

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A prayer As We Begin School ~**

**Loving God,  
Our creator, our savior, and our companion,  
bless this journey of a new school year  
that we undertake at this time.**

**Refresh our souls  
and renew our spirits  
as we embrace  
this beautiful journey  
that you have called us to.**

**We welcome those  
who are new to our community  
and we ask  
that you strengthen them  
to share their wonderful gifts  
that you have given them.**

**Lord,  
make our hearts pure  
as we prepare for our return  
to academic life,  
And the pursuit of truth.  
May you guide us  
to return with open hearts  
and minds eager to learn.  
We ask this in Your name,  
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.*

**LABOR DAY:**

**Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>,** we take time to celebrate the final holiday of the summer — **Labor Day**. Besides reflecting on summer, the holiday, by its very title, invites us to reflect upon the contributions that each person makes toward the building of the human family. All of us are called by God to continue to participate in the work of creation. Each of us, because of our baptism, is called to bring to life, through our talents and energies, to that small piece of God's kingdom on earth. **We will celebrate Mass at 9:30 AM on Monday.** We would be honored if you and your family will join us.

**FAITH EDUCATION REGISTRATION — FINAL CALL:**

**It is time to register for Faith Education classes (Grades K—8) which will begin on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.** 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. **Please contact Patty or Father John in the Chapel Office for more information.**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

**Congratulations to all of the members of the Gilmour Class of 2026 who were Commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers over the summer months: Roma Alvarez, Alexander Batchik, Lizzie Covington, Emily Currid, Valentina DiCenso, Zinyah George, Annie Goff, Ryan Panzica, Ricky Piuanno and Aubrey Terranova. We would also like to congratulate Gilmour parent and Chapel Council member Jason Parker on being Commissioned in June.** We are truly blessed. We always welcome those who would like to join this ministry [and the other ministries] at Our Lady Chapel. We have a need for Eucharistic Ministers at our weekend Masses, particularly since the pandemic. 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 entering their Senior year of High School this fall] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. **Training sessions are coming up in the fall, so if you would like to join in this ministry, please give your name to Father John.** Thank you.

**PILGRIMAGE FOR THE YEAR OF HOPE—SUN. SEPT. 14<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our Lady Chapel is planning a Pilgrimage to the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Downtown Cleveland, following Mass on Sunday, September 14th, as part of the observance of the Jubilee Year in the Church.** The Jubilee Year is a special year of grace, in which the Church offers the faithful the possibility of obtaining plenary indulgences. The Cathedral in Cleveland has been designated as a **Sacred Site**, at which the plenary indulgence may be obtained by pilgrims who make the journey. We will have a sign-up sheet on the Easel in the Narthex of the Chapel. **Please sign up if you are interested in making this journey with Fr. John and other members of our Chapel community. Gilmour Transportation will be provided for you, to & from the Cathedral.**

**WISE WORDS:**

If you're not making someone else's life better, then you're wasting your time. Your life will become better by making other lives better.  
—Will Smith

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

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

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:**

- 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 Tara Hyland Zittel ['07] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Andre Polsinelli, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease.
- For Mary Vislosky, who is critically ill with pneumonia.
- For Anna Sasin, mother of Brother Ben Sasin, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Karen Walsh who is ill.
- For Raj Chahan, who is recovering from surgery.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For Thomas Hackworth, father-in-law of upper school English Instructor, Jason Simon.
- For Hugh O'Neill, brother of Peggy O'Neill-Laise ['73], grandfather of Charlotte Slater ['27], and cousin of William O'Neill ['51].
- For Michael Adamik
- For Richard Hibbard, uncle of Father Matt Hovde, C.S.C.
- For Frank Nannicola, grandfather of Cassie ['17], Frank ['18], and Mia ['19] Nannicola.
- For Mary Duhigg.
- For Dennis Woods.
- For Brian Toohey, grandfather of Madeline ['13], Collin ['16] and Lizzie ['26] Covington.
- For Mary Lange Klisch, sister of Father Bill Lies, C.S.C., and Father Jim Lies, C.S.C.
- For Josephine Fernando, mother of Melvyn ['83] and Raymond ['88], and mother-in-law of Imelda Deogracias Fernando ['88].

**PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the political issues in Palestine 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.

