

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer to St. Joseph ~**

To you,  
O blessed Joseph,  
we have recourse  
with hearts filled with confidence,  
and earnestly beg you  
to take us under your protection.

By that fatherly love  
with which you cherished  
the Child Jesus,  
we beseech you and we humbly pray  
that you will look down  
with gracious eyes  
upon the inheritance  
which Jesus Christ  
purchased by his blood,  
and will assist us in our need  
by your power and strength.

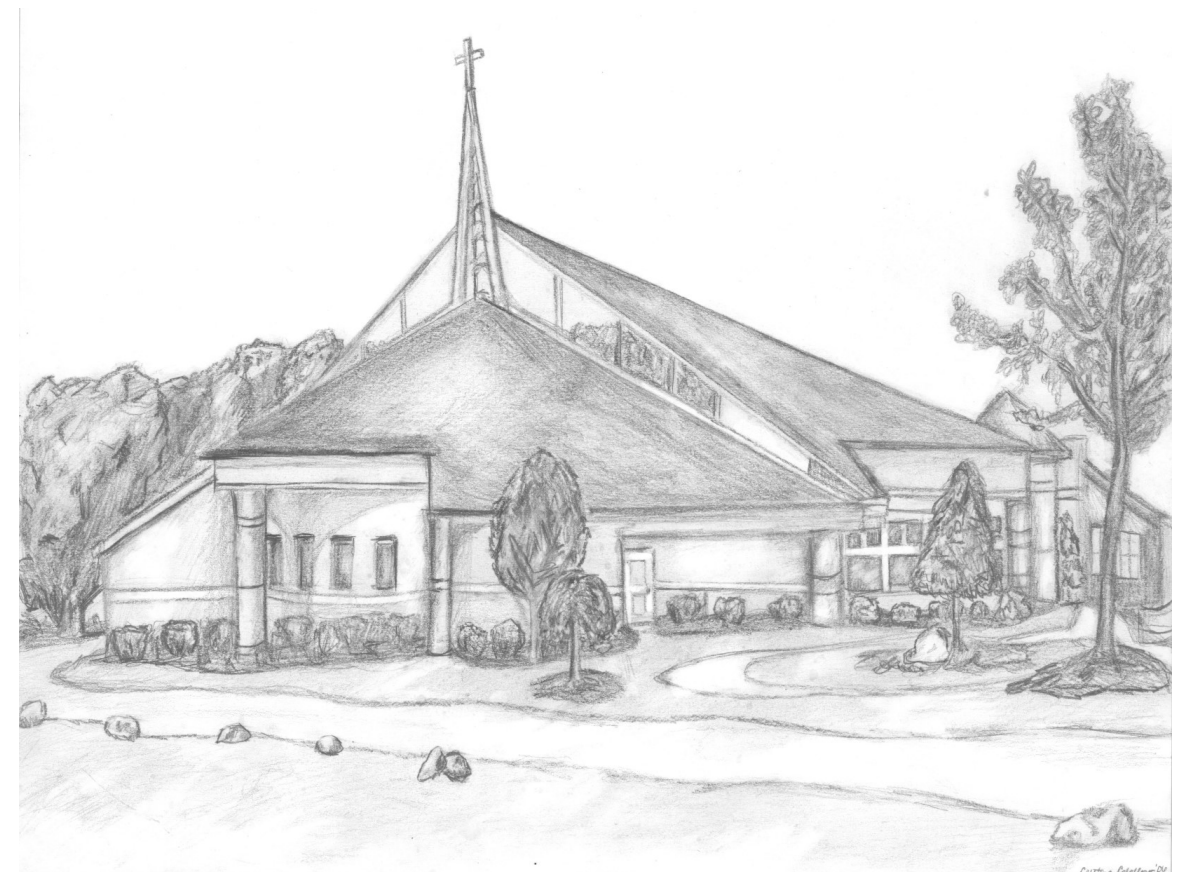
Defend,  
O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family,  
the chosen offspring of Jesus Christ.  
Keep from us,  
O most loving Father,  
all error and corruption.  
Aid us from on high,  
most valiant defender,  
in this conflict  
with the powers of darkness.

And even as of old  
you rescued the Child Jesus  
from the perils of his life,  
so now defend God's holy Church  
from the snares of the enemy  
and from all adversity.  
Shield us ever under your patronage  
that, following your example  
and strengthened by your help,  
we may live a holy life,  
die a happy death,  
and attain to everlasting bliss in heaven.  
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.*

**PENANCE SERVICE:**

Our community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on **Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**. Our service is centered around reflections of the various characters involved in the passion and death of Jesus. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to bring ourselves from our sinful ways back to the Lord. As we confront our own sinfulness, we realize that we, too, have a part to play in the death of Jesus. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be a time for individual confessions following the service, for those who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Please join us.

**LENTEN NOTES:**

The season of Lent has begun. During this sacred time, each of us is called to spiritual growth — particularly through a turning away from sin. Lent is a time for “new beginnings” — a time to grow in our relationship with God and each other. There are 3 major spiritual practices during Lent to which Scripture calls us: **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.**

**—LENTEN DEVOTIONALS:**

On the table in the Narthex of the Chapel are 3 Lenten Devotionals for you. **The Little Purple Book** is a Young Person’s devotional. **The Little Black Book** is for High School and Adults. Finally, **The Word Among Us** is a Scripture centered devotional based on the daily scripture readings.

**—LENTEN REGULATIONS:**

**Good Friday** is a day of **fast** for all between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine. Fasting means that one full meal for the day is allowed, along with two light meals [snacks]. No eating between meals. Those not included in these “ages” are encouraged to take upon themselves some aspects of the fast, whenever possible.

**All Fridays** during Lent are days of **abstinence** from meat, for those who are fourteen and older. Again, those not included in these “ages” are encouraged to participate whenever possible.

