

# 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.*

## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:

Monday, **December 8<sup>th</sup>**, is the Feast of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**. It is a **holy day of obligation**. This is an important feast day because Mary, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, is the **patroness of the United States**. This Feast is also at the heart of the Advent Season. We will have a **Mass on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM**. We will also have Mass in the morning at **9:15 AM** [Lower School] in the Chapel, and at **1:00 PM** [Middle/Upper School] in Lancer Gymnasium, which will have seating available. We have much to pray for in our nation at this time. Please mark your calendars so that you will be able to join us for Mass on this important Feast Day.



## FAITH EDUCATION SCHEDULE:

**Faith Education schedule for December is December 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<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.**



## THE GIVING TREE:

**Our Chapel Giving Tree is now active**. We will have tags on the tree for items requested by Our Lady of Fatima Family Center and St. Adalbert Parish, for the children & young people they serve. There will be a selection of toys and clothing for children from age 5 –12 years. **Select a tag from the tree, purchase your gift, and bring it back to the Chapel UNWRAPPED, to place under the tree. Please attach your tag to your gift. Gifts need to be turned in by Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org)] if you have any questions.**



## “ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:

**For many years, Our Lady Chapel community has worked with St. Adalbert Parish in adopting families who are having a difficult time celebrating the Christmas Season**. We have a list of families whom St. Adalbert has identified as being in the greatest need of assistance — most often single parent families, living below poverty-level, who are in their school & parish. We are given the ages of the children in the family & other family member information.

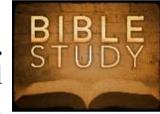


**The need is greater than ever**. In addition to gifts for family members, we also ask that you provide a Gift Card for food, from Wal-Mart, Dave's or Aldi. You may also purchase non-perishable food items and place them in a basket, if you wish.

This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. Families can be matched according to family size, ages, etc. It was truly inspiring. Adopt-a-family gifts should be WRAPPED.

**To “adopt” a family, stop after Mass to look through the Binder we have prepared. Or call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560] or send her an email at [szaniszlop@gilmour.org](mailto:szaniszlop@gilmour.org) if you and your family would like to participate in this program, or if you have any questions. The deadline for turning in gifts for Adopt a Family will be Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10<sup>th</sup>:**



**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.**

Bible Study usually meets 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: Living Advent as found in Scripture**

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, December 7: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, December 8: <b>Feast of the Immaculate Conception</b>	<b>9:30 AM; 1:00 PM [Gym]; 5:30 PM</b>
Tuesday, December 9:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Wednesday, December 10:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Thursday, December 11:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Friday, December 12: <b>Our Lady of Guadalupe</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
Saturday, December 13: <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b> In-Person only
Sunday, December 14: <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Week in Advent</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream

**ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE:**

On **Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**, we will celebrate our Advent Communal Penance Service. This service will consist of scriptural reflections by those involved in the Christmas Story. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to straighten the paths of our lives to ease the arrival of our God. Each of us needs to truly hear in our heart the message of John the Baptist: “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand” [see Mark 1:15]. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be an opportunity for individual reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation following the service. Please join us.



**THE POWER OF THANKFULNESS:**

Wear gratitude like a cloak and it will feed every corner of your life.

— Rumi

## REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

There is something blowing in the wind. The breath of God is announcing a coming event which is to rearrange what, for us, has become “usual”. It is a time in nature when the sun’s movements change how we look at things. We may have gotten accustomed to the warmth of summer and fall. Now we face the darkness and cold of winter. As we enter into the wind or breath of change during these Advent days, let us pray that we are moved by the Spirit of God to keep growing, changing, advancing and becoming more of what God originally created us all to be. The way things currently are in us and in our world do not have to be as angular, or hostile, or alienating as they are presently. Advent invites us to let the Breath of God soften us — while, at the same time, give us courage. The process begins with our answering the basic question — is the coming of Jesus a basic comfort or discomfort?

A very familiar and heart-warming passage from the prophet Isaiah begins our Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent [Isaiah 11:1-10]. Isaiah begins with the reminder that the Messiah will come from the Davidic family tree or bush — He will spring from the royal root of God’s chosen leading family. He shall be surrounded by the spirit which embraced the traditional religious leaders of Jewish history. He will have the wisdom of his ancestors Solomon and David. He will have the “fear of the Lord” — respect for God — which allowed Moses to trust God. In truth the Messiah will fit into the well-known pattern of the great leaders of Israel’s past.

New life will arise out of the old soil of the earth; a person of Hope is coming. This person will rearrange the forest and farm animals into new personal companions. All the estranged — the nations and gentiles — shall seek the glorious dwelling of God. This Flower, this “shoot” will take up on this earth, among us humans. These humans will long for and seek the fragrance of this awaited-for Flower

This new and longed-for blessed Messiah will have the spirit of the Judges of Jewish history, but will judge more by God’s spirit than mere human evidence. He will be dressed in the clothing of Justice, faithfulness, and sensitivity for the poor.

But in the midst of this comfort, Isaiah paints his famous picture — this Messiah will reverse the accustomed ways in the animal world. Natural enemies will no longer fear their natural rivals. Eden’s curse of hostility and fear will be dissolved. The “little child” and the “baby” will join in familial interchange with the animals because of their innocence. This rearranging of the old will take place in the “glorious” dwelling offered to the earth by its Creator. The dwelling will be the universal embrace of the Messiah offered to the Jews and through them to all others known as the “gentiles.” The usual dwelling of shame and guilt resulting from the fracturing in the Garden of Eden will be refashioned, replanted, reoffered in the bestowing of innocence once more through the same breath/spirit which once gardened the earth.

