

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

~ I Hear You, Lord ~

O Lord my God,  
You called me from the sleep of nothingness merely because of Your tremendous love. You want to make good and beautiful beings. You have called me by name in my mother's womb. You have given me breath and light and movement and walked with me every moment of my existence.

I am amazed,  
Lord God of the universe,  
that You attend to me —  
and, more, cherish me

Create in me  
the faithfulness  
that moves You,  
and I will trust You  
and yearn for You  
all my days.  
Amen.

—Joseph Tetlow, S.J.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**  
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# 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 “ORDINARY TIME”:**

Because the term ordinary in English most often means something that’s not special or distinctive, many people think that Ordinary Time refers to parts of the calendar of the Catholic Church that are unimportant. Even though the season of Ordinary Time makes up most of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, the fact that Ordinary Time refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons — Christmas and Easter — reinforces this impression. Yet Ordinary Time is far from unimportant or uninteresting.



Ordinary Time is called “ordinary” not because it is common, but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. The Latin word “ordinalis” which refers to ordered numbers in a series. Thus, the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time in fact represent the ordered life of the Church — the period in which we live our lives neither in feasting — as in the Christmas and Easter seasons — or in more severe penance — as in Advent and Lent. Ordinary Time is the part of the year in which Christ, the Lamb of God, walks among us and transforms our lives. There’s nothing “ordinary” about that!

**2023 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:**

If you would like a copy of your 2023 Contributions to Our Lady Chapel, please call the chapel office [440-473-3560] and we will be glad to send it out to you. Since many have their own records and do not need to receive this statement, we have found that this is much more economical for us — as good stewards, we are trying to cut postage expenses from a mass mailing. Let us know if you need the statement sent to you and we will be glad to get it to you. Thanks for your understanding.

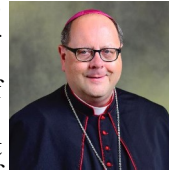
**A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MALESIC ON MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY:**

As we honor the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., let us focus on his call for racial equality and justice for all, while remembering his lessons of peace and non-violence. His message of peaceful resolution to conflict reflects the words of Jesus in the beatitudes: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” [see Matthew 5:9].

As our nation — and our world — struggles with conflict, division and injustice, let us also recall what Pope Francis said in his own Prayer for Peace: “Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister.”

Let us imitate Dr. King, who courageously committed his life to forging peace and equality, and recommit ourselves to the Gospel message of love, mutual respect and the dignity of all human life. Please join me today in praying for the dream of Dr. King to be realized — that together as brothers and sisters and as children of God, we might build a community of unity, hope and justice that will lead us to lasting peace.

—Bishop Edward Malesic

**FAITH EDUCATION:**

Our Faith Education classes will resume on **January 21<sup>st</sup>**. Our Faith Education classes meet on **Sundays from 8:45—9:45 AM. This is followed by Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 10 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: January 28-February** . Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**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 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.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Denise Calabrese.
- For Sue Ryavec, mother of Ron Ryavec [’16]
- For James Kelly, brother of Cindy Frimel.
- For Irene Sopko
- For Michael Murphy,
- For Gregory Alexander, father of AVI associate Vee.
- For Eileen Stark, sister-in-law of former Gilmour teacher, Theresa Stark.
- For Joyce Bican.
- For Jean Smith, mother of Matthew [’08], Tyler [’10] and Alec [’13] Smith.
- For Peter DeCrane [’73], brother of Michael DeCrane [’76], uncle of Meredith [’99], Michael [’01], Matthew [’02], and Craig [’04] Panzica, brother-in-law of former Trustee, Tim Panzica [’73], and Son of former trustee and corporate chairman, Vincent DeCrane.
- For Therese Grega

**IN HIS IMAGE, GOD MADE US:**

God chose to create human beings different from the other animals. God made human beings in his image — both male and female — and he gave them authority over all other living creatures [see Genesis 1:26]. This gives us great value and raises an important question: In what ways are we made in God’s image? We reflect God’s glory. Some believe that our reason, creativity, speech, or self-determination is the image of God. More likely, our entire self is what reflects the image of God. We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme creator. But we do have the ability to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God’s image and that we share many of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not based on possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim; instead, it is based on being made in God’s image. Because we bear God’s image, we can feel confident in who we are. Criticizing ourselves is discounting what God has made and the abilities he has given us. Knowing that you are a person of worth helps you love God, know him personally, and contribute meaningfully to the lives of those around you.

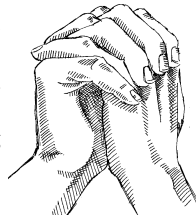
Stop and thank God for creating you in his image. You are his unique creation and he loves you. Thank him for your special gifts, talents, abilities, physical characteristics, emotional makeup, and personality. And ask him to help you respect others, even those you don’t get along with, because they are his image-bearers as well.

**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 John Zippay, family friend of Bernadette and Stephen Ritley, who is critically ill.
- 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 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 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 Robert O’Neill, grandfather of Bobby O’Neill [‘33], who is undergoing treatment for bladder cancer.
- For Josephine Fernando, mother of Melvin [‘83] and Raymond [‘88] Fernando, mother-in-law of Imelda Deogracias Fernando [‘88], who is ill.
- For Lincoln Nye, former Gilmour student, brother of Maddie Nye [‘25], who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For JoAnne Fisher, wife of Jim, mother of Bill [‘10] and PJ, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Roy Smith, C.S.C., who is recovering from surgery.
- For Sister Colette Livingston, O.S.U., who is seriously ill.
- For Pam Spicer, wife of former Gilmour coach, Bob Spicer, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Dennis Kramer, who is undergoing treatment for prostate cancer.
- For Jerry Walker, brother of Housekeeping associate, Kelly, who is seriously ill with Pneumonia.
- For Bill Stark, brother-in-law of former Gilmour teacher, Theresa Stark, who is preparing for heart bypass surgery on Tuesday.
- For Jennifer Krantz, who is undergoing treatment for cancer
- For Tom Bryan, former athletic director, uncle of Georjanna Opalich [‘09], Alexis [‘10] and Spencer [‘12] Antunez, and Morgan Converse [‘11], who is ill.



