

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer to Sts. Peter and Paul ~

**O holy Apostles, Peter and Paul,
be my constant advocates before God.
Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles,
you are the Rock
upon which Almighty God has built His Church.
Saint Paul,
you were fore-chosen by God
as the Vessel of election,
and the Preacher of truth in the whole world.**

**Obtain for me a lively faith,
a firm hope,
and a burning love;
complete detachment from myself
and the world around me,
patience in adversity,
humility in prosperity,
attention in prayer, purity of heart,
a right intention in all my works,
diligence in fulfilling the duties of my state of life,
constancy in my resolutions,
resignation to the will of God,
and perseverance in the grace of God —
even unto death.**

**Lead me to the throne of my Eternal God
to enjoy His presence
and love Him forever.**

Amen.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

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

Our Lady Chapel



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

THE FEAST OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL:

The season of Ordinary Time continues to be interrupted as we pause to celebrate a very important Feast this weekend — The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Peter and Paul are two very different people; yet each shared the common mission of Jesus — the spreading of the Gospel.

Saint Peter's name appears in the New Testament over 150 times. After Jerusalem, later sources name him the founder of the church at Antioch. Peter received thousands of Jews into the faith, and opened the church to the Gentiles. Ten years after the Ascension, Peter moved the seat of the church to Rome — the center of the Roman Empire — where he labored and built up the church for twenty-five years. Nero had him crucified, and his body was buried where Saint Peter's Basilica now stands in Vatican City.

Saint Paul's story is better known. He was present at, and oversaw, the stoning of Saint Stephen; he met God on his way to Damascus when he was struck blind. A convert to Christianity, Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles. Eventually he was beheaded, but not without leaving us fourteen epistles or letters that contain the most basic truths of our Christian faith.

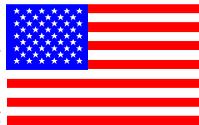
It might be comforting to know that Paul and Peter squabbled and competed; they frequently challenged each other to grow in faith and the understanding of the message of Jesus. But they were both united in their fierce love of Jesus. And for this we are forever grateful.

CHAPEL OUTDOOR PICNIC — JULY 13:

Put this date aside; mark your calendars! Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is Sunday, July 13th. Every year, the Chapel picnic has been a great event for the entire family. The picnic will take place following our 10 AM Mass. **This year, weather permitting, we will gather from 11:15 AM—1:30 PM under the shade of the trees right outside the chapel. Should it rain, the picnic will move indoors into the Howley Commons.** What a wonderful way to continue our celebration of community. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Pulled Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, and other treats will be part of our picnic. Cookies, and beverages are provided. **Pot Luck sides & desserts are welcome!** Come and enjoy family and friends. **Swiftly and a face-painter friend will join us, as will the Euclid Beach Rocket Car.** In order to properly prepare for our picnic, we ask that you please **RSVP by July 7th to Patty [440-473-3560]** in the chapel office, or simply **sign up on the Picnic Sign-Up Sheet on the easel located in the narthex of the Chapel. Please indicate the side or dessert if you wish to bring one.** So here it comes once again. It will be a great event for the entire family.

NO MASS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY:

The week of June 29th — July 5th, **Fr. John is directing a Retreat at the Sisters of Notre Dame Mother House in Chardon.** Because July 4th, Independence Day, falls within the parameters of the Retreat, **Fr. John will not be able to celebrate Mass here at the Chapel on the Holiday.** We apologize for this oversight in planning, and we hope that it will not be too great of an inconvenience for you to find another Parish where you may celebrate Mass, if you choose to do so. As Christians, on July 4th, we give thanks to God for the land placed in our care, and for the many peoples who call this land their home. We hope you and your family will observe a prayerful,

**TRUE JOY:**

Joy is the happiness that doesn't depend on what happens.

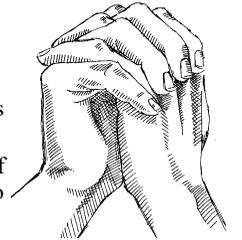
—Brother David Steindl-Rast, OSB

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, father-in-law of Andy Tran and Matt Orehek, grandfather of Theodore, Benjamin, and Magdalena Tran, who is critically ill.
- For Josephine Fernando, who is in hospice.
- For Thomas Noble who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Brother Dan Kane, C.S.C., former long-time instructor at Gilmour, who is under hospice care.
- 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 Mary DiLisi, mother of Rick ['82], Greg ['83], and Jennifer ['96] DiLisi, grandmother of Tomasso ['16], Jack Michael ['19], and Anna Marie ['22] Solomon, who is in rehab following serious surgery.
- For Gary Mills, brother of John Mills, uncle of Morgan Mills Converse ['11], who recovering from back surgery.
- For Carol Hutchison, mother of former Religion Instructor, James Menkhaus, who is under the care of hospice.
- For Andre Polsinelli, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease.
- For Brother John McMuldren, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for breathing issues.
- For Brother Tom Maddix, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for congestive heart failure.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Pete Petralia [anniversary]
- For Morada Sabio, mother of Dan ['78], Andrew ['84] Sabio, Christina Sabio Socrates ['85], Morada Sabio Mueller ['91] and Victoria Sabio Findley ['97], and grandmother of Ian ['15], Sarah ['15], Josh ['17], Nikolas ['21], and Nolan ['29] Socrates, and future grandmother-in-law of Mary Sheehan ['15].
- For Sister Anne Robinson, S.N.D.
- For Marianne Baldini, grandmother of Samantha Baldini ['14]
- For John Zalokar ['60]
- For Antoinette Burke

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the Victims of the Plane crash in India, and their families
- For an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the political issues in Gaza and Iran.
- 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.

CARING:

When you care, you give more, do more, and create more. Caring is the difference between going through the motions, doing a job and building a masterpiece.

PETER’S CALL TO LIVE THE MOMENT:

Even Catholic Scripture scholars agree that the biblical role of Peter isn’t to be the first pope — it’s to be a witness to Jesus’ resurrection. Accustomed to hearing Jesus’ well-known words to Peter against the background of the hierarchical church structure which we’ve created through the centuries, it’s difficult to put ourselves in the place of Matthew’s original readers — Jewish/Christians who had a frame of mind about Jesus and his church different from that which most of us Gentile/Christians have.

