

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ Prayer of Gratefulness ~

God of all blessings,
source of all life, giver of all grace:
We thank you for the gift of life:
for the breath that sustains life,
for the food of this earth that nurtures life,
for the love of family and friends
without which there would be no life.

We thank you for the mystery of creation:
for the beauty that the eye can see,
for the joy that the ear may hear,
for the unknown that we cannot behold
filling the universe with wonder,
for the expanse of space that draws us
beyond the definitions of our selves.

We thank you for setting us in communities:
for families who nurture our becoming,
for friends who love us by choice,
for companions at work,
who share our burdens and daily tasks,
for strangers who welcome us into their midst,
for people from other lands
who call us to grow in understanding,
for children who lighten our moments with delight,
for the unborn, who offer us hope for the future.

We thank you for this day:
for life and one more day to love,
for opportunity
and one more day to work for justice and peace,
for neighbors
and one more person to love and by whom be loved,
for your grace
and one more experience of your presence,
for your promise:
to be with us,
to be our God,
and to give salvation.
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 ANIMALS — OCTOBER 3:**

On **Sunday, October 1st**, our Chapel community will gather after Mass at **11:35 AM** to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. In the spirit of this celebration we welcome your family to bring your pet to be blessed. If you cannot bring your pet, bring a photo to share. Weather permitting we will meet this year — because of COVID-19 — outside in the Red Brick part of Pender Circle [right outside the chapel]. **If it rains on this day, the event will be postponed until the following Sunday.** We hope you can join us!

**THE EDGE OF THE INSIDE:**

Prophets, by their very nature, cannot be at the center of any social structure. Rather, they are “on the edge of the inside.” They cannot be fully insiders, but they cannot throw rocks from outside either. They must be educated inside the system — knowing and living the rules — before they can critique what is non-essential or not so important. Jesus did this masterfully [see Matthew 5:17-48]. This is what Martin Luther King, Jr. taught the United States, what Gandhi taught British-occupied India, and what Nelson Mandela taught South Africa. Only with great respect for and understanding of the rules can a prophet know how to properly break those very same rules — for the sake of a greater purpose and value. A prophet critiques a system by quoting its own documents, constitutions, heroes, and Scriptures against its present practice. This is their secret — systems are best unlocked from inside.

Holding the tension of opposites is the necessary education of the prophet; yet the Church has given little energy to what Paul says is the second most important charisma for the building of the church [1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11]. Prophets must be skilled in unitive thinking, but the Church has primarily trained people in the simplistic choosing of one idealized alternative while denigrating the other. This has gotten us nowhere.

After Christianity became the established religion of the Western Empire in the fourth century, the priestly mentality pretty much took over in both East and West, and prophets almost disappeared. When the Church held so much power, prophets were too threatening to the status quo. The clergy were at the top of the hierarchy in the full company of their patrons — kings and princes — and even began to dress like them. Emperors convened and presided over the first seven Councils of the Church. What does this tell us?

For the next 1700 or so years, most of the preaching and interpretation of Scripture was from the perspective of power — from primarily European, educated, quite comfortable, and presumably celibate males. I am one myself, and we are not all bad. But we are not all — by a long shot! Where are the voices of women, minorities, LGBTQ, the poor, and differently abled? How would they read the Gospel? Without these voices included, sometimes even central, I see little future for Christianity.

My spiritual father, St. Francis of Assisi, saw this problem in the thirteenth century and called people to live on the edge — of the Church, of economy, of patriarchy, of the “system” — through universal solidarity and chosen simplicity. Pope Francis is evoking the same Gospel spirit, and I pray for his success and protection. What a surprise that the ultimate establishment figure took the name of such a radical saint. It shocked the world because we do not expect prophecy from popes. There is hope!

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., 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 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 Denise Shade, wife of Loren Shade, mother of Michael, Madeline, and Charles Shade, who is recovering from an injury incurred in an accident.
- For Sister Mary Ann Lavelle, C.S.J., sister of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C., who is in hospice care.
- For Jill Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for medical issues.
- For Danny Yuhas ['27], who is recovering from surgery.
- For David Winchester, uncle of Athletic Director, Sean O'Toole, great-uncle of Owen ['18], Connor ['20], Kelsey ['24], and former Gilmour student, Erin O'Toole, who is seriously ill.
- For Shirley Smith, sister-in-law of Brother Charles Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Marion Greene, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Laura Pizmoht, mother of Francie ['28] and Jane ['31] Pizmoht, who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Loretta Seidl, sister of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C., who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Father Gerry Papen, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for severe pneumonia

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Stanford Moss, father of Debbie Moos Batt [anniversary]
- For Jennifer Mills, mother of Morgan Converse ['11], and mother-in-law of Edward Converse ['09], sister of Georganna Opalich ['09] and former softball coach, Steve Opalich, and aunt of Hope Regalo ['19].
- For Lexi Hagen, half sister of Carson Hundstad ['25].
- For Mimi Nook, mother of Hockey Assistant Coach, Joe Nook, sister-in-law of William Nook ['62].
- For Michael Feeney, grandfather of Eddie ['25] and Abbey ['27] Steiner.
- For Allee Bell, Sr., grandfather of AJ ['26] and Lauren ['28] Bell.
- For Mary Dolores Dean, grandmother of Father Peter McCormick, C.S.C.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the victims of the excessive flooding in Libya
- For an end to violence as a means to resolve differences.
- 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.

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.



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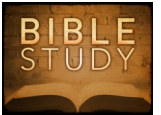
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 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 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 Paula Smith, mother of Tyler [*10] and Alec [*13] Smith, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Andy Andino, Sr., grandfather 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 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 Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian [*09], Rosa [*12] and Edwin [*17] Heryak, who is seriously ill.
- For Miguel Valdehita, who is undergoing treatment for Covid.
- For Joe Bucar, housekeeping employee, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease
- 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], and brother of Gilmour Marketing associate, Mary Roddy Stretar, uncle of Katie Stretar [*29], 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 Susan Locke, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- For Jerry Baum, who is undergoing treatment for an aggressive form of leukemia..



