

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer of Oneness in God ~

**Eternal One,
Father
and Mother of us all,
Holy is your name.**

**Let justice and mercy
fill all Creation
and let us recognize
that every thought
and thing
belongs to you.**

**Feed us
with the bread
we need for today.
Forgive our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Stand with us in trial
and temptation.**

**Free us
from the grip
of all that is evil.**

**For you alone
are creating our universe,
now and forever.
Amen.**

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

Our Lady Chapel



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

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.

**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."

**THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY:**

We want to put this on your radar — **Tuesday, August 15th** is the **Feast of the Assumption** of Mary into heaven — a **holy day of obligation**. When the course of her earthly life was completed, the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven, where she already shares in the glory of her Son's Resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body. [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #974]. **Mass schedule for the holyday will be slightly different from years past because of our faculty meetings: Monday vigil Mass at 5:30 PM. Mass on Tuesday's Mass will be at 1 PM. There will be NO 5:30 PM. All Masses will be in the main chapel.**

**ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL SUPPLIES:**

Once again this year, we are assisting the students at St. Adalbert School with their school supplies. We have received a list of supplies which the children need. Here is how you can be a part of this outreach. **Here are the items that they need: Single-Subject Spiral Notebooks; pencils, school glue; glue sticks; crayons [any size box]**. Simply shop for items on the list. Kindly **return the items** whenever you come to Our Lady Chapel. **If you do not have time to shop, simply place an envelope in the collection basket and mark it "St. Adalbert's" or drop it off in the chapel office.** Together, we work and plant our seeds of hope and goodness to this community. Thank you in advance for your generosity and helping the children of St. Adalbert! Contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] if you have any questions.

**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.

**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 Vivian Klick, mother of Linda Monitello, grandmother of Anthony ['17] and Angeline ['19] Monitello, who is recovering from cancer surgery.
- For Beth Budaji, mother of Kate Budaji Mckay ['06], who is seriously ill.
- For Brian Ponader, who is seriously ill following a stroke.
- For Sister Antonee Pflanning, S.N.D., who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.
- For Brother Robert Dailey, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jennifer Burger ['06], sister of Rachel ['10] and Paul ['16] Burger, who is undergoing treatment for rare form of breast cancer.
- For Nada Kucmanic, who is preparing for surgery.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Helen Piggford, mother of Father George Piggford, C.S.C.
- For Dorothy Schlicher
- For George Kaminski, brother of Father Ed Kaminski, C.S.C.
- For Russel Leik, brother of Brother James Leik, C.S.C.
- For Marlene McGee
- For Joyce Murray, grandmother of Mr. David Murray, C.S.C.
- For Michael Barren, brother of Mary Lee Barren Sprung ['88], and son of former Athletic Director, Daniel Barren.
- For Sister Dolores Bray, C.S.C.
- For Sister Margaret O'Brien O.S.U.
- For Dan Ruminski, grandfather of Elaina Kline-Ruminski ['25]
- For Joseph Weber ['52]
- For Patience Humphrey.

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 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.

FAITH EDUCATION:

Faith Education will begin shortly. With that in mind, it is very important that you register your child early so that we will know how many teachers we will be needing. **Even if your child attended class in the past, because we are resurrecting our program, you will need to register.** Our Faith Education classes for the year will begin on **Sunday, September 17th at 8:45 AM.** Please join us as we come together to begin our faith journey for this year by entering into prayer and worship together. **If you have any questions, please contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560].** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

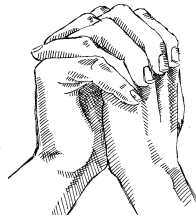


PRAYER REQUESTS:

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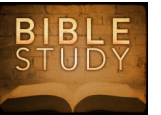
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Sister Grace Corbett, S.N.D., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Tom Lerette, uncle of Father Matthew Hovde, C.S.C., who is terminally ill with cancer.
- For Megan Schaefer Wenker ['09], who is undergoing treatment for lung cancer.
- For Frank Potenziani, former Trustee, and father of David ['95] and Cyrena ['01] Potenziani, who is seriously ill.
- For Gia Cefferati, aunt of Rylyn ['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, AUGUST 9th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, August 9th 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 [Part 2]

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 30: 17 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, July 31: St. Ignatius of Loyola	NO MASS
Tuesday, August 1: St. Alphonsus Liguri	NO MASS
Wednesday, August 2:	NO MASS
Thursday, August 3:	NO MASS
Friday, August 4: St. John Vianney	NO MASS
Saturday, August 5: Transfiguration of Jesus	NO MASS
Sunday, August 6: Transfiguration of Jesus	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.



REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

It is the middle of summer vacation time, and in thousands of cars, the ancient prayers are being uttered from the back seats: “Are we there yet?” “How much longer?” When I was a younger “prayer”, I wanted to know only when we were half way, so I would ask if we were half way yet. The desire to arrive — to be freed from seatbelts and the contagion of siblings — gave urgency to the pleading. Furthermore, all farms, fields, woods, small towns and filling stations look alike, and were not passing by quickly enough. Arrival — not the journey — was the important thing.

Now as we journey along in the life of faith, arrival does not concern us enough. We spend far more time being attentive to the farms, fields and living spaces through which we travel through life. For us, we are more interested in where we are than when we will arrive. We are always arriving to the awareness of where that where is. The Eucharist blesses us in our journeys and arrivals.

