which has later been "allegorized" by the early Christian community and applied to a situation the historical Jesus never encountered — people giving up the faith [18-23]. The historical Jesus seems to have originally told this story to those who accused him of wasting his time preaching God's kingdom. Though they point out almost no one will ever follow through on what he's teaching, he has no plans to stop. He's convinced the few who actually do carry out his words will produce "a hundred, or sixty or thirtyfold."

The wait for God's word to be fulfilled is always worth it, no matter what's happening in our lives.

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

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S FUTURE:

It happened on Broadway, in 1957. A guy named Tony was trying to escape gang life, and he took a break from delivering Coke — the real thing — to sing. Standing amid tenements, surrounded by drying lingerie, he poured his whole heart into Stephen Sondheim's lyrics: *Could it be? Yes, it could. Something's coming, something good.* Alas, *West Side Story* tells a tragic 20th-century rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*, and in spite of his hopes, Tony couldn't escape fate. He died in the cycle of violence he tried to halt.

The theme of the futility of trying to do good is as old as storytelling and usually rings truer than the assurance that the heroes in white hats always win. The best dramas, and even the best comedies, engage us in ambiguity; they portray the struggle to discern and practice genuine goodness in the midst of confusing and competing circumstances and philosophies.

One wonders what St. Paul would come up with if he were invited to write a few seasons of a contemporary TV drama. He's got ready-made themes in his letter to the Church at Rome — particularly Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 7 is a discourse on the quest for freedom and human inconsistency. Chapter 8 entices the audience into believing in the certainty of God's future — the “glorious freedom of the children of God” [Romans 8:18-24]. For Paul, even though our efforts may feel futile, all of creation is ultimately moving toward transformation in God.

With that as his interpretive key, Paul might model the plots of Season 1 on Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed. Being the sort of preacher that he was, Paul would spend ample time exploring the problems, starting with the seed that totally missed its mark and got eaten by the birds. After doing his ecological research, Paul would cleverly lead his audience to realize that what we consider loss can bring hidden gain — some seeds slip to good soil from the birds' beaks or fall after being caught in their feathers, others get dispersed through the birds' droppings. After all, for Paul, “all things work for good for those who love God” [Romans 8:28].

Elaborating on the rocky ground, Paul would tell stories about people who close themselves off, refusing to relate deeply or make commitments. He would dramatize their lack of concern for the others with whom they make up the body of Christ.

Paul would have a heyday with the “thorns”! He has all the raw material he needs in his correspondence with those Corinthians he berated for putting up with rivalry, infighting, discrimination and incest in their community.

The seeds on good ground would provide a subtle backdrop to every episode. They would be inconspicuous because they are planted deep and their progress is so slow that it's almost imperceptible. Not only that, but time and again, it would seem that the good seed sinks into the soil only to die — or as Paul says in his letter, to be subject to corruption.

Paul's drama would not shy from showing suffering, but his depictions of pain and sorrow would be tinged with hope for something unimaginable, what he called the revelation of the children of God.

Of course, we don't need Paul to write this TV series — it's happening all around us. Our challenge is to discern the underlying plot in our own dramas, and to decide how to play our roles so as to live into the unimaginable future we are offered.

The prophet, Isaiah, assures us that, whether or not we see it, God's grace is at work in our world [Isaiah 55:10-13]. Jesus elaborates on this in the parable of the sower, telling us not to worry about what seems to be wasted, but to concentrate on the seed in good ground [Matthew 13:1-23].

If we take that as a Pollyanna approach to life, we're missing Jesus' message. On the one hand, our ideas about how things should go are not necessarily the same as God's ideas. Plants that don't grow as we think they ought may become the seeds of transformation in a far-distant field. As Pope Francis so famously reminds us: “Who are we to judge?”

Secondly, if we choose to concentrate on what goes wrong, we'll miss the 30-, 60- and 100-fold that is proliferating all around us.

ends up only in self-negativity and preoccupation. Rather, go to the Sower — to the Rain-Sender and do not ask questions which will take away mystery. Listen with the ears you have and see with the eyes you have that certainty and security are traps and lead only to yourself. The Kingdom is established on the fidelity of God Who has made promises and that Love will remain around and within us until what it was sent to do in me and you is accomplished

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

WHO LIKES WAITING?

