

Our Lady Chapel



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

THE GIVING TREE:

Our Chapel Giving Tree project was a success! The participation of our Chapel community, as well as our Gilmour students and staff, was outstanding this year! Our thanks, and the gratitude of the Fatima Family Center go out to all of you! If you still have a gift to return, do not hesitate to drop it off late — The Fatima Center is flexible and will work with us.



“ADOPT A FAMILY” PROGRAM:

Our Adopt a Family program is now complete! All of the St. Adalbert families have been adopted! We cannot thank you enough for your generosity beyond measure!

We hope that your family enjoyed working on this project together, and that everyone found a way to become involved.

If you adopted a family, you need to turn your gifts in to the Chapel Office this weekend. The due date is this Sunday, December 21st.

Remember, Adopt a Family gifts must be WRAPPED. Please pack your family’s gifts in a box or bag or basket, and label it with your Family’s number. Thank you.



SCHEDULE OF ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

- 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
- December 27 & 28 – Regular weekend schedule
- Wednesday, December 31 — 5:30 PM – New Year’s Eve Mass

CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR — BEGIN WITH MASS:

It has been a long-standing tradition here at Our Lady Chapel that we begin our New Year’s Eve celebration by first coming to Mass before going out for the evening. This affords us a great opportunity to begin the New Year with a time of prayer and worship of God. As noted in the Mass schedule of the Christmas Season, **there will be a vigil Mass on Wednesday, December 31st at 5:30 PM.** Please plan on joining us.

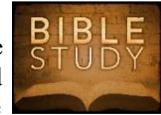


CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

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, Eleanor DeMarco, the Blazek and Rezabek Family.**



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 21: 4 th Week in Advent	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, December 22:	NO MASS
Tuesday, December 23:	NO MASS
Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve	4:00 PM In Person & Live Stream
Thursday, December 25: Christmas Day	10:00 AM In Person & Live Stream
Friday, December 26: St. Stephen	NO MASS
Saturday, December 27: Feast of the Holy Family	5:00 PM In Person only
Sunday, December 28: Feast of the Holy Family	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

CHAPEL GAME NIGHT – SATURDAY, JAN. 10th:



On **Saturday, January 10th** Our Lady Chapel is bringing back our **Game Night!** Our **Young Adult Group, as well as all adult members of our community — are invited to attend.** Bring your family and your friends. Bring your favorite game. Bring your favorite snack or treat. **Game night goes from 6:15 PM until 8:30 PM** in the **Lennon Board Room.** Please call the Chapel office 440-473-3560 or sign up on the **“sign-up sheet”** on the **Chapel** easel to let us know that you will be joining us. Please feel free to join us for this wonderfully fun time.

REFLECTION ON THIS WEEK'S THEME:

Preparing for the last week in Advent always takes some doing — especially as the excitement of Christmas keeps getting closer. But we have four more days to experience our prayer of longing. In our North American culture, we don't do longing very well. Immediate gratification is our usual style. Waiting is for the “poor” — longing is a frustration to be relieved by a presumed right of purchase.

I wish I longed for the celebration of the birth of Jesus as much as I long for the semester to be over, or the ultimate victory of my favorite football team. Perhaps I am too accustomed to the story and the reality of Jesus' birth. Perhaps I have too many comforts and warmth of clothing and nourishing food to really want! I would want the inquisitiveness of the shepherds, the searching of the Wise Men, and the wondering of Joseph and Mary.

We also need to find some emptiness within ourselves — a place in our Inn. It would do us well to prepare for the Feast of Christmas by allowing ourselves to have some experiences of “not having” so that we can come to see “not having” as a kind of “having”. Nature abhors a vacuum; our hearts ache for completion. We need to find that peace of soul that accompanies our unique ways of hungering.

What's in a name? The confrontation between Isaiah and Ahaz is well known [Isaiah 7:10-14]. As in our times, war was a popular past-time between Israel and its surrounding neighbors. God has promised that Judah and Israel would be spared and King Ahaz was relieved to hear this — but for all the wrong reasons. But he was belligerent and haughty. And so, Isaiah tells him to ask for a sign, but Ahaz does not want to do that — even though he still questions whether or not he should trust that the kingdoms will be safe.

The prophet Isaiah then gives Ahaz a second comforting word — not only will the two kingdoms be safe, but the future will be safe as well, because a young woman will give the Davidic family-line a son whose name will be “God-Is-With-Us”. Ahaz does not want to tempt God. God wants to affirm that God is faithful to past promises and future fruitfulness. God is with us now and in the years to come. What's in a name? Matthew's Gospel [1:18-24] tells us who “God-With-Us” really is — Jesus!

We do not like mystery very much. We want to know exactly how things work — how it all happens. Joseph wanted to know of course. We don't deal with dreams very well either. Joseph had a mystery and a dream, and trusted through them both. When an angel — we don't deal well with angels either — addressed Joseph as “son of David”, we hear how Matthew intends to affirm that Jesus is from the “Rod of Jessie” — the royal lineage. What's in a name? There is plenty. Joseph trusts as did Ahaz, and a young girl is found with child in some mysterious, angelic way.

The child to be born will have a name — “He Who-Saves-His-People-From-Their-Sins” is a prophetic and comforting name and title. Matthew then affirms this all by referring to the prophecy of Isaiah — the One Who is to save His people from their sins is also the God Who is with us now and for our fruitful futures.

