

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for the Elections ~

Give us, O God,
leaders whose hearts are large enough
to match the breadth of our own souls
and give us souls strong enough
to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek
more than development of ourselves —
though development we hope for,
more than security for our own land —
though security we need,
more than satisfaction for our wants —
though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose the leader
who will work with other leaders to bring safety to the whole world.

Give us leaders
who lead this nation to virtue
without seeking to impose our kind of virtue
on the virtue of others.

Give us a government
that provides for the advancement of this country
without taking resources from others to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves
to choose as leaders those who can tell
strength from power,
growth from greed,
leadership from dominancy,
and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust you, Great God,
to open our hearts to learn from those
to whom you speak in different tongues
and to respect the life and words
of those to whom you entrusted the good of other parts of this globe.

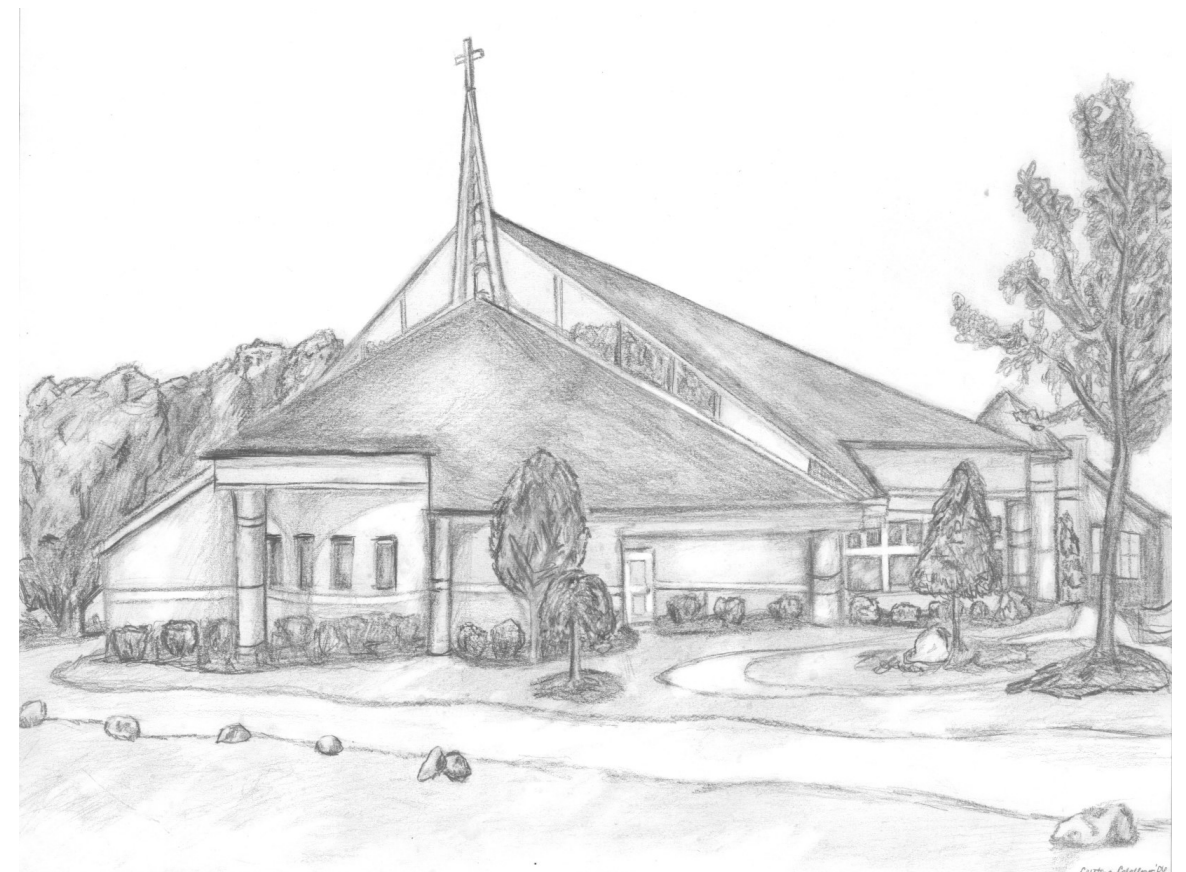
We beg you, Great God,
give us the vision as a people
to know where global leadership truly lies
to pursue it diligently,
to require it to protect human rights
for everyone everywhere.

We ask these things, Great God,
with minds open to your word
and hearts that trust in your eternal care. **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.

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS:

Friday, November 1st, is the Feast of All Saints. It is a **Holy Day of Obligation.** All Saints Day is a universal Christian Feast that honors and remembers all saints — known and unknown. In the Western Church [especially Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglicans] it is kept on November 1st. While the Eastern Orthodox churches began observing the Feast of All Saints back in the mid 4th century, the Feast did not become established in the Western Church until the Roman bishop Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to Christian usage as a church on May 13, 609 or 610. Pope Gregory III [died 741] moved its observance to November 1st, when on this date Gregory dedicated a chapel in the Basilica of St. Peter's to "All the Saints." The Feast of All Saints is a day to remember and thank God, but also to venerate and pray to the saints in heaven for the many ways that they intercede for us and help us. It is a day to glorify Jesus Christ, who by his holy life and death has made the saints holy through Baptism and faith. **Because of Halloween and poor attendance, we will not have a vigil Mass on Tuesday; rather, we will have our community celebration on Friday at 5:30 PM. In addition, we will also have Mass on Friday, November 1st at 9:30 AM [Lower School], and 2:00 PM [Middle School].** While these are school Masses, there will be room for you to attend if you choose one of these. Please join us.

**ALUMNI & CHAPEL MEMORIAL MASS — NOVEMBER 17:**

November is the month of Thanksgiving. It is also traditionally the month set aside to remember our deceased. What better way to offer thanks than to remember the special people in our lives who have gone before us to the Lord — our lives are built on the heritage they have left behind. As the *Catholic Catechism* reminds us: "We who journey together on our earthly pilgrimages, must accompany each other at our journey's end and surrender each other into God's hands" [CC, #1683].



