

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Fathers ~

God our Father,
you made the family
a community of love.
Bless our fathers
as they strive
to serve you
and to love,
support,
and care for their families.

Let their faith,
hope,
and love
shine in our families,
and show us the way to you.

Be with our fathers
as they work to be true examples
of discipleship
to our families.
May their example
reflect your protective care
for all of us.

We also pray for fathers
who have died,
that you may bring them
into the fullness of your love.
May we,
their sons and daughters,
always remember
the love
and sacrifice
of our fathers,
and may we walk with them
in love and gratitude.
We ask this
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

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.

FATHER'S DAY BLESSING NEXT WEEKEND:

Father's Day, in the United States, is a holiday — third Sunday in June — to honor fathers, as well as all those who have shared the gift of fatherhood in our lives.. Credit for originating the holiday is generally given to Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington, whose father, a Civil War veteran, raised her and her five siblings after their mother died in childbirth. She is said to have had the idea in 1909 while listening to a sermon on Mother's Day, which at the time was becoming established as a holiday. Local religious leaders supported the idea, and the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910 — the month of the birthday of Dodd's father. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge gave his support to the observance, and in 1966 President Lyndon B. Johnson officially proclaimed it a national holiday. Observance on the third Sunday of June was decreed by law in 1972. Although it was originally largely a religious holiday, Father's Day has been commercialized with the sending of greeting cards and the giving of gifts. Take time this weekend to pray for your father, your grandfather, your Godfather, and for all those men in your life who have share the gifts of fatherhood with you.

**CHAPEL OUTDOOR PICNIC — JULY 14:**

Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is Sunday, July 14th. Every year, the Chapel picnic has been a great event for the entire family. The picnic will be held rain or shine from **11:15 AM – 1:30 PM at the Lower School Patio & Dining Hall. Family Mass takes place at 10:00 AM** and the picnic begins right after Mass — what a wonderful way to continue our celebration of community. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, Ice-cream treats, Cookies, and beverages are provided. So here it comes once again. It will be a great event for the entire family. **Pot Luck (non-perishable) sides & desserts are welcome!** Come and enjoy family and friends. **Swiftly and a face-painter friend will join us, as will the Euclid Beach Rocket Car.** In order to properly prepare for our picnic, we ask that you please **RSVP by July 7th to Patty [440-473-3560]** in the chapel office, or simply **sign up on the Picnic Sign-Up Sheet on the easel located in the narthex of the Chapel.**

**THE FEST IS COMING — AUGUST 4TH:**

Join us on **Sunday, August 4th for the FEST.** This year's diocesan family FESTival takes place on the grounds of the **Center for Pastoral Leadership, 28700 Euclid Ave, Wickliffe, OH 44092.** It's the perfect family day and an amazing one-take trip. Come and hear the best Christian artists [*Casting Crowns, We the Kingdom, Cochren & Co., and Caleb and John*] for FREE. There are activities, events, and fun for the entire family. The day also includes opportunities for prayer, Confession, and more. **Bishop Malesic and Bishop Woost** will bring the FEST day to a close with a beautiful outdoor Mass at 8 PM. This will be followed by an incredible American Fireworks display. This highlight of the summer — the perfect day of faith, family and fun — is all for FREE thanks to our sponsors [**Marc's, Sherwood Foods, Baron's Bus Lines, and the Diocese of Cleveland**]. Check out all the details by going to: www.theFEST.us. Mark your calendars and spread the word for the best day of the summer — the FEST.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

The Spirit is universal; he does not remove cultural differences, differences of thought. He is for everyone, but each one understands him in his or her own culture, in his or her own language. The Spirit changes the heart, broadens the view of the disciples. He enables them to communicate to everyone the great, limitless works of God, surpassing the cultural confines and religious confines within which they were accustomed to thinking and living.

—Pope Francis

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 seriously 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 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 Debbie Langer, friend of Cindy Frimel, who was diagnosed with brain cancer.
- For Denise Marzano, who is battling liver cancer.
- For Joseph Michael, father of former Gilmour LS religion teacher, Colleen Michael, who is undergoing treatment for ALS.
- For Sister Colette Livingston, O.S.U., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nada Kucmanic, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Bob Lisowski, father of Father Robert Lisowski, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Crawford Mitchell, 3 year-old grandson of Debbie Moss Batt, who is preparing for a serious heart procedure.
- For Josephine Fernando, who is seriously ill.
- For Sean O'Toole, Gilmour Athletic Director, father of Owen [*18], Connor [*20], Kelsey [*24], and former Gilmour student, Erin, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Mary Vislosky, who is seriously ill as a result of bone cancer.
- For Brother Robert Livernois, C.S.C., who is recovering from heart surgery.
- For Brother Joseph LeBon, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.

**FAITH EDUCATION REGISTRATION BEGINS:**

It's time to begin registration for our Faith Education Program for Next School Year. **All children who will be part of our Faith Education program need to register [even if you were a part of the program last year].** Our Sessions go from **8:45—9:45 AM**, with the hope that our children would then **participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass. Register your family for next year's classes by contacting Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560].** If you have any questions, please call Patty in the chapel office. Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.

**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.



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 landslide in Papua New Guinea, and their families
- 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 Christine Kramer, aunt of Gavin Hawk [‘21]
- For Father Tom O’Donnell, pastor emeritus of Holy Name Parish
- For Kelly Tutulo, mother of Jonathan Walker [‘34]
- For John Roddy, son of Frank Roddy, brother of Tim Roddy [‘87], and brother of Gilmour Marketing associate, Mary Roddy Stretar, uncle of Katie [‘29] and Anne [‘30] Stretar, and cousin of Daniel [‘83], Mike [‘85], and Matt [‘86] Roddy.
- For Mark Lies, brother of Fathers Jim and William Lies, C.S.C.
- For Father Benjamin Tremmel, O.S.B.
- For Paul Steiner [‘65]

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.

