

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ St. Therese's Canticle of Love ~

How great and tender
is our God
who has smiled
on the lowly.
Eternally my heart will sing
A new canticle of love.
Come all who hunger,
all who thirst,
all who long
for fulfillment.
The God of mercy
waits for you
as a mother for her child.
O come to the living water,
fear not your weakness,
forever trusting
in God's merciful love.

Through the shadows
of this night,
my love will be
my guiding light.
Presence hidden
from my sight
'til the clouds
are put to flight.

Beneath your gaze
I've blossomed forth,
as a rose in the sunshine.
With joyful heart
I've given all
to the mystery of love.

In peace, I will come
before you
with empty hands,
relying solely
on God's merciful love.

Through the veil
your face appears,
beauty shrouded,
bathed in tears.
Bread of sinners I will share,
rose unpettaled everywhere.

Ah, my God
I will sing of your love
for this one eternal day,
for this one eternal today.

Transformed
in Love's consuming fire,
lifted up in glory
her fragrance
filling all the earth,
drawing us after her.
Until, in eternity
we join in one chorus,
forever singing
of God's merciful love,
canticle of love,
song of love,
this eternal day I will sing,
sing of your love.
Amen.

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.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

PLEASE NOTE:

Sunday, **December 8th**, is the Feast of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**. **But because the fast falls on the first Sunday of Advent, it is moved to Monday, December 9th**. **It REMAINS a holy day of obligation**. This is an important feast day because Mary, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, is the **patroness of the United States**. **This Feast is also at the heart of the Advent Season**. We will **not have a Vigil Mass on Sunday**. We will also have 3 Masses on **Monday, December 9th — 9:00 AM** [Lower School]; **10:25 AM** [Middle School], and **5:30 PM**. All Masses will take place in the chapel. We have much to pray for in our nation at this time. Please mark your calendars so that you will be able to join us for Mass on this important Feast Day.

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP IS FORMING:**

A group of Young Adults will be holding their **first meeting at 11:45 AM on Sunday, November 10th in the Lennon Board Room**. Here is an opportunity to get together, share some time in faith, and 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, Joe Gurney, or Edwin Heryak. Of course, you can also contact Father John at the chapel if that would be easier for you. God bless you.

**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.

Please join us following Mass on Sunday, November 17 for a special **Coffee & Donut Reception in the Commons**.

MAKE YOUR FAMILY'S ADVENT WREATH:

Again this year, we are going to be making family Advent Wreaths on Sunday, **December 1st following Mass, at 11:30 AM** [location TBA]. **Cost of the Wreath Kit is \$25** — this includes trimmings, candles, and everything else you will need. Please know that cost is not a reason for not making an Advent Wreath; please contact **Father John**. **The Sign up Sheet for making Advent Wreaths is on the Easel in the Narthex**. So start thinking about participating in this wonderful Advent activity.



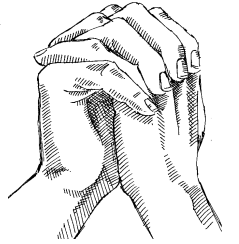
On the day we make Advent Wreaths, we will also have **Coffee & Donuts in the Commons following Mass**. You may reserve your Wreath Kit by signing up on the easel, or by calling the Chapel Office [440-473-3560], or sending an email to Patty at: szaniszlop@gilmour.org. Please sign up early because we have to have time to purchase the supplies & kits. If you have any questions, please contact the Chapel office.

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 Cathy Force, mother of Erika DiCello Lacroix [*90], Grandmother of Andre [*23] and AJ [*25] Lacroix, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- 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 Alex Rudyak, nephew of Natasha and grandson of Kelley, who work for All for You, who is recovering from injuries sustained in an accident.
- For Cathy Lough, friend of Cyndi Frimel, who is undergoing health struggles.
- For Dave & Elaine Tanaski, who are suffering with dementia and other health complications.
- For Nick Chiacchiarri, father of Mark Mark Chiacchiarri [*94], father-in-law of Michelle Chiacchiarri [*96], and grandfather of Aurelia [*28], and Olivia [*30] Chiacchiarri, who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Kip Apel, who is recovering from surgery.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Peter Petralia [birthday]
- For Billie Stubbs, grandmother of KiKi [*23] and Trevor [*26] Bilant
- For Daniel Goodnow, grandfather of Ben [*26] and Nathan [*26] Goodnow
- For Tedd Kwasniak
- For Lyle Pauer, brother-in-law of Brother Charles Smith, C.S.C.
- For Burkie White, grandmother of Alex White, C.S.C.
- For Eloise Parsons, grandmother of Math and Science Teacher, Melissa Jeric.
- For Patti Coreno, aunt of Annie [*26] and Joe [*28] Goff
- For Brother Dennis Doose, C.S.C.
- For Mary Liuzzo
- For Robert Krejci
- For Michael Kuckelman [*57]
- For Frank McCamley, former Gilmour teacher, father of Brian [*03] and Lauren [*08] McCamley.
- For David DeLaney [*81].
- For Johanna Flaherty, grandmother of Nathan [*22], Kevin [*24] and Megan [*30] Flaherty
- For Jim Klick, uncle of Linda Monitello, great uncle of Anthony [*17] and Angeline [*19] Monitello
- For Courtney Kuhl.

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PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the Antonelli family, recovering from family difficulties.
- For the people of the Philippines who are affected by Tropical Storm, Trami, and Typhoon, Kong-rey
- 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: Friday [11/1/24] _____ [All Saints Day] _____ \$ 80.00
Total Offerings: Saturday [11/2/24] _____ \$ 132.00
Total Offerings: Saturday [11/3/24] _____ \$ 841.00

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.