The majority of commentators on Matthew’s gospel are convinced the evangelist and his community were still expecting Jesus’ Parousia in their lifetime. So they’d have little reason to expect “their Jesus” to set up a structure that would guarantee their existence for thousands of years down the road. Along with most of Jesus’ earliest followers, they were much more interested in the here and now than in the distant future.

But even more important is the fact that they were Jews — Israelites who hadn’t given up their religion when they bought into the reforms Jesus preached. None of them believed that this Capernaum carpenter had created a new religion — He simply had created a new way of looking at and living the Jewish religion they already professed.

Unlike most of their fellow Jews, who at the most regarded Jesus to be just another prophet, they — following the lead of Peter — believed Jesus to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” [Matthew 16:13-19]. This unique belief in the presence of the living God among them was the “rock” on which their Christian community was built — the guarantee that the “gates of the nether world” would never wipe them out. They would always be able to overcome any evil that would confront them.

But that faith would also enable Peter — and the whole community [Matthew 18:16-17] — to know what to “bind and loose.” Just like their Jewish proto-rabbis, those who believed in the presence of the risen Jesus could definitively determine which of the 613 Laws of Moses applied to them and which didn’t. Their faith was the key which opened the “kingdom of heaven” for them.

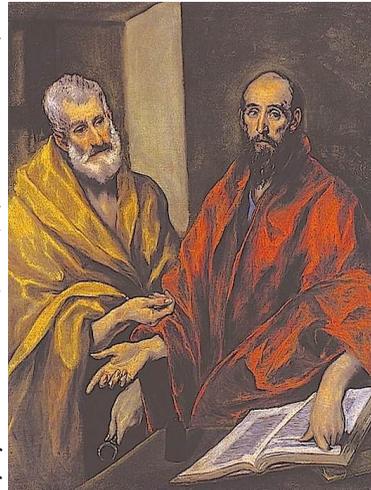
In Matthew’s gospel, the kingdom of heaven normally doesn’t refer to the place we’re planning to inhabit after our physical deaths. As a good Jew, Matthew tries to avoid using the word God. In Matthew’s Gospel, the kingdom of heaven is Jesus’ way of talking about God working effectively in our lives right here and now. The necessity to surface that presence is at the heart of Jesus’ preaching. But after his own death and resurrection, his followers also employed it to describe their faith in the risen Jesus working effectively in their daily lives. It’s that faith which enabled them to look at everyone and everything from a different perspective — the rock which gave stability to their lives.

Instead of setting up the papacy, Matthew’s Jesus is setting up a way of living one’s faith. Those who preach the risen Jesus will be saved from annihilation by the risen Jesus. Peter’s being delivered from Herod’s clutches is classic [Acts 12:1-11]. Nothing or no one — not even the forces of evil — will ever stop God’s word from being proclaimed.

Following along the same trail, the disciple of Paul who composed Paul’s second Letter to Timothy saw in his mentor’s life and martyrdom a practical example of his deep-rooted Christian faith — “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith” [2 Timothy 4:6-18].

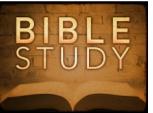
Wouldn’t it be great if someone could say similar words about us during our funeral than to simply mention that “He or she was a good Roman Catholic?”

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



NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JULY 9th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, July 9th 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 Mass as community prayer

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, June 29: Sts. Peter & Paul	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, June 30:	NO MASS
Tuesday, July 1:	NO MASS
Wednesday, July 2:	NO MASS
Thursday, July 3: St. Thomas	NO MASS
Friday, July 4: Independence Day	NO MASS
Saturday, July 5: 14 th Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In-Person only
Sunday, July 6: 14 th Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

COUNTDOWN TO THE FEST BEGINS:

Don’t miss the FEST! All ages are welcome to spend the day at the 25th annual Catholic family FESTival on Sunday, August 3rd at the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe. The FEST! brings *Maverick City Music*, *Danny Gokey*, *Ben Fuller*, and *Seph Schlueter* to the main stage along with faith-based activities for all ages. Come and enjoy delicious food along with great displays and presentations. The FEST! Mass begins at 8:00 PM. Join thousands from across the Diocese as we celebrate our faith with an outside Mass followed by an amazing American Fireworks Display. The day begins at noon and continues through 10:00 PM. All of the many events, activities, displays and directions can be found at www.thefest.us The FEST! is FREE and open to all. It’s a great family day. Make plans to come to the FEST!



GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE:

Cast yourself into the arms of God and be very sure that if He wants anything of you, He will fit you for the work and give you strength.

— St. Philip Neri 3

REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK’S THEME:

Amazing Grace is a song that is well known by most, if not all, of us. The closing lines of the first verse sound a prominent note for this weekend’s feast — *I once was lost, but now I’m found; was blind, but now I see.* Peter and Paul — each a giant of faith — both experienced the rescue that these words of the old hymn sing about. The book of Acts [12:1-11] sets the scene. Picture Peter and Paul, both in prison and in chains, discussing together their respective histories that got them in this predicament. Their faces reveal a great trust in God; they know they have been called to this special ministry of sharing the gospel. Listen with your heart as you hear them rattling their chains occasionally as they laugh at each other’s stories.

Over the course of the past few weeks, we have celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the Body and Blood of Jesus. Now we pause to celebrate the Church’s beginning through the preaching of its two great Apostles, Peter and Paul. In the up-coming weeks we return to “Ordinary Time” which contains the liturgies meant to help us celebrate and live what we have heard as Church. Thus, what was the life mission of Peter and Paul is now our mission. We are called to continue the journey.

Peter and Paul were human beings like ourselves. Peter, after all, was the disciple who denied that he even knew Jesus when the servant girl questioned him in the high priest’s courtyard [see Luke 22:31-34]; and Paul was that zealous persecutor of the Christian movement — “breathing murderous threats” [see Acts 9:1-8].

In both cases, God called them in spite of their failure — Paul was confronted by the risen Jesus in person before he saw the light, and was changed from premier persecutor to prime promoter of the Christian mission; and Peter was confronted by the look of Jesus [see Luke 22:6-62]. Peter and Paul both heard the call of God, and they allowed the Good News into their hearts and lives, and then they lived it out. We too need to listen to God’s call; we need to accept the gospel in to our hearts; and we must live it out. We have a sacred mission. The lives of Peter and Paul demonstrate that the life of a disciple is a life that knows God as rescuer — finding oneself on the receiving end of divine love. And that could not be any clearer than in Jesus’ appointment of Peter — “you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church” [Matthew 16:13-19].