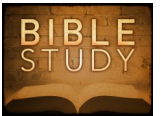
Total Offerings: Saturday [6/8/24] ----- \$ 126.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [6/9/24] ----- \$ 205.00

WISE WORDS:

Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! —St. Anthony of Padua

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, June 26th 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: Let us go to the House of the Lord [Psalm 122]

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, June 16: 11th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, June 17:	NO MASS
Tuesday, June 18:	NO MASS
Wednesday, June 19: Juneteenth	NO MASS
Thursday, June 20:	NO MASS
Friday, June 21:	NO MASS
Saturday, June 22: 12th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, June 23: 12th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — JULY 20th:

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. Please join us for a great experience.

HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE:

Rather than living every day as if it’s my last, I want to wake up and meet the day with the wonder of a newborn, to cultivate childlike qualities like curiosity and play.

—Suleika Jaouad

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Can our God really help us? Can we really have hope in the midst of great struggles? These are the questions being asked and addressed in the Scripture Readings for this 11th Week in Ordinary Time — by Ezechiel’s community, by the community in Corinth, and by the community under persecution, who first heard Mark’s gospel, and, finally, by us.

We need to remember that “all gifts have a hole” — an emptiness embedded in them. This hole is also an invitation. A doughnut is a wonderful symbol for much of life. It can have so many promising attractions — sugar, chocolate, caramel, coconut shreds, sprinkles, and coatings of sweetness. In the middle — at its center — is an encounter with reality. While in the middle there is nothing, by our eating the circle, our middle circle becomes even more something.

Very oftentimes, we focus on the gift — and not on the hand that offers us the gift. Gifts are what they are — and also what they are not. We long always for both the infinite and the finite; we have wonderful promises which will eventually disappoint our longings — as they should. We can lick the ice cream cone quickly because it is so good, but the quicker we do the licking, the quicker the ice cream cone is gone — with only the taste lingering. Fullness is a temporary condition. All that is “outer” leads to the “inner” where there is the invitation to keep searching for the Searcher Who is always giving — and that is the gift. We are always left with a graceful and quite holey disappointment.

Israel’s history with God has been a roller-coaster at best. Currently the Israelites are in captivity all because Israel has not been faithful to the covenantal practices and customs of their relationship with God. The people had lost hope — and that they certainly wondered how God’s promises could be fulfilled. Is it possible for God to be faithful? In the midst of this? The power of their captors seems overwhelming.

Ezekiel explains that God really is powerful. He uses the symbol of tree-trimmings and the replanting of those highest clippings back in Jerusalem — God is going to bring back Israel, making the valleys raised and the mountains made low [Ezekiel 17:22-24]. The branches of the tree will be the faithful and loyal kings who will form the new kingdom of Israel and all creation — symbolized by the birds of all kinds, who will return to their original innocence pictured in Genesis after the flood [see Genesis 7]. God is faithful and God’s mercy is God’s existence. The lowly trees will branch above the lofty who will wither and be brought low. It is the Lord Who speaks and does it.

In Corinth, the early Church must have been losing courage. They had come to believe that their true home is in heaven with their risen Lord, who won victory over sin and death. And they believed that the Lord was going to come soon. So, how were they to live in this place here, which isn’t their true home? What does everything here mean? Paul says that we have courage “for we walk by faith, not by sight” [2 Corinthians 5:6-10].

In Mark’s gospel, Jesus tells a string of parables; he begins with the parable of the seed sown in various types of soil, continues with the parable of a lamp’s not being hidden under a bushel, and then returns to the parable about seeds growing unnoticed [Mark 4:26-34]. God’s reign, he explains, is not the way we think of reign and power. It is like the farmer who sows seed, but doesn’t really know how they grow, even with the right combination of sun, rain and good soil. It just grows. And, it’s like a mustard seed which is not very impressive or powerful looking. The results, however, are wonderful.

Growth in all things occurs because it is of God’s Goodness — growth is not attained by mere human intellectual processing and or solving. Things grow while you are even sleeping or distracted, and even while you are trying to pray — imagine that! The Kingdom of God parable is like a tiniest of all seeds which also grows into the largest shrub and gives shade and rest to the birds of the air.

Each of us carries a sadness about something that did not work well in our life, and perhaps a



to God. It is as if we are saying: “An hour on a Sunday will be enough for him.”

But God does not want only a small part of us — he wants all of us; he wants the lot. God does not want us to keep anything back for ourselves, but rather that we should give everything to him. He does not want us to serve him only for an hour here or there — God wants us to serve him all the time.

The mistake we make is thinking that what we give to God is something that we take away from ourselves. But this is far from the case. The very words of Jesus tell us that we will be rewarded a hundred fold for whatever we do for God. But somehow we don’t believe it. At this point our faith fails us, and we feel it necessary to constantly hold back from giving God what he wants, which is all of us.

The lesson we need to learn is that God already owns us — he created us, and it is only his power that keeps us in being; everything that we have comes from him in the first place. If we show a true and deep generosity of spirit and hand our lives over to him then it will be completely transformative for us. We will be filled with the love of God and enabled to live grace-filled lives bringing joy to all we meet. The lesson of life is that everything comes from God, and everything returns to him. Our job is not to hold back anything for ourselves, but to give everything freely and joyously to him who is our Lord and Savior.

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

TRANSFORMING SPIRIT:

Without a conscious living in the flow of the Spirit — through us, within us, and for us — and those are the three movements — I think prayer can become merely functional. But if we live within that flow, prayer can become an experience of mystical communion. There is no problem to be solved — it’s simply enjoying what is, learning how to taste it, learning how to receive it, learning how to see God in it, and knowing that this now — whatever it is — is enough.

When that flow is not there, church becomes overly problem-solving and practical. Sacraments without the Spirit become strategic. They become something we feel obligated to attend or belong to in order to go to heaven. Church becomes about paying fire insurance dues. We don’t really want to be there, but we go along for the ride in case the whole thing just happens to be true. I know this might be shocking to say and hear, but this kind of church deserves to die. There’s no life to it; there’s no future to it. It is not of the Spirit. It is precisely a blocking of the Spirit, but it’s disguised as if it’s spiritual.

Outside of the Spirit, reading the Bible can also become nothing more than ego ammunition. Without the Spirit, Bible study does not lead to divine intimacy and union; rather, it can lead to self-sufficiency and confirmation about why we’re right. Instead of leading us to God, it becomes a way for us to protect ourselves

and to judge and diminish other people. But when we read the scriptures inside of the energy and flow of the Spirit, the stories themselves reveal a thousand confirmations of that very pattern — people allowing the flow, people resisting and opposing the flow, and sometimes, finally being swept up by it. They become models for us that allowing the flow of the Spirit leads to new life.