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, September 27th 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: Heaven, Hell and Purgatory

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, September 17: 24 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, September 18:	NO MASS
Tuesday, September 19:	NO MASS
Wednesday, September 20 St. Andrew Kim and Companions	NO MASS
Thursday, September 21: St. Matthew	NO MASS
Friday, September 22:	9:30 AM [All School] Live Stream
Saturday, September 23: 25 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, September 24: 25 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

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.



A LIFESTYLE:

Gratitude for the present moment and the fullness of life now is the true prosperity. —Eckhart Tolle

The obvious theme of the Scripture Readings for this 24th Week in Ordinary Time is Forgiveness. Forgiveness is mentioned a lot in the Bible — it is mentioned frequently in the Lord’s Prayer; regularly whenever we are reminded of God’s forgiveness. Given how often this theme appears, you won’t be surprised to read that I have written reflections on this more than once (including one on this same Gospel reading) over the years.

One of the wonderful things about God’s Word is how it can speak to us anew each time we read it. One aspect that is totally clear is that forgiving and loving are inextricably linked. The Apostle Paul tells us that love keeps no record of wrongs [see 1 Corinthians 13:5], which is another way of saying that loving includes forgiving. The second aspect is that God wants good for each of us — which is why He gives us the ability and duty to forgive. The obedient act of forgiving is a blessing that frees us from pain, bitterness, anger and much more, while at the same time it fosters healthier, positive relationships for us to enjoy.

Peter does not ask if he should forgive — clearly Peter knows he is supposed to forgive, but surely there must be limits! Jesus’s answer, in essence, is that there are no limits so just keep forgiving [Matthew 8:21-35]. One commentator has noted that Jesus is encouraging us “to make it our constant practice to forgive injuries, and we should accustom ourselves to it till it becomes habitual.”

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” In our private prayers and asking for God’s grace, we do not find it necessary to pray for a personal sense of justice. We are more than adequately equipped to gauge how much injury we have sustained and the proper amount of recompense due us and by whom. We have a built-in system to weigh insults — minor, slight, can-live-with-it, major and war-alert.

Forgiveness is difficult to pray for because we become less aware of how we have been forgiven and the seriousness of our having insulted, injured or rejected others. We tend to minimize the “as we have trespassed”, and maximize, “those who have trespassed”. We might pray for the grace to become merciful in our judgments and compassionate in our reception of hurts and unfair treatment. We could also pray for the grace to calm the harshness and grudges which are a true response at the time of impact, but which, when held onto overtime, tend to continue injuring us who hold them too close.

In the old days, the Book of Sirach was known as the Book of Ecclesiasticus. It is a book rich in Jewish heritage, but one which many Protestants do not recognize as being divinely inspired — thus it belongs to what is known as the “apocrypha”. Catholics hold this book as divinely inspired, and thus part of the Bible. On this 24th Week in Ordinary Time, our author gives us a bit of “quid-pro-quo” — when we forgive, then when we pray for mercy, we will receive it [Sirach 27:30-28:7].



But the highlight of the message is a reminder of our humanity — remember how we will feel as we near death. We should remember God’s commandments and God’s covenant of love. The message is that God has been personally caring for each human being with forgiveness, guidance, and intense love and these reminders will help us in turn to be equally caring, forgiving and loving.

Jesus uses Peter’s question about exactly how many times he — and we — are to forgive our brothers and sisters [Matthew 18:21-35]. Of course, Jesus does not give a straight answer with which we could argue. Instead, Jesus tells us a story and lets us draw our own answer. An owner desiring to settle all claims and debts has compassion on a servant who had a large debt and was unable to make any repayment. Upon his total acquittal, the same servant seized his fellow servant who owed him a lesser amount and when that servant begged for patience, he was refused and thrown into prison.

We get the picture pretty quickly, but Jesus, desiring to emphasize his point, continues. Other servants report this matter to the owner who confronts the first servant with the reminder of how the

LIVING FOR THE LORD:

There’s a frequently overlooked line in Genesis 39 that conveys an essential biblical belief. When the wife of Joseph’s Egyptian master demands he “lie” with her, he refuses, reminding her initially of the loyalty he owes her husband. But then he says something unique: “How could I commit so great a wrong and thus stand condemned before God?” Though the sacred author doesn’t give the rejected woman’s response, I presume it would have been something like: “What are you talking about? The gods don’t give care about what we do on earth.”

Most people in the ancient world believed their only obligation to the gods was to keep them satisfied with the proper ritual sacrifices they expected several times a year. Once they did so, they were free to do whatever they wished. They had responsibilities to one another, but not to the gods.

But, flying in the face of this “laissez faire” theology, the God of the Israelites so identifies with people that what one does to those around him or her is looked upon as being done to God. Quite a novel belief. Yet it’s the linchpin of our moral theology.

That’s why the author of Sirach can ask the biting question: “Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from God?” [Sirach 27:30-28:7]. When we’re relating with others, we’re also relating with God. Even more, God’s forgiveness of us is dependent on our forgiveness of others — “Forgive your neighbor’s injustice,” Sirach writes, “then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.” Nothing could be clearer.

As a good Jew, Matthew’s Jesus is also convinced of that process. His well-known story about the king’s two indebted servants hits home [Matthew 18:21-35]. If God’s already forgiven each of us an astronomical debt, how can we still demand repayment of the minuscule debt others owe us? Jesus’ God can always be counted on to forgive those who forgive.

