

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Ohio ~

**Ever-living God,
you give life
and desire a future
for all your children.
Take hold of our nation, state, and community and
awaken in every heart
awe for the gift of life.**

**Send your Spirit
to strengthen us
with wisdom and fortitude
as we defend mothers
and children in Ohio
from laws
that disregard their health and safety.**

**Mary and Joseph trusted in you
and welcomed Jesus into our broken world.
Father, we ask their intercession
to protect the preborn
and their mothers,
and to guide all parents
in raising their children.**

**May they help us
build a civilization of love
by upholding the sacredness of life,
preserving parental rights,
and accompanying
pregnant women in need.
We ask this through
Christ, our Lord. 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

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS:

Wednesday, November 1st, is the Feast of All Saints. It is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. All Saints Day is a universal Christian Feast that honors and remembers all saints, known and unknown. In the Western Church [especially Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglicans] it is kept on November 1st. While the Eastern Orthodox churches began observing the Feast of All Saints back in the mid 4th century, the Feast did not become established in the Western Church until the Roman bishop Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to Christian usage as a church on May 13, 609 or 610. Pope Gregory III [died 741] moved its observance to November 1st, when on this date Gregory dedicated a chapel in the Basilica of St. Peter's to "All the Saints." The Feast of All Saints is a day to remember and thank God, but also to venerate and pray to the saints in heaven for the many ways that they intercede for us and help us. It is a day to glorify Jesus Christ, who by his holy life and death has made the saints holy through Baptism and faith. **Because of Halloween and poor attendance, we will not have a vigil Mass on Tuesday; rather, we will have our community celebration on Wednesday at 5:30 PM. In addition, we will also have Mass on Wednesday, November 1st at 9:30 AM [Lower School], and 2:00 PM [Middle School].** Please join us.

**FAITH EDUCATION — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29th and NOV. 5th:**

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 29 and November 5-12-19.** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**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].**

**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] Papczun, 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 Robert Harrison, Gilmour soccer coach, who is recovering from a heart attack. And medical procedures.
- For Elizabeth Benson, grandmother of Izzy DiPuccio ['25] who is hospitalized

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Antoni Szczepanik [anniversary]
- For Laura Pizmoht, mother of Francie ['28] and Jane ['31] Pizmoht,
- For Sister Margaret Biaggio, S.N.D.
- For Sister Joretta Livignano, S.N.D.
- For Sam Barrick.
- For Rosanna Buttazzoni

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.

THE BURDEN OF JUDGMENT:

Imagine having no need at all to judge anybody. Imagine having no desire to decide whether someone is a good or bad person. Imagine being completely free from the feeling that you have to make up your mind about the morality of someone's behavior. Imagine that you could say: "I am judging no one!"

Imagine — wouldn't that be true inner freedom? But we can only let go of the heavy burden of judging others when we don't mind carrying the light burden of being judged!

Can we free ourselves from the need to judge others? Yes, by claiming for ourselves the truth that we are the Beloved Daughters and Sons of God. As long as we continue to live as if we are what we do, what we have, and what other people think about us, we will remain filled with judgments, opinions, evaluations, and condemnations. We will remain addicted to the need to put people and things in their "right" place. To the degree that we embrace the truth that our identity is not rooted in our success, power, or popularity, we can let go of our need to judge. "Do not judge and you will not be judged; because the judgments you give are the judgments you will get" [Matthew 7:1].

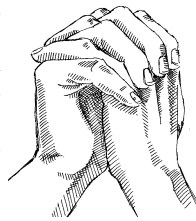
—Henri Nouwen

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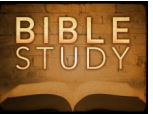
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 recovering from hip replacement surgery.
- For Nora Beach, wife of former 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, NOVEMBER 15th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, November 15th 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: Thanksgiving

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 29: 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 30:	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 31: Vigil of All Saints	NO MASS
Wednesday, November 1: All Saints Day	9:30 AM 2:00 PM 5:30 PM
Thursday, November 2: All Souls Day	NO MASS
Friday, November 3:	NO MASS
Saturday, November 4: 31 st Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, November 5: 31 st Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

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.³

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

Tuesday in this country is the celebration of *All Hallows Eve* — or the day before All Saints Day. Halloween has long been a dress-up day in which children run from house to house in their costumes begging treats, and if treats are not forthcoming, then some devilish tricks are promised by the beggars. Long are the preparations on the part of the “pretenders”, as well as on the part of those preparing to pretend they are frightened into surrendering candy and such.

But we who are in relationship with God are preparing to un-pretend — to take off our costumes. Like the beggars we are, we prepare to receive the “Holy Treat” [Eucharist] of an un-tricky God. But we need to bring our real selves to the altar of His most real sacrifice. We need to exalt Him and be lifted up ourselves by His “treatful” and generous love.

Jesus is asking us to take His personality and teachings into our own way of living our days. Like the “pretenders” of Halloween, we too can hurry from house to house, not to scare and demand, but offer peace and comfort to those whose fears might be keeping them holed up inside.

Are we pretenders, or are we real? The Liturgy of the word for this 30th Week in Ordinary time, asks us an important question — is it easier to “do what we are told” with strict exactness? Are we more comfortable when we are told how we are to love, than being told, well, just to love your neighbor?