In order to properly celebrate for our November remembrance, we are going to have a **Memorial Mass at Our Lady Chapel on Sunday, November 17th at 10:00 AM.** We are particularly remembering **all of our alumni who have passed away within this past year. We are also remembering all members of our Chapel and school families who have gone to the Lord. Please place the names of your loved ones whom you would like to remember in our Memorial Basket located on the table in the narthex of the chapel.**

MEN'S DAY OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, November 7th 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.**

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

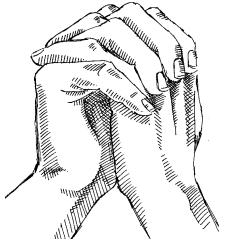
Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord's invitation: "I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They 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 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 undergoing medical treatment
- For Terry DeBacco, mother of Michelle Chiacchiarri [*96], mother-in-law of Mark Chiacchiarri [*94], grandmother of Aurelia [*28], and Olivia [*30] Chiacchiarri, 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 undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 Barbara Amato, grandmother of Margot Reid [*17], mother-in-law of John Reid [*76]
- 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 Father Karl Romkema, C.S.C.
- For Victor Scaravilli, grandfather of Cassidy Scaravilli [*28]
- For Bill Colbridge, uncle of Father Dan Ponisciak, C.S.C.
- For Father George Lucas, C.S.C.
- For Dennis Skitzki, brother of Brother Larry Skitzki, C.S.C.
- For Paul Berger, grandfather of Holy Cross Director of Mission, Tymothy Tagliafero
- For Nick Restifo.
- For Keith Craigo, brother of Science Teacher, Jason Craigo.
- For Robert Ondak, Sr., father of Ann Marie Ondak Clifford [*90] and Robert Ondak, Jr. [*91]
- For Stansa Zitnik, mother of Christine Foell.
- For Denise Miranda, mother of David [*12], Agnes [*14], and Matthew [*25] Miranda.

JESUS AND THE EUCHARIST:

When someone experiences that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, it helps them to understand what it means to be a disciple.

—Bishop Andrew Cozzens

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- Got s peaceful and Spirit driven election
- 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 [10/19/24] _____ \$ 303.00

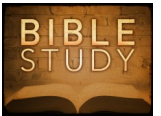
Total Offerings: Saturday [10/20/24] _____ \$ 245.00

GOD OF BOUNTY:

Mother Teresa once observed that the United States was one of the most poverty-stricken nations she had ever seen. We are glutted with material wealth, but starving for spiritual wealth. We are drowning in stuff, but parched for love. St. Francis knew the way out of this, for he had learned the lesson of the rich young man. Unlike that poor soul who went away sad because he had many possessions [see Matthew 19], Francis went away joyful because he had nothing. God kept him alive — and lively — through years of ascetic material famine and made St. Francis richer in the Spirit. Today, put your eyes on the One Who has His eye on you — and He will deliver your soul from death too. The Marriage Feast of the Lamb is a bounteous table!

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, October 30th 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 27: 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, October 28: Sts. Simon & Jude	NO MASS
Tuesday, October 29:	NO MASS
Wednesday, October 30:	1:15 PM In person only
Thursday, October 31: Vigil of All Saints	NO MASS
Friday, November 1: All Saints Day	9:30 AM 2:00 PM 5:30 PM In-Person & Live Stream
Saturday, November 2: 31 st Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, November 3: 31 st Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

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.**



LITTLE ACTS OF KINDNESS:

No matter who you are, the biggest thing you do in any day is most often going to be a small act of kindness, decency, or love.
—Cory Booker

REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

There is an old axiom which says “Whatever is received is received according to the mode of receiving” —simple and understood easily. If you are going to give something to another, it is necessary to know something about the other’s ability of, or way of, receiving the gift. We communicate with babies in the “coos” and “tickle-tickle” which they seem to take in. We learn languages of other countries so we can relate in their tongues. It is arrogant to assume that all must adapt to our ways of reception.

So, it becomes very important that we ask ourselves “What is it that we seek?”, knowing that God seeks our freedom and joy, and continually invites us to rise and walk with Him on a journey that leads to eternal life. God comes to, and communicates with, and consistently gives to us according to our individual manner of receiving. Sometimes in reading the lives of the saints, we end up thinking that God dealt with them all in a uniform and predictable manner — thus implying that we must change and get to where we think God is. This is simply not true.

God is not arrogant. Rather God is a lover, and he comes to us deeply respectful of how we are able to receive. It is not so easy to trust in our individual way of being available to receive. It is somehow safer to ask: “Where should I be and which way should I face and hold my hands to be open?” — in other words...what do I have to do to make this happen. But the reality is that if you wish to engage God in prayer, just be there according to how you are, when you are “there”.

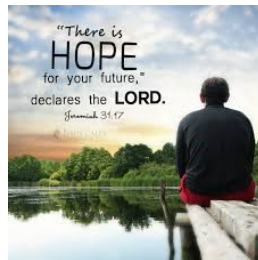
Anne, a high school aged person from Bismarck, North Dakota, wrote to me the other day, and in her note she mentioned that she was giving a five minute talk on the “challenge of freedom.” Do you know how many books have been written on this topic? — all trying to discuss: “What is freedom?”; “How would we ever know if we were really free?”; “What happens when my being free collides with your sense of freedom?” Right there her five minutes would be up! And, of course, the only really answer is: “Be yourself” and “Open yourself to the love that God has for you.”

Jeremiah is usually a doomful and “pointy finger” prophet. But, now after years of calling Israel to reclaim its identity as God’s holy people, Jeremiah sings a song filled with hope [Jeremiah 31:7-9]. God, who allowed the people to experience exile, now promises a return for everyone — the blind, the lame, the little ones. This assurance emphasizes that no one is excluded from God’s love; all are accepted as they are as cherished children of God.

Gone is the impending banishment to a second enslavement; now we are hearing that this exile will end, tears will be replaced by brooks of water. The blind will not stumble along the level road, nor will mothers with their children. It is a Second Exodus, and the scattered will console each other in their reunion. God has an everlasting divine love for Israel. God had bound them together in exile to regain their hearts and orient their lives. Now it’s time for the Lord will free them to be once more the People of God.

As we transition to Mark’s Gospel, we meet a blind man named Bartimaeus, whose story beautifully illustrates the core message of today. Jesus has been imparting profound lessons about life and discipleship, and now, through Bartimaeus, we see a powerful symbolic act that ties together His teachings. Bartimaeus cries out for mercy, undeterred by the crowd’s attempts to silence him. His unwavering faith leads him to Jesus, who asks him pointedly, “What do you want me to do for you?”

