

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A Prayer to Celebrate Creation ~**

Loving God,  
you have given us  
the abundant earth  
to be our home,  
and from your hand  
has come the fields  
that yield the harvest,  
the gardens  
and the waters  
that feed  
and delight us,  
the vineyards  
and the mountains,  
the valleys,  
plains,  
and meadows.

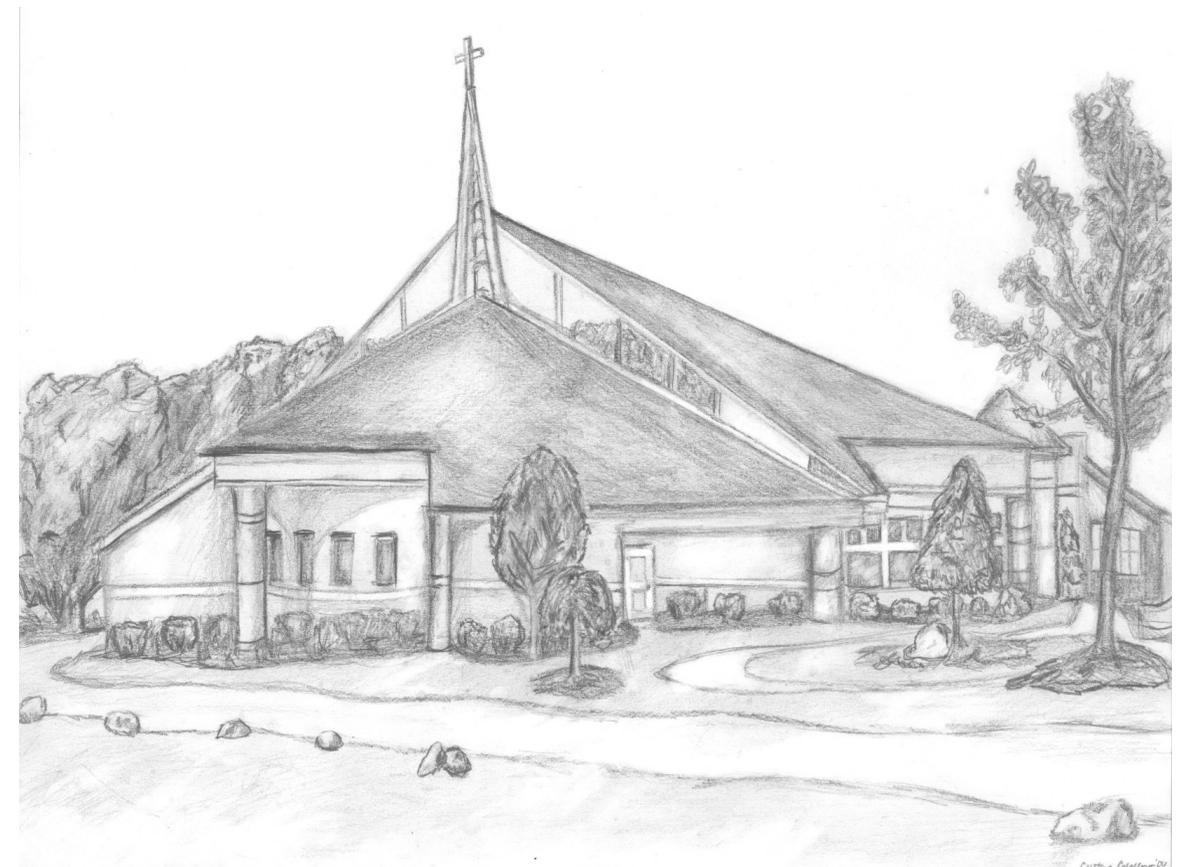
All that lives  
is your gift of life,  
all that grows  
is part of your creation,  
and all that delights us  
in the rainbow  
and the rose  
is part of your eternal beauty.

For the miracle of life,  
and for sending us Jesus  
to teach us  
how to live,  
we give you thanks,  
and join the angels  
in their praise...  
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.*

**CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY:**

On Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, we observed Independence Day. Holiday weekends are always time for family and friends; the time off from the routine of the workday, offering us an opportunity to give attention to other important aspects of our lives. Let us take time this weekend to celebrate our heritage, and the call to use our freedoms and liberties to build a more just and humane society. As we rejoice in the blessings of our nation, let us also realize that without God, our freedoms are misspent. God Bless You, and your families.

**CHAPEL OUTDOOR PICNIC — NEXT SUNDAY:**

Our Chapel Outdoor Picnic is next Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP — NEXT SUNDAY:**

A Young Adult group is alive and well at Our Lady Chapel. Their next meeting will be a social gathering at the Chapel Picnic next Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. 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 the Chapel Picnic, 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.

**ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL SUPPLIES:**

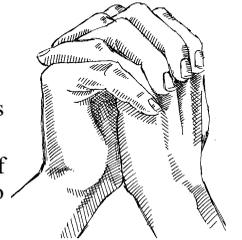
Once again this year, we are assisting the students at St. Adalbert School with their school supplies. The following items are needed: **#2 Pencils, Pink Erasers, Crayons, Colored Markers, Glue & Single-Subject Spiral Notebooks.** We will add more items to this list if we receive further communication from the school. Here is how you can be a part of this outreach. Simply shop for items on the list. Kindly **return the items** whenever you come to Our Lady Chapel; we will have boxes in the narthex marked "St. Adalbert." **If you do not have time to shop, simply place an envelope in the collection box and mark it "St. Adalbert's" or drop it off in the Chapel office.** Together, we will work and plant our seeds of hope and goodness with their community. Thank you in advance for your generosity and helping the children of St. Adalbert! Contact Patty in the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] if you have any questions. We will be concluding our school supply drive by **Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>.**

**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 Carol Hutchison, mother of former Religion Instructor, James Menkhous, 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 Josephine Petralia [anniversary]
- For Morada Sabio, mother of Dan ['78], Andrew ['84] Sabio, Christina Sabio Socrates ['85], Morada For John Zalokar ['60]
- For Antoinette Burke.
- For Richard Herman.
- For Alberta Nieberding.