**A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:**

A Young Adult group is alive and well at Our Lady Chapel. The group has been meeting to 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 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



**THE CHOSEN :**

We had a wonderful group of people join us for our initial showing of an episode of *The Chosen* during this past Lenten season. 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. Please plan to join us on October 12<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560].**

**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: Friday [8/15/25] \_\_\_\_\_ [Assumption] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 20.00**  
**Total Offerings: Saturday [8/16/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 235.00**  
**Total Offerings: Sunday [8/17/25] \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 180.00**

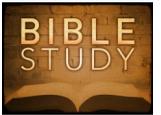
**NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:**

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



**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27<sup>th</sup>:**

**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, August 27<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 a community prayer, Part 3**

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, August 24: 21 <sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, August 25:	NO MASS
Tuesday, August 26:	NO MASS
Wednesday, August 20: St. Monica	NO MASS
Thursday, August 21: St. Augustine	NO MASS
Friday, August 22: Passion of St. John the Baptist	NO MASS
Saturday, August 23: 22 <sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	5:00 PM In-Person only
Sunday, August 24: 22 <sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

**O.C.I.A [Order of Christian Initiation for Adults]:**

We are beginning to plan for our OCIA program [formerly known as RCIA] which will begin shortly. Why the name change? OCIA refers to the entire journey of faith discernment, whereas RCIA refers only to the Ritual aspects of the journey.



If you know someone who is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, or who presently is not a Catholic but would like to pursue this avenue of faith; or investigate it; if you know someone who is not fully initiated [Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation] in their Catholic faith; or someone who has been away from the Catholic Church for a while — then consider having them join our OCIA program. **Please contact Father John [440-473-3560] for more information.**

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

Every fall at high schools across the country, a quite human celebration takes place when the first-year boys show up for their first day of football practice. To be more honest, the real celebration of the human condition is the second day of running and blocking in the high-heat of late August when one third of the first-day's hopefuls have decided that hitting the books harder might be less painful than getting hit themselves. They decide to exclude themselves from further pursuit of worldly glory on the athletic field.

All of us have natural fears about whether or not we are going to “make it” — will we be good enough? Unfortunately, we approach our spiritual life in much the same way. In our life of faith and hope, however, we do belong, we are included in Jesus' embrace of us all from the cross. The natural and the supernatural are in tension within us at all times. Grace and nature form the struggle of our spiritual lives. The fears and doubts of our natural world are consoled with the comfort which our faith in Jesus provides. Belief is the choice we make to receive God's choice not to abandon our sisters and brothers in Jesus.

I — a city boy — once asked a young man attending our school from the ranching area in western Nebraska, how large his family's ranch might be. He answered that it was “pretty big”. I asked if it were twelve square miles, and he said it probably was about that. “Wow” I said, “four miles one way and three the other — that's big!” “Oh no,” the young man responded, “it's twelve miles by twelve miles, square.” I learned quickly that it's all a matter of perspective.

The Scripture Readings for this 21<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time deal with somewhat the same question — “How large is your God's ranch?” We learn that “boundary issues” from God's perspective are much different than ours. Throughout his writings, Isaiah has always been reminding the people of Israel that they are “special in God's eyes” — they are God's flock, family, and spouse

But now the group is getting bigger — people from Spain to Africa and Turkey will someday be both included and brought to know their own “specialness”. All will come to know the glory or love of God that was first shown to Israel. They all shall come to Jerusalem to know the God of Israel as their God, and to live according to the newness of the Ancient One [Isaiah 66:18-21]. Even from these strangers, God will select religious leaders to keep reminding and remembering all the people that they are who they are by God's embrace. God's ranch is larger than miles. Territory is measured by response and the invitation has no boundaries. The boundaries are the fears, doubts, and selfishness which can limit the human response to these invitations.

The Pharisees and religious leaders of Jesus' time had definite “boundary issues”. Luke's Gospel records the healing of a woman on the Sabbath [see Luke 13:16]. There were strict boundaries concerning activities allowed and disallowed on this holy day of reflection and gratitude. Jesus responds to them with three parables — the “mustard seed”, the “fig tree” and the “yeast”.

But then boundary widens. Being boundaries are more about observing Jesus and his teachings, then they are about keeping laws [Luke 13:22-30]. Jesus is the “narrow gate” through whom life passes into this world and leads to the “Kingdom of God”.

Then the protest begins. They say: “But we ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.” Again — boundaries. There is nothing about their buying into, or becoming intimate with Jesus personally. They did not join his company or take in the teaching offered in their streets.

