

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ Prayer for Synod on Synodality ~

We stand before You,
Holy Spirit,
as we gather together
in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home
in our hearts;
Teach us the way
we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak
and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance
lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together
to eternal life
and not stray
from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work
in every place
and time,
in the communion
of the Father
and the Son,
forever and ever.
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.

**FAITH EDUCATION — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8th:**

Our Faith Education classes have begun. If you have missed registering for these classes, please make sure that you complete this registration with Patty in the chapel office this week. **Classes will meet from 8:45 AM until 9:45 AM and will be followed by our 10 AM Mass.** Please see our Website for dates upon which the classes will meet. 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 not registered your child, please contact Patty in the Chapel office as soon as possible [440-473-3560].** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**BLANKET SUNDAY IS NEXT WEEKEND:**

The 37th Annual Blanket Sunday in-parish appeal is next weekend, **October 14-15, 2023.** This year, as in the past few, the collection will be a **cash only** collection. We will gratefully accept your cash donations and the **Diocesan St. Vincent de Paul Society** will do the shopping for you, making your money go even further, with bulk purchases of blankets and other items needed by low income families. So give someone a blanket for the winter — and give yourself a warm feeling! **Use the special Blanket Sunday Envelope [on the table] or mark your envelope Blanket Sunday Collection** and we will take it from there. The need is great and donations can also be made securely online at: <https://svdpcl.org/donate/blanket-sunday-donations/>. Checks may also be mailed to: **St. Vincent de Paul Society Blanket Sunday, 1404 East 9th Street — 3rd Floor, Cleveland, OH 44114.** Thank you for helping us “blanket” neighbors in warmth and compassion!

**WOMEN'S EVENING OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

Tuesday, October 24th from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. We will begin with Mass together in the Chapel, and then move to the Lennon Boardroom to continue our prayer and reflection together. **Father John** will facilitate our evening of reflection. Light refreshments will be served. **There is no cost for the evening.** [If you can't make it for Mass, come anyway when you can.] It will be a wonderful evening of spiritual renewal. So **mark the date on your calendars** and give yourself a treat in the Lord. **Sign up on the retreat sheet which is located on the easel in the narthex of the Chapel, or call [440-473-3560].**

**ANNUAL SOCK DRIVE:**

Sophomore, Javi Swinarski, has organized a **Sock Drive to collect socks for the homeless and shelterless men and women in our city.** Javi has been doing this since he was in the 4th grade. Every year, he has increased the size and scope of his project. **This year's drive runs from Saturday, October 14th until Sunday, October 29th.** Javi remarks: “Something as little as a pair of warm socks can change a person's life.” Javi will have collection bins in the narthex of the chapel. Please donate. Thank you.

GENTLE WORDS:

Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice — here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word, always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.

—St. Thérèse de Lisieux

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 mental health issues.
- For Shirley Smith, sister-in-law of Brother Charles Smith, who is critically ill and under the care of hospice.
- 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 Alfred Pinchak, father of Anna ['96], Cyril ['02], Andrea ['02] Pinchak, father-in-law of Ernie Corvi ['02], who is seriously ill.
- For Elizabeth Toth, daughter of Jeffrey Toth ['84], nephew of James ['86] and Jennifer ['94]. And cousin of Tim ['24] and Kate ['27] Papczun, who is undergoing treatment for a serious health issue.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Gertrude Gramaldi, mother-in-law of Lacrosse Coach, Brian Jenkins.
- 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.
- For Brother Roger Berg, C.S.C.
- For Susan Zidanic, family friend of Athletic Director, Sean O'Toole.
- For Robert Riggan, grandfather of Ethan ['18] and Aidan ['20] Muchnicki.
- For Paul Tackett
- For Father David Burrell, C.S.C.
- For Kathleen Bruechner, mother of Father Michael Thomas, C.S.C.
- For Curtiss DeMarco, father of Kathy DeMarco and Chapel Associate Patty Szaniszlo (anniversary)

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

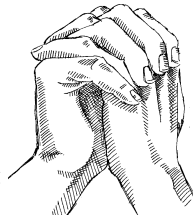
- For the victims of the excessive flooding in Libya
- For an end to violence as a means to resolve differences.
- For an end to sexual abuse and lack of respect for human persons.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For all 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.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

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 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, OCTOBER 11th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, October 11th 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 — Part 2

We also need your help — we need future topics. **So, if you have a topic that you would like us to discuss, please let Father John know.** Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. **We will meet every other week — topic to be decided at the end of the previous meeting.** Join us. You'll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Sunday, October 8: 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 9:	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 10:	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 11:	NO MASS
Thursday, October 12:	NO MASS
Friday, October 13:	NO MASS
Saturday, October 14: 28 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, October 15: 28 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A LECTOR?

