

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer of Gratitude ~

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for not abandoning me
when I abandoned you.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for offering your hand of love in my darkest,
most lonely moment.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for putting up with
such a stubborn soul as mine.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for loving me
more than I love myself.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for continuing to pour out
your blessings upon me,
even though I respond so poorly.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for drawing out the goodness in all people,
even including me.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for repaying my sin with your love.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for being constant and unchanging,
amidst all the changes of the world.

May you be blessed forever, Lord,
for your countless blessings on me
and on all your creatures.

Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

Our Lady Chapel



Our Lady Chapel is a Roman Catholic community founded in the love of the Father, centered in Christ, and rooted in the Holy Cross tenets of building family and embracing diversity. We are united in our journey of faith through prayer and sacrament, and we seek growth through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and outreach, while responding to the needs of humanity.

WELCOME TO “ORDINARY TIME”:

Because the term ordinary in English most often means something that’s not special or distinctive, many people think that Ordinary Time refers to parts of the calendar of the Catholic Church that are unimportant. Even though the season of Ordinary Time makes up most of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, people come to think that Ordinary Time refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons — Christmas and Easter. Yet Ordinary Time is far from unimportant or uninteresting.

Ordinary Time is called “ordinary” not because it is common, but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. The Latin word “ordinalis” refers to ordered numbers in a series. Thus, the numbered weeks of Ordinary Time in fact represent the ordered life of the Church — the period in which we live our lives neither in feasting — as in the Christmas and Easter seasons — or in more severe penance — as in Advent and Lent. Ordinary Time is the part of the year in which Christ, the Lamb of God, walks among us and transforms our lives. There’s nothing “ordinary” about that!

**FAITH EDUCATION — SCHEDULE:**

Faith Education is an important part of every person’s formation. Please make sure that you have not forgotten this important responsibility. 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**. Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility. **Meeting dates for January: 26; February 2-9-23.**

**THE CHAPEL INDOOR PICNIC IS RETURNING:**

Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Sunday, March 2nd is the date for the return our annual indoor Chapel picnic. Our indoor picnic has not been held since COVID, so we are looking forward to renewing this community building activity. What better way to spend a winter day — and the Sunday before Lent starts — than by having an **indoor picnic in the middle of winter — a great idea**. So here it comes once again. It will be a great event for the entire family. The picnic will be held in **the Commons from 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM. Family Mass takes place at 10:00 AM** and the picnic begins right after Mass — what a wonderful way to continue our celebration of community. **In a few weeks, families will be asked to sign up in the vestibule of the chapel, to bring your favorite side dish or desert if you can.**

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:**

The Young Adult group will be holding their **next meeting at 11:45 AM on Sunday, February 23rd**. **We will be discussing Lent in today’s world**. We celebrate this 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 join us at our next meeting, or 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.

**JUBILEE YEAR:**

Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God’s word helps us find reasons for that hope.

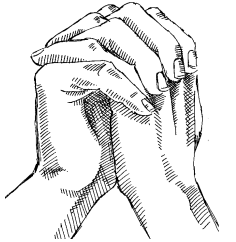
—Pope Francis

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For John Zippay, family friend of Bernadette and Stephen Ritley, who is seriously ill.
- For Jill Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for mental health issues.
- For 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 Father Ray Sutter, pastor emeritus of St. Matthias Parish, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nick Chiacchiari, father of Mark Mark Chiacchiari [*94], father-in-law of Michelle Chiacchiari [*96], and grandfather of Aurelia [*28], and Olivia [*30] Chiacchiari, who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Father Larry Jerge, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice
- For Thomas Noble who is undergoing treatment for cancer.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Doris Peck, sister of Brother Roy Smith, C.S.C.
- For Father Ned Weist,
- For Mary Livingston, mother of David Livingston [*90] and former Gilmour specialist, Kate Wetherbee, mother-in-law of Kate Oviatt [*89]
- For John Shutter, grandfather of Josh Shutter, C.S.C.
- For Tim Pozsgai, father of Tim Pozsgai [*98], and grandfather of Tyler Pozsgai [*28]
- For Timothy Laganke, grandfather of Casey Lennon [*30]
- For William Daley
- For Mary Ann Blakeley, Director of Human Resources for the Diocese of Cleveland
- For Alice Channell, grandmother of Kayla Channell [*25]
- For Cathy Lozick, daughter of Fred Lennon, sister of John Lennon [*55], aunt of John [*78] and James [*80] Lennon, great aunt of Casey [*30], James [*30], Katelyn [*32] Lennon
- For Santa Harbert, grandmother of Director of Residency, Jeff Brown.
- For Sister Mary Dennis Maher, C.S.A.
- For Patrick Ginley