It has been said: “You can’t keep a good person down.” Peter and Paul are living witnesses to the truth of that statement. Peter is arrested, put in prison, chained between two soldiers and is preparing to be executed — just as was James, the brother of John, before him. But God intervenes. An angel appears, wakes him up, leads him out and then leaves him alone [Acts 12:1-11]. What we do not hear is that Peter goes directly to the community who has been praying for him. They are amazed, make sure that he is actually he, and then Peter moves off to assure others that he too has “risen” from the prison.

Paul, on the other hand, is writing to his good friend, Timothy [2 Timothy 4:6-9,13-18]. Paul is writing this near the end of his preaching-life. This is a boast of faith in all that the Lord has done for and through him. In the letter, Paul encourages the community to stay strong in the preaching against new and false teachings which will arise because of personal tastes and desires for novelties. Paul then attests that the Lord has rescued him many times and will continue to save him until his being brought safely into the “heavenly kingdom.” Paul had poured out his life as a “libation” — or sacrificial sprinkling — through his tireless travels and preaching to the Gentiles. Paul continues to be “poured out” evening until his final moments, and he assures his followers that they too are called to be “poured out” as they live and proclaim the same authentic message he had received and shared.

The Gospel [Matthew 16:13-19] returns our focus to Peter and his second calling. When Jesus asks about who the people on the roads say he — Jesus — is, Peter replies for himself and apparently his

**PERSECUTION — THEN AND NOW:**

The Scripture Readings for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul provide us with a glimpse into the remarkable lives of two early Christians who endured persecution because of their faith. While the church singles out these two individuals and recognizes them as “saints,” their experience of persecution, and in the case of Peter who suffered at the hands of an imperial and authoritative leader, is no different from the oppression that many Christians endure throughout the world today.

Organizations such as Christian Freedom International use the *World Watch List*, which documents the global persecution of Christians. Statistics indicate that to date, more than 380 million Christians suffer persecution and discrimination because of their faith. In North Korea — where extreme Christian oppression is at its peak — Christians are arrested, forced to work in labor camps and even executed. Nigeria tragically holds the highest count of killings of Christians. In Pakistan, Christian girls are increasingly being abducted and forced to marry older Muslim men.

In the Book of Acts, a divine angel comes to free Peter from unjust imprisonment [Acts 12:1-11]. In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he bears testimony to the divine aid that he received during his trials [2 Timothy 4:6-9,13-18]. Both Peter and Paul speak of hope in the midst of Christian persecution and oppression.

But is there hope for persecuted and oppressed Christians today?

In Nicaragua, Catholic Bishop Rolando Jose Alvarez spoke out against the oppressive regime of Jose Daniel Ortega Saavedra — and was unjustly convicted of conspiracy and treason and eventually sentenced to 26 years in prison in 2023. Because of international pressure and sanctions, he was freed, expelled from the country and exiled to Vatican City. The divine “angel” came in the form of political and economic pressure exerted against a country’s dictator.

In Viet Nam, Y Yich, pastor of the Degar Protestant Church, was imprisoned in 2013 for his Christian faith. After serving 12 years, he was set free mid-May 2025 when U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman [R-Wisconsin] advocated for his release through the *Defending Freedoms Project*, part of the Tom Lantos 2012 Human Rights Commission formed in conjunction with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Amnesty International USA. In this case, Grothman served as Y Yich’s “angel,” and the consistent organized efforts were successful.

In the Matthean Gospel account, Peter recognizes Jesus as the Christ — the anointed one — the son of the living God [Matthew 16:13-19]. This title has nothing to do with Christ as the second person of the Trinity. An Old Testament term “son of God” refers to someone who has a special relationship with the deity. Solomon, angels, pious men and the kings of Israel are all referred to as “sons of God.” In the Gospel account, Peter acknowledges Jesus as the anointed one, sharing in a special relationship with God. A Christological and Trinitarian understanding of Christ develops later in the Christian tradition.

Following the Jesus-Peter conversation, often referred to as Peter’s Confession, Christ tasks Peter with establishing the church. Catholicism understands Peter to be the first pope. In April 2025, the college of cardinals elected Leo XIV as pope and successor to Peter. Already Pope Leo has spoken out about his concern for the persecution of Christians — especially in the Middle East.

The Scripture Readings for this Feast, as well as world events, call us to become Christians of conscience and to act accordingly. After all, we are part of a church entrusted with a global mission of justice, and we must participate in that mission on behalf of all people, whose suffering cannot go unaddressed.

—taken from the writings of Sister Carol Dempsey, O.P., which appears on the internet



SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. JULY 19th:

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



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

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

ATTENDANCE:

If you attend Mass regularly here at Our Lady Chapel, it would be helpful if you filled out a Registration Form [name, address, phone number, children, etc.] indicating this fact, if you have not already done so. Such information not only helps us to know who is attending Our Lady Chapel; it also is of great assistance to us in record keeping [for our friend, the IRS] of any contributions which you may make.

ENVELOPES:

- When you need a **new supply** of envelopes, please feel free to take a supply of them from the table in the vestibule, or call Father John at the Campus Ministry Office [473-3560].
- When you **use** your envelope, please make sure that **your number** is on it. If you need to know your number, please call the Campus Ministry Office. Thanks.

WEEKLY OFFERING:

A collection box is located just inside the center door when you enter the chapel. Please place your offering in the collection box. Baskets will not be passed during the offertory time. Your offering will help offset chapel daily operating expenses. When you choose to use the envelopes, you can request a printout of your offerings for the year to submit to the IRS. God bless you.

Total Offerings: Saturday [6/21/25] _____ \$ 195.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [6/22/25] _____ \$ 410.00

A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:

A Young Adult group is alive and well at Our Lady Chapel. Their **next meeting will be a social gathering at the Chapel Picnic on Sunday, July 13th**. The Topic for Discussion will be catching up with each other on all that has been going on in our lives. The group has been meeting 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.



RUN THE RACE:

It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our

actions

—Pope Francis

companions, that Jesus is the “Divine one,” — the “Messiah” [16]. This is the highpoint of the relationship between Jesus and those whom he had called. Jesus proclaims that this act of belief comes, not from a physical presentation of evidence, but as a gift from heaven. Faith then is more than examining evidence.

