

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

~ A Prayer To The Shepherd ~

The King of love  
My shepherd is,  
Whose goodness  
fails me never;  
I nothing lack  
when I am his  
And he is mine  
forever.

Where streams  
of living water flow,  
To rest my soul  
He leads me,  
Where fresh and fertile pastures grow,  
With heavenly food  
He feeds me.

And so through all my length of days,  
Your goodness  
fails me never;  
Good shepherd,  
May I sing your praise  
Within your house  
forever.  
Amen.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

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

# Our Lady Chapel



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

**FAITH EDUCATION — SCHEDULE:**

**Meeting dates for February and March are the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.** Faith Education is an important part of every person's formation. Please make sure that you have not forgotten this important responsibility for your children. 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.

**THE CHAPEL INDOOR PICNIC IS RETURNING:**

**Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>** is the date for the return of 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. **Please sign up on the Picnic RSVP sheet in the vestibule of the chapel. If you would like to bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share, there is a space to indicate that on the sheet. We hope you can join us!**

**MEN'S RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, from 6:00—8:30 PM** will be our annual Spring Men's Retreat. All men of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Men's Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John**. There is no cost, but we are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **Sign up on the retreat sheet located on the easel in the narthex of Our Lady Chapel or contact Patty in the Chapel Office (440) 473-3560 or [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org)**

**WOMEN'S EVENING OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:**

**Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM** will be our annual Women's Spring Retreat. All women of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Women's Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John**. There is no cost, but we are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **We will post a sign up sheet on the Easel in the coming weeks. Or you may contact Patty in the Chapel Office at (440) 473-3560 or [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org)**

**A FORMULA FOR LIVING:**

This is how God conquers the world's evil: by humbling himself, taking charge of it. It is also the way that we can lift up others: not by judging, not by suggesting what to do, but by drawing near, empathizing, sharing God's love.

—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 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 Josephine Fernando, who is seriously ill.
- For Father Ray Sutter, pastor emeritus of St. Matthias Parish, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Nick Chiacchiarri, father of 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 Father Larry Jerge, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice
- For Thomas Noble who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Denise George, who is in rehab following a stroke.
- For a woman who has been diagnosed with thyroid cancer.
- For Rick Shelby, who is recovering from open heart surgery
- For Brother Dan Kane, C.S.C., former long-time instructor at Gilmour, who is under hospice care.
- For Brother James Reilly, C.S.C., who is under hospice care.
- For Mary Vereb, who is preparing for surgery.
- For Roger Fafrak, father of former music director, Matt Fafrak, who is undergoing medical treatment.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Brother Edward Libbers, C.S.C.
- For Victor Sopko
- For Brian Verdi, brother of Gilmour Parent, Kathleen Impullitti, brother-in-law of Nick Impullitti ['01], uncle of Joey ['34], Jackson ['36], and Quinn ['39] Impullitti.
- For Michon Shenk Haymer ['96]
- For Betty Bickett Botti, mother of Bradley ['74] and Timothy ['80] Bickett
- For Father William Jerse, retired pastor of St. Jerome Parish in Euclid
- For Teresa Jankovich
- For Sister RoseMarie Kramer, H.M.
- For James Sweeney, grandfather of Danny Rogozinski ['35].
- For Richard Stenger.
- For Gloria Grose
- For Lewis Lanza ['57], brother of Arnold ['53], and Joseph ['58] Lanza.
- For Kevin Killeen ['57], brother of Edward ['54], Eugene ['55], and Dennis ['60] Killeen

**THE WORD OF GOD:**

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — MARCH 15<sup>th</sup>:**

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



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

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

**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:**

A collection box is located just inside the center door when you enter the chapel. Please place your offering in the collection box. 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 [2/8/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 305.00**  
**Total Offerings: Sunday [2/9/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 435.00**

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For the Victims of the plane crashes in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, and for their families.
- For the victims of the wild fires in California
- 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 — WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



**Our topic: The Journey of Lent**

Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. **We usually 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, February 16: <b>6<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, February 17:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Tuesday, February 18:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Wednesday, February 19:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Thursday, February 20:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Friday, February 21:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Saturday, February 22: <b>7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b> In Person only
Sunday, February 23: <b>7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:**

A Young Adult group has formed at Our Lady Chapel. They will be holding their **next meeting at 11:45 AM on Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.** **They 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 members 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.