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.



SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — FEBRUARY 15th:

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.

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 [1/11/25] _____ \$ 740.02
Total Offerings: Sunday [1/12/25] _____ \$ 804.00

PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For all those exposed to the extreme cold
- For the victims of the wild fires in California
- in New Orleans and for their families.
- For an end to the war between Israel and Hamas, and Russia and Ukraine.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For an end to violence in our society in all of its forms.
- 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.

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — THURSDAY, January 30th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, January 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: What is the Jubilee Year

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, January 19: 2 nd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 20:	NO MASS
Tuesday, January 21: St. Agnes	NO MASS
Wednesday, January 22:	1:15 PM
Thursday, January 23:	NO MASS
Friday, January 24: St. Francis de Sales	NO MASS
Saturday, January 25: 3 rd Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, January 26: 3 rd Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

2025 CALENDARS:

Calendars for the year 2025 are available for your taking. Besides having space for you to write your family appointments, the calendar also contains information about Mass and Reconciliation times here at Our Lady Chapel. We wish to thank the Schulte-Mahon-Murphy Funeral Homes for their generous donation of these 2025 Calendars to us. Please feel free to take as many calendars as you would like. Thank you.



2024 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:

If you would like a copy of your 2024 Contributions to Our Lady Chapel, please call the chapel office [440-473-3560] and we will be glad to send it out to you. We have been doing it this way for a number of years now. We have found in the past that many have their own records and do not need to receive this statement. As good stewards, we are trying to cut postage expenses from a mass mailing. Let us know if you need the statement sent to you and we will be glad to get it to you. Thanks for your under-



REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

The Scripture Readings for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time start and end with a wedding theme — a reflection that marriage is the image of God's relationship to His people. to that of a couple and finishing with the story Jesus' first miracle at the celebration of the covenant between a couple.

John's Gospel does not present many miracles in its pages — only seven are recorded. There are three physical healings [John 4:46-54; John 5:1-8; John 9:1-7], two physical changing's [John 2:1-11, John 6:5-14], and the raising of Lazarus [John 11:1-45]. On this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time, we begin the public ministry of Jesus with the changing of water into wine [John 2:1-11]. For John, miracles are "signs" or revelations pointing toward Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. They are offered to those who can see these signs in hopes that they will come to believe in Him. They also remind us of what our relationship with Jesus needs to be. For John, Jesus' first miracle of changing water into wine is not so much about drinking, as it is about "ritual purification" — repurposing our relationship with God.

Our Scripture readings begin with the Prophet, Isaiah, who spoke to a people long held in captivity. Today's first reading infers that God is more opening the door to a relationship than serving as a judge [Isaiah 62:1-5]. Paul reflects on the diversity of gifts that we have received — blessings of relationship, if you will. How do we respond to this relationship — these gifts? [1 Corinthians 12:4-11]. Finally, John's Gospel may just be preparing us for the replacement of the Old Testament laws with the two great New Testament commandments based on relationships — Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and Love your neighbor as yourself.