**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.

talking at once. Jesus himself joined right in: “I saw Satan falling like lightning from the sky.”

Who were these seventy-two? We don’t know even one their names. And there is a reason for that —they are us — we are the seventy-two. We are the ones who have nursed on the Word of God and become strong. We are the ones who have become so strong that other’s experience the Word of God within us. The Kingdom is proclaimed. Evil is destroyed. The devil falls from the sky.

And we are overwhelmed with joy.

But this joy is radically different from any other concept of joy we may have. This joy is different in a most shocking way. St. Paul — the original Sultan of Shock — speaks about this joy in his letter to the Church at Galatia [6:14-18]. Paul’s joy, his strength, his boast is our joy, our strength our boast. His joy and our joy is in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is not merely a memory of an event that took place two thousand years ago — that is too simple, too convenient. Paul’s joy and our joy is in our sharing the Cross of the Lord. St. Paul says: “I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.” This can’t be relegated to a discussion on whether or not he received the stigmata. That’s too easy, too convenient. No, Paul — and we are afflicted with the result of following Jesus Christ.

So, we avoid that party where there are drugs and drunks — teens and adults — and that causes pain from those who mock us for not going, and we gladly bear these pains in union with the Cross. And we happily give up what we want to care for another’s needs.

Just about every parent does this. You happily gave up that boat, that beach townhouse, that top of the line car that you wanted, because your children need a college education. Still, it smarts, but you happily make the sacrifice and bear the marks of the Lord on your body.

And so, we dare to make the decision to be holy — to be separate for the Lord — and people say to us: “Get real.” The girls at work, the guys on the business trip, the kids at school, the neighbors, the relatives — all mock us for wanting to be holy. They say: “Get real, everybody is doing this and that. It is the way the world is. Join it.”

And we respond: “I am real. I am united to the one true reality, Jesus Christ. He means more to me than anything. His Holiness and His Presence is well worth, infinitely worth, what it costs — your scorn. I gladly bear the marks of the Lord on my body.”

Hear what Scripture says today: “Drink abundantly from the breasts of Jerusalem. Witness the action of God in your lives. Relish in the Power of the Lord working through you, and boast in your sharing in the Cross of Christ.” As the Song says: “O Lord, I want to be holy, just like you. I want to go where you lead me to. With reckless abandon to the truth, I want to fall deeper in love with you.”

—taken from the writings for Father Joseph Pellegrino, 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.

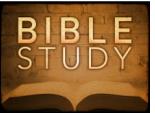
To Register: [Gilmour.org/BasketballSkills](http://Gilmour.org/BasketballSkills)



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.

**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, JULY 9<sup>th</sup>:**

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



**Our topic: The 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, July 6: 14 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, July 7:	NO MASS
Tuesday, July 8:	NO MASS
Wednesday, July 9:	NO MASS
Thursday, July 10:	NO MASS
Friday, July 11: St. Benedict, Abbott	NO MASS
Saturday, July 12: 15 <sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In-Person only
Sunday, July 13: 15 <sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> annual Catholic family FESTival on Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.thefest.us) The FEST! is FREE and open to all. It’s a great family day. Make plans to come to the FEST!



**REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:**

We in the United States are celebrating this long weekend — an historical event of separation and independence from what was known as “Mother England”. There are parades, speeches, and the evening skies are filled with fireworks. We love our independence. But as Catholics, the historical event that we celebrate is one of inclusion and dependence. We refer to the Church as “Holy Mother”, and every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, there are proclamations of the Word, processions towards and away from the altar, and our days are thereby filled with the “grace works” of Christ.

The reality is that God has taken up a divine presence among us; God keep seeking and finding us — despite our personal histories of distancing ourselves from Him. In Jesus, God has extended the Holy of Holies from bricks into hearts. We all have played games of independence from God — and sometimes we think that we have won. God does not play games, but plays to win and that victory is our joy. We are included, and there is great cause for rejoicing.

The temple in Jerusalem was the dwelling place of God, and the reminder of the covenant of God's fidelity. It was the foundational presence of Israel as God's Chosen People. They were what the Temple said they were. It became the celebration place for their identity, their history, and their future.

But like everything, time can wear away our focus, and so Isaiah calls out for the hope and rebirth of the nation Israel. [Isaiah 66:5-14]. The Temple has been rebuilt and so the identity of the nation is reborn. God is giving birth once again to the people, and, as a mother, God is filled with maternal rejoicing.

The Temple itself is in a maternal posture giving birth and consoling nourishment. The presence of God is again a blessing for all — who like young children, sit in Her lap and are comforted with her motherly gestures of faithful love. Those who find life and strength from such sustenance will live their lives as faithful children in service to their God.

In Luke's gospel [10:1-20], Jesus is giving a rather extended “pep talk”. As Moses selected seventy elders to guide and govern his people, so Luke positions Jesus as a Moses, sending out seventy-two advance people to make known his coming. The basic thrust of his instruction is that they are to depend on nothing nor anybody — they are to depend only on the Spirit with which Jesus sends them.

We hear also of their joyous return and excited report of all they had done and seen.

Jesus receives their report, and He reminds them that what they had experienced was that they belong dependently for their identity upon God. Jesus is the “kingdom of God” which is close at hand. The ones sent are how that “kingdom” will be handed on. They will see and do great things — but even greater are the works that will be done through them without their knowing it.