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, November 13th 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 Humanity of Jesus

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, November 10: 32nd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, November 11: St. Martin of Tours	NO MASS
Tuesday, November 12: St. Josephat	NO MASS
Wednesday, November 13: St. Francis Xavier	1:15 PM In person only
Thursday, November 14:	NO MASS
Friday, November 15:	NO MASS
Saturday, November 16: 33rd Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, November 3: 33rd 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 November dates are: 10-17-24. Meeting Dates for December are: 8-15.**



HOLY LISTENING:

Before we can love our God with our whole being, we must practice active and holy listening. We must open ourselves to the movements of the Spirit — to the little fires of God around us. This is the only way we can authentically be in relationship with those around us. We must hear the invitation from God to truly love our God with our whole heart, our whole mind, and our whole body.

REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

Temptations are most often about over-doing or under-doing something good. Whether we believe in the tempting-devil or not, we do know through our own experiences the power of temptations. A rather enjoyable and self-revealing exercise would be to imagine our being a Tempter, and just how we would go about tempting ourselves.

Our Christian Theology holds that all good gifts come from God and lead us back to God — the Giver. This being true for us, then over-use or under-use would hinder our being led back to God. If I were a Tempter to you, I would attract you perhaps to doubt your gifts of singing, writing, dancing, or even parenting. I might joke about, be sarcastic about, compare you to others, or just not respond positively at all. I would try to find out how you doubt yourself mainly.

On the other hand, I might attempt to get you to sing or dance so that you do them extensively, and grow tired or discouraged by your not being able to do things as well as “those others”. Simply, temptations are always about something good in us. Watch your temptations, and hold on to what good that God has given you — and thereby to us as well.

Elijah has an amazing experience that he relates [1Kings 17:10-16] to us. God had warned Elijah that there would be an approach drought. God tells Elijah to go to hide out in the desert near a flowing stream. But the stream dries up, and Elijah is sent into the city where he will find a widow in need. The widow is picking up sticks for her last meal that she will have for both her and her son.

Elijah bids her to bring him some water and a flour cake. And here's where things get difficult. While she knows that Elijah is a man of God, she has only enough food for her last family meal with her son. But as she goes off to do what she is asked, she hears Elijah say that the Lord be faithful to her for her generosity. She just has to trust.

This is a familiar theme. There is a little drama — a drought, a widow, a widow in deep need having so little, a word-promise from the invisible God through the play of a holy man — these are the elements. Will God be faithful? Will the woman trust? Is the prophet too demanding? Everything works out when these elements all come together.

Mark's Gospel [12:38-44] presents even a more striking drama. Jesus instructs the crowd to watch out for the ways of the scribes. These scribes are regarded as important, powerful, and holy. A tension begins. Jesus' ways are different, and he is putting himself in opposition to the religious institution. By calling the pretentious ways of the scribes into question, Jesus sets a context for even a more important teaching. He condemns the necessities of the scribes to be treated with honor in the marketplaces. They have to show-off things and say long prayers which indicate how holy they want others to think they are.



In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is found in a position opposite the temple coffers. Again, a widow becomes a central character. While the wealthy are putting in more — because they have more — she puts in her little — which is all she has. This is the ultimate love of God and neighbor. The widow is in the temple to perform her ritual of loving God according to her religious tradition. She empties her savings to be shared by others — her neighbors. She does not parade her importance, but her actions are significant — they point to a deep reality of the ways of Jesus.

The theme always seems to be that God blesses the little, the unimportant, the poor. The various

**THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE:**

The Gospel for this 32nd Week in Ordinary Time [Mark12:18-24] is one of the most misunderstood in all of Scripture. Rarely does a Christian institution embark on a fund raising project without someone in charge bringing up the widow who “from her poverty, contributed all she had, her whole livelihood” to the Jerusalem temple treasury — usually with the comment: “That's what Jesus expects us to do.”

Is it?

Not when you put it back in the context in which Mark gives it to us. Jesus has just finished condemning the Jewish religious leaders “who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers” — in other words: “If you give me your money, I'll ‘say one’ for you.”

Mark's Jesus then immediately gives us “exhibit A” — an example of the “say one for you” sin — “Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasure. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents.”

Notice that, unlike many Christian preachers, at no point in the story does Jesus ever praise the widow for contributing “all she had” — He simply employs her action as one proof of religious leaders “devouring the houses of widows.” Instead of taking care of such impoverished people, these money-motivated individuals have successfully brainwashed the poor into believing that it's their obligation to take care of them.

Anyone familiar with the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures knows that Jesus stands shoulder to shoulder with his prophetic predecessors on this issue. One of the most biting condemnations of such practices was done by the prophet, Hosea, where God — referring to the priests receiving “a cut” of all the offerings made at the local shrines — states the obvious: “They feed on the sins of my people” [Hosea 4]. If the priests don't hammer away at the sinfulness of their worshipers, they're not going to offer any sin sacrifices — forcing priests to tighten their belts. [What's interesting is that through the years, some Catholic commentators have actually brought up this incident from Mark's Gospel when dealing with the Catholic practice of preaching about the “poor souls in purgatory”, and our Catholic custom — even obligation — of giving priests stipends for “saying a Mass” for them].

Elijah demonstrates this prophetic option for the poor in his treatment of the Gentile widow of Zarephath [1 Kings 17:10-16]. Though he asks her to provide him with “a bit of bread,” he also makes certain that “her jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry.” Unlike the Jerusalem priests, God will not put her and her son in peril because of her generosity to a prophet.

This reality of God taking care of us is an important promise on God's part — it brings God into our serving the poor. In fact, after hearing Jesus' condemnation of the financial abuse of the poor by religious institutions, we've got something to add to our examination of conscience. Jesus' definition of sin is almost always more inclusive than our own. How do we take care of the poor? Is part of our weekly collection earmarked for people in need beyond our own parish? Are we concerned to build up our own parish “treasury” with no thought of the needs of others — especially the poor?