Ahaz received a promise; Mary received a promise; Joseph receives a promise. All three do not ask for verifying credentials or exact signs of coming attractions. In fact, when Joseph wakes up from his dream, he takes Mary into his home. Wakening and welcoming is all we have been invited to during these Advent days. Ahaz had to trust what could not be seen. Mary trusted what could not be physically experienced. Joseph trusted what he could see — Mary — who to all appearances seemed the same as before the dream.



Now we stand at the threshold of the Stable. Our “stable-ability” is literally whether we can stand in the face of promises, mystery, and see beyond appearances. Joseph took into his life more than his wife Mary — there was also a Mystery inside her which he welcomed as well. He could see what he could see, but there was more than met the eye there.

We live the “stable” life ourselves. God has made promises to us which invite us to see beyond appearances, and take mysteries into our unstable lives. They become unstable by our demanding signs which can give us a false sense of security. For as joyful as these days of Advent and Christmas can be, there is a hidden and dangerous aspect. We would approach the straw-filled stable supported by crutches of certainty and our Global Positioning Systems to make sure of things — just the way we approach any call to trust. We would meet Joseph there with nothing but his faith hanging out. Mary would be there, smiling compassionately at our falsifications.

What’s in a name? Our name is the “us” with whom God is. Our name is “His People” who will be saved from their sins. What’s in a name? We would be there with our impatience hanging out, and somehow invited to enter into the stable-life of seeing within the physical — the presence of the Promised.

Joseph is called a righteous man. This description of who he is sets the stage for how he proceeds when he hears that Mary, his betrothed, is pregnant. The text does not tell us how long Joseph wrestled with the different ways to respond to the news, but we can imagine how he learned about the pregnancy and the issues he struggled with before the angel of the Lord visited him.

Here’s a beautiful little story to help illustrate the fullness of the encounter of Jesus with God. As the day nears its end, Joseph steps back to survey the chair he is making. Smiling, he whispers, “It’s almost finished, it will last a lifetime. Maybe two lifetimes, if he gives it to his son.” Looking up from his handywork, Joseph notices Mary’s father approaching. He greeted Joachim, offered him a cup of water, and a place to sit in the shade. The two men sit quietly for a few minutes until Joachim is ready to speak.

“I have something I need to tell you, Joseph. Mary came to us this morning, saying she is pregnant. I can see from your face that your reaction is similar to our immediate response. But Mary is our beloved daughter, so we listened carefully without judgment. She explained that the Angel Gabriel visited her. She has conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, this child is the promised savior of our people! We believe her. Joseph, we know Mary loves you, and she is a woman of deep faith. She would not break her betrothal vows, nor would she ever betray God. I know this is not how you expected to start your marriage, but I beg you to take her as your wife. I will leave you with your thoughts, but I will come back tomorrow so we can talk further.”

In Joseph’s time, religious and cultural norms were intertwined. To violate the law was to sin against God. Members of the community might assume Joseph was the father of Mary’s child — thus damaging his reputation and disgracing his family. He might be disinherited or shunned. He could lose his standing in the synagogue, or his business might suffer — righteous people, including family members, did not associate with sinners and tax collectors.

There were similar consequences for Mary and her family. If Joachim told Joseph that Mary’s child was the fulfillment of the prophecies, he would have realized that the ultimate punishment — death by stoning — would kill Mary and the promised savior.

Although we cannot know exactly what Joseph considered before reaching a decision, as a righteous man, we can assume he turned to God. He might have carried on a conversation with God, lamented the situation, asked God to change it, or asked God for help in some other way.

We do not know how long he pondered, but the text tells us that he chose to balance adherence to the law and acting with mercy — “yet unwilling to expose her to shame, Joseph decided to divorce her quietly”. God gave Joseph the freedom to decide. Once he chose to act with mercy, God sent an angel to reassure him that he was following God’s will.

In our cultural context, we too can find ourselves facing a dilemma. It can arise from within our work environment, perhaps it is a sensitive family issue, or something happening within our society. Although the ultimate consequences might not be as serious as those Joseph faced, we can still struggle to decide. We might feel compelled to respond, but there is no clear right answer. Even a decision not to choose can result in negative consequences, so how do we move forward?

Can Joseph be a model for how to proceed? Joseph’s “yes” to taking Mary as his wife is an essential part of the Christmas story. He is an example of a “servant leader,” putting her welfare ahead of his own, and of what can happen when one person fully trusts and follows God’s will.

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

CHRISTMAS IS FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE ORDINARY:

Nazareth was one of the most insignificant villages in Judah. When Jesus was first assembling His apostles, we find the following exchange between two of them as reported in St. John’s gospel: “Philip found Nathaniel and told him: ‘We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth.’ But Nathaniel said to him: ‘Can anything good come from Nazareth?’ Philip responded: ‘Come and see.’” [John 1:45-45].

Christianity goes beyond doctrines, moral norms, and teachings. It goes beyond how we behave. While all of those things are important, we need to recognize that Christianity essentially involves vision — seeing things as God sees them; seeing things in God’s Light; recognizing reality and truth. Pontius Pilate during the trial of Jesus asked the central question. Truth is not something we establish, it comes from outside of us; it’s something we attain, something we come to recognize. The world thinks otherwise. “Truth?” Pilate asked, “What is truth?” Then, having disposed of truth, he had Jesus crucified [John 18:32].

Christmas is filled with the theme of light and darkness. We recall the Star of Bethlehem and the Magi, the Wise Men, those seers and seekers who came to honor the Source of Wisdom and Light. Christmas is celebrated at that time of the year when darkness fills most of the day. Our Americanized commercial Christmas fills our modern-day darkness with glitzy lights and glitter that all but blind us to the birth of Jesus — the Light of the World, the Light for the world that comes down to us from God in heaven.