With clarity and conviction, Bartimaeus answers: “Rabbi, I want to see.” His request goes beyond mere physical sight — it reflects a deep yearning for wholeness and understanding of his true self and place in the world. In that moment, Jesus not only restores his sight, but also empowers him to follow Jesus. He now has to live differently — not as a blind man by the roadside but as a cherished child of God. This is powerfully illustrated when the Blind Man throws off his cloak and follows Jesus on the way [Mark 10:46-52].

**“LORD, I WANT TO SEE”:**

In the Gospel for this 30th Week in Ordinary Time, Mark concludes his three ways of dying with Jesus with one of the meaningful narratives of his gospel — the cure of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar Mark 10:46-52]. Mark began his teaching on how we’re to die with Jesus by stressing the death which comes from being totally open to whatever God wants of us [see Chapter 8]. Then he expands on death to include our accepting everyone in the community as equals — even the most powerless [see Chapter 9]. Finally, we hear Jesus’ non-negotiable command to imitate his ministry by becoming servants and slaves to all.

Mark never dreamed that anyone would ever separate these teachings. Thus Mark intended that the healing of Bartimaeus would contrast with the James and John story in which they asked for a seat at the right and left hand of God. Only twice in his gospel does Jesus ask anyone: “What do you want me to do for you?” — Jesus asks Bartimaeus, and he asked James and John. James and John stupidly ask for the glory seats; the blind beggar for something significantly different.

Bartimaeus has already shown himself as a potential perfect disciple by immediately responding to Jesus’ call, even throwing aside his only possession — his cloak. So when Jesus asks him: “What do you want me to do for you?”, it is like we are leaning in like the thousands of people in those old E.F. Hutton commercials — waiting to learn what answer an ideal follower of Jesus will give.

“Master,” the blind man replies, “I want to see.”

Mark presumes that simple request should always be our prayer — just to see what the risen Jesus wants us to see on that specific day, in that specific place, with those specific people around us. How is he expecting us to die today in ways we hadn’t noticed yesterday?

Notice also how Jesus responds: “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” He did not say: “Go your way; I cure you.” Mark is convinced it is our faith in Jesus’ dying and rising that opens our eyes to our own dying and rising.

Just one last point — the evangelist ends his narrative by mentioning: “Immediately he received his sight and went behind him on the way.” Remember Mark began this whole question of dying and rising with Jesus by having Jesus tell Peter: “Get behind me, Satan” — finally, we’ve found the perfect disciple — one who follows behind Jesus instead of being an obstacle in his path. And once Jesus has found that disciple, he is ready to make his triumphant entry into Jerusalem [Mark 11]. Jesus only has six more days to live — Bartimaeus is following him to his death — and resurrection.

Though Jeremiah was convinced that the only way 6th century BCE Judaism could be salvaged was by undergoing a complete destruction and rebirth in the Babylonian Exile, he was just as convinced that God would eventually bring the Chosen People back home to live their faith in a more meaningful, less ritualistic and legalistic way — “They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them” [Jeremiah 31:7-9].

Many in our church today not only need to hear this; they need to be convinced and adopt this same hope. How do we change structures which the late Cardinal Martini recently referred to as being 200 years behind the time? It takes a lot of hope to believe that one day we’ll return to the faith of Jesus.

Perhaps it’s important to also zero in on the faith of the author of Hebrews. He believed that the reason Jesus could save us was because he became completely one with us [Hebrews 5:1-6 — “He is able to deal patiently with the ignorant and erring, for he himself is beset by weakness.” It is consoling to know the risen Jesus is suffering through these times with us. Though it doesn’t take away the pain, somehow it makes it more bearable.

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

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



Bartimaeus wanted Jesus to lead him. He was ready to begin to see Jesus' way of seeing the world — a way many chose to ignore [see John 9:40-41].

Mark presents Bartimaeus as a mature disciple. If Bartimaeus were here, he might beg us to listen deeply for the good news in our fragmented world. He would probably tell us that we really do need to hear and respect viewpoints different from our own.

He would urge us to realize and accept that we are blind to more than we see. He would remind us that recognizing and adjusting to Christ's perspective is no once-for-all process [see Mark 8:22-25]. If Bartimaeus were here, he might beg us to listen deeply for the good news in our fragmented world. Finally, he would say he knows for sure that admitting our blindness and asking for mercy will open us to what Christ has desired to give us all along.

Master, we want to see! —taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appears on the internet

IN SERVICE WE ENCOUNTER GOD:

Radical servanthood does not make sense unless we introduce a new level of understanding, and see it as the way to encounter God. To be humble and persecuted cannot be desired unless we can find God in humility and persecution. When we begin to see God — the source of all our comfort and consolation — in the center of servanthood, compassion becomes much more than doing good for unfortunate people. Radical servanthood, as the encounter with the compassionate God, takes us beyond the distinctions between wealth and poverty, success and failure, fortune and bad luck. Radical servanthood is not an enterprise in which we try to surround ourselves with as much misery as possible, but a joyful way of life in which our eyes are opened to the vision of the true God who chose to be revealed in servanthood. The poor are called blessed not because poverty is good, but because theirs is the kingdom of heaven; the mourners are called blessed not because mourning is good, but because they shall be comforted.

—Henri Nouwen

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.**

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.



HOW TRUE:

Our greatest battles aren't with the world around us, but within ourselves.

All of this has been reaffirmed by everything that has led up to this event. Jesus has just finished a confrontational scene in which the question of divorce came up. Jesus responds by speaking about the true Kingdom as being in the hearts and souls of little children [see Mark 10:2-10]. A man [different than the "blind man"] comes to Jesus; this man turns out to be too rich and had too many things binding him down and he could not follow Jesus [see Mark 10:17-22]. Then Jesus showed the disciples that being first or the greatest had to do with being a servant, and that he had come to serve, not to be served [Mark 10:35-40].

The man who is "blind" now can "see" — and understand — and so he can follow Jesus. But the Pharisees remained "bound up"; thus they are unable to see Jesus and what Jesus was getting at. So, this little story ends with seeing Jesus as he is. As Jesus continues his journey to Jerusalem, we will continue to see Jesus inviting others to recover from their blindness.

The "blind man" is freed from his lack of relationship. The crowds relate to him according to the negative adjective — "blind". The man is not a part of the crowd — but apart, sitting by himself. The crowds try to hush him up when he shouts towards what he has heard. Jesus deals with him in the personal pronoun — not the impersonal adjective — "What do you want me to do for you? [36]. Mark wants his readers to have seen enough of Jesus so that they will want to see more of him. Jesus wants to give the man — and us — what is good for us, and that is a freedom to live as loved and redeemed creatures. Jesus wants to give us a sight of who he says we are in his sight.