Outside of the Spirit, authority becomes domination. Inside of the Spirit, authority becomes service. Outside of the Spirit, politics becomes control. Inside of the Spirit, leadership is something we know is given to us to offer to others: not authority over people but authority to call forth the presence of God within so they can be in the same flow and enjoy the same freedom.

I think the simplest way to discern the presence of the Spirit is to look for where there is unity, where there’s movement toward reconciliation, for two becoming one, for enemies becoming friends. The Spirit self has no need to think of itself as better than anyone. We just live with an energy and aliveness that Paul called the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” [Galatians 5:22–23]. Our job is simply to stay inside the flow of the Spirit which is love.

—taken from the writings of Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M., which appear on the internet



TELLING A GOOD STORY:

A very large part of the teaching of Jesus is given in parables. This is not something we are very much used to today — although everyone loves a good story. We get most of our information from newspapers, TV, and social media — we don't go in much for parables. In the modern world we are more interested in facts and data rather than parables or imagery. But the thing about parables is that they are ambiguous — you can read almost anything you like into them. Parables are examples or stories that you can turn over and over in your mind — constantly discovering new insights into them.

We always have to remember that Jesus was speaking to people who were living in a very different age than ours. The main mode of communication was speech — there were no newspapers or TV or even very many books. The people living at the time of Jesus were part of a largely oral society, and storytelling was very important to them. Besides being a good way of passing the time, storytelling gave people something to think about — it helped develop their memories and gave them the opportunity to exercise a considerable amount of creativity.

Those people who are of Irish descent are familiar with the importance of the Shanakee — the storyteller or bard who kept the traditions of the clan alive, usually in the form of stories and narrative poems. Every culture has its own equivalent. Therefore, it is very understandable that Jesus would use parables to communicate his message in this very largely oral culture. Not all his listeners would fully understand what Jesus meant in every case, but everyone would be able to find some nugget of wisdom in his stories. Not only this, but parables do transmit down the centuries in a very accessible way — even though we are far removed in time and geography, we can understand quite well what Jesus means.

The two parables that Jesus tells in Mark's Gospel [4:26-34] are not very complicated. In the first one, the seed is strewn on the land; it grows and it is eventually harvested by the farmer. The seed is us, and the farmer is God. It is our job to grow and to produce a good crop which the farmer can harvest. The other parable is very similar. Here the smallest seed of all grows into the biggest tree which in turn gives shelter to the birds of the air. Here the tiny seed represents the followers of Christ which grow into a great tree which can give shelter to the rest of creation.

Comedians say: "never let the facts get in the way of a good story." The same goes for parables. Factually, the mustard seed is not the smallest of the seeds; nor does it grow into the biggest tree of all. But we know what Jesus means, and we realize that the choice of mustard is also significant since mustard has a strong flavor just as Jesus' disciples ought to bring a strong flavor to the world.

What Jesus does is give images and examples so that even the simplest person can get the gist of his message. His parables are accessible to all — even if some do not understand them fully at the first hearing. In time their meaning becomes more and more clear.

One of the things we notice about these particular parables is that there is no ambiguity in them. In the one case the seed is sown, it grows and is harvested. In the other, the smallest seed grows into the biggest tree and it gives shelter to the birds of the air. The seeds do not go their own way — rather, they do what they are supposed to do. The seeds sprout or grow into a tree; the seeds do nothing other than what they were intended to do. And this is another lesson for us.

Our problem is that most of the time we do everything other than that for which we were intended. We constantly go our own way and ignore the path that is set before us by God. We choose to indulge ourselves and to take the line of least resistance rather than doing what God wants. We fool ourselves into believing that we can keep the largest share of our lives for ourselves and give only a small part of it



number of things which are not working well now. Some of them are so difficult, so challenging, that it is hard to imagine how we could dare to have hope. We might be tempted to lose courage — to be discouraged — so much so that we can't imagine that God is here or that God is able to bring saving grace into our situation. We don't know — can't foresee — how there can be light anywhere near this darkness, or how this loss, this death, can result in some life.

These pictures of the "Kingdom of God" for the Israelites are spoken and heard within the context and experience of the Roman kingdom which was occupying Israel during the time of Jesus. This Kingdom will not be established by any kind of force, nor reinforced or regulated by outside authorities. It is established quietly, in the inside where the heart is attracted to Divine Goodness. It is identified by the fruits or actions of Faith, Hope and Love.

We "walk by faith, not by sight" much of the time. That's why we call it "faith." Walking in "confidence" is walking "with faith" [Latin: *confidere* = to believe in]. Each of us can place our trust in God's presence with us, in the midst of the difficult challenges we all face.

Often it can seem that God — at least sometimes that's how Jesus talks — expects faith and trusting should be easy. Jesus asks Peter to leave everything to follow Him [see Mark 8], and later invites Peter to get out of a boat and walk on water [see Matthew 14]! God asks Mary to believe she is pregnant and she does, but has very good questions first [see Luke 1]. But faith is fragile; it can be overcome by some many things that "look better". Faith — like a mustard seed — is slowly growing with groaning and terror. God is always asking that we be not afraid, and that just might be because God knows we will be and are usually quite frightened. We don't like the dark, the unfamiliar, and all the complexities — but that what it is like to follow Jesus. Seeds of the Kingdom grow into fruits of faith very slowly — hiddenly. And God — "Who sees in secret" — does the cultivating through our experiences of life's invitations to trust in the little things.

—edited from the writings of Fathers Andy Alexander, S.J. and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

FROM HEAD TO HEART:

What if we could all close our eyes right now and be interiorly awakened? And what if, when we open our eyes, we would see through our own awakened eyes what Jesus saw in all that he saw? What would we see? We'd see God! Because Jesus saw God in all that he saw.

What's wonderful about this is that it didn't matter whether Jesus saw his own mother or a prostitute, the joy of those gathered at a wedding, or the sorrow of those gathered at the burial of a loved one. It didn't matter whether he saw his disciples or his executioners, or a bird or a tree — Jesus saw God in all that he saw. Jesus tells us: "You have eyes to see but you do not see" [Mark 8:18].