**MEN’S RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00—8:30 PM will be our annual Spring Men’s Retreat.** All men of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Men’s Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John.** We are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **Sign up on the retreat sheet located on the easel in the narthex of Our Lady Chapel or contact Patty in the Chapel Office (440) 473-3560 or [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org)**

**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: April 7-14-21-28.** 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 the victims of the tornadoes in Ohio
- For our Muslim brothers and sisters during this time of Ramadan
- 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 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 Margot Giordano, mother of David [\*75], Anthony [\*76], and Monica [\*83] Giordano, grandmother of Christina [\*05] and Anthony [\*07] Giordano
- For Inge Schmidt, mother of Megan [\*05] and Peter [\*09] Schmidt-Sane.
- For Richard Jeffreys [\*59]
- For Dennis Brennan [\*59], brother of Thomas [\*61], John [\*65], and James [\*71] Brennan
- For Michael Nestor [\*98]
- For Paula Sieminski, mother of Andrew Sieminski [\*18]
- For Herman Wenker, father of Chris Wenker [\*89].
- For William Langley [\*58]
- For Christine Maharg, mother of Lily Maharg [\*21]

**CONVERTED TO WHAT?**

Metanoia, conversion, is an ancient concept that is deeply embedded in the monastic worldview. Early seekers went to the desert to escape the spiritual aridity of the cities, and to concentrate on things of God. “Flight from the world” — separation from the systems and vitiated values that drove the world around them — became the mark of the true contemplative. To be a contemplative in a world bent on materialism and suffocated with itself, conversion was fundamental. But conversion to what?

The answer never changes. In every great religious tradition the concept is clear — to be a contemplative we must be converted to the consciousness that makes us one with the universe, in tune with the cosmic voice of God. We must become aware of the sacred in every single element of life. We must bring beauty to birth in a poor and plastic world. We must restore the human community. We must grow in concert with the God who is within. We must be healers in a harsh society. We must become all those things that are the ground of contemplation, the fruits of contemplation, the end of contemplation.

The contemplative life is about being in the world differently. What needs to be changed in us? Anything that makes us the sole center of ourselves. Anything that deludes us into thinking that we are not simply a work in progress, all of whose degrees, status, achievements, and power are no substitute for the wisdom that a world full of God everywhere, in everyone has to teach us. Anything that drowns out the voice of the Ultimate within must be damped.

To become a contemplative, a daily schedule of religious events and practices is not enough — we must begin to do life, to be with people, to accept circumstances, to bring good to evil in ways that speak of the presence of God in every moment.

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

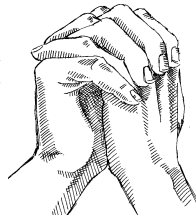


**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- For John Zippay, family friend of Bernadette and Stephen Ritley, who is critically ill.
- 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.
- 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 Josephine Fernando, mother of Melvin [\*83] and Raymond [\*88] Fernando, mother-in-law of Imelda Deogracias Fernando [\*88], who is ill.
- For Pam Spicer, wife of former Gilmour coach, Bob Spicer, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Richard DeBacco, father of Michelle Chiacchiari [\*96], father-in-law of Mark Chiacchiari [\*94], grandfather of Aurelia [\*28] and Olivia [\*30] Chiacchiari, who is undergoing treatment for lymphoma
- For Marc Williams who is critically ill with ALS
- For Shobir Corraya, brother of Brother Victor Corraya, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for a brain hemorrhage.
- For Frances Meyers who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Janie Brooks, mother of Trustee, Sherri Beedles, grandmother of Alexander Beedles [\*22], who is ill.
- For Tom Ward, uncle-in-law of Housekeeping associate, Natasha, who is undergoing treatment and surgery for a serious infection.
- For Debbie Langer, friend of Cindy Frimel, who was diagnosed with brain cancer.
- For Denise Mardano, who is battling liver cancer.
- For Sheila Fitzpatrick, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Joseph Michael, father of former Gilmour LS religion teacher, Colleen Michael, who is undergoing treatment for ALS.
- For Fathers Don Dilg, C.S.C., and Ken Molinaro, C.S.C., who are all under the care of hospice.
- For Ursula Wyras, mother of Janet Heryak, grandmother of Lillian [\*09], Rosa [\*12] and Edwin [\*17] Heryak, who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Rosalie Massey, Middle School Associate, who is recovering from Knee Replacement Surgery
- For Loretta Peterson, mother of Christopher [\*69], Mark [\*70] and Guy [\*73] Peterson, who is ill.



**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.



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, March 27<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: Holy Week**

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, March 17: 5 <sup>th</sup> Week in Lent	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Monday, March 18:	NO MASS
Tuesday, March 19: St. Joseph	NO MASS
Wednesday, March 20:	NO MASS
Thursday, March 21:	NO MASS
Friday, March 22:	NO MASS
Saturday, March 23: Palm Sunday Weekend	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday Weekend	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream

**ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL:**

Over the years, we have partnered with St. Adalbert School, located on East 83<sup>rd</sup> Street. Recently, some of their families have had some unfortunate experiences. and we thought we may be able to help. Please contact Patty in the Chapel office [440-473-3560] for more information if you would like to help.



There is a family who lost everything in a house fire. The family is ok, but all of their clothing and belongings were lost. They have three girls. Two 1<sup>st</sup> graders, and one 4<sup>th</sup> Grader. Clothes and shoe sizes are available from Patty.

There is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade boy who is in a medically-induced coma. Stuffed animals or other get-well gifts would be appreciated.

And finally, there is a teacher who recently found themselves without a home. Gift Cards would be

**GOOD ADVICE:**

The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

—Thomas Edison



**REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK:**

The lessons for today reveal a tension in our human relationship to God, and certainly to Jesus. We are sometimes so sure we know who God is and what God does. We put a lot of faith in the certainty of our knowledge. But all too often we let the limits of our human knowledge limit the power of God and the work of Jesus in our lives. Gracefully, for us, Jesus keeps challenging that certainty. That is what happened in the Scripture Readings for this 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent.

Some people, the Pharisees in particular, were unable to let go of ideas about God that were frankly not very loving of God or their neighbors. Yet, many people were open to the way Jesus was speaking to them, even if he was speaking to them like no one had even spoken to them before. In fact, that newness of perspective was what most caught their attention. They were hungry for the word of God. It was the people who were most certain they had all the answers who would not listen, because Jesus challenged their authority and their power.

In many ways, Jesus is planting seeds — seeds that will first die and then grow into new life. Jesus loved this world enough to die for its salvation, but he detested it enough not to be seduced by its downward-ways of choosing the meaning of life. The same way of life needs to be found within us. This process begins with our following Jesus and choosing selflessness as our personal life-style. Dying to our selfishness, may be live more and more for the salvation of others.

Jeremiah is known for his indictments of the House of Israel. In the past he has warned them about the consequences of being resistant to God's law. He even has had times when he has felt sorry for himself and for his having listened to the word of God. But on this 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent, Jeremiah is quite energetic and excited about what he now hears from God. He is speaking to the House of Israel who are in their captivity. Something new is going to happen, and it is a promise from God to make a new covenant with the whole people of Israel — a covenant that will lead to a new and different way of life [Jeremiah 31:31-34].

