

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ The Prayer of a Doubter ~

Eternal Power, of earth and air!
Unseen, yet seen in all around,
Remote, but dwelling everywhere,
Though silent, heard in every sound;

If e'er thine ear in mercy bent,
When wretched mortals cried to Thee,
And if, indeed, Thy Son was sent,
To save lost sinners such as me:

Then hear me now, while kneeling here,
I lift to thee my heart and eye,
And all my soul ascends in prayer,
OH, GIVE ME--GIVE ME FAITH! I cry.

Without some glimmering in my heart,
I could not raise this fervent prayer;
But, oh! a stronger light impart,
And in Thy mercy fix it there.

While Faith is with me, I am blest;
It turns my darkest night to day;
But while I clasp it to my breast,
I often feel it slide away.

Then, cold and dark, my spirit sinks,
To see my light of life depart;
And every fiend of Hell, me thinks,
Enjoys the anguish of my heart.

What shall I do, if all my love,
My hopes, my toil, are cast away,

And if there be no God above,
To hear and bless me when I pray?

If this be vain delusion all,
If death be an eternal sleep,
And none can hear my secret call,
Or see the silent tears I weep!

Oh, help me, God! For thou alone
Canst my distracted soul relieve;
Forsake it not: it is thine own,
Though weak, yet longing to believe.

Oh, drive these cruel doubts away;
And make me know, that Thou art God!
A faith, that shines by night and day,
Will lighten every earthly load.

If I believe that Jesus died,
And waking, rose to reign above;
Then surely Sorrow, Sin, and Pride,
Must yield to Peace, and Hope, and Love.

And all the blessed words He said
Will strength and holy joy impart:
A shield of safety o'er my head,
A spring of comfort in my heart.

—Anne Bronte

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.

GOD BLESS POPE FRANCIS:

Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Italian immigrant parents. Growing up in a working-class neighborhood, he experienced a diverse, multicultural environment that shaped his inclusive worldview. He initially trained as a chemical technician before feeling called to the priesthood and joining the Society of Jesus [Jesuits] in 1958. He was ordained a priest in 1969, and later served as Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Argentina. In 1998, he became Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Throughout his career, he was known for his humility, simple lifestyle, and dedication to serving the poor and marginalized.

On March 13, 2013, Bergoglio was elected the 266th pope of the Roman Catholic Church, becoming the first pope from the Americas, the first Jesuit pope, and the first to take the name Francis — in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. His papacy has focused on themes of mercy, social justice, care for the environment, interfaith dialogue, and reform within the Church. Pope Francis is widely respected for his compassionate leadership, humility, and commitment to making the Church a more welcoming and inclusive community.

**FIRST COMMUNION:**

On **Saturday, April 26th**, our **2nd graders** will make their **First Communion in a private, intimate family ceremony**. Few of us will argue the fact that one of the times we are closest to God is at our First Communion. The faith and openness of a child to Jesus is inspiring. May we all receive the Eucharist with so deep a faith. Congratulations to our children who are celebrating this special bond with Jesus for the first time: **James Fowler, Danny Rogozinski, Marie-Eve Semaan and Sammy Sherman**. Congratulations to all of our children, and also to their parents who have nurtured them in the faith and the love of Jesus. May we always remember that as people of faith — the Church — we too play a very important role in bringing each other into deeper relationship with Jesus.

**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 szaniszllop@gilmour.org**

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

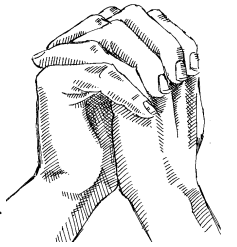
Tuesday, May 6th from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM will be our annual **Women's Spring Retreat**. All women of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Women's Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for 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 szaniszllop@gilmour.org**

**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 Nick Chiacchiari, father of 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 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 Danielle Adams, who is recovering from surgery, and undergoing further testing.
- For Toddy McMonagle, wife of Judge James McMonagle ['62], mother of James ['80] Coakley, and sister of Francis ['67] and Clare ['72] Coakley, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Tara Hyland Zittel ['07] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jeff Overman, brother of Upper school teacher, John Overman, uncle of Jack ['25], and former Gilmour student, Michael Overman., who is critically ill.
- For Hailey Grasso, who is preparing for serious surgery
- For Sister Rosemary Hammer, H.M., former religion teacher, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Brother Carl Sternberg, C.S.C., who is seriously ill and undergoing medical testing.
- For Ted Potts, father of AVI Concession specialist, Ryane Potts, who is recovering from a stroke
- For Brother Bob McFadden, C.S.C., who is undergoing medical treatment.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Deacon Bob Kovach, St. Anselm Parish
- For Randy Wilkinson, brother of Father Rick Wilkinson, C.S.C.
- For Eric Penick ['71], great uncle of Antoine ['05] and Asa ['30] Phillips
- For Lucy Russo, grandmother of John Santone, C.S.C.
- For Jack Coyne, father of Cathleen Lane ['73], Dennis ['75] and Thomas ['77] Coyne
- For Pope Francis

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the community of Florida State University.
- For the victims of the earthquakes in Myanmar and Bangkok
- 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.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RISEN JESJS:

One of the reasons Luke composed a double volume gospel revolves around his belief that whatever Jesus does in the gospel, the Christian community also does in Acts. Though he doesn’t directly employ Paul’s image of the Body of Christ, he certainly shares his theology. It’s up to us to continue Jesus’ work. No matter what he accomplished during his earthly ministry, if we refuse to carry his ministry forward, it remains unfinished. Only other Christs can pull that off. That’s why we should be well-versed in both understanding and copying Jesus’ personality. As the late Fr. Dan Berrigan insisted: “Our task is to become Christians, not experts on Christianity.”