**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].



**A REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:**

As we enter the worship-space of our church, we are remind that each of us has entered the Church through baptism. We are asked to dip our fingers in the holy water and sign our bodies with the tracing of the cross. It is a reminder that God has claimed us as holy and set us aside for living the “unusual” life. We are, at each moment of our days, making our way toward celebrating our beliefs together. We live the Eucharist in the particular manner with which each of us lives this “unusual” life. The dispersed re-gathers, the particular re-joins, the individual re-forms into the one Body of the living Christ. Each of us has a different walking-style — one takes little quick steps, one strides, and another shuffles. How we walk toward the Eucharist and how we walk living the Eucharist can be different, but the particular way we live the Eucharist makes our lives “unusual”. Living His life in our unique manner is how we best prepare to rejoin His Body — the Church. At least that is what is supposed to happen.

The Prophet Jeremiah [17:5-8] speaks to the heart of false worship. Many people have let go of the temple worship of their tradition; they have forsaken the God of their history. Jeremiah compares and contrasts those who are faithful, and those who are not. In a sense, there are two kinds of persons as there are two kinds of trees — how they are planted will make all the difference. The challenge is about where are our roots? What strengthens us? What is the source of our life's activities?

Those who rely on the shallowness of the immediate “now” will live in the barrenness of the changeless. Those whose lives are propped up by their hope totally in human support have to make sure that everything remains predictable and stable. What they receive is the experience of the changeless desert. The only spice in their lives is the salt of preserving and endless thirst.

Those who reverence the “now” as it leads to the “then” are like trees rooted near a nourishing stream. They trust the beyond and are available to distress, and thirst during the times of the unknown. Their strength derives from something other than themselves or their kind.

This picture of contrast challenges God’s people to return to trusting God rather than themselves for strength and security. They have pulled up their roots from the fertile soil of God’s goodness which apparently has not been good enough. They have forgotten who they are, and are trying a new way of being their own persons. This leads to God’s anger and their ultimate punishment by exile.

In Luke's Gospel [6:17-26], Jesus gives his early disciples the Good News of the Beatitudes — it is a message of hope. Luke has four Beatitudes and four “woe-to-yous” — or maledictions. These are four strong statements about how things or conditions now will be reversed by those who will follow Jesus. Matthew has eight Beatitudes which predict the good life later in heaven for those who live the blessed life here on earth. Luke presents Jesus as telling His disciples that they, personally, are responsible for bringing about material justice and peace. He tells them that by doing this they will provoke resistance, and they should expect persecution and rejection.

Jesus is fulfilling His role as prophet. He is announcing how He intends to live, and predicting how He expects to be heard and received. He is inviting His listeners to follow Him as prophets of “root-changing”.

Luke’s presentation of Jesus here — and often in his Gospel account — emphasizes the poverty of riches and esteem. There are the poor and hungry as well as the rich and full. There are those who weep and those rejected and hated as well as those who enjoy being thought well of. From the moment of His unrolling the scripture in the synagogue to his unrolling of His life on the cross, Jesus is inviting His followers to reverse their own value-system and assist the value-rerooting of others. Jesus called Peter out of his boat — away from the identity by which he was known and knew himself. The question will always be about where are your roots — what or who tells you who you are — and what are you going to do with it all.

**GOING BACK TO BASICS:**

Though the old Weston Priory song containing the haunting refrain — “Come back to me with all your heart; don't let fear keep us apart” — was titled *Hosea*, it could just as accurately have been called Micah, Isaiah or Jeremiah. The goal and message of every prophet in the Hebrew Scriptures is to bring people back to God. Forming and building a relationship with God is at the heart of all faith.

Yet, no matter how deep our faith, we’re always tempted to let our God-relationship slide into the background of our lives — replacing it with a slavish adherence to rules and regulations. Many of us figure a relationship with a specific structure or institution is more secure — safer than a relationship with a God who is completely “other” from ourselves, and the institutions and structures we create.

That’s the situation Jeremiah faces [Jeremiah 17:5-8]. Scholars tell us that this pre-Babylonian Exile prophet has given up on the institution and structures of Judaism. For centuries, Judaism had been leading the faithful in directions that God didn’t want them to go. Once the Babylonians lay siege to Jerusalem in the early years of the sixth century before Christ, Jeremiah is convinced that God wanted the Israelites to throw down their arms, surrender to their enemies, and be marched off into an exile which will effectively destroy the structures and institution that had led them away from God.