What is new is the word “within” — there is a new emphasis on interiority. The Spirit of God will inspire each person to know what is the proper response. In the former relationship with God — externals were everything. The new covenant will not be written on stone, but within the hearts of the covenanted people.

In the previous covenant, God promises to human sinfulness buried in the waters of the flood [see Genesis 7]; now in this new and latest covenant of love, God will see deep inside their hearts. The covenant is embedded within them. And that covenant remains “within” even though the external execution of response may be imperfect. God does not give up on Israel's becoming God's people and their allowing God to be their “master”. This is a promise of great consolation and relief for those in captivity for their pasts.

And Jesus is part of that covenant — embedded within humanity. “Sir, we would like to see Jesus”, the Greeks tell Phillip. Jesus is about to be seen or “glorified” by not only the Greeks who are in Jerusalem for the Passover, but by us as well. Next week we will begin watching Jesus while holding our palms.

Jesus, in John's Gospel, indicates that the “hour” for His glorification has arrived. He goes on to say that like a grain of wheat which must die to its being just a grain of wheat — and is planted in the ground in order to bring forth food — so Jesus Himself must receive His hour of dying so as to bring forth life [John 12:20-33]. The dying is the great time of “seeing” Jesus. Jesus sees this “hour” as the great act of serving God's people. This is almost an exact pre-lecture of what Jesus will tell the Apostles after washing their feet [see John 13]. Those who desire to follow Jesus will have some dying to do so that they might serve God's people.

**LIVING THE COVENANT:**

Why do we belong to organized religions? Though it flies in the face of popular religion, neither God in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor Jesus in the Christian Scriptures, directly command us to do so. Our sacred authors presume that we've committed ourselves to being disciples of God and the risen Jesus, and have sealed our commitment with various covenants — but in none of those agreements are we expected to join a specific religion.

Scholars tell us that organized religions came into existence for one basic reason — to help us have an experience of God in our lives. By regularly joining together with others who've made the same commitments, it should be easier to surface the divine around and in us.

The late Ed Hays once remarked: “Objectively we could do everything the risen Jesus expects of us without being a church member. But practically few of us can pull that off by ourselves. Organized religion is essential for the vast majority of Christians.”

The concept of church membership comes into play today because of God's promise to Jeremiah to “make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah” [Jeremiah 31:31-34]. This agreement, unlike the Sinai covenant, will be placed within them, written on their hearts — no longer just inscribed on stone tablets. “All, from least to greatest, shall know me,” says the Lord.

In Hebrew, to “know” someone or something means more than just having an intellectual familiarity with the thing or person — it means to actually experience that someone or something. When talking about knowing someone of the opposite sex, it usually means to have intercourse — as in the Genesis genealogies, and in Luke when Mary tells Gabriel — “I do not know man.”

In Jeremiah's covenant, the prophet is convinced the deeper one's commitment to God becomes, the deeper one will experience God in the depth of his or her being. The authors of our Christian Scriptures agree. But their road to having that experience runs through Jesus of Nazareth. If we're to experience God in our daily lives, we must do what the historical Jesus did to experience God in his daily life.

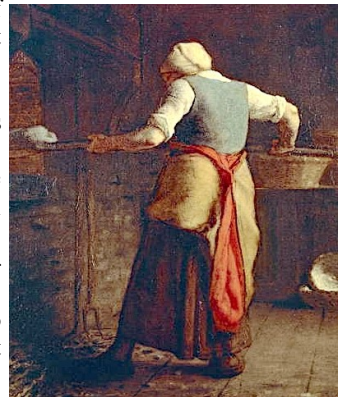
Our unknown Hebrews writer hits the nail on the head. Like Jesus, we must first learn obedience through suffering. We don't find God's presence by walking into a magnificent cathedral, or listening to a majestic organ recital. God only becomes present when we generously give ourselves to others. Only those who imitate his painful giving will experience his God in their lives [Hebrews 5:7-9].

John's Jesus agrees [John 12:20-33]. In one of Scripture's best-known lines, Jesus reminds his followers of something all farmers know, but rarely apply to their personal lives — “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” Life only comes from death.

But Jesus also shares his personal history of surfacing God — “Whoever loves his life loses it, but whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.” Since for John, eternal life begins right here and now, we're already experiencing God long before we step through the pearly gates.

I'm afraid, as necessary as they are, many of our religious institutions only provide us with an experience of the religious institution. They rarely give us opportunities to die enough to ourselves to provide us with an experience of God in our lives. Were these institutions more welcoming communities and actually developed ministries — for instance, to women, children and LGBT individuals — instead of building cathedrals, perhaps we really could do what God intends us to do. They'd be providing us with occasions to experience the kind of death Jesus experienced.

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



dealings with us made it obvious that no child of hers could quash her motherly love — no matter what we did.

On this 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Lent, Jeremiah gives us an image of a motherly God who wants nothing to do with punishment. When the people break their covenant with the God who freed them, what does God do? God turns to them to offer a better deal than they had known before [Jeremiah 31:31-34]. God had brought them out of Egypt; when they were unfaithful, God said: “I will make a new covenant with you. This covenant will join us heart to heart. It will affect you so deeply that our mutual love will teach the world all they need to know about me.”



Ours is a God who gambles on love — over and over again.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus explains the same dynamic in relation to his life and mission. As he did in predicting his passion, Jesus revealed that, as God’s representative, he would prove the boundless power of love through vulnerability — becoming like a seed that falls to the ground and dies in order to produce fruit [John 12:20-33]. The most Godly thing about Jesus’ vulnerability was that, unlike our own weakness and limitations, it was freely chosen [see John 10:18]. The most amazing thing about it was that it revealed the true character of God as a divine lover who constantly tries to woo us beyond our broken covenants and our attempts to fashion the divine in our own image.

In the Letter to the Hebrews, we have a work that seems to have been a long sermon — a synagogue “message of encouragement” — slightly revised to function like a letter. Whoever wrote this letter is a mystery, but some scholars suggest that it was Priscilla — the woman who, along with her husband Aquila, collaborated with Paul and continued his ministry. In that case, it may be the only New Testament work — and recorded synagogue sermon — written by a woman.