I've heard that if someone waits more than four seconds for your website to load, there's a 25% chance the person will skip it entirely. When there's a line at Starbucks, we tap our foot. When the subway is delayed, our eyes repeatedly flick to our watches. When the tinny “all circuits are busy now” chirps in our ear for the fifteenth time, we grit our teeth and debate hanging up. When the promised reward is slow in coming, we don't like to wait.

On a larger scale, we can see the same impatience for change. Hasty to fulfill campaign promises, the Republicans or Democrats bring their bill to the House floor without a guarantee of support, and now, as a result, move forward more hesitantly. Of course, all earthly leaders face the same scrutiny. Whatever side of the aisle, we want our promises fulfilled. And we don't like waiting.

The Scripture readings for this 15th Week in Ordinary Time understand this concept. From Isaiah to St. Paul to Matthew's Gospel, we see the theme of promise and awaiting its fulfillment. The prophet speaks of the word of God going forth like the rain to water the earth [Isaiah 55:10-13]. The psalmist praises God who “visited the land and watered it” and whose paths “overflow with a rich harvest” [Psalm 65:10, 12]. St. Paul recognizes that all creation is waiting in hope [Romans 8:18-24]. And Matthew's Gospel shares the parable of the sower and the seed, in which seeds fall on different types of soil to varying results [Matthew 13:1-23].

American culture has largely moved away from the agrarian society of Jesus' day. But farmers understand something that McDonald's doesn't — change takes time. New growth doesn't spring up overnight. At my parents' home in Minnesota, three pine trees line the side of their house. We used to take photos next to them on the first day of school. I had an early growth spurt, and, in many of the photos, I stand taller than the trees. Now the pines soar higher than the house. Growth takes time.

We know the waiting isn't easy. St. Paul compares it to the labor pains of a pregnant mother! There's good news in all of this. As impatient as we get in everyday life, and as disappointed as we become from unmet expectations, our hope lies elsewhere. Ultimately, our hope rests neither with a timely cup of coffee nor the person in the White House. Our hope is in the One who sows the seed, who waters it with care, and who produces abundant fruit.

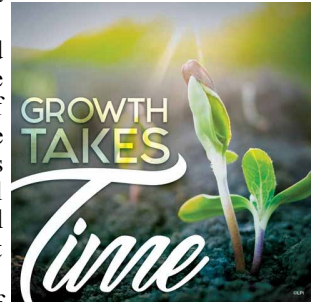
Every day we have the opportunity to renew our hope in God. Every day we have the choice to cultivate the seed of his word in our hearts through prayer, reading Scripture, and acts of charity to others. Every day we can trust him to provide the grace we need in our journey toward hope's fulfillment in heaven.

Our God's promise will “not return to him void,” but is always moving, and “achieving the end for which he sent it”. So let us rejoice in hope! —taken from the writings of Anna Carter, which appears on the internet.

THINK ABOUT THIS:

You have to go the way your blood beats. If you don't live the only life you have, you won't live some other life, you won't live any life at all.

—James Baldwin



WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL PLANTING?

When it comes to facing failures in life, the farmer in Matthew's Gospel parable sounds a lot like many of us. We work hard, and only sometimes succeed. Most of the best things that we give to others are not well received by them. Most of what we want to plant in the lives of those around us don't "take"; it doesn't become rooted and permanently planted in their lives. All of us have to deal with failure — those areas where the best that we've given to others comes up lacking — falling short of our hopes, our dreams, and our great expectations.

There are some biblical commentators who suggest that the parable of Jesus about the farmer sowing seed [Matthew 13:1-23] is really autobiographical. That may well be true. Jesus certainly had to face a whole lot of apparent failure. He knew full well the pain of failure:

- He was born and raised in Nazareth and his own hometown folks rejected Him.
- His own Hebrew countrymen rejected His message.
- What about His handpicked twelve apostles? Well, one of them sold Him out for 30 pieces of silver, and the others fled when He was arrested and crucified.
- Peter wasn't too swift to take His message to heart; Thomas was the doubter; and the others weren't much better either.

Elijah — long before Christ — along with Jeremiah and other prophets as well, were notable failures — most of them being taken outside the walls of Jerusalem and then stoned to death.

