

# 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 BAPTISM OF JESUS AND THE CHRISTMAS SEASON:

This weekend, we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. With it, we draw a close to the Christmas Season. Jesus' baptism publicly inaugurates the reign of God. This is the kingdom to which all people are called. Thus, the intimacy of the Christmas story unfolds into the endless baptismal mission of all Christians. The story of Christmas is now the story of each person's daily life.

Think about this: on the last day of Christmas, my true Love — Jesus — gave to me a deeper life in the Spirit. On the last day of Christmas, my true Love — the Holy Spirit — cried out in my heart: “Abba” [“Father”]. On the last day of Christmas, my true Love — God the Father — revealed Jesus to me in a new way and gave me an even deeper life in the Spirit. On the last day of Christmas, I was caught in the crossfire of the Trinity's love — the Father spoke; Jesus saved; the Spirit descended.



Are you ready to “grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love, and to experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may attain to the fullness of God Himself?” [Ephesians 3:18-19]. Are you ready to be loved as the Father loves Jesus? On this last day of Christmas, will you let the love of God be poured out in your heart through the Holy Spirit?

“God is Love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” [1 John 4:16]. Christmas is all about God's love. Make this the moment, the day, the year, and the life of love. Thank you, God, for the gift of the Christmas season. I will never be the same because of it. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I live in Your love [John 15:10]. Thank You for the Christmas.

## FAITH EDUCATION -- JANUARY DATES:

**Faith Education is on Christmas Break, and will resume Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. Class dates for January will be January 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.** 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.**



## CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

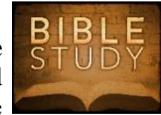
Again this year we will accept memorial donations to help defray the cost of flowers and decorations which we use in our Chapel for the Christmas season. If you are interested in making a donation **in memory of loved ones**, please put the names of the loved ones along with your donation in an envelope, 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. Please keep the following people in your prayers: **In memory of Toni Burke, Mike Heryak, Eleanor DeMarco, the Blazek, DiSalvatore, Heryak, Orehek, Tran, and Rezabek Family.**



## KEEP MOVING FORWARD:

Don't give up! The world tries to define you by the mistakes of your past. But history defines you by how you responded, how you learned and improved, how you made amends, how you persevered and what you accomplished afterwards.

**NEXT BIBLE STUDY — THURSDAY, JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>:**



**Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.** Bible Study usually meets bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.

**Our topic: God’s call to Repentance**

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.

**MASS SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

Sunday, January 11: <b>Baptism of Jesus</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, January 12:	<b>1:30 PM</b> [Lower School]
Tuesday, January 13:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Wednesday, January 14:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Thursday, January 15:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Friday, January 16:	<b>NO MASS</b>
Saturday, January 17: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b> In-Person only
Sunday, January 18: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b> In-Person & Live Stream

**LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH:**

God is Spirit and the Source of all love. Our spiritual journey calls us to seek and find this living God of love in prayer, worship, spiritual reading, spiritual mentoring, compassionate service to the poor, and good friends. Let us claim the truth that we are loved and open our hearts to receive God’s overflowing love poured out for us. And living fully each day let us share that love in all our wonderful and difficult relationships, responsibilities, and passages.

The seeds of death are at work in us, but love is stronger than death. Your death and mine are our final passage — our exodus to the full realization of our identity as God’s beloved children and to full communion with the God of Love. Jesus walked the path ahead of us and invites us to choose the same path during our lifetime. He calls to us: “Follow me.” He assures us: “Do not be afraid.” This is our faith.

### A REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THIS WEEK:

Thirty or more years have passed in the life of Jesus since the events of the Epiphany. Jesus has grown and matured. While no one comes to maturity within one week in their lives, maturity is something that all of us need to seek. It begins with our realizing that we are “the beloved” of God and others [Matthew 3:13-17]. Who we listen to does determine what we hear. We pray to hear, to listen, and to believe the message and the Messenger. He walks us prayerfully through his very public life of love.

Our Scripture Readings for this Feast of the Baptism of Jesus begin with one of Isaiah’s famous “servant songs” [Isaiah 42:1-7]. Israel as a nation is often referred to as the Servant of the Lord. What we hear seems to be an exact prediction of a special person of history who will assist God in caring for the people and nation of Israel itself. This person will have God as his support; this person will have qualities of justice, calmness of spirit and action.

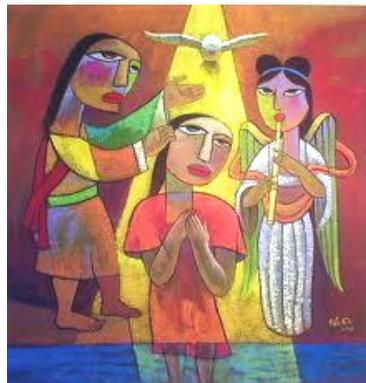
There is a strong sense of the messiah in this prophecy of Isaiah. Justice will be the theme of this messiah, and by his teaching those physically and spiritually blind will see, and those in various conditions of confinement will be liberated. This person has a specific mission which involves his going beyond the boundaries of Israel, bringing a “light”. This “light” will bring “justice” to the earth as well as recovery of sight and freedom for those in darkness and prison. The Spirit of God will be upon and within him and his identity will be known by the people of Israel through his actions. This “Servant” will be gentle — not like other prophets who work themselves up into a feverish frenzy resulting in shouting and convulsions. He will be upheld by the Lord and loved explicitly so as to bring “justice” between God and God’s creation.

