

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for God's Grace ~

**We call upon you
in a special way.
It is through your power
that we were created.
Every breath we take,
every morning we wake,
and every moment of every hour,
we live under your power.**

**Touch us, again, with that same power.
Recreate in us new life.
Fill us with the healing power
of your Holy Spirit.
Cast out anything
that stands as an obstacle
to our becoming the person
you want us to be.**

**Keep us strong —
physically,
emotionally,
intellectually,
and spiritually —
so that we may serve you,
and the human family,
for the rest of our lives.
Amen.**

Our Lady Chapel



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

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

FAITH EDUCATION — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22nd and 29th:

Our Faith Education classes have begun. Our Faith Education classes meet on **Sundays from 8:45—9:45 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]. **Upcoming class dates: October 22-29 and November 5-12-19.** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**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].**

**MEN'S DAY OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

Wednesday, November 7th 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. **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.

**ALUMNI & CHAPEL MEMORIAL MASS — NOVEMBER 19:**

November is the month of Thanksgiving. It is also traditionally the month set aside to remember our deceased. What better way to offer thanks than to remember the special people in our lives who have gone before us to the Lord — our lives are built on the heritage they have left behind. As the *Catholic Catechism* reminds us: "We who journey together on our earthly pilgrimages, must accompany each other at our journey's end and surrender each other into God's hands" [CC, #1683].

In order to properly celebrate for our November remembrance, we are going to have a **Memorial Mass at Our Lady Chapel on Sunday, November 19th at 10:00 AM.** We are particularly remembering **all of our alumni who have passed away within this past year.** We are **also remembering all members of our Chapel family who have gone to the Lord.** Please place the names of your loved ones whom you would like to remember in our **Memorial Basket located on the table in the narthex of the chapel.** The Memorial Wall will not be put up this year because of the construction which prevents us from setting the wall up. Please use the basket.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Loretta Seidl, sister of Brother Robert Lavelle, C.S.C., who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Elizabeth Toth, daughter of Jeffrey Toth ['84], nephew of James ['86] and Jennifer ['94]. And cousin of Tim ['24] and Kate ['27] Papeczun, who is undergoing treatment for a serious health issue.
- For Becky Woodfin, who is seriously ill.
- For Stephanie Batt Mitchell ['04], who is recovering from surgery.
- For John Zippay, family friend of Bernadette and Stephen Ritley, who is critically ill.
- For Cheryl Zenobi, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Brennan Friedman ['23] who was injured in an accident.

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Patty Gorman.
- For Arthur Althans, grandfather of Alison ['11], Olivia ['12], Jake ['14], Alex ['15], and Claudia ['17] Althans
- For Barbara Guerra
- For Shirley Smith, sister-in-law of Brother Charles Smith
- For Leo Vovk ['81], brother of Marco Vovk ['79]
- For Laura Pizmoht, mother of Francie ['28] and Jane ['31] Pizmoht,
- For Sister Margaret Biaggio, S.N.D.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For an end to the war between Israel and Hamas.
- For the victims of the earthquake in Afghanistan
- 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.

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — NOVEMBER 18st:

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.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 Patty Szaniszlo, Chapel Office Associate, who is preparing for hip replacement surgery.
- For Chris Livers who is preparing for surgery to remove a blood clot.
- 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 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 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 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 25th:

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: We are the Body of Christ

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 22: 28th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 23:	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 24:	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 25:	NO MASS
Thursday, October 26:	NO MASS
Friday, October 27:	NO MASS
Saturday, October 28: 29th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, October 29: 29th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

A QUESTIONING HEART:

Czeslaw Milosz once wrote: "In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot." The quality of life as we know it has changed radically in our lifetime. When I was a young woman, the world — my world — was an exercise in answers. We had absolute answers for everything — who was going to heaven and who was not. The number of planets and how they went together. The age of the earth and how it developed. But now things have changed. Now, it seems, that life is more an exercise in questions than a catalogue of certainties. It is the unending process of an expanding universe and its expanding knowledge with it. Nothing, it seems, is not now open to question.



When we consider yesterday's answers more important than today's questions, we fail both the past and the future. In the first place, the past was for its own time; in the second place, it is meant to prepare us to face the future. Never refuse to ask a question — however unwelcome the question may be. In the end, it may be the only thing that saves us from our own ignorance. To keep growing, it is imperative to keep asking the forbidden questions.

When we try to stop thought by stopping people from asking forbidden questions, we only prove the shallowness of our answers. What is true will hold up to scrutiny — however much untruth is around us. If an idea be of God — like love and goodness and openness and respect and tolerance and compassion — it will thrive in the most godless environment.

—taken from the writings of Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B. 3

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

What altar do you worship upon? In the history of the human race, there have been many altars to many gods and goddesses. Some of these holy places are of humans forming likenesses of superhuman beings. Some — like mountains and rivers — are of nature reflecting force and supremacy. Some altars are built honoring gods of possessions and habits.

But we have been given the gift of faith which leads us to worship, adore and petition the God Who has been revealed through the covenants and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We must not be distracted by the attractiveness which false gods have for us.

Each of us has received a call from God — an invitation — which extends through our entire span of days to which we have responded. In this way we live through the history of our coming to know, to love, and to serve this One God with more than lip-service.

The Book of the prophet Isaiah is written to a people who are immersed in the Babylonian captivity — they are exiled from their homeland and long for release. These many oracles, poems, songs and predictions are meant to keep hope alive in the hearts of the people.

