

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Blessing of Teachers & Students ~

Blessing of our teachers:

O Lord God,
in your wisdom and love
you surround us
with the mysteries of the universe.
You sent us your Son
to teach us by word and example
that true wisdom comes from you alone.

Send your Holy Spirit upon our teachers.
Fill them with your wisdom and blessings.
Grant that they may devote themselves
to their calling to be teachers,
and share what you have given them
and what they have learned from others.
Amen.

Blessing of Students:

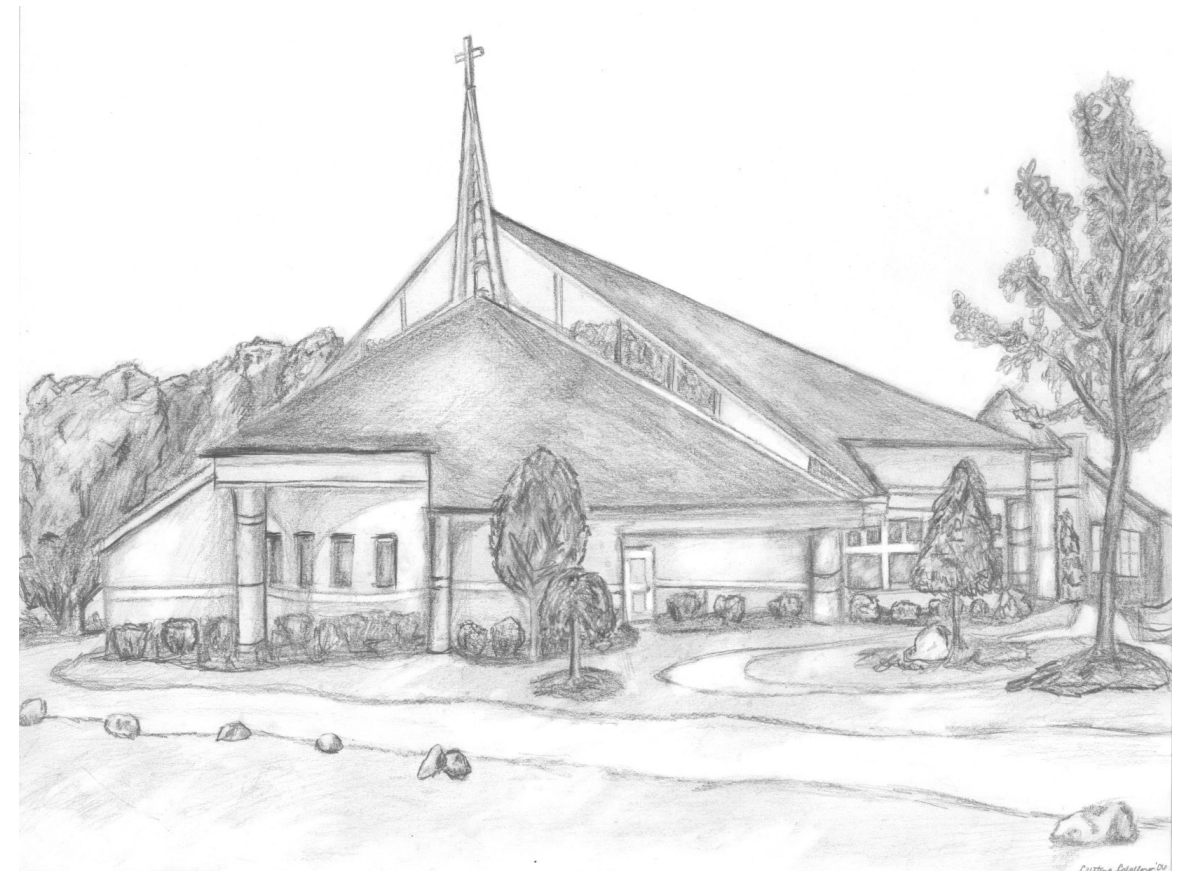
O Lord God,
your Spirit of wisdom fills the earth
and teaches us your ways.
Look upon these students.
Let them enjoy their learning
and take delight in new discoveries.
Help them to persevere in their studies
and give them the desire to learn all things well.

Grant that they may follow in your path,
learning the lessons of truth and love,
and may they share with others,
the truths that they have learned,
their energy for life
and the goodness of their hearts.
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.

**BLESSING OF OUR STUDENTS & TEACHERS — THIS WEEKEND:**

Our school year begins next week. Giving everyone a few days to “settle in”, we would like to gather our Students and Teachers as they begin the journey of 20172017, by sharing a blessing of God upon them. As a faith community, we want your school year to be filled with the joy and excitement of life, as well as the presence of God. **Join us at our Masses this weekend of August 26-27 for this special blessing of our students and teachers.**

**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 restructuring our program, you will need to register.** Our Faith Education classes for the year will begin on **Sunday, October 1st 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

**SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HEALING PROCESS:**

Healing depends on wanting to be well. I may not forget the blows I have suffered in life, but I must choose not to live under their power forever. Most of all, I must not choose to imprison myself in my own pain. Whatever has mutilated us — the betrayal, the dishonesty, the mockery, the broken promises — there is more to life than that.

The first step of healing, then, is to find new joy for myself to tide me through the terror of the abandonment. It is time to get a life instead of mourning one. When the beating is over, there is nothing to do but to get up and go on — in a different direction to be sure, but on, definitely on.

The second step in healing is to find new ideas in which to live. Whatever we needed before the breakpoint came — security, love, connectedness, certainty, and identity — we must now find someplace else. We must put our hope in the risk of a challenging newness.

The third step of healing is to trust ourselves to someone else just when we think we cannot trust anyone or anything at all. Just when we are not sure who the enemy really is, we must risk confidence in someone again. It is a false and hollow cure that ends with a sterile handshake. Healing comes for both the beaten and the intellectually bound when they step across the lines in their minds and hope that this time, in this person, in this situation, they will find the acceptance, the enlightenment, needed to join the human community one more time.

Healing comes when I have been able to desensitize myself to the indignity of hurt by telling it to death until I have bored even myself with the story. It is not the wounding that kills; it is the lack of understanding that paralyzes the soul. Telling my story to someone who will listen is, after all, the understanding that every soul on earth is seeking.

The final step of healing is a matter of time itself. To honor the fact that there is “a time for healing” means surely that we come to peace with the notion that healing does not come before its time, that healing takes time, that time itself is a healer who comes slowly, bringing new life and new wisdom in its wake.

“Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground,” Oscar Wilde teaches. It is in the healing process that we come to a new appreciation of life. What we manage to transcend is what we have triumphed over.