But probably the most important part of the Scripture readings on this 24th Week in Ordinary Time is Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome. Normally the older we get, the more we realize the implications of our actions. It’s one thing for a three-year-old child to tell its mother: “I hate you!” It’s another thing for a thirty-year-old to say those same words. The latter sees implications the former has yet to learn.

As we get older in our faith, we also discover more implications of our actions; we more deeply understand Paul’s insight that “none of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.” Whatever we do somehow affects others. More than anything, it affects our relationship with the risen Jesus among us [Romans 14:7-14].

We can never forget that the basic message of the historical Jesus revolved around God’s kingdom being at hand. He went town to town, synagogue to synagogue pointing out that God is already among us, working effectively in our lives.

There’s just one “kicker.” To surface God’s presence, we must “repent” — turn our value system upside down. What we once thought important, we now regard as insignificant, and vice versa. The needs of others, not our own needs, are now at the center of our lives, and the focus of our actions. That value switch is the death all other Christs are expected to experience.

No one expresses that experience better than Paul — “If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” More people than the Egyptian’s wife would be befuddled by such a unique theology.

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

GRATITUDE:

Gratitude as a discipline involves a conscious choice. I can choose to be grateful even when my emotions and feelings are still steeped in hurt and resentment.

—Henri Nouwen

Years ago, one of our wise sisters told me: “Be careful about over-tending your wounds. Some people go through life pressing a bruise so that neither they nor the world will ever forget it.” It was quite an image. I could just see myself focusing on a purple mark on my arm, remembering exactly who had bumped up against me and my schemes and thrown my perfect plans out of whack. Sister Margaret’s advice was a gentler version of Sirach’s opening observation: “Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner holds them tight” [Sirach 27:30-28:7]. What motivates us to cherish wrath? Sirach doesn’t say, but he suggests that a remedy is to “remember our last days and set enmity aside.”

Where Sirach the sage gives us clear maxims, Jesus tells a story to confound us from multiple angles [Matthew 18:21-35]. When Jesus talks about a king and two servants, the story sounds pretty straightforward. One person forgave, another didn’t, so the stingy guy loses in the end. Most third graders will get the message. But what if we dig deeper?

First of all, we have the king. He, of course, is omnipotent. He can buy and sell both people and things at will. He calls one of his slaves to “settle accounts.” Now the slave is in big trouble; he owes the king something on the order of 6,000-10,000 days’ worth of wages — that’s about 20 years of work. Nobody but another king could come through with that amount. When the slave begs, the king spares him and his family from being banished into obscurity.

What did the king accomplish? He demonstrated and acted with the full extent of his power and authority. The power to erase a debt is even greater than being able to collect on it. As we know from the reaction of the servants, the public saw what he did.

What did the slave perceive? We might say that he pleaded with the king and got what he asked for. Did he think he had pulled one over on the king? Did he feel ashamed that he had to stoop to begging? Did he feel like he had gotten let off? Did he think the king was stupid? All those attitudes are possible at the same time. Even if the slave had conned the king, the entire situation made the vast difference in their power immensely, painfully, obvious. As slave — whether debtor or released — he would always see himself as beholden to the king — as would others.

In the next act, the tables turn; the absolved debtor has the upper hand over someone who owes him. And what does he do? Having learned nothing about real power, he exposes the puniness of his mind and heart by sending his fellow debtor to prison until the debt is paid — a highly unlikely outcome. When others see how things progressed, the original debtor ends up in torture that he brought upon himself.

When we go beneath the surface of the story, we see that even after being relieved of his debt, the first slave chose to live in a world of oppression and domination. Although the king’s forgiveness had created an alternative to strict economic justice or tit-for-tat relationships, the slave rejected that option.

Given the opportunity to increase the bounteousness in the world, he instead supported a caste system that offered him petty superiority. By reinforcing a strictly transactional system and the power of domination, he ultimately became his own torturer. As Sirach warned, he held tight to terrible things — there would always be someone over him and that would always torment him.

What can we take from this in September 2023? In the middle of the Season of Creation [September 1October 4], we might read this parable from the vantage point of being creatures given an undeserved bounty of life and possibility. None of us has done anything to deserve the life we have, it is a pure gift of God — to us and to every other part of creation.

What does this suggest about the relationships we create with the rest of God’s creation? Sirach talked about cherishing wrath. That seems to be the direct route to self-inflicted torment. How about the alternative of cherishing gratitude?

Instead of pressing the bruise, we might marvel out our bodies’ remarkable powers of regeneration and healing. Before we call in any debts, we might take account of what we have been given, beginning with life itself, and then all the unmerited advantages of our time and place in history.

God’s creation is lavish. We can be, too.

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

servant had been forgiven his debts which were large, but he could not forgive his fellow servant a lesser debt. The result was that the owner had the servant handed over to be tortured until the whole debt is paid. Jesus then turns to Peter, and us, and says that this is how things will play out for us when we will be forgiven to the extent we have forgiven others from our hearts. Ouch!

Seventy times seven is a biblical exaggeration — though my mother on occasion would say us patiently: “That’s four hundred and eighty-nine.” Jesus was making a reference to the “foreverness” of God’s forgiveness of us which we are to reflect in our dealings with those who have trespassed against us.

We have the faculty of memory which can be long and exact — especially about our having been injured in some way. Forgiving is not the same as asking our memory to delete past hurts. Because we remember so well, we assume we have not forgiven. We can easily call up the video and sound bites of those incidents which call for forgiving. We can likewise go through the whole painful experience again in our emotions, but that does not mean we have not forgiven. This is hard for us.

Perhaps forgiving is not an emotional release from the awareness of the injury or injustice, but revealed when we live with the limps, bumps and dents with less anger dominating our spirits and actions. Memory can seem to hurt us, but it also is part of our spiritual freedom from resentment.