But God not only spoke words of hope. God called a foreign king, Cyrus, who does not know exactly how he has been called by God. The prophet proclaims that God has called this Cyrus, who is so powerful that other kings run away from him. Cyrus becomes the victor over Israel's captors. Cyrus has the title of the "anointed". It may sound as if God is boasting like a professional wrestler, but instead God is making his people aware of his divine fidelity to the Jewish nation who lies in captivity. Help is on the way, and it is God Who is behind Cyrus' power and victories [Isaiah 45:1-6].

Matthew's Gospel presents us with a familiar story [Matthew 22:15-21]. The final line of the story is often quoted to various purposes — "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but give to God what belongs to God."

The Pharisees have been getting hit in their collective noses by the recent parables which Jesus has directed toward them. And so, they want to trap Jesus in order to get him in trouble with the Romans. The Herodians are a separate Jewish group who cling to the Pentateuch as containing nothing about the resurrection of the body after death. The Herodians accepted the authority of the Romans and their allegiance to Caesar. The Pharisees wishing to get Jesus in conflict with the Romans, allied themselves with supporters of the Roman domination.

The group comes to Jesus; they flatter him a bit and then pose the big question. Jesus rebukes their intention and confronts their hypocrisy. The coin belongs to Caesar's empire; his image crowns the coin. The census tax is unjust of course because the Roman domination is cruel and unjust.

"Repay to Caesar" is the way Jesus avoids entrapment with the Romans which would be reported by the Herodians. Repaying to God what belongs to God is Jesus' call to the interior surrender to which all people are called. God — the "Dominus" — is greater than Caesar and God's empire more extensive. The Pharisees have heard this insult to their religious authority and so the trap has failed. The tension remains between them and Jesus and that tension will be rising.

Caesar's image was on the coin of the realm. As we know it was a powerful and extensive kingdom, but temporal. We struggle to live with the belief that God's image is upon everything and everyone. We are made in that image while we wear our human smudge. It was easy for the Herodians and Pharisees to see Caesar's image; it takes some reflection to pick up God's image upon us and others. That image may pop up clearly on the faces of little babies and tall mountains. Our human senses have a built-in filter which is reluctant to repay God for what belongs to God.

How true it is that infants quickly learn two words — "no!!!!" and "Mine!!!!" That outward possessiveness demands property and dominion. For some, that infancy continues into long years of



Joshua Heschel, who wrote in his classic 1962 book *The Prophets*: "Above all, the prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, but all are responsible."

If we take this to be a fundamental truth of the human condition, then we are all in need of further introspection. The choices that lead to violence begin with a similar, if unequal, origin within the heart of people in positions to actualize destruction on various scales. For some, it is the verbal, psychological, emotional, physical or sexual violence perpetrated against an individual or small group. For others, like state actors and terrorist organizations, it is exercised in unthinkable wide-ranging ways.

Merton writes: "We drive ourselves mad with our preoccupation, and in the end there is no outlet left but violence. We have to destroy something or someone. By that time, we have created for ourselves a suitable enemy, a scapegoat in whom we have invested all the evil in the world. He is the cause of every wrong. He is the fomenter of all conflict. If he can only be destroyed, conflict will cease, evil will be done with, there will be no more war."

Many times, teaching Merton's writings and thoughts on nonviolence and peacemaking, I have found students resist the claim Merton makes that we are all responsible in some way for the perpetuation of manifold forms of violence in this world. We are desperate, as he notes, to identify the "other" outside ourselves — some kind of monster who is unlike us and therefore the "real" cause of violence, so that we can reassure ourselves of our own false innocence and absolve ourselves of the little and big forms of violence in our own lives.

It is this way of thinking, certainly shaped by the effects of original sin experienced by all, that precludes us from seeking real peace, which is peace that the world cannot give, as Jesus famously taught us [see John 14:27]. As Merton says: "The peace the world pretends to desire is really no peace at all."

But at a time when solidarity and prayer are needed — but are themselves not enough — I find Merton's exhortation to the Christian community instructive. As an individual, I may not be able to effect substantive change in the Holy Land or Eastern Europe or Central Africa, but I can work on modulating how I personally contribute to violence in this world in my own life and thinking.

As an individual, I may not be able to effect substantive change in the Holy Land or Eastern Europe or Central Africa, but I can work on modulating how I personally contribute to violence in this world in my own life and thinking.

I have found that the closing paragraph of Merton's essay serves as a good reminder of the personal spiritual work I need to do at a time like this to prepare me for greater clarity of vision and interpretation regarding global violence: "So instead of loving what you think is peace, love other men and love God above all. And instead of hating the people you think are warmakers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed — but hate these things in yourself, not in another."

If we all worked on this, then maybe we could move from the individual to the collective. And then perhaps the human family would be better able to embrace what Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*: "We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war.' Never again war!"

—taken from the *National Catholic Reporter*, October 19, 2023, in an article written by Daniel Horan, OFM

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.



REFLECTING ON THOMAS MERTON'S "THE ROOT OF WAR IS FEAR":

Given the recent atrocities in Israel and Gaza, the terrorist actions of Hamas and the state of Israel's initial retaliation and plans for a massive ground attack, war and escalating violence has been on the minds and hearts of many around the world. This latest war is added to the nearly two-year-long war in Ukraine following Russia's invasion of that sovereign nation in February, 2022, and the dozens of other conflicts across the globe, including ongoing civil wars in Yemen, Libya, Myanmar, Syria and the Central African Republic, among other forms of violence and instability.