Matthew’s Gospel is one more an “Annunciation” scene. As with Gabriel’s announcing to Mary that she would give birth to a son who will be born of the Holy Spirit [see Luke 1:26-38], Jesus is announced as the “beloved son” by the same Spirit [Matthew 3:13-17]. John has baptized the crowd, and Jesus fulfills his ritual tradition. Then, while praying, there is a new form of baptism specifying him as the “beloved servant”. In a sense, it is more of a “confirmation” or even more, an “ordination”. This is not the moment when Jesus takes upon himself a “Divine Nature”, but an announcement of his coming of age in our salvation history. By the overshadowing by the Spirit, he became incarnate; by the “over-hovering” of the same Spirit he becomes incorporated — that is embracing himself as “servant-Messiah” of God and for all God’s people. The same Spirit “incarnates” and “incorporates” that family in Luke’s account of Pentecost in The Acts of the Apostles [see Acts 2].

With our being baptized, we enter this same coming of age — this same being part of Jesus’ salvific embrace of God’s mission of returning creation to its proper state of praise and order. The work of the Spirit is bringing about flesh and family. We are likewise inspirited to take flesh anew and our mission of extending God’s family in Christ.

We have been celebrating these past weeks, the Word becoming flesh. Mary’s flesh was more than it seemed; her body was more than others knew. In time her cousin, the shepherds, and the Magi came to reverence that which was different from what it had seemed to be. That Word Made Flesh was transformed too, from being what it seemed to be seen for what he was, the “Beloved Son”.

My flesh and your flesh have been immersed in the baptismal experience of Jesus. His body and person were united by God to unite us within ourselves and incorporate us with and for each other. Like



Jesus, we are baptized, confirmed and all are ordained to go public. Jesus had to leave his praying alone, leave the riverbank, leave the association with John, and begin his walk towards Jerusalem. We in our turn must leave our privacy our pews — our comfort zone, our well-planned, surpriseless ways. Our flesh, our persons, our presences are much more than they seem. We are so close to ourselves though, that what “seems” is deceptive. As Jesus heard his new name, he moved from “seems” to “is” — as did Mary of Nazareth. We have to move against the same spirits of this world which confronted Jesus from shortly after his “baptism” to shortly before he baptized the earth with his blood.

In baptism, we have heard God say to us, as He said to Jesus: “You are my beloved son/daughter with whom I am well pleased.” Although difficult to imagine, we must confront what we hear and reflect upon: “How am I pleasing to you, God?” Is it when I spend time exclusively with you? Is it when I give you the first fruits of the day? Is it when I am kind to your people? Is it when I do my very best to be a good friend, a great parent, a loving spouse or child? When am I a good steward of my gifts of time, treasure, and talent? Is it when I do the corporal works of mercy? Or does it, perhaps, have nothing to do with my “doing.”? Do I please you because I am? Do I please you because I am a creation of Yours in Your image?

I don’t know the answers to my questions, and I may never know who I might be, or what I might do that pleases God. But this reflection has led me to let go of the questions and just listen to the voice of the Holy One saying: ““You are my beloved son/daughter with whom I am well pleased.” I just receive the gift and become present to the Giver and soak in what I have the capacity to receive.

Today’s sacred scripture seems like an invitation to be open to receive these words and engage with the Giver. Our being Baptized and Confirmed dedicates us into becoming “other Christs”. To do so, we must learn to listen to Jesus. As he listened to the mysterious God and to the bewildering voices of humanity within and around Him, by these same sacraments we plunge into the waters of “Discernment”. To be guided by the spirit does not mean our being subtracted from the attractive voices which sure can sound “divine”. Our ears were blest at our baptisms to begin this process of learning what God sounds like and what our egos, our flesh, and our worldliness too, sound like. Jesus learned to listen to it all with receptivity and discretion. We will spend these next weeks of the Liturgical Year listening so that we might hear, and hearing, we might live what we come to believe.

—edited from the writings of Kathy Kemler and Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet

## **SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. JAN. 17<sup>th</sup>:**

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



Our Savior Lutheran’s Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. **Please let us know in the Chapel office [440-473-3560] if you would like more information or if you would like to help.** This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

### **BAPTISM IS ALL ABOUT LIVING LIFE:**

Whenever a priest or deacon stands before you to deliver a homily, we have a dual responsibility — the responsibility to teach and to preach. That is particularly true today as we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Let's begin now with the teaching aspect.

We might ask ourselves why Jesus Christ submitted to the baptism of St. John the Baptist [Matthew 3:13-17]. After all, if Christ is the incarnate Son of God, the sinless Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, why would it be necessary for Him to be baptized? That's a good question calling for an insightful answer.

The answer begins with a clear understanding that Jesus Christ did not need to be baptized. He, the Holy One of God, sanctified the waters of baptism — He wasn't sanctified by them. He, the Holy One, made Baptism holy — not the other way around. By being baptized His intention was to reveal the love of God for us even though we have sinned against Him. By His own baptism Jesus leads us to repentance.

A few points come to mind. [1] Jesus was identifying Himself as being immersed in our sinful humanity; [2] He was emptying Himself of His divine glory and joining Himself into our human state of alienation from the Father; and [3] His baptism opened up His public ministry, revealing His activity in our world as one of us.

In the first book of the Bible — the Book of Genesis — we heard how God's Spirit brooded over the waters of chaos, and in that activity, God brought order out of chaos, light out of darkness, giving life to Adam and Eve and creating them from the slime of the earth into His own image and likeness [see Genesis 1:1-28]. In the waters of the Baptist's baptism Jesus harkens us back to God's creating activity out of the waters of chaos and announces that God is bringing about His new creation.