Luke constantly reminds his community that it isn’t what we know, but what we do. And based on what Luke wrote in the Book of Acts of the Apostles, one of the main things we do is heal — even going beyond just healing physically [Acts 5:12-16]. That seems to be why Luke includes in his cures “those disturbed by unclean spirits.” In the evangelist’s day and age, unclean spirits were thought responsible for all evils — not just moral evils. For instance, those with mental problems were believed to have as many demons in them as someone afflicted with cancer.

Following that line of thought, John’s Jesus, on the night of his resurrection, gifts his disciples with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to forgive one another’s sins [John 20:19-31]. Nothing rids us of our demons more than forgiving and being forgiven. Both help us create the kind of world the risen Jesus envisions.

Yet, as the author of Revelation states: unless we keep the risen Jesus as the “first and last” of our lives, we’ll be trapped in our humdrum existence [Revelation 1:9-20]. Only God provides us the life for which we dream, as long as we remain participants and not just spectators.

One of the key elements in our participation can easily be overlooked — at least I overlooked it until recently. When John’s Jesus reminds Thomas: “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed,” we correctly include ourselves in that number. Yet at the same time, there’s usually a group we leave out — our sacred authors. All scholars tell us that no one who physically came in contact with the historical Jesus ever wrote anything about him that we have today. None of our sacred authors — including the evangelists — directly heard or saw Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus who lived between 6 BCE and 30 CE. They — like we — encountered only the risen Jesus. Everything we read in our Christian Scriptures has come down to us from those who have not seen, yet believe. If they didn’t pass on their second and third generation reflections to fourth and fifth generation Christians, we’d have no Christian Scriptures.

Obviously no one alive today has had an experience of the historical Jesus. Along with our sacred authors, we can only have contact with the risen Jesus. Though we might sluff off our risen Jesus experiences as insignificant, thankfully our Christian biblical writers didn’t share that state of mind. Rembert Weakland — the former archbishop of Milwaukee — once wrote that all Christians have an obligation to put their risen Jesus experiences into a format others can later surface. The Spirit didn’t share them with us for our benefit alone.

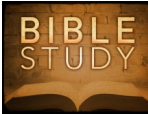
Hard to tell what that format would entail. Weakland suggested that, given specific circumstances, it could simply be a letter to the editor of our local newspaper. Though I imagine few of us will ever write a gospel, we should at least share our reflections with certain family members or close friends. Just as our sacred authors have helped us, we might be a help to others — people who we don’t realize need them.

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



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30th:

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



Our topic: **The apostles coming of Age in the Book of Acts**

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, April 27: 2 nd Sunday in Easter	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, April 28:	NO MASS
Tuesday, April 29: Saint Catherine of Siena	NO MASS
Wednesday, April 30:	1:15 PM In Person only
Thursday, May 1:	NO MASS
Friday, May 2: Saint Athanasius	NO MASS
Saturday, May 3: 3 rd Sunday in Easter	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, May 4: 3 rd Sunday in Easter	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

EASTER FLOWERS:

Once again this year we are offering an opportunity for you to make a memorial offering toward our Easter flowers and the Flowers that will be planted outside surrounding the chapel. Just make a list of those loved ones whom you would like to remember and include it with your donation toward the flowers in an envelope marked: **Easter Flowers**. You can either give it to Father John or drop it in the offering basket at Mass. This year, we remember the members of the **Heryak, Orehek, Tran, Wyrwas, Blazek, Rezabek families**, as well as **all the deceased members of Our Lady Chapel family**. We will publish a list of the loved ones whom you wish to remember during the first part of the Easter season.



FAITH EDUCATION — NEXT SUNDAY:

The last meeting date is May 4th. 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 BATTLE AGAINST DOUBTS:

The Gospel for this Second Week in Easter is always the Gospel of Doubting Thomas [John 20:19-31]. Perhaps, the reason for this is that the incident where Thomas is present takes place on the Sunday after the Resurrection. But there is more than this. Jesus appeared to just a few people after the Resurrection. There was Mary Magdalene — and any others that may have been with her; the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; the eleven — and anyone with them in the Upper Room on Easter Sunday and the Sunday after Easter; the disciples who saw the Lord on the shore while they were fishing; and finally those who were present at the Lord's Ascension into heaven. Everyone else is left with an empty tomb.

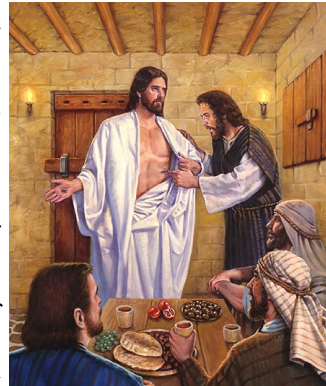
We have to have faith that what Jesus promised happened — He rose from the dead. We have to have faith in the witness of the first disciples. So John's Gospel tackles a problem we all have — doubting our faith. This is the messy side of our humanity. We want to believe, but we are often besieged with doubts. Sometimes we feel very bad about ourselves. How can I doubt Christ? Why would I doubt the teachings of the Apostles, or the authentic teachings of the Church? We need to remember that this is all part of being a human being. We will only be free of doubts when we see God face to face. With this understood, we can fight off some of our doubts by considering their origin.

All doubts ultimately flow from the evil one. The devil placed the first doubts into the minds of Adam and Eve. So putting a fight against doubts is good work; it is part of our battle against evil. I've noticed four areas of doubt where together with the Lord we need to do battle. There are intellectual doubts, doubts in other human beings, doubts due to the disjunction of our faith and lifestyle, and doubts that flow from the crises of our lives.