But let's return to the Prophet Isaiah. He begins by reflecting on God's plan for the city of Jerusalem [Isaiah 62:1-5]. It is a comforting message, and uses a marital theme for emphasis. Zion — Jerusalem — was occupied by non-believers who polluted the holy temple and desecrated all that was of the Jewish religious traditions. It appears as if the city was a spinster or an orphan — not belonging any more to God, nor were the people God's people. But the love poem is a prophetic foretelling of the future embrace of God once again — and the people will be called by a new relational name. Gone is the past where the city and the people of Israel have been called by dishonoring names by former prophets; now their names are changed, and new life is born — in very much the same way people who marry change their names to begin a new way of life. Isaiah speaks a poem about redemption and the Groom — God is taking as his bride all that once was disgraceful and abandoned.

It is important to remember that in John's Gospel, there are often literary references back to the Book of Genesis. For example, John's story of the Wedding at Cana and the book of Genesis both begin with the words: "In the beginning" [see Genesis 1:1]. The first day of creation was the act of God's hovering over the "water", or chaos [Genesis 1: 2]. God said: "Let there be light", and so there was, and God called that "day" and the dark God called "night".

In John's Gospel the good things happen in the light of day, and the bad things take place in the dark. For John, Jesus is Light. At the very beginning of his Gospel, John reminds us that "This Light [Jesus] was the life of the world" [John 1:4].

The fact that there are six water jars in this story is not an accident — there are six days of creation in the Book of Genesis. The water of chaos — or the unformed — is changed by the Word of God into seeable light, and the water in the stone jugs is to be seen through the light of Jesus, thus making it a sign. The signs are to be seen and taken as lights shining on Jesus as Messiah.

And so, for Jesus — and John — this is the opening, or first day of the new creation. The wine-



or of my country.

Now is that attitude universal? Not at all. It might not even be the majority of the people in the world would not accept it. Nevertheless, there are more people believing in human dignity today than at any time before this. Gérard would point to such an advancement as a sign that we are coming closer to the kingdom of God.

Gérard's perspective is worldwide. But we can also look in a more personal direction. This leads to the second question which I would like you to consider this week: Is my life-getting better or worse? Do I see myself moving forward or backward? Again, there are many ways to answer that question. If you happen to be in the midst of some terrible tragedy or loss, then your life can certainly seem to be falling apart. Yet there can be another way to answer the question.

For example, many of us deal with the diminishment which comes from age as we move to our 40's to our 60's to our 80's. We have less energy, less health, our friends die. How are we to interpret that movement? Is the only viewpoint that we are caught in a downward spiral? Must we believe that with each day there is less and less of life? Not necessarily. It is possible to recognize that even as life diminishes in all these ways, other things are increasing. Moreover, the things which are increasing might be more important things — experience, wisdom, patience, generosity, and thankfulness. If we find that those gifts are increasing, then — even as other gifts diminish — we can claim that the best wine is now.

So those are the two questions which I would like you to reflect upon this week. Is the world at large and is my personal life-becoming better or worse, moving forward or falling backward? Jesus tells us that the best things are in the future, the best wine has not yet to be drunk. We have to choose whether to believe him. I suggest that we make that choice carefully, because the choice we make will shape our world. It will determine whether we think that we are moving forward into darkness or into light, whether we are moving forward to death or to life.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Hebrews 5:1-10, Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday: Hebrews 6:10-20, Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday: Hebrews 7:1-17, Mark 3:1-6

Thursday: Hebrews 7:26-8:6, Mark 3:7-12

Friday: Hebrews 8:6-13, Mark 3:13-19

Saturday: Acts 2:3-16, Mark 16:15-18

3rd Week in Ordinary Time: Nehemiah 8:2-10, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

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].