2 What we have wrestled with and won is what measures in us the quality of our lives.

—taken from the writings of Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B., which appear on the internet

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Joe Bucar, housekeeping employee, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease
- For Nada Kucmanic, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Frank Cunningham, who is under the care of hospice
- For Jim Milan, nephew of Father Jim Foster, C.S.C., who is critically ill as a result of an accident.
- For Kathy Hudak, aunt of Brother John Draves, C.S.C., who is critically ill following a brain aneurysm
- For John Roddy, brother of Tim Roddy ['87], brother of Gilmour Marketing associate, Mary Roddy Stretar, and cousin of Daniel ['83], Mike ['85], and Matt ['86] Roddy, who is undergoing treatment for a recurrence of cancer.
- For Sue Ryavec, mother of Ron Ryavec ['16], who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Tracey Fairchild, mother of Colton Fairchild ['24], who is recovering from surgery.
- For Teresa Kozak, Spanish instructor, who is recovering from injuries sustained in an accident.
- For Susan Locke, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Jerry Baum, who is undergoing treatment for an aggressive form of leukemia.
- For Paula Sieminski, mother of Andrew Sieminski ['18], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nora Beach, wife of Gilmour Religion Instructor, Bob Beach, mother of Hannah ['98] and Miriam ['99] Beach, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Henry Bohlke, uncle of Shannon Traynor ['20]
- For Tom Lerette, uncle of Father Matt Hovde, C.S.C.
- For Herminda Munoz, the mother of Father Romula Vera, C.S.C.
- For Eileen Grebinoski, sister of Brother Thomas Rock, C.S.C.
- For Brother Julian Przybyla, C.S.C.
- For Vince Lauricella, cousin of Lorraine Doderro, 2nd cousin to Corrine Salvatore ['02]
- For Francis Brady ['64]

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the victims of the fires in Maui as well as the storms on the West Coast and in Ohio.
- 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.

EVEN IN DARKEST NIGHT:

Can we still say “Thy will be done” when we are no longer certain what God's will would have of us? Do we still have the means to hold to his ways when the inner light dies out? There are such means, indeed such strong means, that it really becomes virtually impossible to deviate on any matter of principle. God came to redeem us, to unite us with himself, with one another, and to conform our will to his.

—Edith Stein

But the struggle continues. After 2,000 years we're still fighting against "the gates of the nether-world," trusting the gospel Jesus' promise that if we constantly fall back on our faith in him, the forces of evil will never prevail — even forces within the church.

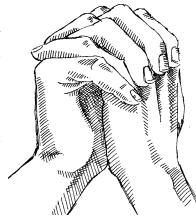
—taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet

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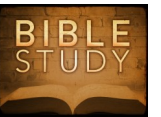
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Tim LaGanke, grandfather of Casey Lennon ['30], who is critically ill with Lymphoma.
- For Beth Budaji, mother of Kate Budaji Mckay ['06], who is seriously ill.
- For Brian Ponader, who is seriously ill following a stroke.
- 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 Sister Grace Corbett, S.N.D., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Megan Schaefer Wenker ['09], who is critically ill with cancer.
- For Gia Cefferati, aunt of Rilyn ['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 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 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.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, September 6th 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: Angels

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, August 27: 21 st Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, August 28: St. Augustine	NO MASS
Tuesday, August 29: Passion of John the Baptist	NO MASS
Wednesday, August 30:	NO MASS
Thursday, August 31: St. Bartholomew	NO MASS
Friday, September 1:	NO MASS
Saturday, September 2: 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, September 3: 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

POVERTY IS A QUALITY OF THE HEART:

Poverty is the quality of the heart that makes us relate to life, not as a property to be defended, but as a gift to be shared. Poverty is the constant willingness to say good-bye to yesterday and move forward to new, unknown experiences. Poverty is the inner understanding that the hours, days, weeks, and years do not belong to us, but are the gentle reminders of our call to give, not only love and work, but life itself, to those who follow us and will take our place. He or she who cares is invited to be poor, to strip himself or herself from the illusions of ownership, and to create some room for the person looking for a place to rest. The paradox of care is that poverty makes a good host. When our hands, heads, and hearts are filled with worries, concerns, and preoccupations, there can hardly be any place left for the stranger to feel at home.



—Henri Nouwen

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

When I sat down to write this reflection, my first thought was: “This will be easy; I know who God is.” It is always good to reflect on the question Jesus poses “Who do you say I am?” But something in me wouldn’t let me get away with the “easy out” this time. I sat some more, reflected some more, read again. I saw a couple links between the reading from Isaiah and Matthew, and was challenged to dig deeper.

First, in Matthew’s story [16:13-20], we read how Peter is chosen by Jesus to be the foundation of his church. Jesus doesn’t just say to Peter: “I choose you” — He chooses him because he has been gifted with revelation. Peter has been given blessings and gifts to be the foundation. Secondly, in the prophet Isaiah, Eliakim is being chosen [Isaiah 22:15,17-24]; he is being chosen and gifted to replace Shebna who was exploiting his position for personal gain. And so my question became not so much “who do you say that I am”; rather it became: “How am I chosen? What gifts have I been given and how am I called to use them?”

Reflecting on the question: “Who do you say that I am?” was intended to help me to grow in the understanding of who I am called to be. The more I seek to know God more fully, the more I enter into deeper relationship, the more clearly I know myself.

The opposite is also true. The more I dig deep into who I am at my core, the more fully I will know who and how God is. This is a “both/and” invitation. So, in summary, the invitation that Jesus offers us today is to reflect on the questions: Who do you say I (Jesus) am? Really, deeply, honestly? Where and how does God choose and gift me this day so that I find out who I am also?

As so often happens when we listen to scripture — we only get part of the story. If we are not familiar with Scripture, we fail to understand what the story is about. We need to stop and examine what really is going on. In the Old Testament reading, Shebna has had a rather lofty image of himself; he also holds a lofty position in the palace. He has begun to immortalize himself by beginning to construct his own tomb on a lofty mountain. God has told him that he will be waded up like a ball and thrown out of the country with all his finery, and he will die there in disgrace.

Through Isaiah’s message, God not only takes away Shebna’s symbols of domination, but God also calls somebody else from a different family to bless God’s people — Eliakim will be a “father” to the people of Jerusalem, and all the people will be his family under God. Instead of warring with power and haughty presumption based on family of origin, Eliakim will be steadfast and use his authority for peace.