Being a Christian involves viewing reality in a light that is different from all other sources of vision and knowledge. Christianity is all about seeing things and seeing people as Jesus sees them. It is in His Light that we can see reality as God sees it. God in Christ has come to us so that we might see — so that we might see the meaning and purpose of the life He has given you and given me. God has given us the Light of the World so that we might see reality and see ourselves in His Light.

What, then, do we consider to be of significance to us in our world and in our own personal lives? What seems to be significant for us in our eyes may be insignificant in God’s way of seeing things. Conversely, what we think to be insignificant may be very significant in God’s eyes.

The most significant thing about Christmas is that our humanity has been invested by God with His divinity. Our ordinariness is what appeals to God. God wants to be loved by plain men and women — men and women who are fully alive. He wants to be loved and sought in the commonality of our human nature and experience. That was His purpose and plan. But because we are so far

removed from His purposes it is only the extraordinary person who brings God into the regularity of his or her daily routines and patterns of behavior.

That is why the Virgin Mary is such an extraordinary person. She appeared to be, and was in reality, simply a little Jewish girl. She was lowly and considered herself to be a maidservant. But she was innocent and capable of wonder. In her simple humanity she was, in reality, of special appeal to God.

As a truly Christian celebration, Christmas is becoming more difficult for us to celebrate. Ask people what the significance of the Christ child is for them, and you'll get responses that are all lovely and nice — but which completely miss the point. Given the routine lives so many face in living, our culture has developed an entertainment industry that tells us things are not significant unless they are spectacular. Spectacles abound in sports, entertainment, and in television. But, we must ask, what do these spectacles show us?

Escapism is another way to flee from being what we consider to be just an ordinary human being. Consider the amount of alcohol, drugs, and pornography that fills our culture. We are continually told that it is a dreaded thing to be simply and plainly human.

Yet the message of Christmas is, in its radical form, a message that tells us God wants to be loved by us in our littleness and in our vulnerability. He even allowed His only-begotten Son to hang in that condition on His Cross. He did this to show us the glory of our humanity. Human eyes that see with no vision of reality view Christ on the Cross as twisted and deformed; stripped naked of all significance. Even in our day we all stand in amazement when we meet people who are sincere, speak only the truth, and have such a wholesome awareness of themselves that we view them in wonderment.

God's Christmas gift to us is the fact that we can carry the insights of Christmas into our fields of employment, our careers, our marriages, and into our relationships with the world and all others in the world that surround us. The Incarnation makes significant those things which appear to be insignificant. A simple Jewish maiden, a little town called Bethlehem, and ordinary humanity — all become apt conductors of the divine. It all happens in the inversion of values that Christmas brings to us. New Light comes into our world — a Light that prompts the skeptical Pontius Pilates of our own day to ask: "Truth? What is truth?"

How, then, do we see the reality of ourselves and of our lives? What do we consider to be significant and meaningful? And how do we see ourselves in the eyes of God? Dare we even look? Christmas says: "Yes!" We can look. Christmas can give us faith in our selves; it can give us hope; and it can give us love. Christmas gives us the power to see our world as God sees it — to see what in God's light we can be. Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph and Jesus — they all belong to us because we can identify ourselves in them. May all of that allow us to be at peace with ourselves, and between ourselves, and with God.

—taken from the writings for Father Charles Irvin, 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.



DO YOU GET IT?

A child was terrified of the dark. Her father tried to calm her by saying God was in the bedroom with her. She still was upset. She told her dad: “I want a God with skin on Him.” The Christmas season for most of us is speeding in the fast lane miles above the speed level. It is bearing down on us like a truck out of control.

Theoretically, these last few weeks of Advent should be spiritual quality time between the approaching Christ and ourselves. But the spiritual message becomes like spitting into the wind. Many Catholics will first touch Jesus when, exhausted, they put the chipped plaster Infant back into the shoe box after the Epiphany. Then they put it in the dusty attic for the next year. The malls all over America decree that gift-hunting season opens even as the Thanksgiving turkey is being served; malls can't wait to get their hands on our wallets.

This is one of the worst times of the year for many. Depression before the Thanksgiving/Christmas season arrives as faithfully as credit card bills arrive after it. The University of Utah School of Medicine has reported that ninety percent of us suffer from emotional reactions brought on by Christmas stress. In Chicago, three hundred counselors operated a hot line one year from December 21 through 27. They clocked two thousand calls from depressed people.

Children suffer anxieties about Santa's existence. They become greedy because of too many gifts, or envious because of too few. A young boy was heard to say to one of his friends: “I want any kind of gift as long as it's expensive.” Non-Christians, who oftentimes enter into the external signs of these times with trees and lights, usually experience an emptiness as others are reveling in the birth of Jesus. In short, for many of us, this season of joy and merriment leads to very negative experiences.