**PUT ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER:**

Arthur Tonne tells an interesting tale. Most people have seen the famous photo of Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal. It pictures United States Marines raising the American flag on a hill in bloody Iwo Jima during World War II. Many of us, too, have stood mesmerized by the equally famous heroic size bronze likeness of the scene sculpted in Washington DC. What is little known is that the photographer — Mr. Rosenthal — was a convert to the Church from Judaism. For his conversion, he was shunned by fellow Jews for abandoning the faith of his people. But Rosenthal was not intimidated. He wrote: “The day before we went ashore on Iwo Jima, I attended Mass and received Holy Communion. If a man is genuinely convinced of the truth and still neglects it, he is a traitor and that goes not only for my Jewish friends who do not attend synagogue each Saturday but also for my friends who miss Mass each Sunday.” The Teacher was pulling himself through the towns and villages of Palestine. Busily He was teaching all the time. His destination was Jerusalem. There He would keep His long-planned rendezvous with death. He was asked by someone: “Lord, are those to be saved few in number?” The exhausted Christ — who desperately needed a shower and a cold drink — ignored the query. Oftentimes the questions put to Him did not touch on His syllabus. But He took advantage of the well-intentioned question to say in effect: “The door to the kingdom is unlocked” [Luke 13:22-30].

Keep in mind that the door is not wide, but it freely swings open on well-oiled hinges. Those willing to exert themselves will walk right in. No people at any time need stand outside with their noses pressed against the glass door wistfully looking in. All of us need a re-introduction to the real Christ. Many of us live in a fantasy world in relation to Him. Luke's Gospel is as good a teaching tool as any. Jesus is not the naive individual many of us imagine. He is neither a patsy nor an easy touch. Rather, Jesus is a no-nonsense Man who tells it like it is. Luke's Gospel reveals that the favorite sport of Jesus is not softball but hard ball. This stands in harsh contrast to the writers of insipid greeting card verses who make you see a different Jesus. In very blunt language today, the Nazarene informs us that no one has a lock on Heaven. Rather, heaven is the payoff for a lifetime of hard labor. What our parents or grandparents may have done for the Christ matters not. Everyone must pay his or her own dues. Why should anyone of us have the bonus without the onus?

Even in the spiritual life there is no such thing as a free lunch. We belong to what someone has aptly called the Church of the Narrow Door. Given these ground rules, one can see why the Joe Rosenthals of our culture travel first class with the Teacher. That dog-eared certificate of Baptism in the safety deposit box, or the securely locked cedar chest, is not necessarily a passport into the next life — at best, it is only the first few pages in a six hundred page autobiography that everyone of us is writing each day. After all, almost all of us here did not consciously choose Baptism like Mr. Rosenthal. Why then should it give us a guaranteed leg-up on everyone else in the neighborhood? Those who think — as some authors suggest — that they have the heavenly seating chart arranged, are in for quite a shock. One does not need to be a genetic scientist to identify the DNA of any true disciple of Jesus — the Christian life is forever a task of putting one foot in front of the other and one hand on top of another. As Will Rogers puts the case, even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if all you do is just sit there. Some years ago I said a weekday Mass in Rhode Island. Among the worshipers was Felix de Welden. He is the celebrated sculptor responsible for the bronze image of Rosenthal's Iwo Jima picture in Washington, DC. He, like Mr. Rosenthal, was just paying his dues. He attends Mass daily. However, do not grow discouraged as you attempt often with little success to put on Christ. “The only way to fail,” says St Teresa of Avila, “is to stop.”



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

**THE COST OF A SMILE:**

I am a 58-year-old woman who was fortunate enough to have the world's greatest mom with me until a year and a half ago. There are no words to describe how much I miss her. I know this may seem strange to tell, and believe me, I am not looking for a substitute for my mom, but I have found myself looking at elderly ladies and thinking how nice it would be to adopt one.

At the grocery store just last week, I saw a dear person near me — we were both bagging some produce. I looked at her and politely said “The produce here is always attractive isn't it?”

Why did I engage in a conversation? Because I just needed a smile or a kind word from this lady. What I got has had a profound effect on me. This sweet person looked at me as if I were an alien, did not speak and did not smile, but just looked at me dumbfounded. I moved away crushed and almost cried.

I needed her to give me just a kind word or a smile — no more. I vowed then to always stop what I am doing — no matter how much in a hurry I am or what the other person looks like — and give that kind word or smile. It may really be needed.

None of us knows what is going on in the life or thoughts of another. But what we must always remember is that we are all God's children; God loves all of us no matter how we may look to each other.

**READINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

**Monday:** 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 8b-10; Matthew 23:13-22

**Tuesday:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8, Matthew 23:23-26

**Wednesday:** Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16; Luke 7:11-17

**Thursday:** 1 John 4:7-16, Matthew 23:8-12

**Friday:** Jeremiah 1:17-19, Mark 6:17-29

**Saturday:** 1 Thessalonians 4:9-11, Matthew 25:14-30

**22<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time:** Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a, Luke 14:1, 7-14

**SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. SEPT. 20<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.



