

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer Upon Arising ~

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven;
Light of the sun,
Splendor of fire,
Swiftmess of wind,
Depth of the sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's hand to guard me.
Afar and anear,
Alone
or in a multitude.

Christ shield me today
Against wounding:

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in me.

I arise today
Through the mighty strength
Of the Lord of Creation.
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.

FAITH EDUCATION:

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: Jan 28-Feb. 4-11**. Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**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.

**INDOOR CHAPEL PICNIC:**

Because of the construction, our **Indoor Chapel Picnic**, which would have taken place on Sunday, February 11th, will not take place this year. The Picnic will return next year, and will be held in our new dining area/student commons.

Our Summer Outdoor Picnic will take place as scheduled on Sunday, July 14th. Thank you for your understanding.

**BLESSED ARE THE BLAMELESS:**

The Psalmist wrote: “Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord [Psalm 119]. What does it mean to be “blameless”? Words like “blameless” and “righteousness” don’t sit well on our ears these days. If we say: “Joe is a righteous person”, we generally do so, these days, in sarcasm. There’s a sort of stiff rectitude that goes with the term that makes it ill-suited to fit in with modernity. It evokes a sense of wooden and unnatural awkwardness.

But this sort of rigidity is not at all what moves the biblical writers to poetry about “blamelessness” and “walking in the way of the Lord.” Rather, for them, the “righteous” or “blameless” person is, above all, the free, blessed and deeply happy person, because he/she lives in reality, and therefore is balanced and healthy.

A prominent icon of that blameless happiness in our deeply unhappy age is none other than the Child. For the child is, quite literally, blameless, and is therefore not hampered by a stiff and unreal rectitude. Rather they are free to love and enjoy the whole panoply of life that comes his way. Today, live out the blamelessness given to you in baptism, and walk in the law of the Lord, and view life through the eyes of a child.

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.

**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 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 Angela Wahl [anniversary]
- For John Brown, father-in-law of security director, John Dalessandro.
- For Virginia Guttman
- For Eileen Sanders, mother of Charlotte [*24], Liam [*26], and Reid [*29] Sanders.
- For Jim Orcutt
- For Vail Miller Sr., grandfather of Rocco [*23] and Mason [*24] Hice.
- For Marcelle Nahra
- For Cosmo Bordonaro, brother of former Gilmour Employee, Helen Parisi
- For Sister Kathleen McCafferty, S.N.D.
- For Sister Amalia Rios, C.S.C.
- For Brian McDonald, brother of Mark McDonald [*09]
- For Father Jerry Duke, pastor-emeritus of St. Cyril and Methodius Parish

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S GRACE:

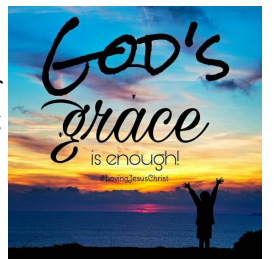
We all struggle in our sinfulness. We find our temptations and our sins to be embarrassing, and we rarely admit them. Even when we are shown evidence of our wrongdoing, our guilt often becomes an obstacle to our positive life-changing response. It is part of the human condition that all of us face.

Yet, the reality is that God continues to reach out to us with his grace and support. But rarely do we ask for that grace when we are being tempted. We are much better about doing this after we have fallen. God’s grace works within us whenever we ask.

Father Moreau understood this. He writes: “God is faithful; God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength.”

St. Paul is a great example of this. He asked God to remove temptations from his life. But God reminded him that the grace that He offers is more than enough to deal with his weaknesses. And God’s promise to us is the same.

God wants to work with us as we go throughout our day. But he will not force himself upon us. It is only when we are humble enough to admit our weaknesses — to take ownership of our choices — and to ask God for his grace, that we discover that inner strength to deal with the moment of temptation in our lives.

**CONTENTMENT:**

Practicing contentment is a radical act in a consumption-driven society.

—Robin Kimmerer

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

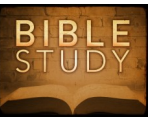
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- 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 JoAnne Fisher, wife of Jim, mother of Bill [‘10] and PJ, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 Bill Stark, brother-in-law of former Gilmour teacher, Theresa Stark, who is recovering from heart by-pass surgery.
- For Jennifer Krontz, 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.
- For Sarah Lindley, Sister of Gilmour’s Social Studies Teacher, Matt Lindley [‘89], aunt of Benjamin [‘24], Nathan [‘26] and Evan [‘27] Lindley, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Father Frank Quinlivan, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Carol Miller, grandmother of Rocco [‘23] and Mason [‘24] Hice, who is recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident.
- For Judith Seiler, mother of Admissions advocate, Christian Hollis, grandmother of Tom [‘13], Nicole [‘14], Justin [‘16], John [‘18] Hollis, who is recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- For Kathy Wadowick, mother of long term sub, Sarah Soplata, who is ill.
- For Lincoln Nye, former Gilmour student, brother of Maddie Nye [‘25], who is undergoing medical treatment.
- For Adam Caraboolad who is recovering from kidney transplant surgery.
- For Richard DeBacco, father of Michelle Chiacchiarri [‘96], father-in-law of Mark Chiacchiarri [‘94], grandfather of Aurelia [‘28] and Olivia [‘30] Chiacchiarri, who is undergoing treatment for lymphoma
- For Marc Williams who is critically ill with ALS
- For Joe and Helen Loew who are seriously ill.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, February 24th 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 28: 4 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 29:	NO MASS
Tuesday, January 30:	NO MASS
Wednesday, January 31: St. John Bosco	NO MASS
Thursday, February 1	NO MASS
Friday, February 2: Presentation of Jesus in the temple	NO MASS
Saturday, February 3: 5 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, February 4: 5 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — FEBRUARY 17th:

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.