Matthew sees in this discussion the fact that Jesus is beginning to hand over the responsibility of his ministry —the “tradition” of Jesus’ being extended; in this witness, Jesus is made almost “bigger than life.” As Peter and the other apostles were called, so all that Jesus gives to Peter is meant to continue the calling, so that those who hear and follow will be called — and are called — “The Called.” Jesus never was the “convincer” but the “inviter.” Peter is offered the position of “rock” or foundation slab. The “keys” are not meant for locking up, but keeping safe for future distribution of the original and authentic Jesus.

As Jesus asked Peter, what people are saying about him — Jesus — so the world is asking the Church who the Jesus is. It’s an interesting question that the world doesn’t ask often enough. The world needs to see itself in terms of its identification with Christ. Far too often we lose the vision of who we are. We all need to remember that just as Peter and Paul were rescued from being shut up, discredited and put away for good, so too are we blessed. Each of us has our own prison that confines us. Like Peter and Paul, we are freed from our prisons by Jesus so that we can go forth and preach the word and bless others.

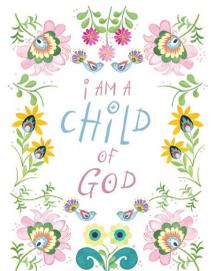
How much Simon will still need “outside help” to carry out his role as Rock becomes clear a moment later, when he objects to Jesus’ prediction of his coming suffering and death in Jerusalem, and Jesus calls him “Satan” and “stumbling stone” [see Matthew 16:21-22]. Without God’s help, the foundation stone can become a stone of stumbling — a cautionary note for all of us. For we will all need God’s constant redemption as we continue to proclaim the Good News of Salvation.

“Who do others say” that Jesus is? Some say a good luck charm, a “good old boy” prophet, an historical bother and a “buddy, a friend.” Who do you say he is? Your answer determines your life and your actions. By your life, your speech and your actions, you are preaching the “Good Word”. It is hard to keep the “good word” down, no matter how strong the storm. Pray this prayer and see that it speaks about you: “These men conquering all human frailty, shed their blood and helped the church to grow. By sharing the cup of the Lord’s suffering, they became the friends of God.”

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

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:

Have you ever done an “examination of conscience?” Many people with a mature conscience do this naturally — and some way too much. Instead of just looking a “rights” and “wrongs” of your day, step back from your compulsive identification and unquestioned attachment to yourself to be truly conscious. Pure consciousness cannot be “just me”, but instead is able to watch “me” from a distance. It is aware of me seeing, knowing, and feeling. Most people do not understand this awareness because they are totally identified with their own thoughts, feelings, and compulsive patterns of perception — they have no proper distance from themselves. It is for this reason that so many of our mystics and saints emphasized detachment. Without it, people could not move to any deep level of consciousness — much less to the level of soul. Meister Eckhart said detachment was almost the whole spiritual path, and the early Franciscans seemed to talk about nothing else — although they called it “poverty.” We do not live in a culture that much appreciates detachment or such poverty. We are consumers and capitalists by training and habit — which is exactly why we have such problems with addiction to begin with. We always think more is better. For properly detached, non-addicted persons, deeper consciousness comes rather naturally. They discover their own soul which is their deepest self, and thus have access to a Larger Knowing beyond themselves.



—Father Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

In Matthew's Gospel, we find Jesus asking: "Who do you say that I am?" And we find Simon Peter answering the question by identifying Jesus as the Son of God [Matthew 16:13-19]. Evidently Peter recognized something deep within Jesus that was divine — someone coming from God. But Peter came to that as a consequence of Jesus asking him a question. Jesus in response sees something deep within Peter that Peter couldn't see for himself.

In a sense, Jesus introduced Peter to himself. "Okay," Jesus said, "you told me who I am. So now let me tell you who you are — you are Rock!" This quality was not, I am quite sure, something that Simon Peter recognized within himself. No doubt it was a big surprise, not only to Peter himself, but also to all who knew him. Probably no one would have thought that about him. Nevertheless, Peter was previously known as Simon and now, because of Jesus, he was entering into a new self-identity. It took long time, however, because Peter's behavior with respect to Jesus was anything but solid and rock-like until after Christ's resurrection.

All of this was typical of Jesus. Jesus judged differently, He went beyond appearances. We judge people by appearances — Jesus judges with penetrating insight. He went deep inside people and saw the best that was in them. Then He tried to get them to become aware of those wonderful qualities deep within themselves.

That's what He did with the woman caught in the act of adultery [see John 8:7]. He saw something in her that was far deeper than her sinfulness. Underneath her worst He never doubted that there was something better. And when all her accusers had departed, and only Jesus was left standing with her, He did not condemn her even though He recognized her sins. She must have left His presence that day with a whole new vision of who she was. She finished that day with an entirely new identity — a new name for herself, a good name, and a whole new person with a new life ahead of her.

We all hear a lot of bad news about ourselves. Jesus, on the other hand, comes to give us good news. The good news of Jesus Christ is all about who we really are and who we can become. The good news is this — inside each one of us there is the person God meant us to be. Deep within us is the person God our Father dreams we can be. Hopefully we will eventually come to see that. There's an identity — a name that God has given you that is nothing but good. We don't need to import anything from the outside. All of the skills and talents God originally gave us are still there. All of the personality traits are there. We simply need to become the person our Father always meant us to be, to bring out of ourselves the best that's within us.

When writing to the Colossians, St. Paul encourages us to "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" [Colossians 3:12-14].

The whole point is that we should see ourselves and identify ourselves as loved by God, and therefore we should see ourselves as important in God's eyes. Each one of us is specially loved by God. God our Father sent His only Son down from heaven to suffer and die for each one of us. Therefore, you are really special, really important. You are precious and loveable in the eyes of God. You should put aside how the world causes you to see yourself; put aside your self-identity and see yourself as God sees you. Likewise, you should see others as God sees them.

Individualism is stressed today — individual rights, individual freedom, and the assertion of the few over the many. Our common good and our care for the common good is very much a part of God's plan.



that: We can walk on water only as long as we don't think that we are doing it with our own strength.