We continue to be in need of Lectors for our Saturday 5 pm and our Sunday 10 am Masses. Fr. John is happy to provide training for any student or adult who is interested in reading at Mass. **Any student who is in the 5th [and up] grade is invited to become a Lector, as well as any adult in our Chapel community.** This is a wonderful ministry — a great way to serve God and the faith community. **If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, we have placed a sign-up sheet on the easel in the narthex of the Chapel. Please add your name to the list, and Fr. John will contact you.**



You do not have to attend Gilmour to be a lector, or to be involved in any other ministry at Our Lady Chapel. **Please call the Chapel office [440-473-3560] with any questions.**

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The imagery of the people of God as a vineyard is common in both the Old and New Testaments. Generally, the vineyard stands for the nation of Israel as a whole, but that does not exclude an emphasis on the role of the individual. The vineyard parables all have certain things in common. God is the one who plants the vineyard. He chooses the best and most fertile land, works the land to prepare it, and then looks for a harvest, only to be disappointed for one reason or another.

The first allegory was spoken by the prophet, Isaiah. In it, God is disappointed because, instead of the vineyard producing good grapes, it produced wild — or, as some translations say, rotten or sour grapes [Isaiah 5:1-7]. So, what do you do? There is nothing left to do but tear it all down. Isaiah’s message to the nation is that this is what God plans to do with Israel because the nation has produced rotten grapes. In the same way that the owner of the vineyard looked for good grapes and found rotten grapes instead, God looked for justice within Israel and instead found bloodshed. Nations that are systematically unjust can last for a time, but eventually God gets fed up and destruction comes.

The Psalmist is responding to this situation [see Psalm 80]; he sees that God is allowing his vineyard to be torn down. With all the work God had done, bringing a vine from Egypt, working hard to clear the land to plant it, and then letting it spread itself to the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River, why is God now allowing it to be plundered and trampled on by everybody who passes by? The psalmist pleads with God to look favorably on his vineyard and give it new life. The people have withdrawn from you and haven’t called upon your name, but, if you will restore your vineyard, the nation can turn around and be saved.

In Matthew’s Gospel, the history of Israel as God’s vineyard is told. The owner of an estate leases it out to tenant farmers and then goes on a long journey [Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46]. This was particularly common in Galilee where landowners often actually lived outside of the territory. Generally, the rent was for a certain amount of produce from the vineyard with the tenants able to keep what remained. The owner of the vineyard then sent delegates to take the part of the harvest that was his. However, the tenants choose not to pay and abuse the servants. The servants in the parable are God’s prophets whom he regularly sent to Israel, only to see them abused and killed. Finally, the owner sends his son, but he, too, is killed. Those who hate Jesus know that he is talking about them and himself. You can reject God’s Son, but he will take the vineyard and give it to someone else who will produce good fruit.



What is that good fruit that God wants from his vineyard? Saint Paul tells us — “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you [Philippians 4:8-9].

We must be very careful here not to think that our Scripture writers are only talking to the people of their time. Nothing could be further from the truth. The critique of the land owner is aimed at us also. It’s not that this is a wrong interpretation, or even a “bad” one, it’s that it keeps us from doing one thing: letting the critique it contains hit home. It keeps us from feeling the difference between, as St. Paul put it, allowing the “peace of God to guard our hearts and minds” and keeping the challenge of the Gospel at arms-length.

Our task is straightforward from here. We must, when we hear again Jesus’ words, never allow ourselves

healed on the Sabbath [Mark 3:1-6. He took on humanity [Philippians 2:7]! He didn’t just enter into the mess we made and tried to clean it up with us, He literally took it all upon Himself [Matthew 11:28-30].

That is how much He loves us.