The Letter to the Hebrews aims to strengthen a community under persecution and in danger of denying their faith. And so, the author emphasizes Christ’s complete solidarity with us in all things, and it highlights his example for those undergoing temptation. The author carefully explains that Christ himself suffered and cried out to “the one who was able to save him from death.” The author goes on to say that “He was heard — Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered” [Hebrews 5:7-9].

Hebrews tells us that Jesus himself went through a process of growth in union with God; he had to learn to trust beyond reasonable hope in order to experience what God could do in and for him. His faithfulness to God’s call, his reliance on love over all else, opened him to the unimaginable future of resurrected/eternal life. In that, he revealed God’s glory, the power of God to bring life out of death.

From Jesus, we learn that divine power is the most subversive force in all of creation. Rather than crush opponents, God’s power undermines evil and the violence it perpetrates. As Mahatma Gandhi explained: “Love is the strongest force the world possesses, yet it is the humblest imaginable.”

Ultimately, the greatest leap of faith Christians are invited to take is to believe in this entirely counterintuitive and countercultural idea that the forces of humility, generous love, and tender, nonviolent creativity are the instruments of world change. This is Jesus’ message. He taught that falling into the ground and dying lead to ousting the ruler of this world.

Christ’s ongoing offer is to draw everything to himself. To believe that is to have faith that when the forces of evil unleash their worst, they ultimately expose themselves impotent against love.

As we draw near Holy Week, our liturgy invites us to reassess the creed we really live by. Do we look to Christ to be delivered from punishment or harm? If so, what does the cross tell us about that? Are we willing to gamble everything on the power of love? To the extent that we choose the latter, we are on our way to being drawn into the very heart of a motherly God.

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

In his prayer in the garden, Jesus confirms that this is exactly what is taking place. His being faithful has a great cost, and the hour of his paying the price is near. Jesus receives comfort from a voice from heaven, but Jesus says that it is not for His sake, but for the comforting of those who will follow His way of loving the world by dying to its ways and for its salvation.

The “within” of Jesus is about to be “outed” or “seen”. We say that what goes up must come down. So too, what is inside will be revealed eventually. For Jesus, what must go down will rise again; what must die for the world, will give life to the world. In John’s Gospel, we “see Jesus” from the inside and the out.

I recently visited the L’Arche Community of Daybreak, in Toronto. L’Arche is a community of communities around the world dedicated to the dignity and well-being of its mentally-challenged “Core Members”. I was privileged to be a small part of Daybreak thirty years ago. Many of the Core Members — Residents — are still thriving there and still remember me.

One striking feature of the wonderful women and men who have lived there is they have little sense of time. They were glad to see me, hugged me, and welcomed me back. But when they left for their jobs, they didn’t say good bye or ask when I would return. They also did not say thank you to the Assistants who made their lunches and who would welcome them back to their communities for dinner. The Assistants serve from their insides and die to the worldly way of being paid in words or money. Their insides — their “withins” — come out in the gestures of faithful patience and love they live their “hour” one moment at a time, as each day breaks. I am sure they would love hearing a voice from heaven once in a while telling them that God was grateful. Maybe they do.

The Core Members are timeless in their affection, but they did not say anything about seeing me later or “Thanks for coming”. The affection of the Assistants is timeless as well. As servants, washing feet, floors, faces, is how they care for the Body of Christ. God’s love is timeless as well. As Jesus continues encouraging us to follow His ways — as we wash tears away, dirt away, memories away — the same thing happens. This “world” of which Jesus speaks is also “within” us and we want a “Thank you” now and then, and a warm payment of celebration or glorification in its ways. Jesus was glorified and His timeless gesture of salvation was not greeted with any thanks then. His “Hour” by which we receive eternal life is the One Act of Thanksgiving expressed in His whole Life and validated on His being raised up to the Cross. He became grateful for Who He was even to the death on that Cross of Glory.

It is my prayer today that we can all renew our faith as students of the living Christ. I pray we will each listen to the ways Jesus speaks to us like no one has ever spoken to us. We might learn something about ourselves and others, and how much God loves us all.

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

### SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — APRIL 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.

### A CALL:

Come to the quiet, so that the Quiet might come to you.



**GLORIFYING GOD BY OUR LIFE:**

In listening to the words of John's Gospel, we see that Jesus realizes that he is coming very close to the cataclysmic events that were to become the hinge points of the whole of human history — his own death and resurrection. I think that we can never overstate the impact of his death and resurrection. Everything that existed before, everything that exists now, and everything that will exist in the future depends upon and takes its meaning from these events. Many people live their lives quite oblivious to this fact, and I suppose many more in the future will do the same. But if we are to make sense of the world and all that is in, it then we must come to the realization that what occurred on those three days almost twenty-one centuries ago is of absolutely crucial importance. "Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," says Jesus, and he gives us that beautiful proverb about the grain of wheat — "unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest" [John 12:20-33].

As we know, these words were uttered just a few days before Jesus himself was due to die and rise again in order to bear the greatest harvest of all. Jesus dies so that many might live — so that we all might live — all who chose his way of self-sacrifice. This is a harvest far greater than any mere sheaf of wheat. This is a harvest of souls — a bounteous harvest of souls won for eternal life. So, we can see why Jesus calls his death "a glorification". That darkest moment of all — especially considering the circumstances — is turned into a victory, not only for Christ, but also for all of us.

We spend this last week of Lent in what we can only call "The Shadow of the Cross." As we approach Good Friday, each day we spend a little more time in meditation on the terrible events that unfolded all those years ago. As Christians our natural instinct is to accompany Jesus on that last journey, and feel deeply for him as we witness from a distance the brutalities and indignities he experienced for our sake. The Cross does cast a shadow across the life of every Christian. We all experience loss, sorrow and suffering at one time or another, but knowing that our Divine Savior walked the same way before us gives us the strength to carry on. And we carry on full of hope precisely because of the victory he won for us on the Cross of Calvary.

In the words of John's Gospel [12:22-30], and in their echo in the Letter to the Hebrews [Hebrews 5:7-9], we get some idea of the anguish Jesus went through. Unlike the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there is no Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane in John's Gospel — for John the garden is merely the place where Jesus is arrested. The suffering of the Agony in the Garden is transferred to this scene before the Passover. John records the words: "Now my soul is troubled." Jesus knows that his hour is at hand — that the time has come for all that was foretold to take place.