While those from beyond the geographic, national, and religious boundaries of Israel have not been the first to be invited, the “kingdom” is a broadening of the invitation to those who will now be first. Those who were first will be last and left out completely. Here Jesus is speaking directly to the Jewish leaders who are reminded that their ancient prophets, and Father Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will all be at the heavenly table with these “late” comers. Now that really is a stinger. The Jewish leaders and their followers were dedicated to their traditions and beliefs. Jesus is turning many of their traditions over and asking to let him be God's invitation again to walk more personally with the personal God of their traditions and beliefs. This invitation is being extended beyond and in new forms, but the ancient call to trusting the inviting God remains central. Jesus is not replacing the old, but intensifying the revelation of that ancient divine love.

How big is God? How large of an embrace does God have for the human clan? Twelve square miles of ranch might seem mighty large to most of us. Twelve by twelve could seem impossibly huge. We are lately quite taken up with definitions which word literally means “putting down limits or boundaries” — political parties, ethnic families, financial levels, and even religious groups define, limit, wall in and wall out “those others”.

Labels create distance and distance provides the luxury of suspicion and self-ratification. The more we affirm our being identified through Jesus, the more we are available to those from the north/south and east/west. Only our walls of fear confine the growth of God's kingdom.

The question for us is not about whether or not we will “make it”, but what we will make of Christ's having made “it” for us. Holiness just might be expressed in our observing the “laws” of Jesus. Good fences make good boundaries; but they make neighbors distant, easily misjudged and eventually, enemies.

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

**COLLECTION FOR THE FOOD PANTRY:**

**As you already know, Our Savior Lutheran Church — across the street from the Chapel — has a Food Pantry which distributes food to our community on the third Saturday of each month. They serve around 150 clients each time. Our Lady Chapel's Council group has decided to begin an ongoing food collection to assist them.**

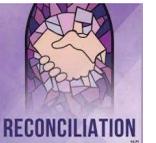


Our Savior Lutheran's Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, and we are pleased to collaborate with them, in bringing hope to our neighbors.

**Right now we are focusing on the following items only: Canned Vegetables, Dry Cereals and Dry Noodles.** Beginning this weekend, we will have bins in the Chapel Narthex for your donations. Thank you!

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:**

Father John is available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with you. Please call him [440-473-3560] to arrange for this experience. 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].

**REMEMBER:**

Jesus is the way — not an add on, an extra, an option, or a supplement.

**THE LOCKED DOOR:**

Luke's Gospel for this 21<sup>st</sup> Week in Ordinary Time [Luke 13:22-30] is challenging, to say the least! What does it mean when Luke tells us that we will come and knock upon the door of eternal life and find that it is locked? What does it mean that we will come seeking to enter in and be told that we are rejected? I thought that God was always willing to welcome us in. I thought that there would always be an open door when we came and knocked. Recall how Jesus said to us: "Ask and you shall receive. Knock and it shall be opened to you" [Luke 11:9-10]. So, what does this passage mean that tells us that when we try to enter, we will be refused? When we seek come in, the door will be locked?

To answer that question, let us start with what we know is true. God's will is to save us — to save every person in this church, to save every person in the world. God is always willing and open to invite us in to eternal life. But salvation is a two-way street. It requires our participation. God's intention is not the only factor. God will never change in God's desire to save us. But two things can change — our circumstances and our very selves. When these things change we can find that the door in fact is locked.

How can we explain this? There are many stories that have resulted from the tragic events of 9/11. But one of the most poignant for me was a story that I experienced on 9/12. As you know during that time, many people came to church and spent time in prayer. I encountered a woman leaving church. I said to her: "I am glad you came today to pray. We all need prayers."

"Some more than others," she said. "Do you want to know who I was praying for today?"

"Of course," I said.

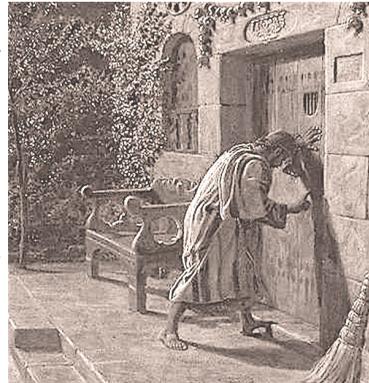
"I was praying for all the spouses of the people that died in those twin towers who left for work yesterday morning angry at their husband or wife. They always thought that there would be time to make peace. They always thought that there would be another opportunity to be reconciled. Yet there was not. They will have to live with that for the rest of their lives."