We are asked often in our days: “How are you?” A better question — which is never asked — is far more important — “Where are you?” The proper answer of course would be: “I am here, but am moving to arrive at the next ‘there’.” A wonderful spiritual freedom is ridding ourselves of having to know exactly where we are and how are we doing. The Eucharist blesses the “now” and accompanies us to the next “there”.

King David was chosen by God Himself to be King and leader of Israel from among his brothers. As David is about to die, he chooses his son Solomon to be the next king. When King David dies, Solomon is anointed as David’s replacement. Solomon has gone out to the mountain and offered a thousand holocausts in accordance with tradition. While sleeping that night, God appears to Solomon and invites him to ask for anything [1 Kings 3:5-12]. In kind of an Inauguration statement, Solomon asks for the gift of an understanding heart with which to govern the vast group of people that the Lord has called him to lead.

Solomon does not ask for riches, a long life, nor dominating power. God blesses him with this kind of wisdom which reveals the wisdom of God. It isn’t long into his reign that Solomon will be called upon to use this great gift of wisdom. Solomon used the gift of Wisdom to live out his — and God’s — dream that all would be right and in order. Wisdom proves to be more than logic, pragmatism, or strategy. It seems for Solomon — and for us as well — that wisdom is an approach to the questions of life as if there were a real God, loving and laboring with us to bring back the order of the original creation.

The wisdom of Jesus which He is calling the “Kingdom of Heaven” penetrates Matthew’s Gospel [13:44-52]. There is the common thread in these little pictures of change, or exchange. The “treasure”, the “Pearl”, the “netted fish”, and the “old for the new” all describe conversion or decision.

The kingdom of heaven is a kind of treasure which a person, just digging around, happened to find among the other “stuff” buried in the field. A few questions arise — what is the person looking for in the first place, and what was the treasure? Why did the person bury it again and go to buy the whole field? The finding is one thing, but buying the whole field is at the heart of what Jesus is saying. No matter what we are searching for, if we keep digging we will find God. Buying into God’s being God and all that this relationship invites us to, is buying the whole field including those things we do not understand or want. In addition, the field also holds many other hidden treasures which will be revealed over the course of time. This is true in our own relationship with God; we do not know and understand all there is to know and understand at one time; it’s a journey over time.

The second parable pictures a merchant who knows what he wants — a pearl — and he finds it. He sells everything to buy the pearl. Two questions arise — what made the pearl so valuable, and what was the merchant going to do with the pearl after it was purchased? Was the pearl bought “just to look at”, or

**WHAT DO YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE?**

Author and speaker John Shea frequently reminds his audiences that the historical Jesus’ ministry revolved around three questions — what do you want out of life? Where do you get it? How much does it cost? The Galilean carpenter certainly wasn’t the first biblical person to get involved with those three topics.

God first asked Solomon what he wants out of life [1 Kings 3:5-12]? Surprisingly the king responds: “Give your servant an understanding heart.” Should God have problems with the term, Solomon quickly defines such a heart — it’s the ability “to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.”

Scholars who deal with biblical Wisdom Literature — Psalms, Proverbs, etc. — contend that those with understanding hearts are wise in the scriptural sense. They can perceive God at work in their world, and know how they should respond to his presence. Three thousand years ago, our sacred authors believed people thought not with their brains, but with their hearts. Truly wise persons have geared their hearts to think the way that God wants and expects them to think.

In some sense, that’s how the evangelist Matthew conceives of himself. He actually shares an Alfred Hitchcock moment with us — just as the famous director suddenly shows up in almost all his movies, so Matthew shows up in his gospel. He’s the “scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” [Matthew 13:44-52].

As a good Jew, his storeroom of faith overflows with the “old;” as a good follower of Jesus, he’s also involved with the “new” — constantly experiencing the “kingdom of heaven” in his everyday life. Finding the risen Jesus working effectively in all he does and everyone he encounters can only be compared to discovering a buried treasure or coming upon a pearl of great price. Both fulfill the dreams of a lifetime.

Yet even when we eventually surface that “thing” for which we’ve spent our lives searching, we still have to deal with the price for acquiring it. Paul pulls no punches when it comes to the cost. He reminds the church in Rome that we have to be “conformed to the image of God’s Son” [Romans [Romans 8:28-31]. In other words, in order to be “justified,” we must become other Christs. That’s the only way we can be certain we’re doing what God wants us to do, that we actually have an understanding heart. Though we believe “all things work for good for those who love God,” that only happens to those who give themselves over to dying and rising with Jesus — the price God demands.

Among other things, that means we have to commit ourselves to working with a “mixed net;” we can’t just work with those who, like us, are trying to do what God expects us to do. But we’re not only to just work with the “wicked,” we’re to constantly give ourselves to them. It doesn’t matter if our love is returned or rejected, it must always be given. That’s part of the cost of conforming ourselves to the image of God’s Son.

Obviously paying such a price isn’t something we take care of once a lifetime, then forget about it. We not only pay it every day, we discover it changes every day. On the other hand, we also discover a new treasure every day, a constantly changing treasure.

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

KNOW THIS:

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

It appears. Her husband, furious that she wasted a wish on one little sausage, thunders: “I wish it were stuck to your nose” — voilà, it happened.

Much as they might have wanted something extravagant for their third wish, they finally agreed that she couldn’t live the rest of her life behind that sausage. They wished the sausage away and everything went back to normal — except that they understood their love for one another much better.

The moral? “Be careful what you wish or pray for.”

It seems that Frank Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, could well have gotten inspiration from the Book of Kings. Dorothy and her companions on the yellow brick road were each seeking what they already had without being aware of it. When God came to Solomon, the young king took stock of who he was and his vocation. His request for wisdom was ultimately a request to be the kind of king God wanted him to be.