In his 2020 encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis acknowledged that "conditions that favor the outbreak of wars are once again increasing", and described the breakout of state and terrorist violence across the planet as reflecting a new and disturbing reality: "In today's world, there are no longer just isolated outbreaks of war in one country or another; instead, we are experiencing a 'world war fought piecemeal,' since the destinies of countries are so closely interconnected on the global scene."

It is easy to be overcome by the magnitude of the violence and the acute hopelessness that surfaces when the scale of destruction, violence, and injustice comes to the surface. In *Fratelli Tutti*, the pope named this sense of apathy and willful ignorance that arises in the face of such global violence: "In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat."

So, to what or whom can we turn to think about what is happening in Israel and Gaza, Ukraine and central Africa, Southeast Asia and elsewhere? When I am overwhelmed by the magnitude of global violence, I find myself returning to an essay by the Trappist monk and author Thomas Merton. *The Root of War Is Fear* appears in Merton's 1961 book *New Seeds of Contemplation* and was also published in a slightly expanded form in *The Catholic Worker* in October of the same year.

While Merton was well known for his criticism of war and violence, especially in the 1960s during the Vietnam War, the Cold War and the fight for civil rights in the United States — often writing about the systemic and global dimensions of conflict — the essay, *The Root of War Is Fear* brilliantly — and unsettlingly — turns the critical focus inward and invites all of us to a deep examination of conscience.

Merton writes at the outset of the essay: "At the root of all war is fear: not so much the fear men have of one another as the fear they have of everything. It is not merely that they do not trust one another; they do not even trust themselves. It is not only our hatred of others that is dangerous, but also and above all our hatred of ourselves — particularly that hatred of ourselves which is too deep and too powerful to be consciously faced. For it is this which makes us see our own evil in others and unable to see it in ourselves."

Some may find Merton's opening challenge to moral self-examination off-putting when few of us are directly responsible for the sort of violence and bloodshed we see around the world today. But Merton wants us to look beneath the superficial descriptions and breaking news, to ask ourselves the tough question: Why does this kind of violence exist and what role might we have in it?

Merton is careful across his writings not to offer false equivalencies — he does not believe that all people are equally culpable for the violence in this world. But he does believe that all people are implicated in some capacity on account of our interconnectedness and ethical obligations we have to one another. In this way, I believe Merton would agree with his friend and correspondent, Rabbi Abraham



"mine-ness" grasping.

"Internal possessiveness" is the basis of spirituality and the following of Jesus. It has several aspects. We are invited to receive interiorly God's image and God's creating of us. We possess God's dwelling within us. This allows us to be more grateful for the particular and peculiar person each of us is. "Interior possessiveness" allows us to be more generous. What we have is a wonder-filled gift which has many auxiliary gifts that express reception in their distribution.

Instead of greed, instead of having to possess for one's identity, generosity and service are the coins of the realm. Repaying God with that which belongs to God is called the Christian life. Jesus as King of that realm lived His interior-possession by pouring Himself into each of His life's gestures. Jesus lived outsidershiply what He was inside. We have a long way to go, but the call is here, the time is always and the grace is ours by God's divine generosity. We repay to God what is God's by accepting who we are and whose we are. We worship at the altar at which Jesus continues to serve from the Divine Generosity of love. We worship at other altars when we forget who we really are.

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

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.

**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, October 14]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-i]----- \$ 114.71

Offerings-----[Sunday, October 15]----- \$ 692.05

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].**



POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR MISSION SUNDAY:

Dear brothers and sisters!

For this year's World Mission Sunday, I have chosen a theme inspired by the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, in the Gospel of Luke [see Luke 24:13-35] — "Hearts on fire, feet on the move". Those two disciples were confused and dismayed, but their encounter with Christ in the word and in the breaking of the bread sparked in them the enthusiastic desire to set out again towards Jerusalem and proclaim that the Lord had truly risen. In the Gospel account, we perceive this change in the disciples through a few revealing images — their hearts burned within them as they heard the Scriptures explained by Jesus, their eyes were opened as they recognized him and, ultimately, their feet set out on the way. By meditating on these three images, which reflect the journey of all missionary disciples, we can renew our zeal for evangelization in today's world.

1. Our hearts burned within us "when he explained the Scriptures to us". In missionary activity, the word of God illumines and transforms hearts. On the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the hearts of the two disciples were downcast, as shown by their dejected faces, because of the death of Jesus, in whom they had believed. Faced with the failure of the crucified Master, their hopes that he was the Messiah collapsed.

Then, "as they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them". As when he first called the disciples, so now, amid their bewilderment, the Lord takes the initiative — he approaches them and walks alongside them. So too, in his great mercy, he never tires of being with us, despite all our failings, doubts, weaknesses, and the dismay and pessimism that make us become "foolish and slow of heart", men and women of little faith.

Today, as then, the Risen Lord remains close to his missionary disciples and walks beside them — particularly when they feel disoriented, discouraged, fearful of the mystery of iniquity that surrounds them — and seeks to overwhelm them. So, "let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!" [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #86]. The Lord is greater than all our problems, above all if we encounter them in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. For in the end, this mission is his and we are nothing more than his humble co-workers, "useless servants" [see Luke 17:10].



I desire to express my closeness in Christ to all the men and women missionaries in the world — especially to those enduring any kind of hardship. Dear friends, the Risen Lord is always with you. He sees your generosity and the sacrifices you are making for the mission of evangelization in distant lands. Not every day of our lives is serene and unclouded, but let us never forget the words of the Lord Jesus to his friends before his Passion: "In the world you will have tribulations, but be courageous — I have conquered the world!" [John 16:33].

After listening to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself". The hearts of the disciples thrilled, as they later confided to each other: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?". Jesus is himself the living Word, who alone can make our hearts burn within us, as he enlightens and transforms them.