Our Blessed Lord's baptism is a revelation of what God is doing — a revelation announcing the beginning of Christ's redemptive activity in our world. As such, baptism wasn't so much for Christ as it was for us. It inaugurated the mission of Our Blessed Lord to us and for us. It is the manifestation of the arrival of the One the Jewish people had longed for, the arrival of the Messiah.

For us as Christians, the baptism of Christ Jesus by John the Baptist the River Jordan manifests the Holy Trinity. All three were revealed to us in Jesus' baptism — the voice of the Father making His announcement, the submission of the Son to His Father's will, and the consecration of Christ by the Holy Spirit. It was the revelation of Jesus' consecration by the Holy Spirit for the establishment of His mission amongst us.

To be sure, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of our world, and He would be baptized in His bloody death on the Cross. But in that moment of His total immersion in the consequences of our sins, death, water and blood would flow out of His pierced side, the water and blood that would constitute the Sacraments of the Church. Raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit, we who are members of Christ's risen and glorified Body now receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus was born, lived among us, and died on His Cross for us so that we could be given God's holy and life-giving Spirit.

In bringing all these things to mind I am not simply sharing some interesting history with you. What I am sharing with you are present realities in your life and in mine because of our baptisms into Christ. All of these things didn't happen in the past — they are happening right now in your life and in mine.

And this is where the “preaching” part of this begins. It is baptism — our relationship into God — that is the basis of our life that we share together. The beginning point of all theology is that God

offers and then waits for our response. We can reflect on all of the glorious things God has done for us — and we should. What is crucial is that we hold before our eyes all that we ought to do in response to God’s initiatives. There is a temptation on our part to think that God’s gift salvation to us is automatic — that all we have to do is believe and we will be saved. While it is true that God’s activity is necessary, it is at the same time incomplete unless and until we act in response. The simple truth is that a gift is not a gift unless we receive it. Love isn’t effective unless we accept it — and then act on it. Salvation is ours only if we receive it by acting on it.

Christ was baptized — immersed — into our human life so that we would be baptized — immersed — into His divine life. The Holy Spirit that abided in Him now, because of our Baptism, abides in us. When you stop and think about it, that’s quite astonishing. Furthermore, when we were baptized, we were baptized into Christ and thereby immersed in His Holy Spirit. We are joined into Christ’s mission in order that we might realize it, to make it real in all that we think, say, and do. This means that we don’t establish God’s kingdom here on earth, He has already done that. It is in the living-out of God’s gift that we receive it.

To be sure we must first believe — we must first have faith in God and in His love for us. But then we must act. We don’t act and then come to believe; we believe and then come to act on our belief. Our actions come forth from our love — our love does not result from our actions. Our actions speak of our love and reveal it.



Acting on our faith and doing the will of God means that we must overcome our self-concerns and care for those who suffer, for those less fortunate than we are, the outcasts, the sick, and the poor. It means that, like God, we are ready to forgive, to bring peace into our family conflicts and to reconcile ourselves with those whom we have hurt.

Acting on our faith means that we build up those who feel they aren’t capable, those who feel they are without talents or abilities. It means that we bring courage to the dispirited. Acting on our baptismal faith we go about the task of revealing the presence of God and the light of His love to those who suffer from hate and discrimination. Acting on our baptismal faith impels us to bring a vision of meaning and purpose to those who live in the misery of life without purpose or meaning. It means respecting the dignity of all living persons no matter in what condition they may be.

Acting on our baptismal faith means that we honor God, respect His Church, and give God the worship that is due to Him. Prayer and worship are essential to our baptismal response to God’s offering of Himself to us. The baptism of Christ was out in public — it wasn’t in private. Christian living isn’t private and hidden. It is public.

Matthew’s Gospel for this Feast of the Baptism of Jesus begins with these words: “In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: ‘A voice of one crying out in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.”

It was in this context that Jesus was baptized by John and so began His public ministry. In Christ, God offers Himself to us. The question to be answered now is: “How will we respond?” The answer will be found in your life and in mine, in your lived-out baptismal faith and in mine.

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

## **OUR PERSONAL BAPTISM:**

In the initial weeks of Ordinary Time beginning in January, the first chapter of Mark's gospel is proclaimed during weekday Masses. After Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River and the call of his first disciples, Jesus seeks out people in need of healing. These stories reveal Jesus' desire to reach into the suffering depths of humanity and to bring the intimacy of the Father's love to earth. The mission of Christ Jesus is restorative and forgiving without societal boundaries.

The mission of Jesus Christ breaks through to us in the opening chapter of this gospel. These stories immerse us in the deep mission of the church. Our baptism calls us to serve among people who live in pain, who need forgiveness, love, and physical and spiritual healing. Jesus' presence among the ill, among outcasts and lepers and demoniacs, reveals to us the places of redemption, forgiveness, and peace. This opening chapter is a job description for our pastoral ministry as Christians. These passages show us that we are part of the healing mission of Jesus Christ in people's need and sorrow, in their struggles and insecurities.

As a young priest, I heard God challenging me from this gospel to step out into the world so to encounter the suffering of people. I listened as a warrior of hope for the marginalized, for people waiting to belong in community, for people who ached to discover genuine meaning in their lives. I heard the task of the gospel to enter the unknown territory of people's pain, to help fix their circumstances, and claim my own sense of justice for the lives of those I named broken. I listened with unmeasured energy and the conviction of youthful zeal, assuming the posture of helper, fixer, and interpreter for other people. Certain that I carried God's answers in my every step along the way, the gospel fueled me to work tirelessly for the sake of the lost and on behalf of the church.