Solomon eventually failed because he lost touch with what he desired to become and followed his cravings for pleasure and power. If he had asked for faithfulness, perhaps his relationship with God would have given him the wisdom and self-control he needed. He might have forgone accumulating the women and weapons that led to his downfall.

Solomon’s history leads into Matthew’s Gospel. As Jesus comes to the end of the parable discourse we’ve been hearing for a few weeks, he changes perspectives. Now, instead of describing the kingdom’s irrepressible dynamism, he talks about its value and what it costs those who desire it. Note the key word — desire!

So often the morality police assume that desire is wicked and sexual. On July 31, we’ll celebrate the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola — a champion of paying attention to our desires as a way to discover God’s will and to grow closer to God. Jesuit Fr. Mark Thibodeaux comments that Ignatius believed that we sin, not because we follow our desires, but because we allow petty or superficial wants or cravings to entice us away from “the great big desires that God has placed in our hearts.”

Ignatius would tell us that desire is not wicked, but it is tricky. Look at the first two parables of Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus presents two approaches to the kingdom of heaven [Matthew 13:44-52]. In the first parable, someone discovered a treasure no one else had noticed. Note what Jesus says about her motivation: “Out of joy,” she sold everything she had and bought the field. She hadn’t been combing the beach with a metal detector, but she stumbled on something that could fulfill her desires more than everything else she already had.

In the second case, we’re dealing with a connoisseur — somebody who knows his pearls and comes upon one that is absolutely incomparable. He is willing to give up everything else for this one pearl.

These stories describe the vocation to discipleship — what it’s worth and what it costs. Jesus never hid the truth that following him is an all-or-nothing deal that will cost us our lives. But the secret ingredient in these stories is joy. The treasure finder and the pearl merchant were anxious to give up possessions they had relished and even their occupations because they discovered something more valuable than everything they had ever acquired or accomplished. We saw contemporary parallels in the people who made it their vocation to help others during the pandemic. That vocation is the pearl they value more than plans, safety and comfort. It has cost some their lives. It has been fulfilling for them all.

The pandemic experience shook us out of a fairy-tale, consumerist world. It challenged all of us to face the question of the truth of our lives. God may not appear to us in a dream, but contemporary experience gives us a vivid reminder that the life we have received is God’s gift of the opportunity to fulfill our potential, to do and become what we most desire.

Let us seek wisdom and faithfulness, lest we waste it mindlessly on the equivalent of a sausage!

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



was there something more to be gained by using the pearl to acquire even more? The reality is that the Kingdom of Heaven demands a “letting go” or a “selling off of the “pearls” of this life in order to acquire the great pearl of Jesus as Savior and Lord. Jesus is the new “treasure” or “pearl” buried in the field of humanity. Once a person understands the value of the relationship which Jesus offers, that person lets go of everything else to acquire the treasure.

Matthew’s Gospel ends as a professor might end his/her semester. Jesus asks if the disciples understand these teachings — even the last parable about the net catching all kinds of good and bad fish. The disciples say that they do understand; but they will learn the deeper realities as they walk along with the Master. He tells them that like a good storekeeper — he brings out the good of the old and the good of the new. Jesus is not negating the former revelations, but building on them and the disciples will be the scribes of the new who cherished the old.

Jesus closes his teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven by reminding the disciples that the old or former or ancient revelations by God of God were of great importance and value. God as the Great Householder does not hold anything back. The “new” — or Jesus — fulfills, highlights and continues the “old”. The goodness of God is everlasting and that goodness wants to be presented constantly and accepted freely.

Life can be like a fisherman who throws a net into the sea and retrieves all kinds of things besides the good fish. It is for us to sort, discern and figure out the mess with God’s help. With faith in the Word of God, We know that “all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” [Romans 8:28-31].

—taken from the writings of Sister Candice Tucci, O.S.F., and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

DEEPENING CONNECTION:

If we would imitate Jesus in very practical ways, the Christian religion would be made-to-order to grease the wheels of human consciousness toward love, nonviolence, justice, inclusivity, and care for creation. Mature religion serves as a conveyor belt for the evolution of human consciousness. Immature religion actually stalls people at very early stages of magical, mythic, and tribal consciousness, while they are convinced they are enlightened or “saved.” Then we are more a part of the problem than offering any kind of solution. Authentic mystical experience connects us and keeps connecting us at ever-newer levels, breadths, and depths, “until God is all in all” [1 Corinthians 15:28]. “The world, life and death, the present and the future are all your servants, for you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God” [1 Corinthians 3:22-23]. Full salvation is finally universal belonging and universal connecting. Our word for that is “heaven.”

God is forever evolving human consciousness, making us ever more ready for God. The Jewish prophets, Jesus himself [Mark 2:19-20], and many Hindu, Catholic, and Sufi mystics used words like wedding, espousal, marriage, or bride and groom to describe this phenomenon. That’s what the prophet Isaiah [61:10, 62:5], many of the Psalms, the school of Paul [Ephesians 5:25-32], and the Book of Revelation [19:7-8, 21:2] mean by “preparing a bride to be ready for her husband.” The human soul is being gradually readied so that intimacy and partnership with the Divine are the final result. Note that such salvation is a social and cosmic concept, and not just about isolated individuals “going to heaven.”