People who are blind from birth, or who received this gift early in their lives, do not know what they look like. Nobody can tell them exactly either. They can touch their faces and bodies, but that data is insufficient for grateful acceptance. Some who can see themselves find gratitude difficult as well. The real freedom which Jesus offers this man — and all of us — is a picture of our face with his face superimposed. Am I pretty, beautiful, handsome, gorgeous? Am I ugly, deformed, bland, disgusting? The real challenge of the freedom which Jesus gives us is the challenge of living our face.

We, too, experience various forms of blindness—perhaps struggling to perceive ourselves as God sees us or feeling overwhelmed by life's distractions that cloud our true identity. We may often find ourselves on the sidelines, crying out for assistance while hesitating to embrace the healing Jesus offers.

Today, Jesus passes by each of us, inviting us to express our desires. However, we must ponder: Do we sincerely seek? The vision Jesus offers isn't just about physical sight; it's about perceiving ourselves through His loving perspective. It's an opportunity to recognize our inherent worth, beauty, and our unique roles in His creation

Reflecting on Bartimaeus' journey from the roadside to following Jesus, let's consider what it means for us to rise and walk with Him. This is where the challenge emerges: to accept and embrace our true selves in the light of God's love. When we learn to love ourselves, we become equipped to share that love with others. Just as Bartimaeus was transformed and enabled to follow Jesus, we, too, are called to a life marked by generous service and authentic relationships, empowered by the insight we gain through Christ.

How coincidental that during this coming week here in North America, we will put on masks and various costumes for celebrating the Eve of all Saints, or Halloween. The saints will take those masks off the next day, and celebrate how they see themselves because of their seeing themselves through the eyes of Jesus. The man threw off his costume of a cloak of blindness and walked the way of seeing himself close to Jesus. He was freed and unbound, but embraced the bindings of a relationship which too, would have its challenges. May we find the courage to seek sight — both of ourselves and our calling — so that we can rise, follow Him, and embody His love in the world around us.

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

POPE FRANCIS ISSUES A NEW ENCYCLICAL:

Pope Francis released a new encyclical *Dilexit Nos* ["He Loved Us"] on Thursday, calling for a renewed understanding of devotion to the Sacred Heart in the modern era and its many pressing challenges. In the document, the pope argues that the spirituality of the Sacred Heart offers a vital response to what he calls a "liquid society" dominated by technology and consumerism. Pope Francis writes: "Living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart."

Subtitled "Letter on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ," the document is the first papal encyclical dedicated entirely to the Sacred Heart since Pope Pius XII's *Haurietis Aquas* in 1956. Throughout the document, Francis weaves together traditional elements of Sacred Heart devotion with contemporary concerns, presenting Christ's heart as the principle unifying reality in a fragmented world. The document's release fulfills an announcement made by the pope in June, when he noted that meditating on the Lord's love can "illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal and say something meaningful to a world that seems to have lost its heart."

The approximately 30,000-word encyclical draws extensively from Scripture and tradition, featuring insights from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Charles de Foucauld. Released as the Synod on Synodality is concluding its monthlong deliberations in Rome, the document emphasizes both personal spirituality and communal missionary commitment. Francis develops his vision across five chapters, beginning with a philosophical and theological exploration of "the importance of the heart" before moving through reflections on Christ's actions and words of love, the theological meaning of Sacred Heart devotion, its spiritual dynamics and social implications.

He emphasizes that the meaning of the word "heart" is not sufficiently captured by biology, psychology, anthropology, or any other science. "In this age of artificial intelligence, we cannot forget that poetry and love are necessary to save our humanity. No algorithm will ever be able to capture, for example, the nostalgia that all of us feel, whatever our age, and wherever we live," Francis writes.

The pope emphasizes that devotion to the Sacred Heart is not merely a private spiritual practice but has profound implications for social life and human relationships. "The world can change, beginning with the heart," he writes, connecting individual transformation with broader social renewal.

The encyclical builds on centuries of Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart while offering fresh insights for modern challenges. Francis cites extensively from previous papal teachings, particularly from St. John Paul II: "Devotion to the Sacred Heart, as it developed in Europe two centuries ago, under the impulse of the mystical experiences of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, was a response to Jansenist rigor, which ended up disregarding God's infinite mercy," the late pope writes. "The men and women of the third millennium need the heart of Christ in order to know God and to know themselves; they need it to build the civilization of love."

In a significant theological and philosophical development, the encyclical engages deeply with modern thought, particularly through its discussion of German philosopher Martin Heidegger's understanding of human emotion and understanding. The pope cites Heidegger's insight that "philosophy does not begin with a pure concept or certainty but with a shock," as "without deep emotion, thought cannot begin. The first mental image would thus be goosebumps."

For Francis, this is where the heart comes in as it "listens in a non-metaphoric way to 'the silent



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SEE?

What would it be like to be blind from birth? Sight offers one way of understanding the world, blindness another. The disparity is inexplicable. We have multiple accounts of Jesus healing the blind [see Mark 8, Luke 7, John 9, Mark 10]. It was one of his specialties and a sign that he was "the one to come" [Luke 7:18-23]. As John 9 underlines, miracles were not primarily a show of power, but a teaching metaphor.

Bartimaeus was both blind and a beggar. That means he probably pestered passersby without knowing who they were. How could he discern the difference between a poor widow and a tax collector? Like some we see in our cities, he must have been willing to implore anyone within hearing range.

Now come Mark's symbolic details — Bartimaeus "heard" that Jesus was nearby [Mark 10:46-52]. Hearing is a first step in faith — and Bartimaeus must have heard of Jesus before that day. Hearing can lead to curiosity. One wonders: "Can this be true?" How might we know? That curiosity and Bartimaeus' need gave him the chutzpah to make a scene in spite of those who preferred to ignore him. This guy would not be silenced, he had too much at stake — "Son of David! Have mercy on me!"

Bartimaeus' racket became impossible to ignore, so Jesus told the disciples to call him. They didn't need to speak twice. Bartimaeus leapt up. Navigating with nothing more than his ears, he found Jesus. Jesus saw him and asked what he desired.

"Master, I want to see!" This statement moves us into the heart of the matter. What did Bartimaeus really want to see? How could he have known? He had heard of Jesus and received his invitation. He asks for something else he has heard about but can't imagine. Then Jesus tells him he already has it: "Your faith has saved you." What did that mean?