The Sufi mystic, Rumi, once wrote that we live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, and then not, and then we know it again. Faith works like that; some days we walk on water, other days we sink like a stone, and then later we walk on water again.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., which appear on the internet

COOPERATING WITH GOD'S GRACE:

In this contemporary moment, it can be easy to find our usual sources of hope to be empty. Our world and our lives are undergoing many changes; chaos and questioning is rampant; and hope can appear to be scarce. For Catholics, hope, as sourced in grace, is co-operative — our hope is always, already made present to us by God. Therefore, it is often us who are blinded from what is always there, unable or unwilling to heed God's call, hear his silence and to thus cooperate. As the receivers of God's grace and hope, what does it mean to cooperate with God, to pour our lives "like a libation," to fight "the good fight," and to "keep the faith"? [2 Timothy 4:6-9,13-18].

Theologically, this is understood as self-emptying, or kenosis; we are called to empty ourselves like Christ who emptied himself in the incarnation, dwelt among us, died, and was risen. In other words, in as much as we fight the good fight and keep the faith, we are living in the way of Christ and in the hope of the Messiah. But what does it mean to "empty oneself" and so cooperate with God's grace, and how can we enter into the hope of the Messiah?

Our lives are marked by omnipresent, fear-fueled, selfish desires. There is fear everywhere — fear to speak up, fear that we will lose our friends and/or family, fear of what is coming next, fear that this will never end. And this fear inculcates the opposite of self-emptying. We turn in upon ourselves. We strive to pay bills, to keep our head above the water; we end up caring only for ourselves and our loved ones. Many of us know this to be true by the simple discussions we have with friends and family: in a context of globalized climate destruction, ubiquitous dehumanization, and political fear, how often do we hear, "but me and mines are doing well and taken care of so I'm content."

As Christianity often does, the imprisonment of Peter shows us another way [Acts 12:1-11]. Amidst active persecution, Peter was taken into custody, surrounded by guards and sentenced to death; and in the face of what seems a hopeless situation, an angel of the Lord appeared and led Peter to freedom. There is hope.

Note that in Peter's flight from imprisonment to liberation, it was never clear to him if he was being led to freedom or if he was having a vision and would therefore remain imprisoned. But as a follower of the Way of Christ, Peter is led to freedom and exclaims "Now I know that all of this is true, that our God really did send an angel to rescue me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were so certain would happen to me."

In the face of what was doomed to be certain, Peter was led to freedom. This journey to freedom was only made clear and certain in hindsight. The hope that we need today must be a hope like Peter's — a hope that is unclear to us but is still very much working. We need to nurture a hope that trusts in the angel of the Lord even if we don't know where it is going. It all begins with realizing that God walks with us, and cares for us.

—edited from an article by Francis Bocuzzi, which appeared on the internet

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 Ministers.



WALKING ON WATER, SINKING LIKE A STONE:

Faith isn't something you ever simply achieve. It's not something that you ever nail down as a fait accompli. Faith works this way: Some days you walk on water and other days you sink like a stone. Faith invariably gives way to doubt before it again recovers its confidence, then it loses it again.

We see this graphically illustrated in the famous story in the gospels of Peter walking on water. The story goes this way: The disciples had just witnessed a major miracle — Jesus feeding more than 5000 people with five loaves of bread and two fishes. Having just witnessed a miracle, their faith was strong. Soon afterwards they get into a boat to cross a lake. Jesus is not with them. A few miles out they run into a fierce storm and begin to panic. Jesus comes walking towards them on the water. Initially they're frightened and take him for a ghost. But he calms their fear by telling them, right from the center of the storm, that he is not just Jesus but that he is God's very presence.

Peter is immediately buoyed up in his faith and asks Jesus to let him too walk on the water. Jesus invites him to do so, and Peter gets out of the boat confidently and begins to walk on the water. But then, realizing what he was doing and the incredulous nature of it, he immediately starts to sink, cries out for help, and Jesus has to reach out and rescue him from drowning [Matthew 14:28-33].

What we see illustrated here are two things that lie at the heart of our experience of faith — namely, that faith literally has its ups and downs, and that it works best when we don't confuse it with our own powers. We see both of these almost pictorially illustrated in the incident of Peter walking on the water. Initially his faith feels strong and he confidently steps onto the sea and begins to walk. But, almost immediately upon realizing what he was doing, he starts to sink. Our own faith works exactly like that; at times it lets us walk on water and at other times we sink like a stone. The gospel-image of Peter walking on the sea speaks for itself.

However, if we feel discouraged because our faith vacillates in this way, we can take consolation from these words from Julian of Norwich. Describing one of her visions, she writes: "After this spiritual experience in which Jesus showed a most excellent spiritual pleasure in my soul, I was completely filled with everlasting certainty, powerfully sustained without any painful fear. This feeling was so joyful and so spiritual that I was wholly in peace and in repose and there was nothing on earth that would have grieved me. This lasted only a while, and I was changed and left to myself in such sadness and weariness of my life, and annoyance with myself that scarcely was I able to have patience to live. And immediately after this, our Blessed Lord gave me again the comfort and the rest in my soul, in delight and in security so blissful and so powerful that no fear, no sorrow, no bodily pain that could be suffered would have distressed me. And then pain showed again to my feeling, and then the joy and delight, and now the one, and now the other, various times." Julian of Norwich was a renowned mystic with an exceptional faith, and, yet, like Peter, she too vacillated between walking on water and sinking like a stone. Her confident feelings came — but they also left.

As well, faith works best when we don't confuse it with our own efforts. For example, Donald Nichol, in his book, *Holiness*, shares a story of a British missionary working in Africa. At one point, early on in his stay there, the missionary was called upon to mediate a dispute between two tribes. He had no preparation for this, was naïve, and totally out of his depth. But he gave himself over to the task in faith, and, surprisingly, reconciled the two tribes. Afterwards, buoyed by this success, he began to fancy himself as mediator, and began to present himself as an arbiter of disputes. But now, however, his efforts were invariably unhelpful.

Here's the irony: when he didn't know what he was doing, but trusted solely in God, he was able to walk on water; as soon as he began to wrap himself in the process, he sank like a stone. Faith works like



Caring for the well-being of others and caring for the good things, we can share with others is very much a part to the great command to "love God and love our neighbor as ourselves." If you want to identify yourself and who you are as a person, then that identity will be realized in what you actually do for others. I, a prisoner for the Lord, said St. Paul, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" [Ephesians 4:1-6].