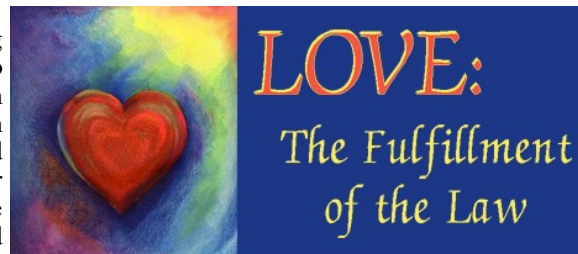
The Book of Exodus [22:21-27] has a huge number of laws concerning conduct within the Jewish community. These “laws” were meant to preserve a religious spirit and order between and among the people. They were all seen as initiated by God, and keeping them was the way to “love” or reverence God. These “laws” cover such areas as thievery, compensation for injuries, molesting or mistreating foreigners, orphans and widows, sexual behavior and violent actions done to others or animals. These are all very specific, and they seem to cover every eventuality. One would have no problem knowing exactly what it means to love God — but it doesn’t say anything about the heart. For some, maybe, these laws would make life easy.

But there’s more to it than that. In the reading from Exodus, the Lord tells the people not to oppress immigrants. Everyone comes from immigrant stock; everyone is originally from somewhere else. What is your heritage? Where did your ancestors come from? But no matter what our answer, we want to be treated decently and feel like we belong here and have a community. The Lord says the immigrants should be welcomed and treated decently, the same way we would want to be treated. They are our neighbors now, and after all we come from immigrant stock as well. He says in his compassion he will hear the cries of the abused and give them justice.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is asked a question about the law — which of all of them is the greatest [Matthew 22:34-40]? Jesus’ answer is direct and beyond confronting. As with the question about Caesar’s coin [see Matthew 22:15-21], the Pharisees are trying to pit Jesus against Roman law as well as their own Jewish traditions.

But what Jesus does is perfect and logical and simple. He says the first commandment is to love God above anything else. That’s the greatest commandment, and it would include following God’s commandments. If you love God you will not have false gods or idols, you will keep God’s day holy, and won’t take the Lord’s name in vain. In essence, all sin is putting something before God, giving anything more importance than God in our lives. So, if everyone just did this one commandment, put God before anything else, all the other commandments would be moot.

But then Jesus adds that the second commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. If you love your neighbors you will not harm them. If you love your neighbors you won’t kill them, or steal

**HELPING OTHERS:**

Rarely does a liturgical reading more apply to the “Sitz im Leben” we’re experiencing right here and now than the Book of Exodus — “Thus says the Lord: ‘You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt’ ” [Exodus 22:21-27].

The authors of our Hebrew Scriptures constantly single out three groups of people for special care — orphans, widows, and resident aliens. Each has no one “significant” to plead their cause. The first two have no father or husband; the last are “strangers in the land.” That’s why, as we hear in II Samuel 14, any of the three can knock on the palace door 24/7 and demand an audience with the king. Though frequently overlooked, one of the main reasons 11th century BCE Israelites created the monarchy was to make certain the helpless in the land had a protector — the king. Those with no clout could always depend on him to supply that clout.

The biblical prophets and lawmakers presumed the king’s obligations also were the people’s obligations. Reminding them of their past helplessness, God expects all Israelites to care for the needs of those who find themselves in a similar predicament. Not only were orphans, widows and resident aliens to receive special care, the poor were also to get singular treatment — there could be no interest on any loan they were forced to take out, nor could a lender keep a cloak overnight that had been taken as collateral. The goal of these laws was to maintain the dignity of those, who through no fault of their own, were in danger of losing that dignity.

The gospel Jesus, as a good Jew, certainly agrees with such generous behavior. He quotes the well-known Leviticus command: “Love your neighbor as yourself” [Leviticus 19:18]. Yet as a reformer of Judaism, he places such giving of oneself on the same level as loving God Himself. Writing specifically for a Jewish/Christian audience, Matthew makes certain his readers get the point. His Jesus alone states: “The whole law and the prophets — the biblical term for the Hebrew Scriptures — depend on these two commandments” [Matthew 22:31-40]. In other words, if you’re not actively loving God and your neighbor, forget about reading the Bible.

It always bothers me — a priest — to hear Paul write about being a “model” for others to imitate — as he does at the beginning of his first letter to the Church at Thessalonica. Growing up hearing the term “other Christ” applied solely to priests, it really bothered me when I saw some of those special people physically discipline some of the boys in my grade school class. I couldn’t picture the historical Jesus engaging in such violent behavior. At least I never saw a holy card depicting Jesus “beating the tar out” of some hapless child.

Only later — when I learned the title other Christ was originally given to all followers of Jesus — did I begin to understand that all of us should be careful of how we treat others — especially those over whom we have power. Someone’s always watching — for good or bad. And someone’s always affected — for good or bad. We have no idea how “far” our example reaches.

One of the highest compliments we can be paid is to hear that people are speaking well of us — not just to us, but to “others.” Paul pays that compliment to his Thessalonian community.

Like almost everyone, we often boast about our influential friends. Telling others that we know them seems to give us a higher stature in their eyes. Rarely do we boast about our friendship with the individuals in our midst who have no clout. Wouldn’t it be great if, at the pearly gates, the risen Jesus will one day greet us with: “Welcome! I’ve already heard all about the good things you’ve done for the helpless?”

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

HOW TRUE:

No one has ever become poor by giving.

—Anne Frank



global economic system. Corporate agribusinesses gobble up small family farms. Landlords raise rents as lenders increase mortgage rates, making it difficult for middle income and low wage earners to either stay in their rentals or buy homes and property. The power brokers of the Global North continue to self-enrich at the expense of the Global South.

