

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer for the Elections ~**

We pray for our nation in the coming weeks,  
That we move beyond our fears and concerns  
To discern what will serve the common good  
For all members of our society.

We pray that we may respond to the call of solidarity  
Rather than the call to separate interests.  
May we be more concerned  
with successful Community  
than with individual success.

We pray that we consider ways  
Through difficult economic problems  
That are compassionate and just  
For all who struggle for their daily bread.

We pray that we dwell deeply on the call  
To serve those in poverty  
And recognize that all humans  
Have the right to a life with dignity  
And with the basic services  
to promote human flourishing.

We pray that we take seriously  
The call to be peacemakers,  
Despite the complexities  
In our local, national, and global conflicts.

We pray that we honor  
Our responsibilities as citizens  
Without resorting to the polarization  
That limits our listening.

Guide us in the coming weeks  
In our process of discernment  
So we serve you  
Through our choices and  
Our concern for the common good.  
**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.*

**WELCOME TO OUR MEN'S SOCCER TEAM:**

A special welcome to Gilmour's Men's Soccer Team and their families who are joining us for Mass on Saturday, October 19th in preparation for their game that evening against Wellington. We are delighted that you have joined us, and we assure you of our prayers and support. God bless you.

**FAITH EDUCATION — OCTOBER & NOVEMBER DATES:**

**Our Faith Education Program has begun. Class will NOT meet this Sunday, October 20, because of Fall Break for our teachers.** All children who will be part of our Faith Education program need to register. Our Sessions go from **8:45—9:45 AM, on Sunday mornings**, with the hope that our children would then **participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass. If you have not done so already, it is imperative that you register your family by contacting Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560].** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility. **Meeting dates for October are: 27. November dates are: 3-10-17-24.**

**WOMEN'S EVENING OF RETREAT — TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22:**

**Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 PM – 8:15 PM, we will host our annual Women's Fall Retreat.** All women of Our Lady Chapel and Gilmour Academy, and their guests, are welcome. We will begin with Mass together in the Chapel, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts building for a light supper, and spiritual discussion, led by **Father John. There is no cost for the evening, but we will accept free will donations to offset the cost of our food service.** [If you can't make it for Mass, come anyway when you can.] It will be a wonderful evening of spiritual renewal. So **mark the date on your calendars** and give yourself a treat in the Lord. **Sign up on the retreat sheet which is located on the easel in the narthex of the Chapel, or call [440-473-3560] or email: szaniszlop@gilmour.org.**

**MEN'S DAY OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM – 8:15 PM will be the date of our annual Men's Fall Retreat!** All men of Our Lady Chapel, Gilmour Academy, and the Gilmour Men's Club and their guests, are invited. We will begin with Mass together in the Chapel, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts building for a light supper, and our spiritual discussion, led by Fr. John. **There is no cost for the evening, but free will offerings will be accepted to help offset the cost for our food service.** [Even if you can't make it for Mass, come anyway when you can.] It will be a wonderful evening of spiritual renewal. **Sign up on the retreat sheet which is located on the easel in the narthex of the Chapel, or call [440-473-3560], or email: szaniszlop@gilmour.org.**

**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.

**JOY:**

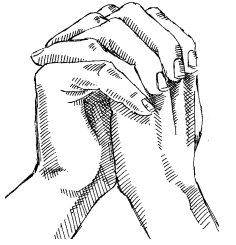
To get the full value of joy, you have to have someone to divide it with. —Mark Twain

**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 Nada Kucmanic, who is seriously ill.
- For Josephine Fernando, who is seriously ill.
- For Mary Vislosky, who is seriously ill as a result of bone cancer.
- For Brother Joseph LeBon, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Cathy Force, mother of Erika DiCello Lacroix ['90], Grandmother of Andre ['23] and AJ ['25] Lacroix, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Tom Maddix, C.S.C., who is recovering from surgery.
- For Terry DeBacco, mother of Michelle Chiacchiari ['96], mother-in-law of Mark Chiacchiari ['94], grandmother of Aurelia ['28], and Olivia ['30] Chiacchiari, who is undergoing rehab following a fall
- For Frank McCamley, former Gilmour teacher, father of Brian ['03] and Lauren ['08] McCamley, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Father Ray Sutter, pastor emeritus of St. Matthias Parish, who is in rehab following hip replacement surgery.
- For Sheldon Gray, who is suffering from a-fib, a recent fall, and has a brain bleed.
- For Janet Sterrett, who is confined to care in assisted living.
- For Brother Ed Libbers, C.S.C., who is recovering from injuries sustained in a fall.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Carl Saghy
- For Jose Antonio Lázaro Arellano, nephew of Father Ángel Lázaro de la Cruz, C.S.C.
- For Samuel Thomas, grandfather of Joe ['25] and Samantha ['28] Carino
- For Darcy Roediger.
- For Rosemary Pacini, mother of Father Pete Pacini, C.S.C.,
- For Bernard Gallagher, father of Brigid Gallagher ['99]
- For Joyce Cygan, grandmother of Bryce Beard ['25]
- For Dan Coughlin
- For Marc Williams
- For David Childers
- For Susan Vance Johnson, sister of Gilmour's Chief Advancement Strategy Officer, Ray Murphy
- For Andrew Carran, father-in-law of Dennis Kavran ['86]
- For Margy Campbell, grandmother of Fr. Karl Romkema, C.S.C.

**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].



**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 flooding in the South-eastern states as a result of Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton.
- 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.

**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 [10/12/24] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 25.00**  
**Total Offerings: Saturday [10/13/24] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 260.00**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN ALTAR SERVER or LECTOR?**

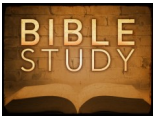
We are resuming our need for Servers, in light of the upcoming school year and school Masses. We are also always in need of Lectors for our weekend Masses over the summer, as well as for next year’s school Masses. **Any student who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an Altar Server; any student who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a Lector.** Adults are also welcome to join in our Lectoring ministry.