We can all remember well how often we have been forgiven by God and hopefully by others. We may have to be more exact about how we have trespassed against others and how we have received compassionate mercy from them. This may help us reduce the immensity, in our hearts’ eyes, of the injuries done to us.

There may be injuries we just cannot forgive right now; sometimes we have to work through things. Forgiveness can be a process that, in certain instances, takes time. But we always must be moving in the right direction.

- Sometimes forgiveness may need to be repeated, especially when something causes a painful memory to resurface. Some grudges are hard to let go. Sometimes the scars that remain after the initial healing need some attention, too. Forgiving again will help to soothe the renewed pain.
- Sometimes forgiveness may need to be extended as more consequences of a transgression emerge. These could be major, or they could be trivial, but more forgiveness will help you with the frustration, pain, etc. that results.
- Sometimes forgiveness may need to come in installments as we struggle with big challenges. I may not be able to bring myself to forgive everything all at once. I may need to start small and work my way up; but if I persist, I can chip away until there is nothing left to forgive.

Our severity of judgment most often injures ourselves and not those who originally hurt us. We are to remember that though our memories are long, life is short. What we really need to remember is the reality of God’s commandments, God’s covenantal love and according to the Gospel. If we take our resentments to the grave, then God will not take them away after death. Does that make God severe? It seems that with our own grudges in one hand and our severe sense of justice in the other, there would not be any room for God to offer peace and eternal welcome.

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

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



LOVE AND FORGIVENESS:

In Matthew's Gospel [18:21-35] we hear Jesus' teaching on forgiveness. Peter poses the question — an entirely practical one — by asking how many times we must forgive those who sin against us. What was being taught at the time in the Synagogues was that one had a duty to forgive someone three times. So we can see that Peter, by putting forward the possibility of forgiving seven times, probably felt that he was being very generous. In giving the number seventy-seven as his reply, Jesus is essentially saying that there should be no limits to the number of times we forgive those who have offended us.

In the parable that Jesus uses to illustrate his point there are two different currencies used. The servant owed the king a “huge amount”; but the man who was in debt to the servant only owed “a very small amount” — a mere pittance in comparison.

Jesus clearly intends the king to represent the God the Father in the parable. And the debts that we owe to one another are just chicken-feed in comparison to what we owe God. Nothing we can ever do can cancel the debt we owe to God. He created us and everything we have comes from him. He gave us the world as our home and provided us with the possibility to flourish in a good environment. Despite all this we find ourselves sinning and turning our backs on him.

Nevertheless, God continues to offer his forgiveness freely to all. Somehow though, this extraordinary generosity seems to offend our human sensibilities. We find it difficult to cope with such unrestrained liberality. It goes against what we think of as natural justice. We feel that sins must be paid for; that recompense must be made for serious offences. We believe that justice must be done and seen to be done.

Some years ago, I was saying Mass in a local prison — it was an open prison where there were many men serving the last part of a long sentence. After the Mass, a prisoner came into the office for a chat. He had only arrived there the previous week from another prison. I asked him how long he had already served and was astonished at his reply — nineteen years.

It seems he had been given a life sentence. I asked him when he was due to be released. He said that he didn't know as it was entirely in the hands of the parole board who he said were sure to knock him back. His best guess was another two years or so.

Now I have no idea what that man did to deserve life imprisonment — maybe murder. All I do know is that this crime must have been committed when he was quite young because he looked as though he was well under forty years old.

There are all kinds of things that have to be considered by judges when determining prison sentences. They must consider the seriousness of the crime, the state of mind and personal circumstances of the criminal, as well as other factors such as the potential danger to the public. Sentencing policy is always controversial, and governments are constantly adjusting the guidelines as a way of showing themselves to be sensitive to the wishes of the electorate.

But human justice can never be compared to God's justice. And the fundamental difference between them is that only God can see into the very heart of a person. Only God truly knows all that has to be taken into account. Only God can determine whether someone is truly repentant. Our problem is the tendency to think that God is too lenient. We imagine that God will let major sinners off the hook if they express some slight repentance. And we frequently don't think that this is right or just. If we were in his position, we would be much harsher because we are inclined to believe that punishment is the true expression of justice and that most criminals get off too lightly.

However, when it comes to our turn to need forgiveness things get more complicated. There are two common approaches. One is the tendency to think that our sins are relatively minor when compared to those of some others and God can't or won't withhold his forgiveness. And the other is the opposite and

causes to be lost in exhaustion and suffering in the course of that effort. The Eucharist offers up the tears and blood of the poor and invites us to help alleviate the conditions that produce tears and blood.

And we do that, as a famous church hymn says, by moving “from worship into service.” We don't go to the Eucharist only to worship God by expressing our faith and devotion. The Eucharist is not a private devotional prayer, but is rather a communal act of worship which, among other things, calls us to go forth and live out in the world what we celebrate inside of a church — namely, the non-importance of social distinction, the special place that God gives to the tears and blood of the poor, and non-negotiable challenge from God to each of us to work at changing the conditions that cause tears and blood. The Eucharist calls us to love tenderly, but, just as strongly, it calls us to act in justice.

To say that Eucharist calls us to justice and to social justice is not a statement that takes its origin in political correctness. It takes its origin in Jesus who, drawing upon the great prophets of old, assures us that the validity of all worship will ultimately be judged by how it affects “widows, orphans, and strangers.”

—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, September 9]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-i]----- \$ 57.00

Offerings-----[Sunday, September 10]----- \$ 301.00

TRUE SELF vs. SEPARATE SELF:

I learned the terms “True Self” and “false self” from Thomas Merton — words he used to clarify what Jesus surely meant when he said that we must die to ourselves or we must “lose ourselves to find ourselves” [see Mark 8:35]. Merton rightly recognized that it was not the body self that had to “die” —which much of Christian history seemed to believe — but the “false self.” Our attachment to our small, separate, false self must die to allow our True Self — our basic and unchangeable identity in God—to live fully and freely.