And that brings us to Matthew’s Gospel. Here Jesus travels with His disciples to a city whose name — Caesarea Philippi — celebrates Roman power and domination of Israel. It is there that Jesus poses the big question for the purpose of eliciting a bigger answer. For the first time in their relationship Peter, speaking for the other disciples, declares publicly the name which is opposed to the power of Roman and all other worldly force. Jesus is the Christ and the son of God.

Peter, who comes from his earthly family — the “son of Jonah” — is given a new name by Jesus. And with it, like with Eliakim, Simon is given a title and a power. Peter — the name in Greek and in Aramaic means “rock” — is to be the foundation of the group called together, or more commonly known as, the Church. As a person, Peter’s deep profession of faith in Jesus as the Christ is what is meant by foundational. However, Peter is still a human person; he doesn’t always get it right, but this time, he does. And we hear Jesus conveying upon this Rock, the “keys” of God’s power. The “keys” which Peter receives are the instruments of governing as Jesus received that power from His Father. Those keys in the hands of Jesus opened ears, eyes, and hearts. Those “keys” in the hands of Jesus shut out darkness, evil, and death from dominating God’s creation and God’s family. And now we hold these keys in our hands.

Someone once wrote that power does not corrupt, but power in the hands of a fool, corrupts the fool.

implicated by what we are saying? Is there any statement in the creed that feels so risky that we think twice before saying it? What phrase could move us to awe?

All the components of Eucharistic liturgy — from readings to the creed to the command “Do this in memory of me” — conspire to shake us up. Today, we find ourselves called to answer Jesus’ question for ourselves. Happily, we don’t need to figure it out alone, nor live it alone. God’s revelation comes through community, word and sacrament. In that, we can believe — and that’s awesome.

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

IT’S ALL ABOUT FAITH IN JESUS:

I’ve often said that someone who can listen to the *William Tell Overture* and not think of the Lone Ranger is a true aficionado of classical music. Likewise, anyone who can listen to Matthew 16:18 — “You’re the rock and on this rock I’m going to build my church.” — and not think of the Roman Catholic papacy, is a true Scripture scholar. We’ve employed this text for so long as the main proof text for our hierarchical structure that for all practical purposes Matthew’s real message has been completely lost.

The main problem is that we take Matthew’s gospel passage out of its original context of a first century CE Jewish/Christian community and put it into a twenty-first century church CE institution. When Matthew originally penned these lines, he still seems to have believed Jesus would return very shortly in the Parousia. He wasn’t concerned with setting up a “program for the ages,” but in addressing problems that the early Christian Community was experiencing then and there. Among those difficulties was the role of Jesus of Nazareth in the lives of Jewish/Christian believers. For the evangelist, this former Galilean carpenter was more than just one more Jewish prophet in a long line of Jewish prophets like Elijah or Jeremiah — “You’re the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Peter states. The risen Jesus whom Christians follow is not only the Messiah for which Jews longed for centuries, but he/she shares in God’s divinity.

As we know from Paul of Tarsus — our earliest Christian author — Jesus’ disciples could only stand in awe once they discovered the uniqueness of this itinerant preacher. God had done things through him that no person of faith could have anticipated — “How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!” Paul reminds the Romans, in his letter to the Church at Rome [11:33-36] — that no one could have predicted what had happened between 6 BCE and 30 CE, and was still happening with the risen Jesus in their midst. We can only give God glory for his intervention through Jesus.

Of course, the Chosen People were certain that God had already personally worked in their history. Isaiah gives us an example of such an occurrence [Isaiah 22:15,17-24]. The prophet presumes it was God — and not just politics — who had replaced Shebna with Eliakim as “master of the palace” in 8th century BCE Judah. God never hesitated to get involved in everyday Jewish life.

Matthew is convinced that same divine involvement carries over into his day and age — especially through Jesus and those who follow him [Matthew 16:13-20]. Simon’s rock-solid faith in Jesus’ divinity has transformed him into a rock for the early Christian community. This poor fisherman’s belief in Jesus’ uniqueness is the rock on which that church has been built. And just as traditional Pharisaic teachers and lawyers could interpret the Mosaic Law in ways respected and binding “in heaven and on earth,” so Peter and those with faith in the risen Jesus now share in that same ministry for the new People of God — Contrary to popular belief, this power has nothing to do with who gets into heaven and who doesn’t.

Through the centuries many of us Catholics seem to have actually put more faith in some of the authority figures in our church than we’ve put in the risen Jesus. Especially during this year commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we have to thank Fr. Martin Luther for trying to at least partially return us to that biblical faith.

Who am
I? Who
are you?



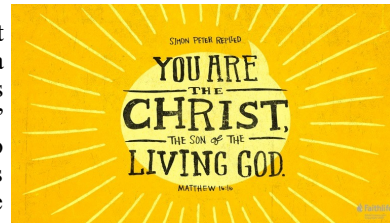
AWESOME FAITH:

Jesuit Fr. John Foley — one of the St. Louis Jesuits of liturgical music fame — composed a song entitled: “Who has Known” which is based on St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome [Romans 11:33-36]. This song contemplates God’s inscrutable judgments and unsearchable ways via the mystery of the Incarnation. The reverent words and mellow music conspire to help us approach the word of God, the Eucharist, and our brothers and sisters with awe, as a mystery of revelation.

In the Scripture Readings for this 21st Week in Ordinary Time, Isaiah prophesies that God will depose an unworthy leader. When he depicts a different, worthy leader, he describes someone as committed as a parent to provide for the total well-being of the people [Isaiah 22:15,17-24]. Such loving dedication is what gives this leader the “power of the keys” — the authority/ability to help the people flourish by providing opportunities and prohibiting harmful behaviors. The exercise of this nurturing guidance gives stability to everyone blessed by the influence of such servant-leaders. Isaiah gives us the sense that leaders chosen by God inspire reverence and show it to others.

This is all as background music to Matthew’s Gospel — an incident we might see as another rendition of the call of Peter [Matthew 16:13-20]. This scene opens with the most important, intimate, and serious question one person can ever ask another: “Who do you say that I am?” The disciples couldn’t dodge the question with an indirect: “They say ...”, so, Peter took the risk and blurted out what they had been thinking and hoping: “You are the Christ.”

That was no simple statement. Although he surely didn’t understand all its ramifications, calling Jesus “the Christ” entailed a commitment as radical as any vow. It’s as strong a statement as “Yes, I will marry you,” or “I am consecrating my whole life to this.” Peter’s confession that Jesus was God’s Son, implied a promise to follow, to listen, to obey Jesus as one would obey God alone. His statement indicated that absolutely nothing in the world could take precedence over his response to what Jesus would ask of him.