That's the trouble with being a follower of Jesus — there's always something to think about today that we hadn't even noticed yesterday.

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

SACREDNESS:

“Sacredness is not just an idea. It is an experience.

— Chöygam Trungpa Rinpoche

ARE YOU SHAKEN?

Has God ever shaken up your life? It struck me recently how many things require “shaking” in our world. Whether it’s a bottle of juice, a canister of whipped cream or a can of paint, one of the most popular directions on daily household items is SHAKE WELL BEFORE USING. That got me thinking about what the author of the Book of Hebrews once wrote: “[God] points to the removal of shaken, created things, so that what is unshaken may remain. Therefore, we who are receiving the unshakable kingdom should have gratitude, with which we should offer worship pleasing to God in reverence and awe” [Hebrews 12:26-28].

So often, when bad things happen, I run or get nervous thinking that it is my faith that is being shaken. In reality, it’s not always my faith that is being shaken, nor is it the object of my faith [God], but it is ME who is being shaken...out of love.

“Out of love?” you may ask? You got it. Stick with me here.

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt [behind Moses] He commanded them to sacrifice animals, like bulls and calves. Now this fact may seem confusing to many who might wonder: “What is God’s deal? Why would He want us to sacrifice animals?”

You see, the animals that God asked the people to sacrifice were [false] gods to the Egyptian people, and over the years, God’s children [the Israelites] had begun to worship these false gods...these animals. By requiring that they sacrifice the animals, God was asking them to sacrifice more than animal’s flesh, but to stop worshipping these false gods that were taking their attention off of Him, the ONE true God.

Through Moses’ leadership, God took the Israelites out of Egypt, but now through the animal sacrifices, God was “taking the Egypt out of the Israelites”. He was “shaking” the false gods and worldly ways from the children whom He loved, for their own good. Once those worldly things were “shaken free”, they were left only with the UNSHAKEABLE, with God — the beginning and end of their lives.

What things in your life, what “false gods” is our Lord trying to “shake you free from” this week? What areas turn our attention from Him? God shaking you is a GOOD thing; it shows His belief in you.

The challenge is not to “freak out” too much when we are being shaken, and that is easier said than done. God promises that we will NEVER be tried beyond our abilities — God does NOT set us up to fail [1 Corinthians 10:13]. Quite on the contrary, God believes in us and in our ability to handle ANY situation thrown our way, when we turn our whole heart and attention to Him. That’s one of the reasons that if people in a community don’t welcome or appreciate us as God’s children, we are told to “SHAKE the dust from our sandals” [Matthew 10:14].

Don’t be surprised if God believes more in you than you do in yourself.

He knows better than you do, the potential that you have...potential you have not even tapped into yet — He should, He put it there.

The direction is “Shake Well...BEFORE USING”.

He wants to use you. Let Him shake you up good.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

We are currently discerning a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training within the next month. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to this ministry, we would be delighted to include you in that ministry here at Our Lady Chapel. Both adults and teens [must be a Senior in High School] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. We are in need of ministers for both our Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. **Contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you feel called to this ministry.** We are always in need of Eucharistic Ministers.



—Mark Hart.



conditions of poverty or need form the context for God’s faithful love to be described. There has to be some human response of course — not to initiate God’s love, but to allow that fidelity to be real.

When I pray about these two women — both widows, both poor — and when I experience their generosity and their trust in God, I am deeply humbled. They also stir in me a desire to be more like them. The temptation to be like the wise and clever scribes — who strive for a righteousness which doesn’t include compassion or care for those in need — is ever present, but ultimately, isn’t really attractive — “They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers.”

Something simplified these women. Something brought them to a place in their poverty that carved out a capacity for God there. Sometimes, my heart can get so full that there is so little capacity for God there. If I actually stop and do an “inventory” of my heart, I discover all kinds of desires there, all kinds of attractions, a wide variety of hostilities and judgments and a list of worries, tensions and fears. Even though I might turn to God in prayer to give me what I want and relieve me of what I don’t want, I can’t always say my heart is full of the Lord, when I am so pre-occupied. It takes real, honest reflection to discover the many ways our possessions possess us. Our needs and our anxieties simply erode our capacity for trust.

Real poverty — even though it is dehumanizing on so many levels — can allow a person to see clearly and to know his or her need for God. Spiritual poverty — which involves a deepening freedom before what we have, or what has come to be our identity — takes us to a place of trust. Poverty, which is spiritual, helps us to know what we really need. It is the difference between asking: “Help me to have more!” and asking: “Help me to trust in you when I find myself having less.”

In that place of dependence upon God, the jar doesn’t go empty and the jug never runs dry. Then, instead of asking God to take away my troubles, to punish my enemies, I’m asking God to help me to be a healer, to help me be generous because I’m noticing those who are in greater need than I am.

It is sometimes said that it is common for us who have plenty, to give from our surplus. It is also said that those of us who are poor often give, even from what we need.

With these readings today, we could each ask for the grace to be able to give more — from deeper inside of us. We can ask, who needs this kind of generosity from me? Who in my family needs what I had previously felt is more than I could give? Who in the world needs my charity, beyond what I have left over after I take care of my needs first?

How can we imagine being this generous, this free? We can only get closer to that place by asking for these graces boldly, by letting God love us into freedom, by letting our Lord convince us that our real happiness will be in letting go of more and more, and falling into the hands of a loving God — who keeps faith forever and who sets captives free. [see Psalm 146].

