

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer To Love Others ~

**Lord,
Thank you for loving us
when we were very unlovable!**

**Lord,
I admit that type of love
doesn't come naturally to me.
The last thing I want to do
when someone offends me or upsets me
is to love them,
much less invite them
to join my family forever.**

**Lord, forgive me
for not loving others
the way you showed us to love.
God, would you help
me to love you in them,
to grow in the knowledge of you in them?
Would you help me to relate to others
in a way that shows them that we belong to you?
Lord, would you make me grow
in love for you and others
so that onlookers would know
that you exist and that you love them too?
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 23rd, 2nd and 9th. 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:**

This is the last weekend to sign up for our Chapel Indoor Picnic — that's right, our indoor picnic is returning. Our annual 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 desert 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 1st, 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**

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

Tuesday, May 6th 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**

**SELF REFLECTION:**

As I grow older, I discover more and more that the greatest gift I have to offer is my own joy of living, my own inner peace, my own silence and solitude, my own sense of well-being. When I ask myself: "Who helps me the most?" I must answer: "The one who is willing to share his or her life with me."

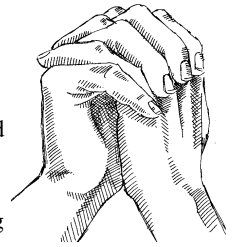
—Henri Nouwen

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 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.
- For Finley Stay, father of Allen Stay ['87], who is undergoing treatment for Covid Pneumonia.
- For Eileen Issing, mother of Father Dan Issing, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Danielle Adam, who is recovering from surgery.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Richard Stenger.
- 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
- For Michelle White, sister of Peter Hammer ['78], aunt of Jessica Debick ['09], cousin of Timothy ['75], George ['76], Daniel ['79], Andrew ['86] Hammer.
- For Christina Livers.

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.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

If we knew just how powerfully our thoughts, words, and actions affected the hearts of those around us, we'd reach out and join hands again and again.

—Tara Brach

LancerSGO — Good News!

There is still time to get up to a \$1500 tax credit for donations to the *Gilmour Academy LancerSGO*, part of the State of Ohio Scholarship Granting Organization program. Ohio taxpayers who donate to the LancerSGO program by April 15 (or when you file your taxes) may be eligible for a 100% tax credit on their State of Ohio income tax return for 2024. LancerSGO donations are awarded as tuition assistance to qualified Gilmour students.



Here’s how it works: The maximum credit amount is \$750 per individual; married couples that file a joint return can each claim this credit if both spouses make eligible donations [\$1,500 total]. Please note this is a non-refundable credit, which means that the amount of the credit cannot exceed the amount owed in state taxes. Just follow these three steps:

- STEP 1- Estimate your 2024 Ohio state tax liability.
- STEP 2- Make your donation to gilmour.org/sgo [designate GILMOUR ACADEMY].
- STEP 3- Claim your scholarship tax credit when you file your 2024 State of Ohio taxes.

Please visit gilmour.org/sgo to make an online contribution.

The maximum credit amount is \$750 per individual; married couples who file a joint return can each claim this credit if both spouses make eligible donations (\$1,500 total).

For more information contact Ryan Ryzner at ryznerr@gilmour.org or (440) 473-8001 x4556.

[PLEASE NOTE: This does not constitute income tax advice. Always consult with a tax professional for information on the impact of any charitable donation].

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 [2/15/25] —————\$ 305.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [2/16/25] —————\$ 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 19th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, March 19th 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 23: 7 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, February 24:	NO MASS
Tuesday, February 25:	1:15 PM
Wednesday, February 26:	NO MASS
Thursday, February 27:	NO MASS
Friday, February 28:	NO MASS
Saturday, March 1: 8 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, March 2: 8 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM 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 23rd. 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:

The Season of Lent is quickly approaching; and with that in mind, our Liturgy for this 7th Week in Ordinary Time turns to explore two very important experiences in our lives — mercy and forgiveness. God is always laboring upon creation — our creation — to bring us more and more to life. Let us ask God to help us to be more available to all the little and not-so-little ways that God offers us new experiences of just what the grace-life is all about. All of life is made up of thousands of invitations to us. From the rising of the sun to its setting, seconds are more than time, minutes are miracles asking us to be awake and not be blinded by what appears to be. We need to approach each moment with open eyes, and there we are going to find ourselves speechless as we encounter God’s beauty and compassion.