HOW TRUE:

We are all more blind to what we have than to what we have not.

—Audre Lorde

REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:

Did you ever try to peel a piece of fruit and the peel just didn't want to move? You long for the taste of the sweet fruit, but the peel is getting in the way. Each of us labors to taste life with joy, but there are difficulties. There are events which have coverings or hard things to peel away. There are lumps and bumps in our everyday lives — relationships which are bothering us. We keep yearning for life's sweetness — despite the peels of discontent.

We are tempted also to read books or articles for easy canned resolutions or answers. We can think that somebody has reduced all of life to a simple idea or practice which is easy to swallow. We can even think that religion or sacred scripture has it all reduced to just our opening the can of God and all shall be sweet.

Our lives are filled with peels, but also the juice of receiving and living the Eucharist. To love God does not mean liking the struggle with the peels. We pray for the freedom to receive it all, and not turn easily to frozen or concentrated or deluded life-juice.

In the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus, Moses gives the people the laws reflecting the covenantal relationship that God has initiated with the people. They have heard the thundering of God's presence with accompanying flames. They became fearful of God and begged that God would not relate with them in so frighteningly a manner in the future.

In the Scripture readings for this 4th Week in Ordinary Time, Moses refers to this request of the people to hear differently from God [Deuteronomy 18:15-20]. Moses announces that they will be given a prophet who will hear from God and speak from God all that the people need to hear. Moses gives two interesting warnings to the people and to those who will be called to speak — [1] when the prophet does speak, the people better listen or they will be dealt with; and [2] if the prophet speaks what is his/her own thoughts and not from God, or if the prophet speaks on behalf of other gods, then they will be punished.

But an important question arises in all of this — how does the community know that the prophet is speaking truly from God? Moses gives the answer — if what is spoken by the prophet does take place, then it is from God, otherwise the prophet is unfaithful and not to be trusted.

Christmas was a month ago; the decorations and trimmings have all been taken down and stored away, and life again has settled in. We are into the Fourth Week of Ordinary Time of learning who and what Jesus is, and what does that have to do with us. It is early in Mark's Gospel, and we already are seeing patterns of His ways. In His homeland, Jesus begins his public ministry by appearing in the local temple [Mark 1:21-28]. He does the usual religious things, but then something new occurs. Jesus had been teaching in a way which amazed His listeners. The unclean spirit makes a startling statement about the identity of Jesus. Divinity, infinite goodness is meeting, for the first time, the Evil One who states that Jesus of Nazareth is the awaited-for — the Holy One of Israel. Jesus commands that the spirit be quiet, because Jesus desires that the good He is and does — and the good His followers do in announcing Who Jesus is — involves more than just telling others; it is a way of life. Later in Mark's Gospel we will hear that all of the natural world — symbolized by the sea and wind — obey Jesus in recognition of His being the Anointed [see Mark 4:41].

Trying to grasp what they have observed, the gathered crowd describes the particular quality of Jesus' teaching — he teaches as "one having authority." This teaching authority is matched by his authority over evil. Yet, for all that, the crowd does not seem to be able to identify the source of this authority and power. The source is identified by an unlikely voice—that of the possessed man, who shouts out: "I know who you are — the Holy One of God!"

Throughout the gospel of Mark, amidst the continual teaching and miracle-working of Jesus, the

ON BEING A PROPHET FOR OUR TIMES:

The first miracle Jesus works in each gospel is very significant. The evangelist deliberately chooses it not only to set the tone for his whole gospel, but to especially tell us what we, as other Christs, should be doing to imitate the person whose ministry we're carrying on. That's exactly what St. Mark is doing in his Gospel.

There's more to Jesus exorcising a demoniac than might appear at first glance [Mark 1:21-28]. Jesus' earthly contemporaries thought demons were the source of more than just moral evils. Besides sins, they caused all sorts of sicknesses and other physical and psychological evils. If it's bad, a demon must somehow be behind it. There's no telling exactly what kind of demon possessed the man in the Capernaum synagogue on that fateful Saturday. But it was sharp enough to realize that Jesus of Nazareth was intent on "destroying us" — one demon at a time. In other words, Mark's Jesus conceived of his ministry as a force to eradicate evil.

That means we who follow him and are committed to carrying on his work are expected to buy into his dream. Before anything else, we, like him, should be destroyers of evil — no matter how or where we encounter it. We need only read the rest of Mark's gospel to see how he accomplishes this step by step, until at the end he completely gives himself — and eventually comes back as a totally new creation.

The problem in getting rid of evil is two-fold. How do we know what evil to attack, and how do we eradicate it? Moses supplies us with the first answer — prophets [Deuteronomy 18:15-20].

Our biblical authors presume a person of faith can't get by without prophets in his or her life. They're the community's conscience. That's why God's people panic when Moses — the prophet par excellence — is about to die. How will they continue to know what God wants them to do?

Though some interpret the Lord's promise to raise up another "prophet like Moses from among their kin" as applying to just one special, specific prophet, the original readers of Deuteronomy seem to have interpreted the promise as God's guarantee that there will always be other prophets in their lives. God won't let them fly blind.

Not being biblically oriented, many of us believe Jesus simply set up an institution — the Roman Catholic Church — which tells us through its infallible decrees what God wants of us, pointing out which evils to exterminate. Certainly we should expect the church to be prophetic, but what happens when the evil we encounter actually comes from the church? The late Carroll Stuhlmueller often mentioned that throughout history the community's prophets have rarely been members of the hierarchical structure. It's possible a pope or bishop could be a prophet — Pope Francis — but prophecy usually isn't one of their gifts. Carroll was convinced the prophets God sends are almost always "outsiders." That's why it's essential to know the classic five (or six) rules for separating real prophets from fake prophets — another day, another commentary.