**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.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24<sup>th</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> 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: Lent as the true Valentine’s Day**

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, January 14: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 15:	NO MASS
Tuesday, January 16:	12:00 noon
Wednesday, January 17: St. Anthony	8:30 AM and 9:45 AM
Thursday, January 18:	NO MASS
Friday, January 19:	NO MASS
Saturday, January 20: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, January 21: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JANUARY 20<sup>th</sup>:**

Our Savior Lutheran Church — across the street from the Chapel — 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 unloading the trailers and setting up items for distribution and preparing for the food pantry to open. It serves around 150 clients each time. The food pantry serves clients 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.

**TRUE:**

Those who have a strong sense of love and belonging have the courage to be imperfect. —Bremé Brown 3



**REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:**

We are at the beginning of Ordinary Time, and so it is fitting that we pray to be good listeners. Jesus asks his first followers to tell him what they are searching for [John 1:35-42]. What a very good question to replace any New Year's Resolutions we might have made — and lately put aside. Jesus gives us the freedom to get in touch with our deepest desires. On this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time, we ask God in our Opening Prayer “to bestow his peace in the world.” What a profoundly deep prayer in these days of worldwide tensions and fears. Perhaps we desire a deeper personal peace within our own inner wars. Only our hearts can tell us what to pray for and ask of God. What are you looking for? Where do you live, God? We want to know where Jesus lives and move slowly towards staying with him these days of the new year.

The Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time are all about our having been called. We are summoned to trust the One Who is calling. In the past, we have needed and demanded evidence of the Caller's faithfulness to us — we want familiarity with the Caller lest we be seduced.

We are preparing for the long walk through the weeks of Ordinary Time to become more acquainted with the person of Jesus and His style of living. We cannot love what we do not know, and so God begins a courtship with us. We will not always feel comfortable or easy with His ways — and we might even want to sleep through His invitations. We will meet our resistance and hopefully something inside us that wants to be responsive.

Invitations and callings come in many forms. Samuel hears a “sleep-interrupting” call [1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20]. Samuel is a servant-boy for Eli. Samuel hears a voice and believes it is from Eli. After several more voice-visits, Eli instructs Samuel on just how to respond. When Samuel finally realizes what he is hearing, he makes his profession of faith — “Here I am.”

What we do not hear between his direct statement to God about being a good listener, and the unfolding of the call is the message which Samuel will deliver to his master Eli. Eli's sons have been cursing God so Samuel is instructed to relate to Eli that God is going to destroy Eli's house and family. Eli hears this and surrenders saying, “The Lord is God” [1 Samuel 3:11-18].

John's Gospel is the beginning of Jesus' public life; he is inviting others to follow His way, His truth, and His life [John 1:35-42]. As we have seen during the Advent Gospels, John's Gospel begins with John the Baptist making it clear that he — the Baptist — is not the Messiah. But now, John points out to his disciples that the One Who is passing by — He is the “Lamb of God.” Two of John's disciples follow Jesus — Who turns and asks them what they are looking for. They don't know exactly so they ask Jesus where He is staying. Jesus does not tell them, but shows them by inviting them to come and see.

Three words are used to describe Jesus in John's Gospel — “Lamb of God”; “teacher”; and “Christ”. Each of these tells us something very important — Jesus is divine; he is our way of life; he is our Messiah. There are many themes or hints flying around in this scene. This is happening at four in the afternoon — in bright daylight. The main characters of this Gospel's drama are being named. Jesus is Teacher and the Christ; John is the one pointing Him out; and we are there too — we are being invited to come and see and stay a while.

Another interesting point arises in the Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time — Samuel, Andrew, Simon are not called “out of the blue,” as we say. The call seems to be an invitation to someone who has an already-present something going on within them in their souls. There is a searching.

In other words, there is a “tendency going on within them.” Here is an example: Some people respond to negative calls in their lives. Students, for example, often get in trouble because of drinking.

**THE DIVINE CALL:**

Nothing creates more interest for Scripture's original readers than the “call narratives” many of our sacred authors include in their writings. When God or the gospel Jesus asks someone to be a disciple, everyone listens carefully to the details. Their interest isn't hard to understand. Those original readers feel called in a similar way; though times and circumstances differ, several elements are always the same.

First, the divine caller usually demands that the person who is called “move.” Neither Jesus nor God ever says: “Stay there! Don't move a muscle! Just keep doing what you're doing!” Movement is always entailed — either physical or psychological or both. No one responds to such a call without experiencing change.

Second, the individual who's called is expected to follow not some intellectual ideals or principles, but a real person. When we deal with any person, there's always something new to learn about him or her. Nothing stays the same. Those not open to the person aren't open to the call.

Third, whoever is called is now expected to put his or her security in the person doing the calling. Whatever or whoever they consistently fell back on before they now push into the background. They trust only God or Jesus. Their personal strength shifts from former places, people and ideas to someone completely “other.”

Samuel discovers that when God calls there's no hesitation, no thinking it over [1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20]. Eli correctly instructs the boy: “If you are called, reply: ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” In a very deep sense, if he's not already listening for a call, he'll probably pull a “Sgt. Schultz”, and hear nothing even though the call is coming loud and clear. Eli and Samuel's misunderstanding tells us we can easily mistake the actual caller for someone else. We'd better know whom and what to listen for, else we'll think it's just a figment of our imagination; something we can slough off at will.



The call might even come through someone with whom we're already familiar, but are now looking at from a different perspective. That seems to be what happens in John's Gospel [1:35-42]. Along with Andrew and Simon, Jesus already appears to be one of the Baptizer's followers when John points to him and says: “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

Now because of John's leadership and authority, whatever this Galilean carpenter says and does takes on a deeper meaning. When he, for instance, asks: “What are you looking for?”, he's referring not just to an immediate need — he's asking the pair, “What do you want out of life?”