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

GOD DISGUISED:

We need to lay hold again of the elementary truth that God reveals himself by the fleeting method of the word, and in an appearance of weakness, because everything would be shattered if God revealed himself in power and glory and absoluteness, for nothing can contain God or tolerate his presence. God cannot be known directly but only through that which is within the realm of human possibilities. —Jacques Ellul



LIVING THE KINGDOM:

The Kingdom of God, always somewhat mysterious for us, was always on the mind of Jesus. There are almost 150 references to God’s Kingdom in the New Testament — 52 of them are in Matthew’s gospel alone! The more that Jesus spoke about the Kingdom, the more it seemed to His listeners to be another worldly place. Perhaps that is because in a world gone insane, sane things seem to be unreal.

In the gospel for this 17th Week in Ordinary Time, Jesus referred to the Kingdom as a hidden treasure — a box filled with golden coins buried somewhere in a field [Matthew 13:44-52]. Likewise, Jesus spoke of the Kingdom as a precious pearl — a jewel found by a businessman who astutely sold everything he owned in order to buy it. Jesus also spoke of the Kingdom as a fishing net filled with fish — both good and bad. Later Jesus referred to the Kingdom as leaven in dough, as light, salt and seed. He also called it a ripe harvest, a royal feast and a wedding banquet.

We wonder what the Kingdom is for us, in everyday terms, as we live out life here in our town this week, next month, throughout the rest of this year, and beyond. How do we identify and describe God’s Kingdom here on earth? Some folks think of the Kingdom as a remote and distant heaven in another world at the end of life. Others think it’s an ideal political and economic order. Some think that the Kingdom is exclusively God’s business — not ours — and we only have to wait and receive it from God’s hands. Some identify the Kingdom as the Church. What’s inside the Church is the Kingdom; what’s outside the Church is not a part of God’s Kingdom.

But, what is the Kingdom of God? When did it start? Where did it begin? How did it come into being? For the answer to these questions, we need to go back to the beginning. In the beginning, God divided light from darkness. Then God divided the land from the water. Then He made the earth fertile so that living things would grow in it. Then the oceans, lakes, and rivers were made to crawl with reptiles and filled with swimming fish. The lands were filled with weeds, climbers and creepers, bushes, and finally great trees. The air and the sky God filled with insects and birds, and on the ground were wondrous animals and creatures of all sorts and varieties [see Genesis 1].

And then God made the likes of you and me. He took the face of a man, and then of a woman, in His hands, bent their faces backwards, put His mouth on theirs and blew the Breath of Life into them commanding: “LIVE you woman!” “LIVE you man!” “Live as I live. I place you over the world as my agents, my ministers, my stewards, my sons and my daughters. I give you all the earth that you may return it back to me with all that you have done to make it fruitful, productive, wondrous, and beautiful, filled with souls for me to love, and to love me in return. Have life! Be joyful! Give life! Give happiness and joy; give your love and your life to each other and to all. Give my life within you to your children and your children’s children forever and ever. Live together in my love [Genesis 1:26-31].



Where is the Kingdom of God? On earth, here, as it is in heaven, in us...as it is in God. It is our human life — that sacred space in which lives the very Spirit of God, the very life of God. If that’s not true, then the Incarnation — God’s Son becoming man — is meaningless. The Kingdom is found where God wants to establish it — in our human relationships with each other. That is when it started; that is where it began; that is how it came into being. Jesus is tireless in pointing that out to us.

God’s Kingdom is God’s will, God’s desire for human life, where we find the quality of our human life. God’s kingdom is the expression of His will that your life, and those who live in your life, might be filled with His joy, His love, His mercy, His justice, His truth, and His peace.

Whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we pray to God: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth...” God’s desire and will is nothing else but that we be filled with the fullness of well-being, happy living, total life. Nothing else is God’s will. The Kingdom of God here on earth is human life — high

husband, we will act out in dangerous and hurtful ways.

Thoreau once said: “The youth gets together materials to build a bridge to the moon or perhaps a palace or a temple; at length the middle-aged man decides to build a woodshed with such materials.” So too in love and life — the child sets out to make love to the whole world and the adult eventually determines to marry a single person, in essence, to build a woodshed. But it’s only in that shed where life and love are real in this world

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

PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD:

Brother Lawrence (1611–1691) was a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery, where he primarily worked in the kitchen. His reflections, known as **Practice of the Presence of God**, have inspired countless Christians and other spiritual seekers to simple practices of contemplation and presence. He begins by encouraging us to take brief moments of pause during our busy days to enhance our awareness of God’s presence.



During our work and other activities — even during our reading and writing — no matter how spiritual, we must stop for a brief moment, as often as we can, to love God deep in our heart. Even though this pause may be brief and in secret, we become aware that God is present before us. Stopping enables us to praise God, ask for His help, and to offer Him our Heart and to thank Him.

Ultimately, we can offer God no greater evidence of our faithfulness than by frequently detaching and turning from all things created so we can enjoy our Creator for a single moment. It is a common oversight among spiritually minded people not to turn from outside engagements from time to time to worship God within ourselves and enjoy in peace some small moments of their divine presence.

Brother Lawrence teaches that this practice begins with a faith that God is truly present with us in all times and circumstances. All this reverence must be done by faith, believing God is really living in our hearts, and we must honor, love, and serve them in spirit and in truth. Infinitely excellent and with sovereign power, God deserves all that we are, and everything in heaven and on earth, now and through eternity. All our thoughts, words, and actions belong rightly to God. Let’s put this into practice.

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 22]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-in]----- \$ 420.56
Offerings-----[Sunday, July 23]----- \$ 615.00

FAIRY-TALE OR REAL?

