

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Fulfillment ~

God grant me
the serenity
to accept
the things I cannot change,
courage
to change the things
I can
and wisdom
to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment
at a time;
accepting hardship
as a pathway
to peace.
Taking,
as Jesus did,
this sinful world
as it is —
not as I would have it.
Trusting
that You will make
all things right
if I surrender
to Your will;
so that I may be
reasonably happy
in this life
and supremely happy
with You forever
in the next.
Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

Our Lady Chapel



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

WELCOME TO OUR MEMORIAL MASS:

A special welcome goes out to all our friends and families who have joined us for our annual Memorial Mass this morning. This is always a very special time. This month of November is set aside for us to remember the gift of relationship that we share with people everyone — living and deceased. As we are reminded in the *Catholic Catechism*, “We must accompany each other at our journey’s end and surrender each other into God’s hands” [CC, #1683]. **A list of all our deceased loved ones who have been listed in our chapel bulletin throughout this year is included for your continued prayer.** At Mass this morning, the memorial basket will be brought up as a sign of our remembrance. **Thank you for joining us on this special day.**

**MAKE YOUR FAMILY’S ADVENT WREATH:**

Again this year, we are going to be making family Advent Wreaths on **Sunday, December 3rd at 11:30 AM** in the **Commons**. **Cost of the Wreath is \$25** — this includes trimmings, candles, and everything else you will need. Please know that cost is not a reason to not making an Advent Wreath; please contact **Father John**. **Sign up sheet is located on the easel in the Narthex of the Chapel, or you can call the chapel office [440-473-3560]. Please sign up early because we have to purchase the materials for the wreaths.** If you have any questions, please contact the chapel office.

**OLC “ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:**

For many years, Our Lady Chapel community has worked with St. Adalbert Parish in adopting families to help them celebrate the Christmas Season. In recent years, we have had many requests from our families to begin this project earlier in order to take advantage of pre-Christmas sales, etc. So again this year, we have begun to collect the names of families from St. Adalbert at the present time. **The need is greater than ever.** St. Adalbert identifies families — most often single parent, below poverty level families; we are given the grade levels of the children & other family information, so that you can purchase gifts appropriate to each member. In addition, if possible, we ask that you also provide a Christmas meal for the family [non-perishable items in a food basket, and/or Gift Cards for Giant Eagle, Aldi’s or Family Dollar.] Those from our chapel family who participated in this project last year spoke very highly of the benefit of this project to their own families. This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. Adopt-a-family gifts should be **WRAPPED**. **Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or szaniszlop@gilmour.org] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions.**

**THE GIVING TREE:**

Our Lady of Fatima Community Center, the West Side Catholic Center and several Senior Health Care Agencies are in great need of items for their clients. Fatima Center needs hats, gloves, socks, underwear, sweaters, sweat shirts, hoodies, infant needs, books, toys and games for children, ages Newborn to 16 years. Senior Health Care facilities need fleece throws, footie socks, as well as hats & gloves. **We have posted a list of needed items next to our giving tree. Select what you would like to give and bring it UNWRAPPED and put it under the tree with a label showing the item needed.** These items would then be gathered and delivered to the various agencies. **Our goal would be to have all items assembled by December 17th, for pickup by the various agencies. Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or szaniszlop@gilmour.org] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions.**

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Madelene Mazzurco, grandmother of Isabella Mazzurco [*21]
- For Sister Mary Schrader, C.S.J.
- For David Fedor, father of Nick [*99], Nate [*05] and Gabriel [*14] Fedor.
- For Joan Ambrose, grandmother of Ian Baird [*23]
- For Annie Burney, mother-in-law of Maintenance Associate, Oanh [Juan] Pickens
- For Cheryl Zenobi.
- For Rosie Torrence
- For Jack Sawyer, Mentor HS Student
- For Caroline Kirchner, grandmother of Daniel Kirchner [*17]
- For Denise Calabrese., mother of former Gilmour students, Rachele and Ricky Calabrese.
- For Ann Griggs, the mother of Father Gabe Griggs, CSC
- For Sister Marie Therese Courtad, C.S.J.
- For Sister Grace Corbett, S.N.D.

ARE YOU READY?

It seems that the Thessalonian community was very concerned about the scheduling of the Parousia — the second coming of the Lord. They wanted to know exactly when Christ would return to complete his mission, and what signs would warn them of this “day of the Lord.”



Paul tells them that they do not need instruction on this— for “the Lord will come like a thief at night” [1 Thessalonians 5:1-16]. For those in darkness who are blinded by a false sense of “peace and security,” the return of Christ will come like a “sudden disaster,” bringing suffering like the pains of a woman in labor. On the other hand, believers — like the Thessalonians — who are “children of the light” have nothing to fear from the “day of the Lord” — whenever it occurs — as long as they follow his admonition — “let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober.”

And so, what meaning does Paul’s teaching have for us today — two millennia after Paul wrote his letter to the Church at Thessalonica? For one thing, it reminds us that belief in the Parousia is an essential part of Christian faith as expressed in the Nicene Creed — “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.” For most contemporary Christians, however, the timing of the Parousia is not of great personal concern.

Another way to make Paul’s letter relevant is to concentrate on growing spiritually by being more alert to the ways we encounter Christ in our everyday activities. We believe Christ is present in all the people we meet — family, friends, colleagues, parishioners, strangers and enemies. Our days are filled with opportunities to share personally in Christ’s mission to spread the reign of God. A healthy prayer life can help us stay alert to potential encounters with the Lord.

Every day while driving to work, Ted asks God to give him the strength and wisdom to deal charitably with an egocentric co-worker who talks incessantly about himself and his accomplishments. June spends 15 minutes in meditation each morning which enables her to interact more effectively with her three children — each one with unique gifts and challenges. John leaves Mass each Sunday determined to see Christ in someone he meets that week, with special attention to individuals in need. Lydia, a lifelong Catholic, made a life transforming retreat which taught her that her religion was not primarily about keeping laws but about heeding Christ’s call to love God by loving the neighbor who crosses her path.