That's what Peter eventually came to. But he couldn't do it all by himself — he needed Jesus to draw it out, changing his name so that he could change his picture of himself. Remember that is what is involved when God gives us a name in our baptism — a name and an identity that comes from God our Father.

Finally, Jesus calls us to live together as a family — a family that He calls His Church, a family of faith. He called it "my church", and He declared that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Hell vanishes in the face of love; the devils flee in the face of trusting, forgiving, believing, and hoping love. Jesus knows that we can't be our best all alone, all by ourselves. The best within us is always brought out in loving relationships with others. No amount of evil can ever overcome any amount of love. That's why the gates of hell are powerless in the face of it and we become like Rocks of Gibraltar, like St. Peter became the Rock, when we face of all of life's storms thrown up against us.

This coming week we will all go out to face a very difficult world. Be kind to everyone you meet. Every one of them is fighting his or her own hard battle. There are many things in our world that appeal to the worst within us. That's why it's so important to hear the words that Jesus addressed to Peter as being addressed to us. We need to hear Jesus appealing to the best within us. He said to Simon: "You are rock." Jesus is saying something similar to you and to me today. The Scriptures were written for you. Listen to what Jesus is saying to you, and then face each day of this coming week in the midst of our very troubled world, trying to remember just who it is Jesus says you are and who He meant you to be.

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

BASKETBALL SKILLS CAMPS:

Once again this summer, Gilmour Varsity Boy's Basketball Coach, Dan DeCrane, along with many of his players, is hosting a series of Basketball Skills Camps at various local parishes for grades 3-8. The first camp [Skills Camp] is July 8-10 and will take place at St. Paschal Baylon Parish from 9AM-12 noon; the second camp [Skills Camp] is July 16-18 and will take place at St. Francis of Assisi Parish from 9 AM-12 noon; the third camp [Shooting Camp] is July 21-22 and will take place at St. Paschal Baylon Parish from 9 AM-11:30 AM.

To Register: Gilmour.org/BasketballSkills



Come and enjoy some time with your friends, and get better at the game of basketball. You will have a lot of fun and improve yourself at the same time.

FAITH EDUCATION REGISTRATION BEGINS:

It is not too early to begin thinking about registering for Faith Education classes which will begin in the fall. Faith Education is an important part of every young 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.



DISCIPLESHIP AND IRONY:

The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is about discipleship and irony. It would be best if we examined each of these qualities in turn.

Today's feast is about discipleship because Peter and Paul were among the first disciples of the Church. They were founding apostles who preached the Good News to Jews and Greeks alike. Their discipleship shows us what discipleship is about. When we examine the lives of these two great apostles, it becomes clear that discipleship places demands upon us — it calls us to a higher standard. Being a disciple is more than knowing a few things about Christ and coming to church on Sunday. It is about giving ourselves as deeply as we can to the service of Christ. Peter and Paul gave their very lives. They were martyrs for the faith. Now we probably will not be called to die for Christ, but we are called to live for him. And we are called to live in a way which is distinctive — a way which is different because we believe.

What is that difference like? A story will help here. This is a true story. On March 28, 2008, National Public Radio reported this story. A young man, Julio Diaz, is a social worker in New York. One evening coming home from work, as he exited the subway, a teenager approached him with a knife and demanded his wallet. Julio gave it over immediately, but as the boy walked away he said to him: "Since it's a cold night and you're going to be out all night robbing people, why don't you take my coat as well?" The boy stopped, confused: "Why are you offering me this?" "Well, you're willing to risk your freedom for a few bucks, so you must be in need. When you stopped me, I was just going to get some dinner, which I would still like to do. Would you like to join me?"

Perhaps because he was confused or intrigued, the young man agreed. They went to a diner which Julio often frequented. He greeted everyone warmly and treated people with respect. "Why do you treat people so well?" the boy asked. "Weren't you taught to treat people well?" Julio responded. "Yes, I was. But I never saw people actually living that way." That led to a long conversation between the two of them.

When the bill came, Julio said: "You're going to have to pay for this because you have my wallet." Without a second thought, the teenager gave his wallet back. "Thank you," Julio said. "And now that I have money, I'd like to give you twenty dollars for that knife." They agreed, and the deal was closed.

Now I do not share this story with you because I think that we should follow Julio's actions exactly, if we find ourselves in a violent confrontation. I share it because in this story we see a man trying to be a disciple — trying to act differently in a situation which is a difficult one. If we are to be disciples of Jesus we have to allow the things that we believe to influence the way that we live, and the decisions that we make. If we cannot see any difference between ourselves and others in the way that we love, in the way that we forgive, in the way that we vote, in the way that we use our money, then we are not really disciples of Jesus. We are certainly not following the example of Peter and Paul. To follow Christ means that we are willing to live to a higher standard — we are willing to be different because of what we believe.

But we must not forget the irony. Both Peter and Paul were humble men — one a fisherman, the other a tent maker. Neither of them was adequately prepared to serve as the foundation for Christ's Church. Moreover, they did not start out very well. Peter denied Christ. Paul persecuted the early Church. It is the highest irony that God would choose such weak and fallible people to begin the Church. But that irony is our hope. That irony reminds us that God does not choose us because we are so capable, but because God knows that we can become capable with God's help. Our weaknesses can be overcome by God's strength.

Discipleship is living according to a higher standard, being willing to be different because of the truth of the gospel. It is not easy to live in this way, but it is possible with God's help. It is ironic that

**A LETTER FROM GOD:**

Dear "friend,"

As you got up this morning, I watched you, and hoped you would talk to me, even if it was just a few words, asking my opinion or thanking me for something good that happened in your life yesterday. But I noticed you were too busy, trying to find the right outfit to wear. When you ran around the house getting ready, I knew there would be a few minutes for you to stop and say hello, but you were too busy.

At one point you had to wait, fifteen minutes with nothing to do except sit in a chair. Then I saw you spring to your feet. I thought you wanted to talk to me but you ran to the phone and called a friend to get the latest gossip instead. I watched patiently all day long. With all your activities I guess you were too busy to say anything to me. I noticed that before lunch you looked around, maybe you felt embarrassed to talk to me; that is why you didn't bow your head. You glanced three or four tables over, and you noticed some of your friends talking to me briefly before they ate, but you didn't.