First, intellectual doubts. These would be the doubts we have when our minds refuse to allow us to accept spiritual truths. So we look at a basic Christian belief, such as the Trinity, and say that it is not possible for there to be one God, but three persons, each God. Or, how can the Second Person be both fully God and fully man? The problem here is that we are trying to solve eternal mysteries with the finite knowledge of our intellect. Even the greatest mind in the world is limited in the knowledge it can attain on its own.

But there is a knowledge deeper than the mind can ever come to — this is the knowledge that is revealed to us by God. If we are full of pride, and refuse to recognize our intellectual limitation, we will not be open to God's deeper knowledge. Just because we cannot understand something, does not mean that it isn't true. An extremely intelligent seven year old is incapable of understanding calculus. That does not mean that theorems and rules of calculus don't exist — it just means that the seven year old's mind cannot grasp them. Some of the greatest minds in history limited themselves by refusing to acknowledge the existence of truth beyond their rational capabilities. Other great minds — Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Pope John Paul II — allowed their knowledge to expand by accepting their limitations and being open to that which is beyond them. It takes humility to recognize our dependency on God for knowledge beyond our grasp.

The devil uses our pride to prevent us from being open to the Truths of the Lord. So we fight the pride of the devil with our humility. If we look closely at John's Gospel, it is important to notice Thomas did not doubt Jesus as much as he doubted the other disciples. After all, these were people full of human failings. One was a tax collector — making his living stealing from his fellow countrymen; one was a political zealot — domineered by his determination to destroy the occupying Romans by any means



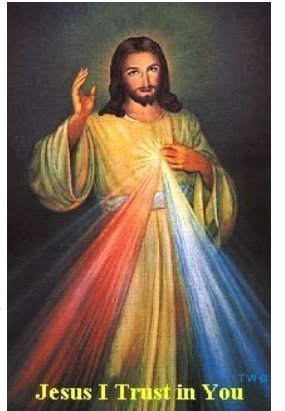
wounded hands and put his hands in Jesus' pierced side. And then Jesus appeared. He told Thomas to do what he said he needed to do to believe. Actually, Thomas didn't touch Jesus' hands and side as many paintings show. Instead, he just said to Jesus: "My Lord and My God." It is at that point that Jesus looked at Thomas and said: "You believe because you have seen" — and then Jesus looked at us — people through the ages, you and me — and said: "Blessed are those who have not seen but who believe." We who were not there were in Jesus' eyes simply because we are here.

Jesus continues to look at us. He sees our fears. He hears our questions. He knows how we often struggle with doubts, and he has mercy on us, just as he had mercy on Thomas. If he did not hold Thomas' doubts against him — Thomas who had experienced so much of the Lord's presence, so many wonders — if he did not hold Thomas' doubts against him, he will not hold our doubts against us. And for those who in confession admit their doubts, well, the very fact that they — and you and me — hate the times that we doubt the Lord, then our struggle to fight doubts, our prayer for help with those parts of us that don't believe, all this draws God's Mercy Upon Us.

This 2nd Week in Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday. Look at the picture of the Divine Mercy. Look at the Lord risen, with the tomb behind him and white and red beams flowing from his side, and then read carefully what is under the picture: "Jesus, I trust in you." We trust in his care and concern for us and all the people of the world. And when we hear about horrendous things happening — as we do every day — we trust that the Lord will care for the victims. St. Peter says that in the war against evil our ancient enemy — the devil — prowls about like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour [1 Peter 5:8]. He tells us to be strong in faith and stand up to him. We cannot let Satan's temporary victories turn the tide in the war for God's Kingdom.

There is a wonderful group of contemplative sisters from Watertown, New York — the Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood — who have promoted this short prayer from a hymn written by Lucy Bennet: "Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee, trust Him, when thy strength is small; trust Him, when to simply trust Him, seems the hardest thing of all. Trust Him — He is ever faithful, trust Him — for His will is best; trust Him — for the Heart of Jesus, is the only place of rest."

"Jesus help those parts of us that don't trust, that don't believe." On Divine Mercy Sunday we pray: "Jesus we trust in you." —taken from the writings for Father Joseph Pellegrino, 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].**



MERCY FOR DOUBTERS:

“Bless me Father for I have sinned. Father, I have horrible doubts. Sometimes, I wonder if God exists. Sometimes, I think that He’s not concerned about me. Sometimes, I wonder if He cares about the people in the world. If He exists, and if He cares, then why do horrendous things happen?” These and similar questions confront all priests. In fact, all priests, as well as bishops and even popes, are often attacked by doubts. Doubting is one of the weights of the human condition. There is a part of us that wants to posit the physical world as the only life that exists. There is a part of us that questions the spiritual.

“I do believe, Lord, help those parts of me that don’t believe” [see Mark 9:24]. These frantic words came from the lips of a father pleading for his child’s healing. The man had brought his son to Jesus’ disciples to be healed. The poor boy was having seizures — throwing himself into the fire, down a well, etc. The people of the time thought the child was possessed. We would have other explanations, but the fact remained that the child had a serious problem. Jesus came upon the scene of the man and the disciples and a crowd of other people — perhaps all yelling at each other. “What is happening here?” Jesus asked. The man told him about his son, and then added: “I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn’t do anything. If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” “If I can?” Jesus retorted, all things are possible to him who believes.” And then the man cried out: “I do believe, help my unbelief.” And the man’s plea for faith added to his prayer for his son resulted in Jesus healing the boy.

“Help those parts of me that don’t believe” that’s a prayer that we have to say whenever doubts assail us. Whether we question God’s concern, we question the Church’s teaching, or even if we question God’s existence, every one of us throughout our lives need to call out: “I do believe. Help those parts of me that don’t believe.”