In this way, we can better understand Saint Jerome's dictum that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ". "Without the Lord to introduce us, it is impossible to understand sacred Scripture in depth; yet the opposite is equally true: without sacred Scripture, the events of Jesus' mission and of his Church in the world remain indecipherable" [*Aperuit Illis*, #1]. It follows that knowledge of Scripture is important for the Christian life, and even more so for the preaching of Christ and his Gospel.

INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S PLAN:

Matthew's Gospel [22:15-21] is very often misunderstood. Very frequently people see this incident as a call to divide the world between God and "Caesar" — church and state. They frequently use it to defend their conviction that the church and its ministers should stick to "churchy" things, and leave matters of state to those who have a special expertise in such matters. The main problem with such reasoning is that a church/state configuration of the world was unheard of at the time Matthew penned these lines. His Jesus is simply getting out of a trap set by his enemies, stating something obvious to everyone.

The enemies of Jesus are convinced that they have him cornered. If he says: "Yes, pay the tax!", the Pharisees would sneer and say: "You've just lost all credibility with the people. You're nothing but a lackey of our Roman occupiers." Should he say: "No, don't pay the tax!", the Herodians would yell: "Traitor! Roman soldiers will be coming around later tonight to arrest you for treason to the Empire."

But by asking his enemies to produce the Roman coin used to pay the tax, then inquiring whose image and name are on the coin, Jesus is saying: "If you've got something in your pocket that belongs to someone else — proven by the name and image — and that person wants it back, then you'd best give what's Caesar's back to Caesar."

The kicker in this verbal confrontation is what comes next — "And repay God what belongs to God." In other words: "Why are you more interested in what Caesar owns than in what God owns?" Jesus obviously presumes that the coin, the person who has it, and even Caesar belong to God — something his enemies have yet to learn.

Our sacred authors constantly try to get that point across. No one does it better than Isaiah. He does it so well that some scholars believe these words actually were one of the reasons he was martyred. Centuries before Isaiah began his ministry, the Chosen People were convinced that God would eventually send a special person to deliver them from all their troubles. They often referred to this unique savior as "The Lord's Anointed."

We're familiar with the Hebrew and Greek words for anointed: "Messiah and Christ." Isaiah is daring to call the Persian emperor Cyrus — an uncircumcised, Gentile leader — The Lord's Messiah [or in Greek: "Cyrus Christ!"]. For most exiled Israelites to whom the prophet was speaking, that was taking prophecy one step too far. In their minds, if God was going to save them, He would send a good Jewish boy — like Moses — to accomplish the task.

Yet, like Jesus, Isaiah is convinced that everything and everyone belongs to God. He can work through anyone, even non-believers. It's up to us believers to discover that God actually doing this [Isaiah 45:1,4-6].

Though after the prophet's death, Cyrus eventually freed the Israelites, the lesson of God's "broad behavior" was still hard to learn. Six centuries later, for instance, Paul runs into opposition from mainstream Jewish/Christians because he baptizes Gentiles without demanding they first convert to Judaism. Paul's letter to the Church at Thessalonica is one of our earliest Christian writings. It shows how pleased Paul is that these non-Jewish converts are, without knowing anything about the 613 Mosaic Laws, performing "works of faith and labors of love." They're part of God's "Chosen" People even though they're not Jews [1 Thessalonians 1:1-6].

As we know from Paul's letter to the Church at Galatia, Paul is convinced that the risen Jesus is unlimited; neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, man or woman [see Galatians 3]. Today we could add gay or straight, Democrat or Republican.

Only God knows what people we'll be expected to add to that list tomorrow.

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



SHOW ME THE MONEY:

The cartoon character Charlie Brown never ages, and seems not to learn much either. Every fall since 1953, Lucy has been snatching away the football just before Charlie can kick it, leaving him sprawled on the ground, lamenting. “Poor old Charlie Brown.” It often seems that Jesus’ opponents were as naive as Charlie Brown, and as unkind and double-crossing as Lucy. Over and again, they failed to realize that they were no match for the wit and wisdom of their prey. Time after time, they tried to trap Jesus, only to find themselves caught in the spiraling conundrums that flowed from their attempts.

As often happens, Matthew’s Gospel for this 29th Week in Ordinary Time has multiple levels of significance. Jesus must have enjoyed the rich irony of the group that marshaled to approach him that day. They were Herodians and disciples of the Pharisees — groups with significant ideological differences brought together because they chose to see Jesus as a rival. The combination of these two groups intent on cornering Jesus made for great public theater.

Like prosecuting attorneys, they planned to bamboozle him with a question about paying taxes. If he said, “Don’t pay,” he was rebelling against the Romans; if he advised payment, he was affirming the Roman right to collect a hated tax — something like the British tax of 1773 that led to the Boston Tea Party. Unfortunately for them, Jesus was quick on his feet and led them to get snared in their own trap [Matthew 22:15-21].

Jesus said: “Show me the money!” Money always talks.

In this case, when one of them produced the type of Roman currency required for paying that much-loathed tax, the coin made a visual announcement that at least one of those purists was walking around with a portrait of Caesar in his purse. That coin not only had an image, but it bore the inscription: “Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus.” That announced that the holder was ready to comply with the tax and also carried a “graven image” of a false God — a flagrant violation of God’s command. Simply by showing Jesus the coin they had, they incriminated themselves both of being compliant with Rome and as breaking the law of God. This much of the entertainment is obvious.