I finally learned after many mistakes and stumbles that people often do not want to be changed, and that my answers for their lives were not their answers to their questions. As I look back on my experiences, I now see that God invited me into situations and places of ministry to change me as well, because I carry the potential for healing in my heart only after I allow God to heal me.

I, too, am the hurting leper who hesitates to belong. I, too, am the demoniac who lashes out because others do not take me seriously. In all the healing possibilities of Mark's first chapter, I have learned to read and re-read, to ponder and re-ponder the message of God from this sacred text. I have learned to relax in the beauty of God's soulful response to people's pain and to see myself as one of the people who need such love, redemption, and accompaniment. This gospel has called me into acknowledging my own deep humanity and my spiritual quest for the person of Christ Jesus.

Even though I know the sacred text will flow into my life, I once again will be caught off guard. I pause because of the surprising places the gospel passages take me. I now know how these stories have changed me over the years. I remember the hurting and ill people whom I have encountered, and I see how I have been changed by the depth of their suffering, their life questions about survival, meaning, and relationships.

My hearing has changed and deepened over the years. I have slowed my response, listened again, asked new questions; I continue to learn and to be changed by grace. I carry within me the people whom I could not reach, a litany of names and circumstances of those who could not believe in a loving God because of the enormity of their pain. I have learned from people's fear, and certainly from my



own. From these experiences, I surrender to this gospel every year, and no matter from where or in what community I proclaim it, I remain awed by the grace that flows from this text of good news.

**I pray for all who have waited a lifetime for healing and a new view on life through me.** May all people who face constant pain find calm and wholeness in Christ Jesus. May the diseased skin of people reveal the smooth healing of Christ. May people who suffer mental illness or who face evil be offered sure comfort and calm. May our loved ones who are bedridden discover the miracle of God’s healing grace to protect them in the nighttime. May every human being facing illness and disease know a deeper love of God and the miracle of faith, hope, and love.

**I pray for all who claim to fix other people’s problems.** May we know our own limitations, our own sins, our own ways of being of assistance to others. May we realize our inability to impose our answers on other people. May we not become bloated with self-sufficiency or solve our own spiritual hurts. May God offer us wholeness and tenderness so to listen to others.

**I pray for all who are deaf to God’s healing presence.** May we sit among the marginalized with compassionate ears. May we listen well beyond words and even beyond the silence that rises from pain and fear. May God reveal hope among us who wait for healing, change, and consolation. May our human bodies become a true home for God’s miracles of mercy and healing remedy. May our ears hear the tender voice of God among people who teach us about suffering and longing.

**I pray for a deeper and more reverent reading of the gospel.** May we all sit with our own struggles and listen with profound faith in the ways Jesus served people in need. May the ill, the outcasts, and the fragile show us how to receive miracles beyond our imagining. May we be more than attentive to the reality of the struggles of others, and human concerns. May we not turn our back on Jesus’ journey of healing, nor on the people in our midst who most need Christ’s loving presence. May the Holy Spirit show us how to engage in the mystery of God’s healing redemption.

—taken from the writings of Father Ronald Raab, C.S.C., which appear on the internet.

## THE MISSION OF BEING CHRIST TO OTHERS:

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord completes the Christmas season. The infant born in a stable and paid homage by the astrologers grows to adulthood, and, after a remarkable long private life, begins his public ministry by being baptized by John [Matthew 3:13-17]. Christmas is indeed a special celebration for the children, but it has deeper layers of meaning that invite adult reflection.

The Baptism of Jesus is not just about Jesus “going down into the water”; it not just about his being identified as “God’s beloved Son”; it is about how the Holy Spirit guided Jesus into his public mission — going about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil. The “good news” which flows from this Christmas message is that Christ shares his Spirit with us so that we can participate in his enlightening and liberating mission. Through our baptism, we are called to build up the Body of Christ and to spread his kingdom in the world.



As with Christ, the mission of our lives is to turn the challenges and crosses of daily life into opportunities for others. This is how we live out our Baptismal commitment. An older couple, who successfully worked their way through serious problems in their marriage, now shares their experience with young couples in their parish. A middle-aged man, unemployed for a year before finding a good job, volunteers his time to help others in similar circumstances. A woman, who has survived breast cancer, is a big support to friends diagnosed with this disease. A high school teacher, who escaped from the drug culture many years ago, spends extra time helping students say no to drugs. A woman, who worked hard over several years to develop a spirituality that increased her self-esteem, facilitates a small group interested in spiritual growth.

## Baptism of Jesus

The question stands before each of us: “How can I live out my baptismal call to a life of service more effectively during the coming year?” —taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet

### **BAPTISM MEANS DYING TO SELF:**

John the Baptist was a very fierce man. This might be what you would expect of someone who lived most of his life in the desert. He knew all about hardship, and he had the marks of penance on his body. Much of his message was taken up in condemnation — condemnation of those living a life of luxury and giving no thought to the life of the Spirit [see Luke 3]. But if John was so fierce, why did so many people come to him, people from all over Palestine? If I preached fierce condemnatory sermons each week you would soon get fed up — so why did the people flock to hear John.

They came because he had a message of hope. Yes, he was fierce, but he was also gentle. He tapped into something deep inside each person. He knew that each one of us is profoundly aware of their own guilt and wants to repent, and he drew this out. But besides all this, John was also able to tell the people that one of their deepest yearnings was also about to be filled — a Savior was about to come. This Savior would reach out to them with the hand of healing and salvation. They came to John because he had a message of hope, and the hope he pointed to was Jesus.