These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John.** You do not have to attend Gilmour to be an Altar Server, Lector, or to be involved in any other Ministry at Our Lady Chapel. **Please call the Chapel office [440-473-3560].**

**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



**Our topic: The Mysteries of the Rosary [Part II]**

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, October 20: 29 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 21:	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 22: St. Pope John Paul II	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 23:	1:15 PM In person only
Thursday, October 24:	NO MASS
Friday, October 25:	NO MASS
Saturday, October 26: 30 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, October 27: 30 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — NOVEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>:**

Our Savior Lutheran Church — across the street from the Chapel — has a Food Pantry which distributes food to the community on the **third Saturday of each month.** They welcome volunteers. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help unloading the trailers and setting up items for distribution and preparing for the food pantry to open. It serves around 150 clients each time. The food pantry serves clients from 9:30 AM—1:30 PM on Saturday.**



Our Savior Lutheran’s Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Please join us for a great experience.

**Please let us know in the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you would like more information or if you would like to help.** This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.



**REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:**

Love moves to where the beloved is most present to her-or-himself. “How are you,” really is asking: “Where are you?” If I love you, I will want to know how your hurting knee is, or how did the exam go today. Our dog never asks how my day has been, but I know he is centered around the circumference of his food dish. My affection for the dog attends to his needs.

St. Augustine reflects that God is more intimate, or present to us, than we are to ourselves. If we believe that God is love and that this is the most basic truth of God, then we hold that God's love is where I am most humanly me. To pray is to be attentive to where God is already present. We do not have to ask God to be near or aware. We have to ask ourselves to be more present and real where God's love is already meeting, embracing, and enlivening us.

For every suffering or calamity, or tragedy, we look for — in fact, we demand — reasons and causes. When there is a plane crash, there is a big search for the Flight Recorder contained within the “Black Box”. Somehow, we feel better when we know the roots and causes of the tragic things so that we will be comforted by the prospect of how things will turn out. Mechanical malfunctions are easier to forgive rather than human fragility or mental disturbance. Recently and always, we read in the news of young people who shoot and kill people in a movie house, school classrooms, places of prayer, and clothing stores. We eventually find out that the killers were sick, angry, rejected, or lonely. These are some kind of explanations and causes, but the sufferings of the families remain, and the victims are dead.

This is played out when we look at the Scripture Readings for this 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. Our readings begin with the Prophet Isaiah [53:6-12]. Here, Isaiah makes a rather bold and even scary statement that “The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.” But as the remainder of the First Reading proceeds, it is in this “crushing” that we are able to see the “light in fullness of days.” In my usual surface-level reading, I tend to interpret the literal meaning of the readings. But, in reality, God is not rejoicing in my crushing and suffering, but rather that I am making my way through the process of seeing more clearly. The crushing that Isaiah is referring to is my own journey of seeing past my surface-level and ego-driven self so I can recognize my True Self — the me where God resides. This is not the part of me that is the hard outer shell that contains my titles, accomplishments, and popular labels that I hope the world gives me and provides me with a social identity; but rather the loving and compassionate me that God knows. This process of letting go of the hard outside me and living into the compassionate inside me can feel like dying — like being crushed because it requires me to let go of a part of me that I take too seriously — my titles and accomplishments. But if I can let go and move in this direction towards connection, compassion, and love, then I “give my life as an offering for sin” (sin being the disconnected and self-centered me). And “Because of this affliction I shall see the light in the fullness of days.” So, God is not an angry God who finds joy in punishment and suffering; rather, God a loving God who “is pleased” by the dying of a small self in exchange for the living of the True Self.

It is not exactly a tragedy when one person's injury or fault leads him/her to cause their own personal disturbance or destruction. The tragedy is really when, through that fault, others are destroyed. It is within this context that we reflect on what the Prophet Isaiah is saying. This is one of the famous “Suffering Servant Songs” — it is usually read on Palm Sunday Weekend. This “Servant” will suffer for being God's servant. It will appear that God decided to “crush” and punish this particular person. There must be a reason!

There are several interpretations as to just who this “servant” might be. It could be Israel itself,

**HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

It's been over a month since we've heard the second of Mark's three predictions of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Finally, we have the third. Following the same pattern of the previous two, it begins with the prediction — which for some reason has been omitted in the Gospel for this 29<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time. What we do have is what follows this third prediction — the misunderstanding of what it means to die, and the oblivious response of James and John [Mark 10:32-45]. Jesus again clarifies the issue.

In the first prediction, it was Peter who has a problem dying with Jesus [see Mark 8]. In the second, it's the 12 who get into a discussion about who is the greatest [see Mark 9]. And now with the third prediction, the honor goes to James and John. Totally missing Jesus' point about first dying then rising, the brothers foolishly ask to be given the “glory seats” when Jesus comes into his glory.

Mark's Jesus initially cuts them down by simply replying: “You do not know what you are asking.” But then, when the other ten “become indignant” at the brothers' request, Jesus clarifies what dying with him actually entails. In the first prediction/misunderstanding/clarification incident, dying revolved around being open to whatever God asks of us; in the second, accepting even the community's most insignificant members as being important. Now in this third incident, Jesus takes our dying one step further — “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you.”

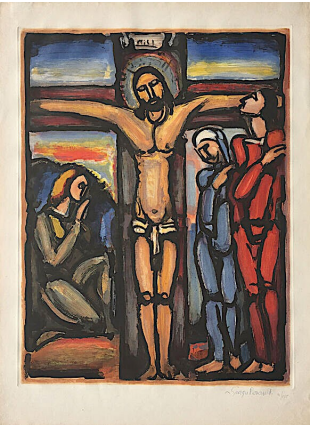
Then Jesus outlines his dream of an authority structure which completely turns all other such structures upside-down — “Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” In Jesus' ideal community, the persons who serve others are more important than the people who are served.

We must always remember that there were “real” slaves during the historical Jesus and the evangelist's day and age. What we today regard as symbolic or metaphorical language was looked at quite differently 2,000 years ago. Slaves back then were expected to give themselves totally over to their masters — their lives revolved around being at the beck and call of others. Jesus not only demands the same of his followers, he even goes beyond that by mentioning that he regards himself as a “ransom” for many.

When I ask my students, “What's a ransom worth?” they normally respond, “Whatever the person being ransomed is worth.” I presume a kidnapper would expect to get more for Pope Francis than for a parish priest in our local community. That means that Jesus — and his imitators — gauge their value by the value of those they serve. If we're important, it's only because we serve important people.