Now for the spiraling conundrum. Jesus asked: “Whose image — literally: ‘icon’ — is there?” When they identified Caesar, he said: “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God, what belongs to God.” That short interchange included two key points.

First, “icon” is the word used in Genesis to speak of human beings created as images of God. Genesis 1:26-27 uses the word “icon” three times as it teaches that male and female are created in the divine image. Hearing the question, “Whose image?”, created an echo of Genesis in the minds of anyone steeped in the Scriptures, reminding them that every person is an august icon of God.

Second, the word “render” means more than “pay” or even “repay.” It implies that the person in question is handing over something very personal — this isn’t just a random silver dollar. “Rendering” something indicates that the givers are handing over a bit of themselves and admitting that the receiver has the right to it.

This raises the question of what really belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. Because Jesus had brought Genesis to mind, the answer was obvious — everything is part of God’s creation, destined to be consecrated to God’s purpose.

Just like Charlie Brown running toward Lucy, the team of Pharisees and Herodians fell into Jesus’ trap and were left sprawling. Instead of forcing Jesus’ hand, the evidence they produced implicated them in the very transgressions they were trying to pin on Jesus. He, in turn, had transformed their interrogation into a proclamation of God’s unique sovereignty.

As disciples who realize that Jesus did not give a definitive answer, we need to revisit the scene, seeking what the incident teaches. Avoiding meticulous mandates, Jesus invites us to deeper considerations. By recalling Genesis and the human vocation to be icons of the divine, he calls forth our creativity. While he does not give us hard and fast rules, he promises to be there for us, more trustworthy than Lucy, sending the Spirit who helps us learn better than Charlie.

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

Otherwise, what are you passing on to others if not your own ideas and projects? A cold heart can never make other hearts burn!

So let us always be willing to let ourselves be accompanied by the Risen Lord as he explains to us the meaning of the Scriptures. May he make our hearts burn within us; may he enlighten and transform us, so that we can proclaim his mystery of salvation to the world with the power and wisdom that come from his Spirit.

2. Our eyes were “opened and recognized him” in the breaking of the bread. Jesus in the Eucharist is the source and summit of the mission. The fact that their hearts burned for the word of God prompted the disciples of Emmaus to ask the mysterious Wayfarer to stay with them as evening drew near. When they gathered around the table, their eyes were opened and they recognized him when he broke the bread. The decisive element that opened the eyes of the disciples was the sequence of actions performed by Jesus — he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Those were the usual gestures of the head of a Jewish household, but, performed by Jesus Christ with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they renewed for his two table companions the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and above all that of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the sacrifice of the cross. Yet at the very moment when they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, “he vanished from their sight”. Here we can recognize an essential reality of our faith — Christ, who breaks the bread, now becomes the bread broken, shared with the disciples and consumed by them. He is seen no longer, for now he has entered the hearts of the disciples, to make them burn all the more, and this prompts them to set out immediately to share with everyone their unique experience of meeting the Risen Lord. The risen Christ, then, is both the one who breaks the bread and, at the same time, the bread itself, broken for us. It follows that every missionary disciple is called to become, like Jesus and in him, through the working of the Holy Spirit, one who breaks the bread and one who is broken bread for the world.

Here it should be remembered that breaking our material bread with the hungry in the name of Christ is already a work of Christian mission. How much more so is the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, which is Christ himself, a work of mission par excellence, since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church. As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out: “We cannot keep to ourselves the love we celebrate in the Sacrament [of the Eucharist]. By its very nature, it asks to be communicated to everyone. What the world needs is the love of God, to encounter Christ and believe in him. For this reason, the Eucharist is not only the source and summit of the life of the Church; it is also the source and summit of her mission: ‘An authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church’ ” [*Sacramentum Caritatis*, #84].



In order to bear fruit we must remain united to Jesus [see John 15:4-9]. This union is achieved through daily prayer — particularly in Eucharistic adoration, as we remain in silence in the presence of the Lord, who remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. By lovingly cultivating this communion with Christ, the missionary disciple can become a mystic in action. May our hearts always yearn for the company of Jesus, echoing the ardent plea of the two disciples of Emmaus, especially in the evening hours: “Stay with us, Lord!”

3. Our feet set out on the way, with the joy of telling others about the Risen Christ. The eternal youth of a Church that is always going forth. After their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus “in the breaking of the bread”, the disciples “set out without delay and returned to Jerusalem”. This setting out in haste, to share with others the joy of meeting the Lord, demonstrates that “the joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who meet Jesus. Those who allow themselves to be saved by him are freed from sin, from sadness, from inner emptiness, from isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn” [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #1]. One cannot truly encounter the risen Jesus

without being set on fire with enthusiasm to tell everyone about him. Therefore, the primary and principal resource of the mission are those persons who have come to know the risen Christ in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist, who carry his fire in their heart and his light in their gaze. They can bear witness to the life that never dies, even in the most difficult of situations and in the darkest of moments.

The image of “feet setting out” reminds us once more of the perennial validity of the “missio ad gentes” — the mission entrusted to the Church by the risen Lord to evangelize all individuals and peoples, even to the ends of the earth. Today more than ever, our human family, wounded by so many situations of injustice, so many divisions and wars, is in need of the Good News of peace and salvation in Christ. I take this opportunity to reiterate that “everyone has the right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to announce it without excluding anyone, not as one who imposes a new obligation, but as one who shares a joy, signals a beautiful horizon, offers a desirable banquet” [**Evangelii Gaudium**, #14]. Missionary conversion remains the principal goal that we must set for ourselves as individuals and as a community, because “missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity” [**Evangelii Gaudium**, #15].