Ironically, in 2023, economic statistics show that poverty has increased in the U.S., the land of plenty. Economic data also indicates that the recent global pandemic created many new billionaires among the western technology and pharmaceutical companies, making their CEOs and presidents our new global bio-techno-feudal lords.

We live in a changed world with many more changes on the horizon. Now is the time to become more economically, socially, and politically astute, as we try to navigate the new terrain upon which we have yet to gain our footing.

Reading and interpreting the Scripture Readings for this 30th Week in Ordinary Time from the perspective of the world in front of the text and in dialogue with contemporary experiences, we discover that both the author of the Book of Exodus and the Gospel of Matthew make clarion calls to right relationship. Despite all our advancement on so many levels throughout three millennia, human beings have yet to be able to live peacefully and justly with one another.

In the Exodus reading, focus is on those who are “other,” — harshly translated as “aliens” — as if they were not part of humanity. In this narrative, the Israelites are reminded not to oppress the “other” among them because as Israelites, they were once a people living in a land not their own, migrants seeking asylum from severe famines and massive starvation [Exodus 22:21-27].

For many countries today, immigration and fair and just treatment of immigrants continue to be a major challenge — especially in the United States where immigration reform has yet to happen as people of different ethnicities, cultures and races seek asylum from horrific political and social oppression. How do we non-Native American U.S. citizens whose ancestors were “immigrants others” themselves — treat today’s immigrants? Sadly, some of us who are descendants of immigrants have forgotten who we are, and some of us continue our history of colonization, disenfranchisement and oppression.

It’s time for history to stop repeating itself by “othering.” It’s time to work for political, social, economic and environmental justice ever more arduously to abolish sexism, racism, ableism, colorism, ethnocentrism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, sexual orientation discrimination and the many more forms of discrimination that keep the “other” disenfranchised and on the margins.

The Holy One is part of the margins, lives on the margins, is embodied in the margins, is actively listening to and working for the margins with active divine compassion. The litmus test for people of any faith and spirituality today is the measure of how deep their active compassion is for the “other” among them which also includes non-human life, the new migrants of climate change. Active compassion entails changing oppressive structures, systems and ways of thinking.

Matthew’s Gospel complements what the author of Exodus states. Increasingly, nations’ governments are moving toward authoritarianism even among democracies. Fundamentalism and literalism are on the rise as people search for absolutes, law and order and certainty among sacred texts, constitutions and religious systems of thought. In some countries, political, social and economic laws are now shaped by culturally conditioned religious laws and culturally conditioned religious attitudes, making the separation between church and state an experience of the past. The United States is no exception.

Yet, the Gospel is clear. Law is not the means to the deep transformation needed in our world today; relationships create the pathways. For believers, the deeper the relationship one has with the Divine, the greater the flow of positive energy into self, an energy felt as love, that enlarges hearts and minds, compelling all to do the hard work of all-embracing justice without which no right relationship or transformation is possible [Matthew 22:34-40].

—taken from the writings of Sister Carol Dempsey, O.P., which appears on the internet



from them or try to cheat them or lie to them. If you love your parents you will honor them and treat them well. . And who are our neighbors? Everyone else. If you treat others fairly and decently — the way you yourself would want to be treated by others — you will live in harmony, as God intended.

Jesus says the whole law depends on these two commandments. Put God first, and treat all others fairly and decently. How great would our world be if people actually did this? No crime, no discrimination, no greed. If people would love God and each other, that’s all we need.

Each of us has been involved in “mind games”. There was a time when I was studying at St. Norbert College near Green Bay, Wisconsin. I was taking a Philosophy course and could not figure out such concepts as essence, existence, and all those kind of things. Well in an oral exam, wanting to show the professor that I had some interest in the subject, I asked him who was the better philosopher, Augustine or Aquinas? I had heard those names floating around, but I thought I would trick him into talking more and asking me less. But the professor turned the question around — he asked me my opinion — now I have to compare and contrast. He, like Jesus did, left me silenced.

In Luke’s account of this question and answer session, the Pharisees respond by asking Jesus: “And who is my neighbor?” [see Luke 10]. Matthew leaves it more to us not only about who our neighbor is, but what constitutes loving that person. We could play around a bit and make sure that our neighbors are not unlovable — that they are just like us, and easy to love. We could say that our neighbors have to live within one hundred yards of our front steps. We could figure out how often in one day or week do we have to do such things of love so as to fulfill Jesus’ law. When Jesus asks us to “fill in the blanks”, he is taking us out of our legalistic comfort zone. This is exactly what Jesus is doing by making his response both indefinite in one sense, but quite exact in a deeper, more religious sense.

We love God, less by emotion, and more by counting the ways God loves us and receiving that love gracefully. This is the first and greatest, “invitation”. “Command” is a word Jesus used, because of the Jewish sense of “law”. Jesus is the Divine Invitation to experience what real human life is all about. The Second Invitation is good for us too — it is what real life is all about. When we respond to the First Invitation, then living the Second Invitation is both holy and healthy.

Loving God and loving our neighbor are both one and the same act of faith. That is exactly what Jesus was inviting the Pharisees to make. It is His invitation to us as well.

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

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR:

G.K. Chesterton once said: “The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; they are probably the same people.”

St. Therese shows us the way. As a young sister in a Carmelite monastery, one of the older sisters irritated her very much. She decided that whenever she was tempted to run away or speak unpleasantly, she would give the sister her best smile. This continued for weeks. One day the older nun asked her: “Sister Therese, will you please tell me what attracts you so much to me? You give me such a charming smile whenever we meet.”