The Old Testament reading for the 7th Week in Ordinary Time is the story of David’s not killing King Saul [1 Samuel 26:2-25]. The incident is serious, but it has a tinge of humor in it as well. It is almost out of Harry Potter. In order to get the full effect of what the Scripture reading is about, try to “image” the scene — the surroundings, people, smells, and terrain. Today as we read from 1 Samuel, King Saul is searching for David who had fled to the desert of Ziph. The Judean desert was, and is, a gritty, barren, hiding place and rendezvous area for many who are fleeing from authorities or ascetics who wish to avoid the mental clutter of everyday life.

King Saul, madly jealous of David, was in active pursuit of him. Saul camped for the night, his guards and army around his tent. The king was, in fact, so close to David that David and his nephew, Abishai, were able to stealthily enter Saul’s tent where he and his guards were in a deep miraculous sleep. They could have killed Saul with his own spear, but David would not allow his nephew to kill Saul — Saul was the “anointed of God.” King Saul, blessed by God, anointed, was “delivered into David’s grasp.” David could have slain the King with his own spear.

This was not an instance of God abandoning His anointed one, but possibly a test of David’s respect and reverence for God’s will. We wonder why David and Abishai, with murderous intent, would enter a hostile encampment of 3000 men, find Saul sleeping, yet pass the opportunity to “nail him to the ground” with his own spear.” They instead took Saul’s spear and water jug. They had, no doubt, diminished Saul and caused him to fear and to ponder his own weakness and exposure to the enemy. David had chosen, as he would later write in Psalm 103, to show mercy to his enemy because “God is kind, merciful, and gracious...slow to anger and abounding in kindness.”

Why is Saul chasing David to kill him? David has slain Goliath, and is celebrated for his great military deeds. Saul sees the people rejoicing over David’s feats — while Saul has had his successes in battle, David has killed ten times that number. Saul is jealous and fearful that David will become king. In an earlier part of this story, Saul had thrown his spear at David while David was playing the harp; he missed, but David had to flee. Saul has been searching all around for David, but David finds Saul and shows Saul a new form of mercy. What seems to be mercy is rather a reverence for God Who anointed Saul as king of God’s people, Israel.

It is important to note that we all have guidance from God; we do not always internalize and act on it. David, it seems, acted on God’s guidance at a critical time. David, often did struggle in his life to follow God’s word; he was, to say the least, not always successful. Later in his life, he did provide psalms, a beautiful way for us to understand the essence of God, and literally to sing His praise.

The compassion or mercy or forgiveness is more than meets the ear here. The judicial system in our country — as within ourselves as well — may find various reasons to extend freedom to someone. That is not what is going on here. David is more than making a judicial decision. God has chosen Saul as



birth to new depths of being in us.

Because Jesus tells us to be merciful as our Father is merciful, we can believe that loving our enemies is possible. God’s kindness and mercy are graces to which we can be open because God lives in us and with us. Faith assures us that we are capable of cooperating with grace. Today, we are invited to be among those who really hear what Jesus is saying.

—taken from the writings of Sister Mary McGlone, C.S.J., which appear on the internet.

WHY LOVE YOUR ENEMY?

When someone hates you, you have two choices — you can hate them back or you can refuse to hate. When someone hurts you, you can respond in two ways — you can hurt them back or you can refuse to hurt. In Luke’s gospel, Jesus makes it clear that if we wish to be his disciples, we must refuse to hate, refuse to hurt. This is why he teaches that we are to love our enemies, and why he enshrines that teaching in the golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” Since we would not want others to hate us or hurt us, we should not adopt hateful or hurtful attitudes towards them.

Now this teaching to love our enemies, to follow the golden rule is the most difficult of all Jesus’ teachings. We all struggle against it. We have many objections. It does not make sense. It is impossible to follow. The people who hurt and hate us do not deserve our love and forgiveness. We cannot help but ask: “Why does Jesus want us to do something that is so difficult? Why is he so insistent that we love our enemies?” Isn’t this foolish and impractical?