That's okay. There is still more time left, and I hope that you will talk to me yet. You went home and it seems as if you had lots of things to do. After a few of them were done, you turned on the TV. I don't know if you like TV or not, just about anything goes there, and you spend a lot of times each day in front of it not thinking about anything, just enjoying the show. I waited patiently again as you watched the TV and ate your meal, but again you didn't talk to me.

Bedtime, I guess you felt too tired. After you said goodnight to your family you plopped into bed and fell asleep in no time. That's okay because you may not realize that I am always there for you. I've got patience, more than you will ever know. I even want to teach you how to be patient with others as well. I love you so much that I wait everyday for a nod, prayer or thought or a thankful part of your heart. It is hard to have a one-sided conversation.

Well, you are getting up once again. And once again I will wait, with nothing but love for you. Hoping that today you will give me some time. Have a nice day!

Your best friend,
God

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. **Beginning in the fall, our series will resume on the 2nd Sunday of each month. October 12th. Please plan to join us. If you have any questions, please contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

GRACE:

We know certainly that our God calls us to a holy life. We know that he gives us every grace, every abundant grace; and though we are so weak of ourselves, this grace is able to carry us through every obstacle and difficulty.

— St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



IT'S ALL ABOUT WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH US:

When we consider St. Peter and St. Paul, we are often drawn into a reflection of their lives before they became committed apostles. We remember the lovable oaf Simon, who tried to walk on water towards the Lord and then sank when he questioned his faith, or his denial of the Lord three times. Or we remember Saul of Tarsus who stood at the stoning of the first martyr, St. Stephen, and thought this was a good idea, and then followed this by rounding up Christians and bringing them to trial before the Jewish authorities. If we do this, we might never get to the importance of their lives in the plan of God.

Each of them were committed to bringing the Gospel of the Lord to the center of the world — the very capital of the Roman Empire. It is shocking that St. Peter — a simple fisherman from Galilee — would travel to Rome. But the Spirit of Christ — the Holy Spirit — sent him there. He was the head of the other apostles — the Rock on which Jesus built his Church. He knew that the Church had to be firmly established in Rome for the rest of the world to learn about Christ, so he left Antioch — the first center of the Church — to strengthen the Church in Rome. This man, who had previously been afraid of death, embraced death in Rome if his blood could nourish the soil of the Church.

In 1939, excavations underneath the Basilica of St. Peter, found a first century burial vault of a large man from Palestine with a simple name plate — Peter is here. And Peter remains in Rome — the charism he received as Rock of the Church continued in each of his successor — the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

St. Paul was a scholar and a determined missionary. He sought out places to proclaim the Gospel or to sustain the proclamation made by others. He suffered continual tortures and brushes with death for the sake of the Gospel. In his letter to the Church at Corinth, Paul states that five times he received forty lashes less one, three times he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned, three times he was shipwrecked along with all sorts of other persecutions [see 2 Corinthians 11]. One of his earliest letters had been to the Church in Rome, leading these new Christians to an understanding of the working of the Grace of the Lord. Paul spent two years in prison in Jerusalem and realized that he would eventually be put to death. Since he was a Roman citizen, from the Roman City of Tarsus, he appealed to the Emperor to decide his case, and thus used the Romans to free him from the Jewish Leaders in Jerusalem and transport him to Rome [see Acts 27-28].

In Rome, Paul continued writing the Churches, and preaching to those who came to him, under a fashion of a house arrest. He was eventually killed as a Roman citizen, beheaded, but also happy that his blood would nourish the Church in Rome.

Nothing could stop these apostles of Rome from proclaiming Christ. And nothing should stop us. When we reflect on the call we have received, on the Presence of the Lord within us, on the Power of the Lord working through us — His Holy Spirit — how could stop talking about all that God has done for us?

This feast is not just about the Early Church of Rome. It is not just about Peter and Paul. This feast is about our sharing the gifts we have received with others, gifts through which we can proclaim to the world the wonders and joys of the Gospel. Like Peter and Paul the cost of discipleship is negligible when compared to the joy of possessing Jesus Christ.

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

FULLY LIVING:

To live fully in the present requires having an understanding of the big picture — a transcendent view, an eternal perspective. That infuses each and every moment with meaning and purpose, peace and joy. Instead of merely enjoying one empty pleasure after another, each day is full of new opportunities to grow and give.

—Teresa Tomeo



God would choose such weak people like Peter and Paul and us to be disciples, but that is what God does. In doing so, God removes any excuse. We cannot say: “It is impossible for me to live according to God’s standard.” God can make it possible. God will make it possible. With the same high expectation and irony that accompanied the call of Peter and Paul, God says to us: “Follow me.”

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

BONDING LOYALTY:

Have you ever asked: why do two great saints like Peter and Paul share a single feast day? The answer: they couldn’t get along here on earth, so God put them together in heaven. And you know something? The joke contains some truth. In his letter to the Church at Galatia, St. Paul recounts a clash with Peter which happened at Antioch. However, he also makes it evident that he held the fisherman in high esteem. In the same letter he states that he spent fifteen days with “Cephas.” [see Galatians 1:18 This meeting and one fourteen years later at the first Council of Jerusalem [see Acts 15] authenticated Paul’s gospel. In what is the earliest recorded profession of faith, Paul again mentions Cephas as the first apostle to see the Risen Jesus [see 1 Corinthians 15:5].

How odd that in writing to Celts [Galatians] and Greeks [Corinthians] that Paul uses the Aramaic form of Peter’s name! A contemporary example would be like spending a few weeks with Pope Leo, and come back referring to him by a nickname that would make him “one of the American boys”. To do so would be presumptive and inappropriate, but for Paul this is much more significant.

To understand what Peter meant to Paul — and other early Christians — we need to meditate on words like “rock” and “keys” [see Matthew 16:13-19]. Jesus singled Peter out and entrusted him with enormous responsibility, but not on the basis of merit. Just the opposite. And like Adam and many people after him, Peter tried to duck responsibility, but Jesus came back: “Feed my sheep” [see John 21].

That charge set Peter on a trajectory, first to Antioch [Southern Turkey], and then to Rome itself where he would fulfill Jesus’ words and die — “You will stretch out your hands and another will tie you fast” [see John 21:18].

Others would take Peter’s place. Writing in the second century, St. Irenaeus gives a list of the successors — Linus, Cletus, Clement, etc. Like Paul, subsequent Christians looked to “Peter” — often referred to as “The bishop of Rome” — as the touchstone of faith. For example, Cyprian of Carthage, who saw Christian unity threatened by deviant teachings, stated bluntly: “If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith?”