The prophet Isaiah seems to have been the first biblical person to come up with this idea of “vicarious suffering” — the belief that one person can suffer for another. His disciples, in today's Fourth Servant Song reflect on that phenomenon — “Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt shall he bear” [Isaiah 53:6-12].

It's not clear how such vicarious suffering works, but as we hear in the Letter to the Hebrews, some of Jesus' earliest disciples regarded his death and resurrection as exemplifying such an action. Just as the Jewish high priest offered sacrifices for the people, so Jesus — one of us — offered himself for us. As Isaiah's followers expressed it: “By his wounds we are healed” [Hebrews 4:14-16]. Jesus, like the prophet, had more than the smell of the sheep on him — He actually took on their sins. There's no way we can more deeply serve others. —taken from the writings of Father Roger Karban, which appear on the internet



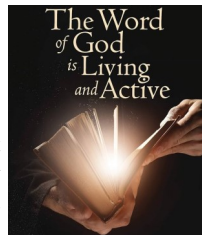
willing to drink the cup of salvation with others in the body of Christ.

Today, in mid-October, Christ offers us the opportunity to grasp nothing except our Gospel freedom. That freedom gives us the glorious power to believe that division can be healed and that the fragility of dominance will be revealed. With the U.S. elections little more than two weeks away, we are called to serve, to do what we can to ransom people who are walking in darkness and to proclaim the good news in deed and word.

We know not what we ask, but we trust that faithfulness leads to an unimaginably wonderful future.  
—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appears on the internet

### THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND ACTIVE:

Scripture is sacramental. Jesus, the Word, speaks to us through the Bible, the word. There is a mystery here which the human mind cannot plumb. There are certain things we can say are not true. We can say, for instance, that a book made of paper and ink is not the thing that is “living and active”, and that this book, all by itself, does not discern “the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” On the other hand, we cannot say that Scripture is “just a book”, any more than we can say that the Eucharist is just a collection of atoms, or that Jesus of Nazareth is just another homo sapiens. We are bound to say, in fact, that it is the word of God, inspired by the Spirit of him who is the Word and capable of changing hearts and lives. We find ourselves confronted, once again, with the mystery of the Incarnation: of God’s choice to manifest himself in a human way and through human things — including books. So let us approach Scripture as we approach the Eucharist — in the full awareness that we are standing in the presence of something mysterious, holy, and full of the power of God, since it is the inspired word of God. Let us take Scripture into our hearts as we take the Eucharist into our bodies. And let us let that word guide, judge, and heal us with all the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in the Church, and with submission to that Spirit and that Church. It will do the work that God sent it to do!



### DID YOU REALIZE?

When we invite friends for a meal, we do much more than offer them food for their bodies. We offer friendship, fellowship, good conversation, intimacy, and closeness. When we say: “Help yourself,” “take some more,” “don’t be shy,” “have another glass,” we offer our guests not only our food and our drink but also ourselves. A spiritual bond grows, and we become food and drink for one another other. In the most complete and perfect way, this happens when Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist as food and drink. By offering us his Body and Blood, Jesus offers us the most intimate communion possible. It is a divine communion.



### O.C.I.A. [Order of Christian Initiation for Adults]:

We are beginning to plan for our OCIA program [formerly known as RCIA] which will begin shortly. Why the name change? OCIA refers to the entire journey of faith discernment, whereas RCIA refers only to the Ritual aspects of the journey.



If you know someone who has been away from the Catholic Church for a while, or who is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, or who presently is not a Catholic but would like to pursue this avenue of faith; or investigate it; if you know someone who is not fully initiated [Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation] in their Catholic faith — then consider having them join our OCIA program. **Please contact Father John [440-473-3560] for more information.**

### ALWAYS:

Sometimes forgetting is the best way to remember.

punished in exile for its infidelities; it could be the prophet Isaiah himself, who has to suffer the punishments of being a prophet of hope within the exiled people of Israel; or it could be a symbolic person, whom the prophet projects will bring about peace and restoration. What is important here is to understand that the prophet is finding a cause for the suffering and that cause is God. God has punished or crushed this servant, but in order to arrive at what true life is all about — there will be “descendants in a long life”. There will be a life of fullness, many will be justified, and the guilt of the people he will take away. For the people of Israel are called to have hope in their God and in their future return to the Land of Promise. There is a reason for their exile — they know that very well. But within that pain of exile, there is a reason to hope — because of the suffering of the Servant.

Mark’s Gospel is a perfect picture of the collision between two forces — the perfectly human and the perfectly Jesus [Mark 10:35-45]. We read about James and John, who, being caught up in their small ego-driven self, ask Jesus if they can sit with him at the highest point. James and John — as well as the other disciples who were angry that they even asked — were still living within the part of themselves that perceives achievement, glory, and an upward trajectory of accomplishment to be the ultimate goals in life. To this, Jesus so beautifully replies, “You don’t even know what you are asking.” He tells them that they will be tested to let go and self-empty just as he does and will do — “The cup that I drink, you will drink”. But we must all go through the process of self-emptying. It cannot be granted to us at a request.

And, most importantly, it is God who grants the grace to “sit at my right or my left” and the author to the Letter of the Hebrews assures us that mercy and grace would be there when we do this self-emptying [Hebrews 4:14-16]. Further, Jesus makes it even clearer by telling his disciples that we do not achieve this “seat” as the rulers of the Gentiles try to do. But rather through the self-emptying of becoming the servant and the slave. In other words, let us not take so seriously our achievements, titles, and authority, but instead assume a posture of service and give up the ego-self for our True-Self.

The Roman kingdom or empire is always the prevailing setting for the listeners of Jesus. Roman domination is all they had ever known. Jesus talks of a new kingdom, but His listeners slowly are learning that their concepts of kingdom are changing. James and John are coming out of their historical context and their human self-centeredness — they are not asking their question based on what Jesus was thinking. Rather, they are putting Jesus’ words into what they had been thinking. There is a “learning-readiness” setting now.

The Greek word, “baptizein” — emphasis on the second syllable — means “immersion” or “sinking into.” The “cup” which will be offered to drink by Jesus will be offered to His closest followers, and Jesus asks if they can allow themselves to drink the cup and be immersed. James and John affirm that they can. Jesus then affirms that they will for sure enter into the deepest experience of Jesus’ life — His death.