You can see the beautiful humility and gentleness in John when Jesus asks him for Baptism, and he says: “But it is I who need Baptism from you” [Matthew 3:13-17]. Jesus, just as gently, tells him to go ahead. Jesus was commencing his public ministry, and Jesus came to John to make that “formal beginning” of his ministry.

Jesus, of course, had no need of Baptism. It has often been speculated over the centuries as to why Jesus would want to be baptized. The Church places this feast close to the Feast of the Incarnation — Christmas — and that gives us a clue. There was no strict necessity for the incarnation — God could have brought about our salvation in an instant if he wanted to. Jesus, through the incarnation, chose to take on human form and by becoming like us brought about our salvation. Jesus undergoes Baptism in order to be like us and show us the way to salvation. In the same way he will undergo death in order to make salvation possible for us.

Jesus chooses this propitious moment to be baptized by John, and it became a moment of wonderful revelation. The Holy Spirit descends like a dove and the voice of God blesses and approves Jesus action. He begins his ministry in this wonderful way. It is a ministry we are going to hear about through the words of St Matthew over the next year, as Jesus heals and teaches, making God present to the people in a truly wonderful way.

Matthew’s Gospel gives us the first reference in the Bible to the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove. A dove was not an image that was generally used by the Hebrews. In fact, about the only reference to a dove is Noah sending out the dove over the waters to find land, the dove returned bearing an olive branch [see Genesis 8].

What a wonderful coincidence of images. Here Christ descends into the waters of Baptism; and the flood in Noah’s time is generally seen as a prefigurement of this Baptismal water. The Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove on Jesus as a sign of the Father’s favor and the assurance of salvation. The dove returns to Noah with the sign that salvation — dry land — is at hand. Scripture is full of such lovely parallels; that is why it is so fruitful for meditation. We would hardly think that there could be a direct connection with Noah’s flood — and yet there it is. And what better image of salvation could there be than dry land?



Most of us were baptized as infants; thus, we have no recollection of our Baptism. Yet, the day of our Baptism is one of the most significant days of our life. It was the day when we were specially singled out by God for ministry in the world. It is the sign of God’s special favor resting upon us. We have through that closely linked sacrament — Confirmation — had the power of the Holy Spirit poured out on us. We, like Christ, have begun a ministry for we are the instruments he has chosen to communicate his salvation to the world.

If we undertake it with due seriousness, it is a ministry which will be marked by miracles, healings, powerful signs from heaven, temptations, and moments of deep communion with God. It will transfigure our lives and we will become God’s windows on the world, conduits of his love to all we meet.

But what we all need to realize is that Baptism means death — it means going down into the water and literally drowning. It is a death to self. If we are to be true followers of Christ this is what it will mean. It won’t be at all easy, but in order to achieve greatness real sacrifice is necessary. Then when we break through that ultimate barrier our own bodily death, the church will gather and pray over us that wonderful and powerful prayer: “You have been baptized with Christ may you now rise with him in glory.”

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

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

We list the Scripture readings for the week, with the hope that you will take some time in your busy day to reflect on God’s word in your homes. We hope you can make good use of it.

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 1:1-8; Mark 1:14-20  
**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 1:9-20; Mark 1:21-28  
**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 3:1-20; Mark 1:29-39  
**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45  
**Friday:** 1 Samuel 8:4-22; Mark 2:1-12  
**Saturday:** Ephesians 6:10-18; Matthew 19:16-26

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:** Isaiah 49:3, 5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; John 1:29-34

## A NEW YEAR’S GIFT:

We are just a few days into the New Year, so I would like to give you a gift — a story — something to think about more than once; something to keep your mind alive and touch your soul so that you can see life fresh and leaping once again.

There is a story from the Desert Monastics about a young monk who asked one of the holy monks of the desert why it was that so many people came out to the desert to seek God, and yet most of them gave up after a short time and returned to their lives in the city.

The old monk responded: “Last evening my dog saw a rabbit running for cover among the bushes of the desert and he began to chase the rabbit, barking loudly. Soon other dogs joined the chase, barking and running. They ran a great distance and alerted many other dogs. Soon the wilderness was echoing the sounds of their pursuit, but the chase went on into the night.

After a little while, many of the dogs grew tired and dropped out. A few chased the rabbit until the night was nearly spent. By morning, only my dog continued the hunt.”

“Do you understand,” the old monk said, “what I have told you?”

“No,” replied the young monk, “I don’t. Please help me with it.”

“It is simple,” said the old monk. “My dog saw the rabbit!”



## Baptism of Jesus

The gift? A reminder to keep our souls focused on the important dimensions of life, on the purpose for which we have been born, on the gifts we are meant to give to others as life goes by. Otherwise we simply drift through life — one minute attracted by this; at another moment confused about what we're doing. Over the long haul, then, we become pilgrims without purpose, looking for what can't be found.

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

### **TAKE THE PLUNGE:**

Jesus saw John baptizing. He saw people there with John — sincere people — responding to John's call and committing themselves to the New Kingdom of God that John said was at hand. Jesus saw people seeking to change the world by changing themselves, by repenting their sins and reforming their lives. Jesus saw John — the last of the prophets of the Old Order and the first of the prophets of the New Order. John proclaimed that God will triumph. He said that the "One Who Is To Come would be here soon" [see Matthew 3].

Jesus saw the sincere people, the impassioned John, the determination for God to reign. Jesus wanted to be baptized. He would proclaim to the world that He was one with these people. John immediately recognized that Jesus was the Messiah — the Christ — infinitely superior to John, but Jesus told him to baptize him. The people washed by John's baptism and consecrated to prepare for God must know that the Christ was united to them.

Jesus seized the moment that John was offering. He took the plunge. He went down into the water and was baptized. And the voice from heaven rang out: "This is my Beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased."