Whenever there has been or is a rebellion for independence — whether that be a nation or a teenager — there follows a necessary search for identity. When the first thirteen rebellious colonies broke from England, they then had to spend years figuring out and fighting among themselves about who they then would be. We can spend our lives making personal declarations of independence — and thereby we think we are free.

A few years ago, there was a radio commercial about a brand of bread. The young boy told his mother that he was running away from home. She asked him if he would like her to make a sandwich or

**EAT SOMETHING:**

The readings for the 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time begin with Isaiah presenting us with a beautiful image of a baby nursing [Isaiah 66:5-14]. Babies need the best food they can have — the food their mothers' provide. Why is it that this image is somewhat embarrassing in modern American society, but perfectly natural in most other settings? Not only is it natural; it is also healthy. Here we see the image of Jerusalem as being a mother nursing her child. In the earthly language of ancient Palestine, the image emphasizes that Jerusalem's breasts are large, filled with milk. We are told to drink fully of the milk of her comfort and nurse with delight at her abundant breasts.

Have you ever seen those pictures on TV or in the newspaper of mothers and babies in famine plagued nations of our world? One of the saddest I have ever seen is a picture of a mother and baby in Somalia during one of the horrible famines that plague that section of the world. The mother could not consume enough food for her breasts to produce milk for her baby. She sat there, her eyes glazed over with a suffering beyond imagination. She sat and watched her infant crying and dying of starvation.

That dying baby — that's us without the Lord. That starving child is us when we are not consuming the Word of God. Isaiah exhorts us: “Nurse and be strong. You have a source of all the nourishment you need. Jerusalem provides the food this nourishment.” From Jerusalem comes the Word of God, the Word of God in Scripture, the Word of God that has become flesh, Jesus Christ.

There are many times in our lives that we all cry out: “I am hungry. I am drained. I am spiritually weak.” What do we say to our children when they are hungry? We say: “Eat something.”

“I am hungry,” we complain.

“Then eat,” Isaiah tells us. “Read scripture, let the Word of God work on you.”

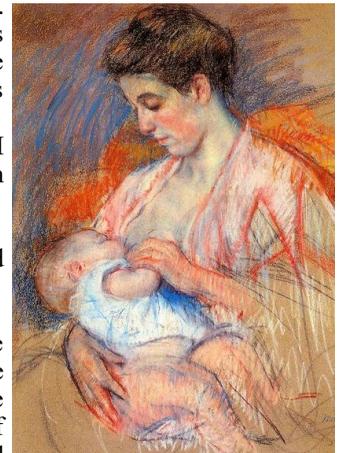
“But I don't know where to start,” we cry.

We have bibles. We have the Eucharist. We have everything we need. But we don't take advantage of God's gifts. Do you know what we are like? We are like the guy that is really hungry and opens up the refrigerator, full of food, but just stares. Have you ever done that? Most of us have — so have I. “Let's see, do I want a piece of last night's fried chicken, or maybe I can make a sandwich, or maybe I should have a piece of pie.” And we just stand there, stare, and stay hungry.

Stop staring, and start eating! A good place to begin is to prepared better for our weekly celebration of the Lord's Dinner. Read the readings during the week — start on Monday and read the first reading, the second on Tuesday, the Gospel on Wednesday, and then start again Thursday with the first reading. On Sunday read all three. Just ask yourself: “what is this reading saying to me.”

Another daily practice we can have is reading a few verses every day of the Gospel that the Liturgy is focusing on for this year — the Gospel of Luke. Or, perhaps, focus on the Gospel of John — the Gospel that makes an appearance throughout the church year during all three cycles. Whatever we do, we need to nurse. We need to get the food we need from Jerusalem's abundant breasts — the Word of God.

In Luke's Gospel for the 14<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time [Luke 10:1-20], the seventy-two who had been sent out by Jesus to proclaim the kingdom return exuberant. You can feel their excitement — they had such wonderful experiences that they couldn't wait to tell the Lord all about them. Everybody was



**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month. October 12<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to join us. If you have any questions, please contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

**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.

**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 [6/28/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 486.47**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [6/29/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 420.00**

two for the trip. He softly said that would be okay. Then he asked his mother if she would drive him!

As much as we love and fight for freedom personally and nationally, spiritually we have to fight to retain our sense of relational dependence upon God. While everything around us invites or urges us to shake off anything that hinders our freedom, that kind of rebellion leaves us alone with just what we wanted — ourselves. Self-reliance sounds psychologically healthy; religiously and spiritually it is a phrase of foolishness. We can celebrate “self-made” persons for their independent works, but they really were not self-made at all.

We are given life — nourished by the loving motherly sandwiches of life. We breathe the sustaining air, receive the nurturing sun and rain, and then, we can rebelliously stamp our feet and shout: “I am who I choose I am!” In the very midst of our declarations, Jesus sends elders, apostles, advancers to tap God's foot towards us, around us, and to announce that the “kingdom of God is at hand for you.”

We are similar to the “First Thirteen” colonies, then, who know from whence we came, but rebel at that kind of dependent identity. Who we are is a bit tangential to whom we will be through our own achievements. It does seem in the history of God's relationship with humanity that God expects this resistance as part of God's relational pattern with us. It seems that we struggle for our own identities by resisting and shaking off, so that we can create our own kingdoms which are at our hands and for ourselves. It seems that God says: “Well, you won't know who you [I] really are]m until you try to find out who you are by your own self-identifying efforts. Good luck. And don't forget to labor for your emptiness to free you to look up and smile.

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

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. JULY 19<sup>th</sup>:**

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



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

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

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. All social distancing will remain in place. Always remember the Lord's invitation: “I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart” [Jeremiah 24:7].