It sounds like a fairy tale. God appears to Solomon in a dream and offers to give him anything he desires [1 Kings 3:5-12]. In fairy tales, there’s always a price connected with wishes granted. Sometimes it’s terrible; sometimes comic’ but it always entails coming to grips with the truth of one’s life. For example, a peasant couple was offered three wishes. Without thinking, the woman says: “I wish I had a sausage.”

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE AND ITS COST:

A woman I know tells this story: She married a man she loved but, early on in the marriage, she was too immature to responsibly carry her part of the relationship. One night she went to a party with her husband, drank too much, and left the party with another man. Eventually she sobered up and repentantly found her way home — fully expecting the marital skies to be ripped asunder with anger. But her husband — though hurt and shaken by what had happened — was calm, philosophical, direct. When she walked sheepishly into the room, he demanded neither an explanation nor an apology. Ultimately, what is there to say? He simply said to her: “I’m going away for a few days so that you can be alone because you need to decide who you are — are you a married woman or are you something else?” He took a three-day sabbatical from her; she cried, sorted out the question he had put to her, and now, years beyond this painful incident, she is inside a solid marriage and infinitely more aware that the pearl of great price comes precisely at a great price.

Every choice is a renunciation. Thomas Aquinas said that, and it helps explain why we struggle so painfully to make clear choices. We want the right things, but we want other things too. Yet every choice is a series of renunciations. If I marry one person, I cannot marry anyone else; if I live in one place, I cannot live anywhere else; if I choose a certain career, that excludes many other careers; if I have this, then I cannot have that. The list could go on indefinitely. To choose one thing is to renounce others — that’s the nature of choice.

In most areas of our lives we do not feel this so painfully. We choose and there isn’t a lot of sting to the loss. But the area of love is more sensitive. Here we feel the sting of loss more strongly, and here we often find it hard to accept the real limits of life. What are those limits? They are the limits that come with being an infinite spirit in a finite world.

We are fired into this world with a madness that comes from the gods and has us believe that we are destined to embrace the cosmos itself. We don’t want just something, we want everything. That’s a simple way, though a good one, of saying something that Christianity has always said — namely, that in body and soul we are meant to embrace everyone and we already hunger for that. Perhaps we experience it most clearly in our sexuality, but the hunger is everywhere present in us. Our yearning is wide, our longing is infinite, our urge to embrace is promiscuous. We are infinite in yearning, but, in this life, we only get to meet the finite.

That’s what makes love difficult. We are over-charged in our own lives. We have divine fire inside us, want everything, yearn for the whole world, and yet, at a point, we have to commit to one particular person, at one particular place, and in one very particular life, with all the limits that imposes. Infinite desire limited by a finite choice, such is the nature of real life and love.

Life and love, beyond the abstract and beyond the grandiosity of our own daydreams, involve hard, painful renunciation. But it is precisely that very renunciation that helps us grow up and makes our lives real in a way that our daydreams don’t.

In trying to explain some of the deeper secrets of life, Jesus gives us this parable: the kingdom of God is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he finds a single one of great value, he goes and sells all that he owns and buys that pearl [Matthew 13:44-52]. That — the pearl of great price, the value of love and its cost — is in essence the challenge which the young husband put to his wife when he told her to sort out the question, “are you a married woman or are you something else?”

For what are you willing to renounce other things? What is our own pearl of great price? Are we willing to give up everything in exchange for it? Are we willing to live with its limits? Until we are clear on these questions there is forever the danger that, like the wife who left the party without her



quality human life — filled with his glory.

The reason Jesus was recognized as the Son of God was because those around Him discovered in Him the same exclusive divine purpose — namely, the well-being of people. And so Jesus cried: “Stop being deaf! That’s no good. Hear!” “Stop being blind! That’s no good. See!” “Stop being crippled. That’s no good. Move!” “Stop being mute. That’s no good. Speak!” And when He met the bleeding woman, He said: “Stop bleeding. That’s no good. Give God a child!” And when He met the widow of Nain hold her only child — her dead son — in her arms; when he encountered the dead daughter of Jairus, and when He wept at the tomb of his dead friend Lazarus, He cried out: “Come forth! Live!” God’s Word — the same Word that He shouted into the black chaos of the cosmos back in the beginning, went forth from His mouth and came back bringing life — life in its fullness, Life fully healed and complete in His glory.

Jesus gave life; He restored life; He repaired life; He affirmed life. He lived life among the broken, the prostitutes, adulterers, widows, and the aged, among orphans, street people, crooks, vagrants, and the outcast. He unbound Zacchaeus — a greedy grasping, mean man who sat on piles of ill-gotten money. And when he was freed, Zacchaeus became prodigally generous — unreasonably and insanely generous. He became just as unbelievably and irrationally generous as God.

Jesus detested injustice; He hated unfairness, He was revolted by sickness, deformity and disease; Jesus was disgusted with violence; He set His face against oppressors. And when the Prince of Darkness and Father of Lies tried to conquer Him, He stood in simple silence on the ground of His Father’s Kingdom. Even death itself could not do away with Him. Why? Because He lived for human well-being while having in His heart the same will of His Father for all human life.

Are you living in the Kingdom? Do you sacrifice your own personal comfort and convenience for the well-being of those around you? Does your work give value added to the lives of those around you? Does it add to the sum total of the happiness in their lives? Do your choices, your attitudes and decisions, contribute to the well-being of others? Do you give them life, or do you drain life from them? Do you give them joy, or take the joy of living away from them? Are you like Zacchaeus before he met Jesus, or are you like Zacchaeus after he started to really live following his encounter with Jesus?