How can you be more alert to finding Christ in your everyday activities?

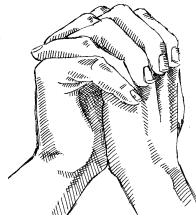
—taken from the writings of Father James Bacik which appear on the internet 19

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Father Larry Jerge, C.S.C., who is under the care of Hospice.
- 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 John Zippay, family friend of Bernadette and Stephen Ritley, who is critically ill.
- For Elizabeth Benson, grandmother of Izzy DiPuccio ['25] who is recovering from a serious illness
- 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 Jennifer Burger ['06], sister of Rachel ['10] and Paul ['16] Burger, who is undergoing treatment for rare form of breast cancer.
- For Maria Ruiz, mother of Elina Gurney, grandmother of Joseph and Christina Gurney, who is undergoing treatment for 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 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 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 Jeanette Favalaro, who is undergoing treatment for Leukemia.
- For James Farmer, father of DEI director, JaiCynthia Farmer, who is recovering from a serious heart-related issue.



PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For an end to the war between Israel and Hamas.
- For an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine.
- For a couple experiencing difficulty in becoming pregnant
- For the victims of the earthquake in Nepal
- 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.

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, November 29th 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: Advent waiting

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, November 19: 33 rd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, November 20:	NO MASS
Tuesday, November 21: Presentation of Mary	NO MASS
Wednesday, November 22: St. Cecilia	NO MASS
Thursday, November 23: Thanksgiving Day	9:30 AM In Person only
Friday, November 24: St. Andrew Dűng-Lac	NO MASS
Saturday, November 25: Feast of Christ the King	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, November 26: Feast of Christ the King	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

FAITH EDUCATION — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd and 10th:

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: December 3-10.** and **January 7-21-28.** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.



INTERESTING:

Circumstances have no power over you. One day you’re in traffic and it bothers you. The next day you’re in a great mood and it doesn’t. It’s not the traffic. If it was it would always cause the same response. It’s not the event or circumstance. It’s always your state of mind.

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

When we were in high school, it was very common for the teacher to have a “pre-exam” review whenever there was a major test coming. The readings for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time are like that review. What have we learned over these past many weeks of the liturgical year? We have watched and listened to the Master. His words are simple and direct, yet his actions have spoken louder than His words.

A key to understanding Matthew’s version of the parable of the talents is to pay careful attention to what is said about the “master,” who represents Jesus, the glorious Son of Man. During the time of the master’s journey—that is, between Jesus’ ascension and second coming—he entrusts his servants with gifts. That act of entrustment extends today to us — his disciples. Indeed, the master is extravagantly generous in his bestowal. Notice, too, that he is discerning, for he calibrates gifts according to capacities and ability — that is, he knows each one of us, his servants, intimately. A further detail is that the master gives his servants freedom, encouraging them to use their creativity and industry in making use of the gifts he bestows. Moving ahead to the reckoning of accounts, observe that he takes great delight in his servants’ success. And he wants to extend to them — to us — the fullness of life and joy in his presence.

So, back to our “review”. Jesus calls us to review how our actions and choices reveal what our values are. What our investments reveal is what is important to us. We are called to live outwardly what inwardly we have received through the gift of faith.

Our Scripture readings for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time, begin with a beautiful description of a wife and mother [Proverbs 31:10-31]. In Wisdom literature in the Hebrew Scriptures, wisdom is personified as a “she”. Thus the description of a wife and all her duties being her beauties, is not what the reading is all about. Instead, what we hear pictures Wisdom as a worthy, wife-like companion. All the wonderful features of a loving wife are figured as the profile of true wisdom. The possessor of wisdom takes Her to his or her heart as a woman or man takes her or his spouse to their loving centers.

True wisdom leads a man or woman to reach out beyond themselves and embraces the poor and needy who in turn will increase their lives with sensitivity and grace. The works of this cherished gift are to be praised because true wisdom comes from and leads to a worshiping relationship with God. Please read these verses — and hear these words — not about a view of what a good wife is, but what a good life is.

Matthew’s Gospel is the middle parable of a series of three parables which deal with the last days of Jerusalem and the end of the world. The parable of investing or “subvesting” money needs some help to enjoy. This image is not the investing our abilities and burying them, but the image is about our life. It seems at first reading that the investing of money and gaining from the investment is all about which Jesus is interested. Ah, obviously not so!

Parables are meant to get our attention and then confront us with something deeper than the obvious or apparent. They are meant to be remembered, as we remember a good joke or heart-touching story. So we have to “un-figure” the image. In Jesus’ parables of ownership, God takes center position. God has given something valuable to three different persons. For the sake of the story, we will say that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob received the first and the larger amount of this valuable “thing”. The Prophets received the second amount. The resident Pharisees received the least and the last. The Patriarchs and the Prophets did something with their valuables. The Pharisees, living their relationship with the Master more out of fear, tied it up and sat securely on top of it.

There is a judgment scene in each of these 3 parables —those who were not vigilant were left out when the bridegroom arrived in last-week’s parable [Matthew 25:1-13]. Those who feared God rather than have faith will be left out [Matthew 25:14-30]. This parable is about faith as a precious valuable. What one does with faith is a personal relationship experience. Faith does away with the security of

**OCCUPYING OUR TIME:**

Perhaps the key to understanding the Scripture Readings for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time is to be found in St. Paul’s letter to the Church at Thessalonica. In this earliest Christian writing we possess, Paul is dealing with something most first and second-generation followers of Jesus simply took for granted — his immediate second coming. They didn’t believe carrying on Jesus’ ministry would last a life-time. They presumed the risen Jesus would return very quickly and take them with him to share in his eternal life. At most, they’d have to spend just a few years biding their time before his Parousia would break out among them.

By the time Paul writes his letter — around 20 years after Jesus’ death and resurrection — Christians are getting anxious; they were beginning to worry about those who had died. Would they completely miss out on Jesus’ promises — or at least be put at the end of the line when the “goodies” were being passed out? Having addressed that problem, the Apostle is now concerned with how they’re occupying their time in the “interval.”