The other Gospels — with almost the same words in each of them — record Jesus praying: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done" [see Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42]. Here in John, the incident is formulated differently. There is no vigil of prayer and the words are posed as a rhetorical question to the disciples: "What shall I say: Father save me from this hour?" It's a rhetorical question because Jesus answers it himself by saying: But it was for this very reason that I came. This is quite a different approach. There seems to be almost no doubt at all. Jesus approaches his passion as if it were something for which he had long prepared. He then goes on to say: "Father glorify your name." It is as if by asking the Father to glorify his name that Jesus wishes the whole thing to be brought speedily to a conclusion.

This is no Agony in the Garden. This is almost exhilaration or an excited anticipation which is intensified by the extraordinary reply from heaven — "I have glorified my name and I will glorify it again." Another thing to note here: in the Gospel of John, this is first time that the voice of God is heard



muscled than those around us.

We all nurse the secret dream of glory. Partly this is healthy — a sign that we are emotionally well. However, this is something that needs to grow and mature inside of us. Our secret dream of glory is meant to mature so that eventually we will begin, more and more, to envision ourselves as standing out, not by talent, looks, muscles, and speed, but by the depth of our compassion and the quality of our forgiveness.

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

**EXPERIENCING GOD:**

Our Redeemer, Lord Jesus Christ, had two defining relationships in the world. Jesus was amicable to people; He felt people's pain, suffering, struggle, and brokenness. He was moved by the death of Lazarus and by the pain of Martha and Mary. At the same time, He never neglected to maintain His deep relationship with His Father. God sent His only Son for the salvation of humankind. To fulfill this mission, Jesus had to be fully obedient to His Father. He had to go through a painful experience in the Garden of Gethsemane to carry the Cross and offer His life on the Cross. Then, after His burial, He was resurrected. Jesus brought salvation to all humankind through His suffering, death, and resurrection. A permanent connection between God and humanity has been made.

I believe that during this Lenten season, before Holy Week and the Easter Festival, God invites us to be aware of His loving initiatives for our redemption. God knows us and feels our struggles, pains, sufferings, helplessness, failures, and brokenness. God invites us all to build a consistent relationship, leaving behind our sinful words and deeds. God wants us to be resurrected from our human fall.

This time of the liturgical calendar requires positive changes in our lives. Our spiritual resurrection is needed daily through our careful reflection on Jesus' suffering, death, burial, and resurrection. We must be optimistic about events, persons, successes, and failures. A positive attitude is essential in life as it helps us to remain healthy physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Jesus waits for us; He wants to come into our lives and live there; we need to open the doors of our heart for Jesus as our "Messiah, the Son of God."

The Lenten season is a blessed time for us, when we may reflect upon our life through prayers and examining our conscience daily. It is a time for us to feel the grace of God. Now, let us reflect on Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for us. Let us be obedient to God as the followers of Jesus Christ. We may reflect upon our religious vows, especially the vow of obedience. Our surrender to God will make us free from all kinds of slavery and bring resurrection into our lives as we are going to celebrate the Easter Festival. Then, the incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection will be significant in our lives, and we will feel true and unfading joy and peace in our lives, hearts, families, and society. Moreover, our life will be the life of God and the life of Jesus Christ.

—Brother Propidy Placid Gomes, C.S.C.

**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.

**A GOD WHO GAMBLES ON LOVE:**

When I was 4, I told my mother that I was running away and would never come back. She replied that any child of hers who ran away and never came back would receive a punishment she or he would never forget. Well, that was enough for me! — logic was not my strong suit then. At the same time, her

**DIFFERENT KINDS OF GLORY:**

We all nurse a secret dream of glory. We daydream that in some way we will stand out and be recognized. And so we fantasize about great achievements that will set us apart from others and make us famous. The daydreams vary but, inside them, always we are at the center — the most admired person in the room, the one scoring the winning goal, the ballerina star, the actor picking up the Academy award, the author writing the best-seller, the intellectual winning the Nobel Prize, or even just the one in the circle who tells the best story.

What we are chasing in all this is notice, appreciation, uniqueness, and adulation so that we can be duly recognized and loved. We want the light to be shining on us. And this isn't all bad or unhealthy. We are built to stand in the spotlight. Our own reality is massively — sometimes oppressively — real to us, and scientists today tell us that the universe has no single center, but that everywhere and every person is its center. And so it is not a big secret that each of us feels ourselves at the center and wants to be recognized as being there. We nurse a secret dream of glory and, partly, this is healthy.

Jesus defines glory very differently than we do. Real glory — for him — is not the glory of winning a gold medal, of being a champion, or of winning an Oscar. What's less healthy in our daydreams is how we envision that glory. In our fantasies, glory almost always consists in being famous, in standing out, in achieving a success that makes others envious, in somehow being the best-looking or the brightest or the most talented person in the room. In our fantasy, glory means having the power to actuate ourselves in ways that set us above others, even if that is for a good motive. For instance, some of our fantasies are daydreams of goodness, of being powerful enough to squash evil. Indeed, that was the messianic fantasy. Before Jesus was born, good-hearted and religious people prayed for a Messiah to come and, in their fantasy, that Messiah was generally envisaged as a worldly superstar — a person with a superior heart and superior muscles, a Messiah who would reveal the superiority of God by out-muscling the bad.

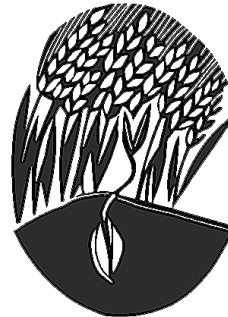
But, as we see from the Gospels, real glory doesn't consist in out-muscling the bad, or anyone else. When Jesus was being crucified, he was offered precisely the challenge to prove that he was special by doing some spectacular gesture that would leave all of his detractors stunned and helpless — “If you are the Son of God, prove it, come down off the cross! Save yourself!” [see Matthew 27:40].

But, with a subtlety that's easy to miss, the Gospels teach a very different lesson. On the cross, Jesus proves that he is powerful beyond measure — not by doing some spectacular physical act that leaves everyone around him helpless to make any protest, but in a spectacular act of the heart wherein he forgives those who are mocking and killing him. Divine kingship is manifest in forgiveness — not in muscle. That is real glory, and that is the one thing of which we really should be envious — namely, the compassion and forgiveness that Jesus manifested in the face of jealousy, hatred, and murder.

We see this illustrated in the Gospels in the incident where James and John come to Jesus and ask him to give them the seats of glory at his side [see Mark 10]. Jesus takes their request seriously and does not, on that occasion, caution them against pride. Rather he asks them: “Can you drink from the cup of suffering that I shall drink?” In naiveté, they answer: “We can!” Jesus replies: “The cup that I shall drink you shall drink, but as for the seats of glory at my right hand or left, these are not mine to give.”