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

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. 5



FAITH AS TRUST:

In the Book of Genesis [Chapter 12], God makes a promise to Abraham that if he would leave his homeland, he would be blessed with descendants as numerous as the stars in the night sky. Abraham protested that he was an old man, and his wife was barren. How could such a thing be possible? Yet Abraham did something that the Bible tells us “was reckoned to him as righteousness” [Romans 4:3]. What God did was so compelling that it prompted him to leave his homeland and live as a stranger and pilgrim in a foreign land, and to be willing even to sacrifice his only son.

What Abraham did was simply this — he trusted God. He put all his faith in God. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that “to obey [from the Latin word *obaudire*” — to “hear” or “listen” to] in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself. Abraham is the model of such obedience offered us by Sacred Scripture [CCC, #144].

Thus, as St. Paul teaches, and as the liturgy proclaims, Abraham is our “father in faith,” precisely because he puts all his trust in God, and believed that, despite all appearances to the contrary, what was promised to him would be fulfilled. Abraham exemplifies the following definition of faith found in the Letter to the Hebrews — “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” [Hebrews 11:1].

The letter to the Hebrews goes on to offer a beautiful panorama of the trusting faith that marked the lives of so many of the great figures of the Old Testament. It describes them as people “who by faith conquered kingdoms, did what was right, and attained the promises. All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised, but saw it and greeted it from afar, and acknowledged themselves to be strangers, and aliens on the earth. God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them” [Hebrews 11:33, 13, 16].

The Old Testament emphasizes faith under the aspect of trust and obedience. The first lesson of the Bible about faith is that it is the total response of a human being to God who reveals himself in some saving way. Faith means accepting and believing the messages, promises, and commandments of God. Another way of putting it is to say that faith involves confidence in God who is faithful and trustworthy. He is to be trusted without hesitation, doubt, or fear. At the same time, the Bible also reveals faith as a movement of the intelligence toward realities that are not seen. This is brought out more fully in the New Testament where faith means giving one’s assent to a Person — Jesus Christ — and to the revelation that He is.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”. On a person level this means that when the providence of God is not so apparent, and he seems distant or remote, we are being called to exercise faith on a deeper and purer level. A great saint, John of the Cross, teaches that this ever increasing purification of faith is what most directly and most immediately unites us to God. The self-abandonment and the trust that faith entails are very pleasing to God and bring us very close to him.

God is revealed in the Old Testament as the Lord of history, and not just of individuals. He speaks to the patriarchs, and then enters into a covenant with his chosen people. The story of the exodus shows how God’s people were called out of bondage — away from what was harsh, but nevertheless relatively secure — out into a high risk situation in the desert, totally dependent on God alone. The whole history of Israel is the story of a people being led by the hand of God. Their infidelity, which at the root was a lack of trust, was denounced by the prophets who recognized the true depths of human sinfulness, and the need for God Himself to create a trusting human heart in a new covenant yet to come. This was fulfilled with the advent of Christ.

Like our spiritual ancestors in the desert, as fallen creatures, we find it difficult to live with complete



tality for which you really long. There’s enough loneliness, paranoia, fearfulness, breakdown, bitterness, drug abuse, and flat-out emptiness in the lives of celebrities to more than vouch for this. It’s no accident the three celebrities mentioned above — Marilyn, Elvis, and Diana — died as they did. Celebrity, of itself, doesn’t make one larger than life nor accord immortality.

What does enlarge our lives and give immortality? Compassion and contemplation.

Compassion. All the great religious traditions — from Hinduism to Christianity — teach that what makes our lives small is not place, anonymity, and occupation, but selfishness, self-preoccupation, ego, and narcissism. My life is small and petty precisely when it’s centered upon myself. However, when I can, through empathy, break a little the casings of my own selfishness and connect myself to the feelings and thoughts of others, by that very connection, my life becomes larger.

I know a hermit who has lived by himself for more than 35 years. He lives alone and his existence is known to few people. Yet, paradoxically, his life is really larger-than-life. He’s the most connected man I know. When he prays at night, alone, by his own description, he “feels the very heartbeat of the planet, and feels the joys and sufferings of everyone.”

That’s the very opposite of an experience we so commonly have when, inside the very buzz of social life, we feel nothing but our own obsessive restlessness and the smallness of our lives.

Contemplation works in the same paradoxical way — we connect ourselves most deeply to the world and we taste immortality when we are in solitude — in contemplation. What is that?

Contemplation is not a state of mind where we don’t think of anything — a blankness beyond distraction. Nor is it necessarily thinking lofty, sublime, or holy thoughts. Contemplation is, as Thomas Merton so aptly defined it, a state within which we are present to what is actually going on in our lives, and to the timeless, eternal dimensions inside of that. We are in solitude and contemplation when we are really aware that we are drinking water when we are drinking water.

Here’s how Merton describes a graced moment of contemplation: “Today it is enough to be, in an ordinary human mode, with one’s hunger and one’s sleep, one’s cold and warmth, rising and going to bed. Putting on blankets and taking them off, making coffee and then drinking it. Defrosting the refrigerator, reading, meditating, working, and praying. I live as my ancestors have lived on this earth, until eventually I die. Amen. There is no need to make an assertion of my life — especially about it as mine — though doubtless it is not somebody else’s. I must learn to gradually forget program and artifice.”

