

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Those in Want ~

O Lord,
There's a lot of suffering in the world —
you know that better than I do.
Poverty, sickness, and hunger;
pain, loneliness, and fear.

You never promised us paradise in this world;
But when I look at what I have
And how little they have,
How can I not feel guilty?

I know their suffering is partly my fault,
For while I don't actively will it,
I know that I affirm it
by living the comfortable kind of life that I do.

Please forgive me, Father;
but more than that,
instill in me
an active, genuine awareness, and concern
for those whose suffering
I don't really know,
so that I might identify more
with their suffering and need,
and do what little I can
to help their situation.

I know that there are basic things
that should be theirs regardless.
Help me to find a way —
because they are my brothers and sisters
and your sons and daughters.
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.

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.

**CHAPEL OUTDOOR PICNIC — JULY 14:**

Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is Sunday, July 14^h. 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.

**COMPASSION IS “BEING WITH”:**

Let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken. But this is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it. As busy, active, relevant people, we want to earn our bread by making a real contribution. This means first and foremost doing something to show that our presence makes a difference. And so we ignore our greatest gift, which is our ability to enter into solidarity with those who suffer.

Those who can sit with their fellow companion, not knowing what to say, but knowing that they should be there, can bring new life into a dying heart.

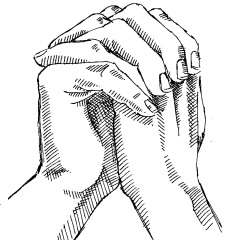
—Henri Nouwen

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 Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian ['09], Rosa ['12] and Edwin ['17] Heryak, who is seriously ill.
- For Debbie Langer, friend of Cindy Frimel, who was diagnosed with brain cancer.
- For Denise Marzano, who is battling liver cancer.
- For Nada Kucmanic, who is seriously ill from cancer.
- 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.
- For Jack Boduszek, father of Graham ['10] and Jocelyn ['13] Boduszek, who is critically ill with Parkinson's Disease.
- For Cathy Force, mother of Erika DiCello Lacroix ['90], Grandmother of Andre ['23] and AJ ['25] Lacroix, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Lawrence Wynn, Gilmour Strength and Conditioning Coach, who is recovering from surgery.

**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.

**NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:**

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family. Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For an end to political polarization.
- 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 Paul Steiner [‘65]
- For Sue Elliot
- For Thomas Vickers
- For Wilfred Gill
- For Brother Richard Armstrong, C.S.C.

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 [6/15/24] ----- \$ 187.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [6/16/24] ----- \$ 617.00

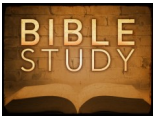
SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord’s invitation: “I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.” [Jeremiah 24:7].



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 23: 12 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, June 24: Birth of John the Baptist	NO MASS
Tuesday, June 25:	NO MASS
Wednesday, June 26:	NO MASS
Thursday, June 27:	NO MASS
Friday, June 28: St. Irenaeus	NO MASS
Saturday, June 29: 13 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, June 30: 13 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

Once again this year, we are assisting the students at St. Adalbert School with their school supplies. We have received a list of supplies which the children need. **Here are their most requested items: #2 Pencils, Pink Erasers, Crayons, Colored Markers, Glue, Single-Subject Spiral Notebooks & Loose-leaf Paper.** Here is how you can be a part of this outreach. Simply shop for items on the list. Kindly **return the items** whenever you come to Our Lady Chapel. **If you do not have time to shop, simply place an envelope in the collection box and mark it “St. Adalbert’s” or drop it off in the Chapel office.** Together, we will work and plant our seeds of hope and goodness with their community. Thank you in advance for your generosity and helping the children of St. Adalbert! Contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] if you have any questions. We will be concluding our school supply drive by **Monday, August 5th.**



THIS IS GOOD TO KNOW:

You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them.

— St. Therese of Lisieux

A REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Each of us is called to live through the storms and questions which life itself provokes. Storms can come in many forms — there's illness, loss of loved ones, family drama, work-related difficulties, or physical storm damage, to name a few. Things don't always go the way we would like them to, but Jesus is there with us, through the good and the bad, calming the winds and helping us through. In the midst of these storms — and within life itself — we must discover a greater respect for God and to be kept safe in God's love. Life presents us with storms through which we struggle to find God's care. In addition, there are the inner storms as well whose waves ebb and flow through our minds and hearts. They can bring us to our knees — to a praying-place or a fleeing-place. However, those waves beat upon us or beat us up, during the calm times, God will encourage us to keep faithful.

Remember Job? Job has been talking to God; he has presented his "case" — argued, complained, whined about his being unjustly punished or treated poorly by God. His three friends have tried their best to assist his preparation for the court-appearance by presenting possible reasons for his being so punished. Job has lost everything — family, home, and wealth — because of a kind of deal the devil has made with God. The devil has seen Job in a praiseful relationship with God, but the devil assures God that if Job were to lose everything, he — Job — would be singing a different song. Would Job stay faithful if all his worldly goods were taken away? God agrees to the testing of Job and poor Job does everything but deny God; he does have many questions and frustrations.

Now it is God's turn to respond [Job 38:1-11]. Within the storm of Job's life, God has heard enough of his "empty-headed", but heart-felt, protests. God reminds Job that there is a limit and an end to every storm; the darkness has a purpose. In order to achieve this, God begins his defense and opens up a cross-examination which is meant to win Job to life and not defeat him to death. God's voice comes from out of a tempest which is a biblical symbol for God's power. The basic line of God's defense is that Job does not know much about what God has been doing since the foundation of the world. Where was Job when the sea — the mighty waters — were put in their places? Job's arguments are like the waves which have their force, but will find stillness from their proud raging at the foot — the shore — of God's designs. All of this is said, not because God is unloving or uncaring. Rather the opposite is true; God wants to remind Job — and us — that He is God, and we are not! Sometimes we become confused on this point.