The drama of Matthew’s Gospel [3:1-12] is intense. There is this character, John, who lives in a strict section of Judaism away from Jerusalem. His pouring of water upon people of the Jewish tradition is meant to clean their spirits from the violations of the sacred Law and especially their having had any contact with gentile peoples or their ways. The baptism of John was a celebrational reminder of who they were since their being freed from their being slave-stuff into their being God’s Sacred People through the Red Sea and the Exodus.

Thus, the current way of life is about to be turned upside down. The scribes and Pharisees soon join him representing the old accustomed religious furniture. While many of those who have been listening to John’s call to recover their faith traditions and are being baptized, John has hard words for the pretenders. They live lives of external observance. They also spend their days observing the



conduct of their Jewish tribes strictly. They are not rotten to the heart, but they have no interior from which “good fruit” will grow. The Pharisees are religious observers — and this is meant in two ways. Mainly, they observe how others are keeping clean by keeping externally conforming to the teachings of the same Pharisees. John’s words to them are directed not so much to their coming out into the desert to be baptized, but that he knows the cleansing waters will be only a skin-deep observance [Matthew 3:1-12]. What John is announcing is that the ax is being laid against the roots of unfruitful religious observance. He is calling out for a baptism leading to the works of original innocence. There is One Who is coming to consecrate with both water and a Spirit who will create a fire for the “within” so that His Spirit will blossom into a life that is lived. The harshness of the Law is to be replaced with the gentleness of the interior “fire”. There will be no room for “religious spectators”.

John announced that Jesus was coming to set things back right. His teachings would invite His hearers to evaluate their personal interior and where they had placed things in their ways of life. Jesus’ teachings are not to be observed — they are offered to us for our personal participation in His garden where there will be no need for separation, violence and fear.

Advent is an interior joyful time to “take-in” prayerfully, interiorly, the “fire” — the “Spirit” — of life. Christmas is coming, and homes are being decorated and gifts are being prepared. This is good. But our decorations cannot just be on the inside of our homes; we are reminded that interiorly we must hear His call to de-decorate first our interior self, allowing His ways to re-model our spiritual homes. It is from our rearranged interiors that God’s fruitfulness will decorate God’s house — our world.

“Come Lord Jesus.”

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

## ADVENT DEVOTIONALS:

Welcome to Advent. On the table in the narthex of the Chapel are several Advent devotionals to assist you in your spiritual journey during this season of Advent. We hope that you will make use of them for you and your family. [1] **The Little Blue Book** with daily readings and devotions. This book corresponds to “The Little Black Book” that is so popular during Lent. [2] The daily scripture devotional, **The Word Among Us**, is also available. It lists the scripture passage for the day along with a short reflection on one of the passages.



## ADVENT — PATIENT WAITING:

Advent is upon us. While the stores have been promoting Christmas for weeks, we are called to put all of this on hold for now and wait. If the Jewish people have waited for centuries for the Messiah, we can wait for four weeks. Why are we called to wait? It is in waiting that we are able to empty ourselves so that something new can be born in us.

We know that Mary and every other mother must wait for the birth of their child. During this period we have time to prepare. We have time to desire and long for new life. As the world bombards us with thoughts of war and gradual destruction of our planet, we need to let go of these thoughts long enough to anticipate a better day.

Advent is a time of hope. We hope for a new day in which God enters our lives in a new way helping us come out of darkness into the light with the birth of a child who is the prince of peace, justice, and love. This is a gift to us that is worth waiting for.

Here are some questions to help you reflect:

- Is this time before Christmas meaningful to you?
- Do you want to experience the gift of Advent and celebrate waiting?

O God, help me see the value of waiting patiently for your coming.

—Brother Carl Sternberg, CSC

## ADVENT IS A CALL TO COME ALIVE:

Here we are with Christmas just two and a half weeks away. The shops and malls are loaded with goodies. Christmas songs fill the air. Parties are being arranged and delicacies prepared. Thoughts of home, of family, and of a lovely time fill our hopes and imaginations. With all of these lovely sentiments in our hearts and minds we come to church today and hear about a weird guy living in the desert, wearing scratchy and horribly smelling clothes made of camel's hair, eating locusts, calling people a bunch of snakes while telling them that fire and brimstone will come down on them, all the while threatening them with axes that will cut them down [Matthew 3:1-12]. In addition, John ends up threatening the Sadducees and Pharisees with hell. Aren't you glad you came to church today just before Christmas to hear all of that? Well, John the Baptist reminds us that it's likely we all need to pay attention to a few things that perhaps we have neglected in our lives — things that revolve around the presence of Christ — or His absence. Take for instance those with whom we live — our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our friends. How have we loved them? How have we failed to love them? Who have we downright neglected or not treated as we should have?

Too often we take those around us for granted. We give them little, if any, of our time, our attention, our affection. Maybe we haven't cared for them very well at all. It seems strange that we sort of assume that they know we love them without our ever actually telling them or showing them that we do love them — dearly love them. Daily routines, concerns about our work, and our habits can cause us to pay attention to material things at the expense of giving our families and friends our real attention, care, concern, and love. Maybe this Christmastime we can actually give them more of ourselves as we prepare to celebrate the love of God for us made real in Christ Jesus.

What about our parents and our grandparents who live some distance away from us? Have we neglected them too? And our friends? Are there some changes we need to make because of our neglect? Then there are those with whom we work. Our attitudes toward them are expressed in the ways we treat them or otherwise relate to them. Attitudes are the sources of human behavior. If we want to reform the way we treat others, then we have to begin with our attitudes toward them. We need to hear John the Baptist's message as it applies to us.

Then, too, we should pay some attention to the way we have neglected our own selves. Are we physically out of shape? Overweight? Do we overindulge ourselves? Do we drink too much; drink too often; or eat too much? Do we care for ourselves?

What is at issue is the way we have failed to love — failed to love and respect others, and failed to have love and respect our selves, selves that God gave us when He brought us into life in the first place. John the Baptist's words ought to raise questions we should face and answer.