We are so besotted by celebrities because we are always looking outside of ourselves to find what is timeless, what can enlarge us, and give us immortality. But what we are looking for is already inside of us — something we must awaken ourselves to — namely, our union through compassion with everything that is and our tasting of what’s immortal and eternal through being aware of the cold and the warmth inside of our own lives. —taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet

OLC “ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:

For many years, Our Lady Chapel community has worked with St. Adalbert Parish in adopting families to help them celebrate the Christmas Season. In recent years, we have begun this project earlier in order to take advantage of pre-Christmas sales, etc. So again this year, St. Adalbert has begun to collect the names of families—the need is greater than ever. St. Adalbert identifies families — most often single parent, below poverty-level families. We are given the grade levels of the children & other family information. Since the pandemic, we have been limited to gift cards, but this year we are opening it up to gift cards or actual gifts. We do ask that you provide a Christmas meal for the family in the form of Gift Cards for Wal-Mart, Dave’s or Aldi [or purchase non-perishable items and place them in a basket] . Those from our Chapel family who participated in this project last year spoke very highly of the benefit of this project to their own families. This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. Adopt-a-family gifts should be WRAPPED. **Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or szaniszlop@gilmour.org] if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions.**



New York diocese comes from African-Americans in Central Harlem. Most of us Caucasians have higher incomes than the majority of these people. But they have more in common with the woman of Mark's Gospel than we. These people would remind us that faith motivates people to open their wallets. Perhaps they have in mind Paul's advice — "God loves a cheerful giver" [2 Corinthians 9:7].

Bertrand Russell wrote: "To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness." Too often the comfortable give to God as though they were poor. And the poor give to Him as though they were wealthy.

Many Catholics are more generous to waiters than to God. They give up to 20% of their bill — that is double-tithing. They would be embarrassed and afraid to give to waiters what they give to God. And yet, God deserves not a tip but a tribute.

Someone has enumerated four different types of giving. The first is called "grudge giving" — I hate to part with this twenty dollars, but I will. The second is "shame giving" — I must match whatever the Jones family is giving. The third is "calculated giving" — we part with our money with what, someone deliciously called, a "lively sense of favors to come." Bingos, Las Vegas nights, and raffle tickets fit in very nicely in this category. The final category is "thanksgiving" — I part with my funds precisely because God has been so wonderfully generous to me.

The widow of Mark's Gospel fits comfortably into "thanksgiving" giving.

This tale also points up another truth about our Christian selves — the majority of us do not fully give ourselves to the Christ. We are marking time with our Catholic lives. We are hedging our bets. The clever Mark situates his famous story during the last week in the life of Jesus. Not too subtly, Mark is reminding us that in a few days Jesus will give His life for us on Calvary. What do we give Him in return?

Thus Mark's Gospel reminds us that we should give, in Cardinal Mercier's words, not only what we have but also what we are.

Remember this epitaph on an English gravestone — "What I kept I lost. What I spent I had. What I gave I have."

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

BESOTTED BY CELEBRITY:

We are infatuated by celebrities. For most of us, the rich and famous take on a god-like status, and our own lives seem small, empty, and hardly worth living in comparison to what we imagine theirs to be. Fame, we believe, gives someone a life bigger than our own. We live in just one place — anonymous, domestic, unknown — but someone who is famous, whose face is recognized everywhere and whose name is a household word, it would seem, is everywhere, omnipresent like God. No wonder we view them as gods and give them worship.

But there's more: We also believe that fame gives immortality. Famous people may die, but they live on — Marilyn, Elvis, Diana — we don't even need last names. Something about them stays — more than a gravestone. Fame leaves an indelible mark. Our fear is that our small lives won't leave that. We disappear, but the famous remain.

So it isn't surprising that we are so besotted with the famous. They appear to us as gods — omnipresent and immortal.

But does fame really make one's life larger? If someone's face appears on billboards and magazine covers everywhere is he or she in some real way everywhere? Does a celebrity's larger-than-life status indeed make their lives larger than ours? Does fame accord some kind of immortality?

On a superficial level, the answer to the question is a resounding "yes". To be a household name and to leave a legacy ingrained inside of peoples' consciousness does, in a manner of speaking, make one omnipresent and does give one a certain kind of immortality. But, being larger-than-life and having immortality are very ambiguous concepts. There's something very vaporous and unreal in the kind of omnipresence and immortality that fame brings. You can't eat it, and you aren't present just because your name is. At the end of the day, fame doesn't really enlarge you, nor does it give you the kind of immor-

trust — not only that God exists, but that we are totally dependent on Him for all that we are, and all that we have. In the words of Pope Benedict: "The human being does not trust God. He harbors the suspicion that in the end, God takes something away from his life — that God is a rival who curtails our freedom — and that we will be fully human only when we have cast Him aside. The human being lives in the suspicion that God's love creates a dependence, and that he or she must rid themselves of this dependency if they are to be fully themselves." The Holy Father goes on to say: "Love is not dependence, but a gift that makes us live. We live in the right way if we live in accordance with the truth of our being, and that is in accordance with God's will."

It is Jesus, in his sacred humanity, who reveals to us the truth of our being. He became one like us in all things except sin. He was beset by weakness. He was tempted as we are. Reflecting on this, Carmelite Sister Ruth Burrows writes: "We, like Jesus, have to shut our eyes, give up the controls, and allow God to work and say, with Jesus, our "Yes, Yes". It is thus that we cease to be in control by trying to be our own god, our own creator, and we accept, as Jesus did, to be human — wholly contingent, with no answer, no fulfillment in ourselves — an emptiness that looks to infinite love for its completion. Because of Jesus we, too, can learn obedience, learn to accept with all our hearts the painful but wonderful vocation to be human. This "yes" of Jesus is that all-powerful word that upholds the universe, taking it to God."

—Archbishop Leonard Blair, former archbishop of Hartford, Conn.

SHE GAVE THE LITTLE THAT SHE HAD:

Some time ago I learned of a woman, who as a child was crippled by polio. She became angry with God and was mean, nasty, and angry with everyone around her. She became a miserable human being. By chance one day, she came into contact with members of a parish who gave her a whole lot of love. She returned to that parish every Sunday, and eventually joined it because there she found a lot of love from a lot of people. Her frozen heart warmed up. She found the freedom to "walk the spiritual walk", even though her body remained crippled.