Though the institution rarely is prophetic, it does have a role. After prophets surface the evils to be destroyed, institutional administrators should point out the practical ways to eradicate them. Carroll was convinced prophets make lousy administrators. When put in administrative positions, prophets will quickly frustrate everyone around them. That's not their gift.

Paul, for instance, in his letter to the Church at Corinth, prophetically points out that the risen Jesus wants us free from anxieties [1 Corinthians 7:32-35]. Most Christians today, though, wouldn't agree with his "celibacy conclusion" as a way to accomplish such tranquility. It might have made sense when the Parousia was thought to be just around the corner, but 2,000 years later . . .

We need both prophets and administrators.

. . .

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



should be jumping out of your skins, you've all that red-blood, and fire, and energy and you're holed-up here away from everything! But that's good. That restlessness is a good feeling — you're healthy! Tough it out with the restlessness; it'll be worth it in the long run!" It was the first time in my life that someone had legitimized how I was feeling. I felt like I had just been introduced to myself: "Are you jumping out of your skin? Good, you're healthy!"

We carry infinity inside us, and thus should not be surprised that we will never find full consummation and peace within the finite. Immediately after that novitiate year, I began my theological training, and one of the persons we studied in depth was Thomas Aquinas. He was the second person who helped introduce me to myself.

I was nineteen years old when I first met his thought, and, although some of his insights were a bit beyond my young mind, I understood enough to find in him not just some legitimization for how I was feeling, but also, more importantly, a meta-narrative within which to understand why I was feeling the way I did. Aquinas asks: "What is the adequate object of the human mind and heart?" In other words, what would we have to experience in order to be fully satisfied? His answer: All being, everything! What would we have to experience to be fully satisfied is everything. We would have to know

everything and be known by everybody — a human impossibility in this life. And so it shouldn't be a mystery as to why we live in perpetual disquiet, and why, as Pascal says, all the miseries of the human being come from the fact that we can't sit still in a room for one hour.

The third person that helped introduce me to myself was Sidney Callahan. Reading her book on sexuality as a young seminarian, I was struck by how she linked sex to soul, and how desire — not least sexual desire — has deep roots in the soul. At one point she makes this simple statement. I don't have the exact quote, but it is words to this effect: If you look at yourself and your insatiability and worry that you are too-restless, over-sexed, and somehow pathological in your dissatisfactions, it doesn't mean that you are sick — it just means that you are healthy and not in need of any hormone shots! These were liberating words for a restless, over-sensitive twenty year-old.

A couple of years later, I was introduced to the writings of Henri Nouwen. He — perhaps more than anyone else — gave me permission to feel what I feel. Nouwen, as we know, was such a powerful writer because he was so honest in sharing his own neediness, restlessness, and disquiet. He had a singular talent for tracing out the restless movements within our souls. For instance, in describing his own struggles, he writes: "I want to be a saint, but I also want to experience all the sensations that sinners experience. Small wonder, that life is a struggle."

Finally, of course, there's St. Augustine, and his famed opening to the *Confessions* wherein he summarizes his life-long struggle in the words: "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." We carry infinity inside us, and thus should not be surprised that we will never find full consummation and peace within the finite. Augustine also gave us that wonderful rationalization that we all use to put off into the indefinite future some of the things that we need to do now: Lord, make me a chaste Christian, but not yet!

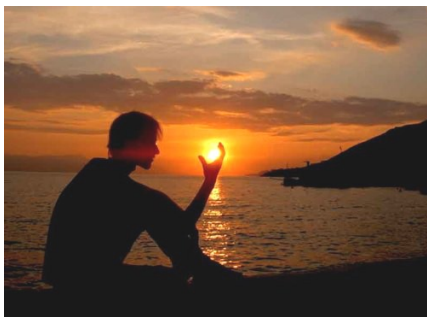
Some people talk about the five people they would like to meet in heaven. These are the five people who have helped me understand what it means to walk on this earth.

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

PROFOUND:

Avarice is a 'sickness of the heart, not of the wallet

—Pope Francis



question lingers — Who is this man? This continues until, at the moment of his death on the cross — another unlikely voice reveals Jesus' identity: the Roman soldier who sees Jesus die calls out: "Truly this man was the Son of God!" [see Mark 15:39].

We can admire the teachings of Jesus. And why not? They have had a major influence on the western world and much beyond. We can marvel at the miracles described in the gospels. But do we really grasp and abide in the truth of who Jesus is? Is Jesus merely a "good man" or the "best of men?" Or is He the "Holy One of God" — the Son of God?

Thomas Merton, Trappist monk and one of the best known American Catholics of the last century, experienced his conversion journey in stages. One of the most important experiences of that journey occurred when he visited the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome. As he gazed at the mosaic of Christ in glory which surrounds the altar, it suddenly dawned on him: the Jesus spoken of by Christians is no mere "historical figure" but the Lord who is alive and who interacts with those who believe in and worship him. This experience contributed powerfully to Merton's conversion to a deeper Christian faith, then to the Catholic faith and eventually to his monastic vocation.

Have we encountered Jesus in this way — as someone alive and who is in relationship with us? Or do we still relate to him as someone from "back then" and "out there"? Pope Francis, in quoting words of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, reminds us: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."

This is Mark's first important statement — Jesus is revealed as the One sent to confront such unclean, ungodly spirits. There are unclean spirits abroad and within. One particular spirit which Jesus came to confront is the spirit of independence. It seems the more advanced a culture becomes in technology, the greater the reliance resides in oneself. Interpersonal commitment in marriage, business, and relationships do not resound with loyalty and perseverance. Practicality, personal advancement, and invulnerability have become virtuous and celebrated. There is a spirit that moves us to hold tightly to what we think without any depending on authority, interchange, or much self-reflection. Little children learn the power of the word — "Mine!" — quite early in their young lives. That is not an unclean spirit unless it is allowed to grow and control one's relationships and life. It is when opinions become the center of one's approach to life that Jesus invites that spirit to be silent and to come out of us.

