

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.

ADVENT PENANCE SERVICE:

On **Monday, December 15th 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.



FAITH EDUCATION SCHEDULE:

Faith Education schedule for December is December 7th and 14th. After Christmas break, classes will resume on Sunday, January 11th. 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 16th. Please call Patty at the Chapel Office [440-473-3560 or 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.



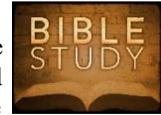
The need is greater than ever. In addition to gifts/gift cards for family members, we also ask that you provide a Gift Card for food, from Aldi, Wal-Mart or Dave’s. You may also purchase non-perishable food items and place them in a basket, if you wish.

This is a project that the entire family can get involved in. We can try to match your family with a family of the same size, or with children the same ages, so that everyone can join in the effort. 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 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 21st.

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — THURSDAY, JANUARY 8th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, January 8th 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: The Meaning of the Epiphany of Jesus

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 14: 3 rd Week in Advent	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, December 15:	NO MASS
Tuesday, December 16:	NO MASS
Wednesday, December 17:	NO MASS
Thursday, December 18:	NO MASS
Friday, December 19:	NO MASS
Saturday, December 20: 4 th Week in Advent	5:00 PM In-Person only
Sunday, December 21: 4 th Week in Advent	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

SCHEDULE OF ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SERVICES:



- Monday, December 15 — Communal Penance Service at 7:00 PM
- Saturday, December 20 – 5 PM, Vigil Mass for 4th Sunday of Advent
- Sunday, December 21 – 10 AM, Mass for 4th Sunday of Advent — Decoration of the Chapel for Christmas, following the 10 AM Mass
- Wednesday, December 24 — 4:00 PM — Christmas Eve Mass
- Thursday, December 25 — 10:00 AM – Christmas Day Mass
- Wednesday, December 31 — 5:30 PM – New Year’s Eve Mass

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a poem about patience as a hard thing to pray for. “Waiting, longing, wondering what’s taking so long”, are experiences we’d rather avoid. Things for which we do not have to wait — things and persons who are automatically present — tend to become just there — the usual.

There is a comfort in the usual, but there is something in the human soul which urges the new, different, or surprising. Advent reminds us that we want both the expected and the unexpected. This is a wonderful way to live because there is something of God in both. Our experiences of being surprised with the different and unusual of each day is a preparation for our celebration of the Eucharist and of God’s becoming one of us. The different can be an annoyance, but it does keep us alert and alive. May we come face to face with our resistance or skepticism about the unexpected in order to be welcoming.

The Jewish nation is distant from Jerusalem — they are in exile in Babylon. In the midst of their alienation from land and temple, a prophetic voice sings out a song of hope [Isaiah 35:1-10]. For us, Isaiah’s song is a picture of reversals. For the people in exile it would have been a dream — “Is it possible?” They were far from home in a captivity brought about by their failures to respond to God. They hear about a “coming soon!” from the very same God Whom they had rejected.

The promise is all about change. The natural will change; the desert will become fertile and all the vegetation will sing out of the goodness and glory of God. Darkness will become light because God is coming — so stay awake and do not give in to despair. These are words of encouragement to a repentant nation long in exile. The blind and mute and deaf will be made whole. The entire people will see and hear and sing with joy as they re-enter Jerusalem.

Matthew’s Gospel pictures John — whom we heard last week baptizing and announcing that someone new is coming — is now in prison. He sends his followers to Jesus with one good question. John is not doubting Jesus; rather in his personal exile in prison, he needs a sign of hope. The question is about whether or not Jesus is the Messiah [Matthew 11:2-11].

The answer of Jesus to John relies on John’s familiarity with the message of Isaiah — the blind, the mute, the leper are healed. The dead are raised and the poor have the “good news” preached to them. The words that Isaiah spoke have now become reality. John will be comforted by the report his disciples give him.

As they are departing, Jesus speaks to crowds about this person — John. They had gone out to see him and listened to his calling. They might have had certain expectations and even suspicions. John was found to be strong, dedicated, and living what he believed. He was not a trembling reed, but a true prophet of God. Of all the prophets — and indeed of all born the natural way — John is the greatest.