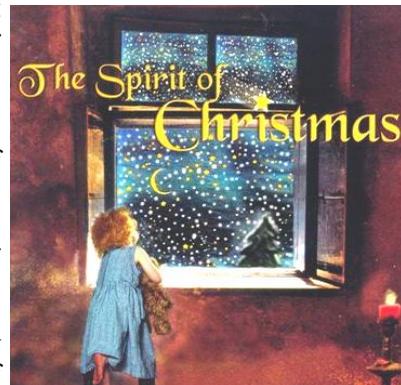
Jules Feiffer puts it this way: “Every Christmas, the family gathers together and fights about why we don't get together more often. And it occurs to me that the Bible must have the dates wrong — Christ was born on Good Friday and crucified on Christmas — isn't everybody?” Jesus the Christ, whose birthday we celebrate, can hardly be enthralled by the style of many of us who claim to be authentic Christians

The birth of Christ brings the infinite God within reach of finite people. The reality is that Christmas brings us face-to-face with the fact that God does have skin on Him. John Newman reminds us that when we look into the stable, we witness the Absolute in swaddling clothes, and Omnipotence in bonds. The Incarnation is superb poetry, exquisite painting, and sublime music wrapped into one gaily wrapped package.

One never tires of Jesus as a subject. Born twenty centuries ago, Jesus still sells. As you read this article, dozens of writers — unknown to one another — work at their computers around this cosmos to produce still one more volume on Jesus. This happens even though the Library of Congress already has twice as many books on Jesus as any other subject.

Tell others of Jesus. But first, allow Jesus to be born in you. He can't be born again, but we can! If you want to be considered subversive this week, answer “Merry Christmas” when people wish you “Happy Holidays.”

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



FROM DISASTER TO SALVATION:

The scriptures say it so quickly and casually that it is possible for us to overlook the crisis and the chaos that it must have caused: “Mary was found to be with child” [Matthew 1:18-24]. What must Joseph have felt when he discovered that Mary was with child? Shock, devastation, betrayal? He knew he was not the father. What hurt he must have felt when he supposed that this woman who he so treasured and loved, had been unfaithful to him? That hurt must have driven him close to despair. And as a person of faith, it is likely he turned to God to complain: “God where are you? Why have you let this happen to me? Have I not served you well? Do I not pray regularly in the temple and follow all of your commands? Did you not know that my heart was set on sharing my life in marriage with this woman who I so loved and who I was convinced you had given me as my spouse? Now it is all ruined. Now my life is shattered, my hope is gone. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

Now in time, Joseph learned that Mary had not been unfaithful, that his life was not ruined, and that his marriage could proceed, although on terms he had never imagined. The message of the angel made that all clear — in time. But in that first moment when Joseph found out that Mary was with child, he certainly presumed that all was lost, that God was absent and unconcerned.

The experience of Joseph tells us that God is working in ways which are not immediately clear. God has a plan which is unfolding — but that unfolding takes time. Therefore some of the things which seem like complete disasters can, in time, lead to goodness and life. When Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was convinced that his life was ruined. But it was, in fact, the first step in the salvation of the world.



In light of this story of Joseph, we must be slow to judge when evil attacks us. Although God is always at work, it takes time to perceive what God is doing. Now this stance of faith in no way denies the reality and power of evil in our world. Sickness, tragedy, violence, and death are real. They do attack us and hurt us. But even as they press in against us, the person of faith continues to believe that God is in charge. God is active, and yet what God is doing is not completely clear. We cannot yet predict the exact way in which God is going to bring goodness in our lives.

Therefore, when we receive bad news in our family, in school, at our job, it is appropriate to be in shock and to cope. But at the same time, the person of faith believes that those disasters will not derail God’s plan of life for us. When we make foolish choices or disastrous mistakes, we have to admit our failure and live with the consequences of our decisions. But even as we do so, we continue to believe that God is with us, guiding us to learn from our mistakes and to avoid them in the future. When someone we love is attacked by sickness or death, we are rightfully shocked and discouraged. But we continue to believe that God will provide opportunities for love, for reconciliation, and for growth.

Those of us who know the story of Joseph know how radically things can change as time passes and God’s plan becomes clear. Evil, sickness and death will always be a part of our lives. But the Christian knows how to face them. Even as they press in against us, we face the future with hope because we believe that the present moment is only a part of the plan that God has in store for us. Although the present moment is a disaster, it can lead to goodness and life. When the present situation is a total loss, it is still somehow a part of our salvation.

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

JOSEPH — THE FORGOTTEN HERO:

We come to the 4th Week in Advent, and the Scripture readings take us into the more immediate phase of our preparation for the great feast of Christmas. We focus on St Joseph, the silent man of the New Testament [Matthew 1:18-24]. Joseph does not speak one word in the scriptures; yet he had a crucial role in the great mystery of the incarnation. Joseph is presented to us as a just and honorable man. Indeed if he had insisted on his rights — as he has at first contemplated — Mary would have been divorced and cast aside. But Joseph listens to the voice of God, and does what is right. A little later on in Matthew's Infancy Narrative we hear how Joseph — again responsive to a dream — takes the necessary precautions and takes Jesus and his mother to safety in Egypt [Matthew 2:13-15]. These are the actions of a good and responsible man — one who puts his own interests in second place. As someone said recently, Joseph is the forgotten hero of the Nativity.

Traditionally we Catholics have called Joseph the “foster-father of Jesus”. This is in acknowledgement of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. We have also taken St Joseph as a model for all fathers — not just foster-fathers. But with the changing circumstances of family life there are many more men today who find themselves providing parenting for children who are not their own. And there are an equal number who because of family breakdown have to find ways of exercising their parental responsibilities at long distance. So, perhaps, we ought to see the example of Joseph as especially important today for all fathers — whether they are natural fathers, foster fathers, stepfathers, or separated fathers.

In the Scripture, we see St. Joseph as acknowledging parental responsibilities. We see him in a protecting role, taking prudent steps to shield his family from the wrath of Herod. Later on we find him in Nazareth working as a carpenter to provide a living for the three of them. Joseph is also an educator — teaching Jesus his trade.