So many images which Jesus uses depicts a grape relying on a branch and the branch relying on the vine and the vine on the roots and the roots founded in the earth. Jesus invites us not to worry about our being dependent on God. That kind of relating is not a weakness, but the strength of humility. We worry perhaps, that depending means we are not very much, and so with violence we establish ourselves as centers of power who need nothing except acknowledgement from others. In this way then ironically we are ultimately radically dependent on others to support our ultimate shaky identity.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus — as with many other healings — gives the person back himself with the dignity of being known by God. The "authority" with which Jesus speaks and which the crowds find new and amazing, is the creative love of God Who wishes us to know our dignity and not be dominated by the unclean spirit of self-rejection. It is when I know who I really am, that the words of Jesus the new Prophet, not to be afraid or worried become real and freeing.

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

GOD'S WAY:

Uniformity is not nature's way; diversity is nature's way.

—Vandana Shiva

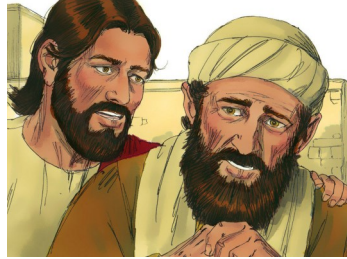
A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS — PART I:

As we enter into this 4th Week in Ordinary Time, St. Mark begins to tell us about Christ's public ministry [Mark 1:21-28]. He does this by giving us the example of a typical day. We have the first half of that typical day as our Gospel text for this week; we will get the second half next weekend.

Mark's "typical day" begins on a Sabbath Day, and it seems to be very intentional that Jesus chooses the Sabbath Day to carry out most of his work. We know that this is going to be one of the most important bones of contention with the Pharisees and others. But, if you think about it, what could be more natural than that the Messiah should conduct much of his ministry on the main Holy Day in the week? By doing so Jesus is giving honor to God — but, of course, this means that he inevitably falls foul of the nit-picking and rule-obsessed Pharisees.

This typical day begins in the synagogue where Jesus exercised the ministry of teaching. His teaching is markedly different from the teaching of the rabbis — "his teaching made a deep impression on them because he taught with authority." The rabbis probably taught with reference to the Law. They would mostly be quoting from one text or another, trying to explain the differences between one rule and another. We know that in their discourses they would often appeal to various authorities, and most of those they quoted would be more senior rabbis. They cited these other opinions to underline the authenticity of their view and to give strength to their teaching.

Jesus takes a completely different approach; he never quoted another teacher to back up his assertions — He did not need to since he was the Son of God and the fountain of all authority. By not using other opinions to back up his teaching he causes the people to realize that he possesses a unique authority and his teaching convinces them absolutely. The people recognize that what Jesus is saying is something completely new and authoritative. They are deeply impressed and find themselves able to resonate at a profound level with his teaching.



Although it doesn't actually say so here, Jesus likely was using parables in his teaching — a practice he did elsewhere also. This would have been another difference between Jesus and the rabbis. These parables brought a creativity and a relevance to his teaching because they were something that the people could easily relate to.

This impression of authority that the people observed as they witnessed Jesus' first day of public ministry is also conveyed by the exorcism of the man possessed by an unclean spirit. In the Jewish world, people were familiar with the ritual of exorcism. It generally involved the burning of some substance to create smoke in order to "smoke out" the unclean spirit [see Tobit 6].

But also, the one who carried out the exorcism usually recited a powerful incantation which invariably called on the names of David and Solomon to assist them. Both David [see 1 Samuel 16] and Solomon had carried out exorcisms and since the current exorcist did not have the authority to expel demons himself he would invoke their names and ancient authority to give weight to his actions.

Jesus needs no fumes, nor does he need to invoke other authorities. Jesus expels demons simply by commanding them to leave their victim. What more could one need to recognize that in Jesus here is a person deeply imbued with authority from above.

Next weekend, we will complete this typical day with the second half of the story where Jesus goes to the house of Simon and Andrew where he heals Simon's mother in law and then goes on to conduct many other healings and exorcisms [Mark 1:29-39].

The typical day of Jesus must have been a full and exhausting day, and yet immediately Jesus says that they must go to the other towns in the neighborhood in order that he can carry on his ministry in those places. So, there is to be no let up for Jesus — he goes from place to place; he teaches; he heals; he casts out devils. Of course, as he continues his ministry a new element gradually enters — that is his

So instead of opposing these two states of life to each other, or trying to figure out which is better, it is much more helpful to recognize that each of these two states of life reveals an essential quality of every full human life. Marriage and celibacy reveal the importance of intimacy and freedom. The gift of marriage is that it gives witness to the essential nature of intimacy in every person's life. A married person lives his or her life by making a commitment to live a life in mutuality and love with another human person. Out of that relationship of respect and intimacy, new life comes. New life for the spouses, new life as family emerges in the gift of children. Of course, the intimacy of marriage is not all hearts and flowers. There are disagreements, there are struggles, there are necessary negotiations. But marriage testifies to the fact that no one can live a full human life without some kind of intimate, committed relationship to another human being. The witness of marriage, then, is a witness to intimacy. The witness of celibacy is a witness to freedom. Because the unmarried person does not assume the responsibilities of a spouse or children, he or she is free to use his or her time and energy for the service of God's people. Celibate persons are not to use such freedom selfishly, but to build the Kingdom of God.