Thomas — the world class doubter of John’s Gospel [20:19-31] — had experienced Jesus words and his miracles. More than that, Thomas himself, as well as the other disciples who would become apostles, had actually witnessed the Power of God working through them. In fact, at one point in his ministry, Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness [see Matthew 10:1]. Thomas could heal people. On another time, Jesus sent out an additional seventy disciples. The seventy returned with joy, saying: “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name”. And Jesus said to them: “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you” [see Luke 10:17-19]. Thomas had been a part of all that; he had been given those powers; and, yet, he still doubted.

Maybe Thomas — like Peter and the other ten disciples in the Upper Room on Holy Thursday — was so shocked by the Crucifixion — by Good Friday — that he lost hope in the Resurrection. He lost hope that there would be an Easter Sunday. Maybe Thomas — like Judas Iscariot — was so heavily planted in the physical, that he relegated his spiritual experiences as insignificant. Certainly that would explain Judas’ selling out Jesus, betraying him. Was Thomas like Judas in this way? Perhaps Thomas wondered if there were some sort of physical explanation to the wonders he had experienced. Or maybe Thomas was so sick and tired of the antics of the other disciples, that he just wasn’t going to believe anything they said — even if they told him the Lord had risen from the dead. In the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man in Luke, Jesus had prophesied that those who were not just, not united to God, those who did not believe in Moses and the Prophets, would not believe even if someone were to rise from the dead [see Luke 16:19-31]. Perhaps, Thomas was not as committed to God as he thought he was.

What a scene in that Upper Room on the evening, one week after Easter Sunday! Thomas had heard that Jesus had appeared to the other disciples the third day after he died — Easter Sunday. But Thomas was not there at that time. Thomas had said that he wouldn’t believe unless he touched Jesus’s

possible; their leader, Peter, had even publically denied Christ. When Jesus was crucified, all of them — except John, but including Thomas — had abandoned the Lord. Why should Thomas believe these people?

We do this too. Thus, secondly, we all doubt in human beings. We hear a message from a priest, and we think of all the failures of priests, and refuse to believe the message. We hear an instruction from the bishops, and we deny that they have the moral authority to instruct us in anything. We even question the authority of the Pope, citing the examples of papal immorality from the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. Again, think of the many people who have written letters to the editors, or who have sent emails to many of the priests objecting to this or that statement of the Church by citing the moral failures of priests. When we are tempted to do this, we are more concerned with the person who is pointing rather than what he or she is pointing at. Again, the evil one wants to distract us from truth by confusing the truth with those who are proclaiming it.

A third source of our doubts flows from disjunction in life. By this I mean the separation of faith and morality. Some attempt to be people of faith here, but live immorally out there. That does not work. When people commit themselves to an immoral lifestyle, they soon begin questioning their faith. How many people have told me that they began doubting their faith when they began cheating in their marriage, or destroying themselves with substance abuse, etc. The evil one wants us to think that we can be part of a believing group while living like pagans. When we fall for Satan’s lies, we end up believing Satan rather than believing in Jesus. The immoral person may say that he or she is a person of faith, but in reality, he or she is more comfortable with the devil than with Christ.

Finally, when crises arise, doubts appear. How could a good God allow this to happen? Why does God allow those who do evil to live when the person that I love — a good man or woman — has died? Why? Why?

It is only in finding the risen Christ in every situation — and in ourselves — that we, like Thomas, can move beyond doubt into a profession of faith — “My Lord and My God!”

—taken from the writings of Monseigneur Joseph Pellegrino which appear on the internet

THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF YOUR IDENTITY:

Jesus died well because he knew he was going to God and he would soon send his Spirit of Love to his friends. “It is good for you that I leave,” he said, “because unless I leave, I cannot send my Spirit who will lead you to the full communion, to the full truth, to the full betrothal” [John 16:7-8]. With that Holy Spirit he knew that his beloved apostles would live better, happier lives.

This vision is not just about Jesus. It is also about you and me. Jesus came to share his identity with you and to tell you that you are the Beloved Sons and Daughters of God. Just for a moment try to enter this enormous mystery that you, like Jesus, are the beloved daughter or the beloved son of God. This is the truth. Furthermore, your belovedness preceded your birth. You were the beloved before your father, mother, brother, sister, or church loved you or hurt you. You are the beloved because you belong to God from all eternity.

God loved you before you were born, and God will love you after you die. In Scripture, God says: “I have loved you with an everlasting love” [Jeremiah 31:3]. This is a very fundamental truth of your identity. This is who you are — whether you feel it or not. You belong to God from eternity to eternity. Life is just a little opportunity for you during a few years to say: “I love you, too.”



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY:

On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II declared that the 2nd Sunday of Easter was to be called **Divine Mercy Sunday**. The message and devotion to Jesus as the Divine Mercy is based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who, in obedience to her spiritual director, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God’s mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion to **The Divine Mercy** had begun to spread. The message of Divine Mercy is nothing new; it is a reminder of what the Church has always taught through scripture and tradition — that God is merciful and forgiving, and that we, too, must show mercy and forgiveness. But in the Divine Mercy devotion, the message takes on a powerful new focus. The message is a called to all to a deeper understanding that God’s love is unlimited and available to everyone — especially to the greatest sinners.

This year, we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday today, April 27th. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is recited in many churches on this date. You may recite the Chaplet on your own at home on this date. We have some copies of the Chaplet on the table in the narthex.



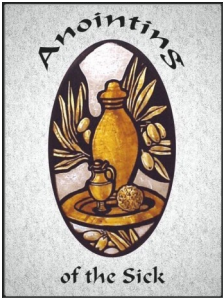
ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

At all of our Masses next weekend, May 3 & 4, we will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Illness and suffering have always been part of human life. In illness, we experience our powerlessness, our limitations, and our mortality. Every illness can make us glimpse death. Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption — sometimes even despair and anger against God. It can also make us more mature — helping us discern in our lives what is not essential so that we can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to Him.