LOOKING FOR THE BEST WINE:

There is more than one way to answer a question. There is more than one perspective through which we can view life. A young psychologist was given a task of administering a new psychological test that was meant to show mental flexibility of elderly people. His first patient was a 91-year-old man. When the man came in, the psychologist carefully explained that this would be a verbal test and that some of the questions were very easy, where others were rather difficult. He asked the man whether he was ready to begin. “Let’s go,” the elderly gentleman said. “Ok,” said the psychologist, “this is the first question. Can you name two days of the week that begin with ‘T’?” “That’s easy,” said the man, “today and tomorrow.” The psychologist paused for a few moments, wrote a few notes, shuffled his papers, and said: “Well let’s go on to the second question. Now this one is much more difficult, can you tell me how many seconds there are in a year?” Without batting an eye, the man responded: “twelve.” “Twelve!” said the psychologist. “Yes,” said the elderly man with confidence, “the 2nd of January, the 2nd of February, the 2nd of March and so on.”

There is more than one way to answer a question and there is more than one perspective through which we can live life. This is an important insight because it means that since there is more than one way, we must choose which answer will be our answer and which perspective we will adopt.

Now in John’s Gospel for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time, Jesus gives us a perspective through which we can view life — a very optimistic one. The gospel of course is the story of the wedding feast at Cana [John 2:1-11], and the key line is the one uttered by the chief steward: “You have kept the best wine until now.” The good wine was not served first; the good wine was served last. The pattern of this gospel, therefore, tells us that we are moving forward, that things are getting better.

John’s gospel reminds us that we as Christians believe in an optimistic view of the world. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we do not have to feel that we are falling backwards, but that we are moving forward. We are moving forward to what is the best possible thing: the establishment of the kingdom of God. We believe that God is leading us not to something inferior but to something wonderful — that the best wine is not behind us but before us. Jesus presents this optimistic message to us today. The question is: do we believe it. Can we buy into such a positive view, or will we insist on a more pessimistic approach?

In this light I would like to suggest to you two questions for you to reflect upon this week. The first question is this: Do you believe that the world is moving forward or backward? Do you believe that human civilization is becoming better or worse? There are different ways to answer that question. Certainly, if you center in on some of the horrors of recent times such as the Holocaust, Hiroshima, or genocide in Africa, a pessimistic answer seems appropriate. But is that pessimism the only perspective which is possible?

There is a French theologian by the name of René Gérard who has made it his life’s work to chronicle the positive developments in history. In Gérard’s view such forward movement is a sign of God acting in our world. Gérard would argue that we who live in the world today have more potential for a good life than any other generation before us — that it is better living in the 21st century than in the 12th century or the 2nd century. This is certainly because we have electricity, air conditioning, medical advancements, and education. But Gérard points out that our progress is not simply in science and material things. He asserts that there are more people living in the world today who respect the rights of others than at any other time in human history. That there are more people living in the world today who believe that every human being has a value, even if that human being is not of my family, or of my tribe,



masters indicate that this new wine is more of a sign than the earlier one. For John, Jesus is the later wine which completes the wedding feast begun with the first serving of wine, or the original creation of the universe — this of course, includes our human creation.

The disciples begin to accept Jesus as the son of God — the real miracle is their acceptance of themselves as changed-into-new-wine people. This miracle continues taking place in our own lives as well. God continues breathing over our chaos — our unformedness, our darkness — and he brings us into the light that is Jesus.

We are just at the beginning of the Liturgical Year. We, like the disciples, are always coming slowly into the light of our being newly created through Christ’s birth, life, death, and Resurrection. Through the accounts of the Genesis creation stories, God comes out of hiding, just enough to allow us the freedom to say “yes”, there is a Person of Beyondness whose love does such things as giving us signs which we can accept, ignore, or reject as mere possibilities or accidentals.

In my family, our mother, each year, made a Christmas Cranberry Pudding — a steamed moist cake — upon which she would pour a sweet and hot mixture of sugar, whipping cream, butter and vanilla — the four major food groups for sure. During my first Christmas away from my family of origin, my mother sent a medium-sized jar of this sauce as a post-Christmas gift and reminder. It was in the community refrigerator, and it appeared to some person who threw it away as if it were lard or two-week old gravy. Now there’s a homily in there somewhere. Jerusalem, the people of God, the jugs of water, our old human condition, things which can appear throw-awayable — each of these are still so precious to the Mother God who keeps sending us the new four major food groups — Jesus, the Sacraments, our personal selves, and those to whom God sends us to nourish, and through whom to be nourished. I did find out who threw my treasure away — and he is not allowed to forget it either! Jesus is still changing my old water into new wine.