What did Bartimaeus have? "Faith." How did Jesus know? He called Jesus: "Son of David." Peter had recently called Jesus the Messiah — although he couldn't accept what Jesus said about a suffering Messiah. Bartimaeus named Jesus "Son of David." He called on Jesus as the kingly leader who had united the people and brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Bartimaeus asked Jesus for "mercy." Mercy goes beyond compassion or pity. One who has mercy takes on the need of the other. In Gospel terms, Bartimaeus asked Jesus to be and act like who he was — the Son of God identified with humanity. We echo Bartimaeus each time we humbly repeat his words: "Kyrie elison — Lord have mercy, help us to see."

Although he had just seen Jesus for the first time, Bartimaeus exhibited more faith than Peter and other disciples. Bartimaeus had paid attention to what he had heard about Jesus and allowed it to awaken his curiosity. At Jesus' invitation, Bartimaeus left his belongings behind and went to Jesus saying: "Master, I want to see."

Bartimaeus' story completes a section of Mark's Gospel; it begins with the healing of a blind man, and is followed by the 3 predictions of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, and concludes with Bartimaeus' request to see more [see Mark 8:22-10:52]. Bartimaeus stands in direct contrast to Peter and the Disciples who did not want to understand what Jesus was saying. Mark put these incidents together to teach taking on Christ's viewpoint is a long process that may need more than one start.

Unlike the disciples who clung to their definition of Messiah, Bartimaeus allowed Jesus to explain and carry out his mission. Bartimaeus expressed the kind of faith lacking in James and John who looked for glory (Mark 10:32-41). He believed enough to ask for help, and was humble enough to go wherever Jesus was going — without knowing what it would entail. With no bragging, no agenda, no fear,



HOLY and UNHOLY FEAR:

Not all fear is created equal — at least not religiously. There's a fear that's healthy and good — a sign of maturity and love. Then, there's also a fear that's bad — that blocks maturity and love. This needs explanation.

There's a lot of misunderstanding about fear inside of religious circles — especially around the Scriptural passage that says that “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” [Psalm 11:10]. Too often texts like these, as well as religion in general, have been used to instill an unhealthy fear inside of people in the name of God. We need to live in “holy fear,” but holy fear is a very particular kind that should not be confused with fear as we normally understand it.

Holy fear is love's fear — namely, the kind of fear that is inspired by love. It's a fear based upon reverence and respect for a person or a thing we love. When we genuinely love another person we will live inside of a healthy anxiety, a worry that our actions should never grossly disappoint, disrespect, or violate the other person. We live in holy fear when we are anxious not to betray a trust or disrespect someone.

But this is very different from being afraid of somebody or being afraid of being punished. Bad power and bad authority intimidate and make others afraid of them. God is never that kind of power or authority. God entered our world as a helpless infant and God's power still takes that same modality. Babies don't intimidate — even as they inspire holy fear. We watch our words and our actions around babies, not because they threaten us, but rather because their very helplessness and innocence inspire an anxiety in us that makes us want to be at our best around them.

The gospels are meant to inspire that kind of fear. God is Love — a benevolent power, a gracious authority — not someone to be feared. Indeed, God is the last person we need to fear. Jesus came to rid us of fear. Virtually every theophany — an instance where God appears — in scripture begins with the words, “do not be afraid”!

What frightens us does not come from God. King David is revealed as the person who best grasped this. Among all the figures in the Old Testament, including Moses and the great prophets, David is depicted as the figure that best exemplified what it means to walk on this earth in the image and likeness of God, even though at a point he grossly abuses that trust [see 2 Samuel 11-12].

Despite his great sin, it is David to whom Jesus attributes his lineage, not to Moses or the prophets. David is the Christ-figure in the Old Testament. He walked in holy fear of God, and never in an unhealthy fear. In fact, at one time, David was bold enough to go into the temple and took the bread that was there and gave it to his troops who were hungry [see 1 Samuel 2-6].

In the gospels, Jesus praises this action by David, and asks us to imitate it, telling us that we are not made for the Sabbath, but that the Sabbath is made for us [see Mark 2:27-28]. David understood what is meant by that. He had discerned that God is not so much a law to be obeyed as a gracious presence under which we are asked to creatively live. He feared God, but as one fears someone in love, with a “holy fear” — not a blind, legalistic one.

A young mother once shared this story with me: Her six year-old had just started school. She had taught him to kneel by his bed each night before going to sleep and recite a number of night prayers. One night, shortly after starting school, he hopped into bed without first kneeling in prayer. Surprised by this, she challenged him with the words: “Don't you pray anymore?”

His reply: “No, I don't. My teacher at school told us that we are not supposed to pray. She said that we're supposed to talk to God — and tonight I'm tired and have nothing to say!” Like King David, the young boy had discerned what it really means to be God's child and how God is not so much a law to be obeyed as a gracious presence who desires a mutually loving relationship, one of holy fear.

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



voice' of being, allowing itself to be tempered and determined by it.” “The heart is also capable of unifying and harmonizing our personal history, which may seem hopelessly fragmented,” the pope writes, “yet is the place where everything can make sense.” “The Gospel tells us this in speaking of Our Lady, who saw things with the heart.”

The document calls for a renewal of traditional Sacred Heart practices on this understanding while emphasizing their contemporary relevance. “Our communities will succeed in uniting and reconciling differing minds and wills, so that the Spirit can guide us in unity as brothers and sisters. Reconciliation and peace are also born of the heart. The heart of Christ is ‘ecstasy,’ openness, gift, and encounter.”

The pope concludes by connecting this spiritual vision to the Church's broader mission in the modern world, calling for what he — following St. John Paul II — terms a “civilization of love” built on the foundation of Christ's love.

—Summarized from *The Catholic News Agency*

WHO IS REALLY BLIND, AND WHO REALLY SEES?

Back in the late 1700's a man named John Newton — an alcoholic libertine and a man committed to destroy the Christian faith — was by the grace of God, rescued, restored, healed, and given the sight to see what he was and what God wanted him to be. He wrote a hymn with words you will recognize: “Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”

We could spend the rest of this day discussing the various types and forms of blindness along with answering the question: “Who is really blind, and who really sees?” From my perspective, the most debilitating form of blindness is that found in folks who think they see the truth when they really don't. There's no more pitiable form of blindness than one who thinks he or she has all of the right answers, who thinks he or she knows all that one needs to know about God, about Jesus Christ, about the Church, and about religion...but really doesn't.