Look at the newspapers. Watch the media. Look at the situation in the Middle East, in Russia and Ukraine — “You hurt us, we’ll hurt you.” Look at the retribution that characterizes the gang violence in our cities. Recognize the number of families in our society who are addressing their disputes with handguns — “We’re just getting even,” they say. But, of course, it never amounts to getting even. Violence grows into an escalating cycle of destruction and hatred.

How is “getting even” affecting your relationships? Are you satisfied with the way hurting and hating back is shaping your life? Do you find that holding on to resentments with your family or friends is working for you? Are you satisfied with waiting for others to suffer as you have suffered? In short, are you satisfied with the kind of world that emerges when we respond with hate and hurt, when we do to others as they have done to us? Most of us would admit that such a world is a disaster.

So maybe Jesus is right — telling us not to hate, not to hurt, but to respond with forgiveness and love. Now Jesus’ approach is still difficult, but it is the only way to break the cycle of violence and hatred that is destroying our world and ruining our lives.

Now let’s be clear. When we talk about loving our enemy, when we talk about forgiving those who hurt us, we are not denying our right to defend ourselves. We are not advising that we accept abuse and manipulation. We are saying that when we respond to our enemy, we choose to do so in a way that breaks the cycle of violence rather than feeding it. We choose not to hate because we know that hating will only lessen our life and endanger our world.

Jesus’ teaching is not easy. We would all like another option. But there are only two options on the table. Therefore, if you are satisfied with the kind of world that results from returning hate with hate, getting even, treating others as they have treated you, then reject Jesus’ teaching as misguided. But if that kind of world of increasing violence and hatred sickens you, then maybe it is time to follow what the Lord commands. Maybe it is time to love our enemy, to forgive the one who hurts us, to do to others as we would have them do to us.

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



LOVE YOUR ENEMY — BECAUSE YOU ARE ONE:

Weren't last weekend's readings enough — "Blessed are the poor?" Now, it's: "love your enemies." That's pretty hard to take. So rather than jump straight into Luke's Gospel, let's start with our gentle Psalm refrain from the Liturgy for this 7th Week in Ordinary Time: "The Lord is kind and merciful."

First of all, the word "kind." While we may have human images of kindness, in Scripture the word refers primarily to God. We find the prototype description of God's compassion or kindness in Exodus 22:26, which reveals that God always hears the cry of the poor. We can't get away from that simple fact — God pays special attention to the poor.

Like kindness, the word "merciful" also refers first to God. Once again, the Book of Exodus offers instruction, describing multiple attributes of divine mercy. In Exodus 34, we read that the Lord is gracious and kind, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in love and fidelity, loving for a thousand generations and forgiving.

In the New Testament, the word for mercy — *eleos* — indicates an insatiable desire to relieve the suffering of another. Unlike pity, which looks on another with care, mercy allows the other to get under your skin such that you feel impelled to do something about what is plaguing them. It's a profound expression of love and solidarity, the choice to be in union with another.

In his book *Jesus Today*, Albert Nolan suggests that love of another recognizes that we are already one with each other, that all of creation is bound together and separateness is nothing more than a misperception of reality. As in God's kindness and mercy, love of another implies an ever-growing embrace of our oneness — not as a goal, but as a fact that orients our thinking and therefore, our actions.

When I recognize my oneness with others, Jesus' call to love the enemy takes a "holy" meaning. If I love my enemy as myself — even one who does me and/or others great harm — I will treat that person more like a wound than a threatening outsider. When we are wounded, we provide the maximal conditions for healing. So when someone seems to stand against me, the thing to do is pray for healing and avoid making the wound worse by irritating it.

In Luke's Gospel [6:27-38], Jesus' instructions get a particular focus: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In a globalizing world, that means that we approach others as mysteries to be understood. My tendency to give another what I would want misses the mark because it starts with me. Instead, in this age of synodality, we need to give one another something much deeper — the opportunity to be heard and understood as who they really are, not who we think they are. To treat them as they desire — "do not judge" — it's easy to love those we understand, it's far more humanizing to learn to understand those who think differently from ourselves.

Jesus promises that when we do these things, our "reward will be great." That isn't a promise of a high place in heaven — as if there were degrees of being in the fullness of God's presence. That's a promise that both we and society will change for the happier as we do these things.