Maybe you have someone in your life like that unpleasant sister. And maybe you are asking: how was Therese able to love that person? She gives the answer: “Ah! It was Jesus hidden in the depth of her soul who attracted me, Jesus who makes the bitterest things sweet!”

The truth is, in order to love one’s neighbor, we need God. Even two people deeply in love, at some point, find that they need a Higher Power in order to persevere. If you are living with a narcissist, it may require some counseling, but ultimately you need God.

That’s why Jesus said the greatest and the first commandment is: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” And “The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Follow those commandments and you will help heal our society. Follow those two commandments and like Therese of Lisieux, you will become a saint.

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom., which appear on the internet. 5

IT'S NOT ABOUT RULES:

By the time of Jesus, Jewish Law had greatly expanded from the original ten commandments. One writer says that there were 613 actual laws as well as 365 prohibitions — one for every day in the year — and 268 prescriptions — one for every bone in the body. Obviously not all these rules and regulations were of equal weight and the rabbis constantly disputed which of them were more important than the others. So we can see where the question of the Pharisees in Matthew's Gospel comes from [Matthew 22:34-40]. Their desire to know which was the most important law was not just a matter of curiosity, but a point of contention among the lawyers and religious figures of the day — something which was of real importance to them.

Today we might find such a question a bit abstract and not very relevant, but you have to understand that the ancient world was a very different place, and their concerns were quite other than ours. They lived in a completely religious world which was dominated by the Temple and the various factions gathered around it. What to us seem obscure matters of religion were of vital importance to them.

However, the purpose of the question in Matthew's Gospel is not to find the answer, but, as we are told, to disconcert Jesus. They want to wrong-foot him — to try to find something which they can use against him. This behavior has been going on for quite some time — the Pharisees have been trying hard to entrap Jesus in order to use it against him.

Jesus gives an answer to their question about the law — there are two great and interrelated commandments — Love God and love your neighbor. The Pharisees perhaps seeing that they cannot get the better of him simply decide to back off. What is interesting here is that Jesus does not use the same categories as the Pharisees in their disputations about which is the greatest commandment. They ask which one commandment is the greatest, and Jesus gives them not one commandment but two. He does not place the first above the second but says that the second is like the first.

What also is interesting is what Jesus says after he answers the question: “the whole Law and the Prophets” — in other words the whole body of Jewish teaching — are enmeshed in these two commandments. What Jesus is really saying here is that the Jewish religion is based not on rules and regulations, as the Pharisees would have the people believe, but on love.

This is something that they do not expect. While the Pharisees certainly loved their spouses and their families, that love was over and above their obeying the rules and regulations of Jewish Law. In a word, their religion is mechanical. According to their way of thinking if you observe this set of rituals or that set of behaviors then you will be righteous in the eyes of God.

What Jesus proposes is something that they have completely overlooked. For all their study of the scriptures, the Pharisees have failed to notice the great pillar on which their religion is based — love. They have not understood God's true nature. They do not realize that the sole motivating force of God is love. They do not realize that what God wants from us is for us to simply love him as well as our fellow human beings.

The Pharisees did not understand this simple equation. We realize that their failure to appreciate this important point is very reason why Jesus came into our world — he came to make sure that we perfectly understand just what God is like and what we need to do in order to live with him forever. The message of Jesus, to use the beautiful phrase is found in the first letter of St John: “God is love and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them” [1 John 4:8].

The task then of anyone who wants to be one with God is to learn to become a good lover in the very broadest sense of that term. What we ought to be striving for is to deepen our care and concern for, and our appreciation of, all those around us — and to be constantly reaching out to God in our prayer as well



attend to those who are weak or needy, just as it is marginalized in a church that is judgmental. We must create a society that is merciful and a church that is merciful. Mercy, alone, enables the survival of the weakest.

9. **Remember that mercy calls us to do works both spiritual and physical.** Our Christian faith challenges us to perform mercy in a double way, corporeally and spiritually. The classic corporal works of mercy are: Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, cloth the naked, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. The classic spiritual works of mercy are: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the afflicted, admonish the sinner, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead. God has given us different gifts and all of us are better at some of these than at others, but mercy is manifest in all of them.
10. **Remember that our lives are a dialogue between God's mercy and our weaknesses.** The only thing at which we are adequate is being inadequate. We are forever falling short at something, no matter the strength of our sincerity, good intention, and willpower. Only mercy — receiving it and giving it — can lead us out of the choppy waters of our own anxieties, worry, and joylessness. Only in knowing mercy do we know gratitude.

In the year 2016, Pope Francis asked us all to live a year of mercy — to contemplate the mystery of mercy “as a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.” Mercy, he believes, is the secret to putting a credible face to God, to putting a credible face to our churches, and to walking with steadiness inside our own lives.

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.

**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.**

**THE STRUGGLE FOR TRANSFORMATION:**

When we peruse the Bible — especially the Hebrew Scriptures — we encounter narratives and poems describing the many hardships, struggles, and injustices of biblical times. Nations and kingdoms rival one another. Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires rise and fall. Monarchs, princes, wealthy landlords and dishonest merchants enforce corrupt laws to enrich themselves — leaving many people, especially small farmers, disenfranchised. Wars pollute the land, destroying human and non-human life as women and children become widowed and fatherless, respectively. Political and social oppression leads to forced migration, exile and landlessness.