Of course, Peter did not fulfill his promise immediately or flawlessly. He continued to dispute Jesus’ predictions about suffering; he wanted to put limits on forgiveness; he bragged and argued with other disciples. Matthew and Mark probably summed up Peter’s discipleship with the sentence: “Peter followed at a distance” [see Mark 14:54 or Matthew 26:58]. But the important point was not the distance, but the following. Peter took the risk over and over. He had committed himself by saying: “You are the Christ,” and he strove to live that commitment for the rest of his life.

Upon hearing him, Jesus responded: “How blessed you are, Peter! This is not something you could figure out on your own.” Peter did not figure it out alone and he could not live it out alone. His religious heritage, his relationship with Jesus, his prayer, the companionship of the other disciples — all these people and experiences were included in God’s revelation to him. All of them enabled him to keep growing into the commitment he had professed.

It seems that Jesus chose Peter, not for what he could accomplish or for his wisdom or strength, but for his capacity for metanoia, his willing ability to change and learn, to cultivate an ever-larger vision. Peter’s faith allowed him to grow into his commitment and that faith is the rock Jesus chose as the foundation of his church. Peter’s faith allowed him to weep for betraying Jesus. Knowing his need for conversion, Peter could be a worthy leader, the keeper of the keys for a frail church.

Jesus’ question was at least the second time Jesus called Peter and the disciples to their vocation. By professing that Jesus was the Christ, they pledged to follow him. They would not do it flawlessly, but they would continue on the way, faithful enough to get up and keep going after falling.

So much for Peter and company. What do we say when Christ asks: “Who do you say that I am?” Every week at Mass, we profess the creed. Is it possible that its philosophical and historical language cushion us from the radicality of Peter’s simple, commitment-compelling statement? Do we ever feel

Keys can be a sign of control — for example, car keys or house keys. People who jingle their keys are saying that the power they have comes from outside — from what they possess. They make the noise of power to frighten away anybody who might not listen to the noise and might want to ask if anybody’s home in there. That is the fool who has been corrupted by pretentious power. This fool has been fooled by the Evil One of this world into thinking that things authenticate identity and positions prove authenticity. The Devil offered Jesus power over all things and this power would prove that Jesus was the “Son of God.” Jesus had received His identity and needed no jingling of power-keys to satisfy this world’s demands.

This encounter between Jesus and Peter is often cited as the proof of papal primacy — the power to admit or exclude. What proves our authenticity is the primacy of living with leniency and compassion. We are the Church — the called together. We have our structures based on tradition and Scripture with our Holy Father as chief key-holder. Each of us has been given the Key of the Eucharist placed into our hands. Don’t jingle it around as a false sign of belonging and domination. We are each invited to exercise Christ’s power to open ears, eyes, and hearts and to shut out the noises of false teachings, false posturing, and false temptations to identity.

In the history of the Christian church, power has corrupted and made fools of those who used the power-keys for self-establishing indulgence. As with Shebna, God brought them down to size. Power can be used as a prop and a crutch to assist the insecure of spirit. True power is received, not grabbed and wielded like a club. We receive the Eucharistic keying, and the hands stretched out to accept this blessed gift, are the same hands which are rewriting the new and present history of Christ’s church. This power does not corrupt, but in the hands of the faithful, it gives life to the world in His Name.

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

THE MYTH OF TRANSGRESSION:

St. Julian of Norwich once wrote: “First the fall, and then the recovery from the fall — both are the mercy of God.” It is in falling down that we learn almost everything that matters spiritually. As many of the parables seem to say, you have to lose it — or know that you don’t have it — before you will really seek it, then find it, and fittingly celebrate [see Luke 15]. The message is sort of hard to miss.

It seems that we must fail, and even “transgress,” and then need mercy, forgiveness, and love because of that very transgression. Up to then, all God talk is largely academic and formal. We don’t really know love until we need love. Until then we have no way of knowing that the long, lonely distance between God/Reality and ourselves is overcome and fully spanned from the other side.

The common “myth of transgression” found in universal literature operates on many levels. Both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures reveal transgression to be the most common pattern of human transformation — consider Adam and Eve, Moses, Jacob, Jesus, Paul, and Peter. The old must always be revealed as inadequate or even wrong for the new to be born. Our first attempt to love God by following rules is eventually revealed to be much more love of self and love of some kind of order — but we can’t know that yet [see Philippians 3:6ff]. It is our failure to live up to these egocentric attempts at love that drives us toward an ever-higher love, where we are not in charge but actually in love!

The actor here is what some call the trickster, the clown, the anti-hero and, in biblical literature, “the sinner” who is again and again shown to be the hero, especially in the stories of Jesus — “Her many sins have been forgiven her or she would not have shown such great love,” says Jesus of “the woman who was a sinner” [see Luke 7:47]. The law-abiding Pharisee is deemed ridiculous while the grasping tax collector, with no spiritual resume whatsoever, goes home “justified” [Luke 18:9-14]. We must deal with this. It is indeed shocking, but only to the self-satisfied ego.

Do you realize how counter-intuitive this is? Do you realize how hopeful this is? The playing field is now utterly leveled. It is our mistakes that lead us to God. We come to divine union not by doing it right but by doing it wrong, as we all most surely do anyway.

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., which appear on the internet

WHO ARE WE MEANT TO BE?

We don't often think of it, but the gospels are leaded with questions. Sometimes it seems like there are more questions than there are answers. Questions imply a quest, a search, and a hunger for knowledge. The word "question" contains with it the word "quest". That's what Jesus liked — people who are in search for truth, who are questing for God.

So we find Jesus in Matthew's gospel asking: "Who do you say that I am?" [Matthew 16:13-20]. And we find Simon Peter answering the question by identifying Jesus as the Son of God. Evidently, Peter recognized something deep within Jesus that was divine — someone coming from God. But Peter came to that as a consequence of Jesus asking him a question. Jesus in response sees something deep within Peter that Peter couldn't see for himself.

In a sense, Jesus introduced Peter to himself. "Okay," Jesus said, "you told me who I am. Now let me tell you who you are. You are Rock!" This quality was not something that Simon Peter recognized within himself. No doubt it was a big surprise, not only to Peter himself, but also to all who knew him. Probably no one would have thought that about him. Nevertheless, he was previously known as Simon, and now, because of Jesus, he was entering into a new self-identity. It took a long time, however, because Peter's behavior with respect to Jesus was anything but sold and rock-like until after Christ's resurrection.