The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments, there is one very special sacrament which is intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness. The **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to by Mark in his gospel, but is recommended to the faithful and more fully explained in the letter of James the Apostle [James 5:14-15].

Most of us remember the time when the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was conferred exclusively on those who were at the point of death; it’s very name — “Extreme Unction” [Last Anointing] reminded us of this practice. But it is clear from the scriptures that this was never the intent of the sacrament. The early Church had an entirely difference approach to this sacrament; the Vatican council restored this approach and returned the sacrament to its original name. Today, this beautiful sacrament allows us a special encounter with God during those times of illness in our lives. The cross always leads to the resurrection; sickness leads to salvation.

When are the times when we can receive this sacrament? There are many occasions — during any serious illness; before surgery; the elderly; mental and emotional illness; spiritual struggle; approaching death. Who determines when an illness is serious? You do! Whenever you feel you need the sacrament you should receive it. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has been the vehicle of many powerful encounters with God in the lives of people. **If you have or know of friends or relatives who should receive this sacrament, please try to arrange for them to be here. If there is a problem with local transportation, please let us know.** Join us for this special occasion.



FAITH:

Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.

—Martin Luther

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX:

When people are feeling afraid or insecure, they often find security and solace behind the locked door of a room. While locking oneself in a secure place may relieve an immediate threat or reduce anxiety, it is not a place in which you can stay for very long. Being afraid to leave a secure place when taken to the extreme can lead to agoraphobia and actually cripple a person’s life. Fear caused the disciples to lock themselves in a room. Fear does the same to us.

We live in a world that is becoming more and more fearful. Even when we try to take positive steps to prevent tragedy from occurring, it seems to happen anyway. Trying to do the right thing does not always lead to the right thing happening. The circumstances surrounding the life of Nikolas Cruz — the young man who recently went on a rampage at a Florida school — are a testament to this. There is always a chance that when we step outside the door of our secure place, the world — or someone — could hurt us. Even Jesus knew that his friends were in for a rough ride.

We like our boxes and our rooms. These safe havens allow us to control the uncontrollable, and shield ourselves from the unbearable. They can be found in our institutions, our homes, our places of work, our ideologies, our prejudices, and even our churches. As much as the phrase “think outside the box” may seem trite, the resurrection of Christ pulls us outside of the box! In fact, it is impossible to hide from God even when locked up in a secure room. God finds his way in and says: “Peace be with you.”

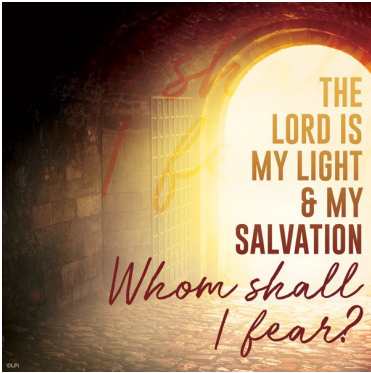
Even though it is tempting to seek peace in a secure place, it is always an illusion. True and lasting security is found within only when we can truly look to the resurrected Christ and exclaim: “My Lord and my God!” The Gospel calls us into the world. Our faith is expressed and validated not inside some stale locked box, but in the wounded, broken messy stuff of people’s lives. God created all of us and offers all of us His love and mercy. The disciples were eventually able to let go of their fear. What they were originally trying to maintain, protect, and fortify no longer seemed relevant or necessary.

Running from a physical threat is one thing. Running from a perceived, ideological, or emotional threat is another. For some, faith becomes a matter of security, and it finds its best expression behind a closed door, in a particular place. For others, faith is related to action and risk and finds its greatest expression in the unpredictability of the marketplace. It is clear that not only God, but our Holy Father are challenging us to bring it there.

Locks can be broken. Buildings and institutions change. What is going to ultimately alleviate fear? Faith is the answer. “For whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith” [1 John 5:1-6]. Our Easter season presents us with the challenge once again to “not be unbelieving but believe.” Our faith dictates how we live our lives, organize our priorities, care for one another, share our possessions, and work toward a world where there is no longer want or need.

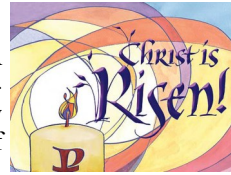
Is the world a scary place? Absolutely. Is there a tendency to retreat to safety out of fear? Yes. Venturing forth alone, we are doomed to fail. Venturing forth together we can be heralds of change. We have been given the Holy Spirit as our divine helper and guide. Does the way we live our lives show others that we have received this gift?

—taken from the writings of Father Mark Suslenko, which appears on the internet.



THANK YOU FOR EASTER:

Easter is such a blessing — such a grace. It is God's gift to us in our brokenness. A special "thank you" goes out to all the members of our Chapel community who entered into the fullness of this season by giving so much of themselves in so many different ways — to numerous to recount. This Easter has been truly a moment of great grace for us. We are grateful.

**HAPPY RESURRECTION DAY:**

"The tomb was empty," the Scriptures say — metaphorically perhaps but pointedly, nevertheless. People came to know Jesus' presence again — not the same as before the crucifixion, true, but real, nevertheless. Transformed. Somehow or other Jesus had defeated death — had snatched new life from its cavernous throat. The implications were overwhelming. Death — even once transcended — could never be permanent again. In fact, life itself could never be the same again. Jesus risen from the dead made life the stuff of eternity. Jesus transformed leads us to look beyond the obvious, to allow for the presence of God in alien places, in unanticipated ways.

The question is, of course, what really happened there? And what does it have to do with us? The answer is simple. Transformation happened. What had always been became more than it was. And because of that, life changed everywhere. The transformation was on both sides — Jesus waxed to new fullness, yes, but so did the people around him. New life burgeoned everywhere.