Mark’s Gospel ends with quite a self-defining statement. Jesus is living among His followers and within the world as “Servant”. He is inviting them all to see His life — and theirs — as the heart of the “Kingdom”. The Romans enslave with power; Jesus as servant offers the power of self-sacrifice as their participation in His identity. Can they drink that — take it in and sink into this kind of living?

Jesus is meeting His human family where they are, and serving them what is good for them. The empire of Rome is a large section of our human territory. Much of our suffering occurs when that personal empire collides with our weaker desires for “God’s kingdom to come and replace our own”. All sufferings cannot be explained so easily. We are invited to drink and sink into the powerful and gentle arms of the Servant — serving us toward what is ultimately good for us.

Did someone say that following Jesus is easy?

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

### REMEMBER:

You are enough. You matter. You are more capable than you realize.

—Anonymous



## GO AND INVITE EVERYONE TO THE BANQUET:

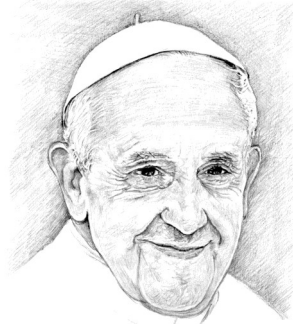
Dear brothers and sisters: The theme I have chosen for this year's World Mission Day is taken from the Gospel parable of the wedding banquet [see Matthew 22:1-14]. After the guests refused his invitation, the king — the main character in the story — tells his servants: "Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find" [22:9]. Reflecting on this key passage in the context of the parable and of Jesus' own life, we can discern several important aspects of evangelization. These appear particularly timely for all of us, as missionary disciples of Christ, during this final stage of the synodal journey that, in the words of its motto, "**Communion, Participation, Mission**", seeks to refocus the Church on her primary task, which is the preaching of the Gospel in today's world.

First, "**Go and invite!**" Our mission is to tirelessly go out to invite others to the Lord's banquet. In the king's command to his servants, we find two words that express the heart of the mission: the verbs "to go out" and "to invite". Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Tireless! God, great in love and rich in mercy, constantly sets out to encounter all men and women, and to call them to the happiness of his kingdom — even in the face of their indifference or refusal. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and messenger of the Father, went out in search of the lost sheep of the people of Israel and desired to go even further, in order to reach even the most distant sheep [see John 10:16]. Both before and after his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples: "Go!" — thus involving them in his own mission [see Luke 10:3 and Mark 16:15]. The Church, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles.

I take this opportunity to thank all those missionaries who, in response to Christ's call, have left everything behind to go far from their homeland and bring the Good News to places where people have not yet received it, or received it only recently. Dear friends, your generous dedication is a tangible expression of your commitment to the mission "to all people" that Jesus entrusted to his disciples — "Go and make disciples of all nations" [Matthew 28:19]. We continue to pray and we thank God for the new and numerous missionary vocations for the task of evangelization to the ends of the earth.

Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the "crossroads" of today's world. Today's drama in the Church is that Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out! Often we end up being an 'imprisoning' Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as 'its own', whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries. May all of us — the baptized — be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!

To return to the king's command in the parable, the servants are told not only to "go", but also to "invite" — "Come to the wedding!" [Matthew 22:4]. Here we can see another, no less important, aspect of the mission entrusted by God. As we can imagine, the servants conveyed the king's invitation with urgency, but also with great respect and kindness. In the same way, the mission of bringing the Gospel to every creature must necessarily imitate the same "style" of the One who is being preached. In proclaiming to the world "the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead" [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #36], missionary disciples should do so with joy,



## A LOVE STRONGER THAN SIN AND DEATH:

Last week we observed the wealthy man who couldn't let himself be seduced into experiencing the Reigning of God [Mark 10:17-30]. This week we watch disciples completely misconstrue Jesus' message [Mark 10:32-45]. James and John, two of Jesus' closest companions, make the bold and self-serving request: "We want to share your glory, sitting at your right and left."

Jesus took them on directly, saying something like: "You don't have a clue about what you are asking for!" On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus knew that whatever his glory would be, it would come through passionate faithfulness to his Father and his mission. What an irony that the brothers asked to be at Jesus' right and left — the places ultimately occupied by two crucified criminals. To top it off, James and John asked for this right after Jesus had told the disciples that his mission would lead to his death.

With overconfidence and thick-headedness, the brothers assured Jesus that they could drink his cup and share in his baptism. Rather than contradict them, Jesus informed them that he had no control over glory. What a comedown! They asked: "Do whatever we ask of you," and Jesus told them he was powerless. Even though they had been with him for a long time, even though he had told them three times over that he was headed toward suffering, messianic powerlessness was not part of their script for him.

Decades after the resurrection, when the Gospel writers began to reflect on how Jesus fit in their Jewish tradition, Isaiah's songs of a suffering servant offered the perfect and paradoxical answer — "The will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him, through his suffering he shall bear their guilt" [Isaiah 53:6-12]. One approach to this reading teaches that Jesus had to die in order for humanity to be forgiven. This theory has a long history. Although we hear it in any number of hymns and homilies, it is far from definitive.

How was the will of God accomplished through Jesus' giving his life? First of all, Jesus' death and resurrection demonstrated and pledged that evil will never, ever have the final word. Theologian, James Alison suggests that Jesus' passing through death to a transformed life in God opened the possibility for his followers to act fearlessly. The revelation of Jesus' human life, his temptations and passion, his sharing in human weakness all the way to death, revealed that God can be trusted, even in the worst of circumstances.

Isaiah says that the servant "gives his life as an offering for sin." What if, instead of thinking Jesus made that offering to God, we consider that he made it for us to demonstrate that God can be trusted? Sin is nothing less than a rejection of God. Jesus' life proclaimed that God's love is more powerful than sin and death in all their expressions.

Jesus told James and John that he was powerless to bestow glory, and invited them to share his baptism and cup. Jesus demonstrated his glory in his experience of God working through him. By weaning them from their grandiose desires, Jesus wanted them to learn that if they clutched to hopes they could envision, they could not receive the unimaginable that God offers.