Then Jesus takes the opportunity to confound, yet invite His listeners. There is a new level of existence. There is a new way of being born. There is a different way of judging greatness. The least person living this new way is greater than John the Baptist whom Jesus has just stated to be the greatest born the old and natural way. Jesus is continuing His call to all Jewish listeners to be born of this new,

Third Week in Advent



unexpected, surprising, “supernatural” way. Jesus has affirmed John, affirmed Himself to be the Messiah, and affirmed the establishment of His kingdom or way of living.

This third week in Advent has often been called “Rejoice Sunday”. And there is some cause for that spirit. But there’s a problem. We hear it said that we should be careful about what we pray for. Advent can be dangerous! We are invited to pray for the coming of Jesus as a baby. The real problem with Jesus is that He grew up; He spoke and lived His truth. By His doing that, we are invited to listen and live those same truths! We are all in a captivity to the familiar, to our ways, and to our expectations.

Jesus asks to be born again in us who are to live with joy at our being released from our fears, blindness, deafness and leprosy.

These are dangerous and disturbing concepts — be careful what you pray for. John was affirmed in his belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The crowds — we — hear that Jesus is after changing, rearranging us, our values, our ways of seeing, listening, living. Surprises — such as Jesus — do take time to get accustomed too. Jesus is about to be born!

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

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

Again this year we will accept memorial donations to help defray the cost of flowers and decorations which we use in our Chapel for the Christmas season. If you are interested in making a donation **in memory of loved ones**, please put the names of the loved ones along with your donation in an envelope, mark it “**Christmas Flowers,**” and either give it to Father John or drop it in the offering box at the Chapel entrance.



We will publish the names of your loved ones in the Bulletin as a memorial throughout the Christmas season. May our floral decorations and this season remind all of us of those special relationships which we hold close to our heart. Please keep the following people in your prayers: **In memory of Toni Burke, Mike Heryak and Eleanor DeMarco.**

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.



ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5th [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** 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].**



LECTORS



Altar Servers

GAUDETE SUNDAY – REJOICE!:

This is *Gaudete* or *Rejoice Sunday* — the third week in Advent. Because of this, the candle we light on the Advent wreath is “pink”. The readings force us to ask ourselves: What makes us happy — really happy?

What really makes for lasting happiness? Certainly not sports; and certainly not stuff. Technology has advanced at such a break neck speed that the stuff that costs so much five years ago is now relatively worthless. You can now buy a combination DVD and VCR player for \$30 over at Big Lots. Only a few years ago DVD players were going for \$200-\$300. Before that VCR’s were selling for that amount.

Stuff doesn’t bring lasting happiness. Happiness that lasts comes from relationships. Mature people are far more concerned with the signs of love they bring the people they love on Christmas than they are at what signs of love they may receive. The relationship is what matters. Many of our seniors will tell you that they really love their husbands or wives, and continued to do so after their spouse died. Some who have lost children would also agree. In our faith, we believe that our loved ones who have gone before us are with the Lord watching over us now, and waiting for us to join them later on. That makes us happy.

Every Christmas I receive pictures of many of the children and Teens of our parish. That is Mom and Dad’s way of saying: “Come and share our joy.” Your children are your joy — even when they try your patience. They are the source of your joy because you love them so much for whom they are — your children, your own unique reflections of God’s love in your lives.



Happiness is found in relationship.

The greatest relationship we can possibly have is the one that brings us the greatest joy. That is the relationship with Jesus Christ. Real happiness comes from the encounter with God. The relationships we have with other people all take their depth from the relationship we have with the Lord. People truly love each other when they see God’s goodness in each other. When the relationship with God is not present, the relationship of two people is rather shallow.