The two eventually discover Jesus' “Come” is an invitation to become a new person. Jesus calls them to go beyond their here and now and to uncover a part of themselves they've never before noticed. That's why he quickly changes Simon's name to “Rock.” Those who respond to God's call not only uncover more and more about God, they also uncover more and more about themselves.

That's exactly what happened when Paul responded to the risen Jesus' call on the Damascus Road. He not only discovered the Christ was present in those he was persecuting, he also discovered he/she was also present in him. No longer did he, as a good Jew, have to regularly visit the Jerusalem temple. Once he answers Christ's call and moves to a new frame of mind, he discovers that his own body “is a temple of the Holy Spirit” [1 Corinthians 6:13-20]. What he thought outside himself is actually inside himself.

It's hard to convince someone of such a wonder who's never said: “Yes!” to the risen Jesus. But, on the other hand . . .

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

**RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:**

More important than any precept is our need to enter into a relationship with God by accepting the gift of the love that he comes to bring us.

—Pope Francis

**KEEP TALKING; I'M LISTENING:**

When one of my favorite aunts was being complimented, she used to say: "Keep talking; I'm listening!" Her line, if not her motivation, helps us enter into the Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. From Samuel to Jesus and the disciples, it's all about looking, listening and hearing, attitudes that lead to discovering who we are and are called to be. It's all about vocation — seeking and listening.

There are two dimensions to our response to God's invitation in our lives. Young Samuel assumed that the only one who would call him was Eli — the priest to whom he was apprenticed. So, when Samuel heard a call, he hastened to Eli's side. Happily, Eli was humble and schooled enough in the ways of God to instruct his apprentice to suspect that his calling was coming not from a teacher, but from God. A trustworthy spiritual director, Eli instructed Samuel to be attentive and to respond in openness to God's will saying: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" [1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20].

In the biblical sense, listening is the equivalent of obeying. Mary echoed Samuel's response with her unstinting offer: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be according to your word" [Luke 1:38]. Later, Mary's son memorialized a version of his mother's offer as he taught us to say: "Thy will be done" [Matthew 6:10]. Each of those statements expresses the willingness to do whatever God might ask.

John's Gospel presents another dimension of the mystery of vocation. Here we encounter disciples of John the Baptist, people involved in a sincere search for God. John, their mentor — as humble as Eli — pointed his own disciples toward the one who gave him his purpose in life. Immediately preceding this Gospel selection, John declared that Jesus, whom he said he did not know, was the one for whom he was preparing the way [see John 1:26-35]. Believing that, John freed his own disciples to go beyond him.

John and his disciples had the humility to seek more rather than rely on their own ideas or long-established answers. Like so many throughout history, they could appreciate the tradition they had inherited and still believe that more was to come. They were willing to risk the discomfort of exploring beyond the limits of their experience. True children of Abraham, they believed that God's promise offered more than anything they had yet encountered. They harbored the intuition that their moment in history offered them new dimensions of faith — their perspective on everything else.

The deepest desire of the human heart is the desire for God. God communicates the divine will through great desires for faith, hope, and love that welled up inside the heart and soul of each one of us. Samuel's words of response to the voice of God echo's the words of Psalm 40: "Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" [Psalm 40:7-8].

The famous words of St. Augustine — "my soul is restless till it finds its rest in Thee." That explains that accepting God's invitation and orienting our life around it is the path that will bring us peace and fulfillment beyond what we can imagine. Living our vocation, responding to God's ongoing invitations, leads us to become our deepest, truest selves. God's call may come out of the blue or as a result of sincere seeking — both can happen, and sometimes at the same time.

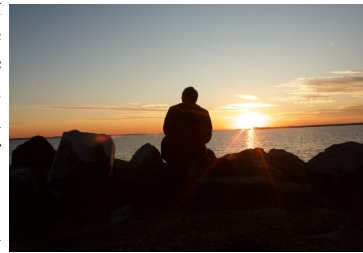
That tells me we can learn from my Aunt Therese and pray: "Keep talking; I'm listening."

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

**SACRED MOMENTS:**

Those seemingly ordinary moments of wonder in your life — when you are arrested by the sunset or swell of music or your child's face, and the line between you and everything blurs — are not throw-away moments. They are actually portals into the sacred nature of things.

—Valarie Kaur



When confronted for disciplinary reasons, it seems that their friends "invited" them — and they went! The invitation was definitely there, but also there was an abiding tendency or leaning to that kind of response. We often say that good kids find good friends — there is a sympathetic vibrational relationship.

Each of us has two interior ears — one longs for self-donation and relational creativity; the other ear longs to hear voices which urge self-indulgence, self-finding, and self-destruction. Jesus has come to us as "teacher", and we will learn if we have the proper ear to hear. There are many things which Jesus teaches that are difficult and we wish He hadn't said them. Learning takes a humility and a sense that we don't have it all figured out. There are many kinds of teachers out there in our lives; each offers a way, a truth, and a life which resonate within our ears — which ear listens?

Jesus has come as the Christ — the Anointed, the Messiah — and He makes sense if our interior ear has listened to our need for a savior. That ear must hear deeply our incompleteness and our longing to be invited out of our self-centeredness and the "troubles" into which that self-spirit has led us. Here too there has to be a humility to admit the confusion, the lies, and the spiritual deaths to which those voices have moved us.

Samuel heard something inside him. He knew he heard it, but was it all from outside him. I'd like to think that his sleeping in the temple allowed his interior-ear to come to hear the call of God. Andrew and Simon were ready by some previous disposition.

Maybe in these early weeks of Ordinary Time we are being invited to get our ears checked. We are invited to learn what Jesus' teaching and ways sound like. We also are in the life-long process of learning what our self-centered hum sounds like. To whom we listen will determine what we hear.