Job held on to his faith. The readings today remind us to focus on Jesus in the storms of our lives and not the ferocity or nature of the storm. We only need a little faith, and our Lord will hush the storm to a gentle breeze, especially when we are tired and terrified.

Mark's Gospel [4:35-41] pictures a boat with Jesus in the back sleeping and a huge storm arising. The "faithful" — or are they? — wake Jesus who calms the winds and waves and their fears. Jesus then asks them whether they have yet attained faith in Him and His faithfulness to them.

Those in the boat sigh in relief and wonder. Their verbalizing their awe is a statement of faith in which they see that Jesus is Lord — even of the earth. They will see often that He has domination over evil spirits — the devil and sin itself.

The community for which this Gospel is written is struggling to live the implications of Jesus' teachings, and His project of returning this world to the kingship of God. The waves which are rocking their boat are caused by their being faithful to what they believe they trusted Him by getting into the boat — which is easy to do when docked on shore.

When Jesus came into this world and lived with Mary and Joseph, he became subject to the waves of the human condition. Thus, he went with Mary and Joseph had to flee into Egypt [see Matthew 2].

**FINDING CALM IN THE STORM:**

The summer before I left to study theology in Rome, one of the older Sisters who did domestic chores in the hospital in which I worked gave me one of the most meaningful gifts I've ever received. It was a funeral home calendar picture of the scene depicted in Mark's gospel — Jesus calming the storm [Mark 4:35-41]. She'd carefully put it between two sheets of plastic, woven boondoggle around the perimeter and glued a cardboard stand on its backside. "I know you're going to have a hard time in Rome," she said. "I've heard seminarians really have to study hard there. But when you're tempted to give up, look at this picture. If Jesus could calm that storm at sea, he can also calm the storms in your life."

Though her fear of my having to work hard was obviously engendered by seminarian "propaganda," Sister Baptist's message that afternoon completely mirrored the message Mark was trying to convey by including this miracle story in his gospel.

Marcan scholars are convinced that Mark accomplished this by first taking a miracle story used by preachers to emphasize Jesus' power over nature and adding several phrases to make it applicable to his readers' everyday lives. The added lines are: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? . . . Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith? . . . Even the wind and sea obey him."

Mark presumed that all people of faith often feel abandoned by the person in whom they've placed their faith. They sense they're "perishing", and no one — even Jesus — gives a darn about them. Yet it's in the very midst of our feeling abandoned that we most encounter the risen Jesus, assuring us that we need to put more of our faith in him/her, not less. The evangelist believes that it's precisely during those times that Jesus expects us to give ourselves more intensely to others, and not give into the temptation to back off from those acts of faith which our imitation of Jesus demand.

After all, someone whom even the "sea and wind obey" must be powerful enough, as Sister Baptist pointed out, to calm the storm of abandonment in our own personal lives. When we're dealing with God, we're dealing with a unique person.

As we learn in the story of Job, it is God's "otherness" that was the only thing which could explain the sudden, devastating influx of evil in Job's life [Job 38:1-11]. Job eventually came to understand that God could do things which he could only dream about.

If we presume God's unexplainable actions in nature, why should we question God's unexplainable actions in our own lives? God operates on levels we humans can't comprehend.

But, as Paul reminds the other Christs in the Corinthian church that we are expected to do more than just admire the way God operates. Our becoming one with the risen Jesus means we've also become part of God's incomprehensible world [2 Corinthians 5:14-17]. We — like the risen Jesus — are now "new creations," expected to live our lives on a new level — a level on which "we no longer live for ourselves, but for him who for our sake died and was raised."

It's significant that Paul never personally knew the historical Jesus — the itinerant preacher who lived in Palestine during 6 BCE and 30 CE. Like ourselves, the Apostle experienced only the risen Jesus. That means he wasn't "distracted" by Jesus' humanity. On the Damascus road, Paul stepped instantly into a new world — a world in which his faith in Jesus' presence grew even in those moments when he felt most deserted by God — something we need to be assured of every day of our lives.

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

GOODNESS:

Goodness always tends to spread. Every authentic experience of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has experienced a profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others.

—Pope Francis

THE STORM ON THE LAKE:

Years ago, I attended a seminar on religious experience where a woman shared here following story. A few years before this incident occurred, her life had been rather settled. She had been happily married, her children were grown and on their own, and she and her husband were running a successful business together. Then it all fell apart. Her husband, a recovering alcoholic, began to drink. Within two years, they had lost everything — including each other. Their business went bankrupt, they lost their house, and their marriage fell apart. She moved to a new city and took a new job, but the pain of what she had lost lingered, and she found herself constantly depressed and joyless as she sought to sink new roots, meet new people, and begin over again in mid-life.

Her frustration culminated one evening when, having worked late, she was driving home and stopped for a red light. While waiting for the light to change she was hit from behind by a drunken driver. The irony wasn't lost on her. Her car was badly damaged and she, suffering from whiplash and a series of cuts and bruises, was taken to hospital by ambulance. After several hours of x-rays, examinations, and medical treatment, near midnight, she was released, to be driven home by a policeman. As they drove up to her townhouse she noticed that the front door was wide open. Getting out of the car she realized that her home had been ransacked and vandalized. It was the last straw — all that penned up frustration, anger, loss, and grief finally burst, and she lost control, began to scream hysterically, and ran across the lawn shouting curses at God and life in general — the policeman chasing her.

As she recalled this, she told us that she remembered exactly what was running through her mind as she ran across that lawn at midnight, hysterical, cursing, a policeman giving chase. Her anger and her questions were about God: "Where is God in all of this? Why is God letting this happen? Why is God asleep?"