Finally, there is the matter of Christ himself. We profess our faith in Him and our love for Him. But talk is cheap and words are easily spoken. It's what we do that gives substance to love. Today we need to take an honest look at what we are actually doing in our daily lives that reveals our faith and love in Christ. Just how real is our relationship with Jesus Christ?

Repentance means change. And change is something we dislike. If you are driving to a destination and make a wrong turn, you can't just say "oops" and continue on driving in a wrong direction. You have to turn around and get back on the right path. You have to make a change that makes a difference. Change has its demands — demands that go beyond mere words of regret. Advent calls us to make some changes in our routines.



Advent has more to offer us, however, than that. Advent has a Savior for us. Beyond our own efforts to recognize sin and failure in our lives, beyond our confessions and admissions that lead us to repent, Advent presents us with what we truly need — a Savior. For if we're honest with ourselves we will admit that we cannot deal with sin, repentance, and conversion all on our own. We can't manage our lives all by ourselves.

So I'll leave you with the first three steps of the famous Twelve Steps found in Alcoholic Anonymous. Of the twelve, the first three are the most vital and critical. They deal with what John the Baptist is talking about. So, substituting the word sin for the word alcohol the steps are:

- 1 – We admitted we were powerless over sin — that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2 – Came to believe in a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3 – Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

The only thing in life that is constant is change. The only certitude is this: that there is life where there is change. Something that is changeless is dead. Change is hard on us all — on you and on me alike. It's very difficult for everyone because who or what guarantees that things will be better as a result of change? A life lived close to God is the only real guarantee we have.

The wonderful thing about Advent is that in the end we are given the certitude of God's presence in our lives in Jesus Christ. Advent is all about our expectant faith in the God who loves us enough to send us His very best — His only Son. And if we receive Him in our hearts and souls, deep down within and not simply with good wishes and nice thoughts, then the change that we enter into will move from incertitude into the certainty of God's abiding love deep within us to empower us to deal with our selves, and to love ourselves and those around us as He would have us.

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

## **SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. DEC. 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 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.

## **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

We have begun the process of discerning those in our chapel community who feel called to Eucharistic Ministry. We have a need for more Eucharistic Ministers, particularly within our younger families who come here regularly, as well as with those who regular attend the Saturday Evening Mass. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to this ministry, we would be delighted to include you here at Our Lady Chapel. Both adults and teens [must be going into Senior year of High School next year] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry.



**Eucharistic  
Ministers**

## FOLLOWING CHRIST TODAY:

Many years ago, when I was still in Seminary training, we were required to spend a semester in jail ministry. It was a very positive experience. Once a week we would go and hold a prayer service for the inmates. Then we would spend some time afterwards sharing coffee and talking with them. But before I began that semester, I remember asking one of the older seminarians, who had already completed this phase of training, what his experience was like. He said: “Oh it’s challenging, but quite important. I think you’ll learn a lot from it.” Then he looked at me and said: “But get ready for a lot of old altar servers.”

Now, I did not know what he meant by that comment. But I discovered as I became involved in the ministry, that a remarkable number of the inmates — perhaps one out of every three — would tell me: “Father, I used to be an altar server.” Now this perplexed me, and I tried to explain it. I wondered whether there was a connection between being an altar server when you were young and ending up in prison.

I was able to conclude that either the inmates were trying to hustle me and impress me with their connection to the church, or they were sincerely sharing with me a moment of their life when they felt close to God. In time I began to pray that they were hustling me, because how sad would it be that these men — many in their fifties and sixties — would have to go all the way back to their childhood to locate a moment when they felt they were serving God.

One of the lessons that I learned from that semester was this: the important question is not what have we done for God? The important question is what have we done for God lately? That seems to be the issue that John the Baptist has in Matthew’s gospel. When some of the religious leaders come for baptism, he insists that they must demonstrate their goodness by their actions. He does not want them to presume their holiness by saying that they have Abraham as their ancestor. Now, having Abraham as your ancestor was a good thing, and John the Baptist certainly respected it. But he insisted that their pedigree be accompanied with action. Or to put it in other terms, what had they done for God lately?

To be a follower of Jesus is not simply to collect a couple actions of faith and love and then move on to other things. To follow Jesus is a way of life. It is not enough to garner together a couple of religious experiences that you can point to when the topic comes up in conversation. Being a disciple is living today — and every day — as a person who is trying to build the Kingdom of God. That is why Jesus asks us to follow him daily. He says: “I know that last Christmas you were very generous with that family that was experiencing financial difficulty. But that was a year ago, and there are people still struggling. I am counting on you to be a sign of my love. I know that you told your wife that you loved her and were thankful for her on her anniversary, but that was months ago. Have you told her that recently? I know that you have stood up for someone who was being ridiculed at school or at work, and I was proud when you did that. But that was some time ago, and they are still people being abused today.” Each day Jesus says: “I am proud of the ways that you have acted in service, in justice, and love to others, but I need that to continue. What have you done for me lately?”

What have you  
done for me  
LATELY?

Now that question of Christ can seem demanding and even unreasonable. But I assure you, it is not Christ’s intention to shame us or to place heavy obligations upon us. For the truth is that doing what Christ asks us to do, following his will, is the best thing that we can do for ourselves. There is no deeper satisfaction than knowing that we have served as he has asked us to serve, that we have forgiven as he has asked us to forgive, that we have loved as he has asked us to love. Doing his will is the

greatest joy we can achieve. He asks us to do his will, not for his benefit, and not only for the benefit of others, but for ourselves. We find joy in his commands. That is why it is important that we do not rest on our laurels. We cannot be content because once we were an altar server or once we sacrificed for the sake of someone else. Christ is counting on us today and every day, to build his kingdom, to be people of service, justice, and love. That is what he asks. That is what he commands. We would do well to follow his commands, for doing his will brings us lasting joy. His question: “What have you done for me lately,” is really only another way of asking: “What have you recently done for yourself?”