Up to this point, my remarks all sound terribly dismal and discouraging. But my point today is that we need to remember that Jesus did not let apparent failure stop Him. In His parable, Jesus went on to speak about a crop that yielded a harvest in successful amounts — some yields bringing spectacular success. Matthew's Gospel parable is not a dirge — it is a celebration; it is a story of hope, not of despair.

Any crisis has within it both danger and opportunity. True there are evils that surround us, but many of those evils are slowly being overcome. God is at work among us bringing good out of evil. We must remember that in the hands of God, the slightest good can be multiplied to feed thousands if we would but hand our efforts into his care and providence.

You and I, like all good farmers who continually face floods and disasters of every sort, need to seriously engage ourselves in the enterprise of faith and hope, planting what we have, planting the best of what we have, and then letting God's sun, wind, and gentle rains do the rest. God's only-begotten Son, along with the gentle breath of His Holy Spirit, provide waters of grace to nourish and sustain what He has planted in the lives of those we love. The best years of our lives, and the best that we have given to others in them, or are giving right now, or will give in the future, will not be fruitless.

Many times, I am called upon to console distraught parents who poured out all of their love and faith into their children — taught them the Catholic faith, sent them to religious education classes, or to Catholic schools — only to have them as adults, leave the Church and go elsewhere — many times to a type of religion that requires little if any faith, but which gives good feelings. We must remember in such cases that the love and the faith that we've planted in the hearts of those around us — particularly in the hearts and souls of our children — will eventually blossom. The hopes and dreams that we've planted in others — even when they seem to be buried under too much dirt — will germinate, grow, and yield a harvest of some extent, even if our efforts do not now appear to be unqualified successes.

But that is life — and Jesus knew it. His parable could well have been autobiographical, for it is truly a vignette of His life.

Sure, our world is a mess now, but it always has been a mess. We need to see that there is also an



ANOTHER CHANCE TO GRAB THE GOLD RING:

Mark Twain once wrote: "Giving up cigarettes is easy. I do it a hundred times a week." Many of us — like Twain — grow easily discouraged from one broken resolution or other. If you do, Jesus' parable of the Sower has your name on it [Matthew 13:1-23].

The setting for the parable is the Lake of Galilee. Jesus is sitting by the lake — probably getting a tan and some much-needed beach time. Leisuredly He is reading the sports pages of a week-old copy of the *Jerusalem Times*, and sipping a glass of good red wine. Suddenly out of that famous nowhere appears a huge crowd. He springs to His feet — lest He be trampled by these happy people. They clamor for what they think will be an impromptu lecture. The favorite outdoor sport of the Jews was to search out distinguished rabbis and drain them dry. Intellectual gymnastics was the Jewish idea of a good time. Today was the turn of our Jesus. Good-naturedly He obliges the almost playful group.

Incidentally, when was the last time you were sitting at the beach and a large mob surrounded you? And they shouted: "O great teacher, share your wisdom with us." Do you see now the type of Man we are lucky enough to follow? Have you sold Him short when He has so much to teach you? If yes, reconsider. Put this point into your mental computer.

Matthew says this was the first parable Jesus spoke. So, He must have spent hours burning the midnight oil at His HP laptop polishing it. This was to be His debut on the lecture circuit. This is one more reason to pay this parable super attention. There is gold out there in those parable hills. We have to dig it out with some old-fashioned sweat. Even in the spiritual life, there is no such thing as a free lunch.

Many others on the lecture circuit have used the parable method, but no one has matched the Master's skills. A literary critic wrote: "Jesus is one of the world's supreme masters of the short story." How many short stories of de Maupassant or O Henry do you remember? Yet you know all of Christ's.

This is a parable of encouragement. It was meant for the apostles and ourselves. To the twelve, the Nazarene was "numero uno." He was an original. Yet they were discouraged that so few were actually buying into Him — "Master, why so much effort and so few gold rings?" Jesus' answer was this parable.

Even the dullest gardener among us does not expect every single seed he sows to come up singing roses. He knows the wind will blow some seeds away. The squirrels will grow fat on others. However, even the amateur gardener keeps on sowing. And he certainly does not give up expectations of a generous growth of flowers.