All of this was typical of Jesus. Jesus judged differently; He went beyond appearances. We judge people by appearances — Jesus judges with penetrating insight. Jesus went deep inside people and saw the best that was in them. Then He tried to get them to become aware of those wonderful qualities deep within themselves.

St. Augustine once said: "Dig deep enough in any person and you will find something divine." That's a perfect description of how Jesus works with us. Put Jesus one-on-one with any person and He will dig until He finds something God-like — something divine — within us. Then He will do everything He can to draw it out of us, and into the open. We should do the same.

That's what He did with the woman caught in the act of adultery [John 8:4-11]. He saw something in her that was far deeper than her sinfulness. Underneath her worst, He never doubted that there was something better. And when all her accusers had departed, and only Jesus was left standing with her, He did not condemn her even though He recognized her sins. She must have left His presence that day with a whole new vision of who she was. She finished that day with an entirely new identity — a new name for herself — a good name — and a whole new person with a new life ahead of her.

We all hear a lot of bad news about ourselves. We all have a little inner voice that constantly gives us bad news about ourselves. People around us sometimes give us bad news about ourselves. Jesus, on the other hand, comes to give us good news. The good news of Jesus Christ is all about who we really are, and who we can become. The good news is this: inside each one of us, there is the person God meant us to be. Deep within us is the person God our Father dreams we can be. Hopefully we will eventually come to see that. There's an identity — a name — God has given you that is nothing but good. We don't need to import anything else from the outside. All of the skills and talents God originally gave us are still there. All of the personality traits are there. We simply need to become the person our Father always meant us to be, to bring out of ourselves the best that's within us.

That's what Peter eventually came to. But he couldn't do it all by himself — he needed Jesus to draw it out, changing his name so that he could change his picture of himself. Remember that is what is involved when God gives us a name in our baptism — a name and an identity that comes from God our Father.

What I am sharing with you here isn't just pop psychology. What I'm sharing with you is the notion that Jesus has given us the highest concept of God the world has ever know — a Father who created us to be like His Only Begotten Son.



to the moment, and sensitive enough to the richness that is already present in our lives. Our experience comes brimming with riches, but too often we are not enough inside of it. Like the young Augustine, we are away from ourselves — strangers to our own experience, seeking outside of ourselves something that is already inside of us. The trick is to come home. God and the moment don't have to be searched out and found. They're already here. We need to be here.

Karl Rahner was once asked whether he believed in miracles. His answer: "I don't believe in them; I rely on them to get through each day!" Indeed, miracles are always present within our lives. Are we?

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

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, August 19]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-i]----- \$ 350.00

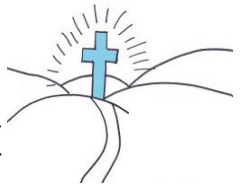
Offerings-----[Sunday, August 20]----- \$ 355.00

FINDING CONFIDENCE IN GOD:

When we are not motivated by love, we become critical of others. We stop looking for good in them and see only their faults. Soon the unity of believers is broken. Have you talked behind someone's back? Have you focused on others' shortcomings instead of their strengths? Remind yourself of Jesus' command to love others as you love yourself. When you begin to feel critical of someone, make a list of that person's positive qualities. If there are problems that need to be addressed, it is better to confront in love than to gossip.

Many think that when God comforts us, our troubles should go away. But if that were always so, people would turn to God only out of a desire to be relieved of pain and not out of love for him. We must understand that being comforted can also mean receiving strength, encouragement, and hope to deal with our troubles. The more we suffer, the more comfort God gives us. If you are feeling overwhelmed, allow God to comfort you. Remember that every trial you endure will help you comfort other people who are suffering similar troubles.

The Way.....
to find God

**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.

**LIVE LIFE:**

— We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders.

—Desmond Tutu

BEING PRESENT TO GOD AND LIFE:

Shortly after his conversion, St. Augustine penned these immortal words: “Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things that you created. You were with me, but I was not with you.”

Augustine — sincere, but pathologically restless — had been searching for love and God. Eventually he found them in the most unexpected of all places — inside of himself. God and love had been inside of him all along, but he had hadn’t been inside of himself.

There’s a lesson here — we don’t pray to make God present to us. God is already present, always present everywhere. We pray to make ourselves present to God. God, as Sheila Cassidy colorfully puts it, is no more present in church than in a drinking bar, but we generally are more present to God in church than we are in a drinking bar. The problem of presence is not with God, but with us.

The secret to prayer is not to try to make God present, but to make ourselves present to God. Sadly, this is also true for our presence to the richness of our own lives. Too often we are not present to the beauty, love, and grace that brims within the ordinary moments of our lives. Bounty is there, but we aren’t. Because of restlessness, tiredness, distraction, anger, obsession, wound, haste, whatever, too often we are not enough inside of ourselves to appreciate what the moments of our own lives hold. We think of our lives as impoverished, dull, small-time, not worth putting our full hearts into, but, as with prayer, the fault of non-presence is on our side. Our lives come laden with richness, but we aren’t sufficiently present to what is there. A curious statement; but unfortunately true.

The poet, Rainer Marie Rilke, at the height of his fame, was once contacted by a young man from a small, provincial town. The young man expressed his admiration for Rilke’s poetry and told him that he envied him, envied his life in a big city, and envied a life so full of insight and richness. He went on to describe how his own life was uninteresting, provincial, small-town — too dull to inspire insight and poetry. Rilke’s answer was not sympathetic. He told the young man something to this effect: “If your life seems poor to you, then tell yourself that you are not poet enough to see and call forth its riches. There are no uninteresting places, no lives that aren’t full of the stuff for poetry. What makes for a rich life is not so much what is contained within each moment — since all moments contain what’s timeless — but sensitive insight and presence to that moment.” Poetry is about being sufficiently alert to what’s in the ordinary.

Augustine was lucky — the clock never ran out on him. He realized this before it was too late: “Late have I loved you!” Sometimes we aren’t as lucky — our health and our lives must be radically threatened or taken from us before we realize how rich these in fact already are, if only we made ourselves more present to them. If everything were taken away from us and then given back, our perspective would change drastically. Victor Frankl, the author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*, like Augustine, also was lucky. He had been clinically dead for a few minutes and then revived by doctors. When he returned to his ordinary life after this, everything suddenly became very rich: “One very important aspect of post-mortem life is that everything gets precious, gets piercingly important. You get stabbed by things, by flowers and by babies and by beautiful things — just the very act of living, of walking and breathing and eating and having friends and chatting. Everything seems to look more beautiful rather than less, and one gets the much-intensified sense of miracles.”