Obviously some Thessalonians seem to be forgetting about carrying on Jesus’ ministry, and spending their days conjuring up possible “times and seasons” predicting Jesus’ arrival. Others are so disappointed in this delayed Parousia that it’s no longer a factor in their everyday lives. Paul chides both points of view — pointedly telling each to “stay alert and sober” [1 Thessalonians 5:1-6]. Though he’s still holding out hope for Jesus’ imminent return, no one can pinpoint the exact time. Meanwhile, there’s work to be done.

As a good Jew, Paul certainly would have held up the “worthy wife” from Proverbs as an example for all to follow [Proverbs 31:10-31]. Whether Jesus’ coming is tomorrow or more than 2,100 years down the road, we should ingeniously be occupying our days — especially if our occupations help others.

But by the time Matthew writes his gospel — at least 25 years after Paul writes — Jesus’ Parousia is being relegated further and further into the background. Though the evangelist still seems to believe the event will happen in his lifetime, he’s zeroing in more and more on what Christians should be doing right here and now. This conviction appears to be at least partially behind Jesus’ story of the talents [Matthew 25:14-30]. No one is to take whatever God has given him or her and bury it.

Though “talents” originally were coins or monetary units, because of their use in this parable the term eventually began to stand for any abilities a person naturally possesses. And so, in Jesus’ parable, the first two servants “trade” with what the master gives them and double their money; but the third, playing it safe, buries his talent.

We’ve heard this story often enough to know the master’s attitude toward all three long before Jesus finishes the parable. But it’s what he says afterward that creates problems for some of us. This Galilean carpenter certainly doesn’t buy into Robin Hood’s “take from the rich, give to the poor” school of thought. On the contrary. “To everyone who has,” he says, “more will be given . . . but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

Matthew’s community seems to have interpreted this surprising statement as referring to the faith with which each person is blessed. Those who use their faith to help others will continue to gain more faith. On the other hand, those who refuse to risk by giving themselves to others will eventually lose even whatever security they have.

Only faith which is used for the sake of others will grow into more and deeper faith — no matter when and if Jesus’ Parousia happens. —taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet

*She will do him good
and not evil
all the days of her life.*
- Proverbs 31:12

APPRAISING OUR GREATEST VALUABLES:

The *Antiques Roadshow* has been one of the most popular programs on public television over the past twenty-five years. The show follows experts as they go around the country appraising the antiques of ordinary people. It is a delight to watch the surprise on their faces when they learn that something they purchased for a few dollars at a yard sale is really worth thousands. It makes us wonder what treasures we may have stored in our attics or basements.

On this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time, Jesus tells the story of three people who are entrusted with a treasure by their king [Matthew 25:14-30]. Though the king is gone only a short time, two of the people are able to double their money by investing it. Why were they so successful? First, they recognized the value of the treasure and knew that the best use of it was to invest it. Second, they understood that the treasure belonged to the king and not to them, and that they would have to give it back. They were not willing to let the treasure gather dust, unlike the third person who buried their talent in the ground out of fear.

Jesus' meaning could not be clearer. God has entrusted a treasure to us, and He expects us to make good use of it. During this week, we should examine our consciences to determine what that treasure is and how we can multiply it for the glory of God. The Author of the Book of Proverbs suggests to us a treasure which all of us have and which we can so often take for granted — like valuable antiques gathering dust in our attics — our family.

As we reflect upon this poem [Proverbs 31:10-31], let us see that the good wife is only one example of a “precious pearl.” Pearls were among the scarcest and most valuable items in the ancient world. In essence, the poem is saying that there is nothing more valuable than a good wife. By extension, our families are one of the most valuable treasures entrusted to us by God.

It is often said that charity begins at home. The home is a school where children are taught to love and serve God. Whether we are parents or children, the home is the place where we learn to become holy. In fact, families which eat at least one meal together daily, pray, and go to Mass together, have practically a zero percent divorce rate. Our homes must be places where God is honored if our marriages are to be strong and our children are to grow in virtue. And that means they must be more than just the place where we eat and sleep in between our jobs, our classes, and our other activities. Our homes must be the place where we pray, where we come to love and understand each other, and where we practice kindness and generosity.

Our family is among the treasures that God has given us for our enjoyment and for his glory. The way a valuable antique can get lost in the clutter of our attics, our loved ones can get overlooked because of the hectic pace of modern life. If we are wondering what special gifts God has given us and how we should be investing our time and energy, perhaps we have to look no further than our own homes.

—taken from the writings of Douglas Sousa, which appear on the internet

**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.**

**DIFFICULTIES ARE WHAT YOU MAKE THEM:**

We must look for the opportunity in every difficulty instead of being paralyzed at the thought of the difficulty in every opportunity.

—Walter Cole

absolute assurance. Faith — like love itself — is a growing-in-trust affair. The Pharisees twisted the love relationship to a fear relationship and in doing so they relied on their execution of laws and rituals for their security. To those who have faith and who live it through their investments of hope and love, more will accrue.

To those who fearfully hide their lives behind coverings of pretense will have even that taken away and that will be given to the more faithful. Faith is a relational reality —it is not measured by standards of dollars and inches. God offers the gift of faith and the grace to live it. Trusting relationships take time, patience, and a leap. Patience and trust are concepts; leaping is the problem.

So, what is the proper response to this loving, generous, and empowering Lord? The first two servants exemplify such a response. They gladly and earnestly go about their business, producing an abundance of works of love and mercy — this is what “talents” mean in connection with the servants’ productivity. Like the symbolic woman of the Book of Proverbs, we are all filled with the blessings of life, and are called to share these with others. We strive to love and please the Lord in all things, especially in our relations and dealings with other people. This response is a manifestation of the “fear of the Lord” that is praised throughout the Bible. Such “fear” is, in actuality, awe and reverence before the God who is so gracious and merciful to us, the awe and reverence that lead each one of us to ask: How can I respond, today, in the concrete circumstances of my life, to such a gracious Lord?