Jesus capped off his teaching saying that he "did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." That's another way of saying that his glory had nothing to do with dominating, death-dealing power. We see his glory in his freedom to be for others. Those who hope to share that glory will find themselves in a great circle in which right and left make no difference because everyone is caught up in the same energy of love.

Jesus' life and the history of Christianity make it clear that his message is subject to distortion and self-serving interpretations. Yet, Christianity has somehow survived its adherents. Jesus has always had followers who recognized and still bet their lives on the faith that weakness opens them to grace, that avoiding the traps of fear and control frees them to believe in the power of their baptism. They are



“give and take” to things, when life is fair. It is quite another when things are unfair — when you are unjustly criticized, when everyone else seems to have lost balance, when, like on Good Friday, it gets dark in the middle of the day.

It is one thing to be gracious when those around you are respectful, warm, and fair. It is quite another when everyone seems bitter, disrespectful, jealous, and cold.

It is one thing to bless others when they want to receive that blessing — when they hang on to your every word, when they want to be in your company. It is quite another when their very glance speaks of loathing, and when they avoid you when you come into a room.

It is one thing to forgive others when that forgiveness seems fair — when it isn’t impossible to swallow the hurt, when the wound dealt you is not mortal. It is quite another to forgive someone when it isn’t fair — when the wound dealt you is mortal, when the life being murdered is your own.

It is one thing to give your life over to family, church, community, and God when you feel loved and supported by them — when they seem worth the sacrifice, when you get a good feeling by doing it. It is quite another thing when you do not feel support — when it doesn’t seem worthwhile, and when you feel no other reason for doing it except truth and principle.

These contrasts capture, in essence, what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. His passion was a drama of the heart — not an endurance test for his body.

What made Jesus’ sacrifice — his handing himself over — so special?

Perhaps we have focused too much on the physical aspects of the crucifixion to the detriment of what was happening more deeply underneath. Why? Because none of the gospels emphasize the physical sufferings of Jesus; nor do they delve into the fears he expresses in conversations that he had with others before his death. What the Gospels and Jesus emphasize is his moral loneliness — the fact that he was alone — betrayed, humiliated, misunderstood, the object of jealousy and crowd hysteria, that he was a stone’s throw away from everyone, that those who loved him were asleep to what was really happening, that he was unanimity-minus-one.

And this moral loneliness, mocked by those outside of it, tempted Jesus against everything he had preached and stood for during his life and ministry. What made his sacrifice so special was not that he died a victim of violence — millions die as victims of violence, and their deaths aren’t necessarily special — nor that he refused to use divine power to stop his death — as he himself taught, that would have proved nothing. What made his death so special is that, inside of all the aloneness, darkness, jealousy, misunderstanding, sick crowd hysteria, coldness, and murder, he held out — he gave himself over, without bitterness, without self-pity — holding his ideals intact, gracious, respectful, forgiving, without losing his balance, his meaning, or his message.

That’s the ultimate test, and we face it daily in many areas of our lives.

Some years ago, I was participating in a forum debating a book on chastity. The book, written by a woman still in her early twenties, was a very idealistic one, and it urged young people to not have sex before marriage, but to keep their virginity as a special gift for their partners in marriage. One of the panelists — a very sincere woman — had this reaction: “I like what this young woman says, and when my daughters are in their teens, I’ll have them read this book. But what she says makes a lot more sense when you are 20 years old, and know what you’re waiting for. It makes much less sense when you’re 39 years old, and no longer know what you’re waiting for!”

Jesus’ sacrifice was so special because, long after the clock had run out on everything, and there seemed no reason left to wait for anything, he still held on to his ideals, his balance, his graciousness, his forgiveness, and his love.

The struggle to do that — to remain faithful — is the real drama inside the death of Jesus, and in the end, it is a struggle of the heart — not of the body.

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



magnanimity and benevolence that are the fruits of the Holy Spirit within them [see Galatians 5:22]. Not by pressuring, coercing or proselytizing, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in this way reflecting God’s own way of being and acting.

Second, “*To the marriage feast.*” And let us all remember the eschatological and Eucharistic dimension of the mission of Christ and the Church. In the parable, the king asks the servants to bring the invitation to his son’s wedding banquet. That banquet reflects the eschatological banquet. It is an image of ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God, fulfilled even now by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, who has given us life in abundance [see John 10:10], symbolized by the table set with succulent food and with fine wines, when God will destroy death forever [see Isaiah 25:6-8].

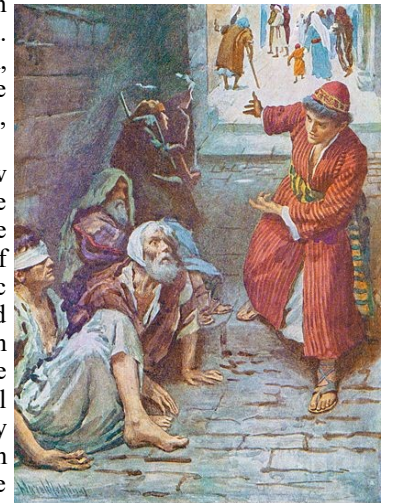
Christ’s mission has to do with the fullness of time, as he declared at the beginning of his preaching: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” [Matthew 1:15]. Christ’s disciples are called to continue this mission of their Lord and Master. Here we think of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the eschatological character of the Church’s missionary outreach: “The time for missionary activity extends between the first coming of the Lord and the second, for the Gospel must be preached to all nations before the Lord shall come [see Mark 13:10, and *Ad Gentes*, #9].

We know that among the first Christian missionaries, zeal had a powerful eschatological dimension. They sensed the urgency of the preaching of the Gospel. Today, too, it is important to maintain this perspective, since it helps us to evangelize with the joy of those who know that “the Lord is near” and with the hope of those who are pressing forward towards the goal, when all of us will be with Christ at his wedding feast in the kingdom of God. While the world sets before us the various “banquets” of consumerism, selfish comfort, the accumulation of wealth and individualism, the Gospel calls everyone to the divine banquet, marked by joy, sharing, justice and fraternity in communion with God and with others.