Marriage and celibacy complement each other because every person needs a combination of intimacy and freedom in their lives. The unmarried person requires intimacy. The intimacy of the celibate does not involve sexual expression as it is in marriage. But every celibate person must build and maintain intimate and honest relationships with family and friends. If the unmarried person does not do this, their freedom becomes empty and sterile. Without intimacy in their lives, unmarried people become selfish bachelors and self-absorbed spinsters. Married people require freedom in their lives. Married people need to know and appreciate that their personhood is larger than the roles of spouse or parent. Married people grow when they realize that the call to build God's Kingdom is a larger vocation than simply the call of family. Without the freedom to extend their love beyond spouse and family, their lives can become narrow and stifling, even a kind of oppression.

All of us, then, require a mixture of intimacy and freedom in our lives. Therefore, we should all follow the advice of Paul: "Live the life to which God has called you." If you are called to married life, then live your marriage vocation clearly, giving witness to the intimacy in your life. But at the same time be open to the witness of freedom that comes from celibacy. If you are unmarried, then use your freedom to serve God's people. But do not ignore the witness of married life which reminds you that life is not to be lived in isolation, that a complete life requires deep relationships with others.

If we can live the life to which we have been called, and learn from the example of those who live another vocation, then we can together become the people, and the church that God calls us to be.

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

FIVE PEOPLE WHO HELPED GIVE ME SOME SELF-UNDERSTANDING:

Although I grew up in a loving, safe, and nurturing family and community, one of the dominant memories of my childhood and teenage years is that of being restless and somehow discontent. My life always seemed too small, too confined, a life away from what was important in the world. I was forever longing to be more connected to life, and I feared that other people didn't feel that way, and that I was somehow singular and unhealthy in my restlessness.

I entered the Oblate seminary immediately after high school, and carried that restlessness with me — except that now, entering religious life, I felt even more worry and shame in carrying this disquiet. However, midway through that first year of training — a year which religious congregations call novitiate — we received a visit from an extraordinary Oblate missionary named Noah Warnke — a man who had received numerous civic and church awards for his achievements, and who was widely respected. He began his address to us — the novices — by asking us these questions: "Are you restless? Feeling isolated in this religious house? Feeling lonely and cut off from the world?" We all nodded "yes" — he'd clearly struck a live-chord. "Good," he replied, "you should be feeling restless. My God, you

THE WITNESS OF INTIMACY AND FREEDOM:

In my reflection today, I'm going to step out on thin ice. So, I ask you to be patient and forgiving. Because whenever a celibate person decides to speak on marriage, things can become embarrassing. It is like the two elderly Irish women who were leaving church one Sunday morning. The archbishop of that area had just come to their parish and had preached a lengthy sermon on marriage. As the two women were leaving church, the one said to the other: "Maggie, sure it was a fine homily that his Reverend placed before us this morning on the holy sacrament of marriage! Was it not?" "Indeed it was," said Maggie, "His words were so beautiful, so perfect, so eloquent. I only wish one thing — I wish that I could know as little about the subject as he did."

So why would this celibate take up this perilous topic? Because of what St. Paul writes in his letter to the Church at Corinth. In his letter, Paul gives the Corinthians some advice. He compares the celibate and the married life [1 Corinthians 7:32-35]. Because these words of Paul are so easily and so often misunderstood, they require some comment. We must remember that Paul, as in all of his letters, is addressing a specific congregation at a specific period of time. Paul is trying to give the Corinthians advice on whether they should enter marriage or not. His advice is intended to be very practical. In fact, his central concern is expressed in his introduction to the topic: "I would like all of you to be free of anxiety."

Now Paul knows that both married people and unmarried people are anxious, and he describes their anxiety. He says that the unmarried person is anxious about the affairs of the Lord — whether he or she is doing all that is necessary to build the Kingdom. The married person is also anxious about the affairs of the Lord — for he or she is also called to build God's Kingdom. But the married person is also anxious about pleasing his or her spouse. According to Paul marriage involves more anxiety. That is why Paul says that married persons are divided. They must give some of their anxiety to building the Kingdom and some of their anxiety to pleasing their spouse.

Paul eventually recommends that the Corinthians do not enter into marriage. It is only a recommendation, and it is not given because Paul thinks that there is anything wrong with marriage. Paul recommends celibacy because he believes it's easier — it involves less anxiety. Paul, like all early followers of Christ, believed that Jesus would return in glory within the next few months, that the world would soon come to an end and a new creation be established. Therefore, his advice to the Corinthians at that particular time in history was: Keep it simple. Keep it easy. Don't complicate your life with more responsibilities because the world is coming to an end.

Now subsequent generations of Christians took Paul's words and read them in new contexts. They concluded that celibacy was a higher way of living, that marriage was second rate. If you look at today's passage, however, Paul doesn't say any of that. He prefers celibacy because he thinks it's easier, simpler, in light of the fact that the world is passing away.

You and I do not live in a world where we expect the immediate return of Christ. So what value, if any, are these particular words of Paul to the Corinthian community for us? To answer that question let us look at another part of Paul's letter. Let each of you live the life that has been assigned to you, the life to which God has called you. What Paul clearly believes and what the church today teaches is that every person has a calling from God. The Latin word for calling is "vocation". Every person has a vocation to build God's Kingdom. Some do that through the married life, some do that by remaining single. Most of us here in church today know to which vocation God is calling us. Others among us are still discerning what that call is. This is fine and good. But all of us should know that each of us has a vocation to serve the Lord — either as a married person or as a single person.



controversy and disputation with the scribes and Pharisees. These conflicts become greater and greater, and inevitably they lead to Jesus' death on the Cross of Calvary.

It is useful for us to reflect on this archetypal or characteristic day in Jesus' life. In considering it, we realize the great depths of compassion that Jesus must have drawn on to face all those people who needed healing and exorcising. Those among us who work in the medical profession will surely recognize that they themselves are frequently exhausted in having to face hundreds of people in search of healing, day in day out. It cannot be easy for them, and it cannot have been easy for Our Lord. The long day of teaching and healing must have drained him of everything he had, hence the need for several hours of prayer before dawn. But the Divine Savior is no slacker — he immediately starts to talk of going to the other towns to minister to the people living in those places.