Then, just as she heard her own curses as an answer, suddenly, in one instant, everything became calm. She ceased running, stopped shouting, because she felt inside of herself a flood of calm and a peace such as she had never experienced before in her life. No magic lights went on, no divine voices were heard, and she made no claims of "miracle" afterwards, but, for one second she realized that, no matter the storm, no matter the loss, and no matter death itself, God is still in charge of this universe. One second of realization was all it took. Calm returned. She sent the policeman home and began cleaning up her house. She has essentially remained in that calm since.

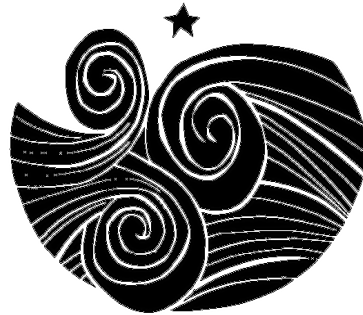
The story of Jesus asleep in the boat and rising to calm the storm is a similar, parallel story [Mark 4:35-41]. The deeper lessons contained within them though are perhaps less obvious — at least during the more stormy moments in our lives. In essence, both stories tell us that God is still in charge of this universe, every counter-indication notwithstanding. The first Christian creeds had only one line: Jesus is Lord!

Ultimately that says enough, says it all. God still rules — even in death and darkness. But, as these stories also make clear, during the stormy moments of life, when our very souls are in fear of drowning, it will seem like God is asleep, comfortable, his head on cushion. But — and this is the real challenge of these stories — calm is only a second of realization away.

What calms the storm in life is not that all of our problems suddenly disappear, but that, within them, we realize that, because God is still in charge, all will be well — whiplash, bruises, ransacked houses, alcoholic spouses, lost houses, lost jobs, loneliness, and the shadow of death itself notwithstanding.

All will be well because, even asleep with his head on a cushion, God is still lord.

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



Jesus, because of his overly zealous spirit, left himself behind in the temple, causing anxiety and fear in the hearts of Mary and Joseph [see Luke 2]. Throughout his life, Jesus made trouble with His hearers as He spoke of the new ways of relating with God and with life. He bothered the political leaders by confronting Roman authority [see John 18]. He was always asking His listeners to choose one way or another — putting them in conflict with themselves and with others — including family members [see Luke 12].

Jesus once said that He came into this world to bring about division — not satisfaction [see Luke 12:51]. Though Mark's Gospel is centered on the conflict between believers and those opposed to believing, it is also a picture of our own divisions, and/or choices we make because of our invitations to follow Him. Once we let Jesus in our personal boat, there are personal storms within ourselves — as we have seen with Job. Staying faithful to Him and His ways is an up and down, wave-like undulation. At times we delight in our being charitable, generous, forgiving — and even suffering. At other times, the storm is resolved by our storming out of conflicts — resentfully retracting ourselves from assisting others, and/or, jumping ship and swimming away from the whole situation.

Jesus did not shame or walk off out of the boat and across the waters, shaking the spray off His feet in disgust. He seemed to them to be sleeping and inattentive to their struggles. He asked them simply about the source of their being terrified. The simple answer is that they were a human group, fearful of losing everything, like Job — and especially their lives. This is healthy — this fearfulness — and faith does not take away our human fears immediately. Prayer does not resolve our fears, but our fears can become our prayer. The storms do not abate when we fall on our knees or face or backside.

We wait often to see the calm — the dawn, the pot of gold — but we struggle to keep turning to Him in the company of believers. These are not like Job's three friends who think they have it all figured out. Our companions must be those who have experienced their own storms of faith, and living that faith within the waves of fears and doubts. They are those who are remaining in the Boat, and surrounding us each day or weekend at the Table of the Ship Captain.

—edited from the writings of Vivian Amu and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

LIFE IS TOUGH:

Have you ever thought that God makes life too difficult? Think about it. Think about all of those times that you've been really tempted and fell because the temptation was too great. Think about all of those days when nothing seemed to go right, and you may have wondered: "God why are you doing this to me?" When is the last time you had a day like that? Maybe even today!

First of all, as Christians we need to realize that there's a big difference between trials and temptations. Trials come from God, but temptations do not. Temptations come from the devil and from within. How do we know? Read what St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: "God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it" [1 Corinthians 10:13]. God does not want us to fail — He would never set us up to fail. That means that all those times we say: "It was too hard" after we've sinned, that it wasn't God's fault what happened — it was ours. St. Paul reminds us that God will never put us in a situation that we can't handle or survive, as long as — and here's the kicker — we have the courage and the humility to call on Him.

Faith is God's gift to you to help you through the storms of life. Just as obvious, we all go through dark times — whether that be of our doing or because of others. If you're confronted with a trial — and you will be — have the courage to call on God, and He'll give you what you need to get through it. If you find yourself in a tempting situation, realize that it isn't God setting you up to fail. Live for Jesus in that situation, take pride in your faith, and in the ability to call yourself a Catholic Christian, and kick the devil in the rear and tell him that he can't win because you stand with Christ. Be proud of Jesus Christ. He is proud of you!

—Edited and adapted from the writings of Mark Hart, which appear on the internet 5



IS JESUS REALLY ASLEEP?

Your doctor informs you that you have cancer; your wife tells you she has been seeing another man; your husband tells you he's found a younger woman and is going to marry her; your son announces that he has AIDS; your employer tells you that your job as been outsourced and your services will no longer be needed. Any number of events can bring your life crashing down. People of faith do not necessarily have trouble free and painless lives, and people with little or no faith at all can be found living wonderful, prosperous, and problem free lives — or so it seems on the surface. Life's blows come to us all no matter what things may seem like on the surface.

If you look deeply into the lives of the rich and famous you will find loss, pain, and suffering. Moreover, if you look into the lives of great men and women, you will find that most of them rose above pain, loss, and suffering, and because of that struggle they achieved greatness.

What happens within our hearts and souls when we find ourselves in the midst of life's storms?