For if you are a savvy business person, you’ll invest only that which will last, and in that which will allow others to value you. After all, God’s totally personal investment was in the humanity of Jesus risen in glory as the Christ given by God in order for us to live in His life. In death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God invested His own Spirit, His own life, His Holy spirit in your humanity and mine. In the Spirit-filled humanity of the risen Christ, God gives us the opportunity to share His very own life. That is a reality that is more real than anything this world can ever dream of offering you.

If you know how to invest, then make this investment, just as did the shrewd businessman in Matthew’s gospel. If you do, you will live a happy, quality life, because you will be doing god’s will and living a life of real value in His Kingdom.

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

IN SERVICE, WE ENCOUNTER GOD:

Radical servanthood does not make sense unless we introduce a new level of understanding and see it as the way to encounter God. To be humble and persecuted cannot be desired unless we can find God in humility and persecution. When we begin to see God, the source of all our comfort and consolation, in the center of servanthood, compassion becomes much more than doing good for unfortunate people. Radical servanthood, as the encounter with the compassionate God, takes us beyond the distinctions between wealth and poverty, success and failure, fortune and bad luck. Radical servanthood is not an enterprise in which we try to surround ourselves with as much misery as possible, but a joyful way of life in which our eyes are opened to the vision of the true God who chose to be revealed in servanthood. The poor are called blessed not because poverty is good, but because theirs is the kingdom of heaven; the mourners are called blessed not because mourning is good, but because they shall be comforted.

A PAIR OF PARABLES:

Every parable has multiple meanings. And when you put two parables together, even more insights emerge. This is what the Scripture Readings for this 17th Week in Ordinary time does for us. Matthew's Gospel gives us two small parables — the parable of the treasure hidden in the field and the parable of the pearl of great price [Matthew 13:44-52].

In both parables, a person finds something of immense value — a cache of gold that was buried in the field or a pearl that is so exquisite that it puts all other pearls to shame. Clearly in Jesus' preaching, the treasure and the pearl stand for that which is most important, that which could bring us the most joy. Ultimately, they stand for our salvation — for our relationship with God. So, these two parables are a way of showing us how we find our heart's desire. Clearly the characters in the parable know this. When they find what is most important, they both sell everything that they have in order to possess it.

Recognizing the similarity of the parables allows us to discover a truth in their differences. In these parables, each of the characters finds that which is most important in a different way. The merchant finds the pearl of great price by constant effort. The parable tells us the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. On the other hand, the man finds the treasure in the field by chance. He is not looking for it. He just comes across it in the course of his work. So when you put these two parables together, they tell us that sometimes we find the kingdom of God by looking for it and other times it comes to us even when we are not looking for it. Sometimes we find our heart's desire because we are searching for it, and other times we simply stumble upon it.

Does this not match our experience? How have we found the most important things in our lives? How do people find a spouse — someone with whom to share their life? Well, some people do it by constant effort, by going on on-line dating services, by talking to friends, by going out to the appropriate social mixers. Such people sometimes find the person they are looking for. But other people have a chance conversation at a party, and the rest is history.

How do couples who are having difficulty conceiving give birth to a child? Some use every possible medical advance to increase fertility. Sometimes it works and they are successful. But I cannot tell you how many times I have talked to a couple who have tried everything without success and finally have resigned themselves to the fact that nothing is going to work — and then it does.

How do we draw closer to God? Sometimes we do it by saying our prayers, by reading the bible, by serving the poor. Such efforts allow us to feel God's closeness. But other times we cannot pray; we feel that God is absent. Perhaps we are even angry at God or doubt God's existence. And then there comes a call from a close friend or a particularly beautiful sunset, and suddenly we know God is with us.

These two little parables of the kingdom relativize our approach to salvation. They remind us that obtaining the most important things in life is not a process over which we have control. It is a process over which God has control. And God is not bound to use our wisdom or our efforts. Now, should we go for what is the most important thing? Should we seek our heart's desire? By all means — with all of our energy and strength. If we try sincerely, sometimes like the merchant searching for fine pearls, we will find it. But on those days when our energy runs out, on those days when our searching seems futile, on those days when we cannot even think of another thing we can try, the gospel reminds us not to give up hope. God still intends to save us. God still intends to give us our heart's desire. And it is possible to stumble on the most important things, like finding a treasure hidden in a field.

Therefore, we should live with confidence. God is in charge. Whether we are looking for God or not, God is looking for us. And God is always successful.

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

A LESSON TO LEARN:

8 It's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.

—Lewis Carroll

Bring this into your present. Sometimes, a couple will see me when they are having a crisis in their marriage. Often, I'll mention that the present situation needs to be dealt with, but don't let this situation cause you to overlook all the good you have done for each other and the growth you have achieved as a loving couple. Some people are too quick to give up on marriage and end up realizing what they have lost only after it is too late.

Solomon prayed for wisdom — not a bad idea. It takes wisdom to combat the challenges of life. It takes wisdom to be a good parent, a good husband, a good wife, a good priest, a good person. It takes wisdom to discern what needs to be brought into the present and what needs to be left in the past.

Where do we get this wisdom? The same place that Solomon received his.

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

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY:

For the past month, we have been reading from the spiritually rich eighth chapter of Paul's long letter to the Church at Rome. The Apostle begins by addressing his brothers and sisters: "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" [Romans 8:28-31]. From all eternity God has had a plan to bring the evolving created world to its final fulfillment and to save all people. The divine plan does not eliminate all evil and suffering, but it does work for our benefit by bringing good out of bad situations. God saves us by conforming us "to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Salvation is open to all through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Paul goes on to explain the dynamics of the divine plan. From all eternity God foreknew and predestined those to be saved — "And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified."