Jesus tells His own troops never to throw in the towel even when one's efforts seem an exercise in futility. People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Love them anyway. People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

Think of John Harvard here. In 1640, he came to the American colonies from England. He was a promising scholar. The New World appeared to be his oyster. But the poor fellow upped and died after but one year. His will gave \$3500 and 200 books to a fledgling university. The school became Harvard University. Today it staffs a faculty of 1000 and has a student body of 10,000. It enjoys an international reputation. John Harvard's death appeared to his contemporaries to be an abomination, but it produced riches beyond anybody's imaginings.

So, this parable of the Nazarene teaches that even if much of your labor or your money seems to go for nothing, do not allow yourself to go into a downer. The ballgame may well go into extra innings. Your honorable self may prove to be as much a winner as Christ Himself. Struggle on.

We mourn that the glass is half empty. With a smile, Jesus fills up the glass. Had Mark Twain taken this parable seriously, he would have ended his nasty cigarette habit.

—taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooly which appear on the internet 15

security. By nature, we fear and we hoard. Because of this, whether we are poor or not, we tend to work out of a sense of scarcity, fearing always that we don't have enough, that there isn't enough, and that we need to be careful in what we give away; therefore, we can't afford to be too generous.

But God belies this, as does nature. God is prodigal, abundant, generous, and wasteful beyond our small fears and imaginations. Nature too is stunningly overwhelming and prodigal. The scope of our universe, even just in so far as we know it, is almost unimaginable. So too is the abundance and prodigal character of God.

We see this, for instance, in the biblical parable of the Sower. The Sower — God — whom Jesus describes, is not a calculating person who sows his grain carefully and discriminately only into worthy soil. This Sower scatters seeds indiscriminately everywhere — on the road, in the bushes, in the rocks, into barren soil, as well as into good soil. He has, it seems, unlimited seeds and so he works from a generous sense of abundance rather than from a guarded sense of scarcity [Matthew 13:1-23]. We see that same abundance in the parable of the vineyard owner, where the owner, God, gives a full day's wage to everybody, whether they worked the full day or not. God, we are told, has limitless wealth and is not stingy in giving it out [see Matthew 20:1-16].

God is equally prodigal and generous in forgiveness — as we see in Luke's Gospel. In the parable of the Father who forgives the prodigal son we see a person who can forgive out of a richness that dwarfs dignity and calculated cost to self [see Luke 15]. And we see this same largesse in Jesus himself as he forgives both those who executed him and those who abandoned him during his execution [see Luke 23].

God, from everything we can see, is so rich in love and mercy that he can afford to be wasteful, over-generous, non-calculating, non-discriminating, incredibly risk-taking, and big-hearted beyond our imaginations. And that's the invitation — to have a sense of God's abundance so as to risk always a bigger heart and generosity beyond the instinctual fear that has us believe that we need to be more calculating because things seem scarce.

The Gospel of Luke has one of the strongest social justice messages in all of scripture — every sixth line is a direct challenge for justice for the poor — and yet, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus, while warning about the danger of wealth, does not condemn the rich or riches. Rather he makes a distinction between the generous rich and the miserly rich. The former are good because they radiate an incarnate God's abundance and generosity while the latter are bad because they belie God's abundance, generosity, and huge heart.

Jesus assures us that the measure we measure with is the measure in which we ourselves will receive in return [see Mark 4]. In essence, that says that the air we breathe out will be the air we re-inhale. That isn't true just ecologically. It is a broad truth for life in general. If we breathe out miserliness, we will re-inhale miserliness; if we breathe out pettiness, we will breathe in pettiness; if we breathe out bitterness, then bitterness will be the air that surrounds us; and if we breathe out a sense of scarcity that makes us calculate and be fearful, then calculation and fearfulness will be the air we re-inhale. But, if aware of God's abundance, we breathe out generosity and forgiveness, we will breathe in the air of generosity and forgiveness. We re-inhale what we exhale.

I have never met a truly generous man or woman who didn't say that he or she always received more in return than he or she gave out. And I have never met a truly big-hearted man or woman who lived out of a sense of scarcity. To be generous and big-hearted we have to first trust in God's abundance and generosity. From that abundance we get a sun that is generous and a universe that is too huge and prodigal to be imagined. That's a challenge not just to the mind and the imagination, but especially to the heart — for it to become huge and generous.