When I was younger, my first questions in the face of loss and pain were: "Why me?" "Why is God punishing me?" If God is so good, why does He allow such things to happen to good people, to the innocent and undeserving? It's the question many people ask.

Well-intentioned people might tell you that God is testing you. But we should question that. Why would God need to test us since He already knows what is deep within And we need also to remember that God didn't create us in order to watch us suffer! our hearts and souls? No, it is life that tests us. More specifically, suffering is the consequence of human decisions that sometimes come crashing down upon us. Chaos, we must remember, isn't necessarily the product of hurricanes, tornadoes, or other disasters of nature. And while it is true that we find chaos in our universe and in our world, the chaos that troubles and tests us the most comes from the decisions of other people. Sin isn't simply personal. Often our sins have consequences that hurt others. But we never seem to realize that.

Some of us react by trying to get even with those whose decisions have caused us pain and sorrow. Essentially getting even involves using evil to overcome evil. That approach doesn't work. Using evil to overcome evil only multiplies evil by two; it doesn't divide it in half. It certainly doesn't cancel evil out.

Other folks allow themselves to live in a state of victimhood. Too many people have spent their entire lives living in passive-aggressive victimhood. That approach does not work either. It does nothing to confront and overcome the evil intentions and decisions of those who have hurt us and caused us loss and pain. Passivity doesn't confront those who make evil decisions that hurt others.

Eventually we all come to realize that we have little control over others, and are virtually powerless over them. But that does not mean we are powerless over our own lives. We do have the power to control our responses to others who have brought chaos into our lives. In Jesus Christ, God has given us the power to confront and face down evil.

God created us to know Him, love Him, and serve Him. But to know, love, and serve God in meaningful ways we must freely choose to do so. Can you imagine being loved by someone who was programmed like a computer to love you? It wouldn't be love at all, would it! So it is with God. He wants to be loved only by those who freely choose to love Him. But the consequence is that He must suffer the rejection of those who freely choose to reject Him. Freedom comes at a terrible cost.

God has suffered the consequences of evil human choices. He suffered them in the life of Jesus Christ here on earth. In Christ, God has faced all that we must face when life tests us with its cruel blows.



Here's an example:

Recently, at a retreat, a woman approached me for advice. This was her quandary: She felt full of faith and doubt both at the same time. She began by telling me that she was, in her mind, a very orthodox Roman Catholic — somewhat pious even. Yet, try as she might, she could not believe that Jesus physically rose from the dead, nor that we will one day rise from the dead. "I believe that Jesus lived on after his death in some way, but his body remained in the grave. I can't picture it coming back to life. I have the same problem imagining our own resurrection from the dead. I believe in immortality, but not in resurrection. If I can't believe that — and I can't, and I know I never will — does that make me an atheist? Am I losing my faith?"

At first glance it might appear that she is losing her faith — at least in that she is seemingly unable to believe in some non-negotiable parts of the creed. That judgment though can be simplistic. My advice to her was somewhat in line with Tolkien's comment to C. S. Lewis. Her struggles were more with her imagination and its incapacity to give her a mental picture of resurrection than they were with believing in the resurrection itself. What's the difference?

Imagine yourself lying in bed some night. You've just had a wonderful prayer time, and you're flooded with feelings and images about God. On this particular night, you have strong, clear feelings that God exists; you have no faith doubts, and you feel the reality of the divine. But imagine another night — a darker one. You wake up from a fitful sleep, and are suddenly overwhelmed by the sense that you no longer believe in God. You try to convince yourself that you still believe, but you cannot. Every attempt to imagine that God exists and to feel his presence comes up empty. You feel empty and you feel the emptiness of the world itself. Try as you like, you cannot shake the feeling that you no longer believe. Try as you like you can no longer imagine God as existing, nor can you give yourself any feeling that God exists.

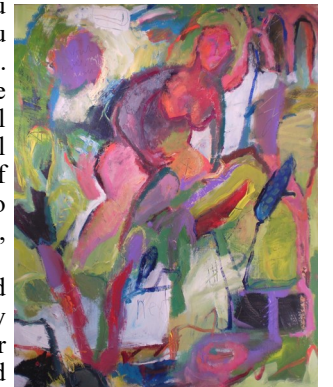
Does this mean that on one of these nights you have a strong faith and on the other you have a weak one? Not necessarily. It can just as easily mean that on the one night you have a strong imagination, and on the other you have a weak one. One night you can imagine the presence of God, and on the other night you cannot. But imagination isn't faith.

Daniel Berrigan, with his usual color, puts this rather crassly, but accurately: He'd been asked: Where does your faith live? In your head, or in your heart? His answer? Your faith, he assures us, is rarely where your head is at — and even less where your heart is at. Your faith, he brilliantly states, is where your ass is at! Within what commitments are you sitting? What holds you, morally and otherwise?

Our actions, our charity, our morality, our commitments determine whether we believe or not. Passing strange, but the posterior is a better indicator of where we stand with faith than are the head and the heart. We understand this because we all have experiences wherein we find ourselves inside of certain commitments — marriage, family, church — even though, at times, our heads and our hearts are not there. Still, we're there! Why? The head tells us this doesn't make sense — the heart no longer has the type of feelings that would keep us there, but we remain there — held by something deeper, beyond what we can explain or feel. This is where faith lives. This indeed is what faith means.

The woman who sought spiritual counsel from me claimed that she did not believe in the resurrection but, by almost all indicators, she lived her life in function of it. Her problem was only that her imagination could not picture it. Like all of us, she suffers the poverty of a finite imagination trying to picture the infinite. But God cannot be pictured, and so a weak imagination isn't the same thing as a weak faith.

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



that expelling demons was but a minor part of it. Throughout his ministry — and especially in the cross and resurrection — Jesus demonstrated that evil does not have the upper hand; he banished it time and again. From day one of his ministry, Jesus revealed how God’s mysteriously ever-present love overpowers even death.