As the Apostle Paul confirms, the love of Christ captivates and impels us [see 2 Corinthians 5:14]. This love is two-fold: the love of Christ for us, which calls forth, inspires and arouses our love for him. A love that makes the Church, in constantly setting out anew, ever young. For all her members are entrusted with the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, in the conviction that “he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again” [2 Corinthians 5:15]. All of us can contribute to this missionary movement: with our prayers and activities, with material offerings and the offering of our sufferings, and with our personal witness. The Pontifical Mission Societies are the privileged means of fostering this missionary cooperation on both the spiritual and material levels. For this reason, the collection taken on World Mission Sunday is devoted to the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The urgency of the Church’s missionary activity naturally calls for an ever closer missionary cooperation on the part of all her members and at every level. This is an essential goal of the synodal journey that the Church has undertaken, guided by the key words: communion, participation, mission. This journey is certainly not a turning of the Church in upon herself; nor is it a referendum about what we ought to believe and practice, nor a matter of human preferences. Rather, it is a process of setting out on the way and, like the disciples of Emmaus, listening to the risen Lord. For he always comes among us to explain the meaning of the Scriptures and to break bread for us, so that we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, carry out his mission in the world.

Just as the two disciples of Emmaus told the others what had taken place along the way, so too our proclamation will be a joyful telling of Christ the Lord, his life, his passion, his death and resurrection, and the wonders that his love has accomplished in our lives.

So let us set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit. Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion. Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity.

Our Lady of the Way, Mother of Christ’s missionary disciples and Queen of Missions, pray for us!

—Francis

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].



forced his abdication, and then enacted the law on their own — something that was permitted between reigns in Belgium law. Then, a few days later, they reversed themselves and returned Baudouin to the throne. Baudouin became an example to his people and to the world of the importance of being first a member of the Kingdom of God.

One more person should be mentioned — although he is often misquoted. That is Stephen Decatur. Perhaps you have heard the quote from Stephen Decatur: “My country right or wrong, but my country.” That is actually a misquote — or at least a quote taken out of context. Stephen Decatur was a naval commander at the dawn of our nation. He was sent to defend American merchant marine ships that had been attacked off Africa. The soldiers on his ships who fought on shore were the first Marines fighting on the shores of Tripoli. Decatur was questioned on why he would allow our country to get involved in foreign affairs. He said that he was merely following the orders sent to him. When he said: “My country right or wrong, but my country”, Decatur was merely saying that it was his job to be a naval commander, not the Secretary of State. He was not saying that we should do immoral actions if ordered to do so by the country.

As citizens who care deeply for our country, we need to work hard to direct our country’s paths to morality. We have a responsibility to support God and country. But we also believe that a priority must be kept — God first, country second. We need to do all in our power to help our country make good, moral laws so that we might always be “one nation under God.”

There are many, many ways that we can guide our country to being one that serves God in its care for all our citizens. We have a responsibility to fight against laws that destroy life — from womb to tomb. We have a responsibility to change a system that allows the mentally challenged to be homeless. There are many other ways that we need to be active in helping our country make moral choices, support noble ideals.

We are reminded that we have to be active, courageous and moral citizens of this great nation. That is how we can “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s.”

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Romans 4:20-25, Luke 12:13-21
Tuesday:	Romans 5:12-21, Luke 12:35-38
Wednesday:	Romans 6:12-18, Luke 12:39-48
Thursday:	Romans 6:19-23, Luke 12:49-53
Friday:	Romans 7:18-25, Luke 12:54-59
Saturday:	Ephesians 2:19-22, Luke 6:12-16

30th Week in Ordinary Time: Exodus 22:20-26, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10, Matthew 22:34-40

R.C.I.A. [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults]:

Our RCIA program will begin shortly. If you have been thinking about investigating the Catholic faith, or if you know someone who has been thinking about it; if you have been away from the Catholic Church for a while, or are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith; if you know someone who is not fully initiated [Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation] in their Catholic faith — then consider joining or having them join our RCIA program. **Please contact Father John [440-473-3560] for more information.**



GOD AND CAESAR:

They tried to trap Jesus — “Is it lawful to pay tax to the Romans or not?” If he said “yes,” they could have declared him a traitor and a Roman sympathizer. He would be a Jew telling people to support their oppressors. If he said “no,” then they would have run to the Romans telling them that he was preaching sedition. Jesus settled the question with a simple, but profound answer: “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” [Matthew 22:15-21]. Matthew’s Gospel leads us to consider how we carry out our responsibilities to our country and to our God.

We are Catholic Christians. We are Americans. We take our citizenship in our country extremely seriously. In public schools, we begin our school day with the Pledge of Allegiance. Every sporting event — in fact, all major gatherings of Americans — begin with the National Anthem. Perhaps, some of you are considering a life in the Armed Services. Our country needs men and women like you to defend it here and in foreign lands. If you were to join the services, you would be putting your lives in danger for the sake of the rest of us. That is patriotic; that is noble.

Patriotism is a virtue. We support and pray for the men and women in the service. We would not have our country as we know it were it not for them and those who fought and died for it in the past.

We are also citizens of the Kingdom of God. Our responsibility to God is infinitely greater than our responsibility to our country. Will we ever be forced to choose between country and God? Hopefully, no, but for us there is no choice. The bottom line is that we are Christians first and forever.