Sometimes though, we need a practical game plan to help us deal with stressful situations, by allowing God to take control. If you ever find yourself overwhelmed by something you’re dealing with — without knowledge of what to do — I offer you the following steps:

1. Step away from the situation, either physically or mentally, depending on what is happening. Obviously, if it’s an emergency, you need to act — use discretion as needed.
2. Take a big deep breath. Actually, take a few. If your heart is racing, let it normalize. Close your eyes, and welcome the Holy Spirit into the situation praying: “Come, Holy Spirit.”
3. Ask yourself, what was my intended outcome, what was my goal that I wanted to accomplish here?
4. Ask yourself, is that intended outcome/goal still a reality? If so, what can I still do to get there in a healthy and honest way? If not, what new goal can I set out for myself?
5. Last — and most important — give glory to God for the mess. Thank Him for this opportunity to realize we are not on our own in this world.

In the end, the reality is this: God has control. He created the universe as we know it and holds it together each and every day. Have faith in knowing that He holds you carefully in his hands as well. And pray: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. May I live one day at a time; enjoy one moment at a time; accept hardships as the pathway to peace; take, as He did, this sinful world as it is — not as I would have it; trust that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.”

—taken from the writings of Rachel Penate, who is on the staff of LifeTeen.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Jonah 1:1—2:2, 11; Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday: Jonah 3:1-10, Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday: Jonah 4:1-11, Luke 11:1-4

Thursday: Malachi 3:13-20b, Luke 11:5-13

Friday: Joel 1:13-15, 2:1-2; Luke 11:15-26

Saturday: Joel 4:12-21, Luke 11:27-28

28th Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 25:6-10a, Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20, Matthew 22:1-14

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].



EXPECTATION vs. REALITY — LETTING GOD INTO IMPERFECTION:

If you asked me the question: “Rachel, what would you be the patron saint of?” My answer, undoubtedly, would be: “Patron saint of people who spill — everything.” No joke. I’m 99% positive that I’m single-handedly at fault for breaking like half of my household’s dishes. I’ve always struggled with this particular attribute, and it’s been a long journey of accepting the fact that some “graceful, non-spilling gene” isn’t going to appear overnight. For this type-A girl, it’s so easy to feel out of control. But, the funny thing about feeling out of control is that “not having it all together” is a reality for more than the elite few of us who are clumsier than a panda in a tree.

We all, at some point in our lives, can feel like we lose control over things — we can feel like our expectations never quite add up to the outcome of whatever we’re dealing with.

I’ve had to give up control many times over in my life — but perhaps my favorite story happened one late night a few years ago. I had climbed into bed, tired after a long day, and realized food was still cooling on the countertop. For fear of a dog thief in the night, I sleepily wandered back out to the kitchen, and in the transfer between counter and fridge — a mere three feet — I lost my grip — and subsequently, my cool. The glass container slipped out of my hands and shattered all over our tile floor.

Now, this is the natural place in the story to tell you that I realized it was out of my control, held my head high and moved on, right? No. I immediately sunk my shoulders and started crying. Seriously, I was so over my inability to keep dishes from breaking.

My husband responded to the loud crash in our kitchen as anybody with ears would have, and his reaction was truly the best. He took one look at me, said: “Rachel it’s okay.” And although I protested — whining that “I literally can never avoid making a mess!” — this patient, wonderful man responded with a gesture I will never forget. He immediately bent down and started cleaning up the pieces of broken glass.



It is amazing to think of the many moments of my day that I allow frustration over feeling like I’m not in control to get the better of me. I often allow my expectations for perfection to affect my attitude — and ultimately my gratitude.

What are those areas of your life when you are holding on to expectations that might not live up to reality? For me, it’s usually a relationship — I want the last say in an argument, or I’m holding on to a friendship that is unhealthy. Sometimes, it’s a situation — I plan out the perfect gesture and it just ends up being a big mess instead. I set unrealistic goals for myself in the classroom or on the playing field and instead find myself defeated by my work or nursing my bruises. Or maybe it’s something a little deeper than that — dealing with my parent’s divorce, constant drama with my friends, feeling like I am never doing enough or feeling like I never am enough — no matter what I do.

Often though, what feels the messiest, is my relationship with God — those days that I want prayer to be perfect, but never feel like I have the “right” words to say.