This fullness of life, which is Christ’s gift, is anticipated even now in the banquet of the Eucharist, which the Church celebrates at the Lord’s command in memory of him. The invitation to the eschatological banquet that we bring to everyone in our mission of evangelization is intrinsically linked to the invitation to the Eucharistic table, where the Lord feeds us with his word and with his Body and Blood. As *Benedict XVI* taught: “Every Eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God. For us, the Eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets [see Isaiah 25:6-9] and described by the New Testament as ‘the marriage-feast of the Lamb’ [Revelation 19:9], to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of the saints” [*Sacramentum Caritatis*, #31].

Consequently, all of us are called to experience more intensely every Eucharist, in all its dimensions, and particularly its eschatological and missionary dimensions. In this regard, I would reiterate that “we cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people” [*Sacramentum Caritatis*, #84]. The Eucharistic renewal that many local Churches are laudably promoting in the post-Covid era will also be essential for reviving the missionary spirit in each member of the faithful. With how much greater faith and heartfelt enthusiasm should we recite at every Mass: “We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again”!

In this year devoted to prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025, I wish to encourage all to deepen their commitment above all to take part in the celebration of Mass and to pray for the Church’s





mission of evangelization. In obedience to the Savior's command, she does not cease to pray, at every Eucharistic and liturgical celebration, the "Our Father", with its petition, "Thy kingdom come". In this way, daily prayer and the Eucharist in particular make us pilgrims and missionaries of hope, journeying towards everlasting life in God, towards the nuptial banquet that God has prepared for all his children.

Third, "**Everyone**". It is clear that the universal mission of Christ's disciples need to be found in the fully synodal and missionary Church. This third and last reflection concerns the recipients of the King's invitation that everyone be invited. This is the heart of mission: that 'all', excludes no one. Every mission of ours, then, is born from the heart of Christ in order that he may draw all to himself. Today, in a world torn apart by divisions and conflicts, Christ's Gospel remains the gentle yet firm voice that calls individuals to encounter one another, to recognize that they are brothers and sisters, and to rejoice in harmony amid diversity. "God our Savior desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" [1 Timothy 2:4]. Let us never forget, then, that in our missionary activities we are asked to preach the Gospel to all: "Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, we should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet" [*Evangelii Gaudium*, #14].

Christ's missionary disciples have always had a heartfelt concern for all persons, whatever their social or even moral status. The parable of the banquet tells us that, at the king's orders, the servants gathered "all whom they found, both good and bad" [Matthew 22:10]. What is more, "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" [Luke 14:21] — in a word, the least of our brothers and sisters, those marginalized by society — are the special guests of the king. The wedding feast of his Son that God has prepared remains always open to all, since his love for each of us is immense and unconditional. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have life eternal" [John 3:16]. Everyone — every man and every woman — is invited by God to partake of his grace, which transforms and saves. All anyone has to do is to simply say "yes" to this gratuitous divine gift, accepting it and allowing oneself be transformed by it, putting it on like a "wedding robe" [see Matthew 22:12].

The mission which is "for all" requires the commitment "of all". We need to continue our journey towards a fully synodal and missionary Church in the service of the Gospel. Synodality is essentially missionary and, vice versa, mission is always synodal. Consequently, close missionary cooperation is today all the more urgent and necessary — both in the universal Church and in the particular Churches. In the footsteps of the [Second Vatican Council](#) and my Predecessors, I recommend to all dioceses throughout the world the service of the Pontifical Mission Societies. They represent the primary means "by which Catholics are imbued from infancy with a truly universal and missionary outlook and are also a means for instituting an effective collecting of funds for all the missions, each according to its needs" [*Ad Gentes*, #38]. For this reason, the collections of World Mission Day in all the local Churches are entirely destined to the universal fund of solidarity that the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith then distributes in the Pope's name for the needs of all the Church's missions. Let us pray that the Lord may guide us and help us to be a more synodal and a more missionary Church.

Finally, let us lift our gaze to Mary, who asked Jesus to perform his first miracle precisely at a wedding feast, in Cana of Galilee [see John 2:1-12]. The Lord offered to the newlyweds and all the guests an abundance of new wine, as a foreshadowing of the nuptial banquet that God is preparing for all at the end of time. Let us explore her maternal intercession for the evangelizing mission of Christ's disciples in our own time. With the joy and loving concern of our Mother, with the strength born of tenderness and affection [see *Evangelii Gaudium*, #288], let us go forth to bring to everyone the invitation of the King, our Savior. Holy Mary, Star of Evangelization, pray for us! —Francis



ourselves to do His work. He sees this, but He also sees so much more. He sees our talent. He sees our love. He sees our determination to seek Him out in others and serve His Presence.

Some people think that because of situations in their past, they will never be good enough to bring Christ to others. Perhaps we all have those thoughts at time. We need to stop ourselves from that way of thinking. We have been called by Christ to be his disciples. We are Christians. We did not take Christianity on ourselves. We were given this Grace freely by the Lord. We are good enough. He makes us good enough.

It is not the size of a person's entourage that demonstrates that he or she is great. It is not the position of authority that a person holds that demonstrates his or her greatness. True greatness come from Jesus Christ. He calls us to be people of service. It is through service that every one of us is capable of becoming, in our own way, GOATS.

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

### COMING TO SERVE:

Mark's Gospel begins with the Zebedee brothers — James and John — angling for high positions in the kingdom much to the chagrin of the other ten [Mark 10:32-45]. Jesus used the occasion to teach the Twelve that they should not lord it over others, but should act as servants. Jesus reminded them of his own mission — "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." Furthermore, Jesus lived out that vocation during his public ministry, exorcising demons, healing the sick and preaching the good news.

Mark's Gospel prompts reflection on ways we might be tempted to lord it over others — throwing our weight around; taking advantage of others; misusing our authority; exploiting the weakness of others; looking down on the less fortunate; putting on airs; portraying a sense of superiority; dominating conversations. If we can detect even quite subtle ways of lording it over others, we are in a position to hear Christ calling us to act less like masters and more like servants — to be less self-centered and more like the Master.