Here is a story about two men — one a saint, and the other a contemporary king. Both were confronted with having to choose between their country and their faith. The saint is St Thomas More. Thomas More was a friend of King Henry VIII of England. Thomas was a brilliant lawyer and a man of deep faith. The king had a deep respect for Thomas. He named him to be the country’s Chancellor. Thomas served the King well. He joined the king on opposing the attacks on the Church made by Martin Luther. Henry VIII wrote an essay supporting the Church that was probably ghost written by Thomas. To this day, the Monarchs of England retain the title “Defender of the Faith” that was given to them by the Pope in gratitude for Henry’s support.

Then the whole problem of Henry’s marriage came up. When the Henry’s request for an annulment was denied, Henry declared himself to be head of the Church. All in England were then required to sign the oath of supremacy rejecting the authority of Rome in religious matters. Thomas would not. For this he was first stripped of his position as chancellor, then he was imprisoned, and finally he was beheaded. Thomas’ last words were: “I die as the King’s faithful servant, but God’s first.” Given the choice between following his conscience, or rejecting the truth, Thomas saw no choice. Given the choice of choosing king or God, he chose God.

The second person I want to point out to you is a former king of Belgium — King Baudouin. He reigned from 1951 to 1993. He was very much loved by all his people. Baudouin and his wife, Queen Fabiola, were fervent Catholics.

They supported many Catholic charities — the foremost being those that cared for mentally and physically challenged children. They were also patriotic. They loved Belgium and the people that they believed God gave them to govern. Then their country’s parliament passed a law allowing abortion — even in late term situations. But according to Belgium’s law, the law could not be enacted unless the King signed it. King Baudouin refused. He said that he was placed on the throne to care for the lives of his people. He would not destroy the lives of the most vulnerable. The King was forced to abdicate — which he did

rather than sign. Actually, the parliament played a political game. They declared him incompetent,

**WHAT GOD OWNS:**

The following letter was found in the files on the Internal Revenue Service. “Dear IRS, my conscience has been bothering me. I am including a check for \$5,000 to pay my back taxes.” At the bottom of the letter was a postscript: “If my conscience continues to bother me, I will send the rest.”

No one likes to pay taxes. Even though we realize the government needs to operate, we want to keep taxes low. We want to give the government the least amount of money we can. Here is where Matthew’s gospel poses such a problem for us [Matthew 22:15-21]. Although the gospel seems to be about taxes, it is about much more. Those who question Jesus try to trap him by asking him whether a good Jew should pay the tax to the emperor or not. If he says they should, he will alienate many of his followers who are opposed to supporting the oppressive Roman Empire that occupies their land. If he says they should not, he risks trouble with Rome, which is something you would not want to do. Jesus escapes the trap by asking for a coin and pointing out that fact that the Emperor’s head is on the coin. He then says you can give that coin to the emperor as long as you give to God what belongs to God.

Here is where the story deepens. “Give to God what belongs to God.” It sounds innocent when you first hear it. But what belongs to God? Everything. What do we have that does not belong to God? Now some people point to this passage saying that Jesus is proposing equality between the state and God — akin to the separation of church and state. But nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus admits that the state has some claim on what we have, but he says that God has a claim on all we have. What do we have that does not belong to God? Our Life? The world around us? Our family? Our children, our grandchildren, our relationships, our health, our talents, our future? It is all God’s.

Now this truth is so fundamental that we often overlook it. But there are only two possibilities. If God does not exist, if God is not real, then everything we are and everything we possess have come about by chance. In that case we can do what we wish with our time and our money. But if God is real, if God does exist — and we come together every week professing that God does — then all that we have is not our own. All we have has only been entrusted to us to be used for God’s purposes. I believe that these are the only possibilities. I have looked through all the scriptures for a loophole on this. I cannot find one. If God exists, then God has a claim on everything.

Now of course God loves us and wants us to be happy. Therefore, God expects that a good deal of what has been entrusted to us will be used for our own benefit. God expects us to use our time, our money, and our resources to support our family, to have a comfortable life style, to use for recreation, to achieve security for the future. God does not begrudge us using our time, and our money for ourselves.

But it is the attitude of the thing. You see a Christian cannot really say, “It is my time and my money to use how I wish.” A Christian must say, “It is God’s time and God’s money, entrusted to me to be used for myself and for others. The word we use to describe this truth is “stewardship.” Everything we have has been entrusted to us as stewards to be used for God’s purposes. I am convinced that as people continue to appreciate stewardship, we will be able to grow and deepen as a faith community.

It would, however, be a mistake to equate that only what you give to charity or your church, is what belongs to God. Everything belongs to God. All that we have been given is to build God’s kingdom. You know in what that kingdom consists. We hear it in God’s word regularly — caring for the poor and vulnerable, protecting life, protecting the planet, promoting peace and justice, reaching out in reconciliation. This is God’s kingdom, and we are stewards of that kingdom. God expect us to use what we have been given and promote God’s will on earth.

This is why Matthew’s gospel is so challenging. Unlike the IRS, our master cannot be deceived. As Christian stewards we must be ready at any time for God to ask us: “How are you spending my time? What are you doing with my money? How are you living the life that I have entrusted to you?”

—taken from the writings of Father George Smiga, which appear on the internet 9



I AM NOT WORTHY — ACCEPTING INFINITE LOVE:

“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” This short response the congregation states before the distribution of Communion at every Mass was nothing more to me than words we mumble during Mass. After a challenge to focus more during the Mass, this particular phrase kept sticking out to me every time it was proclaimed during Mass.

The statement is a quote from Matthew’s Gospel [8:8] when a Roman centurion responds to Jesus’ “yes” to healing his servant — “The centurion said in reply: ‘Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.’” Like several of the other miracles that the gospels recount, this centurion admits that Jesus is indeed our Lord in human form. Where he differs from most other miracles found in the gospels though is that he admits to being unworthy of having the Lord enter into his home.