These are the essential elements of fatherhood — protector, provider, and educator.

But we also see Joseph as a man responsive to the Spirit of God. The dreams Joseph has are symbolic of his attention to the things of the Spirit, and of his wish to discern the will of God. There is a deep spiritual side to St. Joseph — a quiet and humble spirituality which proves to be worthy enough for the foster father of Jesus Christ.

But above all else, it is Joseph in his role as foster father — accepting parental responsibilities in all kinds of circumstances — that needs to grab our attention. Anyone in this role needs support and good role models; we followers of Christ in the 21st century ought to be sensitive to their needs. Anyone who accepts the duties and responsibilities of a parent also needs someone to pray for them, and they could ask for no better patron than Joseph — the protector, provider, and educator of the child Jesus. As Joseph was that loving and nurturing parent in the life of Jesus, may we be the same for the many children who live today.

We are in the immediate run up to Christmas. It is a busy time for us all — with so much to do to make this great feast a suitable occasion for our families. But we must be sure to make the right sort of preparations. Yes, the gifts and the food all have to be bought, the cards sent, and the house decorated. But we, of all people, should be careful not to neglect the spiritual aspects of our preparation. Christ comes into our world to save us from sin and to open for us the way to new life.

We who are baptized are already living that new life. But, of course, we still live in a sinful world, and we are highly conscious of the sin in our own lives. For this reason, an important part of our



preparations for the feast of Christmas should be the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament needs to be an important part of our Christmas preparation. There are so many barriers we human beings put up, so many excuses we can make to avoid this sacramental encounter. But the best place to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ is at the feet of Jesus.

Christ comes at Christmas, and by coming as a tiny baby in the manger he comes to us in complete and utter vulnerability. This is highlighted by the account in Matthew’s Gospel of King Herod and his massacre of the innocents [see Matthew 2:16].

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we too present our vulnerability. In this sacramental encounter, we open ourselves up to another human — acting in the name of Christ — and we speak about our weaknesses and our wrongdoings. Christ came into our world to bring healing and salvation, and we experience both of these in a concrete way in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Make this Christmas a holy feast. Make this Christmas one in which you experience the gifts of healing and salvation that Christ alone can give. Make this Christmas a real time of peace, reconciliation, and love. —taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: 1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56

Tuesday: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66

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

TRUST IN THE LORD:

When Mary said to the angel: “Let it done to me according to your word” [Luke 1:38], she must have had a beautiful relationship with God. Her relationship with God required a great trust. She must have had a relationship that was unique for a person of her age and station in life. She trusted that her pregnancy was part of God’s will for her. She trusted that Joseph would not abandon her. She trusted that Elisabeth would give her consolation. She trusted that the trip to Bethlehem would not cause her harm. She trusted that even if there were no room in the inn, Joseph would find a place to deliver her child. This was only the beginning of her trust that would be the key to the fulfillment of God’s plan.

How much trust do we have in God’s plan for our lives? If we believe that our relationship with God is real, the trust we need will become a real possibility for us. While God might test us, God will not let us face our perils alone even though we might experience darkness. God is in the process of birthing new life in us that will be amazing. From our fear, God will call forth a love that open our hearts and brings us peace, a peace on earth that will touch those of good will.

Here are some questions for you to ponder:

- Is it difficult for you to trust?
- Have you ever experienced peace when you have put your trust in God?
- What areas of your life need more trust in God right now? —Brother Carl Sternberg, C.S.C.

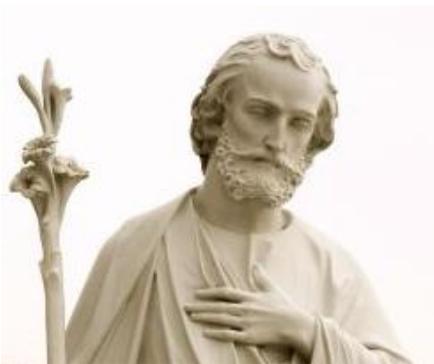


FEAR NOT ALL YOU JOSEPHS:

Matthew's Gospel [1:18-24] reading centers on Joseph — in fact, the infancy narratives in the Gospel of Matthew focus more on Joseph than on Mary. That is because the Matthew wrote his Gospel for Christians of Jewish descent. Matthew wants to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah promised by the prophets in Sacred Scripture as coming through the line of David. Joseph is a direct descendent of David. In the Matthew's Gospel, Joseph names the child. He gives his own spirit and all he is to the child. The child is Son of God and Son of Mary, but also, through the action of naming the child by Joseph, He is Son of David.

Joseph is told by the angel: "Joseph, Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife into your home." "Do not be afraid" — these words occur over and over in scripture whenever a human has an experience of the Divine. The angel Gabriel first appeared in Daniel 10 and told Daniel not to be afraid. Gabriel is found in the Gospel of Luke telling the priest, Zechariah — John the Baptist's father — not to be afraid. Those were also Gabriel's words to Mary. The shepherds were told by angels not to be afraid. Jesus told Simon Peter and his fishing mates not to be afraid after they almost broke their fishing nets when they listened to Jesus' instructions. The disciples were told not to be afraid when they heard the voice of the Father during the Transfiguration.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were told not to be afraid when they came upon the empty tomb. And in Matthew's Gospel for this 4th Week in Advent, Joseph is told "Do not be afraid."