**A TRUTH:**

You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

**PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP:**

Here's a variation on the twenty dollar bill that appeared in last week's Bulletin. The twenty dollar bill and the one dollar bill finally met in the US Treasury. After a long life, they had come to the end of their usefulness and were about to be destroyed. The twenty speaks: "I don't mind. I've had a good run. I have been in many excellent restaurants. I've been on great vacations. I've seen wonderful theater in my day." Then the twenty asks the one dollar bill: "How about you, pilgrim? What kind of a time have you had?" Downcast, the one dollar bill responded: "Lousy! I've spent most of my life at the bottom of collection baskets in Catholic churches." We laugh at this story, but the laugh is on us.

In Luke's Gospel [10:1-20], Jesus addresses the disciples whom He is sending out into the field — "Carry no purse, no backpacks, no sandals." Many people like to think that Jesus was endorsing poverty for His missionaries. But that is not the case at all. Rather, Jesus is telling them that those among whom they labor will supply them with purses, backpacks, and sandals. In a word, Jesus was encouraging His followers to be generous to those working among them.

And, should anyone miss His point, The Teacher adds: "The laborer deserves his wages." The former carpenter — who Himself had no doubt been cheated by deadbeat clients in Nazareth — was saying to contemporary Catholics: "Just as you pay the plumbers and house-painters who work in your home, support my messengers who build your spirits and my Church."

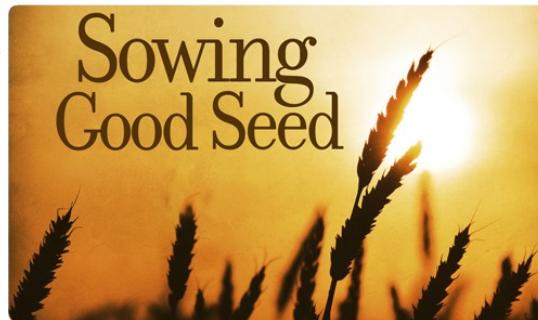
How does this advice from the Teacher compare with the facts? A recent study showed that while the average Catholic family donates 1% of its income to the church, its counterpart in the Presbyterian church is giving 2.2% or more than two times what the Catholic family gives. And, if anybody is anxious to take a guilt trip, do consider that the Mormons give 10% of their income to their church — and oftentimes they give two years of their lives working as missionaries.

Or how about this mind-boggling statistic? It is estimated that two million Seven Day Adventists give more money to their church for the missions than 800 million Catholics around the globe. So, as somebody has put it, while most Catholics are willing to give God credit, too few are willing to give Him cash.

When was the last time you saw a BINGO sign outside a Mormon temple or a Presbyterian church? We Catholics do seem to have the market sewn up on that dubious adventure. I know of a Catholic parish that has four bingos weekly. One unhappily can argue that in the popular mind at least bingo is the fifth mark of the Church. A comedian has been quoted as saying on national TV: "I knew I had pulled up in front of a Catholic church. As soon as I turned off the ignition, parishioners rushed out and began to raffle my car off." He of course got a big laugh. However, what kind of laughter would he have gotten had he substituted Presbyterian or Mormon for Catholic?

Our immigrant parents left to us as their legacy in the USA the largest parochial school system the world has ever witnessed. And yet we, who have more money than our parents ever dreamed of, are allowing that same system to slowly disintegrate. Our schools are threatening to go the way of the dinosaurs and the dodo bird. What will generations to come say of us, do you think?

The loser in all this is Jesus. We expend so much enthusiasm on cake sales, carnivals — and things of this nature — that we have little strength left to get His message out to people. His life is called the greatest story ever told. But we have no time to tell it.



we will discover people who will save our souls. Jerry A. Anderson in his book, *Hummingbirds and Hollyhocks*, tells about a time when, as a protestant minister in a small mountain community, he was invited by a young couple to bless their home. "The dwelling itself was a typical mountain shack. The house was up on poles with several wooden and broken steps leading to the porch. An old swing hung by one chain at the far end of the porch, and a straight-back pole chair stood leaning against the wall."

Anderson was startled by a voice from inside the house. "Come in," the woman said. "We have been waiting for you."

"She wore a print dress and her brown hair hung softly about her face," Anderson writes. "She was prettier than I remembered her. The man came in from the back porch carrying a water bucket with a dipper in it. He sat it down, dried his hands on his freshly pressed overalls, and shook hands."

Anderson looked around the room. "There was a table held together by some protruding nails and wire, and two high-back chairs — like the one on the porch. The kitchen boasted an old-time wood stove with eight-pound irons sitting on the back of the stove. The little bedroom had a straw mattress on the floor and nothing more. One could see the ground through the cracks in the floor, which is an advantage when you sweep — everything falls through the cracks."

"Are you ready?" the young man asked as he dried the palms of his hands on the front of his overalls. Anderson took out his Bible and read some appropriate scriptures, and was just ready to pray the Prayer of Dedication, when the humble couple each took his hands and knelt on the floor. So, there they were — Reverend Anderson and this humble couple — kneeling on that hard, bare floor, holding hands and thanking God for this home and invoking His blessings on this couple.

As they stood, the young woman turned to her husband, put her arms around his neck, and said: "Honey, now we have everything!" Moments later they stood on the front porch with arms around each other, waving goodbye to Anderson. Even the old rooster seemed friendlier, Anderson thought, as he drove down the gravel road, looking back at the house. Had he missed something? No — the house was as bleak and bare as before; but now he realized that he had not asked God to bless a house, but a home. This young couple was just starting out in life with none of the world's goods; yet they felt that because of their faith and their love for each other, they "had everything." Remembering the warmth of their hands and the light in their faces, he had to agree. They were blessed with much more than the world could give.

Who ministered to whom? Many in our chapel and school family have gone to Honduras where the people are unimaginably poor; these missionaries will tell you that they met people who put them to shame spiritually. When you meet people like that — living in conditions that we would term unacceptable, but praising God for what they do have — it will save your soul.