But Biblical times are not so different from contemporary times. Countries are at war with one another as U.S. leaders work to maintain the nation's empire status. China, Russia and North Korea form new alliances in their quest for power. The Israeli and Palestinian conflict rages on. Oligarchs control the

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF MERCY:

Among the Ten Commandments, one begins with the word “remember” — Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.” It reminds us to recall something we already know. There are commandments of mercy written into our very DNA. We already know them, but we need to remember them more explicitly. What are they?

1. **Remember that mercy lies deepest in God’s heart.** Few things so much approximate the essence of God as does mercy. Mercy is God’s essence. Scripture uses words such as loving-kindness and compassion to try to define what constitutes God’s mercy, but the central biblical concept, captured in the Hebrew concept of “hesed”, connotes a relationship that loves, embraces, and forgives even when, and especially when, we cannot measure up or deserve what’s given us
2. **Remember that mercy is the essence of all true religion.** Inside religion and spirituality, within all faiths, three things try to lay claim to what’s central — proper religious practice, outreach to the poor, and compassion. Ultimately they are not in opposition, but complementary pieces of one religious whole. But for religious practice and outreach to the poor to be an extension of God’s love and not of human ego, they need to be predicated upon compassion, mercy. Deepest inside of every religion is the invitation: Be compassionate, merciful, as God is compassionate.
3. **Remember that we all stand forever in need of mercy.** There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who converts than over ninety-nine righteous persons. Does God love sinners more than the righteous? There are no righteous persons. It’s rather that we feel God’s love more when we admit that we’re sinners. None of us ever measure up. But, as St. Paul so consolingly teaches, the whole point is that we don’t have to measure up. That’s what mercy means. It’s undeserved, by definition.
4. **Remember that, having received mercy, we must show mercy to others.** We are forever falling short at something — no matter the strength of our sincerity, good intention, and will-power. We only receive and appropriate God’s mercy and the mercy of others when we extend that same mercy to others. Mercy has to flow through us. If we don’t extend it to others, we become self-indulgent and too harsh on others.
5. **Remember that only the practice of mercy sets us free.** Receiving and giving mercy is the only thing that frees from our congenital propensity to self-seek, self-justify, and judge others. Nothing frees us more from the tyranny of ego than does the practice of mercy.
6. **Remember that mercy is not opposed to justice, but is its fulfillment.** Mercy, as Walter Kasper so aptly puts it, is not “a kind of fabric softener that undermines the dogmas and commandments and abrogates the central and fundamental meaning of truth”. That’s the accusation the Pharisees made against Jesus. Mercy is where justice is meant to terminate.
7. **Remember that only the practice of mercy will make God’s Kingdom come.** Jesus promised us that someday the meek will inherit the earth, the poor will eat plentiful rich food, and all tears will be wiped away. That can only happen when mercy replaces self-interest.
8. **Remember that mercy needs too to be practiced collectively.** It is not enough for us to be merciful in our own lives. Mercy is marginalized in a society that doesn’t sufficiently



as in our good works. What we need therefore is profound passion in our lives — a deep and warm and powerful love for our God and our fellow human beings.

This word passion is very interesting because its roots are in the word suffering. When, for example, we speak of Christ’s Passion, we mean his suffering on the Cross. But we recognize that the motivation for his suffering is his great love for us and his concern that we should have the way to heaven opened up for us.

There is no room for a cold Christian; there is no space in the Church for a stony-hearted Christian. These concepts are complete contradictions. What we are long for is passionate, warm, and loving Christians — members of the Church who care deeply about the welfare of those around them. We want Christians whose hearts are moved by the sufferings that they see and who want to do whatever they can to help to build a better world.

When we describe someone as passionate, we mean that they are excited and ardent about whatever it is that gets them going. In society at large we can see many passionate people in sport, in the arts, in politics and many other areas of life. It is hard for anyone to achieve a measure of success in a particular sphere without being passionate about what they do.

However, what we are talking about here is Christianity. And Christianity goes far beyond mundane things such as sport or politics. What we are talking about is the most important thing that exists — namely God himself. We are speaking about the greatest kind of love that there is — the love of God and flowing from this the love of our neighbor.

If we can harness a deep passion for the things of heaven in our lives, then there is nothing we cannot do; no place we cannot go; no door that can ever be closed to us, least of all the door of heaven.

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

SEDUCED BY THE GOOD:

It is so easy to be seduced — even by the good. But once it happens, we stand to lose the very gain the finding of the good should have given us. For example, we find that a prayer form that satisfies — even uplifts our spirits — often brings us to a new level of awareness and enlightenment. Everything is going well until the prayer form itself becomes our God.

- If I can’t pray every day in this pew at this time, the day is disturbed.
- If I can’t sing this hymn on this feast in this place, the feast has failed me.
- If someone changes the translation of the “Our Father,” I can’t concentrate on it.
- If someone uses universal language for God rather than male pronouns, I get angry.
- If there are no candles, no incense, no flowers and bright clothes and robes, it can’t possibly be real prayer.

Though those things are all good — all important at some time in some circumstances — none of them is a worthy substitute for God. In fact, the very fact of needing to have them — at whatever cost to anyone else — may be the real sign of how little we’ve learned about God while doing them.

Just as we change as we go through life, so must our prayer forms change in order to nourish the new growth the last phase of our spiritual journey planted in us.

When we stop in the course of the spiritual journey, declaring that we have already achieved the end of our search — that we have found the God for whom we seek — it is doubtful that we have found anything more than our own comfort, our own will, the god we have made for ourselves out of our own image. And that is a puny God indeed.