Jeremiah dreams that, in exile and with the externals of Judaism wiped out, the Chosen People will be forced to return to the most essential part of their faith — their relationship with God. The prophet helps prepare them for their exile with the contrast he creates in this passage: “Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, whose heart turns away from the Lord. Blessed is the one who trusts in God, whose hope is in the Lord.”

Luke imitates Jeremiah’s contrast style [Luke 6:17-26]. Like Jeremiah, Luke is giving his people a choice — will they choose the joy and blessings which come from imitating Jesus’ poverty, hunger, sadness and persecution, or will they pick the curses that come from their imitating the wealth, satisfaction, laughter and social status of His enemies?

Only those who have formed a deep relationship with Jesus will dare copy the lifestyle choices which brought Him a new life.

In a parallel way, Paul, writing almost 30 years before Luke, offers the Corinthian community the same choices [1 Corinthians 15:12-20]. But he goes about it in a different way. Some in his church have come to the conclusion that they are not going to rise from the dead. Though they believe Jesus rose, they don’t see how that applies to themselves. Paul’s only recourse is to return his readers to their primary relationship with the risen Jesus. According to his Christian belief, those who believe in Jesus become one with Jesus. To form a relationship with Jesus implies we identify with Jesus — we actually become “other Christs.”

If Jesus dies, we die; if Jesus comes to life, we come to life. To believe Jesus rose from the dead — but we won't — means we’re the “most pitiable people of all. Our faith really is “in vain.”

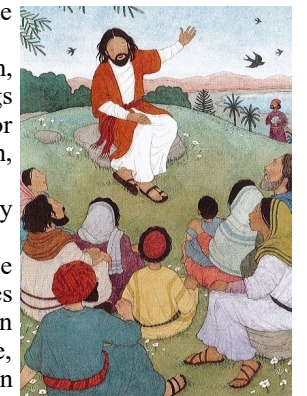
The Second Vatican Council in the 1960’s demonstrated that structures and institutions can and must change. It also reminded us that our relationships with God and Jesus are at the heart of our faith — the force and reason behind any structural and institutional change.

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

**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.



**WHO ARE THE BLESSED?**

The first statement of blessing summarizes Jesus' Beatitudes: "Blessed are you who are poor." In contrast, Jesus warns: "Woe to you who have your consolation" [Luke 6:17-26]. What is this word "Woe"? In the Greek, the word means something like: "Look, it's awful!" Jesus' woes describe people who are content with the "status quo", who base their self-worth on what they have and how their wealth could purchase all they think they need, along with celebrity and companionship to boot.

But back to the keynote statement: "Blessed are you who are poor." What is this word "blessed"? In Greek, it is usually translated as "blessed" or "happy". A good hint about its meaning comes from the first time it appears in Luke's Gospel when Elizabeth says to Mary: "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled" [Luke 1:45]. To be blessed means to have such hope in God's future that you gladly bet your life on it.

This summarizes each of Jesus' blessings and helps us to interpret them. Jesus is not idolizing destitution, starvation, desolation or marginalization. He's talking about a mindset that seems to come most easily to people who hope, not from a position of strength, but from an awareness that God's future is better than anything we could ask or imagine. These are the people who, in the words of Pope Francis, are "waiting for something that has already been given to us" — people who welcome the free gifts of God every day, knowing that every gift is for the good of all [See 1 Corinthians 12].

The blessed poor know the truth that is best discovered from the underside of society — nobody deserves what they have. No one earned the right to be born, much less the privileges that came afterward. Those who can see from the underside know this and see clearly the fragility of the position of those who consider themselves powerful. They know that we will all die and that life is a free gift.

The blessed people who are hungry or weeping are those who, like Mary and all people of the Resurrection, know that evil and suffering are not God's plan and that nothing can overcome the love of God. They know that the evil are "like chaff that blows away in the wind"; in spite of their self-importance, they are tragic, empty shells of what could have been a flourishing human life.

Whereas Matthew situates his version of this address on a mountain crowded with people from all over, Luke tells us that the great crowd Jesus addressed consisted of only "disciples." That sets a different tone, making this not a general teaching but a direct address to those who would be his followers.

If we convert Jesus' statements into a survey, it offers some thought-provoking questions for us as individuals and as communities about whether we are ready to live this way. The survey might look something like, with an answerable scale of 1-5:

- I/we rely on God and community over money, position or our own plans.
- I/we feel the suffering around us, to the point that our desire for solutions creates a hunger that plagues us.
- I/we desire such solidarity with victims of war, injustice and impoverishment that we weep with them, impelled to find solutions to the imbalances of our world.
- I/we care little or nothing about the criticism, mockery or demotions we may receive for standing with the most vulnerable.