Not many churches are sending people two-by-two into the community any more. Maybe we should. But, if we do, we've got to examine our motives. We don't go out simply to build a bigger church or to impress people with our goodness. We go out because there are people out there who are in great need. We go out, not as people who feel superior to the world, but as caring people who identify with them in their hurt and their need. And we go out with the hope and the realization that when we minister to the least and the lowest, sometimes we encounter Christ — and that will save our souls.

—taken from the writings of King Duncan which appear on the internet

**BEING BLESSED:**

The lives that have been the greatest blessing to others are very often the lives of those people who themselves were unaware of having been a blessing

—O. Chambers

The Korean man explained: “My people are Buddhist, and I have been a Buddhist. But Buddha gives me no comfort.” Then he pointed to a Korean Bible. He noted that he had read through it twice. “It tells of a great one. I have waited for someone to come and tell me more about him.” He said that he had believed that if the Bible was true, God would send someone to tell him. The missionary continued to talk to the man about Jesus. He readily believed. Later, as the missionary was leaving, the man thanked him for coming, and said: I just want you to know that you almost waited too long.” The missionary began to cry.

The man’s words haunted the soul — and they ought to haunt us — “You almost waited too long”. There are people in our community, and in your life — maybe even in your own family — who are in desperate straits. And Christ has called us to minister to them — before it is too late. Jesus still calls us to reach out to the world.

Second, **Jesus calls us to identify with those He came to save.** So many Christians are much more like the Pharisees than they are like Jesus. The Pharisees set themselves apart from unrighteous people. They were much more concerned that they did not become sullied than that the sick and the dying encounter Christ. Jesus wants his followers to have a heart for all people. He wants us to identify with the least and the lowest.

It is interesting that Jesus told those whom he was sending out to “eat and drink whatever is set before you”. That sometimes is a test of faith all by itself. “Whether it be on a mission trip, or even working with a group of people, we can find ourselves in situations where “what is put before” is not part of our daily routine — whether it be food or lifestyle. But the worst thing we can do is to make a person who is in need or in the middle of a crisis feel rejected or feel inferior. Maybe they have not exercised the kind of discipline in their lives that we would prefer, maybe they don’t frame their requests in a theologically correct manner, but they are still people for whom Christ died — they are precious to him and they are in need — and that is all that matters.

A young hospital was serving his internship in a large, teaching hospital. While on call one night, he was summoned to the room of a woman whose baby had been stillborn a few hours earlier. “We want our baby baptized,” the young mother said, cradling her lifeless daughter, her husband at her side. “Her name is Nicole.”

The intern didn’t know what to do. He asked the young parents to wait a few minutes and then come to the chapel. Meanwhile, he tried to find a more experienced — a chaplain — to take over. He was unsuccessful. What was he to do? What was he to say? Baptize a stillborn? This situation had not been covered in either his training or his pastoral care of patients and families. He tried to think what he could say to minister to this young couple in their grief.

The intern took the family down to the chapel. When they arrived at the chapel, the words he had hoped to say did not come. Instead, and almost without realizing what he was doing, he took a tissue, wiped at the tears in the eyes of the parents, then wiped his own tears. Taking a bottle of water he poured the water over the child, and said: “Nicole, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

He said nothing else — the tears were more eloquent than words could have been.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and Jesus wants us to have a tender concern for all God’s children. There are people in our lives who are barely keeping their head above water emotionally and spiritually. Christ calls us to identify with them and to minister to them.

But there’s one thing more we need to understand. **Sometimes, those we minister to will do more for us than we will do for them.** Here is one reason Christ would have us reach out to the world —



Yet, recall what Jesus says to the disciples when he sends them out into the mission field — He did not instruct them to become blackjack dealers or pit men. Quite the contrary! Jesus instructs His people to harvest the souls quickly that are waiting for them.

We should reflect long and hard on Rousseau’s dictum: “When a person dies, they carry in their clutched hands only that which they have given away.”

—taken from the writings of Father James Gilhooley which appear on the internet

### A PRAYER:

O Lord, who else or what else can I desire but you? You are my Lord, Lord of my heart, mind, and soul. You know me through and through. In and through you everything that is finds its origin and goal. You embrace all that exists and care for it with divine love and compassion. Why, then, do I keep expecting happiness and satisfaction outside of you? Why do I keep relating to you as one of my many relationships, instead of my only relationship, in which all other ones are grounded? Why do I keep looking for popularity, respect from others, success, acclaim, and sensual pleasures? Why, Lord, is it so hard for me to make you the only one? Why do I keep hesitating to surrender myself totally to you?

Help me, O Lord, to let my old self die, to let me die to the thousand big and small ways in which I am still building up my false self and trying to cling to my false desires. Let me be reborn in you and see through you the world in the right way, so that all my actions, words, and thoughts can become a hymn of praise to you.

I need your loving grace to travel on this hard road that leads to the death of my old self to a new life in and for you. I know and trust that this is the road to freedom. Lord, dispel my mistrust and help me become a trusting friend. Amen.

### ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student entering the 3<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student entering the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a lector. Adults are also welcome to become Lectors.**

If you were thinking of becoming an altar server or a lector, the summer months would be a great time to begin. 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].**

### NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family. The booklets are on the table in the Narthex of the Chapel.. please take one.



### MOTIVATION:

Fear isn’t an excuse to come to a standstill; it’s the impetus to step up and strike.

—Arthur Ashe

**THE MISSION IS NOW:**

We live in a time in the Church when many people seem to have lost hope. They are weary — intimidated by the power of secular culture, and often contentious with each other. People feel helpless in face of the pervasive violence and a sub-culture of dehumanizing poverty — even while the stock market continues to climb. Blessed John Paul II called the life-destroying aspect of our modern world the “culture of death.” The false value-systems of the world still seem to have control over the way we think and treat each other.