We need to awaken to our God-given capacity to see the God-given, godly nature of ourselves, others, and all things. Failure to do so becomes the source of all our sorrow and confusion. Our prayer then becomes: "Lord, that I might see your presence, be present to it, and to realize that without you, everything ceases to have meaning and purpose. Help us to understand that the generosity of the Infinite is infinite, and that we are the generosity of God. We are the song you sing."

We all need to imagine ourself looking into our own heart — not only as the center of emotions, but as the very place where the ongoing, self-donating presence of God, and us in our nothingness without God, are pouring out and touching each other. In our heart there is this oneness.

Carry our mind and thoughts from our head to our heart. We learn to settle into the transformative energies of the prayer by being quietly absorbed into a deepening communion with God by doing our best not to be carried off by the thoughts that arise and fall around the edges of our minds.

Each time we realize we have been carried off into thinking, we return to the words of the prayer as a way of renewing our trust in God's merciful love. In this way, we make our descent into the realm of the heart where our own presence is realized to be eternally one with the mercy of God revealed to us in Christ. Little by little, we begin to realize that our deepening experience of learning to rest in the realm of heart is beginning to show up in all sorts of unexpected ways, in each passing moment of our lives, up to and including the moment of our death and beyond.

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

WE NEED TO WALK BY FAITH:

Our society, someone has declared, is suffering from “jumboitis” — we need the biggest military, the biggest car, the biggest guns, the biggest house, the biggest business, and so forth. We’ve got bigger and bigger buildings, cities, and even churches. “The bigger, the better” and “the more, the merrier” seem to be the adages that govern us. But is this way of thinking really true?

Many don’t think so — including Jesus. In the Gospels we find Jesus giving high praise for just a cup of water [see Matthew 10], two copper coins [see Mark 12], five measly old barley loaves and two dried up fish [see John 6], little children [see Luke 18], crowds of only two or three being gathered together [see Matthew 18], and services rendered for even the least of our brothers and sisters [see Matthew 25].

Mark’s Gospel for this 11th Week in Ordinary Time has two brief parables, both about tiny things — little seeds [Mark 4:26-34]. The first is apparently about wheat, and the second about mustard seeds — the smallest of all seeds. The farmer, once he plants them, doesn’t understand how the growth happens; he just knows that it does. If he plants seeds, waters and nourishes them, he knows they will produce and produce abundantly, the tiny little mustard seed growing into an unusually large bush. He also knows he is not in control.

Well, what does all of this horticulture have to do with us?

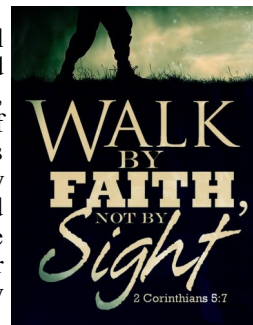
First of all, we’re hearing a warning — a warning that tells us that we ought not to confuse size with importance. Bigger is sometimes not better, the national debt, for instance. Events attracting large crowds aren’t necessarily good events. Crowds have often been quite wrong. For example, at one time slavery was practiced by a majority of people in our American democracy; they were dreadfully wrong. Public opinion polls are not necessarily a gauge of what’s right or what’s wrong, as the media seems to suggest.

Peer group pressure is something that we’re all familiar with, and we all know quite well that what everybody is doing isn’t necessarily healthy, or good for us — or morally right. Many of our friends may be experimenting with drugs, but should we? Premarital and promiscuous sex can damage our sense of belonging and our ability to make a commitment for life. Unwanted pregnancies are often the result of illicit sex. When the consequences come upon us, it’s only then that many people wish they had stood alone and apart from the crowd, stood with a minority who were glad they didn’t do what lots of other people were doing. Don’t confuse large numbers with what’s right or what’s good for your soul. Consider your choices carefully. Don’t allow yourself to be stampeded by the crowd. Jesus is giving us fair warning.

We can be sure of one thing. In spite of appearances, in spite of what a secularized world wants us to believe, God has not abandoned His world. God is at work in ways we cannot directly see. The way things look is not necessarily the way things are. There’s a phrase used throughout the Middle East that we Westerners should pay some attention to: “Things are never as they appear.”

We need to share Jesus’ words of encouragement. Everything does not depend upon us. Isn’t it pride and arrogance to think so? Besides, as Christians we ought to know by now that alone we can do nothing, but with God there’s nothing we cannot do [see Matthew 19:26]. So very often it is little things that grow into big things. A thought becomes a novel; a spark grows into a forest fire; an idea can change the whole world. In Mark’s Gospel account, Jesus speaks of mustard seeds and grains of wheat. Even though we may think we have little faith God can take it and make something wonderful out of it. God is always taking small and seemingly insignificant things and turning them into infinite worth.

Sometimes we’re not really sure about that. But it should be helpful to realize that if we simply give up, then God doesn’t have any effort from us that He can work with. If we think we don’t have any

**LIVING THE DREAM:**

One of the “parables” in Fr. Ed Hays’ classic book, *Twelve and a Half Keys*, describes an encounter between a young man and the Devil. When the young man discovers Satan’s identity, he instinctively surmises that the devil is trying to buy his soul. “Hardly,” the Devil states, “although I must confess that’s the common belief. I mean that I am interested in souls — but I do not buy secondhand souls. What I want to buy from you is your Dream.”

“I don’t understand,” says the young man. “Why would you want to buy my Dream and not my soul?”

“Because, my young friend, if I were to obtain your soul I’d have just a soul, but if I’m able to purchase — at a fair price, mind you — your Dream, then I’ve changed the course of history! Your soul affects only you, but your Dream — ah, that’s something different. Your Dream touches the lives of countless people and, who knows, maybe people yet to be born? The effect of your Dream is cosmic. That’s why I’m interested in it.”

We Christians constantly thank Jesus for dying for our sins, but we forget he also had a Dream — a Dream that he passed on to those committed to imitating his dying and rising.