An improper response is also, ironically, a kind of fear. This is exhibited by the third servant. Tragically, his fear is rooted in a false image of his master, whom he regards as harsh and demanding, traits that are belied by all the details outlined above. In fact, while the master acknowledges that he ‘reaps where he does not sow’—which points to divine power — he does not accept the third servant’s description of him as “demanding.” Burdened with a false image of the Lord, the third servant turns in on himself. He buries his gift, thereby hiding his light under a bushel basket.

There are many things today that can cause us anxiety and fear: diminishment and old age; health care and sickness; finances and job insecurity; concern for loved ones; etc. Moreover, we are deluged daily by local, national, and international news stories that evoke alarm. Our world seems to become less safe and secure with each passing day.

All the more, then, do we need to turn to the Lord, to the one who cares intimately for each one of us, who is lavishly generous, who wants us to have life in abundance. In the face of such a loving God, we need not cower in fear — as did the third servant. Rather, we can stand in reverence and awe, delighting in God’s gifts to us. We can respond with hope and energy, graced to bring God’s love and goodness to others — that is, produce more “talents”. And in doing do, we can embody proper “fear of the Lord.”

As we move toward the end of the liturgical course, the challenge is presented to us. Jesus is calling for lives of faith in Him and what He has said about us as the beloved. This belief is more than conceptual, but is to take flesh in our life-giving investments which are risky and insecure. These investments are to be made in the actions which involve those in need, in trouble, and or in hope of our arrivals. When we are given something, it is a delight; when we are asked to do something with that which has been given, well that’s a different story. Jesus has been coming to us during these past weeks of the Liturgical course to give us our identities, our mission and the promise of a bountiful payoff, but that is around the eschatological corner. This is the wisdom then of Jesus. This beloved quality of faith which reaches out, does good things and is to be praised as it is lived.

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

A PASSING CLOUD:

In life there are moments of darkness. There are periods of discouragement. There are times when we lose sight of the beauty of the sky for all the clouds. You may have to bear severe sickness, or deal with tremendous pain, or you may be disappointed in this or that. But remember, whatever difficulty you have to face, it will not last. It is only a cloud. For God has made each of us with a purpose. We are made for joy.

—Alice Von Hildebrand

WALKING IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST:

We are coming to the end of the Liturgical Year — next weekend is the final weekend of the liturgical year — the Feast of Christ the King. Throughout this past year, we have been accompanied by St Matthew through the various events in the life of Christ. We have reflected on his birth, his public ministry, and the parables and miracles. In particular we have seen the events of his last days and of his resurrection mostly — all through the eyes of Matthew.

Each of the Evangelists has their own particular perspective or view point. Matthew was an Apostle — one of those chosen by Christ to be among his closest followers. We know that Matthew was a Jew, and that his occupation was that of a tax collector. We remember that Jesus saw him in the counting house and said “Follow me”, and Matthew simply got up and literally followed him [Matthew 9:9].

In his Gospel Matthew does not make a fuss about his call — for him it is a simple matter of fact. Jesus called and he followed. For Matthew, nothing more to be said. This alone is something that has the ring of truth about it. Matthew was a Jew, and he is concerned to present his Gospel to the Jews. He pays a lot of attention to Jewish tradition, and paints a picture of Jesus as completely Jewish — his life was a fulfilment rather than an abolition of the Law.

Obviously the Jewish members of Matthew’s community came into conflict with the Jews as a whole, and so this is one of Matthew’s concerns. In his writing, we can see how he sharply criticizes the Scribes and Pharisees. Also, it is interesting to note that there is no reference to the People of Israel being called Jews until after the Crucifixion — as if the use of this name stresses their rejection of Jesus.

Taking a look at the Parable of the Talents [Matthew 25:14-30], we observe first that a talent was not a coin — it was a weight in silver of about 36 Kilos — so it was a very considerable treasure that this man was trusting to his servants. One talent was probably equivalent to a whole lifetime’s wages for such a servant. The master had entrusted them with something precious beyond their wildest dreams.

The second point is that the Master took a very long time to come back. This is a tiny but important detail in Matthew’s Gospel. It shows the Master’s love for his servants that he gave them more than ample time for the treasure of the talents to yield bounteous fruit.

What is the precious thing that God has entrusted to us? It is, of course, the Good News of Salvation. The great treasure that we have been given is the gift of the Gospel — the realization that Jesus is our Savior, and that through our faith in him we will find salvation. It is what we do with this gift that makes all the difference.

We are surely all at quite different stages in relation to this gift of faith. Some of us may not even be sure whether we have it or not. This might be a particular problem for some of our young people — but not only them. There are many adults who suffer doubts and experience long periods of darkness and disbelief.

Others of us might find it a bit of a burden, knowing and believing in Jesus and his message but feeling quite inadequate to the task of transmitting the Gospel to others.

Then some people might feel full of faith, and have put a lot of effort into carrying out the precepts of the Gospel over many years and who yet feel that for one reason or another God has let them down badly. They certainly haven’t lost their faith, but they feel a bit depressed about it and don’t know where Christ is leading them.

Still others might be experiencing a new joy as they experience some wonderful grace or blessing from God. At various times in our life we might go through one or more of these reactions.

The parable tells us that faith is a real and wonderful gift from God. It is something that comes



charity that give meaning and value to our entire Christian life.

May our concern for the poor always be marked by Gospel realism. Our sharing should meet the concrete needs of the other, rather than being just a means of ridding ourselves of superfluous goods. Here too, Spirit-led discernment is demanded, in order to recognize the genuine needs of our brothers and sisters and not our own personal hopes and aspirations. What the poor need is certainly our humanity, our hearts open to love. Let us never forget that “we are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them” [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #198]. Faith teaches us that every poor person is a son or daughter of God and that Christ is present in them. “Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” [see Matthew 25:40].