People saw God in John the Baptist. They were drawn to him, even though he was ruthless in proclaiming the Truth. Actually, that is what fascinated them; more than that, that is what set their hearts on fire. They encountered God in John the Baptist — “Whom did you go out to see?” Jesus asks in Matthew’s Gospel [11:2-11] — “A reed that is shaken by the wind?” Or, in our terms, a politician who changes his position with each election according to what would be politically advantageous. No, people came out to hear a prophet and experience God through that prophet. Yes, he was calling them to a radical change in their lives, but he was also calling them to God. And they sensed it. They experienced God in the radical words of the prophet. They jumped into the water to be baptized by John because they wanted what he had. They wanted God. They wanted true happiness.

We have a greater than John the Baptist. We have Jesus Christ. Why are we attracted to Christ? We are attracted to Christ because the encounter with God burns within us. We are attracted to Christ because we know His Love is real for each of us. His Love is real, and it is forever. We are attracted to Christ because He brings lasting happiness.

May the final days before Christmas be for you and your families days of authentic joy — His Joy.

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

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH:

He was quite a sight — this John the Baptist. He wore clothes of camel hair, and had a leather belt around his waste. His food was locusts and wild honey. He told people things that they may not have wanted to hear. Perhaps you remember the gospel for the 2nd Week in Advent — in it, John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees: “a brood of vipers”, and he told them that they could not expect salvation just because they were children of Abraham. He told everyone that they needed to repent. He called people sinners. And yet they crowded around him. They went out into the desert to hear him. John the Baptist was so popular that his message was carried throughout the Roman Empire. When St. Paul first went to Ephesus, he found people there who had heard of John — even been baptized by John — but who had not heard of Jesus, or of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist was so popular that the writer of the Fourth Gospel — John — had to make it very clear in the prologue to his Gospel that John the Baptist was not the Light, but came to give witness to the Light.

And now John was in jail — in King Herod’s prison to be exact. He was there because he did what he had been doing all along — proclaim the truth regardless of the ramifications. He told Herod that it was not right that he should marry his brother’s wife. This was not a politically healthy statement. It ended up costing John his life.

Before he was executed, John inquired about this Jesus who was now attracting crowds of his own [Matthew 11:2-11]. Jesus sent John’s disciples back to him to report that the signs of the Messiah were all around — the blind recovered their sight, cripples walked, lepers were cured, the deaf heard, the dead were raised to life, and the poor had the good news preached to them. Then Jesus spoke to the crowd. “What did you go out to the desert to see?” What attracted you to John? Was it because he said what was popular, what was trendy? Was John a reed swayed by the wind? — blowing one way one day, another way another day? Or was John a proclaimer of the truth?



The people Jesus spoke to had to admit it — they were mystified by John’s words because they were straight forward and true. John didn’t care about anything other than the truth. People were sick of a world where every fact could be bent a dozen ways to serve the interest of the speaker. They were sick of the Romans and the Greeks using their adroitness with language to twist the law or to twist logic to justify horrible, abominable actions. They were sick of the Temple priests, and the Jewish religious parties — the Sadducees and Pharisees — using religion for their own gain. They just wanted the truth. It attracted them. John fascinated them because he was not afraid of the truth.

People are no wiser now than they were back in Jesus’ day. The way that people form their own concepts of reality was no different in Jesus’ day than it is now. People are still molding facts to suit their desires and needs. People are still using religion for their own personal gain. The truth is still very hard to find in our world.

We have all witnessed family, friends and neighbors twisting truths to justify every abominable action imaginable. Books are available that justify every sort of abomination. Many people have discarded the belief that we will be judged by God according to our actions. They would rather see God as some sort of a Barney that will sing: “I love you, you love me” to us for all eternity, even if we spent significant portions of our lives singing to God: “I hate you and all you demand of me.” The concept of universal laws has been rejected. It was brushed aside by a misuse of the word “values” so that the ten commandments have really been turned into the ten suggestions. Many college professors report that nearly all of the students who enter the classroom believe that the truth is relative. Why then should

be so surprised that the truth is whatever people want it to be?