Once we begin a real spiritual journey we will be led from prayer point to prayer point, deeper and deeper into the Mystery that is God. We will be expected to let go so that God can lead us now. And that path has no end.

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

THE GREATEST THREE COMMANDMENTS:

Jesus pulls a fast one in Matthew's Gospel for this 30th Week in Ordinary Time. A lawyer comes up to him with a simple question: choose from all the commandments one that is the greatest. Jesus answers the lawyer, but instead of choosing one commandment he chooses two. And if we look carefully at his response we can find in one of the commandments a third commandment. Instead of coming up with one commandment that is the greatest, Jesus offers three — first, we are to love God with all of our strength; second, we are to love our neighbor. But we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves; so the third commandment is that we love ourselves. If you were to ask Jesus, then, what is the great commandment, he would offer this triple commandment of love — love of God, love of self, love of neighbor. He would suggest that this is God's greatest revelation of how we should act. It is that upon which everything else hangs — both the law and all the prophets. So, since this is so important and central a revelation, we should spend a little time reflecting upon it. We can do so by asking ourselves why does Jesus choose three commandments, and what are their relationships to each other?

We can start with the command which is most obvious — the commandment to love our neighbor. Now neighbor here is not the person who lives next door. Neighbor is anyone we meet, anyone at all. Our neighbor is everyone in the world. The commandment is we are to love our neighbor. The necessity of this commandment is clear, and its impact cannot be underestimated. Imagine what a different world we could live in, if we could follow this one commandment — if people could relate to one another out of love instead of out of jealousy, greed, and resentment. To follow this commandment would truly change our world. Yet it is a difficult commandment to follow. Why is it that so often that we are unable to love our neighbor?

We move now to the second commandment — love of self. We are so often unable to love our neighbor because we do not have a genuine love of self. Only those who genuinely love themselves are able to love others. Those who consider themselves unworthy and unlovable have no love to give. Those whose dominant attitude is one of failure or anger can only strike out to others in jealousy, hatred, or perhaps even violence. In order to genuinely follow the first commandment, we must follow the second. We must love ourselves so that we are able to extend love to others. But then how do we establish an adequate love of self? Here the believer knows where to turn — to the third commandment: we are to love God with all our strength.

It is when we understand God's love for us and can respond to God in love that we discover our worth and our value. God's love is unconditional and transformative. When we embrace God's love for us despite all of our mistakes and failings then we understand our true worth and value. Then we can love ourselves, and through that love others.

The great commandment according to Jesus is the triple commandment of love — to embrace God's love for us, so that we can come to an adequate love of self, so that we can extend that love to others. This commandment of Jesus is not only striking poetry. It is a very practical truth that we can apply to our own lives. When we face other people who are difficult to love — people who irritate us, people who have hurt us, people whose attitude and stance is contrary to what we understand or can appreciate — we sometimes try to love them by finding good in them. But often, it is our blindness to their goodness that is the problem in the first place. Therefore, a more successful way to love those that are difficult to love is by finding goodness in ourselves, by remembering that we are chosen sons and daughters of God. By remembering how we have been blessed, how often we have been forgiven for our failings, how frequently we have been lost and God has found us and saved us, how God's love for us is unconditional, we can gain a sense of how we are worthy and lovable in God's eyes. It is by claiming God's love for us that we can find the freedom to spread love to others, even when they are difficult to



Her name was Dorothy Day. She lived most of the last century — 1893-1980 — and is sometimes called the saint of the third millennium. Dorothy did not begin her adult life as a holy person. She embraced the loose lifestyle of the Roaring Twenties, and what was then the wild scene in Greenwich Village in New York City. She was no Mother Theresa. In fact, she was the antithesis of Mother Theresa.

But then Dorothy found God. Actually, He was always there. She just stopped shutting him out of her life. She became a fervent Catholic — a dedicated Christian. She led a reform within the establish Church of America to reach out to the poor, the needy, and the desperate. She was a crusader for social justice, a pacifist, and even an agitator — at least in those areas where she saw the local and national government existing only for itself.

There is talk Dorothy Day should be canonized, made a saint. She would have been completely repulsed by that thought. In fact, even during her life when people suggested that she would be made a saint by the church, she would say that she didn't want to be dismissed so easily. After all, people tend to view saints as doing that which is beyond normal human life. She was really quite normal. She wanted normal people to join her in finding Christ in others. Her point was that there was nothing extraordinary in doing what she did. All she did was love God and love neighbor, and live the way every Christian should live. Still, she probably won't get her way. I am sure that Pope Francis would love to tell her story to the whole world.

Just before the consecration in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer we pray: "Having loved His Own who were in the World, Jesus Loved them to the very end." He gave us his Body and Blood. He gave us His life. And He said, "Follow me. Love as I love."

Which commandment is the greatest? "Don't search scripture for a particular commandment," Jesus responds. Instead combine the Shema Israel, "Love the Lord with your whole mind, your whole heart and your whole soul," with the law of love in Leviticus, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is a lifestyle, not a commandment. May we love love God so deeply that we will have no choice but to bring God's love to those around us. —taken from the writings of Monsignor Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Romans 8:12-17, Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday:	Romans 8:18-25, Luke 13:18-21
Wednesday:	Revelation 7:2-14, 1 John 3:1-13, Matthew 5:1-12
Thursday:	Wisdom 3:1-9, Romans 5:5-11, John 6:37-40
Friday:	Romans 9:1-5, Luke 14:1-6
Saturday:	Romans 11:1-29, Luke 14:1-11

31st Week in Ordinary Time: Malachi 1:14-2:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-13, Matthew 23:1-12

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].