What is all this fear referring to? Well, there is good fear and there is bad fear. If a college girl is afraid to walk across campus in the dark — that is good fear. It keeps her safe. If we are afraid that going to a certain place or going with a certain person, bad things will happen — that is good fear. It is keeping us from an occasion of sin.

But there is also bad fear. Bad fear is hopelessness and despair. Judas Iscariot hung himself after he betrayed the Lord because he feared that God would never forgive him — that was bad fear. When scripture says: "Fear the Lord," it is referring to the good fear that leads us to acting in a way that shows our respect and reverence for God.

Joseph was told in a dream not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. What was he afraid of? We don't know for sure, but it certainly had to do with Mary's pregnancy. Perhaps, on the human level, there was the fear of what others would think when a normal sized baby was born four or five months after the couple began their marriage. Perhaps Joseph was worried over what this Mary was really like. After all, she was a young girl, and, as far as Joseph initially knew, she was pregnant by someone else. Did he really want to risk the heartbreak she would inevitably bring upon him? Or perhaps, Joseph's fear was provoked by the religious authorities. What if he got caught protecting Mary, and was accused of joining her in violating the Law of Moses? Wouldn't he also be punished for protecting an abomination to God's law, and thus co-operating with the sin? And maybe there was another reason why Joseph was afraid. Maybe he was afraid that he could not love this child as every child has a right to be loved. It was not his child, how could he love the child as a father. We hear about Joseph's concerns over and over, but we forget that on the human level, Joseph must have thought: "What a mess this is. And what a greater mess it will be if I complete this marriage and take Mary as my wife."

But the angel said to Joseph in the dream: “Do not be afraid.” Joseph heard: “Trust God, for the child is special. And so is his mother. There is no other man. There is the Holy Spirit. Do not be afraid. Trust God.” And Joseph put his complete trust in the angel and in God. God would figure out how to deal with the gossip, how to deal with the Law of Moses, how to deal with Joseph’s concerns for the child. God would give him the ability to love the child as a father. And Joseph named the child “Jesus”. From this point on, this wasn’t just Mary’s child and the child conceived through the Holy Spirit — this was now also Joseph’s child, a son of David.

Fear is not the characteristic of the Christian. At the heart of Christianity is love — or to be more precise, sacrificial love. Our whole lives must consist in ceaseless efforts to love more and more as Jesus loved — sacrificially. To do this we need a gift from God — that gift is trust. We need to trust God to work things out. We have to trust the Lord to remove the fear that prevents us from loving. We have to trust the Lord to protect us from hurt when we take a step outside of ourselves and a step into love. So many of us are afraid — afraid to trust, afraid to love, afraid to risk. We need to trust God so we can make His Presence real for others.

“Behold” is the theme for the Fourth Week in Advent. God is working in our lives. When we are aware of this — when we behold His Presence — we can then bring his presence to others.

Christmas is not a time for fear — it is a time for love. We have to trust God to protect and develop our love. Can we love others as they deserve to be loved? Will we be hurt in return? These are the questions that Joseph asked himself as he stirred in his sleep. He heard an angel say: “Do not be afraid.” When Joseph took the step from fear to trust, the world beheld its Savior.

Perhaps, today, or on Christmas, or throughout this season, some of us will have to associate with someone we have had words with during the last year. This could be a neighbor, a relative, or even a member of the inner circle of our family. We might worry: “If I am kind to that person, will I once more be spat upon? Will I be hurt again?” Is this really important? We have no reason to fear. We only have to trust God, and to love. For the one who calls us to love has given us the Gift of Love on Christmas Day.

We have been called to love. God will show us how to do it. Now, like Joseph, we need to name the child. We need to make Jesus an intimate part of our lives so that all that He is, and all that we are may be one.

And behold! Behold the wonders that God’s love can work in our lives.

—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.

THE NATIVITY IS GOD'S INVITATION:

Ahaz was one of the cruelest kings Israel ever knew; he even offered his own son as a burnt offering to the god Moloch [see 2 Kings 16:3]. Isaiah went to King Ahaz with words of warning. As the true king of Israel, God swore to protect the people, and told Ahaz to ask for a sign to prove it. Pretending piety, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign — he preferred to rely on his allies rather than to trust God's providence.

Ignoring the mutinous king, Isaiah told him of the birth of an Emmanuel-child who would be the sign that God remained with the people. What irony! Matthew picked the prophecy to Ahaz — the child killer — to interpret the birth of Jesus — the Son of God who would conquer evil and death. Not only that, but the grand sign for Ahaz was the most unremarkable thing in the world: the birth of a child.

Isaiah's story has God's fingerprints all over it. Responding to a proud and conniving ruler who depended only on political alliances, God worked through a simple young woman whose vulnerable child possessed the power to undermine well-armed, determined bullies. The message? God dwells with people through their very own. God overcomes the haughty through the humble.

Matthew reinterprets Isaiah's prophecy, applying it to the coming of Jesus, the Emmanuel [Matthew 1:18-24]. From there, Matthew's story continues with details that demonstrate God's mysterious ways. While Luke portrays the Nativity through the lens of Mary and Jesus' blood relatives, Matthew chooses to underline Joseph and God's distinctive role in all that happened.

As he weaves his narrative, Matthew states quite simply that Mary was "found with child through the Holy Spirit." Could he have been any more low-key in announcing the Incarnation? Just seven words? Yet, those words coincide with Isaiah's announcement about Emmanuel. They introduce us to Joseph's simple willingness to encounter a new reality and change his life in the light of it.