It is also important to remember that the church of Luke’s time was much like our own — contention within and persecution without. Peter, Paul, and many early followers of Jesus had been executed in the Roman Empire by the time Luke wrote his gospel. Paul’s experience — a few decades earlier in Athens — could well have happened in any modern city. After he had proclaimed the resurrection of Christ to the Athenians, the response was mostly ridicule or indifference. Some said: “We should like to hear you on this some other time: [Acts 18:32]. A few men and women, however, came to believe.

If our ongoing celebration of the Eucharist is to renew our beleaguered hope, then we — like the Twelve and the seventy-two — must hear Jesus speaking the words of the gospel personally to each of us. It is we — either as successors of the Twelve or of the seventy-two — who are being sent for the same purpose that Jesus was sent. The seemingly impossible mission to do what Jesus did would paralyze our spirit unless today we also hear Jesus say to us: “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven” [Luke 10:1-20]. We rejoice because we are members of the household and family of God.

What is the reality to which the biblical expression “kingdom of God” points? The expression is richly multifaceted in meaning. The kingdom of God comes into being wherever God reigns, and wherever God’s will is done. The kingdom of God is present in persons through whom God acts. It is no surprise that in the early church the kingdom of God soon came to be identified with Christ himself. God reigns in Christ. God’s will is done in Christ. God acts through Christ. To proclaim the kingdom of God is the same as to proclaim Christ. In fact, the church from its beginning, by proclaiming the good news of Christ, was being faithful to his mandate to proclaim the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God has come upon us if God reigns in our hearts — if God’s will is done in us; if God acts through us. Sometimes one can sense God’s presence in a person or in a community. Thus what the Second Vatican Council says of Christ may also be said of us — “The presence of the kingdom is seen in the words and works, but above all in the person, of Christ himself” [*Lumen Gentium*, #5].

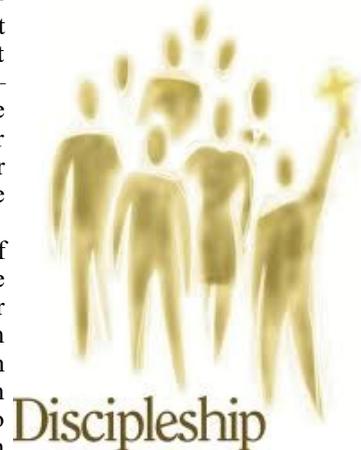
There is a sense of urgency in the words that Jesus addresses to us. Even though we are urged to action, it is equally clear that by our own strength we cannot subdue the evil powers of this world and cure its ills. So that we do not forget to trust in God’s power in all we do, Jesus tells us to “carry no money bags, no sack, no sandals.” We will be able to continue Christ’s mission in the particular circumstances of our lives with audacious hope only if we believe that whatever good we do, it is by the finger of God. And when this happens, we can say with Christ: “The kingdom of God has come upon you.”

—taken from the writings of Father Campion Gavalier, O.S.B., which appear on the internet.

**PRAYER:**

Be faithful to the time spent in prayer, and make sure that at least half of your prayer is spent in silence.

—Mother Teresa

**NOBODY WANTS TO MAKE COLD CALLS:**

There is a terrible story about two young Mormon missionaries who were going door to door. They knocked on the door of one woman who was not at all happy to see them. The woman told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want to hear their message and slammed the door in their faces. To her surprise, however, the door did not close — and, in fact, almost magically bounced back open. She tried again, really putting her back into it, and slammed the door again with the same amazing result — the door bounced back open.

Convinced that one of the young religious zealots was sticking their foot in the door, she reared back to give it a third slam — she felt this would really teach them a lesson. But before she could act, one of them stopped her and politely said: “Ma’am, before you do that again, you really should move your cat.”

We don’t see many door-to-door sales people anymore — why not? First of all, nobody’s home anymore, are they? — at least, in the day time. And at night, with so much to do, and after husband and wife have worked all day, most people don’t want to be bothered with strangers at the door. So, at least in one respect, we live in a different world than the one in which Jesus appointed seventy emissaries and told them to go out two-by-two into the towns and villages from house to house to heal the sick and to tell everyone who would listen that the Kingdom of God is near.

We could do that today, but the results would be disappointing. We now have doctors and hospitals to heal people’s bodies, and most people today would not be too happy to have us tapping on their door. Jesus would probably have us develop a different strategy for the world in which we live, but there are some important truths in what Jesus tells his disciples — and us — that we still need to see.

First, **Jesus still calls us to reach out to the world.** Jesus never meant for his body to become an exclusive club centered only on its own needs. There was an interesting story in *Readers Digest* sometime back by Elise Miller Davis titled: *When Someone Is Drowning, It’s No Time To Teach Him How to Swim.* Ms. Davis tells of sitting near a swimming pool one day and hearing a commotion. A head was bobbing in and out of the deepest water. Ms. Davis saw a man rush to the edge of the pool and heard him yell: “Hold your breath! Hold your breath!” Then a young lady joined him, screaming: “Turn on your back and float!” Their voices caught the attention of the lifeguard. Like a flash, he ran the length of the pool, jumped in, and pulled the man in trouble to safety. Later, the lifeguard said to Ms. Davis: “Why in the name of heaven didn’t somebody holler that one word — Help? When a person is drowning, it’s no time to teach him or her how to swim.”

There are many in our society today — some very close to home, if not in our home — who are barely staying afloat. Families are disintegrating, young people are tempted in all directions, middle-aged people are facing life-crises, and challenges which we never had to deal with before await our seniors. Just because the strategy of going out two-by-two door-to-door is outmoded doesn’t mean the need has disappeared.