IT'S THE LAW:

Everybody wants simple easy answers to their questions. Some answers can be found using Google — like what day of the week you were born. It is absolutely amazing how much information is available using any device connected to the internet. However, some answers cannot be found — like: “How do I keep a straight face when my wife asks me how those jeans look on her?” Answers to the main questions of life cannot be Googled — questions like: “Why do I exist?” “Why is their evil in the world?” Or even: “How do I raise this particularly difficult child?” There are no simple answers.

The Pharisees who questioned Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel reading were trying to get him to give a simple answer to the question that the scholars of Hebrew law debated: “What is the greatest of the commandments?” There were 613 of them in Hebrew Scripture. Which is the most important?

Jesus responded to the lawyer’s question with two quotations from the Torah. The first quotation came from the Sacred Jewish Prayer called the “Shema Israel”. This was a prayer is recited by pious Jews every morning and evening — “Hear this, O Israel, Shema Israel, God is One. You shall love your God with your whole heart, your whole soul and your whole mind” [Deuteronomy 6:5]. The second quotation is taken from the Law as stated in the Book of Leviticus — “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Leviticus 19:18]. We can’t just love God part time; we have to love Him with everything we have. We can’t just be good to our neighbor sometimes; we have to be good to others always.

This was not the easy answer the lawyer was seeking. Jesus’ answer was not a particular law — not even two particular laws. The answer of Jesus demanded a new lifestyle — a way of living that draws us so close to God that we become His presence for others.

In his encyclical on love, *Deus Caritas Est* [God is Love], Pope Benedict noted the three words for love used by the ancient Greeks: eros, philia, and agape. Eros refers to physical love without any spiritual qualities. Philia refers to the love of friendship. This is the love people have for each other. Agape refers to love that is the heart of the relationship with God. Agape is the love that wants others to join us in a relationship with God. Christian love should be shared with everyone, regardless of our feelings. It is the kind of love which Jesus commanded that we show even to those who continue to hurt us: “Love your enemies” the Lord commanded. Loving our neighbors as ourselves means that just as we want to be united to God, we want others to be united to God. When this becomes the focus of our relationships, then we are loving others as Christ taught us to love.

The poet Maya Angelou was once asked what her lifetime goals were. She answered that she wanted to become a Christian. Maya Angelou was a Christian. Her point was that Christianity is an ongoing process of becoming. Everyday we take steps to becoming a Christian.

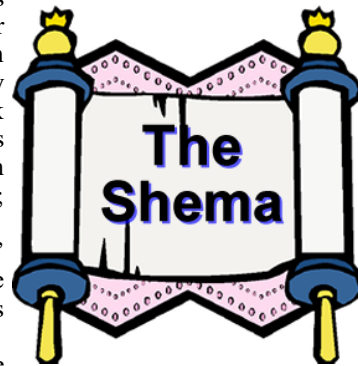
And everyday God uses people to find Him.

There is a story about a college girl who was in great distress because she had lost a sense of God in her life. Her grandmother was very much the spiritual leader of the family, so the girl visited her and complained: “Why doesn’t God let me feel His presence? If only I could feel Him and know that He has touched me.”

Her grandmother said: “Pray to God, right now. Close your eyes and pray to him. Ask Him to put out his hand and touch you. But no matter what happens, keep your eyes closed.” The girl closed her eyes and prayed fervently. Then she felt a hand on her hand. “He touched me. He touched me,” she cried out, her eyes still closed. Then she said: “Wait, this hand feels like your hand.”

“Of course it is my hand,” her grandmother said, “That’s how God works.” He takes the hand that is nearest and uses that.”

There was a saintly American woman whom God used to touch others in the normal, everyday ways.



love.

There is not enough love in our world. All of us can come up with excuses why other people do not deserve our love. It is then that we must remember that we do not deserve God’s love and yet God loves us nevertheless. When we can claim that unconditional love that God has for us, we will be free to love others. Then, and only then, will we know the mystery of living Jesus’ greatest commandment.

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

LEADING THE WAY:

Just a few months after establishing a Christian community in Thessalonica, Paul wrote them a warm affectionate letter expressing gratitude to God for their courageous efforts to live the Christian faith. The apostle praises those new Christians for their hospitality — and especially for imitating him and the Lord — thus becoming a model for other believers in their region and beyond. These mostly Gentile converts “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” and now await the return of the risen Christ who “delivers us from the coming wrath.”

In his clearly hyperbolic praise of the Thessalonians, Paul reveals the essential dynamics of the missionary thrust of the Gospel. Christian faith is rooted in a personal commitment to Jesus Christ — the crucified and risen Lord — who lived a life of self-sacrificing love for the cause of God and humanity. Transformed and energized by his own encounter with the risen Christ, Paul carried out his mission to the Gentiles by striving to imitate Christ’s love of God and neighbor. His good example gave credibility to his preaching, which touched the minds and hearts of the Thessalonians, who themselves became disciples — imitators of Paul and models for other converts. Throughout the centuries, Christian faith has been passed on by believers who try to imitate Christ and find encouragement in the good example of other Christian believers.