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. In a page of her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*, she tells us: “I have come to realize that perfect charity means putting up with other people’s faults, not being at all taken aback by their faults, being edified by the smallest acts of virtue that we see practiced. But above all, I have come to realize that charity must not remain locked in the depths of one’s heart: ‘No one’, Jesus says, ‘lights a candle to put it under a bushel basket, but puts it on a candle-stand, so that it can give light to everyone in the house’ [see Matthew 5:15]. For me, that candle represents the charity that must give light and bring joy not only to those dearest to me, but to everyone in the house, with the exception of none”

In this house of ours, which is the world, everyone has a right to experience the light of charity; no one must be deprived of that light. May the steadfast love of Saint Therese stir our hearts on this World Day of the Poor, and help us not to “turn our face away from anyone who is poor”, but to keep it always focused on the human and divine face of Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Francis

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: 1 Maccabees 1:10-15, Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday: 2 Maccabees 6:18-31, Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday: 2 Maccabees 7:1-31, Luke 19:11-28

Thursday: 1 Maccabees 2:15-29, Luke 19:41-44

Friday: 1 Maccabees 4:36-59, Luke 19:45-48

Saturday: 1 Maccabees 6:1-13, Luke 20:27-40

Feast of Christ the King: Ezekiel 34:11-17, 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, Matthew 25:31-46

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.



selfless service; like the seed that falls on good soil, it takes root in their lives and bears rich fruit [see Luke 8:4-5]. Our gratitude to these many volunteers needs to find expression in prayer that their testimony will increasingly prove fruitful.

On this, the sixtieth anniversary of the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, we do well to take to heart the following words of Pope Saint John XXIII: “Every human being enjoys the right to life, to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, including food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, every individual has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from work; widowhood and forced unemployment; as well as in other cases when, through no fault of his own, he or she is deprived of the means of livelihood” [#11].

How much still needs to be done for this to become a reality — not least through a serious and effective commitment on the part of political leaders and legislators! For all the limitations and at times the failures of politics in discerning and serving the common good, may the spirit of solidarity and subsidiarity continue to grow among citizens who believe in the value of voluntary commitment to serving the poor. Certainly, there is a need to urge and even pressure public institutions to perform their duties properly, yet it is of no use to wait passively to receive everything “from on high”. Those living in poverty must also be involved and accompanied in a process of change and responsibility.

In addition, we must once more acknowledge new forms of poverty, as well as those described earlier. I think in particular of peoples caught up in situations of war, and especially children deprived of the serene present and a dignified future. We should never grow accustomed to such situations. Let us persevere in every effort to foster peace as a gift of the risen Lord and the fruit of a commitment to justice and dialogue.

Nor can we ignore those forms of speculation in various sectors, which have led to dramatic price increases that further impoverish many families. Earnings are quickly spent, forcing sacrifices that compromise the dignity of every person. If a family has to choose between food for nourishment and medical care, then we need to pay attention to the voices of those who uphold the right to both goods in the name of the dignity of the human person.

Then too how can we fail to note the ethical confusion present in the world of labor? The inhumane treatment meted out to many male and female laborers; inadequate pay for work done; the scourge of job insecurity; the excessive number of accident-related deaths, often the result of a mentality that chooses quick profit over a secure workplace... We are reminded of the insistence of Saint John Paul II that “the primary basis of the value of work is man himself... However true it may be that man is destined for work and called to it, in the first place, work is ‘for man’ and not man ‘for work’ ” [*Laborem Exercens*, #6].

This list, deeply troubling in itself, only partially accounts for the situations of poverty that are now part of our daily lives. I cannot fail to mention in particular an increasingly evident form of poverty that affects young people. How much frustration and how many suicides are being caused by the illusions created by a culture that leads young people to think that they are “losers”, “good for nothing”. Let us help them react to these malign influences and find ways to help them grow into self-assured and generous men and women.

When speaking of the poor, it is easy to fall into rhetorical excess. It is also an insidious temptation to remain at the level of statistics and numbers. The poor are persons; they have faces, stories, hearts and souls. They are our brothers and sisters, with good points and bad, like all of us, and it is important to enter into a personal relation with each of them.

The Book of Tobit teaches us to be realistic and practical in whatever we do with and for the poor. This is a matter of justice — it requires us to seek out and find one another, in order to foster the harmony needed for the community to feel itself as such. Caring for the poor is more than simply a matter of a hasty hand-out; it calls for reestablishing the just interpersonal relationships that poverty harms. In this way, “not turning our face away from anyone who is poor” leads us to enjoy the benefits of mercy and

entirely unbidden — as in the parable, the servants are given no clue in advance what the master is about to do. Faith is also given to us according to our ability to deal with it — each in proportion to his or her ability, as it says in the parable.

But the most important aspect of the Parable is that the Master will eventually return. The parable is about Christ’s Second Coming, and the judgment we will all face at the end of time. We know that we will be called to account for how we have handled this gift of faith that we have been so generously given.

This first thing to realize is that it is not a burden — it is a gift. The second thing to realize is that the man who is punished is condemned because he has buried his talent — he has refused to deal with it. He has simply ignored the gift and literally buried it.

So the message of hope is that whatever stage of life you are at — whether you are doubting, whether you are struggling to make sense of the Gospel message, whether you are teaching the love of Christ to your children, whether you are rejoicing in some new grace or blessing, whether you are going through the dark night of the soul, whether you are groping in darkness and searching for some chink of light; whatever it is that might be happening with your faith at least something is happening!

You are immersed in it, you struggle with it, you rejoice in it, you share it, you search for it, you deepen it, you love it, and you even at times might hate it. But you are engaged with it!

Yes we will face judgment, and we will have to give an account of ourselves. And it will surely be a long and convoluted story; however we will have a wonderfully sympathetic listener — one who knows the story all along because he was an essential part of it — and one whose judgment will be merciful and who wants above all other things our happiness. Christ’s whole aim is to give us joy — not a superficial joy, but a deep and lasting and fulfilling joy based on a life of engagement with him.

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

SHARING YOUR TALENTS:

During November, we pray for departed loved ones, and remember that we too will face death and judgment. And this coming Thursday, we celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving — gratitude — leads to Stewardship: discernment how each of us will use the gifts we have received.