As we consider this typical day in Jesus' life, the question we are left with is how we spend our days. While acknowledging the fact that we have to earn our living and have many obligations, we still need to ask ourselves just how much of our day is spent in healing and teaching the truths of the Gospel. You might not think that you are qualified to be casting out devils. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The key, of course, in Jesus' life is that all this work was backed up with prayer. And by prayer what we mean is quality time communing with God — spending time alone with him deepening our relationship with the God we love. This is where Jesus drew his strength and it is exactly the same place from which we ought to draw our strength.

The work of healing and teaching and exorcising is there to be done — more than ever before. Our task is to step up to the plate and follow the example of our Divine Master.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister S.D.S., 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 [1/20/24] ----- \$ 603.00

Total Offerings: Sunday [1/21/24] ----- \$ 364.00

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].



GREAT EXPECTATIONS:

One of the more delightful cartoons I've seen lately shows a puzzled man standing in a secondhand store looking at a display of antique "The end is near" signs. Religious traditions that believe that history is headed toward a destiny generally assume that the world will end; some think they can unravel signs of its coming — usually in the near future and to the detriment of their adversaries. Paul and his communities expected Christ to return in glory before most of them died. This helps us interpret much of his teaching — including his advice that it is better not to marry. Why start a family if the second coming is right around the bend? As time went on — and on and on — Christian communities began to adjust their expectations. The writing of the Gospels was one result of their adjustment; the written narrative assured that future generations could know Jesus as his companions did.

The early communities had to reorient their spirituality as they accepted the fact that Christ was not about to appear to judge the nations. They began to understand that Christ remained present to them and that they had a much larger and longer mission than they had expected. Paul was already moving in this direction when he called his community to be the body of Christ for their world [see 1 Corinthians 12].

This takes us from expectations of the end into the realm of prophecy — which is not a foretelling of the future, but a reading of God's influence and desires for the here and now. For example, Moses promises the people that God will not abandon Israel, but rather will continue to speak to them through prophets [Deuteronomy 18:15-20]. As the early Christians discovered, the promise of prophets did not end with Jesus; just as his mission would continue, so too would prophecy. The belief that God continues to speak through prophets underlines what the psalmist reminds us about — "If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts" [Psalm 95:7]. This call remains as appropriate today as it was from the times of Moses through Jesus.

That sounds nice and easy, but in reality, it is neither. Discerning God's action and desires requires us to be deeply grounded in tradition and profoundly open to the new. This is obvious what is going on in Jesus' life as it is recorded by St. Mark [1:21-28]. Mark depicts Jesus in a whirlwind of activity — teaching, healing, and battling demons. Curiously, rather than being brought to faith, the people who saw and heard Jesus ended up utterly confused. The least confused were actually his enemies — they understood what was at stake for them. In fact, Mark uses two words to describe this — "astonished" or "amazed", and Jesus taught with authority.

What does their bewilderment tell us? First, it makes it clear that Jesus was not what they expected. The folks in question had gone to listen to a teacher. This was hardly the first time they had heard someone preach in their synagogue.

What Jesus' audience heard left them like children who had tasted only watery vanilla ice cream being taken to a Baskin Robbins — there was so much there that they couldn't take it in. The only way people could explain it was to say that Jesus taught with authority — an authority that he authenticated in a successful skirmish with a demon. People saw that Jesus' word was sufficient to banish an unclean spirit. To citizens of an occupied nation, people who had learned to endure their lot in life, who had grown accustomed to mediocre hopes, Jesus came at them like a thunderstorm in the desert, jolting them out of their tedium.

Having never expected anything like this, most people had no idea how to respond. Some were frightened, others threatened. But to those who would follow him, Jesus offered an amazing new take on life. He rooted his message in their traditions, yet, rather than close the book saying: "That's all folks!", Jesus spurred them to hope that all the promises of old would come true — in ways so new that they would continually be astounded.

Mark wastes no time as he throws us into the middle of a world turning inside out. He shows us

this. We have the authority, the power, to form others into Christian leaders. We have the authority, the power of Jesus Christ if only we stay united to him — the source of the power and the authority that we have received.

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

WHY I BELIEVE IN "GOD WINKS":

Like this woman smelling wildflowers, God winks help me know that I'm headed in the right direction, so I can be mindful and joyful in the moment. For the longest time, I've loved words — writing, reading, hearing all sorts of words — foreign languages, poetry, lyrics, what have you. My love for words has shaped me as a person in more ways than I can count, but in one important, very personal way, it's played a role in my faith.

And that role has taken the shape of "God winks."

Let me preface this by saying that I consider myself a casual Catholic — I'm getting better about incorporating my faith into every day, but it still feels like I have a long way to go. But one thing I've held onto from my cradle Catholic childhood is God winks — something my adolescent brain created because of, once again, my love for words. Looking back, I think when I cooked up this idea, I needed Words of Affirmation from a God that I only ever knew from PSR on Sundays.

What is a 'Godwink'?

Let me draw a line in the sand and give credit where it's due — I did not officially coin the term "Godwink" — at least according to where it matters — the Internet. I haven't read the book *When God Winks*, but my hat off to you, Squire Rushnell, for getting the word in print first. To Squire, a "Godwink" is defined as: "what some people would call a coincidence, an answered prayer, or simply an experience where you'd say: 'Wow, what are the odds of that?'" And sure, my winks from God are coincidences, for all intents and purposes. But probably not something that would make others remark: "Well, would you look at that!"