What do we learn about ourselves — and our faith communities — through our answers?

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom which appear on the internet.



It is safe to assume that some of Jesus' disciples may have been a little more well-off than others. They would not have considered themselves "rich" of course, so they were okay. It is also true to say that the rich of our days always want more; so they do not consider themselves "rich", so they are okay. There are the hungry and those who weep because of their own poverty and hunger and that of others. Jesus says that they belong to the kingdom. Those who will speak about the poor and hungry will belong too, but they will be spoken against and will be given a sense that they do not belong. Those who will follow Jesus in His prophetic denunciations will receive what He received. They will belong to the Kingdom.

The rich, the unconcerned, the full and the esteemed, belong to the "Now Generation", and they are already receiving all that they desire. The "Then Generation" will live the unusual way of grounding their roots in the "now" only as a way to bring about a better kingdom on earth. The Rich sing: "It's now or never", so they take the "now road". The poor, hungry and aware sing: "Here comes the sun" and live invested and rooted in the prophetic ways of Jesus.

Looking around our world now, some 2000-plus years after Jesus' day of teaching, humanity continues to repeat past mistakes. We seem to believe we can solve all problems if we just \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the blank]. When faced with the multitude of tragedies and trauma suffered by so many people, anyone working and hoping for God's peace to fill the world might be ready to accept defeat. If we are frustrated and exhausted, with nothing left to give, it is time to sit down and rest, but not surrender or give up, and 2025 is the perfect year to renew and deepen our relationship with God.

The Holy Spirit inspired Pope Francis to declare 2025 a Jubilee Pilgrimage Year of Hope. Given the state of the world, the timing could not be better. To be on pilgrimage is to put down our daily routines and embrace the opportunity to focus on our relationship with God. On pilgrimage, we have more time to notice our inner feelings, naming any impediments keeping us from growing closer to God. If we are discouraged or uncertain about our next steps, Jesus offers us guidance. We can always ask for the grace — to hear God's voice, live into our calling, or for whatever we feel we need most to live into a faith that does justice.

It might also help to reflect on Words of Wisdom that situate our work within the long view of Salvation History.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

*[Prophets of a Future Not Our Own]*

So, if you feel weighted down by the world's brokenness, consider stopping and being a Pilgrim of Hope. Once refreshed and energized, re-engage in the work God has called you to do at this time in history and at this stage of your life.

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

**THE CRISIS OF FAITH:**

We all know of people who, whenever they can, debunk religion — particularly Christianity. They tell us that the bible stories are fables, laugh at the story of the Wise Men, the star over Bethlehem, and ridicule belief about a virgin having a baby. These sophisticated despisers of religion take themselves very seriously and think it is their duty to liberate the ignorant masses from the influence of religion and faith.

Let's be honest. If Jesus were to live among us today, He would be considered to be more than strange. I mean, after all, here He is declaring how happy the poor are, how happy the hungry are, and how happy are those who are weeping. He goes on to say that we are happy when we are spurned and rejected, even when we are abused. Then Jesus tells us that those who are rich are going to go hungry, those who are laughing now are going to really hurt, and those who are popular are going to be knocked off their pedestals. Sounds crazy, doesn't it?

Spiritual things need to be seen and judged spiritually. If you deny that you have a soul, or a spirit, and live as if it didn't matter whether or not you have a soul, then you will not have eyes to see things as Jesus sees them. You will be blind, blinded by your own ego, blinded by your own pride, blinded by wanting to be a part of the crowd to which you belong.

Take a look at those who are rich, those who seem to have everything. Are they happy? Do they live happy lives? Think of the stories you've heard about what happens to families when their very rich father or grandfather dies. Isn't there a lot of infighting among the family members? A lot of jealousy, envy, and even hatred? Some of these family members never speak to each other again for the rest of their lives. Whoever said having lots of money makes you happy? Happiness comes from what you do with your money. It does not come with how you earn it or keep it.

Then there's hunger. For what do you hunger? Fame? Popularity? Attention? Sex? Booze? Well, what do you hunger for? Maybe you're eating spiritual junk-food, and need to switch to more nutritious food — food that satisfies your heart and soul rather than your sensual nature. Do you want to fill your belly, or do you want to satisfy your soul?