Take the plunge. Seize the moment. Seize the day — "Carpe Diem" in the Latin poem by Horace. The pagan poet was not talking about tomorrow, though — he was only talking about making the best use of the day. The Christian, though, seizes the day to take advantage of the moment that God gives us to allow him to change our lives and His world. The Christian seizes the day to prepare for tomorrow.



So a senior couple moves in down the block. They seem to be nice people, but they mostly keep to themselves. You welcome them, but then you let them be — a few waves here and there, but no real contact. Every Sunday you drive by their house on the way to Church and you notice their car in the driveway. "Perhaps they are not Christian," you think. Then you notice that they put up a few Christmas decorations. "Maybe they just don't go to Church," you wonder. But you let it be. You'd like to invite them to Church, but you feel a bit awkward. After all, you rarely speak with them.

A few months later you learn that the husband has had a stroke and is in the hospital. Should you visit? You barely know them. But you take the plunge and go to the hospital. They really appreciate your concern. A friendship develops. The man is able to go home, but he is limited in what he can do. So you stop by frequently, chew the rag, and help with some of their chores. As you are leaving one Saturday, you say that you'll stop by on Sunday after Mass. They ask: "Would you mind if we come with you?" God's grace entered their lives because you seized the day — you went down into the river, you made that visit to the hospital.

Then there's that kid in school who is basically obnoxious. His language is bad. His attitude is worse. Everything in his world is as black as the clothes he wears. You figure that there is no reason to try to be friends with him. There is no reason — except that God wants the kid to know that God loves him. You see him alone one day and decide that you need to take the plunge into the river. "We're having an ice cream social after the Life Teen Mass this weekend. Do you want to come? It's cool,

and there will be at least 50 kids there.” You figure that you will be shot down, but to your surprise he says, “OK.” He meets you at the Church, and he likes it. It’s not just the ice cream social he likes. He likes being with kids who are positive about life. His life gradually changes because you seized the day. You went into the river and declared yourself one with someone who was searching for God.

There are many graced moments in our lives. There are many times that we can allow God to draw us closer to Him. Some of these times are obvious — like confirmation, marriage, various gatherings and retreats, the celebration of the critical moments in the faith life of our children and grandchildren.

There are other times that might not seem so obvious, ordinary times when we are called to make the ordinary extraordinary by seizing the day, respond to God’s call and plunge into the river. We are called to seize the day and be One with all who are seeking the Kingdom of God.

May Jesus, baptized by John, give us the courage to join Him in the Jordan River.

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

### 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 [1/3/26] ----- \$ 2,050.72**

**Total Offerings: Sunday [1/4/26] ----- \$ 465.00**

### 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].



### ALTAR SERVERS and LECTORS:

We continue to be in need of servers and lectors. **Any student who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become an altar server; any student who is in the 5<sup>th</sup> [and up] grade is invited to become a lector.** These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, please give your name to Father John. You do not have to attend Gilmour to be



## Baptism of Jesus

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].**

### DAY-TO-DAY VOCATION:

One of the things we know for certain about Jesus is that he was baptized by John. We're sure of it because it embarrassed the early church — making Jesus appear as John's disciple, yet it was too well-known to skip over. [see Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32]. Matthew's version minimizes the implication that Jesus followed John, claiming that when Jesus came for baptism, John protested that it should be the other way around because he was not worthy [Matthew 3:13-17]. All of that indicates that Jesus really did turn to John and his ritual as a sign of commitment to what God was doing in their midst. If Jesus' disciples were so worried about the implications of his baptism, we might ask: "Why did Jesus do it, and what did it mean for him?"

Jesus himself insisted that there had never been anyone like John [see Matthew 11:7-14]. It wasn't just his countercultural appearance, or even his fiery message. Most striking of all, John attracted crowds and moved them to undergo a baptism that signified their promise to live like people happily aware that the reign of God was at hand. John awakened people to possibilities in ways the Pharisees, Sadducees and even the Essenes were unable to do.

Jesus began his public ministry in John's heyday. By asking for John's baptism, Jesus declared himself to be of a common mind with John. Scholars and disciples have long wondered what Jesus was doing before his baptism. What direction did he see for his life? How did he use the Scriptures as a guide to discover his own vocation? The fact that Jesus' followers used so much of Isaiah's writings to interpret Jesus' vocation hints that Jesus himself may have done so and shared that vision with them.

That is why the Scripture Readings for this Feast of the Baptism of the Lord are so important. Jesus could have incorporated the words of Isaiah [42:1-7] into his own self-concept — Jesus definitely was a "servant of God". He could conceive of God calling him "my servant" — one who would perceive God's glory. Just as all of us are conceived in mystery and formed even before we are born, Jesus surely must have understood himself as chosen by God to carry forth a mission as unique as his own person.

Psalm 29 could also have been core to Jesus' prayer — "Here am I, Lord, I come to do your will." As he lived his vocation, he fulfilled the song's intent to focus on obedient listening rather than sacrifice. Jesus proclaimed the law of God as a law of the heart.

The fact that Jesus joined the circle of John the Baptist, and then branched out in an alternative direction gives us the idea that, like us, Jesus needed to discover his vocation day by day. He, too, needed to listen to the call of God in his heart and discern how to collaborate with what God was working among the people. Jesus was humble enough to identify with John's followers and courageous enough to move in new ways as his prayer and love of his people led him to do.

We can imagine that Jesus began his mission in a posture of discernment and continued to allow himself to be led by God's Spirit for the rest of his life. Rather than having a plan and sticking to it, he grasped the freedom to respond to the needs of the moment as a sign of God's love with no other agenda.