Where once they had known Jesus, in retrospect people now saw the Christ, the anointed one of God for whom they waited as well. There were witnesses. Women first, then the apostles, then people on the road. But, most interesting of all, they each saw him differently now. He did not live with them now — he simply "came" to them. He did not do the things he did before. He showed a new side of himself — or if not really new, at least largely unnoticed before this time. This radiant Jesus had always been there, had even been glimpsed from time to time, perhaps, but had never before been this fully luminous, completely effulgent, totally aglow, entirely apparent to the people around him. That we understand. We know that growth and change are not death.

One thing is for sure — the Resurrection of Jesus is not about "resuscitation." A corpse does not come to life here and wait again to die. A body does not rise to bleed again. No, the Resurrection of Jesus is not about revivification of an old life — it is about experiencing a new kind of life entirely. And no one knows how it happened; we only know that it happened.

Resurrection testifies to the metamorphosis of the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith. It is about coming to grips with the transformed and transforming presence of Christ then, now, and always. Once that happens, life is never again the same. Life begins anew.

To say: "I believe in Jesus Christ who rose from the dead," then, is to say: "I believe that the Resurrection goes on and on and on forever." Every time Jesus rises in our own hearts in new ways, the Resurrection happens again. Every time we see Jesus where we did not recognize him before — in the faces of the poor, in the love of the unloved, in the revelatory moments of life — Jesus rises anew. But that is not all. The real proof of the Resurrection lies not in the transformation of Jesus alone, but the transformation awaiting us who accept it.

The real lesson of resurrection may be its strangest, strongest one. When Jesus died, hope died. The apostles grieved the death of Jesus. The public was scandalized. The synagogue said good riddance to a troublemaker. The entire enterprise collapsed. But in the end, out of apparent failure, came new life stronger than it had ever been before. And so, too, for us. When one phase of life ends, a new one arises, if we do not spend too much time grieving the one before it, if we allow new grace to flow through us.

—taken from the writings of Sister Joan Chittister, O.S.B., which appear on the internet

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

Our Easter Week ends, but the resurrection continues. We continue to seek the "peace" which Jesus rose to share. This "peace" is given so that we too might live lives of sharing ourselves as graces. Individuals war between themselves and among themselves because they are not at peace with themselves. Nations do the same thing. And so we continue to see that peaceful union with Jesus, and through Jesus with all our sisters and brothers. The word "community" literally means "with-gifts", and the unity for which we pray comes from our first being gifted by God's creation of us and his redemptive finding of us — even when we are hiding. We want to be found, to be given a new spirit, and to be sent to extend his gift of grace to others. As this Easter season continues may we see ourselves in his light, and face the darkness of the unknown into which he sends us.

With this in mind, we listen to the works of the early community of believers [Acts 5:12-16]. We hear that many signs and wonders were wrought by the apostles, and these signs attracted many new members to the group of believers. Their very lives were "life-giving"; they defied even death among those who trusted that just having Peter's shadow fall upon them was all that they needed. Many were healed through their faith offered them through the work of the Spirit in the preaching of Peter and the other apostles.

We might wonder ourselves about why miracles are not commonplace these days. Do we not believe? Is the Holy Spirit less present to the Church of believers these days? Do we — the sick — not have the faith needed for God to heal us?

I recall a time when a group of us Jesuits visited the *Shrine of the North American Martyrs* near Midland, Ontario. Some of the relics of the Martyrs are there, and the group decided to try to



have a miraculous healing of one of our members who had some health issues. We all prayed heartily and mightily and tried various pieces of bones from several of our martyred brothers. The group was saddened — except for the one for whom these prayers and actions of faith were directed. The group felt they had lacked faith or trusted more in the bones than in the Spirit.

You might be wondering why the prayed-for person was not disappointed. He had been prayed over many times, and believed that his trusting God and living that faith was miracle enough. He seemed not to need signs and wonders to continue following the ways of God and the workings of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we have enough miracles to attract us and enough doubts to make our believing free and real.

John's Gospel has three distinct, yet united sections [John 20:19-31]. Jesus appears to the frightened apostles — minus Thomas. He offers them peace, then offers them His mission which He received from His Father. Then he breathes upon their chaos and through the gift of the Spirit tendered the gift of forgiving sins. Seven days later He appears to the same group of apostles — plus Thomas. Thomas needed to see signs and wonders. Jesus invited him to read the signs and wonder no more. Thomas did just that.

Originally, this story was how John's Gospel ended. It was only later that John's community added one more chapter. But this original ending is important. John's community writes: "Jesus performed

many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples — signs which are not recorded in this book. But these have been written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” What words of encouragement for all of us.

Old Thomas is such a good friend of ours. So are the apostles gathered together for fear, and separated by their individual shame at having abandoned their Teacher and Lord. We have our doubts, our fears, our shames, and our desires to see just a little bit more so that our faith will be strengthened. It seems that God knows us more than we know ourselves. A little bit more would always be just a little bit more of what we would want. Thomas wanted to see more than he had heard his companions had seen. Seeing is not believing, but rather believing is a way of seeing beyond what can blind us.

This seeing beyond is the gift of the Spirit, and it leads to our being sent out beyond as well. We are sent — as He was sent to us — to attract others to the Sender. How we live this faith-seeing is a graceful insult to this seeing-everything world. We who try to live this beyond-sight way are a sign and wonder for this present age. Our struggles to live faithful, hopeful, and love-full lives by going out, being sent, is the miracle of our times. Each of us is a reminder that the creative love of God is alive and well in our world — He has Risen and is alive. As reminders we make anew this creating love and Easter is our time for going out and beyond.