What Jesus is saying, in effect, is this — You will taste suffering, everyone will, and that suffering will make you deep. But, it won't necessarily make you deep in the right way. Suffering can make you deep in compassion and forgiveness, but it can also make you deep in bitterness and anger. However only compassion and forgiveness bring glory into your lives.

Jesus defines glory very differently than we do. Real glory, for him, is not the glory of winning a gold medal, of being a champion, of winning an Oscar, or of being an object of envy because of our looks or our achievements. Glory consists in being deep in compassion, forgiveness, and graciousness — and these are not often spawned by worldly success, by being better-looking, brighter, richer, or better



— there is no voice at the Baptism, and no account of the Transfiguration.

With this announcement from heaven at such a crucial moment we see the extraordinary closeness between Jesus and the Father — their wills are absolutely united. The self-doubt that is expressed in the Synoptic Gospels is completely and totally absent. But John lets us know that facing his passion and death will still cost Jesus something — “now my soul is troubled.”

As a priest, you see many people face their own death. It is one of the many privileges of this wonderful vocation. These days, however, many people are deprived of the opportunity of experiencing this sacred moment through coma or heavy medication.

Some people are naturally very afraid and need reassurance, but you would be surprised at how many really face the prospect of imminent death with great equanimity and faith. They take comfort in the knowledge of the victory Jesus has won for them and in the promises of God. Jesus faced his death; and because of this we can face ours.

Many years ago, it was a common Catholic practice to prepare for sleep by preparing one's self for death. You made a careful examination of conscience, and said an act of contrition for all the sins you had committed during that day and in this way you could sleep safe in the knowledge that if you died in the night you were as well prepared as you could be. Although it could be regarded as out of fashion, this is not a practice to be sneered at — it is something we could all do well to imitate. It is true piety.

But perhaps to conclude we ought to look at the words from the Letter to the Hebrews — “During his life on earth Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard” [Hebrews 5:7-9]. If the same could be said for us, we certainly would have no fear when it comes to facing our own death.

—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 [3/9/24] ----- \$ 280.00**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [3/10/24] ----- \$ 1,214.00**

**OUR RESPONSIBILITY:**

Lord loves to involve us in his work of salvation, he wants us to be active with him, he wants us to be responsible and protagonists. A Christian who is not active, who is not responsible in the work of proclaiming the Lord, and who is not a protagonist of his faith, is not a Christian. —Pope Francis

**A REALISTIC DISCIPLE:**

About twelve years ago four pizza parlors opened within the same month on the same block in New York city. It soon became apparent that there would not be enough business on that block to support all four. Therefore, the competition for survival began. One owner, in an attempt to gain business, posted a large sign: “We serve the best pizza in the city.” Another was quick to follow suit, claiming: “We offer the best pizza in the country.” Another rose to the challenge and began to advertise: “The best pizza in the world is served here!” The fourth owner was an enterprising woman who finally posted her sign. It read: “We serve the best pizza on the block.” The realism of her claim won her many customers, and that shop is still serving pizza today.

How can we apply a similar realism to our role of being a Christian? What claims can we honestly make as followers of Jesus? I thought of these questions earlier this week as we celebrated our Lenten communal penance service. I have been hearing confessions now for over 25 years. It is clear from my own spiritual life and the lives of others, that from year to year the sins remain the same. Those who were impatient last year are impatient this year. Those who were judgmental and unkind last year are judgmental and unkind this year. Once this pattern is identified, it is only logical to ask, “How good are we as Christians? Can we make honest claims to be followers of Christ?”

The answer to these questions depends upon how we choose to define success as disciples. Pablo Casals was arguably the finest cellist in history. He lived a long life. At the age of 93 he would still practice on his cello from five to six hours a day. When one of his friends asked him: “Pablo, why at your age do you still practice so much?” He answered simply, “Because I believe I am making progress.”

Being a disciple of Jesus does not mean that we have achieved perfection. It means we are making progress. And the progress we make need not be earth-shattering. It can occur in small steps. This is what is so encouraging in Jesus’ words in John’s Gospel [12:20-33]. We know that Jesus sacrificed and died that we could live. We also know that we are called to follow his example and sacrifice and die to self through good works and avoiding sin. However, when Jesus places this challenge before us, he does so with a very consoling image. He says: “Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains a single grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.” When Jesus wants to tell us that we must sacrifice and change, he uses the image of a very small thing — a single grain of wheat. By this image he tells us that our sacrifice need not be huge, that our dying can be limited, that our growth can occur in little steps.

To be a disciple we do not have to reach a state where we can claim that we never lose our patience. We only need to be more patient than we were last year. To follow Jesus, we do not have to achieve a generosity and simplicity to rival St. Francis. We only need to be more generous than we used to be. In following Christ’s example, we do not need to possess a perfect love which never judges another or speaks and unkind word. We only need to have a love which is growing rather than shrinking, expanding rather than turning inward.

Realistically, a disciple is one who is making progress. And it would be wise to set our goals accordingly. So, do not say: “I will never lose my temper again.” Just try to be patient with your spouse, with your children, with your parents for one day, for a half a day, for a few hours. That would be a step in the right direction. Do not say: “I will never judge another person or close my mind to a new idea.” Just single out one occasion in which you truly try to listen, in which you take in the truth that another is trying to offer you. That would be genuine growth. Do not say: “I will be totally selfless and only think of others.” Just find one person in need or trouble and put yourself out so the he or she might know that someone cares. That would be a single grain of wheat falling to the ground and bearing fruit.



student, offering to help out with the high school people. One reason she left the West Coast to come to Florida was to end a bad relationship and seek, what she called “a new virginity.” She was only here a few weeks when she realized that she was pregnant. The people she was staying with tried to convince her to embrace a solution that she would regret the rest of her life — and that would destroy the life within her. She was not going to do that. She wanted to go home, but she didn’t think she could tell her parents. She went to a Pregnancy Center. They helped her with pre-natal needs, directed her to a doctor, told her they would help in any way they could. She came to our parish. Now there may not be a written law that says that we needed to care for her and the child within her, and get her back to her parents, but the law of God within our hearts told us that we have no choice but to do everything we could to help her. By the way, we got the money together to buy her a ticket home. When she called her parents to tell them about her situation, they welcomed her home. She was over 18 and there was no law saying that they had to let her back into their home — no written law that is. But the law of the heart told them as it told us what needed to be done.