Moreover, in these days there is a prevailing philosophy that claims there is no reality worth relying upon or acting upon, other than that which one perceives in one's self; there is no truth one can rely upon other than that which one understands to be the truth in his or her own mind. This is the vision of the Imperial Self — an ego that self-defines reality, morality, truth and the only things it considers that really matter.

The stark reality of the Imperial Self is no more clearly revealed than when you encounter an alcoholic, a drug addict, or one who is mentally deranged. There is no arrogance, no self-centered defiance greater than that found in a raging alcoholic or drug addict. What you see in such a person is a soul raging in hell's inferno.

To a lesser degree we all know, and personally know, what it means to have one-dimensional vision. By that I mean the sort of narrow way we see others. Perhaps we see only how their bodies look. Or maybe we judge them solely on the basis of their level of intelligence. Again, some judge and see others on the basis of their net worth, or their fame, or their acting talents, or their ability to entertain others. I have no doubt that we have, each one of us here, seen and judged others only with a one-dimensional vision.

As in so many other stories and parables that come to us in the gospels, we need to see ourselves in the various characters. Today we need to see ourselves in the character of Bartimaeus. In Mark's gospel, we find Jesus at the threshold of Jerusalem. He was about to climb on a donkey and ride into Jerusalem — an event we celebrate every Palm Sunday. Bar-Timaeus, the son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting begging along the way. We don't know how long Bartimaeus has been sitting there — hours, days, years, a life-time? He certainly was well known by the local citizens. He was regarded as a nobody, so much of a nobody that he wasn't even called by his own name — he was known only as

the son of a man by the name of Timaeus.

Bartimaeus had evidently heard about Jesus, and here was Jesus entering into Jerusalem with the crowd shouting and singing hosannas, alleluias, and such. Amidst all of this din and commotion Bartimaeus shouts out to Jesus [Mark 10:46-52].

I want to draw four points out of Mark's gospel account.

[1] The first and the most important point is that **Bartimaeus knew he was blind**. Do we? Do we know that we really don't see reality as Jesus sees it, that we miss seeing the works and the hand of God in our lives, that we're bedazzled and blinded by the glitz and glitter of this world, and that our souls are surrounded by a spiritual darkness, and that we often do not let the light of Christ illumine our way through that darkness? Do we realize we are blind when it comes to seeing ourselves as Jesus sees us?

[2] The second observation I have is that **those around Bartimaeus tried to hush him up and keep him from Jesus**. It's significant because that's the situation in which we find ourselves today. There are a whole lot of voices and forces attempting to keep us from contacting and personally encountering Jesus Christ. If you don't think so, then you really are spiritually blind.

Bartimaeus took the courageous risk of going against the crowd. He didn't let his hope be deterred by the local populace and the voices of those who tried to keep him down and in his place. Any faith response worthy of the name requires the same sort of risk. Bartimaeus is a true hero because he went against the crowd and in his darkness took the risk.

[3] Thirdly, **Jesus stopped everything to pay personal attention to him**. St. Mark records this as the last miracle Jesus worked before entering into Jerusalem there to suffer and die. As He entered Jerusalem to suffer and die, Jesus brought His whole redemptive journey to a halt in order to respond to this blind man's request — that's how important he was to Jesus. I have no doubt whatsoever that you are just as important to Jesus as was Bartimaeus and that, if you call out to Jesus, He will drop everything to give you the same level of attention, love and compassionate care as He gave to Bartimaeus.

[4] Finally I want to note that **after Bartimaeus received his sight he followed in Jesus' footsteps**, which is a shorthand way of saying that Bartimaeus followed in the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus. He wanted to see and experience life as Jesus did.

What in this world of ours do we see? What do we deliberately not see? What do we fail to see due to apathy, indifference, selfishness, pride and arrogance? Do we see the hurting, the hungry, the miserably poor, the outcast, and the little people? The media presents us with the glittering beautiful people, those at the pinnacle of political and corporate power, the superstars in the sports and entertainment industries. Mother Teresa and Pope Francis invite us to see other people, not just ourselves but those around us. Do we see them and really look at them, or do we ignore them?

And what about the little people — the no-names hit by tragedy that never interest television and newspaper reporters? Pope Francis bids us to pay attention to those who are marginalized, those whom this world holds in little regard, whom this world would have us overlook, whom this world condemns to be of little value. This blindness needs to be cured. More tragically, the world would have us not look at an ultrasound picture of a living, moving fetus. The world would have us rid ourselves of the dying. The world would capture our attention by images of the glamorous and the glittering, blinding us to the ones who are really hurting.

All of this leads us to the great question of the day. How does Christ see you? What is Christ's vision for you? The answer is, of course, not simple. But what is at issue is the question of what it means to be a human person. And what it means to be a human person is the overriding question of our day.

Why can't we see that? —taken from the writings of Father Charles Irvin, which appear on the internet



"I need direction in life," the lady complained to me. "I need direction in life," I've complained to others. Perhaps, you have felt the same way. Why do we do that? Why do we look for direction, when all that we need is right in front of us? We have been entrusted with a treasure — the very presence of the Lord. When we feel that we are lost, then we need to get back to basics — we need to follow Jesus to find the path to life that the psalmist speaks about in Psalm 16 — "You are my Lord; apart from you, I have no good" [Psalm 16:2].

We need to reflect on the profound joy the Lord has brought to all of our lives. He has given us sight. We can see where we need to go. We can follow Him. We can go to that place where all happiness dwells. Our joy is realizing that like Bartimaeus we are not blind any more. We can follow the One who gives Light to our lives.

May we have the courage to live in His Light.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Ephesians 2:19-22, Luke 6:12-16

Tuesday: Ephesians 5:21-33, Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday: Ephesians 6:1-9, Luke 13:22-30

Thursday: Ephesians 6:10-20, Luke 13:31-35

Friday: Revelation 7:2-17, 1 John 3:1-3, Matthew 5:1-12

Saturday: Wisdom 3:1-9, Romans 6:3-9, John 6:37-40

31st Week in Ordinary Time: Deuteronomy 6:2-6, Hebrews 7:23-28, Mark 12:28-34

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — NOVEMBER 16th:

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.

WONDER:

Wonder requires a person not to forget themselves but to feel themselves so acutely that their connectedness to every created thing comes into focus. In sacred awe, we are a part of the story.