The secret to prayer is not to try to make God present, but to make ourselves present to God. The secret to finding beauty and love in life is basically the same. Like God, they are already present. The trick is to make ourselves present to them. Rarely are we enough inside of our own skins, present enough



Why in the world, then, do we depict God to be mean, angry, vengeful and capricious in how He gives us His love? Why do we depict God as being responsible for every disaster that befalls us? Most likely that’s because we image ourselves that way. We try to fashion God in our own image and likeness. We make God to be angry and condemning because that’s the way we see ourselves and others. We have a bad self-image, a rotten self-identity, and we’ve given God a bad name in the process. Jesus, however, has given us a picture of ourselves — an identity — that’s quite the opposite.

God is always forgiving, always trusting, always faithful, always loving. We’ve grown cynical and bitter, unloving, cold, and indifferent, if not actually mistrusting of others. Jesus counters by asking us to be like God — to forgive without limit, to trust others no matter how many times they disappoint us, to keep on loving no matter what, to keep on believing in the basic goodness within others no matter how they may appear to us on the surface. We, with Jesus, should always hate the sins of others, but love other sinners just as much as God loves them. We need to regard them as he regards you and me.

Finally, Jesus calls us to live together as a family — a family that He calls His Church, a family of faith. He called it “my church”, and He declared that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Hell vanishes in the face of love; the devils flee in the face of trusting, forgiving, believing, and hoping love. Jesus knows that we can’t be our best all alone, all by ourselves. The best within us is always brought out in loving relationships with others. No amount of evil can ever overcome any amount of love. That’s why the gates of hell are powerless in the face of it, and we become like Rocks of Gibraltar — like St. Peter became the Rock — when we face all of life’s storms thrown up against us.

This coming week, we must all go out to face a very difficult world. Be kind to everyone you meet. Every one of them is fighting his or her own hard battle. There are many things in our world that appeal to the worst within us. That’s why it’s so important to hear the words that Jesus addressed to Peter as being addressed to us. We need to hear Jesus appealing to the best within us. He said to Peter: “You are Rock.” Jesus is saying something similar to you and to me. Scripture was written for you. Listen to what Jesus is saying to you, and then face each day in the midst of our very troubled world, trying to remember just who it is Jesus says you are, and who He meant you to be.

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

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SEPTEMBER 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 us know in the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you would like more information or if you would like to help. This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

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].



POWER TO TOUCH THE MOON:

There's a story that is popular in the Dominican Republic about a king who wanted to touch the moon. Now, the story never tells us why he wanted to touch the moon — it simply has the king state: "I want to touch the moon. I am the king and I get what I want." So, the king called the royal carpenter and said: "Build me a tower that is high enough to touch the moon." The carpenter said: "Your majesty, this can't be done." "It will be done," said the king, "or I'll find myself another royal carpenter." So, the carpenter came up with an idea: "If we could collect enough wooden boxes, they could be stacked on top of one another and perhaps make a tower that was high enough to touch the moon." "Let it be done," said the king, and he sent out his soldiers to collect all the wooden boxes in the kingdom — boxes that were used to store books, boxes which were used for food or clothing, even boxes in which people had been buried. All were collected and built into a high tower. It was high indeed. But of course, it was not high enough to touch the moon.

"We need more boxes," said the king. "Cut down all the trees in my kingdom and use the lumber to make more boxes to add to the tower." And it was done. Now the tower was immensely high, and the king began to climb it. He climbed up higher than the birds, higher than the clouds to the very top of the tower. But, he could not touch the moon. "We need more boxes," cried the king to the carpenter below. "There are no more boxes," said the carpenter, "you'll have to come down." "Never!" said the king, "I am the king and I want to touch the moon. If there are no more boxes, then I command you to start bringing up the boxes that are at the bottom of this tower." It was done. And, of course, everything then collapsed in utter ruin.

Now, the story is an absurd one, but it resonates with the sad experience of many people throughout the world — people whose countries are ruled by a dictators or despots who are only concerned about their own power. Look at Sudan, or other such nations where political leaders are willing to expend the country's resources and do violence against their own people in order to stay in power. They want to touch the moon, and they are willing to go higher and higher regardless of the cost.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus presents to us another vision of power, another kind of authority. He gives Peter authority in the church. But Peter's authority is not to be the highest of all, but rather the lowest of all. Peter's role is to be the rock — the rock on which the church will be built. So, instead of climbing higher and higher over the resources and the lives of others, Peter's role is to be the solid foundation upon which the lives of others can be built. In Jesus' vision, true authority is not the authority of importance. It is the ability to ground and enhance the lives of others.

This teaching of Jesus should lead us to thankfulness and commitment. Let us begin with thankfulness. Who are the people in your life who gave you the foundation to be who you are? Who are the people who thought not of their own importance and status, but rather gave themselves for your benefit? Who are the people who showed you what wisdom is, what responsibility is, what integrity is, what love is? Are they parents? Grandparents? Friends? Teachers? Mentors? None of us can stand without a foundation provided by someone else. This truth should always make us thankful. If these people in your life are still alive, why not take some time this week to thank them for what they have done for you? If they are already with the Lord, then say a prayer that the Lord might hold them close. Our first step is thankfulness.

But, that leads to commitment. For, if others have given a foundation to our lives, we must be people who are committed to provide a foundation for others. As parents, as friends, as spouses, as teachers, we should see that true authority is not seeing how high we can get, but rather the willingness to lay down our lives as a foundation of generosity, responsibility, and care for others, so that their lives can grow.



All the apostles recognized that Peter was given the charism to lead the Church. And Peter realized that he had to take up his position of leadership to the center of the then-known world, Rome. We do not know how Peter got to Rome. We know that he was there, though. There are stories that Paul consulted with Peter in Rome — particularly regarding the conversion of Syracuse in Sicily. We know that Peter died in Rome — crucified head down. The excavations under the Basilica of St. Peter revealed a tomb with the words: "Here Lies Peter, and the body of a large man of Palestinian origin." We also know that when Peter died, the charism he was given to lead the Church remained active in Rome. The one who took his place — St. Linus, and those who followed him, St. Cletus, St. Clement, and so forth — were all recognized as having received the charism that the Lord gave to Peter to lead the Church. As time went on, these bishops of Rome would be given the title, Pope, Papa, Father of the Family, leader of the Church.

So, what does all this mean to us? It means that the charism of Peter lives on in the Catholic Church. This leadership is experienced in the teaching of the Holy Father and the teaching authority of the Church. It means that we know who we are as Catholics. Our beliefs come from the teaching authority of the Church. The term we use for this is magisterium. We benefit from the charism of Peter — the charism he received at the Roman city of Caesarea Philippi. The charism of Peter remains in the Pope and in the magisterium.