The evangelists tell us that Jesus began his public ministry by proclaiming: “The kingdom of God is close at hand” [Matthew 4:17]. Scholars believe “the kingdom of God” in this context refers to God working effectively in our daily lives. The historical Jesus’ Dream — his “Good News” — revolved around helping those around him achieve the same insight that he had into God’s unique presence in their lives — an insight which would not only change their lives, but the lives of everyone they encountered.



Of course, there’s some “fine print” in the process of experiencing God: repentance. Those who are serious about achieving this experience are, like Jesus, expected to completely change their value systems. People are now to be at the center of their lives — especially those in need. Rules and regulations are to be relegated to the background of our relationships. Service to others is to be front and center. Only when we become “other-oriented” will God’s presence begin to be evident to us.

That means, as Paul reminds the Corinthian community, that we’re constantly walking “by faith, not by sight” [2 Corinthians 5:6-10]. Like all dreamers, we’re committed to doing things which don’t make sense if we’re not guided by a deep faith in our dream. Sight only arrives after the dream is lived.

The prophet Ezekiel demands something similar from his people. He’s prophesying during the Babylonian Exile. Jerusalem and its temple are in ruins. The captives listening to him are living in a foreign country — hundreds of miles from the Promised Land. They can only dream of that “tender shoot” eventually “putting forth branches and bearing fruit” [Ezekiel 17:22-24]. Yet, if they don’t do anything to make that dream a reality, they and their descendants will never see the “withered tree bloom.” Judaism, as they know it, will simply die.

That seems to be why, when Jesus talks about his Dream, he frequently employs “growth” imagery. In Mark’s gospel, for instance, Jesus describes the kingdom of God as a seed that takes a long time to grow, and as a bush which eventually becomes so large that “the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade” [Mark 4:26-34].

Mark’s Jesus presumes that we’re committed to this “faith thing” for the long term. We won’t immediately surface God working in our lives every time we give ourselves for others. But if we stop giving, the Dream for which Jesus died will never become real.

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

REMEMBER:

The world needs your strength, even if you tremble a little.

—Brittany Calavitta

while Jesus was inviting them, not into a new geopolitical structure, but a new way of life.

Jesus' kingdom image may falter for modern people born into democracies. For us, kings conjure up more of Disney and senior prom than what Jesus was describing. Perhaps we should start referring to Jesus' central symbol as a gerund — the "reigning of God" has no geography. It's more like a force or tone that permeates all of creation.

In Mark's Gospel, we hear the carpenter from Nazareth talking like a kid from a farming family [Mark 4:26-34]. First, like an entranced child he describes stage one — the hidden growth of seeds. Just like our Neolithic ancestors who discovered that if they planted a foraged seed, they could expect lots more fruit in due season, we're invited to marvel at the miracles of growth all around us. This kind of discovery is world changing.

How ordinary! Yet how extraordinary! Farmers scatter seed, they sleep and get up, maybe they even play catch. All while the seeds are invisibly sprouting and growing through a power the farmers didn't invent, probably don't understand and can't control. All they can do is water the seeds and pull weeds. This parable invites us to joy-filled wonder.

The parable of the mustard seed was either an example of Jesus' outrageous sense of humor, or a proof that he didn't grow up farming. Mustard sabotages other crops. Considered an uncontrollable weed, it chokes out anything in its ever-expanding territory. Exercising his typical tongue-in-cheek exaggeration, Jesus wove this confounding description of the reigning of God to stimulate curiosity beyond any preconceptions.

How might Jesus' images enlighten us today? Perhaps the image of seed that grows surely and imperceptibly suggests that the reigning of God is a power inherent in creation. Is God's rule the dynamic of growth and grace that has driven evolution ever since the Big Bang? St. Paul hinted at this when he said: "All creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth" [Romans 8:22]. Some theologians call this creation's "initial aim" — an inborn purpose and energy attracting everything toward union in God. Whatever does not collaborate in the movement will disappear "like chaff driven in the wind" [see Psalm 1].

Jesus' mustard seed image complements the notion of the hidden seed's tenacious tendency toward life. Not only does God's reigning grow from a power inherent in creation, but it can take over like an irrepressible weed. Because it is creation's destiny, we can do no more than collaborate or temporarily hinder it. The paschal mystery teaches that it cannot be stopped.

Ultimately, the reigning of God that Jesus preached is far more ordinary than what his contemporaries were hoping for. Ironically, it is also immensely more powerful than any army or bank account. As people of the resurrection, we can hear Jesus' images as an assurance that God's reigning is here and there and everywhere, and that it will be the future of everything. When we believe that, we can relax because it's not all in our hands. We can also trust that others will catch on and we'll all be part of a world changing dynamic.

So, kings may not be on our horizon, but the reigning of God is among us. We're on the way to it and we can make it our way of life.

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

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].



Reconciliation



talents and simply don't bother to act, then what will happen? Nothing. Nothing, after all, turns into nothing. Multiply zero by zero and what have you got?

We cannot stop wars, but we can be kind, compassionate and forgiving toward those around us. We cannot abolish prejudice, but we can be courteous and kind and have genuine respect toward those around us who are "different" from us. We cannot end crime and political corruption, but we can be honest in all of our dealings. We cannot wipe out poverty, but we can help those in need.

All of these are mustard seeds — little things that God turns into very significant things, small things that in the divine economy become big things. We should stop selling ourselves short, selling ourselves cheaply, considering ourselves to be of little worth in the big scheme of things. We are all very important — so important in fact that God's only begotten Son died for us. Take to heart Jesus' word for you today. Live by it. God is always making big things — a whole universe in fact! — from small beginnings.

God guides by planting and offering thoughts and inspirations in our minds and hearts. He guides; He doesn't take control of our free wills. God guides by planting seeds of thoughts; He guides subtly, indirectly, in clues, in our hidden aspirations.

Which leads me to point out the necessity of reflecting — we simply must make time and quiet moments to look at and mull over God's clues deep within us, quiet times in which we can get in touch with our inner lives, times in which to reflect, in which we can become aware of those things from which the our surrounding world diverts our attention and consideration. Quiet time is not a luxury — it is a necessity. It's not something we give to ourselves after we have taken care of other things. It should something we should do before we do other things.