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

## SUPPORTING EACH OTHER ON THE JOURNEY:

In addition to reminding us of the promise of the coming of the Messiah, this Second Sunday of Advent invites us to follow the path that leads us to him. It encourages us to be faithful and to maintain hope by showing the fruits of our sincere conversion. John the Baptist asks us to renounce the path of evil, to straighten our paths out so that they lead us to an encounter with Jesus [Matthew 3:1-12]. In the various places of the world where the Congregation of Holy Cross is present, we find people who show through their actions the love of God. We also see situations of injustice, violence, and abuse that especially affect the most vulnerable and unprotected.

Reality permanently challenges us to remain in love, because it is easy to lose our way, to react negatively, and even to run the risk of thinking that some unjust situations will never change and that hope does not exist. Let us remember that in our Holy Cross mission, we choose to accompany the most vulnerable — those who have difficult lives, those who have crosses that are difficult to carry. It is in them that the cross becomes hope; it is in these negative situations that the ministries of the Holy Cross illuminate the shadows and transmit hope.



It is also necessary that we reflect on whether our journey is in the style of Jesus — if we are determined to follow in his footsteps, or if we allow ourselves to be lost among so many other footprints leading to a lack of love and despair.

Let us not neglect our personal prayer and spiritual lives. Let us pray to Jesus the Messiah, who is always faithful to the promise of God. Let us pray not to deviate from the path that leads us to truth and eternal life. May the promise of the coming of the Messiah motivate us to walk the path that leads us to Jesus, to be faithful, and to show the fruits of our sincere conversion. May the spirit of his love encourage us to persevere and keep hope alive.

—reflection written by José Antonio Patrón Quispe,  
Executive Director of Yancana Huasy in San Juan de Lurigrancho, Peru,

## ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** 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. **Adults are also welcome...especially in our Lector Ministry. Please call the chapel office [440-473-3560].**



## **THE COMMUNITY IS ONE:**

Near the end of his long letter to the Christian community in Rome, Paul reminds his brothers and sisters that the Scriptures — what we call the Old Testament — were written to instruct them and to encourage them so that they might have hope. He asks God to grant them the grace to follow Christ’s example by “thinking in harmony with one another,” by living in “one accord,” and by glorifying God in “one voice” [Romans 15:4-9].

With the division between Jewish and Gentile converts in mind, Paul insists that Christ ministered to the Jews to confirm the promises made to Abraham — which included salvation for the Gentiles. Following the example of Christ, the Christian community should “welcome one another” for the glory of God.

Paul’s call for unity is much needed in our fragmented world with deep religious, cultural, economic and political divisions. He provides us with a solid theological foundation for joining in the great task of overcoming divisions and bringing people together. We are all members of the one human family. The God who loves every person wills the salvation of all people. Jesus, the community builder, reached out to those banished to the margins and welcomed sinners. His death and resurrection unleashed the Spirit, who draws all people into a communion of love.



As Christians we are called to carry on the community forming ministry of Christ in our sphere of influence. Sue, a wife and mother of three teenagers, works hard to keep their family together and each individual happy. She and her husband talk regularly about shared approaches to raising their children. She sometimes initiates conversations with her spouse on how they can keep their love alive and continue to grow together spiritually. Attuned to the unique personality of each of her children, she tries to make them all feel special. When disputes occur, she encourages them to work it out themselves — part of her overall effort to educate them to be responsible adults. Supported by her husband, she promotes the practice of sharing meals together, at least once a week, with no cell phones allowed. She welcomes her kid’s friends into their home, and makes sure they have their own space. Over the years she has insisted that her family respect her time outside the family circle — including her part-time job as a secretary and her leisure time with women friends. Sue finds strength and guidance for living her vocation by participating in the Sunday Mass along with her husband and children who still attend regularly with her.

Sam, who owns a small advertising agency, lives out his community forming vocation at the worksite. He knows all of his employees by name; he spends time getting to know them and something of their personal lives; and periodically consults them on how to make the business more efficient and productive. He purposely hires people of diverse racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds — convinced that diversity produces more creative ideas. During the recession, he kept some people on the payroll even though it hurt the business financially. Sam regularly prays for his employees who are really more like family.

How can you promote community in your own circle of influence?

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

## **GOD’S FUTURE IS ALREADY PRESENT:**

When I finished high school, I found a job as a counselor in a camp sponsored by Catholic Charities. Our campers were girls between the ages of 9-14 — the majority of whom came from an orphanage in the city. The camp sat at something over 7,000 feet in altitude and from it we could look up at “Twin Peaks” — a pair

of mountains 11,420 feet above sea level. Early in the camp session, we started getting the girls in shape for their end-of-camp hike up Twin Peaks.

Happily, we didn't know that this hike is officially classified as "Hard," meaning that it was long, had significant gain in altitude and the possibility of unmarked tracks, etc. Innocent of that knowledge, we carried our lunches and led our little troopers up. Almost all of us — big and little — succeeded in reaching the summit and finding our way back down. One counselor stayed behind with stragglers when their energy ran out.

When we started, Twin Peaks was fully in sight. After about a half an hour, the incline hid the high mountains. As the climb grew more difficult, we had to remember that the goal was really there — even though we couldn't see it. If we hadn't believed, we would have given up.

I thought of that climb when reading Paul's statement that hope comes from "endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures" [Romans 15:4-9]. This coincides with Isaiah's promise that a savior would "sprout" from the people and "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him" [Isaiah 11:1-10]. Isaiah promised that the coming One would establish justice and peace throughout creation and that "Earth will be filled with knowledge of the Lord" — an invisible dream!