As time went by, the parish entered into a campaign to raise funds. The woman surprised her family at that year's family Thanksgiving Dinner by announcing that she was giving \$45,000 to the parish in their building campaign. Her family was stunned. When they asked her where she was going to get all that money, she told them that throughout all her years since childhood she had been saving bit by bit in order to buy a handicap van with a lift. Now that she had the money, she decided to give it to the parish. Why? Because, she declared, her parish was now more important to her than her dream van. Said she: "I am so thankful that God healed me of my crippled heart. He gave me the freedom to walk in the way of His Son. I now need my parish more than I need that van."

Another story is about a famous football player at the University of Texas named Earl Campbell. In 1977, he won the Heisman Trophy. At the award banquet, he publicly pointed to his mother, telling the audience that she had raised twelve children all by herself. Earl's father had died when all of the children were young and without a lot of fanfare and notoriety she had successfully raised all twelve of her children. Said Earl Campbell: "There ought to be a Heisman Trophy for her and for people like her."

My final story is of a woman in Detroit who had two boys to raise all by herself. Their father — her husband — had been shot dead when they were babies. She and her boys lived in Detroit's inner city where she was a public-school teacher. She had done a wonderful job with them, pouring out her whole life into them. Her two boys were in college and headed toward successful careers when they were both killed in a horrible accident on the bridge over to Belle Isle in the Detroit River.

What did she do? She went back to teaching in Detroit's public schools, pouring out the rest of her life into other children in order to bring them to successful careers. Because of her, many lived happy and successful lives.

Finally, let me tell you of a single young woman with two boys. Her husband — their father —

had died of cancer in his early thirties. Somehow, she found the strength to go on. Then, several years later, she met a handsome, strapping young Viet Nam veteran who had come into her life and the lives of her boys.

They were engaged to be married. A few weeks prior to the wedding ceremony, he was over at the home of this woman and her boys, up a tree in their front yard trimming its branches. The branch he was sitting on broke off. He fell to the ground and broke his neck. He was instantly paralyzed from the neck down, doomed to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair and on a ventilator. The accident happened just three weeks before they were to be married. This young woman, with two boys whose father had recently died of cancer, went ahead and married the man she now loved, but who was a quadriplegic, forever to be in a wheel chair and on a ventilator. They joined their parish's Youth Ministry team and devoted themselves to caring for the parish's youngsters and teens. Their influence and gift to those kids obviously made an incredible impression on all who knew them.

These women whose stories I have just now shared with you make the women in the Scripture Readings for this 32nd Week in Ordinary Time very real for me.

The question you and I face is this: "Do we give God what's left over after we've taken care of everything else?" Or do we give God what we're living for? We have much, and we can give God much. We can give God our trust, our reliance upon Him, our dependence upon Him. Take our daily efforts, for instance. Are they to accomplish our purposes or God's purposes? They can be the same, you know. We can make our purposes God's purposes, and we can make God's purposes our purposes. Caring for the ones you love, caring for your wife, your husband, and your children is giving your life to God. Providing for the happiness of others is giving your life to God. Working for peace, working for justice and fairness in our world, and many other efforts is, in fact, giving your life over into God's care.

Let's be clear about it. God isn't interested in your money; He has all of the riches He will ever need. No, God wants more than your money. God wants YOU. He wants your daily life. He wants to be what you depend on each day. He wants to be what you live on.

Our giving to God is only giving Him back what's already His in the first place. But our giving God our hearts? Ah, that's quite something else! The gift of your heart is what He's looking for. It's our gift to Him each time we're at Mass. And when we gift Him with our love, when we give Him our hearts and our lives, our interests and desires, what He will give back to us cannot be measured.

One final story. Back in the time of England's Queen Elizabeth the First, there was a retired admiral of the Royal Navy who in his retirement was now running a thriving business. The Queen asked him to return to military service during a time of this national crisis. The man hesitated, asking: "but what will become of my business?" The Queen replied: "You look after my business, and I will look after your business." When we look after God's business, He will look after ours.

What requirements, what guarantees, do we expect from God when it comes to generously giving our love to Him? Can we have hearts and souls as trusting, as full of faith, and as generous in loving God as these women whose stories you have just heard?

Oh, and by the way, remember the woman crippled with childhood polio who was cured by the love of a parish she joined? Not only was her family stunned by her announcement that she was giving her \$45,000 to the parish building campaign, but many of her fellow parishioners went down on their knees and back to their prayers to examine their own souls. And when a group of men heard of her sacrifice and experienced her radiant joy in her new-found freedom, they banded together and bought her a lift-van anyway. They remained anonymous, and when she was presented with her new van, there was a note on it from these parishioners that simply said: "Thank you for showing us how to walk with Jesus."

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



There are tremendous sacrifices made every week by the people who teach in religious education programs. Most of them are not professional teachers. They are Moms and Dads, or students — the busiest of people. They are tired in the afternoons and evenings, but they have a greater need — the need to bring God to other children. There are others who work in pregnancy centers — they offer alternatives to abortion and are responsible for saving the lives of thousands of babies. The same can be said for those who care for the poor of our parish in community life. The people who sing in church choirs sacrifice hours every week to lead us in prayer through music. And think about all the other ministries — servers, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, greeters — and the list is unending. They give of their time, their talent, and their treasure — they are not concerned with what they need here and now. They are concerned with the Great Need, the Need for the Lord.

Time, talent and treasure — those are the three main areas of stewardship. A steward is someone who is entrusted with that which belongs to someone else. We are entrusted with the Kingdom of God. As good stewards we give from our needs — our need for more time to do the necessities of life, and our need to use our monetary blessings to care for ourselves and our families. But there is a Greater Need in our lives. That is the Need for Jesus Christ.

We need Jesus Christ. We need the Lord. He gives meaning and purpose to our lives. We need Him more than anyone or anything else in our lives.

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

CHEERFUL GIVING?