We Americans are so legalistic that we can easily let the law reduce us to limiting the choices we make to that which is required by the written law. We are better than that. The law that we need to follow is the law of God that is written within our hearts. We need to stay united to God and listen to our consciences.

I could tell you many stories about people who hid behind the law and hurt other people. I could also tell you many more stories of people, who like Joseph, were just, united to God, and chose to make what their hearts told them would be loving decisions.

All of us are concerned with teaching our faith to our children. Religious education is not enough. It is important, yes, but it barely touches the surface of what it means to follow the Lord. Yes, it is important that our children learn their lessons. But it is infinitely more important that we provide our children with experience after experience of our living our love for God. It is not just their minds or our minds that God wants. What God wants is their hearts. What God wants is our hearts.

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Daniel 13:1-62, John 8:1-11
<b>Tuesday:</b>	2 Samuel 7:4-16, Romans 4:13-22, Matthew 1:16-24
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Daniel 3:14-95, John 8:31-42
<b>Thursday:</b>	Genesis 17:3-9, John 8:51-59
<b>Friday:</b>	Jeremiah 20:10-13, John 10:31-42
<b>Saturday:</b>	Ezekiel 37:21-28, John 11:45-56
<b>Palm Sunday:</b>	Mark 11:1-10, Isaiah 50:4-7, Philippians 2:6-11, Mark 14:1-15:47

**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].





## THE LAW WRITTEN ON OUR HEARTS:

This Lent the first readings have by and large presented covenants. Again, the term covenant means a binding agreement between people — or in the case of Sacred Scripture, between God and His people. On the First Sunday of Lent we heard about the Covenant God made with the people at the time of Noah — the Covenant of the Rainbow [Genesis 9:8-17]. We were reminded that God will never give up on his people, or on any of us as individuals. The Second Sunday, we heard about the Covenant of Faith made between God and Abraham. We were encouraged to have the faith of Abraham and to trust in God when we are challenged [Genesis 22:1-18]. We might not know how, but somehow God will set things straight. The Third Sunday of Lent presented the Covenant of the Law God made with Moses, the covenant of the Ten Commandments [Exodus 20:1-17]. This week, we are given the prophecy of Jeremiah dealing with the Covenant of the Heart [Jeremiah 31:31-34]. This will all lead to the Paschal Mystery and the Blood of the New and Eternal Covenant — the covenant we renew on our altar every time we participate in the Eucharist.

Our focus today is on Jeremiah's prophecy — "A day will come when I will write my law upon their hearts. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord." That day has come. When we are united to God, then we can look within ourselves, determine what our conscience is telling us, and know how to serve our God. We don't need particular laws any more. We have the Lord.

A great example of the fulfillment of this prophecy was given by one of the saint's whose feast we celebrate on Tuesday — St. Joseph. Consider Joseph's state of mind before the angel told him to take Mary to be his wife [Matthew 1:16-24]. He was about to marry a beautiful, young girl. He hoped he would have children with her. He was already an established tradesman. Now he would start his own family with Mary as its heart. And then he learned that Mary was pregnant. Joseph was devastated. He knew that the child was not his. Should he follow the written Law of Moses and reveal Mary's pregnancy to the local synagogue leaders? They would have no choice but to put Mary to death, probably by stoning. Perhaps in another horrid way.



Think of how women who are judged to be sinners in the Islamic world of our own day are treated. The people of Joseph's time would not be gentle with Mary. Joseph knew that. He was convinced that he had been offended against, but within his heart he knew it would be wrong to have Mary put to death. Maybe the pregnancy was not her fault. Perhaps, she didn't know what she was doing. It made no difference. Joseph was a just man. That meant that he had a relationship with God. And that relationship told him that law within his heart told him that he could not expose Mary to the law. He would just send her away, to have the baby in the home of a far off relative where she and the child would spend the rest of their lives. It was only after Joseph chose to follow the law of the heart that the angel appeared to him in a dream and told him about the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

When we are united to God, then like St. Joseph we know what is right and what is wrong. We call that knowledge a certain conscience. There may not be a written law that says we have to look in on that difficult elderly neighbor, but the law of our heart tells us that God expects us to do just that. There may not be a written law that tells us that we should try to make peace with that estranged family member who has just returned home, that prodigal son or daughter who walked out on our Mom and Dad, brought them so much grief, and who now wants to be reunited with the family. There may not be a written law telling us how we should behave, but our hearts say that God wants us to welcome him or her home.

A number of years ago, a girl from Oregon moved here to begin college at the University of Southern Florida. She had been in a Life Teen Program at home and attended our program as a college

Being a disciple does not mean we have achieved perfection. It means that we are making progress. You do not have to be the best parent in the world. You only need to be a better parent in your own home. You do not have to be the most generous person in the United States. You only need to be someone more inclined to show interest in the elderly neighbor who requires your help. You do not need to be the holiest person; y. You only need to take a step closer to becoming the person God calls you to be.

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

## LEARNING FROM THE HUMANITY OF JESUS:

The letter to the Hebrews is a well-written, passionate homily, emphasizing the superiority of Jesus Christ, as Son of God, over the angels and the great Jewish leader Moses. There is no scholarly consensus on when it was written or to whom it was addressed. One possibility is that the unknown author wrote it in the 80's to Christians living in Rome, who were attracted to Jewish liturgical customs.

The Letter begins with an acknowledgement of the full humanity of Christ Jesus, who, "in the flesh," offered "prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears" to God, who heard him "because of his reverence" [Hebrews 5:7-9]. Even though he was the Son of God, "he learned obedience from what he suffered." Made perfect, Christ became "the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."

The phrase "in the flesh" refers to the humanity of Jesus with an emphasis on limitation, weakness, frailty, suffering, vulnerability and inevitable death. Jesus truly was like us in all things but sin, as Hebrews also points out [see 4:15].

The reference to anguished tearful prayers reminds us of the Agony in the Garden, when Jesus, deeply touched by his imminent death, prayed that God would spare him but added: "not my will but yours be done" [see Luke 22:42]. Here we see Jesus dealing with deep fears and anxieties, strengthened by his total obedience to the will of his Father. He endured not only physical limitations and pain, but also deep emotional and mental distress.