With all of that in mind, we can interpret Jesus' baptism as a sign of his deep identification with us in all that is human — including in his desire to discern and carry out God's design in unforeseeable



circumstances. We can perceive how he looked to his tradition — Isaiah — and to the prophets of his moment of time — John — and how he combined those into his prayer for guidance about how to carry out his vocation.

Jesus' baptism reminds us that he was one of us. He revealed that we humans must allow ourselves to be fragile, seeking and willing to change course when love calls for it. As we recall Jesus' baptism, let us remember that we are baptized into him, to share the grace of his approach to life. The Spirit may not descend on us like a dove, but that Spirit enables us to share Jesus' freedom and to love in the ways our moment calls forth. We should not forget that we, like him, are beloved and well pleasing to God.

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

## ARE YOU CALLED?

Does hope come in sizes — like small, medium and large — depending on the season of the soul? One Christmas, I had a dream about a messenger: I had bought a bunch of bananas and when I put them on the kitchen counter, an exquisite little bird flew out, about the size of a beetle. It was a brilliant, iridescent royal blue, and began flying around the house.

I was worried about its safety, so I made a shelter for it in a jar. However, it seemed to want to be free, and kept flitting from room to room, with me chasing it. A friend arrived, and in opening the door, the little bird escaped outside and disappeared. In the dream, I was distraught, rushing around trying to find it and concerned it could be stepped on by a passerby. "It's lost, it's lost," I kept lamenting, when suddenly a neighbor came over, and said: "No, it's fine, I found it and put it back in the house." I was overjoyed and returned home, where it settled upon my finger as I marveled at its beauty. It was like a jeweled ornament.



When I woke up, I realized that the bird represented hope — in this case, in an extra-extra small size, symbolic of a problem I wasn't dealing with very well at the time. Sometimes, emotions, expectations and dreams can feel stepped on or lost, but then, like my practical, caring friend and neighbor, the presence of others can bring optimism and help through an action or kind word of inspiration.

My imaginary little bird that I dreamed of seemed to carry a message to me from Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for". We don't need to chase it and when situations seem too large to handle, faith — even just a little — can alight upon us when we least expect it. We can shelter and nurture it in the heart when need be, but it also likes to be free like the little bird with space and room to grow, evolve and flourish. As a new year unfolds, is there someone you need to be the encouraging little bird to?

—taken from the writings of Joni Woelfel, which appear on the internet

## WE ARE ALL CALLED TO IMITATE JOHN'S HUMILITY:

John the Baptist is an incredible figure in Scripture. One of his most notable qualities is his humility. John is not jealous of Jesus' popularity or worried that his followers will leave him for Jesus. Rather, he understands his vocation as the one who prepares the way for Jesus.

Earlier, when asked if he was the Messiah, John remarked that he was not worthy to untie the thongs of Jesus' sandals [see John 1:27]. While the Synoptic Gospels describe John the Baptist's death, he totally disappears in John's Gospel after sending his disciples to follow Jesus, following Jesus' baptism.

If we can imagine John as a best man in a 21<sup>st</sup> century wedding, he would calm the bridegroom's nerves, have the rings ready at the altar, and deliver a fantastic speech at the reception before quietly

## Baptism of Jesus

stepping away so the guests could celebrate the bride and groom.

John the Baptist reminds us all not to fear being small. For, it is in smallness that we make room for God. Like John the Baptist, we are all called to make Jesus “increase while we decrease.”

### **FEAR:**

Unless you are already a full saint or a mystic, you will always live in some fear of death and the afterlife. That’s simply part of being human. But we can, and must, move beyond our fear of God. As a child, I lived with a lot of fear. I had a very active imagination, and too-frequently imagined murderers under my bed, poisonous snakes slithering up my leg, deadly germs in my food, playground bullies looking for a victim, a hundred ways in which I could meet an accidental death, and threats of every kind lurking in the dark. As a child, I was often afraid — afraid of the dark, afraid of death, afraid of the afterlife, and afraid of God.

As I matured, so too did my imagination — it no longer pictured snakes hiding everywhere, or murderers under my bed. I began to feel strong, in control, imagining the unknown, with its dark corners, more as opportunity for growth than as threat to life. But it was one thing to block out fear of snakes, murderers, and the dark. Not so easily did I overcome my fear of death, fear of the afterlife, and fear of God.

These fears are the last demons to be exorcised — and that exorcism is never final, never completely done with. Jesus, himself, trembled in fear before death, before the unknown that faces us in death [see Matthew 26]. But he didn’t tremble in fear before God; in fact the opposite is true. As he faced death and the unknown, he was able give himself over to God, in childlike trust, like a child clinging to a loving parent, and that gave him the strength and courage to undergo an anonymous, lonely, and misunderstood death with dignity, grace, and forgiveness.

We need never be afraid of God. God can be trusted. But trust in God does include a healthy fear of God because one particular fear is part of the anatomy of love itself. Scripture says: “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [Psalm 111:10]. But that fear, healthy fear, must be understood as a reverence, a loving awe, a love that fears disappointing.

Healthy fear is love’s fear — a fear of betraying, of not being faithful to what love asks of us in return for its gratuity. We aren’t afraid of someone we trust, fearing that he or she will suddenly turn arbitrary, unfair, cruel, incomprehensible, vicious, unloving. Rather we are afraid about our own being worthy of the trust that’s given us, not least from God.