As great as goals are and seeking for ourselves an intended outcome, life happens. And, the beautiful thing about this wild life is that God works within our mess. Like my husband that night, God prefers to enter into our honest moments of trepidation rather than seek a way to greet us beyond our facades. Jesus cared more about comforting people in their reality than He did about following the neat little social norms of society. He touched the leper [Matthew 8:3], forgave the adulterous woman [John 8:1–11],

to be too safe. We cannot allow a false peace that keeps us safe from such a challenge to “guard our minds and hearts.” Instead, we must imitate our Jewish brothers and sisters and refuse to be coerced into taking on the role of the safely righteous. We must allow our imaginations to recreate the drama of the challenge that prophets issue and so refuse to let ourselves identify too quickly or solely with the “people that will produce [the] fruit” of the kingdom of God.

Of course, none of this is to deny that we are a people already saved through the loving grace of a merciful God. Yes, the church is a mystical body of the Lord, already gathered into God’s arms. No, the gates of hell will never prevail against us.

But such facts are in reality anything but contradictory to the interpretational vulnerability we have been practicing. Is it explicitly because we trust in God’s goodness and not our own that we have the outrageous courage to expose ourselves — individually and communally, because we are ourselves both loved and sinners and because our church is both holy and broken — to the voices of the prophets in the past and those in our midst today.

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

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW JESUS?

We all know that Jesus is the Messiah — the One who comes to save us. But how often do we doubt His saving power in our hearts? In our most dire moments? On our saddest days? Here are some thoughts on ways in which you can declare Jesus as the Christ in your life day after day:

- **Receive His merciful love.** It’s tough to let Jesus to be our Savior if we are in denial about needing to be saved. It’s really easy to rely solely on ourselves — to take matters into our own hands. For many of us, that’s what life has required of us. But not the Lord. He gives freely, and He takes care of us. Right after Peter announces his faith in Jesus [see Matthew 16:23], Jesus rebukes him for claiming that he won’t let anything happen to Him. In his zeal, Peter wanted to take care of it; but that’s not what Jesus requires. To declare Him the Lord of your life each day means to acknowledge your great for His mercy.
- **Learn about Him.** Relationships deepen as we get to know people more intimately. Our relationship with the Lord is similar. The more we get to know Him, the more reasons we have to love Him. The more familiar He is to us, the more comfortable we are with coming to Him in all our needs — and coming to Him immediately. Commit to learning more about the Messiah Who loves you.
- **Stand by Scripture.** In the moments when life seems overwhelming and there’s no solution, stand by Scripture. Lean on what the Word says about the character of God. He is faithful; He is trustworthy; He is powerful. He is our Rescuer, our Redeemer, our Shepherd, our Healer, and our Savior. When desolation or doubt comes, remind yourself of that Truth.

Who is Jesus for you? Spend some time with this question in prayer. Who is He today? And tomorrow? And for all eternity?

—taken from the writings of Jenna Guizar, founder of *Blessed is She* which appears on the internet

NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.



A LETTER FROM BISHOP EDWARD MALESIC:

Once again, we find ourselves in a very polarized election cycle with candidates that do not reflect the complete breadth of Catholic moral teaching. Yet, it is our solemn duty as citizens of our republic to cast a vote for the candidate who best supports the greatest ideals and moral teachings of our Catholic faith — the faith that we hold and practice as the means of our personal salvation and as a benefit for the common good of the pluralistic society in which we live.

In casting our ballot — whether for those already proposed by a particular party or for those we choose to write in — we must have properly formed consciences. A properly formed conscience comes through prayer, Scripture and studying the teaching of the Church that is promoted and protected by the apostles and their successors, the bishops. This well-formed conscience seeks to understand the truth and allows itself to be guided by the Holy Spirit. A well-formed conscience is devoted to doing God’s will more than it is to supporting any particular political party.



As such, I wanted to write this letter to help you in forming your conscience in preparation for the vote that you will soon cast.

Our bishops have said — and I agree with them — that “the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family and because of the number of lives destroyed.” [See the new introductory letter found in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility* from the Catholic Bishops of the United States, which can be found online at www.usccb.org.]