On this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent, our wild friend John the Baptist appears with his never-subtle message: "Repent!" [Matthew 3:1-12]. He's broadcasting a call to assume a new mentality. John preached that one like Isaiah's "sprout" was coming and that everyone had to make ready to recognize him.

John called the preparation "metanoia" — or repentance. Metanoia has little to do with saying: "I'm sorry," or making a confession. It's far more demanding than that. John wanted to clear the way for the Messiah. To do that, he didn't demand worship, prayer or fasting; no, John cuts to the quick: "Produce good fruit! You think you're part of the chosen people? God can raise up children of Abraham from stones — and right now you do resemble those rocks!"

John called for a mindset that relied completely on Isaiah's promises — a metanoia perspective in which people believe so firmly that they act from the certainty that God's future is already present. They see God's reign emerging now; they sense that humanity and all of creation are on the way to becoming all God created us to be.

This mentality doesn't look backward to an ideal past but toward what theologian John Haught calls: "an unprecedented, planetary, super-organic state of fuller being." That's a way of being that Paul described more simply as the process of all creation groaning in the birth pangs of the glorious future of the children of God [see Romans 8:18-28].

John is the perfect messenger to prepare us for the Nativity. He readies us for One to come — the One whose passion for God and creation is so contagious that it can only be described as the fire of the Holy Spirit. John proclaims that the time is ripe — that this is the moment. He calls us to "metanoia" faith. He maintains that the kingdom of heaven is at hand and that we can discern the Spirit at work among us if only we look with new eyes.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent invites us all to live John's style of "metanoia". Because this prophetic invitation comes from the Spirit, we can believe that it's possible. The Baptist echoes what Moses taught — the reign of God is not far away in the heavens or across the sea: "No, it is very near in your mouth and it's in your heart to do it" [see Deuteronomy 30:12-14].

The time is ripe; this is the moment to make straight the paths, to remind ourselves that Christ is alive and the Spirit is active among us. In this fracturing world, we're all on a long climb. We'll find ways to care for those whose stamina runs dry while the rest of us move forward. All we need is the conviction that we are on the way to something dreamed of, but currently out of sight. We can keep going if we believe.

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

**NOT BY APPEARANCES:**

I love dressing up for Sunday Mass, and I love seeing so many in our parish who dress up for Church. People are very interesting. Everyone has his or her own look. Consider me. I have my own look. And it takes a lot of time for me to get this look. The washing, the priming, the *Just for Men*, the combing; it takes a lot of time. Then there's the picking out the right outfit for the day — “Let's see what should I go with today, black, or black, or my favorite, black?” A teenager once asked me why priests wear black. I told him: “school colors.” Anyway, having primed and chosen my wardrobe, my day starts with me making the proper appearance as a priest. I hope you appreciate it — because God, certainly, does not care. Remember what the prophet Isaiah wrote: “Not by appearance shall he judge” [Isaiah 11:-10]. God is not impressed by our coiffure, our wardrobe — or even our demeanor. God doesn't care if someone has a pietistic attitude that makes you wonder if he or she is a model for a plastic sculpture of a saint.

He doesn't care if someone does not appear different than any one else — He doesn't care. There was no missing the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came before John the Baptist [Matthew 3:1-12]. Both groups had distinctive garb to demonstrate their holiness. John, reflecting God's attitude, was not impressed. He called them a “Brood of Vipers.” Definitely not impressed. Nor does God care what anyone says about someone else. You know: “She is really a saint,” or “He is such a loser.” No, God doesn't judge by hearsay either.

So, how does God judge? And why was John so negative regarding the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to be baptized? According to Isaiah, God judges by actions. He judges by justice. The way people live, the way they treat others is what matters. He judges by justice. The biblical concept of justice is deeper than the legal connotation of justice. In the Bible, justice is the correct relationship with the Lord. Evidence of this relationship is seen in every action of a just person's life. We call a person a “Godly Man” or a “Godly Woman” because the love of God is seen in the way he or she treats others. The Godly Man is a Just Man. The Godly Woman is a Just Woman. That's why John was furious with the Pharisees and Sadducees. There was nothing godly about these self-styled paradigms of holiness.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were more concerned that others respected them than they were about how they treated others. They looked down at people as though they were dirt. But they were the ones whose bellies were in the dirt. So, John called them by their just name: “Brood of Vipers.” If they wanted to prove John wrong, they could. He told them they could. What they needed to do was produce good fruit as evidence of their commitment to God — show their repentance. That's why John didn't kick them out. He baptized them too. Have you mastered proper, plastic, pietism? Can you get your heads tilted at the proper slant so that all around you will expect you to be swooped up into heaven at any moment? I hope not. That is not what this Kingdom that John proclaimed is all about. What the Kingdom of God is about is wisdom and understanding, and counsel and courage and reverence for the Presence of God. The cardinal virtues speak about seeing God in others and in the world and acting according to that vision. Each virtue leads us to make justice the band around our waists. Imagine what a beautiful world we would live in if people were truly godly. It would be a world where there was no hatred, or fear, or war, or suffering. Isaiah became quite poetic when he considered this world — the wolf shall be the guest of the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the baby goat, the calf and the lion shall browse together and the lion won't have veal for lunch. The cow and the bear will get along. And children would no longer die. The baby will play in the cobra's den



and not be bitten. The child will put his hand in the adder's lair and not be hurt — "There shall be no harm or ruin on my holy mountain". The ideal is upon us. The Kingdom of God is transforming the world. And we can be part of this transformation. We can change the world by being godly people. We can change the world by being people of justice and love. The manner in which we treat others has far deeper implications than our relationship to this or that individual. When we are kind to someone, we are making the Kingdom a reality in that person's life. When we treat someone with justice, we are providing the world with an experience of God's presence.