The way we live our lives, our morality, flows from our faith. We know that we can't give lip service to the faith and live as pagans. We also know that we are human beings. We need the help of God to be His Presence for others. The Church provides for us. We treasure the gift of the Eucharist as the food we need for the journey of life. We treasure the sacrament of reconciliation — confession — where we bring our humanity before the Lord seeking the strength to overcome evil around us and within us. Every aspect of our lives revolves around the Lord — including our last days as we receive the sacrament of sick and begin our journey home.

The Catholic Church is the oldest and largest organized body in the world. We have a history. Those who hate us often point out negative incidents in our history. And it is true, some of our history is dark — as some human beings throughout the centuries behaved more like pagans than Christians. But these individuals were not acting as true representatives of the Body of Christ on earth — they acted as flawed human beings using their positions of leadership for their own immoral gain. They were never really the Church. They never took their own commitment to Jesus seriously. And they were a minority. The vast majority of the people of their time were committed Catholics. And there were many saints among them. There are many saints among us. All of us have been edified by people whom we know will never be canonized but whose lives pointed us to Christ.

A recent survey claims that there are 1.285 billion Catholics in the world. There are over 85 million in North America. To put it simply: there are a lot of us. But we are united into one body, the Church, with Christ as our head and with Peter's successor as our leader here on earth. An elderly man, in his last days, once said to me: "I am Catholic, and I love being Catholic." And so does each one of us.

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



THE CHARISM OF PETER:

Sometimes people will say that a place radiates a certain spirit. A few years ago, I visited Ft. McHenry in Baltimore. This was the fort that held out against a British siege during the War of 1812. The siege was witnessed by a young lawyer named Francis Scott Key. As you all know, Francis Scott Key wrote a poem that became the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner. When I visited Ft. McHenry, I was engulfed by a spirit of patriotism. I am sure that most of the people there had a similar experience.

One of my favorite places in New York City is Lincoln Center. When I walk onto the plaza with its beautiful fountain, and see the David Koch Theater on my left that houses the New York Ballet among other events, and the Avery Fischer Hall on my right where the New York Philharmonic performs, and the Metropolitan Opera House in front of me, I feel engulfed by classical music, opera, symphony and dance. I might not hear a sound, but I can sense music all around me. Perhaps you have been there and felt the same way.

Sometimes people will say that a person radiates a certain spirit. Some people might feel that an actor like Morgan Freeman radiates a quiet dignity. Or some might say that a sports figure like Derrick Brookes radiates responsibility. Quite often we will say: “There is something about him, about her.”

Now all of this — be it about places or about people — is experienced on the human level. There are people and places that radiate a spirit on a higher level — a spiritual level. I have never been to the Holy Land, but I understand that those who have feel a presence of God. I certainly have been to Rome, and I can tell you that I have felt overwhelmed by the spiritual in St. Peters, Mary Major, St. John Lateran and the many other places of worship there. Two of my favorite places in the world are the Trappist abbeys in Conyers, Georgia, and Gethsemani, Kentucky. I feel the spiritual there. I also feel the spiritual at Life Teen’s Covecrest Camp in Tiger, Georgia, Hidden Lake Camp in Dahlonga, Georgia, and Benedictine College and Abbey in Atchison, Kansas. I don’t believe that these are mere feelings. There are encounters with the Holy Spirit dwelling in particular places.

Many times, people will say that they met a person who radiates the Presence of the Lord in a unique way. People said this about St. Theresa of Callcutta and Pope St. John Paul II. These saints radiated holiness. The sainted Pope conveyed a sense of being the living mission of the Church. The holy nun conveyed a sense of being the very charity of Christ.

Those who have been to Assisi know that the spirit of St. Francis lives on in this city — almost eight hundred after his death. When you go to Assisi you experience the presence of the poor man of God — the saint of peace.

The ways in which a person reflects God is due to that person’s charism. A charism is a gift from God to the Church for the world. The source of the charism is God. The person who receives the charism receives it for the world.

Peter received a charism — he received the gift of being the leader of the Church. Matthew’s Gospel [16:33-36] tells us about this. The Lord said that the Church would be founded on the Rock — Peter. Like Eliakim [Isaiah 22:15,17-24], Peter would have the keys to admit people into the presence of the Lord. It is clear in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of St. Paul that Peter was first among the apostles — first among those who were called to proclaim the Kingdom of God on earth [See Acts 2, 4, 8]. Peter took leadership in the Church at Pentecost. After he, the apostles and Mary received the Holy Spirit, Peter led everyone out to the Temple and began preaching the good news to the people. After Saul became Paul, after the persecutor of the primitive Church accepted Jesus Christ, Paul spent three years in the desert reflecting on his experience of the Lord on the Road to Damascus [see Acts 9-10]. He then went to Jerusalem to receive Peter’s blessing and commission to bring the Good News, the Gospel to the world.

12



True authority is not the power to touch the moon. It is the sacrifice and love of laying down one’s life for the sake of another. Even as we are thankful for those who have given this gift to us, let us also commit ourselves to live our lives in such a way that others will see in our witness, a foundation on which their lives can stand.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, Matthew 23:13-22

Tuesday: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8, Mark 6:27-39

Wednesday: 1 Thessalonians 2:9—13, Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 3:7-13, Matthew 24:42-51

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday: 1 Thessalonians 4:9-11, Matthew 25:14-30

22nd Week in Ordinary Time: Jeremiah 20:7-9, Romans 12:1-2, Matthew 16:21-27

SINGING GOD’S PRAISES:

For the past several weekends, we have been reflecting on how St. Paul has been wrestling with the fate of his Jewish kinfolk [Romans 11:33-36]. After arguing that the Jews remain God’s chosen people, the apostle to the Gentiles offers a marvelous rapturous hymn of praise to God who remains the ultimately mysterious source, agent and goal of salvation for all — “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!” As limited human beings, we cannot fully comprehend God’s plan of salvation nor adequately explain the role of the Jewish people in it. We can praise and thank the gracious God for extending mercy and forgiveness to all people.

Quoting Scripture, Paul reinforces his point with two rhetorical questions: “For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor? Or who has given the Lord anything that he may be repaid?” It is not up to us to demand an explanation from God. Our task is to accept God’s will as it unfolds in our experience and to cooperate with divine grace in extending the kingdom of salvation in our world.