What might this say to us? In a sense, it seems easier for us to appreciate Job’s experience than that of the disciples. We are sometimes willing to hear God’s voice putting us in our place and calling us into a deeper relationship. The disciples at sea witnessed a phenomenal — seemingly unrepeatable — feat of power over nature, something more in the category of resurrection than everyday life.

Jesus asked the disciples: “Why are you terrified? Have you no faith?” Perhaps that questions us as much as it did them. Do we live like people who believe in the Resurrection? Do we behave as if God can absorb and transform everything that is evil and dangerous? What would it look like to live with that kind of faith?

Job and the disciples came to believe that God’s ways were not theirs, that God’s love appears in unexpected, seemingly chaotic circumstances. If we can learn that kind of faith, we might be freed from holding God to our expectations and be unafraid to venture the transformational crossings over Christ would lead us through. St. Paul takes this one step further and says that if we believe, the impelling love of Christ will carry us to live, not for ourselves, but for and with and in him who has led the way [2 Corinthians 5:14-17].

God is calling us to a not-so-subtle life as a new creation. Instead of cowering in the storm, we can be people of the Resurrection — and discover how whirlwinds can blow us into deeper faith.

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

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.



A CONVERTED HEART:

Compassion born in solitude makes us very much aware of our own historicity. We are not called to respond to generalities but to the concrete facts with which we are confronted day after day. A compassionate person can no longer look at these manifestations of evil and death as disturbing interruptions of his life plan but rather has to confront them as an opportunity for the conversion of himself and his fellow human beings. Every time in history that men and women have been able to respond to the events of their world as an occasion to change their hearts, an inexhaustible source of generosity and new life has been opened, offering hope far beyond the limits of human prediction.

FAITH, DOUBT, AND IMAGINATION:

J. R. Tolkien, the author of *Lord of the Rings*, was very influential in C.S. Lewis’ conversion to Christianity. As a man of considerable imagination, he was not one to easily denigrate this faculty. But he knew its limits. One night, after hours of listening to Lewis object to certain aspects of the faith, Tolkien suggested to him that his problem was not so much one of faith as it was of imagination: “Your inability to understand stems from a failure of imagination on your part.” There’s something important in that statement. It tells us that the seat of our faith does not lie within our imaginations, and that we cannot sustain our faith by our imaginations. To forget this leaves us open to a dangerous confusion.

The Evil One — the devil, our Ancient Enemy — is known in the Bible as the Great Tempter. We recall that when Jesus began His public ministry He was tempted out in the desert by the devil. And Satan tempts us too, only with many different temptations. In life’s storms and troubles, he tempts us first with disappointment. Disappointment leads to doubt. Doubt leads to disillusionment, followed thereafter by depression, defeat, despair, and eventually spiritual death. Satan’s seven “anti-sacraments” are doubt, disappointment, disillusionment, depression, defeat, despair and spiritual death.

Fear plays a big role in all of this. Notice how many times Jesus said to His disciples: “Fear not,” “Be not afraid,” “Peace be with you.” In the New Testament the opposite of faith is not questioning — it is fear. And fear can lead to doubt and all of those other “d” words I just mentioned that the devil uses to defeat us.

We often think of strength in terms of power and control. We are tempted to think that if we can overpower others, we can control them. We think this makes us secure. Actually, it only makes us feel like we are secure when in fact we are not. Security is found elsewhere. Security is not found in power and control over others. Our world’s greatest leaders have demonstrated that to us.

It is love that makes us secure. Without love we are terribly insecure. And love brings with it faith. If you have faith in someone you then can love him or her. If you love someone you have faith in him or her. It is when we are in the presence of Christ, and we are aware of His love within us that we are truly secure.

Out there in that storm tossed boat of Mark’s Gospel [Mark 4:35-41], Jesus was teaching His disciples about where to find peace and security. They would have it so long as Jesus was at their side. That is the lesson we need to learn — that is the truth that we need to see. God Himself comes to us in His Son Jesus Christ. God, with all of His powers, is with us when the forces of chaos descend upon us. He knows what we face because in Jesus Christ He, too, faced them and continues to face them in us.

So when life deals you its cruelties, its blows, its storms, and your life seems to be collapsing all around you, don’t immediately jump to the conclusion that God is punishing you, or testing you, or that He doesn’t care about you. He may be a lot closer to you than you think. You may even come to realize that He’s in the same boat with you. It is only in the power of faith and in the presence of Christ that we overcome all of life’s cruel trials.

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

THE PREACHING OF THE TREES:

Sometimes, when closely reading the Book of Nature, the profoundest of lessons are learned from the quietest, most quotidian of happenstance. Suddenly seeing what you might have walked past countless dozens of times. Being awake to gospel in the plainest of wrappers. A buck-naked tree, perhaps. A tree whose very nakedness suddenly offers aha!

What are the sermons that the woods — those places of betweenness, repositories of ancient stories — might impart from their fretwork of branches and twigs, their columnar trunks and the boughs that hold up the sky? Certainly, there are tales of resilience, the way they stand against whatever time and the weather gods hurl their way, tornado or drought, ice storm or Noah-like rains. And lessons to be learned of holy communion, the way the woods and the birds and the scampering critters all keep watch, share food, warn each other of danger, create ecosystems that moderate heat and cold, store water, and generate necessary humidity. What else of the time-tested truths, laid down like the rings revealed in a fallen tree’s stump?

My temple, my mosque, my church of the woods, where the center aisle is earth rubbed raw, threadbare, not unlike a great aunt’s mothballed Persian rugs, where the vaulted halls are awash in shifting shadow and numinous light, bathed in a mystical halo, it is the holy place to which I return and return. It is a woods that preaches to me, fills me with wordless wisdoms. It is the place where I behold the awe-inspiring mystery of how I hope heaven will someday be.