This succinct summary of God's saving activity is difficult to understand and has generated diverse theological positions. At one extreme is the influential Protestant theologian John Calvin [1509 – 1564] who held a double predestination — meaning God predestined some to be saved and others to be damned. This view made it hard to defend human freedom and triggered speculation about who was actually saved and on what criteria. In 1547, the Council of Trent condemned Calvin's position, insisting that our salvation is totally dependent on God's gratuitous gift of grace, which also requires our free response. Due to the teachings of Vatican II, Catholics have developed a more positive salvation optimism. God does not predestine anyone to hell, but wills the salvation of all people. As Pope Francis insists: God is merciful to us, never tiring of extending forgiveness to all human beings. This good news does not absolve us from doing our part — from cooperating with divine grace; from striving to do God's will; from seeking forgiveness; and from a systematic effort to grow spiritually. We can find a balanced approach in the traditional aphorism: Pray like everything depends on God; work like everything depends on us.

Here are some examples: A woman suffering from MS could come to realize that her illness has made her a more compassionate person. A collegian with low self-esteem could begin to build greater self-confidence by realizing God wants him or her to flourish. A high school religion teacher could be moved to read more on the salvation optimism taught by Vatican II. A highly successful executive who is excessively proud of her or his accomplishments could become more appreciative of their many undeserved blessings received from God. A grandfather who is overly fearful of going to hell could find some comfort by reflecting regularly on God's mercy.

How could all this help you to grow spiritually?

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



WISDOM:

The Scripture readings for this 17th Week in Ordinary Time begin with Solomon's request for Wisdom [1 Kings 3:5-12], and conclude with a summation of the Lord's teaching on the parables. At the conclusion of the Dissertation on the Parables in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus states: "Every scribe of the Kingdom is like the head of the household who brings out from his storeroom both the new and the old [Matthew 13:44-52]. Jesus spoke to the Jewish people, well versed in Hebrew scripture, and Matthew's Gospel was written for Jewish Christians. Jesus is not replacing what we call the Old Testament with the New Testament; rather he is combining the best of the Hebrew Scriptures with the New Way — the Kingdom of God. The wise one — the scribe of the Kingdom — knows how to use what is old and what is new.

It takes wisdom to understand how to deal with the past and the present. There are many people who idealize the past and want to return to life as it was — for example, in the eighties or the nineties. There are many others who want to reject the past and concentrate only on the advancements of modern life. So, in the area of family life, the first group wants to re-create the Brady Bunch, and the second group sees a value in the Modern Family. In the area of faith, the first group wants to return to the pre-Vatican Church and the second group wants a Church without a visible structure.

How do we best deal with the past and the present? The Russian poet/philosopher, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko, has this insight: he said that the trick to handling the past is to know what should be brought with us and what should be left behind. That is wisdom. For example, within the Church, we should bring with us from the past devotion to the sacraments, to the Mother of God, the importance of the Catholic Family, firm standards of morality, a determination to practice the faith. What should be left behind would include the subordination of the laity, the repression of the roles of women in the faith, the glorification of the clergy, and the diminishing of the study of Sacred Scripture.

We should also apply this to our lives. All of us can look back on our lives and note numerous positive and multiple negative aspects of our lives. We have got to stop persecuting ourselves by dwelling on the negatives of our past. When we do this, we are bringing the past into the present. Leave it in the past. At the same time, it is not pride to recognize the gifts we have shown and to be sure that we utilize our potential, or make our talents real in the present.

For example, take a person who went through a period of life when he or she behaved immorally. Then, perhaps due to a religious experience — most likely occasioned by love — that person changed his or her lifestyle and became the person he or she is now. They might say: "I am getting married now. I am having a child now. I need to be a person of integrity." And that person grew up spiritually determined to live a new, dedicated Christian lifestyle.

It would be so wrong for that person or any of us to dwell on the mistakes of the past. If sin was involved, well, remember the sacrament of reconciliation is given to us to leave the past in the past and to concentrate on the present. On the positive side, a person can look at his or her past and remember how volunteer work for the poor or sick was so important during high school or college. Perhaps, he or she might remember how others could not deal with a dying person, but how he or she was able to sit down and chat with the sick person and see that person, not the person's sickness. Reflecting on this, the person says: "Hey, I can do this. And it is important for me to use this gift God gave me. I'm going to volunteer as an aide in a nursing home or as a hospice companion." This is looking at the past and bringing the best with us to the present.

Those of you who are married should do this when considering your relationship. If you are human beings, then you have made mistakes. Leave them in the past. You have also been supportive and caring.

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — AUGUST 19th:**

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. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help setting up items for distribution and preparing for the food pantry to open. It serves around 150 clients each time. 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 32:15-34, Matthew 13:31-35

Tuesday: Exodus 33:4-34:28, Matthew 13:36-43

Wednesday: Exodus 34:29-35, Matthew 13:44-46

Thursday: Exodus 40:16-38, Matthew 13:47-53

Friday: Leviticus 23:1-37, Matthew 13:54-58

Saturday: Leviticus 25:1-17, Matthew 14:1-12

Transfiguration of Jesus: Daniel 7:9-14, 2 Peter 1:16-19, Matthew 17:1-9

WE ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE:

God chose to create human beings different from the other animals; he created them *in his image* — both male and female — and he gave them authority over all other living creatures. This gives us great value and raises an important question: In what ways are we made in God's image? We reflect God's glory. Some believe that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. More likely, our entire self is what reflects the image of God. We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme creator. But we do have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God's image and that we share many of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim; instead, it is based on being made in God's image. Because we bear God's image, we can feel confident in who we are. Criticizing ourselves is discounting what God has made and the abilities he has given us. Knowing that you are a person of worth helps you love God, know him personally, and contribute meaningfully to the lives of those around you.