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

**NOURISHING A RELATIONSHIP:**

Prayer is a cultivated state of life. It takes time; it takes attention; most of all, it takes consistency. Consistency is what raises simple regularity to the level of relationship. It is the awareness of God that draws me — whether or not I feel any immediate personal satisfaction in doing so or not. I reach out to God whether I can sense God reaching back or not.

All relationships take nourishing — the one with God more than most. So many things draw us away from it. We live on the plane of the tangible, and feed it with things and events and people. Those are the things that occupy our minds. The spiritual plane we take for granted — though nothing affects us more than the loss of it.

When we're lonely or depressed or agitated or frightened, the material is of little or no help at all. Then, the things we own or collect may actually be part of our problem. What we really need then is the anchoring that only the spiritual can bring. We need the awareness that though life is not in our hands right now, it is surely in the hands of a God who loves us.

It is this anchoring in the spiritual that lifts us above the pressures of the present to the renewed consciousness of the eternal stability of the God who "wishes our well and not our woe." It is the effort to put ourselves in the presence of God over and over again in the course of the day that prepares us for the abiding Presence that is the home of the soul. "Only in God," the psalmist reminds us, "is my heart at rest" [see Psalm 62].

In the long run, then, it is consistency — the everlasting turning toward God — that prepares the way for the eternal presence of God in the here and now.

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

**LOVE and GIVING:**

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving.

—Robert Louis Stevenson





**THE CRITICAL MOMENT IN LIFE:**

There is an interesting little parallelism which occurs in John's Gospel [1:35-42]. The scene pictures Jesus passing by John the Baptist, who "saw him" and said: "Look, there is the Lamb of God." Then later on Jesus "saw Peter" and said, "You are to be called Cephas — meaning rock."

The Greek word used here is "emlepein", which literally means "to fix one's eye upon". Now, it might seem a very small point but I think these two occurrences of the same word ought to be translated exactly the same. What is clear here is that the author intends for this "look upon" to be more than a passing glance. Fixing of the eyes by John the Baptist on Jesus, and then by Jesus on Peter, is a deep recognition by both of them that the object of their attention has real and vital significance. The fact that the same word is used in both instances is significant.

Clearly identifying the Messiah is the very purpose of John's mission, and when Jesus passes him by on that particular occasion John fixes his eyes on him and in that moment of recognition he becomes fully aware that this truly is the Messiah, and the time for him to be revealed has now arrived.

The very same thing happens when Jesus encounters Peter — He fixes his eyes on Peter, and at that moment knows that this is the man who will head up the Church once Jesus himself has returned to the Father.

What we are dealing with here, then, is a moment of recognition — a critical point when the significance of a person's role suddenly becomes clear. It is as if the scales fall from the eyes and the full understanding of the importance of the object of one's attention is arrived at in a moment of profound insight.

John's whole aim and purpose in life was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. It sounds as if he worked very hard to do this, and he fulfilled this mission as well as he could. We must not forget that he obviously knew Jesus — who was one of his cousins. But it seems as though it was only at that specific moment — when Jesus walked by — that John suddenly understood precisely who Jesus really was.

John's two disciples do not need any urging — they have been so well prepared by their master that they simply leave him standing there and begin to follow Christ. They ask Jesus where he lives and he responds with the famous words: "Come and see."

The surprise in this is that John does not follow Jesus himself; from that moment on, John steps into the background. We have to realize that John knows that his mission is now accomplished and he has nothing more of significance to do. Neither does he need disciples anymore; he is content that they follow Jesus. John steps into the background, and we hear no more about him until we are told of his tragic death at the hands of the brutal King Herod.

The second of "recognition moments" occurs between Jesus and Peter. This look from Jesus is for Peter's benefit — it is a look of recognition and an understanding by Jesus that the right man has been found for the work in hand. It is hard for us to imagine, but to suddenly be introduced to the Messiah, and for him to look you in the eye in a most powerful way must have been most disconcerting for Peter. Then for Jesus to make a pun on your name and call you "rock" — that had to be disconcerting to Peter. His knees were probably like jelly. He most likely realized at that moment that Jesus had something in store for him, but didn't yet know what.

There is another interesting little detail in this scene. John remembers that this conversation with Jesus took place at four o'clock in the afternoon. John is writing this account after almost 70 years have elapsed — yet he still recalls the exact time at which this moment of recognition occurred. The reason John remembers the time so clearly is because he was there. And he knows exactly what the time was because that encounter with Christ was undoubtedly the most significant event of his life.



places — admittedly in every delivery room and nursery in the world, but "preferentially" in refugee camps; in boats making perilous journeys across the Mediterranean; in migrants trekking endless miles in hunger, thirst, and dangerous conditions; in people waiting in endless lines to be processed in hope of being accepted somewhere, in persons arriving at various borders after a long journey only to be sent back; in mothers in detention centers, holding their young and hoping; and most especially, preferentially, in the faces of countless refugee children.

The face of God at Christmas is seen more in the helplessness of children than in all the earthly and charismatic power in our world. And so today, if we want, like the shepherds and wise men, to find our way to the crib in Bethlehem we need to look at where, in this demented inn, the most helpless of the children dwell.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet

**LIVING THE DIVINE:**

Spirituality is primarily about human transformation in this life — not just salvation in a future realm. While Western Christianity lost much of this emphasis, and became rather practical and often superficial, the Eastern church taught "theosis" or divinization as the very real process of growing in union and likeness with God in this world. This is one of the many losses Christianity experienced in the Great Schism of 1054, when the popes of East and West mutually excommunicated one another. The later Protestant Reformation, while needed, did not reclaim this wisdom, and further split the church — each side losing something of value.

In fact, most of Judeo-Christian history reflects a split from depth and interiority. The rational mind cannot imagine God and humanity being one, or being one with our neighbor, because the worldly mind always splits things apart and takes sides. The contemplative mind allows us to see things in wholes instead of in parts.