We can imagine individuals who are trying to be more Christ-like in their relationships. A mother who interfered too much in her son's marriage now helps out only when asked. A husband who expected his wife to wait on him is now doing his share of the domestic chores. A father who generally ignored his daughter and her teenage activities now responds generously when she asks for his help. A very successful older brother who often fought with his younger sister now helps pay for her college education. A corporate executive who was overly harsh with one of her employees is now helping him to develop his skills so he can move up in the corporation. A pastor who thought of his flock as children needing fatherly guidance now sees himself as a servant leader — empowering his adult parishioners to use their gifts to build up the Body of Christ and spread the kingdom in the world. A municipal judge who tended to look down on the petty criminals before him became more compassionate, looking for ways to rehabilitate them.

How can you become a more faithful disciple of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve?

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

### A DRAMA OF THE HEART — THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS:

It is one thing to love when you feel love around you — when others understand you, and are grateful for your person and gifts. It is quite another when everything around you speaks of misunderstanding, jealousy, coldness, and hatred.

It is one thing to maintain your ideals when they are shared by others — when the Gospel works for you, when the principle works out in practice. It is quite another when it seems you are alone in some ideal, and when the Gospel appears to be delivering more death than life.

It is one thing to keep your balance when the rhythms of life support it — when there is a healthy



**HOW TO BE A GOAT:**

There is an expression in the world of sports that a particular player deserves to be called the GOAT. Now years ago, if an athlete was called a goat, it meant that his or her performance at a game was so poor that he/she bore much of the responsibility for the team losing. But that is not how the term goat is used now. To be a goat is to be the “Greatest of All Time”. Tom Brady, the former quarterback of the New England Patriots and Tampa Bay Buccaneers is often referred to as the GOAT. People may claim that Michael Jordan is the GOAT in professional basketball. Others might say that the title GOAT belongs to LeBron James.

Some athletes are far from being GOATS, but act as though they were. They have an entourage of people who are continually telling them how wonderful they are. They lord it over their teammates as though the others were second rate citizens in their world of wonderfulness.

But you don’t have to go to sports to witness those who are so full of themselves that they act as though they are goats. James and John in Mark’s gospel acted that way. They felt that they should sit at the right hand and left hand of the Lord when Jesus came into His Glory. They wanted to lord it over the other disciples. Or, at least they wanted it to be clear that they were much better than the others. Jesus told them that they were clueless [Mark 10:32-45]. They didn’t understand where greatness came from.

There are many people in all walks of life who strut around as legends in their own minds. They may be professionals, like lawyers or doctors or professors who look down on others, or they may be people who hold a position of respect in their families — like parents or grandparents — but do so in an arrogant way, as tyrants rather than as sources of family love. Perhaps we all do this at times. We may act as though we are great, but the truth is that those who think that they are GOATS, are, like James and John, clueless. They, we, don’t understand from where greatness comes.

Jesus understood how to be great, though. He told James and John — and He tells us — that greatness comes through service. On the night of the Last Supper, before Jesus gave us His Body and Blood, He washed the feet of His disciples, and then gave them and us this mandate: what you have seen me do, you also must do. That was the path to greatness [see John 13:12-17]. That was the way that we could become GOATS.

Think about St. Teresa of Calcutta. She died in 1997, so most of us have been blessed to have been witnesses to some of her life — or at least we probably have heard about it. Everyone would admit that she was a great lady. But how did she become great? She became great by emptying herself to serve the poorest of the poor, first in Calcutta and then throughout the world.

Think about people you know that you can say with confidence that he or she is a great person. My guess is that person is someone who continually reaches out to other people. Someone is sick — he or she is there. Someone is having a bad day — he or she is there. Someone needs help with a difficult job — he or she doesn’t even need to be asked. You see, truly great people have learned how to be great from He who is the One True Goat — Jesus Christ, the Greatest of All Time.

All of us have different gifts. We have a responsibility to develop our gifts in service to the Lord. What can I do best? What do you do best? Some people are capable of caring for the incarcerated with mercy, compassion and justice. Others have a great deal of empathy for the sick. Still others have a heart for the poor. Some are capable of teaching. Others are great parents — not just to their own children but to those orphaned by the circumstances of their lives. We all have many talents. Our talents are given to us to serve others. We are called to develop these talents. We are called to greatness.

The Lord understands our failures, our limitations, our fears, the times that we lack confidence in

**THE FIRST GIFT FROM THE LORD:**

What was the first gift that Jesus gave us? When he began his earthly ministry, what was the first step that Jesus took? What was the foundation that he laid upon which he intended to build everything else? Jesus’ first step was not to erect a building. The first Christian church was not built until centuries after his death. Nor was his first step to write the scriptures. The first writings of the Christian scriptures were not composed until decades after Jesus’ ministry ended. Nor was his first gift, to give the Spirit. The Spirit did not descend until after the resurrection. Nor did Jesus begin by instituting the Eucharist. That sacred meal which we share was established on the night before he died.

No, Jesus’ first step was to establish a community. Immediately after his baptism, he went out and called disciples who could share life with one another. Therefore, the first gift that Jesus gave to us, is the gift of one another. He did this because he knew that if his teaching was to be understood, if his miracles were to have an effect, if his mission was to impact the world, he would need a band of men and women who shared a common identity. He would need disciples who would discover in their relationships with each other, his very presence in their midst.

How peculiar it is, then, that we so often forget the essential nature of community. How unfortunate it is that are many who still associate their faith with a church building — as if bricks and mortar could on their own, lead us to God. How misleading it is for us to think that studying the bible or memorizing the catechism, or devoutly receiving the Eucharist, or saying the rosary could on their own adequately form our faith. They can’t. We need community! Because it is only when our lives touch, when stories are shared, when love is exchanged, that our faith can come alive and the power of Jesus’ presence emerge in our lives.

In his memoir of being a prisoner during the Second World War in the infamous Japanese concentration camp on the River Kwai, a British veteran noted that as the prisoners of that camp first came together, overt displays of faith were common. Prisoners would regularly pray publicly; many would read the Bible daily. However, as time passed, and as it became clear that there would be no immediate release from this camp, these displays faded in the face of discouragement and anger. But then, out of hardship and necessity, those individual prisoners began to care for one another; they began to protect those who were weak among them and some even gave their lives for one another. As those individual persons began to share common identity, not only did their faith in God return, but it deepened. They were able to see in their midst, the presence of God’s love. Those prisoners began to realize that religion was not primarily an issue of belief, but one of action, where people cared for one another, even when it was not clear whether such caring would help. Out of that service to one another, faith became living and real.