Personally, my definition is much more manageable logically — I believe in God; He has a plan; I have free will to fulfill that plan if I so choose; and the steps I take toward fulfilling that plan has me on the "right" path. Since that's something only I have control over, my God winks are usually exclusively between God and me — in the form of small intersections of two pieces of my life.

That intersection is usually as small as hearing the same word at the same time from both a conversation I'm having with a friend while shopping, and the music playing over the intercom in the store. But I take that small intersection of life's events as a pat on the back that I'm moving in the right direction, because for me to witness that coincidence, I was in exactly the right place at the right time.

As a perfectionist first-born, it was always reassuring to believe I was on the right path. So when a phrase from my mom's conversation intersected with my reading of the same phrase in a friend's text, I immediately felt a sense of calm — I was where I was meant to be.

I realize I invented this sense of reassurance for myself — and still use it to this day. Maybe that makes me sound unhinged to some people, but I see it as a form of self-care. Those God winks are reminders for me to pause and reflect on where I am, and where I want to be headed. It's a quick gut-check for whether I'm living out my life by my values, and a reminder to make decisions based on my ultimate goals.

God winks are a habit of mindfulness that I've incorporated into my day-to-day. And in that mindfulness, I've also been able to include my faith — faith in God, in trusting the process, and in the idea that Someone much greater than me has my back.

Sure, those God winks might just be coincidence in the end, but it's been a comforting recurring reminder that I have a purpose and inherent worth — and I think that's something everyone should hear every now and then, even if it's inferred through the intersection of an email subject line and country lyrics.

—taken from the writings of Mariah Cressy, which appear on the internet



AUTHORITY:

In Mark's Gospel [1:21-28], the Holy Spirit speaks about the authority of the Lord. Jesus begins to teach in Capernaum. The people are held spellbound because he spoke with authority — not like the scribes. A man comes before Jesus who is in the hand of the power of evil. Jesus makes the devil come out of the man, and the bystanders are amazed because Jesus has such authority.

What do we mean when we speak about the authority of the Lord? What do we mean when we talk about authority in general? In what ways do we exercise authority? In what ways do we exercise the authority of the Lord?

The word authority comes from the Latin word “auctoritas”. The basic meaning of this Latin word is “creator”. The word author also comes from this word. A writer can look at his or her work — an essay, a short story, a novel, a poem, a non-fiction study, etc. — an author can look at this work and say: “This is my creation.” The government recognizes that the author has rights over his or her creation.

When we talk about the authority of the Lord, we recognize that He is the Creator, or Author of the Universe. He has the power to govern the universe. Just as an author can determine what takes place in the short story he or she writes, God can determine what takes place in the universe He has created.

When we talk about authority in general, we speak about the power that a person has received to determine the actions of another person or a group of people. Society creates laws to protect its citizens, and then gives authority to the police to enforce these laws. For example, we give the police the authority to stop our cars if we are driving at 54 MPH on a street where the speed limit is posted as 40 MPH.

But as the source of authority, we can change the laws. If we change the speed limit on the same road to 55 MPH, the policeman no longer has the right to stop us if we are going 54 MPH. In general, authority is intimately connected with its source.

All authority is by nature transitional — that is, all authority except that authority which comes from the Lord. In the Gospel of Mark, the people were amazed because they had never experienced someone speaking with such authority. Jesus held people spellbound because God gave Him the authority to teach the truth. This authority would never be removed from Jesus because Jesus was intimately united to his Father, the source of the authority.

We share in the authority of the Lord to the extent that we are united to the source of this authority. When we are confirmed we receive the power, the authority, to defeat evil in the world and to lead others to Jesus, the source of all truth. This authority is given to us by God. God can remove this authority — and will remove this authority — if we refuse to stay intimately united to him.

The fullness of this authority comes to us in the Sacrament of Confirmation. I hope our young people, our parents who need to direct their children, and all of us — myself included — understand the gravity of this. God has entrusted us with his authority only to the extent that we allow him into our lives. That is the reason why the Church is adamant that we attend Church regularly and receive the sacraments regularly. We need to have union with God so we can bring his authority, his power to the world.

The crowd was spellbound because Jesus spoke with authority — not like the Scribes and Pharisees. People are no different now than they were then. People want to hear the real Word of God, and feel the presence of God in the words of the speaker. We can do this. We have the authority to do this. People can witness the Word of God present in our lives, and then choose to make the Word of God present in their own lives. We can do this. We can make Jesus' presence real for others. We have the authority to do this. People want to learn how to live their lives in such a way that when they conclude their lives they can stand before the Lord saying that they have made His Presence known in the world. We can do



that bewilderment is good for faith; it can startle us into suspecting that there's more afoot than we would ever dream of.

The end he wants us to see coming near is the end of low expectations — because the reign of God is at hand.

—taken from the writings of Brother John Marmion Villa, O.S.B., which appears on the internet.

THE POWER OF JESUS:

Imagine what the scene would have been like 2,000 years ago when Jesus preached at the synagogue in Capernaum [Mark 1:21-28]. Right before their eyes, demons were being cast out, convulsing and shrieking as they left. We can imagine how shaken up and amazed they would have been. What if such a thing were to happen in the middle of Sunday Mass? It would either make us want to come back next week to see what else would happen or make us so afraid that we would never want to come back again.

By such a display of power at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus is demonstrating that, with the Kingdom of God now among us, the reign of Satan has come to an end. As Son of God, He will undo all the evil that the devil has wrought in the world. By forgiving sinners who come to Him, He will show His power over sin. By healing the lame, the blind, and the deaf, He will show His power over illness. By raising the dead, He will show His power over death. However, His greatest triumph over the devil will come when He shows total obedience to the Father's plan, embraces the cross, and rises on the third day.