Not all people see the truth this way. There are very good people in our day in our society — just as there were very good people in Jesus' day in Jesus' society. There are good people who have had enough of the perversion of truth. They are attracted to anyone who will stand for the truth, regardless of whether it is popular or not, whether it is convenient or not, whether it is politically correct or not. There are good people just want the truth. They don't want a reed bent by the wind. They want a John the Baptist who will die rather than sway from the truth.

What do we want to hear when we come to Church? Do we come to hear a priest saying that sin doesn't exist, or that maybe for us this or that sin doesn't really matter? Or are we attracted to the Church because we are good people, and we want to hear the truth no matter how popular or unpopular it may be?

I am convinced that we go to Church because we are good people, who want to be better people. I am convinced that we go to Church because like the people who went out into the desert to see John the Baptizer, we are attracted by the truth. I am convinced that we go to Church because like the people of Jesus' day, we are disgusted with those elements of society that pervert truth to serve their own needs. More than this, I am convinced that all of us want to be freed of the darkness within ourselves that threatens to enslave us in our own selfishness. The truth alone can set us free.

This truth that sets us free is more than a concept — it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ — the Holy Spirit. "I am the way, the truth and the life" [John 14:6].

In a world that would relativize and pervert every aspect of life to serve its own self interests — in a world of darkness — we have found light. And that light is Jesus Christ.

"Are you the Messiah, Jesus, or should we look for another?" John the Baptist's disciples asked. People of Good Will — people who have heard angels singing Gloria — have asked the same question throughout the ages. "Look around," responded Jesus. The signs of the Messiah are all around you. The time of light is upon you.

Rejoice! Our joy is far more profound than the superficial happiness of contrived Christmas emotions. We rejoice because the light of truth has destroyed the darkness of sin. We rejoice because we have been drawn by the truth. We rejoice because Jesus Christ is the truth. He embodies the truth. He is the truth. And He and the truth are, as the *Letter to the Hebrews* states: "The same, yesterday, today and forever" [Hebrews 13:8].

—taken from the writings of Monsignor Joseph Pelligrino which appears on the internet

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. DEC. 20th:

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.

WHO IS THE REAL MESSIAH?

Years ago, some of my high school students gave me a banner, sporting a large image of Santa Claus with John the Baptist's question from Matthew's Gospel [11:2-11] underneath: "Are you the one who is to come or should we look for another?"

In a commentary on this passage, one scholar mentions something with which all scholars of the Christian Scriptures agree: "These verses contain a school debate — probably of post-resurrection origin — over the nature of Jesus' mission, held between disciples of John the Baptist and Christians." Many naively believe that all John's disciples instantly switched their allegiance to Jesus after the Baptizer's martyrdom. Such a general shift never happened. Some of John's followers eventually became Jesus' followers, believing Him to be the Messiah they were anticipating. But most who thought John was the Messiah continued to do so even after his death.



Historians tell us there were still followers of John active in their beliefs centuries after Jesus' death and resurrection. That provides the basis for the scholarly observation: John's disciples and Jesus' disciples debated their mentors' merits long after they had completed their earthly ministries.

Part of the argument John's followers employed revolved around a definition of terms. If Jesus were the Messiah, He certainly wasn't the Messiah the Israelites were anticipating. To call the Galilean carpenter "Messiah" was tantamount to creating a new definition for the title.

The fact that this discussion containing John's question is included both in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, tells us that Matthew and Luke copied it from a very early, but hypothetical, Christian document [called "Q"] that contained sayings of Jesus that circulated before any of our four Gospels were written. Its inclusion by Matthew and Luke demonstrates its importance for even pre-Gospel Christians.

It also raises an interesting question. Just what Messiah are we supposed to imitate? Matthew and Luke agree that it's one who makes certain "the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them" [Isaiah 35].

No wonder both evangelists add Jesus' comment: "And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me." Jesus conceives His ministry to be a total giving of Himself to others. That's why we keep looking for "someone else" — someone not as demanding, someone who gives to us, instead of insisting we give to others.

Seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, Isaiah believed God called him to a parallel ministry [Isaiah 35:1-10]: "Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: 'Be strong, fear not! Here is your God.' The eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb will sing."