We will grow beyond our drive for individual self-preservation, realizing that we thrive only when all thrive. Picking and choosing who we will love and who we will not is self-destructive behavior. Avoiding those we don't understand — or don't want to understand — is like living on junk food: We miss the nourishment of the diversity of who we really are together. We're stunting the growth we can experience when we allow ourselves to be drawn forth in new ways by different kinds of people.

Like the Beatitudes, which sound like an upside-down path to happiness, Jesus' ongoing instructions offer us an enigmatic invitation to human flourishing. As with the risk involved in any choice to love, moving beyond the backyard of our social, national, linguistic, racial and class circles give



King, and so it is God that is revered through David's allowing Saul to go free and continue his being king.

Luke's gospel [6:27-38], teaches how a disciples needs to live and conduct themselves. Jesus gets quite particular and personal. The whole purpose of this instruction is so that they, as disciples, do not become as blind as the people they will be leading.. I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: "love one another as I have loved you."

"Hear what I say" Jesus says to the disciples. Every Christian has heard. Every Christian knows that Jesus concisely tells us to love one another and to react to hate or injustice with love. Jesus knows that this is difficult. He sets an extremely high standard to be a disciple — a Christian. We are instructed not merely to do or love what is natural for us, but rather, to fight against our often reflexive human tendencies — to fight back even vengefully; to be selfish and proud; to hate those who hate us; to hate even those who do not hate us. Jesus reminds us that "even sinners love those who love them."

This gospel is not a puzzle. It is an instruction on Christian living. If we follow it, Jesus tells us, "Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he Himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful."

God gives without expectation of being given thanks in return. God turns the other cheek when slapped. God loves those who are enemies. God blesses those who reject Love. We are invited not to judge, because God does not judge. We are not to condemn, because God does not condemn.

The listening disciples are told at the end of this long instruction that they are building their foundation on rock, and that only sound trees produce good fruit. One can appreciate a good tree by its good fruit, but the fruit is produced from the interior of the tree. What we can hear is all about external actions — such as lending, forgiving, blessings and enduring humiliations. What deeper meaning we are moved to listen to and hear, is the more interior sense. God by being Infinite Love is all of these, and our personal actions coming from our converted hearts, will in turn reveal the interior nature of God as Love. The early disciples were to present the true image of the One and True God by accepting God as love, accepting God's compassionate love for them, and then fruit-it-out in the orchard of life.

These instructions are a continuation of Luke's Beatitudes, and they are invitations to try to live remembering that same divine compassion when we fail. God lends to us, blesses us, forgives us and always desires us to come to life and give that life as our way of revealing the goodness of God. What better way is there to live?

In reflecting on all of this, one might be inclined to make a little score card and give oneself a grade. Don't do that! That would mean you did not listen and hear and take to heart Jesus' great desires for us, and you would be too concerned about your score. God loves us so much as to send Jesus as Lord and not as ruler.

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



WHAT DOES IT MEAN “NOT TO JUDGE”?

From time to time, I hear parents telling me about their attempts to guide their teenage sons and daughters. They are concerned about what their kids are doing after school with their friends. They are concerned, and rightly so, about what their kids are doing or not doing. But many times, these parents are scolded by their kids and told: “Stop judging me!” Too many times these retorts stop parents dead in their tracks, especially when they are reminded that Jesus told us not to judge others.

What is really curious is to note how judgmental many people are — not just kids, especially when they tell others to stop judging! There’s something terribly ironic in that. The ones who complain about judging others are themselves judging!

In Luke’s Gospel, we hear Jesus telling us to: “Stop judging” [Luke 6:27-38]. But at the same time, we must all remember that Jesus did, in fact, judge the behavior of others. Take what He had to say to the Pharisees, for just one example. Furthermore, Jesus teaches us to seek what is good and reject what is bad, discern what is right behavior and what is wrong behavior. Where is it written that we are not supposed to judge what is good behavior and what is bad?

The frequent application of the complaint “stop judging” is often directed at committed Christians. We are called fundamentalists, fanatics, or told that we are the thought police of the religious Right. It appears to some folks around us that our rejection of abortion, and our rejection of aspects of the Culture of Death, for just a couple of examples, goes against Jesus’ clear statement about not judging others. But I deny that. Jesus had hard things to say about people who engage in destructive activities.

We need to see that judging the activity of someone is not necessarily judging the person. Good people — well intentioned people — can after all, sometimes do bad things. Are we to simply allow their bad behavior to go without comment?