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

THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS OF WINTER:

Winter, with its stillness and quiet beauty, offers a unique opportunity for spiritual growth. While the world outside may seem barren and cold, the season invites us inward — to embrace silence, reflection, and renewal in our relationship with God.

The Gift of Silence. Winter is naturally quieter, with shorter days and longer nights. This quiet can be a spiritual gift, encouraging us to step back from the noise of daily life. Silence fosters an atmosphere where we can listen to God’s voice, which often speaks in whispers. Consider carving out moments of quiet prayer or contemplation during the day. Whether it’s in the morning before the rush begins or in the evening as the day winds down, these silent moments can help us draw closer to God.

A Time for Reflection. Nature in winter appears dormant, yet beneath the surface, it is preparing for renewal. Similarly, winter is an ideal time to reflect on our own spiritual lives. Take stock of where you are in your faith journey. Are there areas where you feel distant from God? Are there habits or distractions that have crept in, pulling you away from prayer or the sacraments? Use this time to realign your heart and mind with God’s will.

Lessons from Dormancy. Winter teaches us the importance of rest and patience. Just as the earth lies dormant to prepare for spring, we, too, need periods of rest to grow spiritually. In a culture that often glorifies busyness, winter is a reminder that slowing down is not only okay but necessary for renewal. Embrace this season as a time to focus on spiritual “roots,” grounding yourself in prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments.

Hope for the Spring Ahead. Winter is not an end, but a preparation for what’s to come. As we embrace its silence and reflection, we ready our hearts for spiritual growth and renewal. The lessons learned during these months can guide us throughout the year, reminding us that even in stillness, God is at work within us.

—Scepter Publishers

THE BOND OF LOVE:

The Gospel for this 2nd Week in Ordinary Time comes to us from the Gospel of St. John — a Gospel dominated by the theme of God’s love. Of the four Gospels, John’s is the Gospel of Love — particularly God’s commitment to you and to me to care for us, to cherish us, and to belong to us if we give Him our love in return.

In St. John’s Gospel the first miracle of Jesus Christ takes place at wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. At that banquet Jesus, performing His first miracle, changes water into wine. St. John closes his Gospel with another wedding feast — the Last Supper. The bible speaks of it as the “Wedding Feast of the Lamb.” There Jesus, performing His last and greatest miracle before suffering and dying on His Cross, changes bread and wine into His Body and Blood. In the first wedding feast He changes water into wine, in the last wedding feast He changes wine into His Blood — Blood to be poured out for us in redemptive, self-sacrificing love. The fact that St. John’s brackets his Gospel with these two weddings feasts and their miracles is not a coincidence; it is by design.

Every culture in every age recognizes the central importance of marriage in the ordering of human societies, in their social structures. Marriage is the fundamental cell upon which all social bodies, all human societies, are built. Marriage ceremonies universally celebrate our human commitments to belong, to care, to cherish, and to love. Marriage is the matrix in which children are conceived, born, nurtured, and raised. It is in the life of a family that the personalities and characters of children are shaped and developed. It is the primary locus in which children learn to be other-centered and not self-centered. It is there that they learn to relate to others and learn to live in inter-relatedness with others, the fundamental “glue” that holds all societies together in peace and justice.

I bring all of this up here because in John’s Gospel account, we find Jesus at a wedding [John 2:1-11]. His presence blesses the meaning and purpose of marriage. We should pay particular attention to Christ’s response to His mother when He says: “My hour has not yet come.” What was that “hour”? It was none other than that “hour” or that time when, at the end of His life, we find Him at the Last Supper followed by His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani and ending by His death on the cross. This is the “hour” in which He says: “This is my body, take it; this is my blood, drink it. This is where I marry you in an unbreakable union that nothing, not even sin or death, can overcome. I will love you, no matter what. I am marrying you in an everlasting covenant, and even if you crucify and put me to death, I will come back from the grave to love you, because nothing can make me not love you.” The new and everlasting covenant, you see, is God’s marriage to you and me.