—Barbara Mhany

SPEAKING TO GOD:

Normally we are quite respectful when we speak to God. Controlled and subservient, we place our needs before the Lord: “Dear Jesus, help my son be accepted into the college he prefers.” “Gracious God, you know I’ve lost my job, help me to find a new one.” Now there’s nothing wrong with speaking respectfully to God. But one of the things that Mark’s Gospel shows us is that this kind of respectful prayer is not the only kind of prayer — nor is it necessarily the best.

Jesus and the disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee and a huge storm comes up. The boat is tossed from one wave to another, and the waves are breaking over the side. It has become apparent to the apostles that this boat is going down with everyone in it. Jesus, however, is asleep in the stern on a cushion. What do the apostles do? Do they quietly walk to the back and tap Jesus on the shoulder and say: “Lord I know you’re sleeping, but we have a problem?” Do they gently shake him and say: “Master sorry to disturb you but the waves are getting a little rough?” No. They cry out with accusation — “Master, do you not care we’re going to die?” [Mark 4:35-41].

Now, of course, Jesus gets up and stills the storm. But I do not intend today to reflect on Jesus’ actions, but rather the apostles’ prayer, because this prayer can be a model for us. Sometimes the best prayers are those which are blunt and seemingly irreverent. The best prayers are those that express what we really feel, and sometimes what we feel is not polite.

We have many examples of this kind of prayer in the Old Testament. The Book of Psalms is the prayer book of the Jewish people. Time and again the psalms attack God for a seeming lack of care. The psalmist yells out: “Why, Oh Lord, do you stand so far away from me?” “How long, Lord, will you ignore my prayer?” [see Psalm 10]. Or the famous psalm that Jesus prays on the cross: “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” [see Psalm 22]. When the Jewish people prayed, they asked for what they needed. They were not afraid to demand from God an answer when it seemed what they needed was being forgotten.

You and I need to be able to pray in this manner. We can pray with this kind of strength and emotion because we must pray as the people we really are. If we are angry, it is valid to express anger when we address the Lord. If we are fearful, that fear should not be held back from what we say. If we are disappointed with what God is doing in our life, it is beneficial to express that disappointment when we address God. We need to be the people that we are. It might seem to be preferable to put our best foot forward when we speak to God, but it is more important to be real than to be polite. The only person God can love, the only person God can answer, is the real person that we are. Therefore, it is much better to pray as a real sinner than a fake saint.

Although we might think that emotion and accusation are out of order when we address the creator of the universe, such emotion and honesty is not a sign of disrespect. It is a sign of intimacy. We are polite to strangers. We are brutally honest with the people closest to us, with the people with whom we live. Just remember for a moment the kind of language we use with one another in our own homes: “You did what? Where the “# %\$” were you? Don’t you ever try that again!” We can speak with that kind of honesty because we are close. We don’t waste our emotions on people we consider unimportant. But we are painfully honest with the people on whom our survival depends. We speak to them as family.

God wants us to speak in prayer as family. God wants us to speak what we truly feel because it is a sign of being connected. We should pray not with politeness and aloofness, but with honesty and intimacy.



conquer the storm. The problem is that we — you and I — often don’t have the faith in God we need. We see the chaos within us and don’t even consider that God is stronger than the chaos.

There is no chaos when the Lord is on the ship. There are challenges — many, many challenges, difficult challenges, horrible challenges — but chaos, forces that will destroy who we are, no, there is no chaos with the Lord. All that matters is that we find our identity, our self-worth in the Lord. “Who is this that even the wind and sea obey?” This is Jesus, the Victor over sin, the Victor over death. He is there in your lives and in my life, in our lives. We pray today for faith — the faith we need to trust in the Lord to conquer our chaos. —taken from the writings of Monsignor Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet

HOW STORMS CAN DEEPEN FAITH:

Poor Job! Miserable as he was, he made everything worse for himself by picking a fight with God. And God seemed to enjoy the challenge. Poor Job! He questioned the Almighty who only questioned him back. But, Job’s questioning resulted in a greater sense of himself and God and their relationship. That’s well worth the embarrassment of being asked if you think you’re ready to replace the creator!

Job’s interaction with the God of wind and sea led him into awe. What Job heard from God underpins something Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si’: on Care for Our Common Home*: “From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole” [#99]. Every bit of creation reveals God to those who have eyes to see. God is near, always.

One of Mark’s most striking depictions of Jesus’ self-revelation as Son of the Creator comes in his Gospel for this 12th Week in Ordinary Time. Mark offers a subtle hint about what’s going on as he quotes Jesus’ decision to take the disciples over “to the other side” [Mark 4:25-34]. This was no jaunt. It marked a real transition. Jesus had just taught about the subtle, prodigious seeds of the reigning of God. What he didn’t explain was that moving into the new would be far from peaceful — the seed has to die [see John 12].

Crossing over, the boat got caught in ferocious weather. Mark’s word for the “squall” denotes a whirlwind — a favorite term used in the Hebrew Scriptures to describe God’s powerful, disturbing communication. This same word describes God’s address to Job [see Job 38:1-11].

The folks in the boat with Jesus suddenly felt like Job — uncomprehending and panicked. Job had no idea why he was suffering. The disciples couldn’t explain the tempest — they could only react with terror. In both cases, God was not acting like they expected. Job was not being justly rewarded for his goodness, the disciples felt that if Jesus had been sent by God, they should be safe with him. Job cried out to God [see Job 7:17-21], and the disciples tried to awaken Jesus to their shared plight.

Why did God let it happen? Why was Jesus unperturbed by the raging storm?

We should probably interpret this story in the light of the cross and Resurrection — after all, Mark wrote it with that hindsight. Perhaps the transition Jesus was leading his disciples through entailed a new understanding of their relationship with God. Like Job, they seemingly operated in a transactional world — do good, get rewarded; stay with God and you’ll be safe. If they were with Jesus, there should be no storms.