Matthew's portrayal of Joseph reveals what is often entailed in collaborating with God. Joseph, like Mary, had to be willing to give up everything for the sake of God's mysterious plan. "Everything" included his place of residence, his family, and his reputation — all those things by which we tend to identify ourselves.

When Paul wrote the greeting in his Letter to the Romans, like Matthew he described the mystery of the Incarnation in deceptively simple terms. Paul portrayed Jesus as "descended from David according to the flesh, established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness" [Romans 1:1-7]. These phrases proclaim two profound truths. First, Emmanuel is flesh of our flesh, a participant in God's creation like everything else that has ever been or will be on Earth.

Paul adds that Jesus Christ was established as Son of God through the Holy Spirit and confirmed as such in the Resurrection. While no one had yet developed Trinitarian theology or teaching about Jesus' two natures, Paul laid the groundwork for understanding that God created mortal humanity as capable of sharing in divinity and that Jesus is the effective sign of that. Paul continues: "We have received the grace of apostleship, called to belong to Jesus Christ." In other words, through his life, death and resurrection, Christ draws the willing into realizing their true identity in himself.

Teilhard de Chardin once wrote: "By virtue of Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see." The Gospel, in fact all of Scripture, proclaims the sacredness of creation and God's desire to be one with us. Preaching to the Greeks, Paul described God's design for us, saying: "In him we live and move and have our being." Paul taught that our life



in Christ is a fact, not an aspiration. Whether we realize it or not, we belong to God just as much as Jesus did. When we choose to embrace this reality, our sense of identity changes.

Paul taught that Christ emptied himself in order to be one of us [see Philippians 2:5-8]. In response, we, like Joseph, are invited to empty ourselves, choosing to abandon anything that can get in the way of our union with God or our collaboration with God's design for creation.

God holds all of Creation in life. As we enter this Fourth Sunday of Advent — just a few days before Christmas — let us contemplate the Nativity as God's invitation to become more conscious of our share in divine life. We humans are creatures capable of grasping the truth of our lives and of choosing to collaborate with the divine design, helping everything to move toward our shared divine destiny. In the end, it is we who are called to become the sign through which the world can encounter Emmanuel.

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

REJOICE....GOD IS NEAR:

Rejoice in the Lord always. Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. The Lord is near. Love is near in each and every heart. God is present in every moment of our life.

I feel God's presence when I help or someone helps me. When I sit at the bus or train and I observe the faces of the people. Some are tired, worried, sad, or have a big smile on their face. In the end, we all are the presence of God. Love lives not only in the grand celebrations, but also in the tender moments where we choose compassion, forgiveness and service.



This Christmas, we remember that love is near. God is with us — not in some distant place — but in every hand held, every meal shared, and in every moment of hope..

—written by the Holy Cross Sisters in Africa.

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 [12/13/25] ----- \$ 267.00

Total Offerings: Sunday [12/14/25] ----- \$ 610.00

FAITH MEANS THAT GOD IS WITH US:

If Christ was born into the world to redeem it, why doesn't our world look more redeemed? Why is our world still full of loneliness, anxiety, betrayals, sickness, poverty, violence, war, and death? What did Christ's birth into our world really change? These aren't irreverent questions — they're the right questions. Only in struggling to answer them do we begin to understand more deeply the mystery of Christ. What is that mystery?

In the gospels, one of the angels who announces Jesus' birth, tells us: "They shall name him Emmanuel" — which means "God is with us." What do those words mean?

Sometimes it's helpful to proceed by the "via negativa" — namely, by explaining what something doesn't mean. In this case, the fact that Christ is born into our world does not mean that those who believe in him will be spared the pain, loneliness, seasons of sickness, heartaches, betrayals, anxieties, fears, and humiliations that afflict everyone else. Faith offers no one an escape from pain. Moreover, believers — just like unbelievers — will suffer too the darkness of doubt, the painful fear that the heavens are empty. Faith in Christ doesn't remove any of the pains inherent within the human condition — including the pain of doubting God's existence. Faith promises no magic pass-cards.

What it does promise is that God will be with us, so that we do not have to walk through loneliness, sickness, violence, anxiety, fear, and death alone. We have a hand to grasp, a love to embrace, a truth to cling to, and a power to sustain us — even through death itself. We walk in the same world as everyone else, but, like a young child holding on to her mother's hand as she walks into school for the first time, we are not alone — a trusted, sustaining, guiding love walks with us. God doesn't remove us from what can hurt us, but walks with us amidst it all.

But that explanation too can feel pretty empty on any given day. If God is walking beside us, hand in ours, why don't we feel that more really? Why does God often seem non-existent, not with us at all? Because believers — like everyone else — are not exempt from the trial of faith, from the darkness of doubt, from those emotional and spiritual dark nights that can crush us, bring us to our knees, and can make us cry out in fear that God has abandoned us, as happened to Jesus on the cross. Part of being human — and faith isn't some magic bullet immunizing us against the human condition — is the experience of God's seeming absence.

So how can we say that "God is with us" when mostly it feels like God isn't there for us? That's a complex question, and a full answer would necessitate a discussion on why, in the nature of faith, God's reality is often felt more like an absence than a presence. But, without entering into a full-blown discussion on this, allow me to give just one perspective.

In the Jewish scriptures there's a famous incident where Moses asks God to see his face [See Exodus 33]. God answers that this is impossible because nobody can see God's face and live. When Moses persists in his demand, God offers a compromise — He tells Moses that he will place him in a cleft in the rocks, put his hand over Moses' face, and then pass by, so that Moses will get to see his — God's, back — though never his face.