The state of today's world can make it difficult for us to keep our hope alive. With religious practice in decline, we can start to believe that we are losing the battle. No matter how bleak the world's situation may appear, we have to always remind ourselves that God has already won the victory in Christ. Though sexual abuse is an ongoing problem and the needs of the poor are continually overlooked, we must remember that nothing happens unless our Heavenly Father permits it. He is working quietly in the hearts of all people — believers and unbelievers alike — to shine the light of His Truth.

Not only can we feel discouraged when we see the condition our world is in but also what condition we are in. We are all sinners, struggling with our own inner demons. Because of our failures, we can judge ourselves to be utter hypocrites, and guilt can begin to take hold of us. Here again we need to remind ourselves that Jesus has already won the victory over our personal sin and has conquered our sinful human nature.

God sees the world in a much different way than we do. What looks like failures to us are successes to God. We see this clearly in the cross which seemed at the moment to be the ultimate triumph of sin and death but, instead, ushered in these two millennia of grace. We must take heart then and never give up.

No matter what challenges we are facing, we need never lose hope and need never be afraid. God is in total control. His power is hidden now — known only to those who have faith. But it will one day be made manifest when Christ comes again. So we continue to struggle, and sometimes fail, but we hold on to a lively hope that we will one day know the full freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

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

SPIRITUAL READING:

Spiritual reading is not only reading about spiritual people or spiritual things. It is also reading spiritually — that is, in a spiritual way! Reading in a spiritual way is reading with a desire to let God come closer to us.

The purpose of spiritual reading is not to master knowledge or information, but to let God's Spirit master us. Strange as it may sound, spiritual reading means to let ourselves be read by God!

Spiritual reading is reading with an inner attentiveness to the movement of God's Spirit in our outer and inner lives. With that attentiveness, we will allow God to read us and to explain to us what we are truly about.



WORDS OF ADVICE FROM THE FACE IN THE MIRROR:

Every morning you look me in the eyes after you wake up and as you brush your teeth, and as I look back at you from the mirror I can't help but wonder why are you so mean to me? Why do you hate me? I need to be loved. I need affirmation, but all you do is tear me down — tear yourself down.

I'm looking back at you from the mirror, and so often you feel like I am separate from you. That I am someone else — something you despise and want to hide from. But we are the same person — this body is you, and you are this body.

You compare me, your body, to everyone else. Why? God made every person unique, and yet you only want to be like all the others. You measure yourself by how superior or inferior you are to every person that passes you by.

You don't even care what other people say — words don't hurt you because you've already heard all the worst ones from yourself. The hurricane of verbal assaults that you hurl at yourself cut much deeper than what others could say. You know you. You know your weaknesses, your flaws, the parts you want to hide with loose clothing.

You don't ask: "mirror mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" because you already know the answer — and it's the girl next door; it's the guy from the football team. Instead you say something that sounds more like: "mirror, mirror, on the wall, I hate myself and envy them all."

Every reflective surface is another opportunity to hate yourself. And aren't you tired of it?

It's time to stop — stop looking at yourself in the mirror and hating who you are.

If your definition of beauty and worth is measured solely by what you see in this mirror, that's your problem and it's up to you to fix that. Take control. You are not a powerless victim to the lies of a Photoshopped world. Reclaim the meaning of beauty and remind yourself all day every day so you can rewrite your own inner dialogue.

- Because beauty is in a heart that loves.
- Beauty is in a body that serves another.
- Beauty is a mind in pursuit of the truth.

Beauty is not defined by a ratio of muscle to fat; it's not the size of your pants or the number of people who want to date you. Beauty is in looking at Christ with the eyes of your soul and reflecting Him out to the world.

Aren't you worn out from the self-inflicted wounds of criticism? Hating yourself is exhausting; loving yourself is reviving. You deserve better, and it can start right now. It won't be easy, rewiring your brain to see the real you instead of the lesser version of you that you've measured against everyone else. But please try. It's a battle that so many fight — but even more have given up on. Don't give up. Courage is in continuing to fight your demons when your demons have won more times than you.

Look in the mirror and see yourself — not the despised, less-than-perfect, not-good-enough version, but the version Christ sees. He sees everything and loves you just the same. He sees a beauty beyond words because there's no one like you — "You are altogether beautiful my love, and there is no flaw in you" [Song of Songs 4:7].

—taken from the writings of Christina Mead, a staff person at Life Teen.

WELL SAID:

It is hard to keep money matters in perspective — wealth makes us so many promises. But only you are faithful, Lord. You are perfect in wisdom and goodness, and you would never deceive me. I accept your warning, Lord. Love of money can block the action of your grace. Have mercy on me and everyone tempted by this distraction from you. Jesus, I trust in you.

**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].**

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday:	2 Samuel 15:13-16:13; Mark 5:1-20
Tuesday:	2 Samuel 18:9-19:3, Mark 5:21-43
Wednesday:	2 Samuel 24:2-17, Mark 6:1-6
Thursday:	1 Kings 2:1-12, Mark 6:7-13
Friday:	Malachi 3:1-4, Hebrews 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40
Saturday:	1 Kings 3:4-13, Mark 6:30-34

5th Week in Ordinary Time: Job 7:1-7, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

HEALING OUR HEARTS THROUGH FORGIVENESS:

How can we forgive those who do not want to be forgiven? Our deepest desire is that the forgiveness we offer will be received. This mutuality between giving and receiving is what creates peace and harmony. But if our condition for giving forgiveness is that it will be received, we seldom will forgive! Forgiving the other is first and foremost an inner movement. It is an act that removes anger, bitterness, and the desire for revenge from our hearts and helps us to reclaim our human dignity. We cannot force those we want to forgive into accepting our forgiveness. They might not be able or willing to do so. They may not even know or feel that they have wounded us. The only people we can really change are ourselves. Forgiving others is first and foremost healing our own hearts.

**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.