In Matthew’s Gospel [25:14-30], Jesus presents a model of Stewardship — the man who worked hard and used his talents to make even more. The Master praises him, giving him three blessings:

1. “Well done, my good and faithful servant”. The man is a servant, that is, not an owner. A servant administers what the master entrusts to him. None of us created his or her own self. All that we have — every second of time, every bit of energy and intelligence, any material resources we have — God has given to us. I am a servant and so are you — what we have belongs to God. That’s the first blessing - to be a servant.
2. “Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities”. If you do something well, you get more work to do. If you have regular times for prayer, you will discern how God wants you to use your talents. If a person gives generously to his or her parish and other charities, God has a way of expanding his resources so they can give more.
3. “Come, share your master’s joy”. This doesn’t mean a Christian can retire. On the contrary, the great thing about working for the Lord is that the retirement plan is out of this world! Of course, it’s possible to have a productive retirement. But most retired people seem to be working harder than ever. Some have asked when I will be “retiring”. In some ways I am taking life easier, but I do think about this: I am few months younger than the current president. If those guys can take the stress of being president, I should be to handle the much smaller stress of being a country pastor! I don’t plan on retirement. What I want is to hear Jesus say: “Come, share your master’s joy.”

Whether you are young or old, I am asking you to invest your time, talents in the life of your Church.

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

TAKE IT IN; SPREAD IT AROUND:

It is easier for us to see what is negative rather than what is good. We tend to focus on what is wrong rather than on what is right. We find ourselves more willing to criticize than to praise. Just look at Matthew's gospel for this 33rd Week in Ordinary Time [Matthew 25:14-30] — the Parable of the Talents. What is it about? If I were to take a survey here this morning, I would wager that the majority of people would say: "This parable tells us that God will punish us if we do not use our talents."

We focus in on the negative. We focus on the one servant who buried his money out of fear and received his master's wrath. But there were two servants who used their talents and who receive their master's praise. So, if you look at this parable simply from a quantitative standpoint, it tells us that God is more likely to praise us for our successes than criticize us for our failures. Or to say this in another way: there is more affirmation in the parable than there is judgment.

So, if we take this positive approach to the parable, what does it say about affirmation? Two things: that we should take it in and we should spread it around. Clearly the master in the parable stands in the place of God. Therefore, this parable is telling us that God affirms us. God is pleased with us. God takes delight in the way that we use the talents that have been given to us. If God is affirming us, how important it is that we take that affirmation in. For you see, affirmation is power. Affirmation can change us. It causes us to grow. Just look at the way that the servants grow in the parable as they are affirmed by their master. They once were only capable of a few things, but now they are trusted with more. They once were unsure, but now they are confident and enter into their master's joy.

Because God is affirming us, we must let that affirmation in. We are always inclined to look at the negative parts of our life — our failures. But there is no power in our failures. The power comes from accepting God's affirmation and love. God is affirming us every moment of our lives. God is saying to us: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant. You are a good parent. You are a good spouse. You are a good grandparent, a good sister or brother, a good friend. You have used your talents generously, faithfully, and creatively. You have been strong and a support to others."

It is especially important to take in God's affirmation when we have experienced a setback in our lives — after an argument with a friend, after we have let down someone that we love, if we experience divorce. In these moments more than others, we have to claim that God is still affirming us, saying to us. "You are still good, because I have made you good. You are still talented, because I have given you talents. You are still loved, because you are my daughter or my son." God's affirmation of us is the source of power and life. We must take it in.

It is also important to spread affirmation around. For when we give affirmation, we act like God. We act like God when we affirm others, especially those who are closest to us. It is all too seldom that we praise the people with whom we live. We certainly love them, but the way we show love can often be counterproductive. Sometimes we think that the way to express love is to warn others, to save them from their mistakes. Parents frequently choose to love in this way. They can base their loving on warnings: "Don't do this. Never forget to do that. Do not make this mistake." They are motivated, of course, out of a desire to protect their children. They seek to make their sons and daughters better people. There is no power in emphasizing the negative. Power comes from affirmation and love.

When was the last time that you praised your daughter or your son? When was the last time that you said: "I am so proud of you? You do this so well." Can you imagine the power that is released when such affirmation comes from a mother or father? When is the last time that you paid a compliment to your spouse, or to a close friend? When have you said: "You amaze me at how well you do this. How patient you are, how generous you are, how creative you are." Can you imagine the sense of power and healing that are released when someone who loves you affirms you in that way? We are truly like God

Tobias did as his father told him, but he returned with the news that a poor man had been murdered and thrown into the market place. Without hesitating, the elderly Tobit got up from the table and went to bury that man. Returning home exhausted, he fell asleep in the courtyard; some bird droppings fell on his eyes and he became blind. An irony of fate: no good deed goes unpunished! That is what we are tempted to think, but faith teaches us to go more deeply. The blindness of Tobit was to become his strength, enabling him to recognize even more clearly the many forms of poverty all around him. In due time, the Lord would give him back his sight and the joy of once more seeing his son Tobias. When that day came, we are told: "Tobit saw his son and threw his arms around him, and he wept and said to him: 'I see you, my son, the light of my eyes!'" Then he said: "Blessed be God, and blessed be his great name, and blessed be all his holy angels. May his holy name be blessed throughout all the ages. Though he afflicted me, he has had mercy upon me. Now I see my son Tobias'" [Tobit 11:13-14].

We may well ask where Tobit found the courage and the inner strength that enabled him to serve God in the midst of a pagan people and to love his neighbor so greatly that he risked his own life. That of Tobit is a remarkable story — a faithful husband and a caring father, he was deported far from his native land, where he suffered unjustly, persecuted by the king and mistreated by his neighbors. Despite being such a good man, he was put to the test. As sacred Scripture often teaches us, God does not spare trials to those who are righteous. Why? It is not to disgrace us, but to strengthen our faith in him.