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



amazing amount of goodness in the world. The greatest miracle of all isn't found at Lourdes, or Fatima, or Medjugorje; it's found in those around us, in those who are, in spite of terrible odds, yielding up love, kindness, caring, and sensitivity thirty, sixty and a hundred-fold. We have our modern-day heroes among us who are leading us as never before in efforts to rid our world of oppression, racism, and injustice.

And so, we are all called to keep on planting God's good seeds in the lives of those near to you. For God Himself has said through His prophet Isaiah that His word shall go forth from his mouth, and it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it" [Isaiah 55:10-13].

Faith and hope are what should be in our hearts — not defeat and despair.

So, we need to ask: what how do we define success? Who do we regard as having led successful lives? Have the rich and famous led successful lives? Ralph Waldo Emerson was a famous American who was a prolific essayist, lecturer, and poet. Having moved away from the Christian religion, he led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. It was a philosophy not associated with any particular religion. He was seen as a champion of individualism. Allow me to share with you one of his most famous quotes: "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a better place than we found it — whether by a healthy child, a garden path, or a redeemed social condition — to know even one life breathed easier because you lived, this is to have succeeded."

Nice thoughts to be sure. But we might ask ourselves, where is Christ in them? You and I are Christians — Catholic Christians to be exact. We believe that at the end of our lives, we will meet Christ face to face. How will He judge us? What are the criteria by which we will be judged?

Matthew's Gospel gives us a very big clue: "All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand: 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him: 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me'" [Matthew 25:32-40].

It seems to me that if what we did in our lives meets those standards, we will have gone a long way to have lived a successful life. May you and I pass the test!

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

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.

KNOW THIS:

We can always expect God to give us the strength to deal with the circumstances of our lives, even if he does not change them.

—Father Eamon Tobin



A PARABLE OF TRIUMPH OR TRAGEDY:

Is the parable of the sower a positive or a negative parable? [Matthew 13:1-23]. Is it a comedy or a tragedy? Like many of Jesus' parables, this parable can be read in different ways. Therefore, it is up to us to decide which way to read it. Some would conclude that it is a tragic parable because much, if not most, of the seed does not grow. It is eaten by the birds of the air, choked by the thorns, or scorched by the sun. But others would see it as a positive parable of growth, because the seed that falls on the good soil produces a bountiful harvest of a hundred, sixty, and thirty-fold.

I believe that Jesus is calling us to hear the parable positively — to see it as a parable of growth. The parable is carefully shaped to fit the contours of our lives. After all, the parable is not about agriculture, but about human existence. It is not about seeds, but the Kingdom of God.

What this parable tells us about our life is this: We will never succeed in all of our projects and goals. We will never fulfill all of our hopes and dreams. We will never remain connected to all of the people who we love. Some of our hopes and dreams will not grow and will disappear as quickly as the seed that was eaten by the birds. Some of our projects and goals will start to grow, but then become scorched and wither away because of lack of root. Some of the people that we love will not love us in return. Others will form a relationship with us for a while, but will not be able to adjust to new circumstances. In time our relationship with them will suffocate — like the seed that is choked by the thorns. Either because of our own mistakes or because of other circumstances, many of the hopes and dreams that we have will not come to fruition. Much of what we desire will be lost like seed that does not grow.

But this parable also includes a harvest—a rich harvest. For all the seed that does not grow, there is other seed that produces a hundred, sixty, and thirty-fold. I believe Jesus is calling us to focus on the harvest. For all the goals, for all the relationships, for all the dreams that were never fulfilled, this parable calls us to remember all of those realities that did grow, that did bless us and sustain us still. We must not focus on the parts of our lives that have failed or live our lives in guilt and self-pity. We cannot base our lives on all the what-ifs. What if — I tried harder? What if — circumstances were different? What if — I made another decision? All of these what-ifs have no future. Attaching our lives to them is as useless as crying over spilt milk or over seeds that never grew.

Instead of lamenting about all the things in our life that did not happen, this parable calls us to rejoice in the things that did happen—in the goals we were able to achieve, in the hopes that we were able to realize, in the relationships that still support us to this day. They are God's gifts to us. There might be many of our hopes and dreams that did not materialize, but the ones that did are enough to provide a bountiful harvest, a rich life.