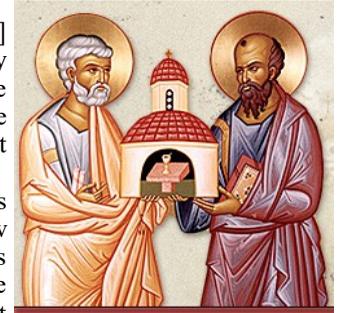
Early Christian teachers valued the “Petrine ministry.” Even a giant like Augustine turned to Rome. In the controversy with Pelagius — a British monk who denied original sin — Augustine sent their local council proceedings to Rome.

Like St. Paul, the early Christians saw Peter as the touchstone of sound teaching and unity. They knew he was a human with many faults and weaknesses, but that did not blind them to Jesus’ deeper purposes. On this Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, can we do less than pray for renewal of such faith and loyalty?

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

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].



CONTINUING THE MISSION:

Today we celebrate the feast of two great saints — saints we consider, after Christ, to be the very cornerstones of the Church. Two great saints who are yet two very human creatures — Paul the persecutor of Christians; Peter who denied Christ three times. And yet it is entirely typical of the way God deals with his people that these two unlikely characters should become such important figures in the establishment of the Church. For God chooses the weak to confound the strong. And he so often intervenes in the lives of the most unlikely people so as to bring about a conversion — a complete turnaround. So that instead of undermining the action of God in the world they actively promote it.

Peter and Paul are well balanced with complimentary gifts — Peter, the Prince of Apostles, the touchstone of unity in the Church to this very day; and Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, the first and the greatest Christian Missionary. These two poles of unity and mission are the hallmarks of the Catholic Church. They are at the root of our faith, and each one of us needs to reflect them in our own lives. We need to constantly review our lives to see that we are actively building up the unity of the Church, and that we are also widening its boundaries.

You might say that this is too big a task for one person — and you would be right. But nothing will be done unless each one of us accepts his or her share of responsibility for these things. You can get a situation where everyone thinks that unity within the parish is a good idea but yet nobody does much about it; then all you need are one or two people who act divisively, and everything falls apart.

Each one of us must actively strive to build up unity within our Christian community. That means we must work together, socialize together, and pray together. If no one was willing to jump in an help, if no one bothered to socialize, and if no one took the trouble to pray or worship together, our parish church would cease to exist. Hopefully we do these things well, but we could always do them better. Take those three things — working, socializing and praying — and let each of us resolve to do a little more in each of these areas. If that happens, our faith community will transform from a good one to a really excellent one.

The same goes for the family. There we have also to work, socialize and pray together in order to be a fully functioning family. One of the best places to do these three things is around the family table. When we prepare a meal, there is work to be done, and it shouldn't all fall on one person. The food needs to be bought and prepared, the table must be set, the food served, the dishes washed, and everything cleared up. When each person plays his or her part, the whole family works together smoothly and we all feel better as a result.

Because of the different generations within the family, socializing can sometimes be difficult — we don't all like the same kinds of music, or the same kinds of trips out. But around the table we generally have little problem socializing with each other — we can share our experiences and no one needs to dominate. It is really not so difficult to avoid arguments for an hour at mealtimes!

We know that prayer is quite often difficult within the family. Things were probably better when we were little and our parents helped us to say our prayers. But as we grow older, it can feel embarrassing, and we don't all have the same degree of faith, and while it might be fine to worship alongside each other in Church, it is not quite so easy to pray together in the home.

But grace before meals is still considered an acceptable ritual. We should take care not to lose it, and if we have lost it, we should try to reinstate it. Perhaps we might introduce it on a special occasion and then try to keep it going on Sundays, or whenever we sit down as a family to eat. A good way is for



someone to say the simple prayer that we know so well — “Bless us O Lord and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty through Christ our Lord.” Then perhaps each one could briefly say aloud some intention they would like the others to pray for, and then draw it together by saying the Lord’s prayer — and “bless the cook!”

The family meal can provide us with a means of working on these three important areas of work, socialization, and prayer which can build up our families and make them really united. It is this kind of unity that is symbolized by this Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

The unity of family is also a witness to mission — a witness to the Gospel of Christ. We can give this witness in hundreds of ways. The crucifix on the walls of your home, your presence at Mass as a family, and becoming involved in the various outreach programs that we offer — all these witness to your neighbors — as well as to each other — to your family’s faith. Even the smallest of things can give testimony to Christ and so help build up his kingdom here on earth.

We are all aware that the world is growing more and more secular and we might feel that the Gospel values are no longer reflected in the media and in the life of our nation. It is really interesting to note in our society, fewer people know the common prayers — The “Our Father”, “Hail Mary”, or “Glory be”. Fewer people know how to pray the rosary. But it’s just an indicator of real cultural deficiency.

There is no doubt at all that we Christians really have to do more on a national and local level to evangelize our society. But again, this is not something that can be left to a few — all of us must play a part. We cannot be anonymous Christians in our world — we have to be identifiable.

People will not be convinced by slogans or advertising — they will only be convinced by persons. We are those persons. Our task is to stand up and be counted for who we are, and to demonstrate by our lives that Christ is our Lord, and that we have found salvation in him.

Saints Peter and Paul are our models, our guides, and our real helpers in all these tasks. As they did, we too can — with the grace of Christ — overcome our human weaknesses and be involved in building up the unity of the Church and widening its boundaries.

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

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Genesis 18:16-33; Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday: Genesis 19:15-29; Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday: Genesis 21:5-20; Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday: Ephesians 2:19-22; John 20:24-29

Friday: Joshua 1:1-8,3:5; Galatians 5:1,13-25; Matthew 6:19-34

Saturday: Genesis 27:1-29; Matthew 9:14-17

14th Week in Ordinary Time: Isaiah 66:10-14; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-20

MOVING INTO THE UNKNOWN:

It takes courage to move away from the safe place into the unknown, even when we know that the safe place offers false safety and the unknown promises us a saving intimacy with God. We realize quite well that giving up the familiar and reaching out with open arms towards him who transcends all our mental grasping and clinging makes us very vulnerable. Somewhere we sense that, although holding on to our illusions might lead to a truncated life, the surrender in love leads to the cross.

—Henri Nouwen 11