For example, let say that a retired person's adult children have been rather unapproachable during the year. They have not bothered about the family. Their own lives were too important and too busy to call to Mom or Dad. Now they want to come to visit for Christmas. Mom and Dad may feel that they have a right to treat them coldly. But if, instead, they are kind and loving — forgetting their absence in past and enjoying their presence — then those children will know what it is like to be welcomed back home not just by their parents, but by God. They will have an experience of the Kingdom of God in the justice of their Godly parents. Maybe it's not the children of a retired person, but a brother or sister who has hurt a sibling and now wants to be warm and friendly for Christmas. Perhaps, they did the same thing last year and the year before, then restored hostilities shortly after the tree came down. It makes no difference. No one can hold a grudge and be a Christian. The conquest of the Kingdom is more important than the rationale for an argument.

When people are genuinely welcoming, when people are warm, then they are godly people working to transform the world — one person, one grudge at a time. Perhaps it's the Teen in school who has invented new ways to be nasty to others. He or she is the least popular person in the class — a distinction he or she has earned by saying things about others, by making others' lives difficult, by just plain being mean. Shock him or her. Give this Teen a Christmas card and truly wish that he or she has a beautiful Christmas. You will be giving the Teen a great Christmas present — an experience of God. You and I need to do this and similar actions because we have the blessing of being called into the Kingdom of God. Not by appearances does the Lord judge, but by justice, and kindness, and the determination to let the presence of God prepare others to enter His Kingdom. This is justice. And this justice will transform the world. This is our Advent Hope.

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

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

<b>Monday:</b>	Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Isaiah 40:1-11; Matthew 18:12-14
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30
<b>Thursday:</b>	Isaiah: 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15
<b>Friday:</b>	Zechariah 2:14-17; Revelation 11:19-12:1-10; Luke 1:39-47
<b>Saturday:</b>	2 Corinthians 10:17-11:2; Matthew 25:1-13
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent:</b>	Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

## THE CHALLENGE:

When we demand that our anxiety or any dissatisfaction be taken away, we are refusing to hold out for the full picture that is always given by God.

— Fr. Richard Rohr

## TOURIST OR PILGRIM?

Let's not live like tourists — getting upset when things don't go our way. Let's become pilgrims. God made all of us for happiness, but we resist. We turn from things that would lead to real happiness and go for things that bring some kind of immediate satisfaction. The result is that we end up creating misery for ourselves and those close to us.

The Scripture Readings for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Advent describe something of great importance — having a goal. Isaiah describes the “day” that awaits us — the day of reconciliation, healing and justice [Isaiah 11:1-10]. Jesus tells us that ultimate justice will happen as his kingdom arrives [see Matthew 4 and Matthew 10]. For that reason we pray: “Thy kingdom come.”

If we have a goal — Jesus' kingdom — then life changes. Our life become a pilgrimage — a journey to a goal. There's a big difference between being a pilgrim and being a tourist. In his book *Resisting Happiness*, Matthew Kelly says: “Tourists want everything to go exactly as they have planned and imagined it. Tourists get upset if there are delays. They demand prompt attention and service to their every need and desire. They focus on themselves, often shoving past others to get where they want to go. Tourists go sightseeing. Tourists count the cost. Pilgrims are very different. They look for signs. If a flight gets delayed or cancelled they ask: ‘What is God trying to say to me?’ Pilgrims are aware of the needs of others. Pilgrims go looking for meaning. Pilgrims count their blessings.”



When our World Youth Day group went to Poland, our bus broke down stranding us at a service station with no working bathrooms. As it turned out, we celebrated an open air Mass and it bound us together in a beautiful way. We did a fair amount of preparation to visit the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, but Auschwitz was not our goal — our goal was to recognize the radical need for God that we share with every human.

Only in Jesus and his kingdom will we have reconciliation, healing, and justice. Let's not live like tourists getting upset when things don't go our way. Let's become pilgrims. Like St. Paul, we need to ask the “God of endurance” to give us what we need to continue on. We all need to pray *A Pilgrim's Prayer* by Thomas Merton — “My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always. Even though I may seem lost in the shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.”

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

## SIGNS OF GOD'S PRESENCE:

Our salvation comes from something small, tender, and vulnerable, something hardly noticeable. God, who is the Creator of the Universe, comes to us in smallness, weakness, and hiddenness. I find this a hopeful message. Somehow, I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God's saving power; but over and over again, I am reminded that spectacles, power plays, and big events are the ways of the world. Our temptation is to be distracted by them and made blind to the “shoot that shall sprout from the stump.”

When I have no eyes for the small signs of God's presence — the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends — I will always remain tempted to despair.

The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, he asks for my full attention. The work of salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises. But the promise is hidden in the shoot that sprouts from the stump — a shoot that hardly anyone notices.

—Henri Nouwen

**THE CHOSEN – SUNDAY, JANUARY 4<sup>th</sup>:**

We had a wonderful group of people join us for our last episode of *The Chosen* this past Sunday. The viewing was followed by a very inspiring sharing among those present. With the holidays upon us, we are going to take a pause in our gatherings for *The Chosen* until after the new year. **Our NEXT gathering will take place on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. We will continue to gather once monthly, viewing a new episode each month, followed by discussion.**



*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. **Join us for this life-giving experience. 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.

<b>Total Offerings: Saturday [11/29/25]</b>	-----	<b>\$ 390.00</b>
<b>Total Offerings: Sunday [11/30/25]</b>	-----	<b>\$ 961.00</b>

**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].



## READYING OURSELVES FOR CHRISTMAS:

John the Baptist tries to prepare the way for Jesus by calling people to repentance: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near” [Matthew 3:1-12]. Whatever else that means, it includes the idea that one of the best ways we can prepare for Christmas is by making a good, honest, searing confession. To repent means to confess our sins.