The consistent teaching of the Church regarding the intrinsic evil of abortion seeks to secure all other rights as well. We are not a “single issue” Church; there are other extremely important rights that we must defend, to be sure; but these additional rights flow from and are rooted in the fundamental right to life itself.

St. Pope John Paul II stated: “Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights — for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture — is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination” [*Christifideles laici*, #38].

Our bishops noted in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*: “A Catholic voter cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behavior, if the voter’s intent is to support that position. . . . At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate’s opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity” [#34].

When we cast our vote, we must not remain indifferent to those positions and policies that would negatively impact religious freedoms, erode the traditional family, or make it difficult for the poor to access adequate education, housing and healthcare. We must carefully consider how to fix our broken immigration system, address the worldwide refugee crisis, preserve our natural resources, protect the environment and strive for humane solutions to global conflict and terrorism.

But, to be clear — although there are many causes our Church stands for and is vocal about — the right to life itself must be given our paramount consideration so that people can have the chance to secure all the other benefits that life can afford.

I humbly ask that you take my thoughts into consideration as you prepare to cast your ballot in the near future. Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide your decision, having before all else the desire to secure

the common good for our nation and to do God’s will in all things. I will pray for you and ask that you pray for me as we make our choice of civil leadership, hopefully with well-formed consciences. And let us all pray for those who are running for election this cycle. May the Lord inspire them to be the best that they can be for all of us, for our nation and for our world.

May God bless you and those you love,
+The Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic, JCL

THE STORY OF GOD’S CONFIDENCE IN PEOPLE:

Aesop tells of a dog with a bone. He crosses a bridge over a stream. He looks at his reflection. He decides it is a second dog with a bigger bone. He goes for the bone. His own falls to the stream’s bottom. Now he has no bone. The tenants in Jesus’ parable are similar — because of greed, they lost their jobs.

Some concede that Jesus was the greatest person who ever lived. Beyond that they cannot go. However, we must make our choice. Either Jesus was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. The proof of a superior story does not consist in its original telling, but rather in how often it’s retold. On this count, Jesus’ Parable of the Tenants [Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46] qualifies as world-class — it has been retold countless times for 2,000 years. It is a parable of defiance.

This parable is very complex — each item has a point. Furthermore, no point went over the heads of His audience that day. Nor were the hearers amused — and neither should we be. Jesus describes a situation not rare in Israel. The nation was as politically and economically troubled as it is today. Wealthy absentee landlords were common. Labor problems abounded. Some tenant-farmers working for low wages declined to pay rents. Rent strikes are not a 21st century invention. Thus, when the landlord sent his agents — and even his son — to pick up his rents, the hapless messengers were often abused and even murdered. Christ’s audience had read of such incidents in the *Jerusalem Times* over coffee and bagels. They nodded their heads in understanding.



The vineyard was a stand-in for Israel’s people. The owner is God. The farmers are the rulers and priests who run the country. The servants are the prophets down through the centuries. Their murders make up an unbroken obituary column throughout the Scriptures. The son is Jesus the Christ. The story tells of God’s confidence in people. While He loans His land to us, He does not stand over us like a bullying cop — nor even a watchful one. He is patient with us too. He sends us not one messenger, but many. Even, when we ignore them, He — unlike ourselves — will suffer insults for a long time.

But, there is another side to all of this — God is not someone to be messed with. He is equal parts tremendous lover and exacting judge. The story does warn of a time when God will call in all the chips owed to Him. If we don’t live up to expectations, the land will be given to others. We will be losers with our noses pressed on the glass looking in at the party.

The Parable of the Tenants tells us what Jesus thought about Himself. The agents who preceded Him were the prophets. Yet, exalted as they were, they were but errand boys. For there is only one Son — He is the Christ. Do you see now that it is not enough to say the Nazarene was a great person? One must choose whether He is divine or a madman or something worse.

This parable contains one of the clearest claims that Jesus ever made to being an original. He considers Himself miles above the greatest prophet. He is without peer. Language betrays us when we try to speak correctly of Him.

Matthew’s Gospel tells us of the sacrifice of Jesus. Even though He knew the outcome, He went to His rendezvous with death with both eyes at full attention. Jesus the Christ is what He was yesterday and will be tomorrow — none other than the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The world says to us: “Follow me and fit in.” Jesus says: “Follow me and stand out.”

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