This truth guides Jesus’ words in Mark’s Gospel [10:32-45]. It is why Jesus commands his disciples to be servants of one another. Because Jesus knows that it is only when we care for one another, when our lives touch and intersect, that the Good News of his gospel will have power. If our faith is to be real, then community must be one in which we live and participate.

A woman was walking down the street, saw two little boys, seven years old, sitting on the curb, crying. With concern, she stopped and asked them: “Children, what’s the problem?” The one little boy said: “We have a stomach ache and it’s in his stomach.” Shared pain; shared life; shared love. These are the essential components of living faith. These are the gifts that allow others to see the presence of Christ in our midst. These are the gifts that allow us to be the Body of Christ in our world.

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

**A REMINDER:**

Fear is a tool used by the enemy to hold you back from the greatness that is inside you

—Brandon Walsh

**DO YOU HAVE INSECURITIES?**

First of all, if you answered “yes” to the question posed in the title, you are not a bad person or a bad Christian. It’s almost a rhetorical question — seeing as most of us have little things here and there that we may be slightly insecure about. But this a message of hope, not condemnation. The message is not complicated or theological. You see, the Gospel message is one of freedom. As Christians, we celebrate the resurrection — Christ’s victory over death.

The word freedom means different things to different people. If you’re like me, when you hear the word freedom, you picture Mel Gibson yelling it at the top of his lungs in the last scene of *Braveheart*. Maybe when you think of freedom you think moving away from home. Some people think of the American Revolution. The point is that freedom holds a dear place in our hearts — whether we realize it or not.

St. Paul writes: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” [2 Corinthians 3:17]. In Galatians, St. Paul tells us that “For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery” [Galatians 5:1]. And then he adds: “But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love” [Galatians 5:13]. This echoes Saint John Paul II’s words: “Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.”

The great saints who went before us knew what it meant to struggle and suffer, but they also knew the freedom that Christ offers. Let’s look at this in terms of our own relationship with Jesus. In doing so, we will all experience freedom in a new way.

Insecurities cripple both teens and adults alike. People think they have to live up to some standard set for them by their peers, coaches, parents, or the media. Sometimes we buy into the lie that our worth is in something other than Jesus. I want to say this again in the hope that we all come to believe it more and more — **Your worth is in Jesus Christ.** That’s it. The God of the universe loves you.



Pope Saint John Paul II had a great sense of this, and a great sense of the hurt that young people were experiencing. This is why he said: **“You are not the sum of your sins — you are the sum of God’s love for you.”** This is a message of freedom. This is a message of hope.

Brothers and sisters, we are free. Any feelings of shame or unworthiness or insecurity that you feel — Jesus took it to the cross. He felt it for you. Those feelings died with Jesus, and when He rose, they were gone. To live weighed down by insecurities is contrary to the Gospel. We need to strive to embrace the freedom we have in Jesus Christ — the freedom to pursue holiness, the freedom to love, and sometimes the most difficult, the freedom to be loved. You are worthy.

Brothers and sisters, don’t give into lustful temptations or relationships. You are worth waiting for. You are worth it. Brothers and sisters, don’t give into temptations to cheat just to prove yourself on the playing field, in the classroom, on the stage, or in your own home. You were worth dying for, remember? Don’t compare yourself to others. Don’t be disheartened; don’t sell yourself short.

Our cry of freedom comes from the deepest place in our hearts. In Christ, we have freedom.

Let us journey together and walk hand in hand with our Lord. Let us experience the freedom Christ won for us. Having trouble with insecurities? Talk to your priest, your friends, your youth minister, or CORE team members — they are all there for you. We are praying for you and we love you.

—written by Dm Quaglia, a youth minister

**YOUR COMMISSION:**

You are uniquely suited and superbly equipped to carry out your God-given mission. —Michael Kelly

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP IS FORMING:**

A group of Young Adults is in the process of being formed here at the Chapel. Here is an opportunity to get together, share some time in faith, but also to support each other in life’s journey as we continue to grow and become the people that God wants us to be. If you are interested and would like to be part of this new adventure, please contact Richard Jones, Stephanie Leonor, or Edwin Heryak. More details will become available shortly, along with the announcement of a starting date for our gatherings. Of course, you can also contact Father John at the chapel if that would be easier for you. God bless you.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Monday:</b>	Ephesians 2:1-10, Luke 12:13-21
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Ephesians 2:12-22, Luke 12:35-38
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Ephesians 3:2-12, Luke 12:39-48
<b>Thursday:</b>	Ephesians 3:14-21, Luke 12:49-53
<b>Friday:</b>	Ephesians 4:1-6, Luke 12:54-59
<b>Saturday:</b>	Ephesians 4:7-16, Luke 13:1-9

**30<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Jeremiah 31:7-9, Hebrews 5:1-6, Mark 10:46-52

**A GRACIOUS WEED:**

When Jesus talked about the reign of God, he was talking about an utterly different way of relating with one another than human society as we know it. The new world order — the reign of God — is the heart of the Christian Scriptures. The kingdom is Jesus’ message. He never describes it conceptually; he walks around it and keeps giving images of the Real. This is the classic pattern of the spiritual teacher. Only those ready and seeking will normally understand. For example, “The reign of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches” (Matthew 13:31–32). The mustard seed is very small and insignificant. Pliny the Elder, a contemporary of Jesus, writes only two things about the mustard plant: It’s medicinal, so it did have some value. But he said not to plant it because it tends to take over the entire garden. It is a weed that cannot be stopped.

Those would have been the two images on which Jesus was clearly building. He teaches: What I’m describing for you is therapeutic — it’s life, it’s healing, it’s medicinal — but it’s like a weed. I’m planting a weed in the world. What a shocking image! Jesus talks about strange things like nonviolence and living a simple life by saying they’re planted and they’re going to take over the whole garden; the old world is over.

That’s Jesus’ hope, but we have to witness what patient hope that is. He didn’t see it happen in his lifetime, when religion was highly corrupt and most people were poor, oppressed, or enslaved. Yet still, in the midst of that, he dared to announce the present reign of God! He dared to promise: “You can live the new reality right now.”

—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.