—Cole Arthur Riley

LIVING IN GOD’S LIGHT:

Betty and Ben, an elderly husband and wife, were sitting in the living room watching TV when Betty decided a snack was in order. She said to Ben: “I’d love to have a bowl of ice cream right now.” Ben said: “I’ll get it for you.” Now Betty, knowing that Ben was becoming more and more forgetful, said to him: “Why don’t you write down that I’d like two scoops of vanilla ice cream?” “I don’t need to write it down,” Ben protested. As he was leaving the room, Betty called out: “How about putting some chocolate syrup on that ice cream?” “Sounds good,” said Ben. “Write it down,” said Betty. “I don’t need to write it down,” said Ben. “OK,” said Betty. “Do you think you can put a couple of cherries on the ice cream too?” “You want cherries, you get cherries,” said Ben. “Maybe you should write this all down, Ben.” “I don’t need to write it down, Betty.”

So Ben went into the kitchen. And was in there for a half hour. Finally, he came in with a tray of food, and put a plate of bacon and eggs in front of Betty. “I told you, you should write it down,” said Betty. “You forgot the toast.”

Now, as I get older, this seems to define a lot of my day. I won’t ask you if you have had similar experiences. By the way, I have heard it said that you don’t have to get old to be so forgetful. Having children in the house will do it to you too.

Anyway, the older I get, the more I realize how little I know about things. I can’t understand this. I knew so much when I was in my 20’s & 30’s — I knew everything about everything. Where did all that knowledge go? Then, people would come to me, and I had instant solutions to their problems. Now, I am not sure I can comprehend their difficulties, let alone offer solutions. Perhaps, the wisdom of age is realizing how little you know, and how much you are dependent on God to step into his view of the world.

One area where I am completely at a loss, is the experience of those people who are blind. I cannot fathom what it is like to be totally dependent on others, or a seeing-eye dog, or technology for sight. I think that it is wonderful that technology has opened so many doors for the blind. Perhaps I will live to see a device similar to the auricular implant for the deaf to give sight to the blind. But I do not know what it is like to be blind — to be dependent on others to lead me.

Bartimaeus was dependent on others for sight. But he could hear well. He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, so he called out to him. He was healed. And then, Bartimaeus did something a blind person cannot do — he followed Jesus — not just figuratively, but literally. Bartimaeus walked behind Jesus along with the other disciples of the Lord.

Jeremiah the prophet tells us that a day will come when the lame will walk and the blind will see [Jeremiah 31:7-9]. And certainly, that day began with Jesus Christ. Certainly, this is one of the teachings that Bartimaeus sees in Mark’s Gospel [10:46-52]. The great days that Jeremiah had prophesied had begun. And Mark helps us to realize that the Messiah has more power than to just give sight to the blind — Bartimaeus sees with the eyes of faith.

Bartimaeus followed Jesus. The blind cannot follow someone. Can you imagine the joy that Bartimaeus must have had to be able to follow someone on his own, without being led? But what is even more important here is the realization that those whose souls are blind to the Presence of God cannot follow him either — only those who are willing to take a step of faith — a leap of faith — and seek out the Lord can follow Him.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus offers an insight that gives meaning to this miracle — “I came so that those who are blind may see” [John 9:39]. So, can you imagine the joy of those whose lives seemed to have no direction, who lived in darkness, when they find a path to life, a light to guide them? Wait a minute — we are those people! We are the ones who had been in darkness and who now have light.

**MAKING THE NEW CHOICE:**

If we are going to be healthy and holy, we must be willing to grow. But growing is not easy. Growing involves change. We find ourselves with new experiences and in new circumstances. Even though many of those new opportunities may contain a real “good,” growing often also entails leaving other “goods” behind.

This truth is illustrated in Mark’s gospel — the story of Bartimaeus [Mark 10:46-52]. When Jesus asks Bartimaeus: “What is it that you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus answers: “Master, I want to see.” Now we imagine that the request by Bartimaeus was an easy request to make. After all, who does not want to see? But this story from the gospel cleverly suggests to us that Bartimaeus’ request was really much more complicated. The story tells us that Jesus met Bartimaeus as he was leaving Jericho. Now the thing you need to know about Jericho is that Jericho was the last stop on the road to Jerusalem. That meant that all the pilgrims that were going up to the temple for the great Jewish feasts had to pass through Jericho. The city itself was filled with commotion as pilgrims bought provisions and found lodging for the night. But every one of those pilgrims would in time have to leave the city and go through the single gate that opened on the road to Jerusalem. It is right there outside that gate, that Bartimaeus sat. From the perspective of begging, Bartimaeus held prime real estate! All the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem would have to walk past him as he cried out for alms. It would be a difficult for them to refuse this blind beggar and then in good conscience go up and worship God in the temple. So Bartimaeus had a successful business in a good location. He probably made a good deal of money for himself and for his family. In this operation, his blindness was a real advantage because it increased the sympathy of those who passed by, and also increased his income.



If, however, Bartimaeus was suddenly able to see, he would have to find a new job. He might not be able to maintain his standard of living. So, when he answers Jesus: “Master, I want to see,” he is taking a risk. He is aware he is about to leave the comfort and success of his former life and embrace the new possibilities that Jesus is offering him.

Now all of us have our own lives with our own blessings. Our lives might not be perfect, but they are ours. But at any time, Christ can invite us to grow — to change. As attractive as that invitation might be, often we also have to leave some good things behind. This can happen in the normal course of life — we leave our home to go to college; we leave one job for a new one. But this invitation to grow can also happen when what is normal changes. When a member of our family undergoes divorce, all the relationships in our family structure need to be realigned. When an aging parent requires more of our time and presence, our schedule must change. When our health deteriorates, we can no longer do the things that we once took for granted. In each one of these situations, Christ can be asking us to grow. We must decide whether we are going to hold on to the “goods” that are no longer available to us or whether we can embrace the new “goods” that Christ is offering.

Bartimaeus chose the new thing. He understood that the security and success of his former life would no longer be his. He also realized that if he followed Christ, he would be able to see the world in a way he never did before, with eyes that were healed of their blindness. Above all, Bartimaeus trusted the man who healed him. He believed that if Jesus was the one who was asking him to change, it would be for the good.

You and I need to share in that faith of Bartimaeus. When Christ invites us to grow, we need to trust him. When a change comes in our life which Christ asks us to accept, we need to believe that it will not destroy us but will open our eyes to a new way of living.

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

THE BIBLE — IS IT RELIABLE READING?