The author of the Book of Hebrews makes a bold statement that Jesus "learned obedience" from suffering; it suggests a couple of important points. As truly human, Jesus was a lifelong learner. He spent three decades preparing for his public ministry. He identified himself with the renewal movement of John the Baptist, and made adjustments in his own missionary strategy. In his personal encounters, he found creative ways to touch the minds and hearts of those open to his message. Furthermore, the author puts the emphasis not on the intensity of Christ's suffering — but on the depth of his obedience to God. Jesus was not a masochist seeking suffering; he was, rather, the obedient servant, who remained faithful to his mission despite the suffering that it inevitability entailed. We can take comfort in the faith conviction that Christ, "the source of eternal salvation," has personal knowledge of the kind of suffering that threatens our inner peace and darkens our earthly journey.

We can think of individuals who could benefit from prayerful reflection in this letter. A mother suffering from depression and assorted physical ailments could pray fervently to God to lighten her crosses, while trying to develop greater acceptance of the realities of life. A lifelong Catholic who regularly adores Christ as the divine Son of God could develop a greater appreciation of his humanity, making possible a closer personal relationship with him. A young man who is generally uncomfortable with authority figures could learn that obedience to God, the Supreme Authority, is actually liberating and fulfilling. A woman who has trouble expressing her deeper feelings could find a friendly confidant who will help her learn the value of naming and expressing feelings.

What can you learn from reflecting on the humanity of Jesus?

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

**IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE BEAUTIFUL:**

It didn't need to be beautiful. Surely, the grass didn't need to be green, and the snow didn't need to be white. I shivered slightly and gripped my hands more tightly around the warm mug. I ran over all the science I had ever learned in school about how it was that the grass was green and the snowfall white. I considered the practical purposes and deduced the helpfulness of my hot tea on a cold morning.

And yet, I still wondered why — Why is it all so beautiful, when it could be any other way? The colors, the silence, the flurry of the snowfall — none of it needed to be so beautiful, and yet it was. I've always prided myself on being a practical person, but the more I consider it the more my heart longs for the extraneous, the extravagant, and the beautiful. Let me explain.

Whenever we say that something is beautiful, there's usually something good about it that is also unnecessary — something wonderful that serves no practical function other than to be wonderful. When I talk about beauty or extravagance, I'm not necessarily talking about diamond jewelry or an expensive house — I'm talking about those little extravagances that God gives us daily. A piece of fruit, for example, does not need to taste sweet in order to nourish my body; its sweetness is an extravagance, but God created it to taste sweet anyway. Why? Because He loves us, of course!

One day, while babysitting two 17-month-old little girls, I spent a solid hour making funny sounds with my mouth, and every single time they erupted into giggles. There wasn't really any practical reason that I was playing this game. I was doing it for the enjoyment of watching their faces light up! Our heavenly Father loves to do the same. He delights in giving us little moments of beauty — the white falling snow, the sweetness of an apple, laughter with our friends — and each of them are absolutely oozing with His generosity and mercy.

Humans have a special relationship to beauty that no other creature has. We're the only creatures that can fully appreciate beauty and find in it a source of prayer — because beautiful things raise our hearts and minds to heaven. They call us to contemplate the source of the all beauty.

I have a theory that we love beautiful things — nature, music, films, books, artwork, and more — because they tell us something about ourselves. We see in the beauty around us the handiwork of the same Divine Artist who created us. When I see beauty — in all its glory and extravagance — I realize that there is something extravagant about me. None of creation needs to exist; it exists only because God has freely chosen to create it. I exist only because God has freely loved me into existence; I am the artwork of God.

My value and worth are not measured by how useful I am or what others think of me; my beauty remains whether it is noticed or not. My value comes from the Artist who created me: I am beautiful because I am beloved. Beauty teaches me who I am, because it teaches me who God is. It reveals God to me as a tender, passionate Artist who delights in His creation.

I didn't begin praying this way on purpose. I learned a lot about it from my sister, who, as an artist, has dedicated her life to filling the world with beauty. I quickly understood that beauty was the "how she spoke to God" — He was both the source of her creative drive and the goal of her work and dedication.

The way she speaks of beauty inspired me to reconsider it for myself, and I discovered in it a wonderful refuge when other types of prayer seem unreachable. When my mind is caught up in anxiety or exhaustion, there is a simple question that can fuel prayer in any place at any time — where is the beauty?

A comfy sweater, a glass of water, the presence of a stranger, nature, and even solitude — they are all beautiful in their own way. When we find beauty near us, it is natural to be grateful for it, and to wonder about the One who created it. As Catholics, we have the privilege of knowing intimately the One who created all these things. He is no stranger to us; He is our Father, our Savior, and Lover. And He



has left love notes to us, if only we pay attention to them.

But how do we pray with beauty when He feels far away? Sometimes beauty doesn't speak to us or inspire prayer. In these times of darkness or desolation — when we can't feel God — we encounter a different kind of beauty, a different kind of extravagance — the extravagance of the cross.

Of all the beauty on earth, there is none that compares to the Eucharist. Of all the gifts God has given us, there is nothing so extravagant as the Eucharist, because He has given us His entire self. This is the beauty we receive in the Eucharist, and in times of doubt or desolation, God invites us to return a little piece of that love. He invites us to find beauty in the most unlikely of places — in the cross.

Sometimes beauty feels hard to find — especially in our crosses; but we have an extravagant God who has surrounded us with beauty to lead our hearts to His. If you want to try but don't know where to start, here are a couple ideas:

- **Devote some time to silence.** This can be when you first get up in the morning, during your prayer time, before you go to bed, or whenever you want really. Sometimes our lives are so filled with noise that we can't quiet our hearts, but sometimes a little bit of silence is all we need to become more aware of God's presence and the beauty that he has surrounded us with.
- **Journal.** Find a bible verse or song lyric that especially speaks to you, and write it out by hand. Don't rush it, though; take your time. Journal about why it's meaningful to you.
- **Make a gratitude list.** Beautiful things are things to be thankful for! Take stock of all the little moments of beauty that you might have missed before.

Finding beauty in our everyday lives isn't difficult if we keep our hearts ready. When our hearts are expectant, they receive beauty more easily. And why shouldn't they be expectant? The God we worship is all Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and He has created us to share in it. Let's not hesitate to start now.

—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].**



LIFE TEEN

**WOMEN'S EVENING OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM will be our annual Women's Spring Retreat.** All women of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Women's Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John.** We are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **Sign up on the retreat sheet located on the easel in the narthex of Our Lady Chapel or contact Patty in the Chapel Office (440) 473-3560 or [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org)**