A government social worker was visiting New England farms. He had the authority to give federal dollars to poor farmers. He found an elderly widow farming a few acres. Her house was clean, but tiny. There did not appear to be much food in the house. The windows had no screens to keep out the summer flies. The exterior needed a paint job. He wondered how she could survive. He asked: "What would you do if the government gave you five hundred dollars?"

Her answer was: "I would give it to the poor."

She was similar to the widow whom Daniel Webster had in mind. Webster was asked: "What moved you to become a Christian?" He replied: "Studying the way an old woman in New Hampshire lived."

The women of these two stories had much in common with Mark's Gospel widow — they were obviously cut out of the same bolt of exquisite damask. All three have much to tell us.

Do most Catholics give a fair share of their income to the Church and to charities? A Gallup poll answered that query. In a recent year, American Catholics gave 1.3% of their income to parish and charities. But Protestants gave 2.4% and Jews 3.8%.

Our comparative tightness with our dollars comes despite Rousseau's admonition — "When a man dies, he carries in his hands only that which he has given away." We would do well to recall the question asked about the wealthy man who died — "How much money did he leave?" The answer came promptly: "All of it!" Who of us has ever seen a U Haul hitched to a hearse? The title of a 1938 film says it all: ***You Can't Take It With You***.

The Nazarene must appreciate the boldness of those who tithe. Incidentally, Jesus Himself did the same in the synagogue at Nazareth for most of His adult life. A survey reveals while 44% of Baptists tithe, but 4% of Catholics do. Giving 10% of one's income to the church and charities can be a frightening sum to consider. But those who do it testify that God has never let them down. Most of us are just too fearful of finding out whether that will be the case. So, we shall die wondering — and, more than likely, we are destined to die with regrets.

Research by Patrick Carney revealed that the highest percentage of Catholic contributions in the



THE GREATER NEED:

The scripture readings for this 32nd Week in Ordinary Time begin with Elijah meeting a widow at Zerahath [1 Kings 17:10-16]. There was a terrible drought at this time, and there was a great famine. Sadly, the poor — then as now — suffered the worst. The widow that Elijah met was a younger woman — younger than most widows. She had a child — a son to care for. Her life was full of tragedy. Her husband must have died fairly recently. Then the drought and famine came. She was certain she would have to watch her son die of starvation. She also knew that soon afterwards she would die herself. And now this traveler — Elijah — came asking her for food. There was a solemn law of hospitality in the ancient days that said that all travelers had to be cared for. It was a way of honoring God — for the traveler could be an angel of God like the time that Abraham cared for three travelers and entertained angels [see Genesis 18]. It was very clear to the ancients that if the widow refused to share what she had with Elijah, she would be committing a sin against God. She chose to do the virtuous thing. She gave that which she really needed. She gave from her need, all for a Greater Need, for the Need for God. And God rewarded her as she and her son survived the drought and famine.

We also come upon a widow in Mark's Gospel [12: 38-44]. Jesus is sitting in the Temple with his disciples in the area where people made donations to the Temple. Some would come with large sums of money and made sure that others would see them. The widow who came though was a poor woman. We don't know her age, but she was probably elderly. She put only a few cents into the Treasury, but it was for her a huge sum of money. Perhaps she felt grateful to God that she was able to worship Him in the Temple and wanted to express her gratitude. Others would think that her donation was little. God's son saw it as truly generous. She gave from what she herself really needed, but caring for God's house meant more to her than her own needs. She had a Greater Need, the Need for God in her life.

The saints gave their lives to the Lord. Some were killed for the faith — their blood became the strength of the Church. Some of the saints were not killed, but were so devoted to spreading the faith that they grew closer and closer to God right until the moment of their deaths — people like Blessed Mother Theresa or St. Damian the Leper. The saints were determined to give their all to the Lord. They weren't satisfied with denying themselves things they wish they had or could do. No, they gave themselves totally to the Lord. Like the widows, they gave from their needs. They sought the Greater Need, the Need for Jesus Christ.

Most of us have received the sacrament of confirmation. Confirmation is a commitment to the Kingdom of God. It is a sacrament that allows us to be vehicles of the Holy Spirit for others. It is also a sacrament that demands that we sell out for God — put Him first in every aspect of our lives. It is a sacrament that calls us to recognize the Greater Need of our lives, our Need for Jesus Christ.

Thousands and thousands of people live out their sacrament of confirmation. Many people come for adoration — even when they may need to stay home and relax, or do a myriad of chores, school related activities, etc. But they come because they know that the time they spent before the Blessed Sacrament would help others come closer to God as well as themselves. They need rest, or time to complete work, but they gave up the time they needed for a Greater Need, the Kingdom of God.

Many people who are retired volunteer to drive people in nursing homes, or who are homebound to appointments or to Church. Others go to the hospital with flowers or bring communion to the sick.

**PLACING GOD'S WORD ON OUR HEARTS:**

Jewish rabbis take the bible very seriously. Because they believe it is God's word, they are convinced that nothing in the bible is there by chance. Every word, every expression, every comma has a significance. On one occasion two rabbinical students were discussing a passage from the book of Deuteronomy. They were trying to understand why God commanded us in that book to put the word of God "on" our hearts. Why did God not say to put God's word "in" our hearts? Is not that where the word of God should be? Since they could not figure this out, they went to ask the rabbi why does the bible say we are to place the word of God on our hearts instead of in our hearts? This was his response: "We are commanded to place the word of God on our hearts because our hearts are closed and the word of God cannot get in. So, God commands us to place the word of God on our hearts. And there it sits there it waits. It waits for the day when our hearts will be broken. When they are broken, then the word of God will fall gently inside."