So, is the Parable of the Sower a comedy or a tragedy? It all depends on how you read it. The same is true of our lives. We can choose to focus on all of our dead dreams and wrap ourselves in despair. Or we can choose to accept the harvest that has been given us with thankfulness and joy. How do you choose to live your life? What do you choose to see — a triumph or a tragedy? Only you can decide. Let those who have ears to hear, listen.

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

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

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



hardened his heart.

Back to Isaiah. The people would hear Isaiah, but would be more determined not to abandon their sinful attitudes, and thus their sin would be greater. By quoting this passage, Jesus is saying that many who hear the Word of God He proclaims will fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 6. They will become hardened against the truth and more determined not to follow it. Jesus wants them to turn to Him and be healed, but He knows that for many people, human nature will result in the fulfillment of the Isaiah's prophecy.

A good example of this is that of people who hear about the development of a human being inside a mother, they know that sonograms would show a human life, but they become even more determined to support abortion. Another example would be that of people presented with the reasons why capital punishment can no longer be justified, but they simply do not want to hear this and chance changing their long-held position. Now that you know, what are you going to do about it? That is the challenge that confronts us today. We have been given the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God — the Word made Flesh. We have heard him calling us to a new way of life — one of love and concern for others, one that does not give in to hatred. We have heard that Jesus identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned, and all whom some people have relegated to the fringe of society — "Whatever you did for them you did for me" [see Matthew 25].

We know that we have been given a great deal. So, the Gospel asks us: "What are we going to do about it?" We cannot ignore the Word of God. We cannot consider it only when it is convenient for us to do so. The charge given in to Timothy is given to every one of us: "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power, proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient" [2 Timothy 4:1-5].

Catholicism is not just a religion — it is a way of life. Christianity is a way of life. We have been given the grace to live this life. The seed has been showered upon us. We pray today that we might be good soil.

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

THE CHOICE OF GRATITUDE:

Gratitude goes beyond the "mine" and "thine" and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift. In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.

Gratitude as a discipline involves a conscious choice. I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment. It is amazing how many occasions present themselves in which I can choose gratitude instead of a complaint. The choice for gratitude rarely comes without some real effort. But each time I make it, the next choice is a little easier, a little freer, a little less self-conscious. There is an Estonian proverb that says: "Who does not thank for little will not thank for much." Acts of gratitude make one grateful because, step by step, they reveal that all is grace.

— Henri Nouwen

AN INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

The sun is extraordinarily generous, giving huge parts of itself away every second. Scientists tell us that every second, inside the sun, the equivalent of 4 million elephants are being transformed into light — an irretrievable, one-time gift. The sun is giving itself away. If this generosity should halt, all energy would eventually lose its source, and everything would die and become inert. We, and everything on our planet, live because of the generosity of the sun.

In this bounteousness, the sun reflects the abundance of God, a largesse that invites us to also be generous, to have big-hearts, to risk more in giving ourselves away in self-sacrifice, and to witness to God's abundance. But this isn't easy. Instinctually, we move more naturally to self-preservation and

SO, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

Matthew's Gospel contains the Parable of the Sower, and an explanation of the parable [Matthew 13:1-23]. Between the parable and its explanation there is a difficult passage about acting on the gifts we have been given. The parable and its explanation are centered on ancient farming practices. In Jesus' time and in His part of the world, fields were harvested in June and then left barren during the hot, dry summer. By the Fall the ground was quite hard. However, the farmers knew that the rain would be coming soon, so in the Fall the farmers would plant the crop for the next year's harvest. Most of our Florida farmers do the same thing — plant in the Fall to harvest in the Spring. But the ancient farmer did not plant like the modern farmer plants. The modern farmer plants in three steps — he ploughs, then sows seed, then covers the seed over. The ancient farmer planted in two steps — farming began with a sower who went through the fields scattering seed. He was followed by a ploughman who would plough the seed under. That's why the seed that fell on the footpaths was useless. The ploughman wasn't about to plough the footpaths under. The seed that fell on rocks wouldn't be ploughed under either. It might develop some roots, but they would not be strong enough for the plant to survive. As far as the thorns were concerned, the Mid East has world class thistles. Thistle plants grow over six feet tall. The only seed that had a chance of surviving would be that which fell on good soil.

Therefore the simple meaning of the parable is "Be Good Soil." Good soil needs help. The farmer fertilizes it, makes sure it receives nutrients that will help the seed grow, and of course, he waters the soil.