Then Paul concludes: “For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever, Amen.” In this prayer, we are offering praise and glory to God as the Savior of the whole created universe, the Sustainer of all that exists, and the God of the entire evolving world.

This beautiful poetic hymn centers entirely on God and says nothing about Christ. Matthew’s Gospel reminds us that the divine plan of salvation centers on Jesus, identified as “the Christ, the son of the living God” by Peter, the rock on which Christ built the Church [Matthew 16:33-36].

Being reminded of this hymn reminds us that we ourselves need to sing more often the praises of God in our daily life. An elderly woman says: “I want that uplifting passage read at my funeral.” A young adult: “I am going to include more praise of God in my daily prayers.” An engineer: “I am reminded that some things in life are beyond human reasoning.” A secretary: “St. Paul’s reminder lifts my heart in prayer.” An architect: “Reflecting on Paul’s words reinforced my conviction that my Jewish colleague will be saved because he is faithful to his religious tradition.”

How does Paul’s letter touch your mind and heart?

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



BRINGING IT TO LIGHT:

It was way past my bedtime. My contacts were way dried out, and all I wanted was Nutella. I was in my best friend's car — a Volkswagen Jetta that she named "Genevieve" — because we girls are relational and befriend even our inanimate objects. We had just finished a campus ministry meeting that went late, and I was ready to get dropped off. Truth is that there was a certain heaviness in my heart, and I was not talking about it. The past few days I was in a gloomy funk, which made it easy for me to be plagued with negative thoughts — and I was doing a great job hiding all this. As we approached my house, I started to unbuckle my seatbelt.

And then there was that inner nudge. OH NO. NOT THE NUDGE. You know — the one that gives you the daunting idea to do something right that you really should do. It said: "Tell her what's going on."

"Nope. Not happening. I don't want to burden her or seem like I'm complaining."

But the idea didn't go away.

"Fine. I'll just vaguely ask for prayers," I compromised. I obviously wasn't going to shake this feeling.

My friend was pulling up to the curb of my house. Meanwhile this is all going on in my heart. Well, here it goes. "Hey, real quick before I go, I just wanted to ask for some prayers. Yeah, so weird, but today all day and especially at the meeting I was just feeling so inadequate, and I couldn't stop comparing myself to everyone and felt like I was useless and doing so little. So would you just mind praying for me?"

Before I could even finish my sentence, my friend nearly jumped out of her seat and screamed: "Are you kidding me? I've been feeling the same thing, and I was literally just about to drive home and cry in my bed! This is spiritual attack — we have to pray!"

She whipped Genevieve into gear and pulled into the nearest parking lot. Immediately we started praying together, renouncing the lies we were hearing, asking for God's graces and consolations. She prayed: "Heavenly Father, how good it is that you have given us community and each other. You yourself live in the Trinity and show us that it is good to be together especially in times of darkness. We bring to the light what plagues us because we know Satan shudders at the sound of Your name. We renounce the lies that Satan is telling us and ask that You help us to believe how magnificently You have made us. Please give us the peace of heart to go home and rest in You. Jesus, all this in Your most holy and precious name we pray. Amen."

And just like that, I immediately felt lighter. It was incredible what that time together did. I couldn't help but think of the time in Scripture when Jesus said: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" [Matthew 11:30]. And just in case someone is like me and didn't know what a "yoke" was, it is a wooden neckpiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the cart that they are to pull.

Imagine being the only one pulling your cart behind you. Pretty miserable right? That's what I had been doing this whole time. But when I look over to my right I see Jesus running towards me from a distance. He willingly, with zeal, puts the yoke on and starts pulling the wagon next to me. Wow! The difference is like night and day. Then the Lord adds: "I brought your friend to help too." I look over, and He brought my friend to help me carry the load! Now all 3 of us are pulling the wagon together. Suddenly, I can run because the Lord provides. That is the beauty of asking and bringing things to the light.

The burdens that I tend to carry in my cart can be fears, past wounds, and spiritual attack. Spiritual attack is the enemy's tactic to undermine our relationship with God by using tricks like whispering lies to make us feel discouraged, unworthy, and isolated [see John 10:10].

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My campus minister once told me that spiritual attack can be like sitting in a dark closet with the evil one. Picture this: he has night vision — and you don't. He can throw some pretty good punches because he knows exactly where you are, but you're just playing defense hoping to protect yourself. But to play offense, you have to flip the switch to turn on the light. With the light being on, Satan is still in the space but now you can fight back. With the Lord, you can aim your punches to hit exactly where you know he will have to back down. Because of prayer, you know exactly what to ask for. "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!'" [Luke 10:17].

Bringing our spiritual attack to the light is exactly what the evil one does not want us to do. It brings us closer to God. Here are some ways we can do that:

- **Pick a strong teammate.** This person of the same gender can be a spiritual friend, a youth minister, or a trusted person who can lead you and who you can consistently confide in.
- **Vocalize your heart.** As hard as it may be to say some things out loud, it creates a space for them to speak truth into that certain part of your life. Be specific when praying together. Jesus says that when two or more are gathered in His name, He is in their midst [see Matthew 18:20].
- **Call on Jesus.** Satan flees at the sound of God's name because it has power beyond measure [see Mark 16:17-18]. Satan wanted me to stay in the dark about my struggles that day, which would have made me prone to thinking I am alone. He wants me to remain isolated. Imagine if I hadn't asked my best friend for prayers. She too would have thought she was the only one in darkness that day.

That initial ounce of courage does take strength, and may seem daunting but when we turn on the light, we take a leap of faith and pay the Lord a huge compliment. We entrust our struggles and worries to Him. In turn we build our relationship with Him and make room for Him to work. When we trust in Christ and belong to Him, the enemy has no chance at having the final word in our lives. We will have struggles but take courage, because the battle has already been won.

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 Chapel. If

you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen website — lifeteen.com. There are numerous blogs and videos for you to connect with. The Life Teen national office continues to release many new programs. **Please contact Father John for more information. And please join us each Sunday for our Mass at 10 AM — in person or live-streamed, and then come to our Life Teen/EDGE gathering after Mass.** And above all, let us continue to join each other in prayer. **Father John is available for you. Please contact him [cell: 216-570-9276].**

NOTICING BEAUTY:

We are here to witness the creation and abet it. We are here to notice each thing so each thing gets noticed. Together we notice not only each mountain shadow and each stone on the beach but, especially, we notice the beautiful faces and complex natures of each other. We are here to bring to consciousness the beauty and power that are around us and to praise the people who are here with us. We witness our generation and our times. We watch the weather.

—Anne Dillard



LIFE TEEN