Marriage, you see, is central to what God is all about in Christ’s incarnation. It is the focal point in which God encounters us and gives Himself to us in love. Marriage is all about commitment and belonging. Secular individualism is not. Marriage is all about the generation and fostering of human life. Secular individualism is not. Marriage is all about understanding about what kind of a God that God is. Secularism seeks to dismiss God. It fractures us. Marriage is all about living together in a community — a community of committed love and bonded caring forever. Secular individualism is only about caring for our feelings as individuals. Secular individualism tells us: “If it feels good, do it. If it doesn’t feel good, dump it or kill it.” Marriage is all about self-sacrifice for others because of love. Secularism is not.

In the culture wars going on in the world around us, the secularist argument is dominant in the movies, on television, and in the newspaper media, while the arguments of believers are to be found more in the radio talk shows. Oh, there are some exceptions to be sure. I am just speaking here of what is usually to be found.



So when you hear talk about abortion, promiscuity, adultery, premarital sex, the gay lifestyle, contraception, divorce and remarriage, and now cloning, realize that they each have some disconnection with the central meaning, value, and purpose of marriage. Is Christ to be invited to the celebration of your life, or do you want Him to stay away? For if He comes to the party, then all that we have watered down and degraded in terms of human values and purposes in life — all those gallons of water in the stone water jars of our cold hearts will be changed. Are you unsatisfied with watered down faith in others? Watered down trust? A watered-down marriage, watered down love, or a watered-down life? If so, invite Christ into your celebration of life and all those gallons of watered-down human living will be changed.

In the scheme of Christ’s mission and purpose, the wedding feast of Cana isn’t something that was simply “pretty” or “nice.” It was the location for His first miracle and it, along with the Last Supper — otherwise called “The Wedding Feast of the Lamb” — it brackets all that Jesus Christ gives us in His life among us as reported to us in St. John’s Gospel. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, and the Last Supper, and the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, are at the core of God’s marrying us in Jesus Christ. All that they give us, along with the miracle at Cana, are at the core of our religious beliefs and our understandings of what it means to belong to the human family.

Not many days ago we celebrated the birth of Christ. All of the images of Mary, Joseph, and the Christ-child presented to us are still fresh in our memories. Following Christmas, on January 1st, we celebrated Mary’s motherhood. The Mass for New Year’s Day was celebrated as the Feast of Mary the Mother of God. With Epiphany our eyes were directed to the scene where the wise men, powerful worldly leaders, came as searchers seeking the wisdom of God found in the birth of Jesus Christ. The theme of God’s love, of belonging to God’s family, the theme of the central importance of family in bringing us God’s love is a theme that is inescapable.

To whom, we must ask ourselves, do our hearts belong? What is found in our hearts? To whom and to what do we give our hearts, give ourselves over to? Like the needle of a compass, where do our hearts turn when the distractions, cares, and concerns of our days lose their grip on us and our hearts are free again? Who and what holds our hearts?

God is a God of love. He offers and then He waits for our response of love in return.

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

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN ALTAR SERVER or LECTOR?

We are resuming our need for Servers and Lectors. Each and every week, we always are finding that we have a need. Ever since COVID, people seem to not have the same interest and/or desire. But these 2 ministers are so grace-filled — both from God and personally. **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].**

**THE BEAUTY OF SCRIPTURE:**

"For the believer, the Word of God is not simply a text to read. The Word of God is a living presence, it is a work of the Holy Spirit that comforts, instructs, gives light, strength, relief, and a zest for life. To read the Bible, to read a piece, one or two passages of the Bible, is like a short telegram from God that immediately goes to the heart. The Word of God is a bit — and I am not exaggerating here — it is a little, real foretaste of heaven."

—Pope Francis