We can imagine Christians expressing their gratitude for the good example of others. A cradle Catholic: “I am grateful to my parents, who practiced Christian charity on a daily basis, passing on to me a passion for serving others.” A former agnostic: “My business colleague so impressed me over the years with her high moral standards and consistent care for others that I decided to investigate her religious tradition and eventually joined the Catholic Church, which has given me a faith perspective that satisfies my rational mind and challenges my selfish instincts. I expressed my gratitude to her by asking her to be my RCIA sponsor.” Parents: “We were both inactive Catholics until our collegiate daughter got very involved with her University Parish and shared with us her newfound sense of meaning and purpose. We were so impressed with her personal growth that we started going to Mass again ourselves and have found great comfort and strength in returning to our Catholic faith. We remain grateful to our daughter for giving us such a great gift.”

Who has been a good example to you on your spiritual journey and how can you express my gratitude?

—taken from the writings of Father James Bacik 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.



CELEBRATING DEATH — THE TRADITION OF DIA DE LOST MUERTOS:

In the months before and after my tenth birthday, I experienced the death of three family members all pretty close together. My great-uncle, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather all died with a span of eight months, and I remember being incredibly unsettled by it. I found it difficult to sleep, or if I did sleep, I would have awful nightmares. I had crossed that threshold of being a normal child free of any concern about my mortality to suddenly being incredibly sensitive to the reality that we were all going to die.

That year for “Día de los Muertos”, my family and I joined a celebration with some friends with whom we served at our parish. I clearly recall working together with my dad and sister to make sugar skulls for my Tío Tomás, my Papá Toño, and my abuelito Isauro. We made little drawings of a barber shop, a baseball field, and construction tools to recall their favorite pastimes, and placed them on the Altar de Muertos. Everyone went around and told stories about the lives of their loved ones with friends who had never even met them. We prayed, sang songs, ate, and celebrated both life and death — and it brought a lot of peace to my little ten-year-old heart.

On November 1st and 2nd, people throughout Mexico — as well as some other Latin American countries — celebrate “Día de los Muertos” — or Day of the Dead. More than just a “Mexican Halloween,” this holiday traces back to pre-Hispanic times, in which the ancient peoples — like the Mayan, Olmec, Mexicas — would regularly honor the lives of their deceased by setting aside times of celebration and ritual — usually coinciding with the start of the harvest season. During the period of colonization of Mexico, Christian missionaries saw this as a connection to the celebrations of All Saints and All Souls, and used these long-held traditions as opportunities to evangelize.

Today, “Día de los Muertos” is celebrated most widely in southern and central Mexico, but its major traditions continue to be held throughout the country, and have even been adopted by other Latin American nations. The two-day festivals often include processions that begin and end in the local churches, block parties, candlelit vigils, live music, “bailes folklóricos” [traditional dance], and an overall gathering of community. The focus of the celebration, however, is around the “Altar de Muertos” — Altar for the Dead. While this may seem slightly morbid, this altar is a tangible way to remember the dead. Families, neighbors, or sometimes an entire town or village comes together to create the altar, filling it with symbols which serve as a bridge between life and death. Here are some of the common elements of an altar and their meanings:

- **“Papel picado”** [decorative paper banners]: their bright colors indicate celebration, but they’re also seen a representation of the connection between this world and the next.
- **“Calaveras”** [skulls]: usually made of sugar or chocolate, each one is decorated to distinctly represent each person who has died in this family or friend group, and often the names of the deceased are written on the skulls themselves. Pictures/personal items of the deceased are placed around their corresponding skulls. These again remind us to think fondly of our loved ones who have gone before us.
- **“Cruces”** [crosses]: usually found at the top of the altar, the cross can be made of salt — to represent the need for purification — or of ashes — to remind us that we are dust and to dust we shall return.
- **“Veladoras”** [candles]: the light of each candle is to light the way for the any lost souls, and are often placed all around and throughout the altar; sometimes they are dedicated to different Saints who could be an intercessor for the dead.



- **“Flores de cempasúchil”** [cempasúchil flowers]: their bright golden color is another symbol of celebration, and their aroma is said to guide any lost souls.
- **“Pan de muerto”** [bread for the dead]: added by the Catholic Spaniards, it is a symbol for the Eucharist — typically, it is dome-shaped with a cross-shaped sugar decoration on top.

Unlike the more terror-inducing traditions that happen on and around Halloween in the United States, “Día de los Muertos” attempts to instead demonstrate the joy that can be found when death isn’t dreaded, but embraced. Rather than making skulls and skeletons dark and frightening, they are made to be bright and sometimes even silly. As Catholics, we are invited to live with a similar perspective thanks to Christ’s victory over death, through which “Christian death has a positive meaning” [CCC, #1010]. Saint Paul tells us joyfully: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” [Philippians 1:21].

Additionally, the celebration of “Día de los Muertos” is a hopeful reminder that death doesn’t end the relationship we have with our loved ones. In the celebration of the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls, the Church boldly proclaims that death doesn’t interrupt our union with those who now sleep in Christ! Instead, “this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods” [Lumen Gentium, #49] and we pray for those that have gone before us. When we pray for the dead, celebrating their life and death, we are strengthening our communion with them. This communion is an anticipation of the perfect unity we will have when are all face to face with Father for eternity.

So this year for “Día de los Muertos”, don’t forget to be part of the celebration! Make an “Altar de Muertos” for your loved ones, or join a community celebration at your parish, in your neighborhood or city, or start your own with family and friends. Above all, pray — pray for the souls in need of prayer, entrusting them to the mercy of God; and have hope for the life awaiting us in Heaven.

—taken from the writings of Stephanie Espinoza, a college student.

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].**



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 21]-----[Mass, Online, Mail-i]----- \$ 173.18

Offerings-----[Sunday, October 22]----- \$ 276.00