This notion has fallen out of favor. The idea of confession is very much challenged today. At a practical level, less and less people are in fact going to confession. The old line-ups at the confessional box are becoming shorter and shorter. As well, more and more people are challenging, theoretically, the idea of sacramental confession. Arguments against it take many forms — “I don’t find it meaningful!” “It’s too privatized!” “There isn’t any need to do this to have one’s sins forgiven! God doesn’t need our mediation.” “It gives undue power to the priest!” “This is an affair between God and myself.” “It’s adolescent!” “The priests don’t have time to do it properly.” Whatever the objection — and there are many — fewer and fewer people going to confession.

This is an unfortunate development because private confession is one of the pillars of the spiritual life. At a certain point in one’s growth, there is no progress without it. Why? Why confession? Why the need to tell ones sins to a priest? Surely the radical mercy and forgiveness of God are not contingent upon telling our sins to a priest? Surely God’s mercy cannot be controlled by or limited to one prescribed ritual? In both scripture and church tradition it is clear that our sins are forgiven through sincerity of conscience and through touching the body of Christ — and this has many forms. The Christian community itself is the radical sacrament of reconciliation and God’s mercy can never be tied down to just one vehicle of grace. So why confession?

The Baptist’s message is as true today as it was 2000 years ago.

Simply put, confession is the sacrament of the mature, and one grows mature by confessing one’s sins. Mature people face themselves and apologize explicitly — and people grow mature by apologizing. The critics of the sacrament of reconciliation are right in saying that God is not tied down to one vehicle as an avenue for the forgiveness of sins. They are wrong however when they denigrate the importance of private confession. One may not have to confess one’s sins explicitly to another human being to have them forgiven, but one does have to confess them explicitly if he or she hopes to live a transparent life, free of addictions, rationalization, and dark skeletons in the closet.



“You are as sick as your sickest secret!” That’s an axiom popular among people working in 12-step programs. They know the truth of that through personal experience. They also know that until one faces oneself, in searing honesty, before another human being and there acknowledges openly his or her sins, there will always be addictions, rationalization, and lack of real transparency. It has taken us a long time to understand the nature of addictive behavior — and even longer to learn how to deal with it. One of the things we have learned — and this is a pivotal and non-negotiable step in every 12-step program — is that there has to be an open, honest, and searing admission of sin, face to face, before another human being. Without this, at a certain point, all real growth stops. The church has always had its own version of this — we called it confession, the sacrament of reconciliation.

It can of course still be argued: Why before a priest? In the letter of James in the New Testament, we are encouraged simply to confess our sins to each other [see James 5:16]. So why a priest? Because a priest symbolically represents the whole community. In confessing to a priest, we are, in a manner of speaking, confessing to the entire community. A friend of mine is fond of saying that sacramental

confession, as presently practiced, is an unhappy compromise, far from ideal. That is correct — though not in the way my friend thinks. We owe our confession to the whole community — since it is the entire community that is wounded by our sin. And because of this, the ideal way to confess would be to go in front of a packed church on a Sunday morning and begin our confession by saying: “Bless me community — for I have sinned!”

Confession is not so much about having one’s sins forgiven as it is about coming to maturity within the community and being able to live a transparent life, free of dark secrets, addictions, and rationalization. The Baptist’s message is as true today as it was 2000 years ago. To make straight the path for the coming of the Savior, to make a proper advent, to prepare ourselves to have Christ born in our lives, we need to undergo a baptism for the remission of sin. In simple talk, that means, among other things, making a searing, honest, open, confession.

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

## YOU CAN GO HOME TO HIS ARMS:

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas during this season of Advent, God is reminding us something important — His mercy never fails. We all know the story of the Prodigal Son, who wasted His father’s inheritance, chasing sin and pleasure until his choices left him alone and broken [see Luke 15:11-32]. His father’s eager embrace shows us that God — like this merciful father — is always ready to forgive. Our heavenly Father would run out to meet us if we but took a tiny step of faith toward Him.

But there’s one detail about this story that we often overlook — the son’s return wasn’t pretty. He didn’t know what would happen if he turned around and went home. He didn’t know who he was to his father anymore, or if he would ever take him back as a son.

When we stray from God, it’s not pretty. And when we finally decide to come home to Christ, it hurts — it hurts a lot. We feel alone and unsure, having wandered far from our Good Shepherd’s gaze. The road back may seem riddled with uncertainties — will God accept us? Can we find our way back? Are we too far gone? Where do we even begin? But, like the prodigal son, if we’re lost, we don’t have to stay that way. And we don’t have to have everything figured out. If the only thing we know is that we need God to save us — that would be enough. That reach — no matter how desperate and fearful it may be — is enough to bring us to His arms.

God has proven time and time again that He’s not going anywhere. Why, then, do we fear the path ahead? Don’t we know He will be waiting for us at the end of the journey, without fail? Even better, don’t we know that He’s with us on the way home, too, guiding our every step? The distance we wandered doesn’t change that.

These coming weeks present us with a challenge — prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming. As we read on the first Sunday of Advent, the Church is proclaiming a battle cry — “Let us throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:11-14).

Advent is no time for comfort — it’s a time for battle, a time to dust ourselves off and choose God, each and every day, no matter how tough it is or how many times we’ve strayed. We’re seeking perfection, not in ourselves, but in Christ alone.

Maybe you’re lost right now. Maybe you have no idea how you could ever find your way again. But if you know just one thing — that you are broken and in need of a Savior — then God will take care of the rest. Come home. Find rest. You don’t need to have it all together. You need only the name of Jesus upon your lips.

O come, O come, Emmanuel!