The hotel room was pitch black. The air conditioner was on full blast. I was surrounded by pillows and hibernating in a cocoon-like fashion. I was perfectly comfortable so, of course, it was at that moment that I had to pee. I began to navigate the foreign surroundings in the dark, making my way to the bathroom when — “WHAM!” — I discovered a large dresser in my path. I yelped and fell back onto the bed. I’m not certain, but it’s quite likely that the word “shin” is Latin for “to find furniture in the dark.”

It was at that moment — writhing in pain and wishing for death — that I recalled the famous passage from Psalms: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” [Psalm 119:105]. If only I had taken advantage of a light I could have avoided so much pain.

Psalm 119 is teaching us more than that by reminding us that if more people sought the Word of God — Jesus Christ — in His Word — the Bible — they wouldn’t be trapped in darkness — sin — blindly stumbling through life. The Scriptures are meant to be a light, and they are designed to not only guide us through darkness, but to also beckon others to safety. The Scriptures reveal God’s plan, speak truth, and challenge us to change. God’s Word, while timeless, offers timely wisdom for any circumstances or challenges we face. Basically, the Father loved us so much that He gave us His Word — the compass — and His Church — the guide — refusing to orphan His children in a wilderness of sin and immorality.

Still, there are countless people who try to say that the Bible is “unreliable” or “outdated.” Many people — some of whom are well-read and quite intellectual — do everything they can to debunk the validity of Scripture, thinking that if they can exploit seeming “inconsistencies” or supposed “errors”, they can somehow do away with Christianity and even God. That’s the first mistake.

Saying that “the Bible has some things I don’t agree with, so the Church must be wrong and God, therefore, is “unloving” or “not real” — or whatever else — is completely backwards. Faith doesn’t begin with the Bible. You don’t use the Bible to prove God’s existence — that’s like using the music of Nikki Minaj or One Direction to “prove” that God hates me.

No, we begin with God. Once a soul believed in God, there’s a decision to make regarding whether or not Jesus is God. Next, one must decide whether or not Christ instituted a Church or not. After that, one must understand that the Bible came out of a living Church — not vice versa.

The early Church — the first generation of eyewitness believers — was a Church of oral tradition that slowly gave us written tradition. That’s one reason St. Paul is so quick to remind us to follow the Church [see 1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:2, and 2 Thessalonians 2:15]. **The Church didn’t “come out of” the Bible — the Bible came out of Christ’s Church.**

Words matter. Prepositions matter. We proclaim — as the early Christians did — that the Bible is the *Word of God* — not merely words “about” God. These words were written down — through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — to communicate the truth of the events that had occurred and were occurring. St. Luke, by his own admission, was not an eyewitness — as were Matthew and John — but received the truth of the events from eyewitnesses and ministers [see Luke 1:2]. He was so taken by the inexplicable reality of what he heard and saw that he just had to write it down in an orderly way [3], to share this good news — the word “gospel” literally means “good news”. The truth was too good not to share [4]. The question isn’t why did they feel the need to share this with all they encountered — the real question is why don’t more people still have a passion to share it?

The next mistake is when modern minds get snobbish, saying that the Bible is “too outdated” or “not applicable” in our current culture. The idea that “old ideas” are not as solid as new ideas is not only stupid — it’s dangerously prideful. Old ideas are often far better because they’ve held up over time.

If you claimed to know better than a group of people in the modern age, you’d sound like a snob; someone claiming to “know better” than a group of people from the past really isn’t any different. Yes,



maybe you have the internet, but they knew how to build pyramids without cranes, harvest crops without tractors, heal without prescriptions, and chart stars without telescopes.

Some people try to dismiss the Bible because they say it’s all just fairy tales and myths. Not only are they denying the eyewitness accounts of countless souls who saw loaves multiply, or the dead raised, or the sea part, but they are also confusing different types of storytelling. Allegory was a popular form of storytelling. When the writers of Scripture — led and inspired by the Holy Spirit — used allegories as moral parables, they communicated truth to us — even if the truth was not literal.

The Church doesn’t teach that you have to believe God created everything in six 24-hour periods. What the Church teaches is that everything was created by God with purpose. While the stories of creation may not be “scientifically accurate” — as some scholarly types like to point out — it’s important to point out that Genesis was not written as a scientific textbook. The author[s] of Genesis sought to explain the “why” God created — not the “how.” Saying Genesis scientifically proves God doesn’t exist is like saying my love letter to my wife doesn’t prove that I exist — or that the phone book doesn’t prove that gravity is true. That was never their intended purpose!

Now, that’s not to say that everything in the Bible is allegorical — far from it. When Jesus healed the blind man — that literally happened. When He multiplied the loaves — that literally happened. You can take additional symbolic or sacramental meaning out of those miracles, which only enhance the physical, literal truth of the action. It’s not an “either/or” but a “both/and” kind of miracle.

Given all of this, some still wonder why we even need the Bible anymore. These people argue — if we have our common sense, a conscience, and we have the Church, isn’t the Bible — with all its ancient cultural references and accepted “ways of life” — kind of unnecessary?

But the answer is that if anything, we need the Bible more than ever before. It’s dangerous to live in any present where you have forgotten your past. What if the God you “think” you know isn’t the actual God, at all? Many people follow a concept of Jesus that is not historically accurate — a pleasant, politically correct, “be nice to everyone” figure of Jesus that is anything but Biblical. Many people ascribe traits to God that are not even remotely consistent with the God of Scripture.

In the Bible, you encounter the God of the universe and see how He moves, thinks and speaks. You’re not merely reading about characters from long ago — you’re reading about your very self. The Bible isn’t merely speaking to you — it’s speaking about you. You are Adam and Eve, standing before God in all of your sin. You are Moses, worried about his reputation as he strikes the rock a second time. You are David, putting your wants before God’s. You are Esther, deciding whether or not to endanger yourself to protect others. You are Peter, being called to lead even though you’re far from perfect. You are the woman caught in adultery, or the woman at the well, or Zacchaeus — being told, by God, that you have worth regardless of your past.

This is what the Bible offers you — an invitation to know God more deeply. The Bible helps you to “know” God beyond just your head, and to engage Him in your heart. Scripture deepens your prayer, enlivens your worship, and makes the Sacraments come to life in a whole new way.

There’s no need to wander aimlessly in the dark. Open God’s Word, daily. Allow God’s love and His promise to light your path — your shins, and more importantly, your soul will thank you.

—Mark Hart

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.