St. John Paul II summed it up well: "The venerable and ancient tradition of the Eastern Churches, that is the teaching of the Cappadocian Fathers on divinization ["theosis"], passed into the tradition of all the Eastern Churches and is part of their common heritage. This can be summarized in the thought already expressed by St. Irenaeus at the end of the second century: God passed into man so that man might pass over to God."

Popes do not quote such statements unless they know they are part of the Perennial Tradition which goes back to the early undivided church. Pope John Paul II was acknowledging that the Western church had largely lost its foundational belief in divinization, and in the practical order had even denied its possibility. Instead, we were just "sinners in the hands of an angry God" and even "totally depraved." No wonder humans suffer from such lack of self-esteem today. We haven't told them the central and foundational Good News that God is with them! Not knowing this can lead to a lot of the anger and disillusionment with Christianity today.

Contemplation allows us to experience the reality of our participation in God's nature for ourselves. Once we plug into the Divine consciousness, God can work through us for the good of the world.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

**GOD IS A GOD OF THE PRESENT:**

The real enemies of our life are the "oughts" and the "ifs." They pull us backward into the unalterable past and forward into the unpredictable future. But real life takes place in the here and the now. God is a God of the present. God is always in the moment, be that moment hard or easy, joyful or painful. When Jesus spoke about God, he always spoke about God as being where and when you are. "When you see me, you see God. When you hear me, you hear God." God is not someone who was or will be, but the One who is, and who is for me in the present moment. That's why Jesus came to wipe away the burden of the past and the worries of the future. He wants us to discover God right where we are, here and now.

—Henri Nouwen

**THE CHRIST-CHILD OF THE YEAR:**

Every year *Time* magazine recognizes someone as “Person of the Year”. The recognition isn’t necessarily an honor — it’s given to the person whom *Time* judges to have been the newsmaker of the year — for good or for bad. This year, instead of choosing an individual to recognize as newsmaker of the year, it recognized instead a category of persons — the Silence Breakers — namely, women who have spoken out about having experienced sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Part of the challenge of Christmas is to recognize where Christ is being born in our world today — where two thousand years after the birth of Jesus we can again visit the stable in Bethlehem, see the newborn child, and have our hearts moved by the power of divine innocence and powerlessness.

The face of God at Christmas is seen more in the helplessness of children than in all the earthly and charismatic power in our world. For Christmas this year, I suggest we honor refugee children as the “Christ-Child of the Year.” They bring us as close to the original crib in Bethlehem as we can get within our world today because for them — as for Jesus two thousand years ago — there is no room at the inn.

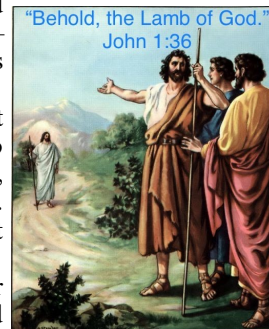
Jesus’ birth — like his death — comes wrapped in paradox: He came as God’s answer to our deepest desire, badly wanted, and yet, both in birth and in death, the outsider. Notice that Jesus is born outside the city and he dies outside the city. That’s no accident. He wasn’t born a “wanted” child, and he wasn’t an accepted child. Granted, his mother, Mary, and those with genuine religious hearts wanted him, but the world didn’t — at least not on the terms on which he came — as a powerless child. Had he come as a superstar, powerful, a figure so dominant that knees would automatically bend in his presence — a messiah tailored to our imagination — every inn door would have opened to him — not just at birth but throughout his whole life.

But Christ wasn’t the messiah of our expectations. He came as an infant — powerless, hidden in anonymity, without status, invited, unwanted. And so Thomas Merton describes his birth this way: “Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because he cannot be at home in it, because he is out of place in it, and yet he must be in it, his place is with those others for whom there is no room.”

There was no room for him at the inn! Biblical scholars tell us that our homilies and imaginings about the heartlessness of the innkeepers who turned Mary and Joseph away on Christmas Eve miss the point of that narrative. The point that the Gospels want to make here is not that the innkeepers in Bethlehem were cruel and calloused and this singular, poor, peasant couple, Joseph and Mary, were treated unfairly. The motif of “no room at the inn” wants rather to make a much larger point — the one Thomas Merton just highlighted — namely, that there’s never room in our world for the real Christ, the one who doesn’t fit comfortably into our expectations and imaginings. The real Christ generally shocks our imagination, is a disappointment to our expectations, comes uninvited, is perennially here, but is forever on the outside, on the periphery, excluded by our imaginations and sent packing from our doors. The real Christ is forever seeking a home in a world within which there’s no room for him.

So who best fits that description best today? The millions of refugee children. The Christ-Child can be seen most clearly today in the countless refugee children who, with their families, are being driven from their homes by violence, war, starvation, ethnic cleansing, poverty, tribalism, racism, and religious persecution. They, and their families, best fit the picture of Joseph and Mary, searching for a room, outsiders, powerless, uninvited, no home, no one to take them in, on the periphery, strangers, labeled as “aliens.” But they are the present-day Holy Family and their children are the Christ-Child for us and our world.

Where is the crib of Bethlehem today? Where might we find the infant Christ to worship? In many



If we were asked the question as to what was the most significant moment in our life, we might answer the day I met my partner in life, or the birth of our first child, or something similar. But John has it absolutely right — the most significant moment in life for us is when we met Our Blessed Lord for the very first time and recognized precisely who he was.

It is at that moment that we are faced with the choice of whether to follow Christ or not — to become his disciple or not. John knows the profound significance of that moment and he realizes the completely transforming effect that this encounter has had on him. It led to him dedicating his whole life to the cause of the Gospel, and to the spreading of belief in Jesus Christ, the one true Savior of the World.

There is a lesson for us here — we should all scrape the dust from our memories and try to recapture that moment when we realized the true significance of Jesus Christ and made the decision to follow him. That was the one really life changing moment that has occurred to us — it is the crucial event that opened us up to the transformative power of a relationship with our Divine Savior and set us on the road to heaven.