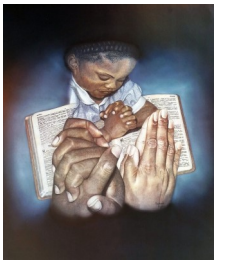
With God, small beginnings can have amazing outcomes. So, it is that with God that we walk by faith, not by sight [2 Corinthians 5:6-10], because God is in control when we let go and let God, when we nurture and care for what He has mysteriously planted deep inside us. We will not see instant results, something for which our surrounding culture has little patience, because the world only understands immediate productivity. What we will see is the tremendous things God can produce from what little we have. We must walk by faith in order to see what God will do.

—taken from the writings of Father Charles Irvin, which appear on the internet

TOGETHER, WE PRAY TO GOD:

Prayer is the language of the Christian community. In prayer the nature of the community becomes visible, because in prayer we direct ourselves to the One who forms the community. We do not pray to each other, but together we pray to God, who calls us and makes us into a new people. Praying is not one of the many things the community does. Rather, it is its very being. Many discussions about prayer do not take this very seriously. Sometimes it seems as if the Christian community is "so busy" with its projects and plans that there is neither the time nor the mood to pray. But when prayer is no longer its primary concern, and when its many activities are no longer seen and experienced as part of prayer itself, the community quickly degenerates into a club with a common cause but no common vocation.

By prayer, community is created as well as expressed. Prayer is first of all the realization of the community itself. Most clear and most noticeable are the words, the gestures, and the silence through which the community is formed. When we listen to the word, we not only receive insight into God's saving work, but we also experience a new mutual bond. When we stand around the altar, eat bread and drink wine, kneel in meditation, or walk in procession, we not only remember God's work in human history, but we also become aware of God's creative presence here and now. When we sit together in silent prayer, we create a space where we sense that the One we are waiting for is already touching us, as he touched Elijah in front of the cave [see 1 Kings 19:13].



GOD IS STILL WORKING:

We may feel stuck and our lives stalled, but God is still working. There may be a problem in our family that we have tried to resolve time and time again, without success. So, we begin to wonder: “Is there anything that can be done to fix it?” We may have experienced a deep loss or betrayal that brought our lives to a standstill, and although we try to adjust — to get back into the game — we cannot budge ourselves forward. We begin to think: “Will there ever come a time when I will be normal again?” We may have a hope or a dream that we would like to achieve, and we work at it. But possibilities do not materialize and opportunities evaporate. We are left wondering: “What else could be done?”

We can feel stuck or stalled, but God is still working. This is what Jesus is trying to tell us in his parables [Mark 4:24-36]. A farmer takes a seed and places it in the ground; it begins to grow. Then he leaves to go back to his life — going to sleep and rising in the morning, day after day. Without his thinking or his direction, the seed on its own produces the blade and then the ripe fruit.

The growing seed in the parable is meant to represent God’s action in our lives. Independent of us, God is moving our lives to something good. Despite our doubts, frustrations, and failures, God is working in silent and secret ways to keep growth alive, to move us forward. So, what Jesus is saying to us today is this: the good things in our life are not all of our own doing. Reconciliation, healing, and forward movement are often the result of God working behind the scenes. We do this and that — and we should. But it is when God acts that things become successful.

This is why we should always be ready. In the parable, there is a hidden sense of urgency that we need to pay attention to. When the grain ripens, the farmer wields the sickle “because the harvest has come.” We, too, must be ready to act when the right time arrives. We may have been trying to make peace with a family member or a friend over and over again without success. But then something changes and God opens a door. We must be ready at once to walk through it. We may be stuck in our grief for months or years, with no energy to move forward. But then there is a phone call and an invitation, and we hear God’s voice; we should be ready at once to say “yes”. We might have tried to solve a problem from every angle without success. And, then, a new opportunity emerges, and we know that it is God’s gift; we must be ready at once to accept it.

When we run out of options, when there seems to be no hope, Jesus’ parable reminds us that God is still working secretly, bringing growth to our lives. This is why we must never give up, and we must always watch for God’s growth to mature. Because when it does, we must wield the sickle at once for the harvest has come.

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

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.

**THE MYSTERY OF LIFE:**

Life is full of mystery. The mystery is our invitation to let go and to embrace uncertainty with the fullness of our being. This is how hope becomes our bearing. It’s how it becomes our compass in uncertain times.

—Joe Primo



matter what the media may say, the Church continues to grow. For the Lord — not people — gives the growth.

Therefore, when you are confronted with media attacks upon religion — a media, which by the way, does not represent the basic perspective of the people but tries to formulate a perspective based on its own preconceived agenda — remember the Church is forever. When you don’t find yourself living up to your own expectations and visions — even though you have tried over and over...even for many years — remember the Church is forever.

And when you are confronted with immorality on all sides — when you are convinced that the world is coming to an end because so many people are behaving so poorly, and also because you, as we all, are often inclined to join them — do not despair. The church not only lives on through the muddle and the mire — it actually grows. We all grow as long as we do everything we can to stay united to the Church. For in the face of turmoil, outside us and within us, God gives his Church growth.

As St. Paul tells the Corinthian Church: “We walk by faith, not by sight” [2 Corinthians 5:6-10]. In the Lord, the miracle of growth continues within each of us.

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

WE’RE LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACE:

We have the impression that we are witnessing a rapid decline in Christian values: we see the world trying to rid itself of the idea of God, placing the ourselves as the absolute point of reference, as the measure of everything, making our self as the arbiter of good and evil, absolutizing the realities of this world and considering faith an obsolete aspect of life. This is secularism, a phenomenon that has remote historical roots, but which has reached its apogee in our time. How come?

In the search for the causes, there are those who attribute the responsibility to the priests who, increasingly fearful, avoid recalling those truths that, in the past, when the churches overflowed with the faithful, were the recurring themes of catechesis: the judgment of God, the eternal condemnation, the devil, the punishments.

The truth is another: today we are paying the consequences of an evangelization and a catechesis that—without wanting to attribute blame to the willing preachers and catechists of the past — was disconnected from the Word of God. The future is in our hands. The Church has become aware of the treasure that the Master has given her — the Word, the seed that waits to be sown in the world in abundance, so that faith may flourish again on a new basis and on a sure foundation.

Those who today, with difficulty, are scattering this precious seed in the World, will not contemplate the ripe ear, but at least the stem, this yes, they can ask the Lord to be able to see it.