Circumstances in our life change. What is possible today is not always possible tomorrow. The people with whom we need to be reconciled will not always be with us. The people we want to thank or tell them that we love them could be taken in an instant. When that happens, the door is locked and we can no longer get in.

But it is not just the circumstances in our life that can change. We ourselves change depending upon our decisions. Every time we say "no" to an opportunity for life or growth it is easier to say no again. Every time we decide not to act, we begin to build a habit that lessens our freedom. This can happen in a marriage or any deep relationship. The decision not to be honest moves us closer to living a lie. The decision not to be generous and forgiving begins to create a pattern of selfishness and inflexibility. Soon we can be living in a lifeless marriage, in a dead relationship.

A similar thing can happen in dealing with addictions. Every time we pass up an opportunity to stop drinking, to stop using drugs, we feed the habit of the abuse that reduces our ability to live. Every time we say no to a good opportunity, we reduce the chances of recognizing the next opportunity that comes along. God will never cease to provide opportunities. The grace of God will never dry up. But we can dry up. We can create a thick crust of insensitivity and habit that refuses to let the grace of God sink in. When that happens, the door is locked and we are unable to enter.

This, then, is the warning of Luke's Gospel. God will never change in God's desire to save us. But



our circumstances can change and we can change. God will never lock the door to shut us out. But the circumstances of our life can shut us out, and we can lose the desire to enter by the choices we refuse to make. The message of the Gospel, then, is "carpe diem" — it is a Latin phrase which means "seize the day." The day is now. If there is an open door in your life, walk through it. If you need to forgive someone, do it. If you need to thank someone or tell someone that you love them, don't wait until tomorrow. If there is an opportunity for change or growth, take it. God will never change, but our lives can change. So "carpe diem". Seize the day. Today is the day of salvation.

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

**SUFFERING THAT LEADS TO GROWTH:**

The Letter to the Hebrews focuses on the word "discipline." Discipline is not about punishment; rather it is about instruction and training for life. The unknown author quotes the Book of Proverbs — "My child, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when reproved by him, for those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines" [Proverbs 3:11-12] — and then the author adds: "Endure your trials as discipline" [Hebrews 12:5-13]. To explain this point, the author compares God's discipline to a good parent who disciplines their child, which is painful but produces "the peaceful fruit of righteousness." The God who disciplines us as sons and daughters thereby strengthens our drooping hands and weak knees, and makes straight paths for our feet.

Today, we are more aware of the dangers of misinterpreting this passage. God does not inflict suffering on us to teach us a lesson about life. Human suffering is not a punishment from God for sinful actions. Those who imagine God as a harsh judge or severe disciplinarian tend to have low self-esteem that impedes healthy spiritual development.

Suffering is an unavoidable part of human existence. We all know something of the suffering involved in emotional distress, physical illness, moral failures and the dark boundary of death. Some suffering is so horrendous and monstrous that anything said beyond silent compassion and healing embrace feels glib and disrespectful. On the other hand, we know good Christians who testify to the teaching of Hebrews that we should endure our trials as discipline — as instructive training for life. They have found a way to view their suffering not as a divine punishment or test, but as an opportunity to come closer to God.

Some examples come to mind. A hard driving corporate executive who was overweight and spiritually undernourished suffered a heart attack. After surgery and recovery, he expressed gratitude to God by making important changes in his life — returning to his earlier practice of regular Sunday Mass; maintaining a better balance between work and family life; exercising regularly and eating properly; and saying brief prayers throughout his still busy days.

Ida worked for over ten years as a secretary for a large advertising firm. She liked her job, made an above average salary, enjoyed the respect of her colleagues and got along with her immediate boss. Then the firm hired a new manager who took a special interest in her. At first she felt flattered, but then he became more aggressive, making flirtatious comments, telling her crude jokes, touching her inappropriately, and even suggesting they have a mutually beneficial affair. At each point, she clearly and firmly told him she was not interested, but inside she was churning with intense feelings of guilt, shame, fear and doubts about what to do. Her distressing situation prompted her to take action — telling her husband and a few friends; learning more about the prevalence of sex abuse at the worksite; reading about the *Me Too* movement; reflecting on stories of victims; and asking God for guidance. When Ida finally took the courageous step of telling her boss, she felt a sense of inner peace that she did the right thing no matter what happened next.

Can you recall a time when suffering led to a personal growth?

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