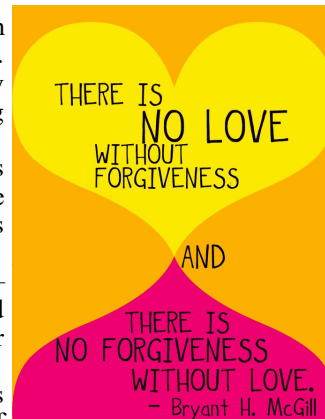
Thomas Merton memorably describes his mystical experience of the True Self: “In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut — now Fourth and Muhammad Ali Boulevard — in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness. The whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream.

Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other. But this cannot be seen, only believed and “understood” by a peculiar gift.

At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us.

It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.



THE EUCHARIST AS A CALL TO JUSTICE:

When the famous historian Christopher Dawson decided to become a Roman Catholic, his aristocratic mother was distressed, not because she had any aversion to Catholic dogma, but because now her son would, in her words, have to “worship with the help.” She was painfully aware that, in church at least, his aristocratic background would no longer set him apart from others or above anyone. At church he would be just an equal among equals because the Eucharist would strip him of his higher social status.

She intuited correctly. The Eucharist, among other things, calls us to justice — to disregard the distinction between rich and poor, noble and peasant, aristocrat and servant — both around the Eucharist table itself and afterwards outside of the church. The Eucharist fulfills what Mary prophesized when she was pregnant with Jesus — namely, that, in Jesus, the mighty would be brought down and that lowly would be raised up. It was this very thing that first drew Dorothy Day to Christianity. She noticed that, at the Eucharist, the rich and the poor knelt side by side — all equal at that moment.

To say that Eucharist calls us to justice and to social justice is not a statement that takes its origin in political correctness. Sadly, we often don’t take this dimension of the Eucharist seriously. There is a common tendency to think that the practice of justice — especially social justice — is an optional part of being a Christian — something mandated by political correctness rather than by the gospels. Generally we don’t see the call to actively reach out to the poor as something from which we cannot exempt ourselves.

But we are wrong in this. In the gospels and in the Christian scriptures in general, the call to reach out to the poor and to help create justice in the world is as non-negotiable as keeping the commandments and going to church. Indeed striving for justice must be part of all authentic worship.

In the New Testament, every tenth line is a direct challenge to reach out to the poor. In Luke’s gospel, we find this in every sixth line. In the Epistle of James, this occurs in every fifth line. The challenge to reach out to the poor and to level the distinction between rich and poor is an integral and non-negotiable part of being a Christian, commanded as strongly as any of the commandments.

And this challenge is contained in the Eucharist itself — the Eucharistic table calls us to justice, to reach out to the poor. How?

First, the Eucharistic table, by definition, is a table of social non-distinction — a place where the rich and the poor are called to be together beyond all class and status. At the Eucharist there are to be no rich and no poor — only one equal family praying together in a common humanity. In baptism we are all made equal and for that reason there are no separate worship services for the rich and the poor. Moreover, St. Paul warns us strongly that when we gather for the Eucharist the rich should not receive preferential treatment.

Indeed, the gospels invite us in the opposite direction. When you hold any banquet, they tell us, we should give preferential treatment to the poor. This is especially true for the Eucharist. The poor should be welcomed in a special way. Why?

Because, among other things, the Eucharist commemorates Jesus’ brokenness, his poverty, his body being broken and his blood being poured out. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin expresses this aptly when he suggests that the wine offered at the Eucharist symbolizes precisely the brokenness of the poor — in a sense the true substance to be consecrated each day is the world’s development during that day — the bread symbolizing appropriately what creation succeeds in producing, the wine [blood] what creation



surprisingly common belief that our sins are so bad that God can’t or won’t forgive us. Of course, in both of these positions there lies a heresy; and after few moments consideration we realize that these two beliefs are just plain wrong. On the one hand, God certainly does not overlook anyone’s sin. But then neither does he withhold his forgiveness from those who truly repent. And this is the key as far as God is concerned — true repentance.

True repentance is an aspect of love. We love the other person and through this love we come to realize just how much we have hurt them. Love then motivates us to make restitution and to seek forgiveness. Sin is quite the opposite — it is the expression of lack of love. Selfishness is the real motivation for sin. Greed, abuse of power, hate — all these things are the very opposite of love.

So, the human project — the very aim and purpose of the Christian life — is to grow in love. And the best and most straightforward way to do this is to imitate Christ who is the Lord of Love. The solution for every sin, for every crime, is to grow in love. This is what brings about repentance both in this world and in the hereafter.

In talking to that man in the prison, I asked him how he had coped over these nineteen long years. He told me, only two things have kept him going — the love of his family and the fact that he had found God. Without those, he said: “I would never have survived.”

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

WE ARE THE LORD’S:

St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome begins with a reminder that we are not isolated individuals; rather we are essentially social beings, constituted by personal relationships. As Paul puts it: “None of us lives for oneself and no one dies for oneself” [Romans 14:7-14]. As Christians, we recognize that our most fundamental relationship is with Christ both in life and in death. The Apostle reminds us: “Whether we live or die we are the Lord’s.” Through his death and resurrection, Christ was manifested as the Lord of both the living and the dead.

How can this reality guide and enrich our spiritual journey? The Apostle insists that we do not thrive alone. Even when we walk in the dark valley of estrangement and isolation, Christ is at our side as a fellow traveler. Jill who never found a suitable life partner enjoyed a happy and fulfilled life, sustained by her friends and her faith that Christ was her constant companion.

Furthermore, Paul assures us that the Lord who illumines our path during our earthly sojourn also accompanies us as we make the passage through death into a life of eternal happiness. Pete, an engineer, who has no doubt Christ is with him in his everyday life, cannot wrap his mind around the whole concept of heaven and eternal life. Perhaps he could deal with his doubts by concentrating on the fundamental truth that death will not destroy his relationship with Christ.