A story is told of a missionary who was serving in Pusan, Korea. The missionary visited a man who had creeping paralysis. Both of his legs were paralyzed and the disease threatened his life if no cure could be found. Entering a dimly lighted room, the missionary found the man crouched on the floor. As the missionary began to talk to the man about the healing power of Christ, the Korean replied: “I know. I have been waiting for you a long time.” The missionary realized that he had arrived at the appointed time.



the height, the apex, the crowning jewel, of our final state in heaven.

Hence, in laughter, we do have a rumor of angels, and we do intuit our transcendence. In laughter, we do manifest that we are on good terms with reality, and on good terms with God. In laughter, we affirm — loud and joyously — to the world the great mantra of Julian Norwich which reminds us that in the end, all will be well, and every manner of being will be well — even though our world is not in that state today.

My assistant Novice Director was a wonderful, sincerely, gentle, and overly serious man. Levity was not his thing, and laughter was not his preferred method of implicitly praying the creed. He showed his deep faith in other ways — believing that laughter is not the only rumor of angels inside of ordinary life.

But it is one of intimation of the divine within human life. Laughter — when it is healthy, when it is not forced or cynical — is, as Rahner says, “an intoxication of joy” — the joy of our final state. Thus when we laugh, we also pray the creed.

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

### LISTEN TO JESUS:

“Tell souls not to place within their own hearts obstacles to My mercy, which so greatly wants to act within them. My mercy works in all those hearts which open their doors to it. Both the sinner and the righteous person have need of My mercy. Conversion, as well as perseverance, is a grace of My mercy. Let souls who are striving for perfection particularly adore My mercy, because the abundance of graces which I grant them flows from My mercy. I desire that these souls distinguish themselves by boundless trust in My mercy. I myself will attend to the sanctification of such souls. I will provide them with everything they will need to attain sanctity. The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is-trust. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive. Souls that trust boundlessly are a great comfort to Me, because I pour all the treasures of My graces into them. I rejoice that they ask for much, because it is My desire to give much, very much. On the other hand, I am sad when souls ask for little, when they narrow their hearts.”

—Jesus to St. Faustina, 1577



### READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

<b>Monday:</b>	Genesis 28:10-22a; Matthew 9:18-26
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Genesis 32:23-33; Matthew 9:32-38
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Genesis 41:55-57, 42:5-7a, 17-24a; Matthew 10:1-7
<b>Thursday:</b>	Genesis 44:18-21, 23b-29, 45:1-5; Matthew 10:7-15
<b>Friday:</b>	Proverbs 2:1-9; Matthew 19:27-29
<b>Saturday:</b>	Genesis 49:29-32, 50:15-26a; Matthew 10:24-33

**15<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Deuteronomy 30:10-14; Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37

### REFLECTIONS ON LUKE AND ISAIAH:

It would be such a great relief and sense of joyful freedom if we could but drop into the holy Water or Baptismal Font at the entrance of our church, all that bothers us, ties us up in knots, or renders us feeling less holy than that water. Yet, that is exactly what happens every time we enter into the Entrance Rituals which take place at the beginning of every Mass. Whether it be through the Penitential Rite or the Sprinkling Rite, we renew the vows that we took at Baptism to make sacred all that it means to be human and welcomed into the community of faith.

At every Mass, Christ comes in Word and Sacrament to reclaim us as His own. We come, not only with our gift of self — but we also come with all those things — the baggage of our life — that we would rather discard. We come to receive His Word and Life by holding on to the cards we’ve been dealt — and especially those we don’t know how to play.

There is a joyful theme that runs through the final chapters of the Book of Isaiah the Prophet [Isaiah 66:5-14]. The city of Jerusalem is celebrated as a nourishing mother giving birth and life to Her child — Israel. There had been a rebuilding of the temple, and all who felt abandoned by God because of the temple’s destruction, now are to come with the eagerness of nursing children to be fed and comforted by Her presence.

Using poetic form, Isaiah writes a short poem summarizing the history of God’s call to the people of Israel — their failure to respond, their being separated from their covenanted land, God’s calling them back home, and the joy of Israel’s now being newly born as a re-covenanted people. The riches of fertility will be flowing like mother’s milk, and the birth-pangs are forgotten as God’s holy family is born anew. The real call of joy is that the city of Jerusalem is home again for God’s people — a clearer revelation of the unabandonable God and Husband of Jerusalem.

Luke’s gospel [10:1-20] has two sections. The first is the sending of the seventy-two with detailed instructions about their depending on nothing except their call. The second section relates their return and all they could do in His Name. As a response to their excited stories, Jesus urges them to be less joyful at the power they have received and seen working through them, but more because they belong to and live in the hands of God. Their names are written on those Hands of God, and they have been sent to extend to the world those very same loving hands.

I have in my personal wardrobe approximately thirty-five t-shirts for running and warm-weather wearing. Each has some identifying lettering — various sports teams, schools, clubs, fund-raising runs in which I have jogged slowly, and many other groups and events are displayed on my broadening chest, sleeves and back. There are all kinds of free advertising available on these shirts, jackets, hats, and pants. For some though these signages are ways of advertising an identity — I am a somebody, because I am a fan of this team, school or state. The human struggle — the spiritual war within us — underneath those shirts, is about “Who owns me? — to whom do I belong?”

Luke’s Gospel relates the great works of the early disciples because they knew the answers to these questions. Their powerful deeds came flowing from their confidence in whose hands they had found themselves. They wore their inner-selves on their sleeves, and allowed their true identity to play out through their arms, hands, and total persons.

Jesus warned them not to take along extra t-shirts or jackets announcing that they belonged to somebody or something else. They were not to depend or lean on anything for assistance except their being His team. As Jerusalem and Israel belonged to God — by God’s covenantal choice, renewed again



and again — so these early followers grew to free themselves from false names and claims.