Throughout the history of faith, God's followers have always been tempted to expect a Santa Claus figure to suddenly step into their lives and give them the "goodies" that will make their lives a happy and bearable experience.

James [5:7-10] doesn't let us forget what both Isaiah and Jesus discovered — we're truly fulfilled and happy only when we're concerned with others' needs, and not our own. "You too must be patient," he writes. "Steady your hearts. Do not grumble against one another, my brothers and sisters." Faith-filled fulfillment is a life-time process. What Jesus achieved, we can achieve. If we're convinced of

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His unique messiah-ship, we can pull it off.

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

PATIENT WAITING:

Many Catholic scripture scholars think the letter of James was written in the late first century by an unknown author who attributed it to James, the brother of the Lord, who led the Jerusalem church until his martyrdom around 62 AD. Throughout the letter, there is a common expectation that Jesus would return soon to complete his saving work. Given his delay, the author advises patience — like the farmer who patiently awaits harvest time after the rainy season — because “the coming of the Lord is at hand” [James 5:7-11]. James goes on to advise Christians to practice patience with their brothers and sisters, not complaining about one another so as not to be judged. The passage ends with an admonition to imitate the prophets as examples of patiently bearing hardships.



The letter of James prompts further reflection on developing the virtue of patience. For most of us, it is not a matter of waiting patiently for Christ to return at the end time — our challenge is to remain patient as we face the delays and hardships woven into everyday life: long lines at the checkout lanes; traffic jams on the commute to work; lingering colds that last longer than expected; delayed divorces that elude a conclusion; enduring vices that frustrate spiritual growth; physical diminishment that accompany the aging process; prejudices that continues to plague our society; and terrorist threats that defy quick solutions.

In the Christian tradition, patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, suggesting that learning patience involves cultivating a deeper prayer life that quiets the agitated heart. A busy executive finds she is more patient with colleagues if she meditates for ten minutes before going to work. Thomas Aquinas taught us that patience — an aspect of the cardinal virtue of fortitude — enables persons to face longstanding hardships with courage. A husband, who practiced the virtue of courage throughout his life, was able to sustain his care for his wife during the last two years of her life as she suffered the diminishment of Parkinson’s disease. A mother maintained a patient love for her rebellious teenage son by saying a prayer of gratitude every day for the way her parents were patient with her during her own turbulent adolescence.

How can I become a more patient person?

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

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**

LIVING OUR HOPE:

The theme for this third week in Advent centers on the “excitement of waiting”. Have you ever “waited” for someone to come over to your home for a visit — maybe a friend or a special relative who lived out of town? As the day draws closer, the excitement builds until you can “hardly wait” anymore. It’s that feeling that this third week in Advent is trying to capture — so much so that the third candle on the Advent wreath is rose colored and not purple.

Excitement is in the air at the imminent coming of the Lord. John’s disciples ask Jesus if he is the one who is to come [Matthew 11:2-11]. “Look around you”, they are told. “The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor and happy are those who believe.” These events really are a cause for rejoicing; the Lord has come and is working miracles among us. Our salvation is at hand.

It is very interesting to speculate as to why John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one who was to come. Scripture scholars over the centuries have wondered why John did this. John the Baptist obviously knew that Jesus was the Christ; in fact, John couldn’t understand why his own disciples were still clinging to him. So perhaps he sent them to ask Jesus this question, presuming that once they met Jesus they would see for themselves that he was the Messiah and so become followers of Jesus.

Or, alternatively, perhaps John, knowing that Jesus was the Christ, could not reconcile himself to the fact that Jesus did not adopt the same sort of penitential lifestyle that he did. It must have been hard for a man so steeped in the ardors of a penitential life like John the Baptist to find himself proclaiming the coming of a Messiah who went to grand parties with Pharisees, allowed prostitutes to anoint his feet, and was found in the company of notorious sinners.