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

**THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON:**

During this brief period of Ordinary Time — four weeks — we will be reading from Paul’s first letter to the Church at Corinth. Roman Corinth was a thriving cosmopolitan city adjacent to two seaports with a perhaps overblown reputation for sexual license and sacred prostitution. The apostle Paul lived in Corinth for about 18 months in the early 50’s — preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and forming a Christian community of both Jews and Gentiles. After leaving Corinth in 52 AD, Paul wrote the community a letter some three years later encouraging them to resolve their differences, and advising them on many issues — including sex and marriage.

Paul presents a Christian understanding of the human body as a basis for sexual morality. He begins with a fundamental principle: “The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord” [1 Corinthians 6:13-20]. He then offers various reasons for respecting our bodies. The God who raised the crucified Jesus to life will also raise us to life. We should “avoid immorality” because our bodies “are members of Christ” — meaning that we have become “one Spirit with him.” Given this close connection, Paul declares “the immoral person sins against his own body.” Not only are we members of Christ’s body, we are also temples of the Holy Spirit — “purchased at a price.” Our body is not an autonomous possession; rather it is a gift from God. This fundamental truth moves Paul to conclude: “Therefore glorify God in your body.”

When Paul spoke of the body — “soma” in Greek, the basis for our English word “somatic” as in psychosomatic diseases — he meant the integrated human person in our concrete physical dimension. He affirmed the human soul and the human spirit while insisting that bodiliness is an essential component of full personhood.

Paul’s teaching could prompt individuals to develop a more harmonious and integrated Christian life. An overweight middle-aged man could start exercising regularly — becoming a healthier more energetic spouse, parent, and worker. A collegian prone to bulimia could reject unrealistic images of female beauty and come to greater acceptance of her God-given body — freeing her to adopt healthy eating patterns. A young man addicted to pornography could free himself for healthy relationships by learning to appreciate women not as sex objects, but as human beings joined to Christ and animated by the Spirit. A collegian immersed in the hook-up culture on campus could find her way out by coming to see herself as an embodied spirit who treasures loving romantic relationships more than mere bodily pleasure.

What can you learn from Paul’s teaching on respect for the human body?

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





**NOT AN ANSWER, BUT AN INVITATION:**

The two disciples in John's gospel ask a simple, straight-forward question: "Teacher, where are you staying?" An answer to this question could be given in a moment, in a couple of words, but Jesus does not provide them. Instead he says: "Come and see" [John 1:35-42]. The disciples come to Jesus with a question; he responds with an invitation. Instead of responding in words, he offers an opportunity for the disciples to travel with him, to walk with him, and perhaps to find what they are searching for.

I do not know how frustrating it might have been for the disciples not to have their question answered, but it is very instructive for us. Because what Jesus is revealing in this short encounter with the two disciples, is the basic pattern by which God deals with humanity, the way that God interacts with us in our lives.

We come to God with questions. God gives us invitations. The questions are many and can be drawn from a number of different circumstances. Why do the innocent suffer? Why is our world so violent? Why is someone that I love sick? Why can't I find a job? Why do our political and religious leaders fail us? How can I protect my family? Why am I so depressed and lonely? Where can I look for hope? Questions, real questions, that we place before God. But God doesn't answer them. God simply says, "Come and see; come follow me."

How much easier it would be if God would simply explain things to us, if God would tell us what is going to happen, if God would tell us what we want to know. But God does not tell us. God says: "Come and see." God responds in this way because on the deepest level, God knows that what we really need, what our life really requires, is not information, but trust. God knows that we could never comprehend, we could never absorb the mysteries through which God is building the kingdom. God understands that we could never take in all the twists and turns by which God is saving us. So instead of trying to reveal this information to our limited minds, God asks us to trust. God says, "Come and see." Live moment to moment, walk day to day, until gradually you begin to recognize the plan that is unfolding before your eyes. God invites us to trust, to believe that God is in charge, that there is a plan and that that plan will eventually lead us to life.



The power of this truth is expressed beautifully in a passage from John Henry Cardinal Newman, which I'd like to share with you this morning. Newman says: "I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. God has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do God's work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it — if I do but keep God's commandments. Therefore, I will trust God, whatever, wherever I am. I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may be a service, in perplexity, my perplexity may be of service. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve God's kingdom. God does nothing in vain. God has a plan. God may take away my friends, throw me among strangers, make me feel desolate, make my spirit sink, hide my future from me. Still God has a plan and I will trust the One who guides me."

We come to God with questions, God responds with invitations. We come looking for information, God invites us to trust. This is the challenge for every believer: to accept God as trustworthy. For we are asked not to be frustrated when instead of giving us an answer, God invites us to "Come and see" — when God invites us to walk for a while until the truth emerges. For those of us who know our God, that invitation is not impossible. For as soon as we take up the journey, as soon as we begin to follow, it becomes clear that we will not travel alone. Step by step, day by day, God will walk with us until in time we come to a place where every question is answered and where all goodness comes to light.

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

**THE WIND:**

8 The winds of grace blow all the time. All we need to do is set our sails.

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

John Henry Newman felt God's call to him in life and reflected on it with a beautiful prayer. But first, who was John Henry Newman? He was a scholar and an intellectual who lived in England from 1801 to 1890. He dabbled with atheism early in his life, and then God called. He couldn't put him off. He sought God in religion — in the Church of England, or Anglican Church. He became an Anglican priest and continued his studies of Christianity at Oxford University. In 1845 he wrote that as he studied more and more the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, he was convinced that the Catholics were the closest followers of Christianity in its original form. He had a deep respect for the Anglican Church, but he heard God calling him to become a Catholic. This was an extremely difficult decision that affected his life in every way possible. He could no longer teach at Oxford. He could no longer preach in the Anglican Churches. He was a patriotic Englishman who was embracing those people whom he had referred to as "our traditional enemies." But God was calling. John Henry Newman was not about to send Him to voice mail. He became a Catholic and led the movement of Anglican scholars to Catholicism called the *Oxford Movement*. He became a Roman Catholic priest, and eventually was even made a cardinal. On September 19, 2010 Pope Benedict XVI beatified Cardinal Newman.