Weeping. There are those among us who never cry. It's not because they won't — it's because they've managed to squash down their feelings to the point they can't really feel anything at all. They have no passion, except perhaps boiling anger. They're bitter. They can only whine, not weep — “Why me?” they whine. “Poor me,” they complain. But weep? They've forgotten how. They have no feeling for anyone else but themselves.

Being spurned and rejected is a terrible thing. Of all of the different hurts and pains that can beset us, I think being rejected is one of the most painful — perhaps the most painful. As a young boy, rejection — not being chosen, not being wanted — was what caused me the greatest of suffering. No doubt, many of you have experienced similar feelings. There's a terrible loneliness that settles into a soul that has known a lot of rejection. It leads to feelings of inferiority, feelings of never amounting to much, of never making a difference in other people's lives.

So what is Jesus telling us here?

First of all, He is giving us a value system that is radically set over and against this world's values — the values of those who are unconcerned about God or what God expects of us.

Secondly, Jesus is establishing a connection between Himself and His followers. To understand this connection, we first must realize that God did not create us to live in poverty. Nor did He create us to be unhappy and miserable, or to live in rejection. Rather God, in Christ Jesus, comes to us as we live in those conditions — conditions that the world has created, not God. And where is Christ Jesus to be found? Among those who have received life's cruelest blows. He joins Himself to those whom life has

harshly treated, and He is preparing His disciples to experience this world's rejections. Later on, Jesus said: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves, for my yoke is easy, my burden light” [see Luke 10]. He yokes Himself to us in carrying our burdens and pulling our loads.

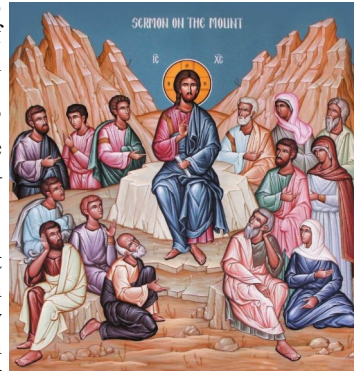
Those who appear to be happy in this world end up by having only what this world has to offer them, nothing more. Those who are rich, those who are satisfied, those who have their bellies filled, and those who have popularity among the worldly, have only what this world offers them and permits them to have, nothing more. They think they have no need for God and for what God can offer them. For them, Christ is nuts, crazy, “out of it”, and not to be taken seriously.

What was true back at the time of Jesus remains true today. If you are a Catholic who takes his or her faith seriously, if you are a person of faith and you openly live by your faith, you will be called a “religious fanatic.” You will be told, “Catholics are hung up on sex.” You will be told that you have a “Catholic guilt complex,” that the pope does your thinking for you, and all that priests want is your money. You will be told all sorts of crazy things because the people making these sorts of statements think you are crazy.

There's no doubt about it, Jesus has a system of values that is contrary to this world's values. The only question that remains is: “Are you crazy enough to accept them and live by them?” Are you crazy enough to admire Mother Teresa of Calcutta's life, beliefs, and faith? Are you crazy enough to believe that God offers you a happiness that this world can never give?

The Sermon on the Mount is not just pretty poetry. It does not offer us a merely sentimental religion. The Sermon on the Mount presents us with high standards, along with the promise that God will be with us no matter how tough life gets for us — “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,” Jesus said, “for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves, for my yoke is easy, my burden light.”

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

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

**Monday:** Genesis 4:1-25, Mark 8:11-13

**Tuesday:** Genesis 6:5-7:10, Mark 8:14-21

**Wednesday:** Genesis 8:6-22, Mark 8:22-26

**Thursday:** Genesis 9:1-13, Mark 8:27-33

**Friday:** Genesis 11:1-9, Mark 8:34-9:1

**Saturday:** 1 Peter 5:1-4, Matthew 16:13-19

**7<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** 1 Samuel 26:2-23, 1 Corinthians 15:45-49, Luke 6:27-38

**GOD IS OUR HOME:**

The image of God inviting us to his home is used throughout scripture. The Lord is my house. The Lord is my hiding place. The Lord is my awning. The Lord is my refuge. The Lord is my tent. The Lord is my temple. The Lord is my dwelling place. The Lord is my home. The Lord is the place where I want to dwell all the days of my life. God wants to be our room, our house. He wants to be anything that makes us feel at home. She is like a bird hugging us under her wings. She is like a woman holding us in her womb. She is Infinite Mother, Loving Host, Caring Father, the Good Provider who invites us to join him.

—Henri Nouwen