—taken from the writings of Faith Noah, which appears on the internet



## PREPARING FOR THE LORD WHO IS ALREADY HERE:

We need to pay attention to Isaiah's statement that says: "for as waters cover the sea, so will the earth be filled with the knowledge of our God" [Isaiah 11:1-10]. The key to appreciating the importance of this statement revolves around being aware of the ancient Hebrew meaning of the words "knowledge" or "know." Our biblical authors normally employ "know" or "knowledge" when they're talking about a person actually experiencing someone or something. It implies a far deeper relationship than just having a casual familiarity with persons or things — like I know the times tables, or I know him when I see him. When the word is biblically used in the context of men and women knowing one another — as in "Adam knew his wife Eve" [see Genesis 4] or in Luke's annunciation scene [see Luke 1:26-38] — "How can this be since I do not know man?" — it usually implies sexual intimacy.

So when the prophet speaks about the earth being filled with the knowledge of God, he is basically sharing his conviction that all of us one day will experience God's presence in everything and everyone we encounter. God will be as much a part of us as water is a part of the sea. For those who have that God-experience everything will change; even natural enemies will become friends.

Yet at this point in salvation history — 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE — Isaiah is still locked into the Jewish monarchy. He believes that it is through one of the country's kings that the Lord's presence eventually will become an everyday experience. That's why he spends so much time enumerating the gifts such a unique sprout from the stump of Jesse will possess. By the way, it's from this passage that we get six of the seven gifts of the Spirit we had to memorize in our Confirmation classes. When Paul lists his gifts of the Holy Spirit, he got them from here [see Galatians 5].

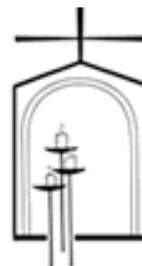
By the time Jesus of Nazareth was about to begin his public ministry, most Jews had given up on one particular king creating an ideal God-present age. A few centuries before this itinerant preacher shuttered his Capernaum carpenter shop, they started to believe that God was going to step outside the reigning monarchy and send a special "Messiah" who would usher in this longed-for day and age. That's why Matthew's John the Baptizer is forced to set people straight — emphatically informing them that he is not that special person — he's just preparing the way for him [see John 1:20-21].

But even if we believe that Jesus is the Messiah, we can never forget John's basic "stump speech." John is not going to bring about God's presence, he's simply announcing that God is already present. Remember the first words of Jesus' public ministry: "The kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe in the good news!" [see Mark 1]. In other words: "Why are you still waiting for something that's already here? You simply have to change your value system and you'll notice God working effectively in your everyday lives!"

Our earliest Christian writer, Paul, presumes his readers in Rome have already gone through such a value changing repentance [Romans 15:4-9]. The eyes through which they filter everything happening around them constantly surface God's presence and actions. That's why, as Isaiah prophesied, they can experience the unity between people who traditionally were opposed to one another — especially the oneness between Gentiles and Jews. Jesus' ministry of helping people recognize God working in all people has made it possible to experience God in all people, even in natural enemies.

Often — especially during Advent — it seems that we're still passively expecting God to enter our lives — instead of being committed to living the way Jesus of Nazareth thought necessary to recognize that God is already here. Perhaps a change in our value system is simply too much to expect.

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



## **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 Andre Polsinelli, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease.
- For Kate Tzefronis, sister of Charlie ['24], who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For a Gilmour parent who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Kaylie McAllister, daughter of Patricia Constantino ['85], who is ill.
- For Denise Linkov, cousin of Anna Akkus, who is a civilian war prisoner, and who is ill.
- For Judy Rabkin, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Lynn Teichmen who is undergoing medical treatment
- For Melissa White who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Kathy Lough who is ill
- For Karen Walsh who is ill.
- For Veronica Powers, sister of Brother Charles Smith, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Brother Roy Smith, C.S.C., who is recovering from surgery.

### **PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:**

- For John Prcela.
- For Doug CaJacob ['58], brother of Stephen CaJacob ['64]
- For Nancy Lavelle, wife Neal Lavelle ['53] and mother of David Lavelle ['89]
- For Susan Murray, wife of John Murray ['71]
- For Timothy O'Brien, Jr., son of Tim O'Brien ['60], cousin of Sean ['89] and Colleen ['92] O'Brien, nephew of Thomas ['59] and Daniel ['62] O'Brien,
- For Donald Rensi.
- For Robert Mikula

### **PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:**

- For a greater openness to the needs of others, especially during this time.
- For an end to religious violence.
- 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 its forms.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.

## **SOLITARY PRAYER:**

Biblical meditation is a traditional method of solitary prayer. By selecting a particular scripture verse from the gospel reading for the day, or a favorite psalm, or a sentence from a letter from Paul, you can create a safe wall around your heart that will allow you to pay attention. Reading and reciting a sacred text is not meant to fill up your empty space or limit your spiritual thoughts, but to set up boundaries around it. Sometimes it is helpful to take one word or phrase from the text and repeat it during your solitary prayer time. Some people find sitting quietly a good way to center their prayer. Others need to move and walk slowly to let the mind and body come into God's presence. Especially in the beginning, when you are easily distracted, it is good to be able to remember and repeat the word or phrase that attracted your attention. Then your focus and awareness can gradually descend from the mind into the heart and be held there for an extended period, close to the heart of God.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

**~ A PRAYER OF WAITING ~**

**Patient God  
sometimes I forget  
that you wait for me.**

**You wait for me  
to finish wrapping  
and decorating.  
You wait for me  
to finish baking  
and shopping.  
You wait for me  
to finish my busy schedule,  
my time with friends,  
my outside interests.**

**Help me  
to give you  
more than my wiped-out self  
at the end of the day.**

**Help me  
to participate fully  
in the birth of Jesus  
in my heart.**

**Amen.**

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.

phone: [440] 473-3560 [office] or 216-570-9276 [cell].

e-mail: [blazekj@gilmour.org](mailto:blazekj@gilmour.org)