It is interesting for us to speculate on these things. More scripture scholars tend to go with the first option. John understood quite well that Jesus came to save sinners; therefore he would not have been surprised to hear that he was found in the company of sinners. All those years of prayer and fasting must have borne fruit in the shape of wisdom and insight — and John certainly possessed these qualities in full measure.

It is also quite common for a prophet to be frustrated by the dullness of his pupils and followers. Disciples are often so attracted by the person they are following that they forget to take note of the message.

John had spent a lifetime waiting for the Messiah; he knew in his soul that he was to come. He must have yearned for the moment he would meet him, and then one ordinary day Jesus comes through the crowds and asks for Baptism. John recognizes him immediately and is thunderstruck — “It is I who need Baptism from you.” Jesus turns the tables on him, just like Jesus turns the tables on so many others — “No, we must do what is fitting” {see Matthew 3}.

It is easy for us to realize with hindsight just how fitting it was that Jesus himself was baptized — he entered into our lives so fully, and he shows us so clearly the way to go. We must be baptized as he was Baptized, we must undergo a Passion just as he underwent a Passion; and we will rise to new life like him — the new life he won for us.



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For now we wait. The Apostle James tells us to “wait patiently for the Lord’s coming.” And as we wait, we rejoice and thank God for all that he has done for us. We rejoice that through the coming of his Son Jesus we have been saved. We do what we can to imitate his life and to follow his Gospel of love. We join together to celebrate the Eucharist, sharing the bread that is his body and the wine that is his blood. We take seriously his plea to the Father — “May they be one, Father, even as you and I are one” [John 17:11].

We do all these things — yet mostly we wait. This waiting is not like we are waiting for a bus or for a mail delivery. We wait with hope in our hearts for the culmination of all things in Christ, and the prayer that must be on our lips is “thy kingdom come!”

In this Kingdom that we long for, all that is wrong with the world will be put right, all that is broken in humanity will be healed. Each person will attain their fulfillment — there will be no oppression or injustice. This is the hope for all humanity. We long for this Kingdom to come into its own.

But this can be no passive longing. We disciples of Christ do not sit around waiting for that bus to arrive — rather, we work to bring it about. We do what we can now to alleviate injustice, and to bring healing and reconciliation to our broken world. There is a poetic writing by RS Thomas entitled *The Kingdom, that sums this all up well*: “It’s a long way off, but inside it there are quite different things going on: Festivals at which the poor man is king and the consumptive is healed; mirrors in which the blind look at themselves and love looks at them back; and industry is for mending the bent bones and the minds fractured by life. It’s a long way off, but to get there takes no time, and admission is free, if you will purge yourself of desire, and present yourself with your need only, and the simple offering of your faith, green as a leaf.”

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

WHO AM I?

Abba Poeman said to Abba Joseph: “Tell me how I can become a monk.” And Joseph replied: “If you want to find rest here and hereafter, say in every occasion: ‘Who am I? and do not judge anyone.’ ” Abba Poeman was very direct about the level of sanctity cultivated at Scetis and its desert outposts. Every day say to yourself: “Who am I?” On Monday: “Who am I?” Answer: I am the one who is tired of staying here in the desert any longer. It’s not anything like I thought it would be. On Tuesday: “Who am I?” Answer: I am the one who has little enough to give to the world, but I would like to give it anyway. On Wednesday: “Who am I?” Answer: I am not that showoff who brings water to all of us every day. “Who am I?” “Who am I?” “Who am I?” At base, it is a simple enough question — but ask it often enough and answer it truthfully enough and you might, sometime, answer it sincerely enough to know the true answer the next time you look in the mirror — I am the person who pretends to care for people more than I really do. Or, I am the person who talks about the Scriptures, but seldom really sits with them and takes them seriously. Or, I am exhausted being a person who is trying to be faithful to a daily practice — but is not. Or, I am a person who never tells the truth about my family background — which means that I have learned to lie well.

Suddenly the answer to what makes for spiritual transformation becomes plain — I will really be a monk when I put down all my righteousness, am honest about myself, and never again judge another person. The effect is immediate. I am free now. There is nothing anyone can say about me that I have not already admitted about myself. Abba Joseph has enabled me to accept who I am. I don’t need to lie anymore. I am ready to grow again.