When the disciples woke Jesus up, He addressed the storm, shouting something like: “Shut up! Be muzzled!”

This sounds like an exorcism. Exorcism was core to Jesus’ ministry — especially when we understand



CONQUEROR OF CHAOS:

A long time ago, when I was first ordained, I taught at Dominic Savio High School in the East side of Boston. Now, if you look at Boston on a map, you'll notice that it is in Eastern Massachusetts where the land meets the sea. While I was at Savio, a horrible blizzard hit, closing the city for about two weeks. As the blizzard was coming, we sent the students home early. The storm raged for over 24 hours. I had never seen anything like this. It was like a hurricane with snow. The city could not be evacuated because the roads were covered with snow. Only essential personnel were allowed out of their homes for a week, and many of these were transported by the National Guard, which had to be mobilized.

When the restrictions were lifted and the roads cleared, life returned to normal. One Sunday after Mass, I took a drive out by some of the nearby beaches — Winthrop Beach and Revere Beach. I saw houses that were hundreds of yards away from the water, but which had their second story windows destroyed by the waves. I could hardly believe what I was seeing. It's hard to explain the fury of the sea during a storm. It is something you hopefully will never experience.

Imagine if you were in a small boat in a storm. Water crashes on the boat from the right, left, front and back. Will the boat break in two? Will it sink? It is complete chaos. So, understand the disciples' turmoil as the sea was about to claim their lives. But Jesus was there with them. Sleeping — seemingly not concerned about the turmoil. They woke him up, and He stilled the sea and the wind. To the ancients, only God could control this chaos. But Jesus did — “Who is this whom even the wind and sea obey?” [Mark 4:35-41]. Jesus conquered the sea. But only God could take control of the sea. The disciples had been terrified. Jesus said that they should not have been afraid. They needed to have faith in Him.

There is a great deal of chaos in our world and in our individual lives. We have to have faith in the Lord to be with us through the chaos. Think about those who died for the faith — the martyrs. So many of them were surrounded by people jeering at them, mocking them, hurting them, killing them. They kept their faith in the Lord, and even those who were horribly tortured died in the peace of knowing that they were returning to the God they refused to reject. In this way God was present through the chaos.

All of us have experienced episodes of chaos in our lives. There are times that we feel that everything is falling apart. Most often we did not cause the chaos — we are victims of a world that has chosen the material over the spiritual, a world that has rejected God. Bad things happen to good people. A member of our family becomes chronically ill. Our family's life suddenly revolves around caring for him or her. Everyone in our family needs to muster up all the strength we have to help our loved one fight the sickness. Or, perhaps there is a sudden accident and a lasting ailment — like paralysis — or tragic death or deaths. We might feel that our world is falling apart. It is then that we have to remember that the Lord is on the ship with us. We need faith. The One who conquers the sea, will conquer the chaos of our lives.

Worse, there are times that we are responsible for the chaos. We fall into sin and then experience what our sin has done to our family as well as to ourselves. We willingly chose the very action which is destroying us and those we love. We know that we have caused this. We deserve whatever is happening to us. But our family doesn't deserve what is happening to them. Do we dare to ask the Lord to get us out of the mess we have created? Yes. We have to trust in Him. He is on the ship of our lives. No matter what we have done, God can control the storm.

God calls out to us in the middle of the storm to have faith in Him, to trust Him, to allow Him to



So when we are angry, when we are upset, when we are disappointed, it is important to tell God how we feel. When life dumps on us one more time, it is valid to ask God what the heck is going on? We need to be as brutally honest as necessary to be the people we really are before the Lord. We do not need to worry about God's feelings. God is big enough to handle it. God wants us to speak as sons and daughters. God wants us to be close enough to speak the truth, to bluntly cry out in our need.

So, we need to tell God what is in our heart — both when it is pretty and when it is not. Because it is only after we tell God how we truly feel that we will be able to hear the answer that God gives.

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

THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY:

The great medieval theologian, Thomas Aquinas, who remains an important resource for contemporary “virtue ethics,” treated charity as one of the three theological virtues, along with faith and hope. Charity — an unmerited gift from God — enables us to live in friendship with God, to participate in the life of the Trinity and to experience something of eternal beatitude while still on earth. As scripture teaches us, God has first loved us which enables us to love God [see 1 John 4:19]. Our friendship with the triune God, who always loves us steadfastly and unconditionally, is dynamic, always open to further growth and development. Lukewarm believers can fall in love with God, nominal Christians can develop a loving relationship with Christ, and good Catholics can get more energized by the Holy Spirit.



Recognizing our limitations as lovers can function positively, preserving us from self-righteousness and encouraging us to deepen our love for God. Furthermore, the ever-merciful God can transform our sinful failures to love into more effective exercises of the virtue of charity. The God proclaimed by Christ is not a stern judge, but a passionate lover who seeks to befriend us. Through the gift of grace, we are able to return that love — at least in some measure — and to delight in the gift of friendship with God.

The virtue of charity inclines us not only to love God, but also to love our neighbor. These two loves are essentially united so that they necessarily interact in an authentic Christian life. The early Christian community put it this way: “Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar” [1 John 4:20]. We are called to love our neighbors because they also are loved by God and share in the gift of divine friendship. God's love excludes no one and embraces all human beings, creating a universal fellowship, an all-inclusive community of love. The virtue of charity empowers us to do the hard work of maintaining healthy family relationships, to set aside our own needs to meet the needs of our friends, and to get along with troublesome colleagues at work. As Jesus teaches us by word and example, charity also prompts us to expand our circle of love to include those in need, the poor, the vulnerable and even our enemies. Charity is true to itself when it is prepared to give more tomorrow than today and when it is ready to sacrifice self to serve others.