Paul’s letter encourages us to accept Christ as our Lord and to live all aspects of our lives under his authority. Some Christians are very open and explicit about Christ’s role in their lives. Ellen, who has a close personal relationship to Jesus, is always ready to give witness to the role Christ plays in her life. Other Christians are less certain about their relation to Christ and more reluctant to speak about it. For example, Ellen’s husband, Dan, was reluctant to talk to her about spiritual matters because he did not have the kind of personal relationship with Christ that she did. However, he became more open and vocal when he recalled that Christ’s teachings really do guide his business decisions. His piety is quite different from his wife’s, but Christ still functions as Lord of his life.

Do you view Christ as Lord of your life and death?

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

LIFE and THE EUCHARIST:

The happiness you seek and have a right to enjoy is hidden in the Eucharist. —Pope Benedict XVI

FORGIVING FOR OUR SAKE:

A married couple was going through a rough time. In the process, they both said and did things that hurt one another deeply. But with patience and commitment, they worked things out, and began moving forward together. But not completely. One day the wife complained: “Why is it that you keep bringing up my past mistakes? I thought that you had forgiven and forgotten.” “I have forgiven and forgotten,” said the husband, “but I don’t want you to forget that I have forgiven and forgotten.”

When someone hurts us, it is very difficult to forgive and to forget. This is what makes Matthew’s gospel so challenging [Matthew 18:21-35]. Jesus is relentless in his insistence that we do not forgive people once, or seven times, but seventy times seven times. And what are we to make of that strange violent statement that ends the gospel, where Jesus assures us that our heavenly Father will hand us over to the torturers unless we forgive our brothers and our sisters from our hearts? What is that about? Whatever happened to a compassionate and understanding God?

As strange as it may seem, that violent statement at the end of the gospel is the key to understanding the parable itself. For it is not telling us what God will do, but in fact what will happen to us if we do not forgive. If we refuse to forgive, we will live in torment, unless we change our minds. For the simple human truth is this: when we have been injured deeply, we can never recover until we forgive.

Now we should be clear on what forgiveness is and what it is not. Forgiveness is not pretending that everything is fine. It is not making an excuse for the person who offended us. It is certainly not putting ourselves back into the same situation where we can be hurt again — in fact, in some cases, the best decision is to break off contact with the person who has hurt us. But what forgiveness is, is realizing that we cannot change the past and refusing to let what we cannot change control us. Because if we refuse to forgive — if we choose to feed our hurt — that hurt can grow and deepen and compound with anger and hatred. That hurt will rule our lives and hold us captive.

This is an old truth. Centuries before the birth of Christ, the Greek play, *Medea* was written. In this drama Medea kills her own children to exact revenge on her husband, who committed adultery. When her husband asks her, how could she kill her own flesh and blood just to spite him, Medea calmly answers: “Because I hate you more than I love them.” Feeding a hurt creates a monster — a monster that can destroy us. The only way to slay that monster is forgiveness.

This is an important truth to remember. Take for example the many mass shootings that we have heard about in recent years. These are all stories of insensitivity and grief. But even in the immensity of these tragedies, we as Christians are still called to forgive. Forgiveness does not mean that we make excuses for the evil that was done. It certainly does not mean that we relax our vigilance to protect ourselves in the future. We are called to forgive the perpetrators, not because they deserve it, but because we need it. For if we try to build a future based on hatred and revenge, we will become what we hate. Mahatma Gandhi — a man who knew much about humanity and world relations, once said: “If we base our relationships to one another on revenge — if we deal with one another based upon ‘an eye for an eye’ — soon the whole world will be blind.”

Jesus is not being cruel in Matthew’s gospel. He is warning us about a hard truth. Feeding a hurt will destroy us. What happens in our life is not always fair; it is not always right. But if we want to be free, if we want to be at peace, if we want to live, we must forgive our brothers and sisters from our hearts.

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

WE ARE CALLED TO MORE:

There comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. —Wangari Maathai



The third image I present to you is the cross. This past Thursday, we celebrated the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross. The cross is a reminder of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. The cross is a reminder of the Gospel of the Lord. St. Paul tells Timothy: “If I do not preach the Gospel of Christ, then the cross loses its power” [1 Corinthians 1:17-18]. The Gospel of Christ demands forgiveness. Christianity is definitely not easy. It demands the sacrifice of that grudge that we actually enjoy harboring. The gospel of Christ demands forgiveness when we think we are justified in our anger. The gospel of Christ demands meaning what we pray when we say: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The gospel of Christ is not easy. It is out and out tough. But by putting our hatred to death, we give life to our love and more importantly, by putting our hatred to death, we give life to His Love.

Is there someone whom you or I hate? Was there a situation from many years ago that has had a negative impact on our lives? Or maybe it is a recent offense that is gnawing at you or at me. Or maybe you hate yourself. Maybe you did something terrible many years ago and have now decided that you cannot forgive yourself. Matthew’s gospel tells us: “Let go. Let go of the battle stories. Let go of the hatred.” This hatred has turned our lives into a prison. It has been the rope that held us back. We have suffered enough from the past. We are called into the joy of the Lord. We need to offer up our anger to the Cross. We need to unite our upset to His upset. We need to join Jesus in sacrifice and sacrifice that so called justified grudge. The result of your sacrifice and my sacrifice is to live in the freedom of the daughters and sons of the Lord, free from our worst enemy, free from that which we do to ourselves. Free to Love.

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

THE DISSENTER IS ALWAYS THE MOST LOYAL:

“Dissent” is one of the more difficult dimensions of public discourse to define. It’s not the same as the political sparring that is expected of political parties — even required at some level — if a republic is to be a republic. And yet, dissent is easy to recognize. Dissent comes out of the depth of the heart and exists only in service to what both sides say they are committed to preserving.