We celebrate Independence Day this weekend, and we are invited to remember that our early birth as a nation was brought about by a revolution from an unwanted identity as a British colony. Those early founders or “freers” wanted freedom from and freedom for. Independence Day is our national holiday of identity — whether we live that identity as a free and freeing nation is not always clear. Those early revolters knew who they did not want to be, and we are still struggling to discover our radical dependence on God.

Each time we gather at the Eucharist, we are revolting against our being dominated, or controlled, or identified by anything except by our baptismal being claimed as belonging to Christ. We are so tempted to belong to other gods — other forces within ourselves and outside. Our personal revolutions continue each day, and the true God’s ways are not always as attractive as those of other gods of this world.

So as I jog with my new t-shirt announcing the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway — even though my way of speed is decreasing — I will try, with God’s grace, to play His hands, run His race, be His grace, extend His embrace, and live a little more my belonging to Him.

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

### HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD YOU “TAKE A BULLET FOR”?

What’s important to you? If, God forbid, there was a fire at your house today — and let’s hope not caused by fireworks — and you were running out, what would you grab to take with you? Who are the most important people in your life? How many people, outside of your family, would you truly give your life for — would you “take a bullet for?” Would you give your life for someone you didn’t know? Would you give your life for an enemy, or someone that doesn’t like you? Like so many things in faith, it’s easy to say, but difficult to do.

This weekend in the United States, we celebrate freedom. While we have separate days — Veteran’s Day, Memorial Day — where we celebrate those who’ve given their lives to defend our freedom as Americans., we also stop every July 4<sup>th</sup> to reflect on how fortunate we are to be free.

We have an independence day as Christians, too — it’s called Easter. On Easter we celebrate the fact that God became man, conquered death, and, in the process, saved all who believe....providing us with a “way out” — a chance at eternal life in Heaven.

Notice that on Easter, too, a life HAD to be lost to ensure our independence. Jesus’ death upon the cross gave us the ULTIMATE FREEDOM. With the passion, death AND resurrection, we receive freedom from original sin.

Just as so many thousands of people have given their lives over the years to defend their families, homes, possessions, independence and way of life, Jesus went even further. One of the many things so cool about Jesus is that He gave His life for everyone — even those who don’t initially believe, even those who hate Him — so that EVERYBODY has a chance, should they come to believe. St. John reminds us: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” [John 15:13] — the sacrifice of your life is the GREATEST sign of your love for someone. Jesus didn’t just die for His followers; He died for those who ridiculed Him, who beat Him, who crucified Him. What an example!

It makes me wonder who I would die for. It reminds me that no matter how many times I screw up, God is still there loving me, and waiting to forgive me, and I have that chance — that chance for forgiveness — that chance at Heaven — because Jesus was so loving that He was willing to pay the ultimate price.

As an American, this weekend reminds us to be thankful for the freedom that we possess and earned. As Catholics, EVERYDAY should remind us to be THANKFUL for the freedom that we’ve been offered — the freedom we’ve been GIVEN.

—the Bible Geek



### LAUGHTER AS FAITH:

In our novitiate, when I was a novice with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, our assistant Novice Director — a sincere, but overly-stern man — cautioned us about too much levity in our lives by telling us that there is no recorded incident in scripture of Jesus ever laughing. I was a pious novice, but, even then, that didn’t sit well with me. I combed the Gospels, trying to prove him wrong. But I found out that, technically, he was right. But is he?

A couple of years later, during my seminary studies, I read a book by Peter Berger, entitled: *A Rumor of Angels*. In it, he tries to point to various places within our everyday experience where we have intimations of the divine, rumors of angels, and hints that ordinary experience contains more than just the ordinary — that God is there.

One such experience, Berger submits, is that of a mother comforting a frightened child at night — using soothing words and gestures to assure the child that he or she need not be afraid — that everything is all right, the world is in order. In saying those words — if she means them, and normally she does — the mother is, in effect, implicitly praying the creed.

Another such intimation of the divine within ordinary experience, Berger suggests, is the phenomenon of laughter. In laughter, we intuit our transcendence — given that we are able to laugh in any situation that shows that there is something in us that is above the situation — transcendent to it. In laughter, Berger believes, we have a rumor of angels.

Karl Rahner agrees, suggesting that laughter shows that we are on good terms with reality, and hence with God. Laughter praises God because it foretells our final state in heaven when we will be in an exuberance of joy. Commenting on the Beatitudes in Luke’s Gospel where Jesus says: “Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you shall laugh” [Luke 6:21], Rahner says that what Jesus is saying suggests that the happiness of the final state will not just dry away our tears and bring us to peace — it will also bring us to laughter — “to an intoxication of joy”.

You shall laugh because God’s Word also has recourse to human words in order to express what shall one day be when all shall have been — that is why a mystery of eternity also lies hidden, but real, in everyday life; that is why the laughter of daily life announces and shows that one is on good terms with reality, even in advance of all that all-powerful and eternal consent in which the saved will one day say their “amen” to everything that god has done and allowed to happen. Laughter is praise of God because it foretells the eternal praise of God at the end of time — when those who must weep here on earth shall laugh.

But is this superficial? Is it human optimism substituting itself for hope? Is it an upbeat-spirit masquerading as theology? Is it the naïve claim that if I am happy, then God is on my side? Indeed, in the Gospels, where is there a recorded incident of Jesus laughing?

Good scripture scholarship has long suggested that looking for an individual text to prove or disprove a certain point is not a good approach toward scripture. The teachings of scripture are best gleaned by looking to scripture as a whole. And if we do that in this case, we will find that both Peter Berger and Karl Rahner are correct. As Rahner points out — Jesus, himself, teaches that laughter will be part of the final state in heaven. You shall laugh! But beyond that, Jesus’ message as a whole invites us to joy — a joy that no one can take from us — and laughter is the exuberant expression of that joy. It is