—edited from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

CHRIST HAS OVERCOME DEATH:

John’s Gospel for this 2nd Week in Easter is the story of Doubting Thomas [John 20:19-31]. At the same time, we begin during Easter to read from the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible. It was written in the early 90’s — during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian [AD 81-96], by a Christian community who followed the apostle John, who was banished to the penal colony on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea because, as he says: “I proclaimed God’s word and gave testimony to Jesus” [Revelation 1:9-20].

The author describes a vision he had — “I was caught up in spirit on the Lord’s day and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see’.” John sees “one like a son of man, wearing an ankle length robe, with a gold sash around his chest” — a reference to the figure in the Book of Daniel who will come on the clouds to judge the living and the dead [see Daniel 7:13]. John is frightened to death, but is reassured by the Son of Man, who touches him and says: “Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives” — titles the Israelites gave to the Lord. The Son of Man then declares: “Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the nether world” — identifying himself as the Christ who conquered death through his own freely accepted death and his glorious resurrection.

Throughout our whole life we are shadowed by death. From conception onward, we move toward a final boundary that ends our earthly journey. As we face our unknown future, death is the one inevitable event. It is also present in everyday life in a thousand forms — failures, sickness, heartaches, limitations, guilt and diminishments. Death in its many manifestations can frighten and discourage us; it can also touch us at a deeper level, causing anxiety, which seems to have no clear single cause but threatens our very being, our fundamental trust and our conviction that life is meaningful and worthwhile.

As we face our distinctive fears and forms of anxiety, we look for strength and guidance from the crucified and risen Christ, who has transformed the darkness of death into the light of a new and richer life. With Christ’s assistance, it is possible to turn life’s many deaths into opportunities for spiritual



he now bestows this power on the Apostles so that they can pursue their ministry of making people aware of the salvation that Christ won for them.

Their task is to be one of teaching and healing. The apostles are to tell people about the Good News of Jesus Christ and to heal people from their afflictions which are primarily their sins. Theirs then is a very powerful ministry and it continues today in the ministry of Bishops and priests to the People of God.

And so, it is not just knowledge of salvation that the Apostles are to give to the people — they are to give the experience of salvation. And this is best expressed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation where we experience the forgiveness of our sins. It is hard to underestimate the importance of this most wonderful sacrament.

The main role of the Apostles is to bring people to faith. The way to do this is not to convince others by force of argument, but simply to tell the story of Jesus and let people draw their own conclusions. Tricky arguments won’t win anyone over. What people want is exactly the same as what Thomas wanted — an encounter with the Risen Lord. And the apostles — and each of us — are critical pieces in this ongoing unfolding of Salvation History.

Learning how Thomas came to express such a profound act of faith is exactly the sort of thing that inspires faith in others. Seeing how Thomas moved from total disbelief in the resurrection to a high level of faith help us to realize that we can do the same. We too can join with Thomas and say those same words: “My Lord and my God.”

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

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:	Holy Thursday [4/17/25]	_____	\$105.00
Total Offerings:	Good Friday [4/18/25]	_____	\$ 83.00
Total Offerings:	Holy Saturday Easter Vigil [4/19/25]	_____	\$880.00
Total Offerings:	Easter Sunday [4/20/25]	_____	\$1,235.00

DOUBT AS A SPIRITUAL ATTACK:

There are two resurrection appearances by Jesus recorded in John’s Gospel [20:19-31]. The first occurs on the very day of the resurrection itself. Jesus has already appeared in the morning to Mary Magdalene who mistook him for a gardener, and then in the evening of that same day he appears to the Apostles who are hiding in upper room — where the Last Supper had taken place.

The narrative centers around Thomas who is not present when Jesus appears to his fellow Apostles. When they tell him how Jesus appeared to them, he doesn’t believe them. John gives us a small clue as to why Thomas was so disbelieving — “Thomas, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.” We need to ask why Thomas was called “the twin”? The name Thomas literally means “twin.” But if a couple actually had twins they would be very unlikely to call one of them “twin” as their given name. So, it is safe to assume that “twin” is a nickname. There is an old theory that Thomas looked very like Jesus and was often mistaken for him. If this theory is right it might explain Thomas’ doubt. He would most likely have thought that the other Apostles had mistaken someone else for Jesus because the very same thing was happening to him all the time. This gives us a plausible explanation for Thomas’ doubt.

When Jesus appears again eight days later Thomas makes one of the most profound statements of belief to be found in the New Testament — “My Lord and my God.” Thomas is the first person to attest to Jesus’ divinity and he does so long before anyone else.

St Thomas is often regarded as the patron saint of doubters. Doubt is something that afflicts a lot of people. I’m not talking here about uncertainty — which is the common type of doubt. What I am talking about is doubt as a spiritual affliction. Many people go on for years very firm in their faith and then out of the blue start to experience serious doubts about their faith. They start to question the existence of God and worry whether religion is perhaps a gigantic deception put about by priests and other people with vested interests.

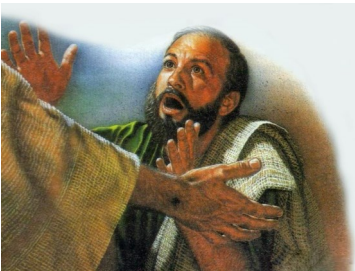
Doubt as a spiritual affliction is not easy to deal with because those who suffer from doubt because at first doubt brings with it serious guilt feelings. It is hard for people to untangle their doubts and come to the realization that they are actually experiencing what is known as a spiritual attack. What needs to be realized is that these spiritual doubts come in fact from the Evil One who loves to disturb and undermine faith wherever he finds it.

When a person experiences such doubts the best thing that they can do is to talk to a priest about them. He may be able to give then the perspective that they are lacking at that moment. Another good thing to do is to turn to St Thomas and to ask him to ease these doubts that trouble them so much.