God is the farmer. We are the soil. The seed is His Word. God doesn't just sow the seed, and leave us expecting us to nurture the seed ourselves. He nurtures us. He waters us. He gives us the capacity to be the very best soil.

Between the parable and the interpretation of the parable is a section that is quite difficult. The disciples ask Jesus why He speaks in parables. He answers that those who are closest to Him hear Him speaking candidly, but those who do not hear the simple messages of the parables demonstrate the fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah — "Listen and you will not understand, look and you will not see" [see Isaiah 6:9]. What is this all about? Is this addressed to us? Are we doomed to never understand the Lord? Is Jesus trying to keep His message secret from us or from others? Is Jesus trying to keep people from receiving His salvation? None of that can be true; yet we are faced with the words: "They have scarcely heard with their ears, they have firmly closed their eyes, otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and then turn back to me, and I should heal them."

The solution to these questions comes from the source of the quotation, from the sixth chapter of the Book of Isaiah. In this chapter the prophet has a vision of God sitting on His throne and attended by the Seraphim, angels. Isaiah hears them singing "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." He is convinced that he is going to die because he has no right to be in the presence of the Holy One. One of the angels then touches his mouth with a burning coal and declares that Isaiah's guilt has been purged. Next Isaiah hears a voice calling out: "Whom shall I send, who will go for us?" Isaiah responds: "Here I am, send me" [Isaiah 6:1-9].

It is right at this point that we have the passage that Jesus refers to in the Gospel for this 15th Week in Ordinary Time. The voice says to Isaiah: "Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed" [Isaiah 6:9-10].

The meaning behind this is that the message of the prophet will result in the people knowing what they have to do, but they will avoid doing it. Think about Pharaoh back in the days of Moses when the Egyptians held the Hebrews in slavery. Remember, Moses revealed God's will to Pharaoh that the people should be freed. He proved the message with great miracles — the Nile turning into blood, the plagues, etc. But Pharaoh refused to listen. His guilt was great because he knew God's will. Pharaoh

**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.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Exodus 1:8-22, Matthew 10:34-11:1
Tuesday:	Exodus 2:1-15, Matthew 11:20-24
Wednesday:	Exodus 3:1-12, Matthew 11:25-27
Thursday:	Exodus 3:13-20, Matthew 11:28-30
Friday:	Exodus 11:10-12:14, Matthew 12:1-8
Saturday:	Song of Songs 3:1-4, 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, John 20:1-18

16th Week in Ordinary Time: Wisdom 12:13-19, Romans 8:26-27, Matthew 13:24-43

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 8]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 770.00
Offerings-----[Sunday, July 9]----- \$ 675.00

ARE WE CAFETERIA CATHOLICS?

Often, we hear some Catholics speak of other Catholics as “cafeteria” believers. This is often a subtle criticism of those who appear to pick and choose from the cafeteria food line, what they want, leaving behind the distasteful or uninviting parts of the menu. The term gives the impression of a person not serious about their faith — one who selects what is easy to digest and avoids the harder elements. Yet I would argue that we all are cafeteria Catholics. In the 2,000-year history of the Church, we all are picking and choosing from the vast menu of Catholic theology, thought, and practice.

Our choices are reflected in the parish we attend, the books we read, the causes we support, the votes we cast, the political parties we join, and the popes we prefer. All us Catholics are making choices. Do we read Thomas Merton’s *Seven Storey Mountain* or Scott Hahn’s *Rome Sweet Rome*? Do we support migrants at the border or march in Right to Life rallies? Are we members of a Catholic Worker house or the Knights of Columbus? Is Black Lives Matter an atheist leftist formation as some bishops assert, or a legitimate protest as other bishops see it?

Are we aligned with Tyler, Texas, Bishop Joseph Strickland, or San Diego Cardinal Robert McElroy? Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister, or the late Poor Clare Sister, Mother Mary Angelica, founder of EWTN? Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, or San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone? To say we know it all and we hold all truth is to undermine the freedom and liberating energy of the Holy Spirit.

A beauty and strength of the Catholic Church is our big tent. At some non-Catholic churches I have attended, it is obvious that political perspectives are very much aligned. But in Catholic parishes, it is just as obvious theological and political views represent center, left and right.

The main issue is not whether we are cafeteria Catholics, but whether we are still feasting at the banquet.