Tobit, in his time of trial, discovers his own poverty, which enables him to recognize others who are poor. He is faithful to God's law and keeps the commandments, but for him this is not enough. He can show practical concern for the poor because he has personally known what it is to be poor. His advice to Tobias thus becomes his true testament: "Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor". In a word, whenever we encounter a poor person, we cannot look away, for that would prevent us from encountering the face of the Lord Jesus. Let us carefully consider his words: "from anyone who is poor". Everyone is our neighbor — regardless of the color of their skin, their social standing, the place from which they came, if I myself am poor, I can recognize my brothers or sisters in need of my help. We are called to acknowledge every poor person and every form of poverty, abandoning the indifference and the banal excuses we make to protect our illusory well-being.

We are living in times that are not particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor. The pressure to adopt an affluent lifestyle increases, while the voices of those dwelling in poverty tend to go unheard. We are inclined to neglect anything that varies from the model of life set before the younger generation, those who are most vulnerable to the cultural changes now taking place. We disregard anything that is unpleasant or causes suffering, and exalt physical qualities as if they were the primary goal in life. Virtual reality is overtaking real life, and increasingly the two worlds blend into one. The poor become a film clip that can affect us for a moment, yet when we encounter them in flesh and blood on our streets, we are annoyed and look the other way. Haste, by now the daily companion of our lives, prevents us from stopping to help care for others. The parable of the Good Samaritan [see Luke 10:25-37] is not simply a story from the past; it continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives. It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved.

Let us thank the Lord that so many men and women are devoted to caring for the poor and the excluded; they are persons of every age and social status who show understanding and readiness to assist the marginalized and those who suffer. They are not superheroes but "next door neighbors" — ordinary people who quietly make themselves poor among the poor. They do more than give alms: they listen, they engage, they try to understand and deal with difficult situations and their causes. They consider not only material, but also spiritual needs; and they work for the integral promotion of individuals. The Kingdom of God becomes present and visible in their generous and



WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

This, the seventh annual World Day of the Poor, is a fruitful sign of the Father's mercy and a support for the lives of our communities. As its celebration becomes more and more rooted in the pastoral life of the Church, it enables us to discover ever anew the heart of the Gospel. Our daily efforts to welcome the poor are still not enough. A great river of poverty is traversing our cities and swelling to the point of overflowing; it seems to overwhelm us, so great are the needs of our brothers and sisters who plead for our help, support and solidarity. For this reason, on the Sunday before the Solemnity of Jesus Christ King of the Universe, we gather around his Table to receive from him once more the gift and strength to live lives of poverty and to serve the poor.

“Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor” [Tobit 4:7]. These words help us to understand the essence of our witness. By reflecting on the Book of Tobit, a little-known text of the Old Testament — yet one that is charming and full of wisdom — we can better appreciate the message the sacred writer wished to communicate. We find ourselves before a scene of family life — a father, Tobit, embraces his son, Tobias, who is about to set out on a lengthy journey. The elderly Tobit fears that he will never again see his son, and so leaves him his “spiritual testament”. Tobit had been deported to Nineveh and is now blind, and thus doubly poor. At the same time, he remains always certain of one thing, expressed by his very name: “The Lord has been my good”. As a God-fearing man and a good father, he wants to leave his son not simply material riches, but the witness of the right path to follow in life. So, he tells him: “Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing” [Tobit 4:5].

We see immediately that what the elderly Tobit asks of his son is not simply to think of God and to call upon him in prayer. He speaks of making concrete gestures, carrying out good works and practicing justice. He goes on to state this even more clearly: “To all those who practice righteousness give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it” [Tobit 4:7].

The words of this wise old man make us think. We are reminded that Tobit had lost his sight after having performed a work of mercy. As he himself tells us, from youth he had devoted his life to works of charity: “I performed many acts of charity for my kindred and my people who had gone with me in exile to Nineveh in the land of the Assyrians. I would give my food to the hungry and my clothing to the naked; and if I saw the dead body of any of my people thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury it” [see Tobit 1:3-17].

For this act of charity, the king had deprived him of all his goods and reduced him to utter poverty. Still, the Lord had need of Tobit; once he regained his post as an official, he courageously continued to do as he had done. Let us hear his tale, which can also speak to us today. “At our festival of Pentecost, which is the sacred festival of weeks, a good dinner was prepared for me and I reclined to it. When the table was set for me and an abundance of food was placed before me, I said to my son Tobias: ‘Go, my child, and bring whatever poor person you may find of our people among the exiles of Nineveh, who is wholeheartedly mindful of God, and he shall eat together with me. I will wait for you, until you come back’” [Tobit 2:1-10]. How meaningful it would be if, on the Day of the Poor, this concern of Tobit were also our own! If we were to invite someone to share our Sunday dinner, after sharing in the Eucharistic table, the Eucharist we celebrate would truly become a mark of communion. If it is true that around the altar of the Lord we are conscious that we are all brothers and sisters, how much more visible would our fraternity be, if we shared our festive meal with those who are in need!



when we decide to spread our praise around.

It is always easier to see the negative, to recognize what needs to be changed. Power and life, however, come from affirmation. This leaves us with two questions: How will I let in the affirmation God has for me, and who will I affirm today? My suggestion is that you put out of your mind any problems or failures or shortcomings, and simply recognize that God is present here among us. Open your hearts to receive the love, the delight, the pleasure that God takes in you. God will never stop loving you. You are God's beloved son or daughter.

Then, once you are filled with God's affirmation, allow the Holy Spirit to suggest to you three people who you will affirm this week. Once you have identified those people, affirm them. Once you have affirmed them, repeat the process again. Make it a pattern of life. Become a person of affirmation — taking it in, spreading it around. —taken from the writings of Father George Smiga, which appear on the internet

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — DECEMBER 16th: 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.

CAMP GILMOUR IS BACK FOR WINTER CAMP 2023:

Camp Gilmour is hosting three one-day camps for campers ages 5-12 during winter break. Campers can return to campus and renew old friendships, make new ones and have a great time! Winter Camp has something for everyone! Join us for seasonal games and crafts, swimming, ice skating, field trips and more.

Camp is in session from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. [bring your own lunch] on the following dates: Wednesday, December 27, Thursday, December 28 and Friday, December 29. Each day is a separate camp. **Cost is \$60 per day per camper.**

Deadline to register is December 11th. Sign up today for one or all three days at gilmour.org/wintercamp!