Blessed Cardinal Newman wrote this beautiful prayer which is a reflection not just on his life but on all our lives: "God has created me for some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have a mission. I may never know exactly what that mission is in this life. I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work. I am a link in a chain — a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place — even if I do not realize what I am doing. But, if I keep His commandments, I will serve Him in my calling."

What is your calling? What is my calling? The general answer to those questions is simple — we are called to know, love and serve God. But how? How are each of us called to serve God? The particular answer to this question is a mystery, the mystery of our lives. The mystery unfolds every time we respond to God's call. We come before the Lord today and ask for the grace to be attune to God's call in our lives. And we pray for the courage to answer His call rather than send it to voice mail. We pray that when He calls we will respond: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

If you attend Mass regularly here at Our Lady Chapel, it would be helpful if you filled out a Registration 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.

**WEEKLY OFFERING:**

Baskets are located on the pillars just inside the center door when you enter the chapel. Please place your offering in the basket. Baskets will not be passed during the offertory time. Your offering will help offset chapel daily operating expenses. When you choose to use the envelopes, you can request a printout of your offerings for the year to submit to the IRS. God bless you.

**Total Offerings: Saturday [1/6/24] ----- \$ 875.00**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [1/7/24] ----- \$ 90.00**



**ANSWERING GOD’S CALL:**

Most of us today have Caller ID and Voice mail — we all use both these advancements in technology to see who is calling us, and then decide whether to answer the call or send it to voice mail. I might be overstating it to say that these are over-used advancements in technology. I have a friend who never answers his phone - every call goes to voice mail. It drives me crazy. Actually, I’m not sure if he does this to all his calls, or just to mine!

We all have caller ID and Voice Mail in our spiritual lives. All of us receive calls from the Lord. Sometimes — like the disciples in John’s Gospel — we recognize the Lord’s call and follow Him [John 1:35-42]. Sometimes, we just send God’s call to voice mail. We might be afraid of what He is going to ask of us — He might demand something more than we want to do or give. Maybe, we’d rather deal with Him later. Maybe if we ignore the call enough, we won’t have to deal with it at all.

And that is the sad truth of our reaction to God’s call. If we don’t respond like Samuel — “Speak Lord, your servant is listening” — we might miss our opportunity to do His will. Maybe the Lord wants us to lead someone who is estranged from Him closer to Him with our kindness. Maybe the Lord is calling us to enter into the path of life where we can best serve Him. God’s calls have an impact both on our lives as well as on the lives of other people — even people we might not know.

This is the perfect time to discuss the call of God that we receive in our lives — our vocation. Usually, when we hear the concept of vocation, we think of those who are called to become priests or to enter religious life as sisters, brothers, or priests. These are certainly vocations from God, but they are not the only call that God gives.

Many of you are married — or are hoping to be married someday. How do you view marriage? If it is just a romantic matter legalized by the state or celebrated in a Church, then you are missing an essential part of the sacrament of marriage. Marriage is a vocation, a call from God to greatness by embracing a life of sacrificial love. If you are married, you need to pray to God that you will be a good Catholic wife or husband, concerned with giving love. Husbands and wives also need to pray for each other. In marriage, it takes two of you to push the receive button on the phone and answer God’s call.

Young people are full of wonderful romantic ideals and ideas. You date this guy or this girl, and you look forward to a time when there will only be one person in your lives. This is all great. But do you ever pray for that special person — even if you do not know who that person is yet? Do you ever pray that God help you recognize the person that you can best make a Christian life with? Pray that when God calls you to love as he loves, you will answer this call and not send it to voice mail.

Many are involved in careers. Why do we do what we do? To make money? It is perfectly correct to receive reward for our labor and to enjoy this reward, but if the goal of our lives is to be “Squidward Tentacles” — that’s a Sponge Bob reference for you older people — or “Scrooge McDuck” — that’s a Donald Duck reference for you young folks — then we will have nothing to take with us when we die. God did not create us for money. God created us for love. We often recognize a call from Him to use our funds for others. It’s easy to send this call to voice mail, but then we will miss an opportunity to do God’s will — an opportunity to love.

Sometimes we miss God’s call because we allow ourselves to become too busy to answer it. We get so busy in the things that we are doing that we forget why we are doing them. God calls us, but we send his call to voice mail — “We’ll get back to him later when we have more time,” we say. Only, later may never come.

**SPEAK LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING:**

Now that the Christmas season is officially over, we are all slowly trying to get back into the daily grind of life. It’s amazing how a couple weeks of presents, staying up late, and sugar can deconstruct even the best home routine and make everyone a mild form of a post-Christmas Grinch. And now we face the hurdle of the ever-present night coughing from a current cold strain making the rounds in our neighborhood. I know for the past two weeks, I’ve been up for at least two hours each night tending to sick children.

The Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time are all about calls. What is most interesting about Samuel is that when God called him, he missed the point a few times before finally discovering who was beckoning him. And what’s more, he needed help coming to that discovery [1 Samuel 3:1-10,19-20].

So often in my vocation, God has called me in mysterious ways much like Samuel. I have the heart of a champion, and want to believe that I could do heroic feats for the sake of Christ. I imagine God asking me to start a kitchen to serve the poor with my family, or maybe to write a book. But instead, in the deep of my slumber I’m woken with “hack hack hack hack, Mommmmyyy!” It doesn’t sound like the Lord. I’m disoriented and tired, and daydreaming of grand ways I could be serving God — if only I had enough sleep at night. But what Samuel — and each of us — realized is that God’s ways are not our ways.