How wise this explanation is! We all here believe in God. We all would express our conviction that God loves us and will save us. But when things are going well, when we are confident in our strength and success, when we are convinced that we can handle things on our own, God's word sits on our hearts. It cannot get inside, because our hearts are too full of ourselves. So, God's word sits and waits until we fail, until we are hurt, until we have to struggle with sickness, addiction, pain, or death. It waits until our hearts break, then it falls gently inside and gives us both power and peace. Those who know their own need are the ones who can carry the word of God in their hearts. Those who struggle with weakness and failure are the ones who truly experience the power and peace of God's presence. Those who are in need are those who truly believe.

This is why the central figures in the Readings for this 32nd Week in Ordinary Time are widows. In the ancient world a widow was the most vulnerable member of society. Without family her need was paramount. Her need nurtured her faith. Without family on which to depend, she depended on God alone.

It is easier to believe the word of God, when we recognize our own need. So, whenever we experience loss, failure, or pain, there is hope. God's word is sitting on our hearts, waiting to console and strengthen us. As difficult as our trials may be, they can lead us to God. It is often our brokenness that allows the love of God in.

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

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.**

**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].



LEARNING THE IMPORTANT LESSONS OF LIFE:

The Gospels are often referred to as “Good News” — which is what the word “Gospel” literally means. But we don’t always experience it as good news — all too often we perceive it as placing some kind of burden on our shoulders. But when we read about the widow in Mark’s Gospel [12:38-44], we certainly are faced with “good news”. Here Jesus points out the hypocrisy of the rich and powerful, and highlights the sheer goodness of the poor widow. The implication is that she will receive a high reward in heaven, while all those hypocrites will go unrewarded.

This certainly is good news for all the meek and lowly people of the world. It is good news for the poor and the disregarded people around us. It is good news for us if we have ever felt powerless or unworthy. It is good news if we stick to our principles and do our duty no matter what other people think.

The widow makes a sacrifice — she gives what little she has. She places her trust in God that he will provide for her. She stands unnoticed in the Temple, but actually makes a greater sacrifice than all those high-ups who are ostentatiously walking about looking important, hoping people will notice them. It is the Widow’s sacrifice that will be rewarded by God — her willingness to take a risk, her wish to give something back to God in return for all that she has already received from him.

This implies deep faith in God. Her simple action demonstrates what we call trust in divine providence. It implies a deep faith and trust in God that he will somehow or other provide for her needs even though she has no visible means of support.

Of course, in those days there were no social services, no food stamps, no pensions. And yet despite this, people didn’t generally die of hunger. There was a greater understanding of the interdependency of us all, and therefore more tolerance towards the poor. It was a village society, and each person probably had access to a plot of land where they could grow a few vegetables. There were also surrounding fields where there were scraps to be found after the harvest was gathered. So while no one was likely to starve, there were surely plenty of people who lived very poorly and at a subsistence level.

This widow, while not actually starving, probably didn’t have much to live on, and certainly not much in the way of the comforts of life. Every penny was counted and used as wisely as possible.

What Jesus highlights in all of this is that the poor and vulnerable are never forgotten by God. Jesus pours contempt on the hypocrites and on those who take advantage of others while making a show of their religiosity — these he threatens with punishment.

It is interesting to note that the woman in the story, however, is completely unaware of Jesus praising her. She places her coin in the alms box, and goes on her way. Jesus makes his remarks only to his disciples, and so she is oblivious to the praise Jesus heaps on her.

This heightens the point that whatever it is she gives to the Temple she does not do it to get attention — unlike those scribes who want everyone to notice how much they are giving. So it is not only that she is giving all she possessed, but also that she does it discreetly and not to gain attention. She looks for no reward — she simply does her duty.

What we need to learn incident is that pride and greed take us away from God, while humility and poverty of heart draw us closer to him. What God is interested in is our motives. It is what drives our actions that interest Him — not so much what we actually end up doing.

This is one of the most important lessons of life. We cannot hide from God; He knows our inmost thoughts and motivations; he knows what we are thinking and what drives our actions. There is



absolutely nothing that we can hide from him. This is why we have to keep a constant check on our thoughts as well as on our actions.

This shows the importance of a good upbringing and a good training in our youth. It is the duty of parents to rear their children to be unselfish and to be generous towards others. It is their task to train them not only in good manners, but to have good thoughts, and to be motivated by the good of all.

It is very easy to indulge children and to give in to their demands, but it is not good for them. Children need to learn very important lessons in life, and it is only the parents who can ensure that this is done properly. In an atmosphere of unconditional love, we have to be sure that they learn personal discipline, and to live their lives in a moderate and loving way.

However, if the parents are selfish, then the children will also be selfish — they will not learn the most important lesson of life that we are all in it together. They will not realize that what we call life is a common enterprise that involves us all. They will not realize the impact that their actions have on others, and they will be the worse for it. They will go through life taking instead of giving, and they will never find true happiness.

This story of the Widow’s Mite is an important one for us all. It teaches us about how important it is to have a correct inner motive for our actions. It teaches us that God notices our inmost thoughts, and judges us accordingly. It teaches us the importance of generosity, and the need to depend on God when we have nothing else.

These are timeless lessons that we need to be sure that we transmit to our children — and that we need to be sure we have learned ourselves. These lessons are the key to a truly deep and fulfilling life.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Titus 1:1-9, Luke 17:1-6
Tuesday:	Titus 2:1-14, Luke 17:7-10
Wednesday:	Titus 3:1-7, Luke 17:11-19
Thursday:	Philemon 1:7-20, Luke 17:20-25
Friday:	2 John 1:4-9, Luke 17:26-37
Saturday:	3 John 1:5-8, Luke 18:1-8

33rd Week in Ordinary Time: Daniel 12:1-3, Hebrews 10:11-18, Mark 13:24-32

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 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an Altar Server; any student who is in the 5th [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].**