Stop and thank God for creating you in his image. You are his unique creation and he loves you. Thank him for your special gifts, talents, abilities, physical characteristics, emotional makeup, and personality. And ask him to help you respect others, even those you don't get along with, because they are his image-bearers as well.

SEARCHING FOR THE TREASURE:

Matthew's Gospel for this 17th Week in Ordinary Time presents us with three more parables about the nature of God's Kingdom [Matthew 13:44-52]. The first two about the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price tell us about the inestimable value of the Kingdom. The third one about the dragnet tells us about the great diversity of its make-up.

I recently visited a most interesting Auction House. I was in the vicinity and I went in to take a look. It was a fascinating place — there were all kinds of interesting items of furniture as well as a lot of old crockery, jewelry, paintings and many other curiosities. There was only one day for viewing, so the place was full of people examining the various items that they were interested in. They were all making notes in their catalogue.

I watched a man examining a collection of rather old clocks. He had a magnifying glass in one eye and was carefully peering into the back of each of the clocks to see the state of the mechanism. He reminded me of the merchant in Jesus' parable looking for the pearl of great price. This clock dealer was using his expert knowledge to see which of the clocks was worth buying. And who knows, one day he might discover a clock worth thousands that no one else has recognized!

Yard sales can be like this.

What a great image for the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is all around us, but most people aren't aware of it. But for those of us who do realize that it is, there is treasure beyond measure that we can possess.

But the problem is that for so many of us, we have only a foggy notion of the spiritual. We think that there might possibly be a God, but we don't see much evidence of his hand at work in the world and so we forget about him most of the time. It is only when we experience a crisis that we bring God to mind, but because we are so unfamiliar with the things of the Spirit that we don't know how to pray properly or how to ask for his grace.

We don't realize that one of the greatest signs of God's presence in the world is the very fact that he doesn't make himself overtly known. Clear evidence of God's presence is that he gives us the tremendous gift of free will and leaves us to make our own decision as to whether we acknowledge him or not.

Paradoxically it is God's apparent absence that shows how great he is. He doesn't need to press himself upon us and make himself known. Actually, it would be a sign of weakness if he had to constantly advertise himself. He prefers anonymity and ambiguity; he wants us to discover him for ourselves rather than force himself upon us.

In ordinary life, to give an anonymous gift is regarded as something special. This is particularly the case when the gift is a large one. But most people, quite naturally, want a bit of credit, and it is hard for them to resist the temptation to reveal themselves as the giver of a valuable gift. And yet there is a negative side to making oneself known because it can place an obligation on the receiver of the gift — they might feel that they have to be extremely grateful or obliged give something in return. This is the very reason why God doesn't advertise his presence overmuch. If he let us know just how much he has done for us we would feel under such a heavy obligation to him that we would be completely paralyzed and wouldn't be able to do anything other than praise and thank him for the rest of our lives.

In the person of Jesus, God has revealed himself definitively to the world. Through Jesus he has shown us what he is like. God does this in a most particular way when Jesus makes the great sacrifice on the Cross that takes our sins away. But there is no definitive proof of this — we are invited to take it on faith.

And so, the choice rests with us. The invitation is placed before us, and it is entirely up to us whether we accept it or not. We are invited to believe in all that Jesus told us, and to embrace the Gospel as our way of life, but there is absolutely no compulsion on God's part to force us to believe in him.

It could be that those of us who have taken Jesus at face value have a special sensitivity to the things of the Spirit, or perhaps it is that we are simply more open than others to the action of God's grace in our lives. Whatever the reason, we have come to know God; we have come to appreciate that his Kingdom of love and peace is indeed the "pearl of great price" that we simply must possess.

But unlike the merchants in the story, or the man in the auction house, we do not want to possess it just for ourselves because we understand that the Kingdom of God is not that kind of thing. We understand that it is not something that can be limited only to us — it is something that in order to fully possess it we must share with others.

This is one of the great paradoxes of the Gospel. To possess the Kingdom means to share our knowledge of it with others. To truly believe in Christ means leading other people to the same knowledge; for secret faith is no faith at all. We need to be like the householder, whom Jesus talks about at the end of the parables — we need to bring out of our house things both new and old. We should be happy to bring out of the house that is our life all kinds of treasures to share with our neighbors.

But these treasures are not things like clocks and pearls; rather they are attitudes and virtues such as love and justice and truth and hope. What we bring out from our treasure store are the values of the Kingdom, the attitudes of Jesus and the knowledge of the one true God.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister S.D.S., 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

**SUPPORT LANCER ATHLETICS:**

How would you like to win a new car? Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Medina Auto Mall and the Northeast Ohio Buick GMC Dealers, Gilmour Academy is raffling off a brand new **2023 GMC Acadia SLE!** All ticket proceeds will be directed to the Campaign for Lancer Athletics, benefiting each and every Gilmour student. You can enter to win by visiting gilmour.org/car. Tickets are available for \$100 each and **one lucky winner will be drawn at the final regular season home football game vs Brush on Friday, October 6 [winner doesn't need to be present to win].** Don't miss your chance. Buy your tickets today! Participants must be 18 years of age or older to purchase a ticket.

**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.