—edited from the writings of Father Fernando Armellini, which appear on the internet

THE REIGNING OF GOD:

When I was about 4 years old, my parents were expecting a visit from friends who lived very far away. I could not have been more excited. The Kings were coming to our house! I dreamt about their crowns and robes and what magnificent stories they could tell. What a letdown when an ordinary couple, just like my parents, arrived with suitcases in hand and ordinary hats on their heads. I had never seen royalty, but they definitely did not fit the bill.

All of Jesus’ preaching and activities focused on God’s reign. He invented parables about it, he said it was near — even among and inside us — and he talked about it as the reality of the future. His audiences held their own images of God’s kingdom — mostly as something that would top the reign of David and bring them more fame than Solomon’s temple.

Under oppression, they awaited God’s savior who would overturn the forces of evil and raise up the chosen people. In many ways, they had good ideas — it’s just that Jesus lived his kingship and fame in an entirely different way than they expected. The people were seeking a familiar version of a kingdom

THE LORD GIVES GROWTH:

The ancient Hebrews understood agriculture. Their lives were dependent on the crops they cultivated and the animals they raised. Yet, they knew that the wonder of growth belonged to the Lord. No one knew this fact greater than St. Paul who wrote in his first letter to the Church at Corinth: “Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” [1 Corinthians 3:6-7].

When Ezekiel prophesied that the Lord would take a sprig from a tree and turn it into a noble cedar, the people recognized in this prophecy that growth is always in God’s hands [Ezekiel 17:22-24]. They knew that God would do more for them than they could imagine. Israel — a nation in exile at the time of this prophesy — would become the nation that the whole world would respect. Every kind of bird — all the nations of the world — would live under the tree of Israel. God’s wonders, like the wonders of agriculture, were too wonderful to understand.

The people who listened to Jesus also shared the wonder of the soil. The farmer works hard during the day, but the farmer can’t make the seed grow into a plant, and the plant produce fruit — God causes the growth [Mark 4:26-34]. In our modern terms, the farmer creates the best environment for growing, but God causes the growth. The farmer had to be patient. Jesus’ point is that the Kingdom of God is like the plants in God’s hands. The workers in the Lord’s fields must do their best to create the proper environment for growth — but God causes the growth.

The parable comforts the people of the early Church in face of discouragement when their efforts don’t seem to be getting them anywhere. They are a development of the Jewish faith and are rejected by that faith. That is pretty hard to explain to the pagans to whom they preached Christ. Persecuted on every side, they had to just trust God to give growth to his kingdom. And God does give growth. The Church lives on despite the persecution from the Romans, despite internal dogmatic fights and debates of the second through fifth centuries, despite the Fall of Rome and conquest of the barbarians, despite the corruption from within and outside in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, despite the onslaught of rationalists in the last two centuries, despite the clergy sex abuse scandals, despite internal attacks, despite the new attack on priests and faithful by the “holier than thous” — the Church still lives on, and grows. God gives the growth. He does wonders with our feeble efforts. He turns that which is insignificant into that which is substantial.

There are many times that we expect too much of ourselves and others. To make matters worse, we expect too much to happen too soon. Sometimes parents expect their 15 year-olds to act like 21 year-olds. Sometimes we get thoroughly disappointed in ourselves because we are not the perfect people we like to imagine ourselves being. Sometimes we are impatient with how we or others are progressing in life. We may be upset with our home situations, our marriages, our families, our jobs — or what have you. What we have to understand is that none of us are self-made men and women. If we trust in God, He will give growth. This growth might be very subtle — nothing we can put our fingers on. But after a while it suddenly occurs to us: “God has brought us a long way.” If we trust in God, the growth that He gives us will be more than we could imagine. We are all small seeds, but God can make of us great trees. However, if we think that we can do everything ourselves — and if we don’t trust in God — we won’t get anywhere. None of us can make ourselves or others grow.

We are members of the greatest society the world has ever seen — we are members of the Kingdom of God; we are members of the Church. No matter what the media may comment, we are part of the only truly relevant organization in the world. We give meaning to the whole purpose of existence. No

**SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH:**

Jesus used many parables to teach the people about the kingdom of God. In his teaching, Jesus did not propose philosophical arguments or use abstract language; rather, he told stories, drawing on familiar experiences of ordinary people. His parables were designed to get people to think more deeply about life — to examine common assumptions, to broaden narrow perspectives, to make better moral judgments, and to live as more effective disciples.

In Mark’s Gospel [4:26-34], Jesus compares the kingdom of God to seed which takes root and grows apart from the attention or knowledge of the sower. One implication of the parable is that God’s reign is growing in our world in mysterious ways that we can easily miss as we go about our daily tasks. More is going on in human affairs than meets the eye. God’s grace silently accomplishes great things. The parable challenges us to see the world with eyes of faith, to probe beneath the external appearances of life, to discern the mystery dimension of experience, to try and align ourselves with the direction and dynamics of the kingdom.

We can imagine individuals responding to the parable of the seed. A married couple begins to look for ways to help each other grow spiritually. A corporate executive driven by the lure of ever greater financial rewards decides to redirect her energy into becoming a deeper, more authentic person. After making a marriage encounter, a husband realizes that he cannot read his wife like a book — making her newly mysterious to him. A lifelong Catholic comes to see that going to Mass is not merely an obligation, but an opportunity to come closer to Christ. A woman upset with the church hierarchy looks for signs that Pope Francis is having a positive influence on his fellow bishops. A citizen depressed by the moral deterioration of society consciously looks for positive signs — lower rates of violent crime, a reduction in sexual promiscuity, fewer teenage pregnancies, as well as a growing percentage of young people doing volunteer service projects and actively caring for the environment. A veteran deals with depression by helping other veterans who are suffering physically and emotionally.

How can you deepen and expand your awareness of God’s reign secretly growing in our world?

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

THE SPIRITUALITY OF SUMMER:

As the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, summer arrives, bringing with it a sense of warmth, vitality, and renewal. Beyond its physical attributes, summer holds deep spiritual significance across cultures and traditions. It is a time of abundance, growth, and connection to the natural world. Let’s explore the spiritual meanings that summer embodies.