When Jesus said: “Stop judging”, He was telling us that only God sees the real inner person — we don’t. The judgment about who is going to hell and who is not is God’s judgment — not ours. The judgment about who is a bad person is God’s judgment — not ours. All too often, we pre-judge others. Our prejudices bring us to condemn others for who they are rather than what they do. Racial and ethnic discrimination along with discrimination against others because of their religion bring us to judge others unjustly.

We need to distinguish and realize that although Jesus told us not to judge, the commandments themselves involve a judgment of others — and of our selves — as to certain behaviors. They never involve a judgment about who another person really is.

How do we live with this paradox? C.S. Lewis said that in teaching morality we should pay attention to our own personal failings. He said it is best to avoid comment on areas where we are not particularly tempted, but others are. For most of us, that still leaves a broad field. From my own experience, I know a lot about resentments, impatience, lust, intemperance, laziness, envy and gossip. With some reflection, I could give an “expert opinion” about those sins based on my own experience. However, I am not so familiar with greed, or stealing, or political corruption, or some other sins. Am I qualified to judge only when my thoughts are based only on my own experiences? Am I disqualified to comment on things outside of my own experiences? Of course not.

Because of one’s station in life — being a parent, a teacher, or a priest, for instance — one may have a duty to warn people about dangers not personally experienced or succumbed to. I may only have secondhand knowledge about free-basing, or sniffing, or sexual addictions, but am still obliged to direct people away from things that are quite harmful and therefore evil. I can perhaps help a young person understand that while temptation presents an attractive face, yielding to it can lead to misery, isolation, and cruelty. After all, isn’t it true that many sins bring with them their own punishment?



We are currently in a culture war — one with very high stakes. We must recognize just who the enemy is. For me, the primary enemy is not the drug traffickers, the abortionists, or so-called liberal college professors. Our Ancient Enemy is simply using them. At a deeper level, they, just like us — we are all spiritual hospital patients desperately in need of cures. For me, the real enemy is anyone who advocates that we throw away our standards, who tells us to stop thinking and stop judging, and to let anyone do anything they want to. They are the ones who want us to pervert the standards of Jesus when they tell us to “stop judging!”

When we find a police officer giving a ticket to someone who ran a stop sign, or who was caught driving recklessly, are we to accuse him of judging others? Are we to tell him to stop judging? If no one is supposed to judge, then why don’t we dismiss all judges and close down our courtrooms? Why don’t we tell our teachers to stop giving grades on report cards? Why don’t we let others simply do whatever they feel like doing?

To suspend judgment on human behavior is a sure way to take us all into a living hell — the hell of chaos in which everyone does whatever they feel like. To a great extent that is exactly what is going on in the increasingly chaotic world in which we find ourselves today. Upholding standards for human behavior is necessary if we are to hold our society together.

When it comes, however, to judging who people are, we must do what Jesus wants us to do. With Him, He wants us to hate the sin, but love the sinner. And at the end of the world, on that final Day of Judgment, we must always remember that it is God who will be sitting on the throne — we will not.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Sirach 1:1-10, Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday: Sirach 2:1-11, Mark 9:30-37

Wednesday: Sirach 4:11-19, Mark 9:38-40

Thursday: Sirach 5:1-8, Mark 9:41-20

Friday: Sirach 6:5-17, Mark 10:1-12

Saturday: Sirach 17:1-15, Mark 10:13-16

8th Week in Ordinary Time: Sirach 27:4-7, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, Luke 6:39-45

A PRAYER:

O Lord, How hard it is to accept your way. You come to me as a small, powerless child born away from home. You live for me as a stranger in your own land. You die for me as a criminal outside the walls of the city, rejected by your own people, misunderstood by your friends, and feeling abandoned by your God.

As I prepare to enter into the mystery of your love for me, I am trying to feel loved, accepted, and at home in this world, and I am trying to overcome the feelings of alienation and separation that continue to assail me. But I wonder now if my deep sense of homelessness does not bring me closer to you than my occasional feelings of belonging. How do I truly celebrate your passion and death — in a cozy home or in an unfamiliar house, among welcoming friends or among unknown strangers, with feelings of well-being or with feelings of loneliness?

—Henri Nouwen