The third time he is called — with Eli’s help — Samuel finally understands who is calling him. He is no longer confused and wandering about in the night. God has made the first move, and patiently called him, and now Samuel answers: “Speak, Lord”. The past two weeks, I’ve been reminded that God is indeed calling me — only I’ve not been truly listening to recognize it’s Him, hidden in the tasks of my vocation. With each night of coughs, I’ve slowly come to hear His voice.

The wonderful thing is that God is a patient lover. If we feel He isn’t listening or our prayers aren’t being answered, we can be assured it’s not because He doesn’t hear us, but perhaps because we don’t hear Him. In the Catechism, we’re reminded that God always makes the first move and we respond.

St. Paul gives us a pragmatic game plan when we step up to follow the will of God [1 Corinthians 6:13-20]. Everything we do ought to be well-intentioned and give glory to God. On Monday, we observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Martin Luther King is one example of this — he fought to bring light to dark parts of our nation’s history. He wasn’t perfect by any means, but without his influence and bravery, countless more people would have been violated and abused in our nation’s history. King saw a call to do good, and he rose to action.

Family sickness has taught me to see those suffering right in front of me, and to use my body to glorify God by doing something about it — even if imperfectly. Once we realize God is calling us, we have to have the courage to say: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

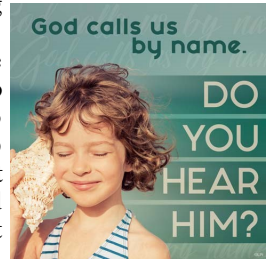
John’s Gospel shows us this reality as Jesus beckons his disciples to follow him [John 1:35-42]. Jesus is reaching out; they are searching and intrigued — even if they don’t fully understand what the call means. Much like Samuel, the words hit their ears, something stirs in their hearts, and as they answer back, they begin experiencing communion with Christ. This is the beauty of conversion — finding that God has called us in places we may have never expected, and moving away from sin toward Christ as we respond. We are called to glorify God with our whole selves — whether that means tending to sick children, sitting at a parish office desk, or speaking to the crowds. God is calling each of us by name — do we hear it?

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

**GOOD ADVICE:**

“Without prayer and time for silence we grow negligent in the service of God.”

—Blessed Basil Moreau



**RELATIONSHIP AND RELIGION — WHY BOTH ARE NECESSARY:**

“Faith is not just something we do alone.” I’ll never forget those words. I was kneeling in the confessional, having just nervously poured my heart out about all the doubts I was struggling with, when the priest said those words: “Faith is not just something we do alone,” he said. “We’re fed by each other, by the faith of the whole Church.”

I had never thought about it that way before. I had never realized that I’m not just one individual who has faith — I’m one member of a family with a shared faith. In modern culture, that’s kind of a strange thought, though — we’re taught to think of faith as private and individual, as not shared.

Nowadays, it’s common for people to identify as spiritual rather than religious — which makes it tempting to think of the Church as an outdated way of relating to God. Or maybe even to think of the Church as a barrier between God and us. If I know Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him, then why have the Church at all?

As Catholics, we don’t believe the Church is just a human institution — we believe Christ Himself instituted the Church and filled her with grace — His divine life of infinite love. So why did Christ institute the Church?

The Church herself is a mystery, so there’s no quick and easy answer to that question. But Scripture is a good place to start! The word “church” in English is translated from the Greek word “ekklesia.” In the Old Testament, this is the word used to refer to the gathering of the chosen people before God when they received the law on Mount Sinai [see Exodus 21]. Receiving the law is the old covenant that first establishes Israel as God’s chosen people.

In the New Testament, the same word is also used when Jesus says to Peter: “And, I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church” [Matthew 16:18]. The new covenant that Christ makes establishes the new Church, which extends beyond Israel to the people of all nations.

So, the Church isn’t just a human invention — it was established by God for us because He has called us to communion with Him and each other. The Catechism actually tells us that God created humanity to share in His divine life. And so the Church is one of the reasons for creation — “God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the convocation of men in Christ, and this convocation is the Church” [CCC, #760].

The Church is a gift from God, and through the Church, God gives us the sacraments. This is how He brings us into “communion with his divine life.” And yet, I know so many people who don’t feel that way. Instead, they think the Church is a “middleman” blocking their intimacy with Jesus. But the sacraments are not a block to our intimacy with Christ — they bring us into a greater intimacy with Him than we could ever experience without them. They are a vital part of a personal relationship with Christ because He gives His own divine life to us through the sacraments.

Following Christ is just as much about having a relationship with Him as it is about following His example. Receiving His grace through the sacraments is what gives life to our souls and enables us to follow Him all the more closely. So the sacraments are far from a hindrance to our relationship with God — they’re where our relationship with God begins. As Christians, we encounter Jesus in many ways — we find Him in Scripture, we find Him in each other, and we find Him in the sacraments.

God’s grace isn’t restricted to the sacraments — but it is promised in the sacraments. Christ has promised Himself to the Church He established and “the gates of hell will not prevail against it” [Matthew 16:18]. This means that I can be at peace, trusting in Christ’s promise to His Church that in Baptism, I am adopted; in Confession, I am forgiven and reconciled; in the Eucharist, I am wedded to the Lord.

A life with the sacraments is a life with Christ — it is a life spent in ever-growing love, friendship, and intimacy with God. Jesus doesn’t only want me to know about Him — He wants me to know Him,

to encounter Him, and to experience Him. That’s why He has given us the gift of the sacraments and the gift of the Church.

Receiving His body and blood in Communion is the most intimate encounter I have with Him. Confessing my sins in Reconciliation have been some of the most healing moments of my life. If He has humbled Himself to give me something so great, then why would I ever settle for anything less?

—taken from the writings of Sophia Swinford, 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](http://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].**

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 15:16-23, Mark 2:18-22

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Mark 2:23-28

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 17:32-51, Mark 3:1-6

**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 18:6-19:7, Mark 3:7-12

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 24:3-21, Mark 3:13-19

**Saturday:** 2 Samuel 1:1-27, Mark 3:20-21

**3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Jonah 3:1-10, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

**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.

**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].