Summer is a time when the Earth is teeming with life, from vibrant flowers in full bloom to bustling wildlife in every corner. In many spiritual traditions, this abundance is seen as a reflection of the divine — a reminder of the interconnectedness of all living things.

Celebration of Light Summer solstice — the longest day of the year — marks the pinnacle of sunlight and is celebrated in cultures around the world. This day holds deep spiritual significance as it symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness. This abundance extends beyond the physical realm to our spiritual lives, where we have the opportunity to cultivate new ideas, relationships, and experiences. Summer invites us to embrace the fullness of life and to nurture our dreams with care and intention. Joy and Vitality, and Summer’s warmth and brightness infuse us with a sense of joy and vitality.

Summer is a time of renewal and Rebirth. The energy of the season inspires us to release old patterns and embrace new possibilities. Just as the Earth undergoes a process of renewal, shedding its old growth to make way for new life, we too can use this time to let go of what no longer serves us and to welcome fresh opportunities for growth and transformation.

The spiritual meaning of summer encompasses a rich tapestry of themes — from connection to nature and celebration of light to nourishment, joy, and renewal. May we all find inspiration and guidance on our spiritual journey during this time.

—Edited from *A Beautiful Life*



STAY THE COURSE:

A man walked into a store. He found Christ behind the counter. He asked: “What do you sell here?” Christ replied: “You name it.” The man continued: “I want food for all, good health for kids, adequate housing for everyone, and abortion to cease.” Gently Jesus answered: “Friend, I do not sell finished products here — only seeds. You must plant them and water them. I will do the rest.” When Jesus told this parable of the smallest seed in the world [Mark 4:26-34], His disciples were in a downer. They had worked so hard and so little had happened. The famous mountain had been in labor — and only a mouse had been born. Their work, begun with a bang, was about to close down without a notice.

Given their depression, Jesus tells them the parable of the minuscule mustard seed. Though its beginnings are modest, its final height is awesome. Jesus wanted the disciples to realize that despite their few numbers and the opposition against them, a great Church would arise from their labors. The history books show how correct He was. Someone has noted that masterpieces come from the smallest beginnings. From eight notes come every hymn, song, and symphony ever composed. Arguably the greatest piece of music ever written is Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony — all of it from eight notes. All literature is born from the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. From them came the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address.

But one does not have to produce masterpieces to have an effect. Small acts make a difference. Graduating college seniors hear much nonsense from commencement speakers. However, Sydney Schanberg, the Pulitzer Prize journalist, whose reports formed the 1984 film, *The Killing Fields*, was a blessed exception. He told the graduates before him: “You are often told you can change the world. But that is rubbish. What you can do is make the world modestly better.” He went on to speak of their own classmates who assisted the homeless and fed the hungry over their college careers. These people made a difference. They themselves grew and developed. They were helping people one by one. Bigger is not necessarily better. His message was it is a great thing to do a little thing well.

Find a cause. Go for it. Take Gandhi’s advice: “First they ignore you. Then they laugh. Then they attack. Then you win.” We wish to see objects grow in a flash. Yet, Christ is telling us that though you cannot see it, the mustard seed is maturing. It will become among the largest of all plants. It will climb to eleven feet. No wonder birds flock to its branches for “R & R”, and travelers crawl into its shade for lunch and a nap.

A story is told of an experiment performed by a physicist. She wanted to show her students the effect that a small object can have on block of iron. The block was hanging from the ceiling. The physicist began throwing paper balls at the metal. At first nothing happened. Then after a time the iron began to vibrate, then sway, and at last move freely. The poet Lucretius wrote: “Dripping water hollows a stone.”

Everything must begin somewhere. No one emerged fully grown from his/her mother’s wombs. If Christians could learn to bring together their modest contributions to the commonweal, can you imagine what a force for good we would be for those about us?

Jesus is saying to us: “Develop where you are planted.” He warns us to that often we quit growing because we prefer groaning. Some years ago I heard of an Oscar winning actor who owed his career to an elderly woman. As a young man, he received bad notices. Finally, he resolved to give up his dreams of becoming an actor. Then a note arrived in his mail box from an anonymous fan. She had heard of his despondency. She wrote but four words: “Keep acting — you’re good.” That small note gave him the

A man in God’s shop:

Man: What do you sell?

God: Whatever your heart desires.

Man: I want success and happiness.

God smiles and says: I sell only seeds, not fruits!

courage to continue. From her four words grew an Oscar winner.

I have worked for years with teens. They often have sorrowfully spoken to me of how little or no encouragement they receive from their own families, friends, and even teachers. Cannot you and I substitute for those silent people? Cannot we do for them what the fan did for the actor? Our compliment need be no more than four words. Begin today. Encourage others. And remember the advice of Winston Churchill: “The difficulty is not to be expected in the beginning but rather when one attempts to stay the course.” —taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooly, which appear on the internet.

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.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday: 1 Kings 21:1-16, Matthew 5:38-42

Tuesday: 1 Kings 21:17-29, Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday: 2 Kings 2:1-14, Matthew 6:1-18

Thursday: Sirach 48:1-14, Matthew 6:7-15

Friday: 2 Kings 11:1-20, Matthew 6:19-23

Saturday: 2 Chronicles 24:17-25, Matthew 6:24-34

12th Week in Ordinary Time: Job 38:1-11, 2 Corinthians 5:14-17, Mark 4:35-41

COMMUNITY IS A QUALITY OF THE HEART:

The search for community is a deeply human search and I have felt that the ideal community remains mostly the object of my hopes and dreams. But I have also experienced that if I keep those hopes and dreams alive, true community will reveal itself in the most unexpected places and times. Somehow, community is first of all a quality of the heart, a quality that touches all those whom you meet in your life, not only your own family, but also the people you work and play with.

The source of all community, however, is your most intimate relationship with the Lord because the deeper you enter into communion with him, the more clearly you will find that all those whom you love are hidden in his heart. This truth does not solve all our pains and problems, but it certainly can set us free at times to travel on and to move forward even though our emotions can make us feel very lonely.

Keep close to the Bible and taste it to the full. There is a very deep hunger in many people for the life in the Spirit and many people need to be nurtured continuously by the Word of God.