It comes out of a soul in anguish over life that must be bartered in the process of saving it.

Most of all, dissent always has a place and a time and a face we do not expect to see in this place at this time. It has the character of exactly what the institution wants most to produce — total loyalty and complete identification. The problem is that both sides define their one same loyalty differently. The establishment is always loyal to the very institutionalism of the institution in question. The dissenter is always most loyal instead to what the institution itself claims to be about.

As a result, loneliness is at the very heart of dissent. Loneliness is its character and isolation is its cost — it is one young man facing a row of tanks in Tiananmen Square. It is the pacifist Dorothy Day on a hunger strike in a Washington jail for having the temerity to protest on behalf of women’s suffrage at the gates of the White House. It is Rosa Parks refusing to get out of her seat on a public bus. It is the few who hold out against total dissolution of the highest ideals of any institution.

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

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

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



FREEDOM FROM ANGER:

I have three images for you this week — one is a comic from the newspapers; one is a big expensive yacht; and the third is the cross.

First of all the comic. Have you ever read *Rose is a Rose*? It's great. I love it. It is also very faith-filled. It features Rose, her husband Jimbo, and their son, Pasquale, as well as Pasquale's Guardian Angel. Rose is always happy and upbeat — well, usually. Sometimes she has an alternate ego, Biker Girl, but usually she is a shy, happy Mom and wife.

But there is one strip when Rose is not happy at all. And she was not behaving all that well. It begins with her pretty miserable. In the first panel she sits in a dungeon with a large ball and chain clamped to her leg. And she is angry. The anger is smoking off of her. There's a dark cloud over her head. She's really mad. In the second panel her expression changes, and the dark cloud is replaced with the word "Sigh". In the third panel the dungeon has been transformed into a rainbow with birds singing, and butterflies flapping. The ball and chain is gone, and Rose is dancing with a big smile on her face. In the fourth panel, Rose goes up to her husband, Jimbo, who is engrossed in his newspaper, and like most men, thoroughly oblivious. She tells him: "Well, it wasn't easy, but I have decided to forgive you."

Who really benefitted from the forgiveness? Was it Jimbo? Or was it Rose? It was Rose whose anger had imprisoned her, whose anger had turned her world black. It was Rose whose upset was a ball and chain around her.

The second image is the big expensive yacht. I used to go on scuba diving trips to the Island of San Salvador — a small island of the Bahamas. There is just a little harbor on the island where the scuba boats leave from, but there are also three or four huge yachts there. The scuba boats were like little ants next to these ships. The yachts have everything. They cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each. Well, one time as we were leaving for a dive, one of the bigger yachts began pulling away from the pier. But there was a problem — someone forgot to untie one of the lines from the dock. The result was that the stern — the back of the ship — could not pull away until either the rope snapped or the stern got busted up. The rope won. The whole back of the ship which was made of fiberglass, shattered. It cost that owner a pretty penny to fix his ship.

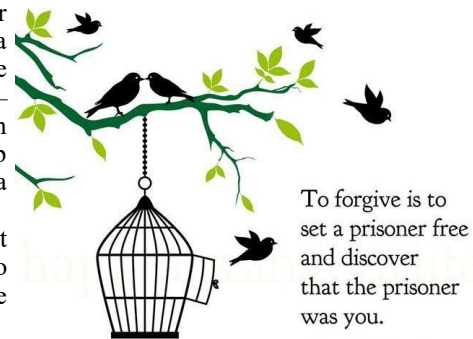
That ship had everything you could think of, but something was holding it back — something was causing it to destroy itself. That's what anger does to us. That's what the refusal to forgive does to us. It destroys us.

All of us have been done dirty by others. I have never met anyone who has not been offended by many people in many different ways. And we get angry. And we nurse that anger. We treasure that anger, maybe even to the extent of allowing it to become hatred. And do you know what happens? Our anger, our hatred, our refusal to forgive holds us back. "But, Father, you don't know what So and So did to me."

You are right; I don't know. Nor do you know what another So and So did to me. But how can I progress in Christianity if I refuse to let go of the dock that my anger is tied to? And how can you be a Christian if you would rather walk around with the ball and chain of anger instead of run free to love?

"I am going to take this anger to the grave," an elderly lady once told me. That will really fix the person who hurt her, won't it? We cannot be good Christians and allow ourselves be tied down by our anger. Anger — the refusal to forgive — will consume us in the same way it consumed that servant who had been forgiven a great debt but who was still furious with another servant who owed him a mere trifling.

12

**HOPE AND HEALING IN THE AFTERMATH:**

A few weeks ago, Hurricane *Idalia* hit the United States and battered the residents of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina in gigantic proportions. For those of us without connections to the South, the events could seem distant, and beyond the sphere of immediate concern — a matter of sympathetic thoughts, \$20 donations, and passing prayers. For residents, however, the aftermath can stretch far into the future.

If we're not careful, the Scripture readings for this 24th Week in Ordinary Time can likewise be received as a distant armchair witness. Both the author of the Book of Sirach [Sirach 27:30-28:7] and Matthew [18:21-35] are clear in their call to forgive and to expunge emotional debts. It's easy enough to nod our heads sagely, note the lesson in neighborliness, and switch to the next channel.

But sometimes wrongs hit with gale-force winds. Sometimes the sins of others uproot our sense of self or our perspective of the world. Sometimes our better selves are flooded out by hurt and shame. When we're on the receiving end of a cataclysmic fault, something is different. The call to forgive and move on can feel overwhelming, the daunting task of reconstructing a city on uneven, marshy ground. For those in the aftermath of hurricane-force sin, the recovery process is not easy. Forgiveness takes time.