Over time, this phrase has stuck out to me for just how complex it is. By placing ourselves as the role of the centurion, we humble ourselves and ask the Lord to help us. While I’m sure that whole papers have been written over just this response alone, I would like to break it down what it means to me.

“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof…” This phrase is an admittance that we’re not deserving of the incredible love — the

Eucharist — that is about to be given to us. There’s nothing we’ve done or nothing that we can do to possibly deserve everything that the God has done for us — and what He continues to do. We’re the troubled children of God that are constantly wrestling with sin. We are not worthy of the heart of God for countless reasons, and there’s nothing we can do to make us of deserving of that heart.

You want to hear the good news? All of that does not matter. All of the hurt and pain and sin that makes us not worthy of His love does not matter because He still gives His love to us — not as a reward but as a gift. The heart of God is the perfect love that we so desperately need, and all we have to do is accept it into our lives.

“...only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” It sounds too good to be true because it’s too good for us. We’re an imperfect people, but God chooses to love us anyway. We are far from deserving of this gift, but through His redeeming heart, we are filled with His love. God offers his Eucharist to his imperfect people without condition. The only thing we have to do is accept it.

It honestly does not make logical sense as to why God does it — except that He loves us infinitely more than we could ever understand. We were created by God in order to be relentlessly loved by Him. The best way to receive that love is by the sacraments. In a world where everybody is searching aimlessly for a fulfilling love life, we can rest in the knowledge that through the Eucharist, God offers himself to us in a form that we could consume and have within us.

God is desperately needing us to accept His love. A love that is specifically crafted for you, fulfilling, and given to us for free; the only thing we have to do is accept Him. This unfair love that we cannot possibly understand is offered during Mass. The gift that we could never possibly deserve is given to us on the Altar during Mass. It’s just up to us if we accept this or not.

“I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

—taken from the writings of Dillon Duke, a college student.

THE BEAUTY OF LIFE:

Even in the darkest days, the moon and sun make their ancient, reliable journeys. Birds sing. Some green thing insists on growing in a ravaged land. Our own human life force refuses to give up.

—Trebbe Johnson

TO WHOM DO WE BELONG?

Something somewhat unique about my family is that we have three boys pretty close in age. This means that we have a lot of fun, a lot of energy, a lot of messes, and a lot of fighting each and every day. It’s a joy to watch them grow in community with each other, and in a lot of ways the littleness of their actions is a school of love for me as I tend to them.

One thing that really fascinates me is how particular they are about their possessions.

Growing up with four siblings of my own, I totally empathize and remember going through this phase. But being an adult spectator is something brand new to me. There have been many times when the boys receive the exact same gift from a family member, yet they can quickly identify the owner of each toy in a glance. The most recent objects of their affection are Minions placemats sent by my mom. Within seconds, each of the boys had their prized possession, and no sooner than they put their hands on the mats they could easily tell me which was theirs — despite the fact they were all quite literally identical. This means if I try to give someone the wrong item or mix things up, there is always a heated quarrel as they take it upon themselves to find the proper owner of each item.

I’m reminded of these seemingly silly moments of childhood when I ponder on the Scripture Readings for this 29th Week in Ordinary Time. We’ve heard time and again the story of giving what is due to Caesar to Caesar, and what is due to God to God [Matthew 22:15-21]. Most times it brings up a conversation or two on stewardship or causes us to ponder if we are giving enough to the church. But this week, my heart is pulled in another direction as I look at the readings together as a whole.

The prophet, Isaiah, reveals one of the most beautiful characteristics of God — His jealous love for us — “I am the Lord, there is no other” [Isaiah 45:4-6]. It’s not that He wants to be the best or the most powerful among many gods. The truth we hear is that there is no competition or gray area. The only God we serve is the one true God. Our God is unfathomably in love with us and wants no competition. I think of my boys and how to them, they don’t want just any toy; they want their own toy — the one that is rightfully theirs. They aren’t okay with a substitute. In a much bigger way, God says to us that we are His — He is claiming us and wants to hear His children claim Him back.

In the Catechism we read that “God calls the human person first” [CCC #2567]. Psalm 96 reminds us that we need to respond to this love of God for us — a God who is head over heels for humanity; we give Him praise and honor and glory. Paul’s letter to the Church at Thessalonica calls us to action — our call is to live as disciples like the Thessalonians, sharing the good news of our loving God with all those we meet [1 Thessalonians 1:1-6].

Finally, in Matthew’s Gospel, we see the Pharisees try to put Jesus in a corner. The whole situation ends with the rebuke and call to give what is due to its rightful owner [Matthew 22:15-21]. We owe to God the love He has poured out to us by the witness of our lives as disciples of Christ.

This reality stirs in me. I see how particular and intense my boys can get over small earthly possessions. The truth of God’s personal love for me as His child is far beyond anything I can imagine or compare. I sense the call to give to God what is His — glory, honor, blessing, a life lived in true discipleship as a child of God.

In our world today we so often give of ourselves until we are stretched thin. We give to the schools as volunteers, we give to the teams as coaches, we give to the organizations, and more. What if we shifted our focus a bit and made it a priority to give to God what is His prized possession? What if we gave God our hearts, on fire for Him and His word?

Let’s make this week a chance to do just that — to see how beloved we each are personally to God, so much so that He wants no competitors — and give God what is rightfully His — a heart deeply in love with Him, ready to share the good news with everyone we meet.

—taken from the writings of Angie Windnagle, which appear on the internet.