We know that Thomas travelled widely and that he brought Christianity to the people of India. In Kerala they are known as St Thomas Christians. He was martyred in Madras — or Chennai as it is now called. So, we are dealing with a great and energetic Apostle — one who was strong in his faith, one with the ability to convert many others to Christianity.

That first appearance of the Risen Jesus to the Apostles was significant. Jesus says to them: “As the Father sent me, so am I sending you. Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.” These words imply two things. First, the Apostles are now Christ’s representatives — they are to act just as he would in the world. As he was sent by the Father so now the Apostles are sent by Jesus to fulfil his mission in the world.

And in order to be effective in this task, Jesus gives them a most extraordinary weapon — he gives them the power to forgive sins. The forgiveness of sins is the reason why Jesus came into our world, and



growth.

We can find inspiration in contemporary witnesses to Christ's victory over death. Mother Teresa overcame the painful experience of feeling abandoned by God and continued her ministry to the poorest of the poor. Nelson Mandela overcame many years of imprisonment and became president of his country, dedicated to healing its wounds. Martin Luther King overcame the threat of violence and served the cause of justice through non-violence until his untimely assassination. Cardinal Joseph Bernardine overcame his fear of death by trusting Christ and befriending his imminent death, freeing him to continue his priestly ministry till his final days.

Can you think of individuals who inspire you by their efforts to overcome the threats of death?

—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet

THE CHOSEN :

We had a wonderful group of people join us for our initial showing of an episode of *The Chosen* this past Sunday. The viewing was followed by a very inspiring sharing among those present. **Allowing for a break for summer months, we will begin again in the fall with a monthly gathering, as we continue the journey of faith together**



The Chosen is an American Christian historical drama television series. Created, directed, and co-written by filmmaker Dallas Jenkins, it is the first multi-season series about the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Primarily set in Judaea and Galilee in the 1st century, the series depicts the life of Jesus through the eyes of the people who interacted with him, including the apostles and disciples of Jesus, Jewish religious leaders, Roman government and military officials, and ordinary people. In contrast with typical Bible-focused productions, Jenkins has given more depth to his scripts by adding backstories to various characters from the gospels without contradicting the material of the gospel. **An announcement will be made shortly as to when the next gathering will take place. Please plan to join us. If you have any questions, please contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:

A Young Adult group has formed at Our Lady Chapel. During Lent, the group has formed prayer buddies so that they can journey together back to God, and now that Easter is here, 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.



EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

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



LET THERE BE LIGHT:

What’s your forecast look like this week? What’s the seven day outlook? Are you having spiritually sunny days or spiritually dark days, these days? Something very simple but quite profound hit me in prayer recently — there are two types of darkness — God-made and manmade. Let me offer an example. In the morning, my bedroom is dark, first because it is prior to sunrise, but also because I have chosen to draw the shades and eliminate any trace of light from my room.

God brings light to the darkness *in His time*, but whether or not I allow that light in, and the amount of light I allow into my life and reality — **that is my decision**.

Sometimes we go through “dark times” in our lives — moments in which we can’t see or hear or feel God’s light. Sometimes those dark times are because in that moment God’s allowing the darkness; *in time He will reveal His presence again*. Those are the times of darkness that God permits — they are God made. We might grow cold or feel out of control, but **God is very much in control**, we just need to be patient to feel the warmth of His light, once again.

Sometimes, though, we go through “dark times” in our lives — dark times that are manmade. These are a result of our decisions, actions or pride. Times such as these, of difficulty or pain, suffering or anxiety are not a result of God’s plan, but a result of our sin. We wind up in these kind of situations because we seek to be in control — to control “how much light we let into the room”. We draw the shades to our soul, diffusing and eventually expelling God’s light completely, until we are left *out of control* and sitting in the darkness — cold, lost and alone.

Sometimes we draw the shades to our soul quickly. Other times we draw them slowly, one blind at a time, until we are left spiritually blind. We reject the light because it hurts our eyes. We gravitate to the darkness over time, and slowly lose all perspective of what it’s like to live in the light. Again, for some people it’s gradual; for others it’s drastic; and for others, it’s a constant spiritual struggle, to live and to stay in the light.

So, how about you? Have you drawn the shades to your soul? Are you choosing to eliminate or control the amount of sunlight that enters your inner room, the Son’s light?

Ponder what God has to say about this tension between light and darkness, pray with me:

- “God is light and in him is no darkness at all” [1 John 1:5].
- “For you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness” [1 Thessalonians 5:5].
- “He who says he is in the light and hates his brother or sister is in the darkness still. But he who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” [1 John 2:9-11].
- “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” [John 1:5].
- “I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” [John 12:46].

Scripture, in a sense, dilates the pupils of our souls. It opens our eyes wider in times of darkness and allows in more light, helping us to see more clearly as darkness encircles us. Prayer does the same thing.

One of the tools of the devil is to make you believe that your darkness is God made [the lie] instead



of manmade [the truth] — that way, we’re left wanting to blame God for the darkness rather than ourselves. Thus, we refuse to act and we are left, stuck and trapped in the darkness.

Ask yourself this day — how bright is your life? If there is darkness, where is it coming from? If it’s from God, don’t worry, the sun will rise soon. If it’s from you, stop what you’re doing, fall on your knees and rip open the shades to your soul. God is waiting to shower you with light.

God’s first command? “Let there be LIGHT” [Genesis 1:3]. —the Bible Geek

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Acts 4:23-31, John 3:1-8
Tuesday:	Acts 4:32-37, John 3:7b-15
Wednesday:	Acts 5:17-26, John 3:16-21
Thursday:	Acts 5:27-33, John 3:31-36
Friday:	Acts 5:34-42, John 6:1-15
Saturday:	1 Corinthians 15:1-8, John 14:6-14
3rd Week in Easter:	Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41; Revelation 5:11-14, John 21:1-19

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. MAY 17th:

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.

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].