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

THE CHOSEN – SUNDAY, JANUARY 4th:

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 4th, 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 1st century, the series depicts the life of Jesus through the eyes of the people who interacted with him, including the apostles and disciples of Jesus, Jewish religious leaders, Roman government and military officials, and ordinary people. In contrast with typical Bible-focused productions, Jenkins has given more depth to his scripts by adding backstories to various characters from the gospels without contradicting the material of the gospel. **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.

Total Offerings: Saturday [12/6/25]	-----	\$ 825.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [12/7/25]	-----	\$ 507.00
Total Offerings: Monday [12/8/25] [Immaculate Conception]	-----	\$ 75.00

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].



A TIME FOR LONGING:

Advent is a time of longing. It is a time to recognize that in all our hopes and dreams we are reaching out for the “one who is to come.” To use the words of St. Augustine, Advent is a time to “exercise our desire” for God.

In Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist and his disciples express their longing for a Messiah when they ask Jesus if he is the “one who is to come” [Matthew 11:2-11]. How does Jesus respond? He simply recounts to them what they have seen. The sick are healed, the blind are given their sight, and the poor have the Good News preached to them [Isaiah 35:5-6]. Jesus was the one Isaiah had foretold would come, and the one John had prepared the way for. He was the one who would bring an eternal kingdom. Over 2,000 years after the birth of Jesus, many in our world still await a Messiah. They are imprisoned in ignorance, abusive situations, poverty, or their own sinful choices. They are looking to us to answer this question for them: “Is Jesus the one we are waiting for? Is Jesus the one who can save us?”

How are we to answer them? What can we point to in our lives to show that God is at work in the world, freeing us from sin, changing lives, and bringing peace? They know that the world cannot offer them what they truly desire, but they are also not yet convinced that Jesus is the answer. They want to see what difference a life lived in relationship with God makes. Will they be able to see that by looking at us?



Each of us — through Baptism and Confirmation — has received the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit empowered Jesus to preach the Good News to the poor and to perform miracles. This same Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, Jesus can say in Matthew’s Gospel that the least in his kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. John the Baptist probably never understood that Jesus would die for his sins. He never read the New Testament. He never received the Eucharist as we do. And so, we have a power at work in our lives that even he could not understand.

Like the priests, prophets, and kings of the Old Testament, we have received an anointing. It is now time for us to put that power of God to work serving others so that the world can see for itself what difference a life lived for Jesus makes. Only by seeing our lives transformed by the peace which only God can give will the world come to know that Jesus alone provides the answers that the people of today are seeking.

Where do we begin? We begin right here and right now with the people around us. It is by showing kindness every day to the people we bump into that the transformation can start. If I can hold a door open for someone or say a kind word to a teenager, then I will have an open heart for the beggar who asks me for change or the hitchhiker who needs a lift to the gas station. Our acts of mercy will leave people wondering what motivates us to be so kind. Through our goodness, they will come to know Jesus who is the source of all goodness. And knowing him, they will have grasped the answer to the longing of their hearts.

—taken from the writings of Douglas Sousa, which appear on the internet

MOVING INTO THE UNKNOWN:

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

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 Pauer, 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.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday:	Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27
Tuesday:	Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32
Wednesday:	Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17
Thursday:	Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25
Friday:	Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25
Saturday:	Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38
4th Sunday of Advent:	Isaiah 7:10-14; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ An Advent Prayer ~

**In the darkness
we light a flame of hope.
May it dance
not only upon
our Advent candle
but within each
of our hearts as well.**

**Hope is the flower
that blooms
from the ground of faith.
And so,
with joy
we keep the tradition
of ages past
as we encircle
our Advent wreath
with prayerful expectation.**

**This dancing flame
sings out
that the reign of God,
that pure light,
is slowly dawning
in our world.**

**May this Advent season
bring us a new birth of hope
in the ancient promise
of our God.
amen.**

—Edward Hays from *Advent Blessings*

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