Psalm 23 reminds us that our cup is overflowing. In John’s Gospel, Jesus tells his friends: “I have many more things to say to you” [John 16:12]. That Gospel also reminds us “of his fullness we have received, grace upon grace” [John 1:16]. In his letter to the Church at Ephesus, Paul prays that we all have the “strength” to comprehend the love of Christ and be “filled with the fullness of God” [Ephesians 3:18]. Spanish poet and mystic John of the Cross wrote in his poem, *The Spiritual Canticle*, that if you gather together all that the saints and holy people have learned of God over the centuries, the “greater part” remains to be unfolded.

There is a question we must ask, then, no matter our current theological, social, and political perspectives: “Is that all God has to say to us, or is there more? Are there ‘many more things?’; is there ‘grace upon grace’ and are we filled yet with God’s fullness?” Jesus told Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit is like the wind — we hear the sound of it, but we do not know where it has been, or where it is going [see John 3:8]. To say we know it all and we hold all truth is to undermine the freedom and liberating energy of the Holy Spirit.

Our “truths,” as we know them, are partial and in constant need of expansion and change. If someone says they understand fully what God has revealed, I suggest such a view is unbiblical and against Catholic teaching. The late Swiss priest, author and theologian, Hans Küng, wrote in *The Church Maintained in Truth* that just as sin is overcome by grace, the Gospel truth shines more brightly as it corrects our errors.

Küng suggested that we are “corrected” to the extent that we are open to the Holy Spirit. Küng wrote: “God’s Spirit is under no law other than that of his own freedom; no justice other than that of his own grace; under no power other than that of his own fidelity. The Church does indeed try continually to take over the Spirit, but it cannot ‘possess’ him, cannot control, restrain, direct or master him.”

Vatican II is a prime example of our collective choosing. Some Catholics believe Vatican II saved

the church from irrelevance and decay, and others believe it has irreparably harmed Catholicism. Opposition to the documents and spirit of Vatican II persists, despite the years it took to draft the documents, and the over 90% approval votes from the more than 2,000 bishops from around the world participating in the event. It was the first ecumenical council that could be truly termed “global,” as past councils were dominated by western Europeans.

One of those documents, *Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, speaks directly to our collective role in continuing theological reflection and attainment of truth: “discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the spirit of truth. Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life” [see Chapter 12].

While recognizing the importance of the faith “given once and for all to all the saints,” the text emphatically urges us toward “more.” “More deeply” and “more fully” both convey a sense that God’s wisdom, mercy, and justice have yet to be exhausted. The document affirms John of the Cross’ poetic proclamation that “the greater part still remains to be unfolded.” Despite all we know and believe and do, there is still “more.”

Therefore, we should all confess our status as “cafeteria Catholics,” with the recognition that the feast continues. *Lumen Gentium* says that we must understand our faith “more deeply” and apply the faith “more fully.” If we had access to all we needed, we would not need “more.” If God’s truth were exhausted in our cherished positions, political ideologies and sense of “right,” there is no need for more. More is not necessarily “more” of the same, but more new. St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*: “Late have I loved you, O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new.” Almost 2,000 years ago Augustine recognized that God is “ever new,” and continually transcending our limits.

Revelation is not complete. Revelation is constant. Tradition, which many Catholics herald as fixed and irrefutable, is merely the formalized expression of the church’s past experience with God. Those experiences are not over, for every day each of us have new and expanding encounters with God. These experiences do not detract from tradition — they in fact add “more.”

There is more to God, and the love of Christ, than any of us have fully understood. Whether we are conservative or progressive, traditional or liberal, the banquet is still open. Our ongoing question should be: Are we done choosing from the menu, or are we still feasting?

—this article by Daryl Gribbsby was published on July 7, 2023 in the daily *National Catholic Reporter* post.

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**



LIFE TEEN

WORTHY OF MERCY:

Do not fear then, that your past faithlessness must make you unworthy of God’s mercy. Nothing is so worthy of mercy as utter weakness. He came from heaven to earth to seek sinners, not the righteous; to seek that which was lost — as indeed all were lost if it were not for him. The physician seeks the sick, not the healthy. Oh, how God loves those who come boldly to him in their foul, ragged garments and ask, as of a father, for some garment worthy of him!

—François Fénelon