What's meant by this? Among other things, it means that we are wise not to be overly naive about the powerful, sacred, archetypal energies that flow through us. Even when something is beautiful and good — like sex for instance — it doesn't mean we don't have to treat with sacred caution. We're wise to accord things their proper respect — to keep our shoes off before the burning bush.

But there's a wonderful thought that runs beneath all of this which can help explain why we so often think that God is absent in our lives. Generally we struggle to feel God in the present moment — to see God's face in the here and now. In the present, God often seems absent. Yet, when we turn around and look back in our lives — when we look back on our story — we more easily see how God

has been there all along, and how we have walked in a divine presence, protection, guidance, and love that were imperceptible at the time, but are clear in retrospect. We see God more clearly in our past than in our present — we see God’s back more than we see God’s face.

This can be helpful in understanding how Christ is present to us — even when it doesn’t always feel like it. Faith doesn’t promise us a ladder to crawl out of the pains of life; it promises a friend to walk with through those pains. Mostly though it’s only when we look back in our lives that we see that this friend has always been there.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., 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* in November. The viewing was followed by a very inspiring sharing among those present. **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].**

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.

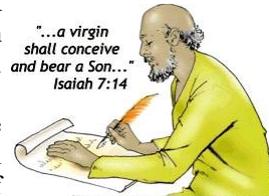


GETTING IT RIGHT:

My Scripture students always know what the first question will be on every exam I give — what’s the difference between exegesis and eisegesis? I figure if they can’t correctly make the distinction between the two, then there is no way they can pass a course in the Bible.

The answer isn’t complicated. Exegesis takes place when we take out of the text what the original author intended us to take out of it. We work at understanding the background against which the author writes, and the questions he or she is trying to answer. Eisegesis, on the other hand, happens when, ignoring the intentions of the sacred author, we put our own preconceived ideas and thoughts into a biblical text, and then excitedly proclaim: “Look what I found!”

No biblical text is more eisegeted by Christians than the prophet, Isaiah [see Isaiah 7:10-14]. As we hear in Matthew's gospel [1:18-24], the followers of Jesus eventually took Isaiah's words to Ahaz and gave them a meaning which neither the prophet nor the king would have originally understood. Matthew explains Jesus' unique conception by simply stating: "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means God is with us.'" This is a classic case of eisegesis.



First, the Hebrew word "almah" — which we Christians like to translate as "virgin" — describes not only a woman who has yet to experience sexual intimacy; it more frequently is employed to characterize a woman of childbearing age who has not yet given birth to a child. Scripture scholars agree the latter is meant here.

Second, in context, Ahaz is being forced to make a decision which will affect not only him, but his immediate family. They probably will be massacred if he chooses the wrong option. It's a decision he should have made yesterday. Why would anyone think he has over 700 years to wait for a sign?

Third, the "almah" here could only be Mrs. Ahaz. Isaiah interprets her pregnancy as a sign that God is not going to permit the king's family to be wiped out.

Fourth, the son to be born — Hezekiah — will eventually turn out to be a far better king than his father ever was. Having him on the throne was like having El — God — with us.

Thus, putting Jesus and Mary into Isaiah 7 would be continuing the eisegesis which Matthew began. And we simply do not want to go there.

Our faith in Jesus as God, and our belief in the circumstances of his virginal conception developed only after his death and resurrection. If we overlook the angelic annunciations to Mary in Luke, and Joseph in Matthew, no one could have imagined Jesus' divine prerogatives until, as Paul tells the Romans: "God established Jesus as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through the resurrection from the dead."

The late scripture scholar, Raymond Brown, pointed out that biblical annunciations are almost always literary devices employed by the authors to let their readers in on the deeper meaning of the events that they've been narrating. Keeping this in mind, then we are forced to admit that those closest to the historical Jesus probably had a far more difficult time recognizing who he actually was than we post-resurrection disciples have today.

Perhaps we should give ourselves not only over to correctly exegeting Scripture, but also to correctly exegeting the world around us. If we don't surface the risen Jesus in all we do and experience, we're not taking out of this world what God originally put into it. That's a sin of eisegesis for which we'll have to answer at the exam that we will have to take at the pearly gates.

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

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].**



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 Tzeffronis, 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 Violet Stenger.
- For Sister Stefana Osredkar S.N.D.
- For John Leidli, father of Chris ['85] and Kurt ['87] Leidli.
- For William Sennett, brother-in-law of Father Jim Chichetto, C.S.C.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For a greater openness to the needs of others, especially during this time.
- 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.

FAITH EDUCATION -- JANUARY DATES:

Faith Education is on Christmas Break, and will resume Sunday, January 11th. Class dates for January will be January 11th and 25th. Faith Education is an important part of every young person's religious 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.**



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].



CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer of Advent Anticipation ~

**Come, long-expected Jesus.
Excite in me a wonder
at the wisdom and power
of your Father — and ours.
Receive my prayer
as part of my service of the Lord
Who enlists me in God's own work for justice.**

**Come, long-expected Jesus.
Excite in me a hunger for peace —
peace in the world
peace in my home,
peace in myself.**

**Come, long-expected Jesus.
Excite in me a joy
responsive to the Father's joy.
I seek his will so I can serve
with gladness, singing, and love.**

**Come, long-expected Jesus.
Excite in me the joy and love and peace
it is right to bring to the manger of my Lord.
Raise in me, too,
sober reverence for the God who acted there,
hearty gratitude for the life begun there,
and spirited resolution to serve
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
I pray this in name of the Christ
Whose Advent I await.
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