EUCHARISTIC 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.



OPTIMISM:

Positive thinking doesn't mean you ignore the reality of the situation. It means you have the optimism, belief and faith to overcome the situation.

—Jon Gordon

COMPARE AND DESPAIR:

Raise your hand if you're a competitive person. Oh yeah? I'm more competitive than you. I've had a healthy sense of competition for most of my life. My brother and I — just 14 months apart in age — are the only two kids in our family. I spent most of my childhood years trying to prove that I was better than him in sports — although let's be honest, neither of us were really that great here — in school — he always said he was smarter than me; I said that was just because he'd had an extra year of school — in our family — who do Mom and Dad love more? That's a healthy question to ask, right?

That carried on through middle school and into high school, where I actually got excited about taking the ACT because it was, competitively, the moment I'd been waiting for. I was determined to score higher than him. Here was a level playing field where I could finally prove — once and for all — that I was actually the smarter one.

We ended up tying. Don't worry. I'm over it. Really!

We all fall into that trap of comparing ourselves to one another. How do we stack up against the competition? Whether we're measuring ourselves against our siblings, classmates, teammates, best friends, or even total strangers like celebrities, we're constantly sizing up the competition. Where do I rank? Am I as good as he or she is at ___? Am I better than him or her at ___?

Hey, a little competition never hurt anybody — it can drive us to do our best, and stretch us to reach goals that we never thought we could achieve. A little competition is a good thing. But in this endless battle of comparing ourselves to one another, nobody wins. There's an old saying I try to keep in mind: "Compare and despair." I first heard that phrase from a priest I really like named James Martin, SJ. The guy has written some really stellar books on the spiritual life, and is even the official chaplain of *The Colbert Report*.

Compare and despair — because every time we make comparisons, there's always a winner and there's always a loser. Think about it — we always end up thinking or saying either "I wish that I could be more like that," or the opposite — and just as harmful — "Well, at least I'm not like that."

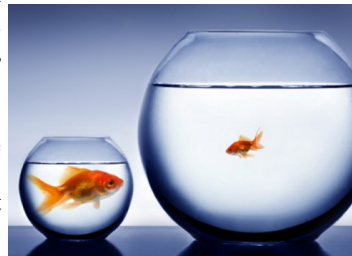
And let's be honest — when we're comparing ourselves to others, aren't we the ones who usually lose? I'm not as funny as Jimmy Fallon; I'm not as smart as Mark Zuckerberg; I'm not as flawless as Beyoncé. That may be true, but I've got news for you on that front — neither is she.

Here's a great step one — let's stop comparing ourselves to things that aren't even real. I know we've all heard that things are photo-shopped — that's nothing new. But have you ever actually seen the process? If you check this girl at the beginning of the ad, and compare her to the image on the billboard at the end, you wouldn't even recognize her as the same person — because she isn't. That girl that we all see on a billboard doesn't even exist. Not even the model in the photo can live up to the image.

And they don't just do it to girls, and they don't just do it to pictures. Check out any movie featuring Tom Cruise. He's 5'7" — which isn't super tall for a Hollywood leading man — so directors will use all kinds of tricks to make him appear taller than his costars. Is it really that big of a deal if he isn't the tallest guy in the scene?

Forget everything you think you know when it comes to "real life" in pop culture. And even when it comes to comparing ourselves to the people we actually share our days with, the truth is that we can't ever know the full reality of their situation. St. Paul writes to the Church in Corinth: "Among human beings, who knows what pertains to a person except the spirit of the person that is within?" [1 Corinthians 2:11]. Every perfect Instagram comes with a filter, right? I'm sure your class valedictorian, your starting quarterback, and your homecoming queen all have their struggles behind the scenes.

Perhaps you've seen or heard the quote: "Comparison is the thief of joy"? It's true. Comparisons



ruin our joy when they cause us to dwell on the negatives rather than focusing on the positives — so the best weapon we have in this war against comparisons is gratitude. When we're grateful for what we do have, it's a lot harder to focus on the things we don't like about ourselves, or the things we wish we had. Maybe you don't love the color of your hair — but you know?... you've got some killer eyes! You might struggle in English, but have mad skills in math. Maybe you wish you were more outgoing or loud, but you have a beautiful ability to be patient with others.

God is very creative. Be grateful for His talent at making countless individuals, bodies and hearts and minds and souls, who are all so different from one another. Recognize the good in others — without comparing yourself to them. Acknowledge what it is that's cool about them, and try to look also at what is good in you. You have I also try to look at what's good in me. And I have a lot to be grateful for.

Honestly, the thing that's helped me the most in my own struggles with comparison is to take my eyes off others and turn them toward God. He will tell you the truth of who you really are. God is a really good Dad, and so grateful for your life — "because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you," He says [Isaiah 43:4].

Chances are that we will all sit around a dinner table some Thursday in November and discuss all the things that we are thankful for. Each of us possess unique quirks and gifts and talents that make you, you. And know that your family and friends — not to mention your God — are grateful for you, too.

—written by Rachel Allen, an associate of the Bible Geek.

LIFE TEEN and EDGE:

Our Life Teen and EDGE youth group is meeting in-person again. We will meet for an hour beginning at 11:30 AM following our 10 AM Sunday Mass in the Chapel. If you are unable to join us, there are many resources available for you on the Life Teen

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

If you attend Mass regularly here at Our Lady Chapel, it would be helpful if you filled out a form [name, address, phone number, children, etc.] indicating this fact, if you have not already done so. Such information not only helps us to know who is attending Our Lady Chapel; it also is of great assistance to us in record keeping [for our friend, the IRS] of any contributions which you may make.

ENVELOPES:

- When you need a **new supply** of envelopes, please feel free to take a supply of them from the table in the vestibule, or call Father John at the Campus Ministry Office [473-3560].
- When you **use** your envelope, please make sure that **your number** is on it. If you need to know your number, please call the Campus Ministry Office. Thanks.

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].