Some of us are near indeed to those affected by life-altering flooding. Others of us feel the effects only through our common humanity. But it is very likely that we are all near to someone brokenhearted — perhaps it's us.

Whatever our storm, Jesus' invitation is not an easy one. His call to forgive seventy times seven times is, on the one hand, classic Jewish hyperbole to convey a point. Seven is a number associated with perfection and God himself. On the other hand, it's very practical advice. Disaster recovery efforts lay one brick at a time. For those of us in the aftermath of a spiritual or emotional storm, this process, too, proceeds gradually, with one act of forgiveness after another.

The Scripture readings remind us that we are not alone. After a natural disaster, relief funds and generous donors quickly send millions of dollars to the affected areas. St. Paul puts it this way: "We are the Lord's." We do not belong to the devastated state that the sins of others seem to have left us in. We belong to God [Romans 14:7-14]. We need to recall that sin and destruction do not have the last say! Jesus weeps over our wounds and he doesn't abandon us to our tragedies. The Father's love is superabundant. Like a storm-battered city, we can receive his aid. We can allow the Holy Spirit to allocate the grace where we need it the most so healing can begin.

—taken from the writings of Anna Carter, which appears on the internet

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — OCTOBER 21st: 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.

9



THE JOY OF SEEING YOU:

Does Jesus smile when He looks at you? Are you sure? Growing up Catholic I was fortunate enough to see some amazing works of art. Traveling around the world, too, I've been blessed to see the architectural wonders of high-arching basilicas — one-of-a-kind statues, priceless paintings, elaborate stained glass windows, hand-carved pews, the list goes on. All are evidence not only of the incredible talent the Lord has bestowed upon His children, but of how lucky we are that some artists have blessed Him back by using it for His glory and sharing with the world.

That being said, being Catholic I've also seen some of the worst, most frightening and all together “hokiest” interpretations and attempts at “art” that have ever “graced” this planet. I'm not just talking about Sunday school art projects. I'm not talking about “felt banners” and clip art on the song sheets. I'm speaking of original paintings that portray our Lord in a thousand different ways — but few flattering and seldom approachable.

Have you ever seen those pictures of Jesus with the really bad haircut, parted down the middle and matted down into a mullet? How about the ones with all the weird glowing and bleeding? When I see some of those I am tempted to take them off the walls and “fix” them. They make even the worst high school yearbook photo look like a glamour shot. Luckily, God is bigger than my annoyances with others' portrayals and portraits of Him.

One icon I do love, however, is the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. You may have seen it as a painting or a statue or a drawing — it's the shot of Jesus walking with the lamb, the “lost sheep”, draped over His shoulders. He is grinning and holding the lamb close to him, with His hands firmly grasping both sets of legs. Picture it in your head, if you can. Okay, now keep reading — it's easier with your eyes open, see?

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who comes looking for you when you wander off. Sometimes He comes in the form of a gentle invitation from someone who notices you haven't been to Church in a while. Sometimes He comes in a loving, but concerned conversation about choices you've been making in your life. Sometimes He comes in a quiet movement in your soul, that won't let you sleep because you know you've acted wrongly. Sometimes, though, because you run [and don't walk] away, the Good Shepherd has to work extra hard. You [and I] force Him to climb over mountains and cross rivers just to get close to us. He loves every one of His sheep, even YOU, so much that He will do anything it takes [and sometimes even more than it takes], to insure that you have a chance at something better.

I was reminded about all of this when the gospel was read at Mass last weekend [Luke 15:4-5]; you've probably heard it countless times in your life. “Who among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until you find it? And when you do find it, you set it on your shoulders with great joy”.

One thing that really struck me upon praying it one morning last week, though, was verse five which reads: “you set it on your shoulders with great joy”. The image of me being that sheep and Jesus carrying me is, already, very cool — the concept, too, that Jesus does it JOYFULLY is even cooler. Jesus doesn't have to do that, but He does; that is what is so amazing about God's love. We can wander, even run away and after us He comes. And when He catches us, He doesn't let go. Sure you'll squirm, and might even break free some days, but as a Shepherd, God doesn't quit.

What else did He set on His shoulders with great joy? That's right — the cross. You might be thinking: “No, BG, that didn't bring Him great joy”. Maybe not on a physical level, but on a spiritual level, it brought Him great joy. His taking the cross on His shoulders was the most beautiful and selfless act of love this world has ever seen, and it brought incredible joy to both He and His Father at its



culmination. It opened the door to Heaven and gave you and I a shot at eternal life. It was painful, absolutely, but also joyful in a paradoxical way.

And on those days when you get too down on yourself because you screwed up or wandered away, and you wonder how He could possibly still love you, how He could possibly go on with you, remember that He did. That fact is less a paradox and more a miracle. On days like that when you are more a “cross” to bear than a “sheep” to carry, remember that He carries you anyway, and He does it joyfully.

Jesus is that loving. He is that strong. Christ does care about you that much — to carry you upon His shoulders. The question is: Will you let Him? Because THAT is what would make Him smile at you.

Next time you feel like you have the entire world resting on your shoulders — remember that Jesus is the SHEPHERD that does, and that's GOOD news. —the Bible Geek

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].**



LIFE TEEN

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	1 Timothy 2:1-8, Luke 7:1-10
Tuesday:	1 Timothy 3:1-13, Luke 7:11-17
Wednesday:	1 Timothy 3:14-16, Luke 7:31-35
Thursday:	Ephesians 4:1-7, Matthew 9:9-13
Friday:	1 Timothy 6:2-12, Luke 8:1-3
Saturday:	1 Timothy 6:13-16, Luke 8:4-15

25th Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 55:6-9, Philippians 1:20-27, Matthew 20:1-16

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.

**LOVE:**

Love heals wounds and brings us closer to establishing the kingdom of God.