Individuals practice charity in various ways. Tim expresses his love for God by going to Mass a couple of times during the week. Mary practiced tough love by enrolling her drug-addicted teenage son into a drug rehab program. Sam deepens his loving relationship with his wife by regularly paying her honest compliments. Martha cares for her elderly neighbor by grocery shopping for her. Don helped create a better work environment by befriendng a black co-worker. Sylvia got her friend through a tough divorce by being a good listener. Jose helps the poor by serving meals once a week at a food distribution center. Sharon gave up a very lucrative job to become a community organizer in the inner city.

What concrete thing could you do to practice the virtue of charity?

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

SIMPLE and BEAUTIFUL:

Surrender your emptiness to the one who left the tomb empty.

—Jana Zuniga Pingel

FEAR IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY:

Jesus asked them, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” [Mark 4:35-41]. Were you afraid of the dark when you were a child? I certainly was. Although there was a nightlight in my room, I was still often afraid because that soft light — which was there for comfort — cast shadows and didn’t quite penetrate to every part of the room — including those corners where I knew something sinister was lurking.

Like countless children through the ages, I feared what I didn’t understand, and my young mind couldn’t penetrate the mystery of night’s darkness.

When we think of the experience of the disciples related in this account of Jesus calming the storm at sea, it’s easy to sympathize with their plight, even as we might be tempted to shake our heads at what we — who like to imagine ourselves to be more enlightened — dismiss as a limited vision and weak faith. After all, they had already seen Jesus demonstrate the divine power that was at work within him in acts of healing and heard his teachings. Why should they possibly feel frightened because of the storm that was raging around them?

Just like a child who still feels fear, even though she has been assured, again and again, that she is safe and secure and that the shadows that seem to be hiding places for monsters are really just tricks of the light, our faith and confidence can also fail us when we encounter frightening or uncertain realities in our lives. In our most human moments, we are not all that different from those frightened disciples. But as we reflect, we realize that fear is not the end of the story.

In his Gospel, Saint Mark is again and again inviting us to join the disciples in asking: “Who is this?” Because, for Mark, Jesus is the embodiment of the saving work of God, and each of the miracle stories he relates becomes an opportunity to come to a deeper understanding of Jesus as the one who brings God’s power and providence to human needs.

What message is contained in the fact that the disciples had to “awaken” Jesus? Was he really that sound asleep? Or was it possibly that Jesus was waiting for the disciples to get more in touch with their fear and helplessness? At that moment, Jesus “gets up” — rises to his full height in the stern of the boat, and directly confronts the nearly overwhelming power of the wind and the waves. Mark seems to be invoking Old Testament images of God’s power over raging waters [Job 38:1-11; also see Psalm 107]. The evangelist is proclaiming that Jesus possesses the same divine power that inspired the faith and hope of the people of Israel for generations.

In a sense, this incident is holding up a mirror for us, inviting us to look at our own lives and to consider how we respond when all hell seems to be breaking out around us. Do we revert to an unlightened fear as we try to hold onto some illusion of control, or do we find hope and confidence in what has been revealed to us about God’s power and action, even if we might not be able to recognize it in the moment?

In his book, *The Road to Peace*, Henri Nouwen reflects: “Fear is not of God. Our God is the God of love, a God who invites you to receive — to receive the gifts of joy and peace and gratitude of the poor, and to let go of your fears so that you can start sharing what you are so afraid to let go of.”

The invitation for us is to allow Jesus’ questions to the disciples to lead us into a deeper reflection on the power of God that is at work both within himself and, through faith, in us. Rather than freeing the disciples from any experience of fear or suffering — or simply explaining away their fears — Jesus invites us to look with the eyes of faith so that fear may be replaced with wonder and awe at what God has done — and is continuing to do — in our lives and in the world.

—taken from the writings of Brother Silas Henderson, S.D.S., which appear on the internet.

**LIFE IS TOUGH:**

Have you ever thought that God makes life too difficult? Think about it. Think about all of those times that you’ve been really tempted and fell because the temptation was too great. Think about all of those days when nothing seemed to go right, and you may have wondered: “God why are you doing this to me?” When is the last time you had a day like that? Maybe even today!

First of all, as Christians we need to realize that there’s a big difference between trials and temptations. Trials come from God, but temptations do not. Temptations come from the devil and from within. How do we know? Read what St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: “God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it” [1 Corinthians 10:13]. God DOES NOT want us to fail. He would never set us up to fail. That means that all those times we say: “It was too hard” after we’ve sinned, that it wasn’t God’s fault what happened — it was ours. St. Paul reminds us that God will NEVER put us in a situation that we can’t handle or survive, AS LONG AS — and here’s the kicker — we have the courage and the humility to call on Him.

Obviously, if you’re signed up for this service, you take an active role in your faith. Just as obvious, a lot of times Fridays and Saturdays offer us more difficult situations to respond to than the other days of the week. If you’re confronted with a trial this weekend — and you will be — have the courage to call on God, and He’ll give you what you need to get through it. If you find yourself in a tempting situation over the weekend, realize that it isn’t God setting you up to fail. Live for Jesus in that situation, take pride in your faith, and in the ability to call yourself a Catholic Christian, and kick the devil in the rear and tell him that he can’t win because you stand with Christ.

Be proud of Jesus Christ. He is proud of you!

—the Bible Geek

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

Monday:	Isaiah 49:1-6, Acts 2=13:22-26, Luke 1:57-66, 80
Tuesday:	2 Kings 19:9-36, Matthew 7:6-14
Wednesday:	2 Kings 22:8-23:3, Matthew 7:15-20
Thursday:	2 Kings 24:8-17, Matthew 7:21-29
Friday:	2 Kings 25:1-12, Matthew 8:1-4
Saturday:	Acts 12:1-11, 2 Timothy 4:6-18, Matthew 16:13-19

13th Week in Ordinary Time: Wisdom 1:13-24, 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Mark 5:21-43

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.



LIFE TEEN