But we must trust that God understands our humanity. God doesn’t demand that we give him our conscious attention all of the time. God accepts the natural wanderings of our hearts. God accepts our tiredness and fatigue. God accepts our need for distraction and escape. God accepts that we usually find it easier to immerse ourselves in entertainment than to pray. And God even accepts our resistances to him and our need to assert, with pride, our own independence. Like a loving mother embracing a child that’s kicking and screaming but needs to be picked up and held, God can handle our anger, self-pity, and resistance. God understands our humanity, but we struggle to understand what it means to be human before God.

For many years, I feared that I was too immersed in the things of this world to consider myself a spiritual person — always fearing that God wanted more from me. I felt that I should be spending more time in prayer, but, too often, I’d end up too tired to pray, more interested in watching a sports event on television or more interested in sitting around with family, colleagues, or friends, talking about everything except spiritual things. For years, I feared that God wanted me to be more explicitly spiritual. He probably did!



But, as I've aged, I've come to realize that being with God in prayer and being with God in the heart is like being with a trusted friend. In an easeful friendship, friends don't spend most of their time talking about their mutual friendship. Rather they talk about everything — local gossip, the weather, their work, their children, their headaches, their heartaches, their tiredness, what they saw on television the night before, their favorite sports teams, what's happening in politics, and the jokes they've heard recently — though they occasionally lament that they should ideally be talking more about deeper things. Should they?

John of the Cross teaches that, in any longer-term friendship, eventually the important things begin to happen under the surface, and therefore surface conversation becomes secondary. Togetherness, ease with each other, comfort, and the sense of being at home, is what we give each other then.

That's also true for our relationship with God. God made us to be human and God wants us, with all of our wandering weaknesses, to be in his presence, with ease, with comfort, and with the feeling that we are at home. Our fear of God can be reverence or timidity. The former is healthy; the latter is neurotic.

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

## **EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:**

We have begun the process of discerning those in our chapel community who feel called  **Eucharistic Ministers** 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.

## **CARRYING THE TORCH:**

All four Gospels tell us about the Baptism by John at Waddi Kharrar in the muddy Jordan River. Their eagerness to tell us indicates the importance attached to it by the early Church. Until the Baptism, Jesus had lived a laid-back life in Nazareth for thirty years. His was a humdrum existence as a craftsman. There was no hassling of His person. His biggest problem was to encourage clients to pay their bills. Life with His mother in their sleepy village was blissful. There were three good meals daily, red wine, and early to bed. There was time to study the books in the village library. Who could ask for more?

All that was about to change with the appearance of John the Baptist making his wet and noisy entrance into history in the Jordan River. Jesus' situation would change utterly. The good life was put in limbo. Though He looked back on the good old days wistfully, He would not enjoy them again. The work for which He was sent by His Father was beginning. It would consume all His energies — it would cost Him His life.

Jesus was running — not walking — into the tsunami of world history. He would hold nothing back. It would be all systems go. His life would make a difference. Billions of people would be richer for it. He would fulfill the job definition given to Him by His Father. It is laid out in detail by the prophet, Isaiah [42:1-7] — He was “to open the eyes of the blind, free prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon those who live in darkness.”

Jesus was aware of the consequences to Himself. He knew that good people do not always win. Life, said President John F Kennedy, is not fair. But Christ dismissed His forebodings with a shrug — “We must do this if we would fulfill all of God's demands” [Matthew 3:13-17].

## Baptism of Jesus

Peter summarizes well what the baptized Jesus did in six famous words — “He went about doing good works” [Acts 10:34-38]. The baton has been passed to us. We, like Christ, must excel. Now is the acceptable moment for each of us to become a difference in someone else’s life. Human problems and hurts surround us everywhere. We, too, like Jesus, must go about doing good.

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

### COMING TO KNOW WHO WE ARE:

Though it certainly created problems for the gospel churches, the first three evangelists still insisted on narrating an account of Jesus’ baptism. The reason for the problem revolved around the fact that many followers of John the Baptist never accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They insisted that John — not Jesus — had fulfilled the role of the long-anticipated savior of Judaism. This belief didn’t end during the period of the gospels. Historians remind us that some fourth century Jewish communities still had members who continued to believe in John as the Christ. Since a superior normally baptizes an inferior, these devotees of John insisted that Jesus’ baptism proved their point. Their mentor was superior to the Galilean carpenter who had once been one of John’s disciples.

Yet, in spite of the confusion, Jesus’ earliest followers couldn’t overlook his baptism. Because of what John’s baptism signified, they presumed it was a life-changing event for him. As a member of the Dead Sea scrolls community, John employed baptism as an outward sign of people’s determination to carry out God’s will in their lives. The Essenes and others, like Jesus, who submitted to this ritual washing were declaring their openness to whatever God was asking of them.



Looking at the unique aspects of Matthew’s gospel [3:13-17], Matthew seems to have created the “give and take” between Jesus and John over “who should be baptizing whom” simply as a way to get around the superior/inferior issue. But he also changes Mark’s original narrative in another significant way. Instead of the heavenly voice proclaiming: “You are my beloved son!” Matthew’s voice states: “This is my beloved son!” What formally was regarded as an annunciation to Jesus about his divinity is now looked upon as an annunciation to his followers — a small but very important change.

Many Christologists — those who study the person of Jesus — believe that the historical Jesus only became aware of who he actually was when he made the life-changing decision to give himself completely over to God’s will in his life. No wonder that event couldn’t be left out of most gospels.

Luke even refers to it in Peter’s well-known sermon that is called the “kerygma” of faith [Acts 10:34-38]. He reminds the Gentile Cornelius: “You know the word that God sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.” Things always change when God’s the center of one’s life.

In the same way, everything also changed for Isaiah. Though he is convinced that he’s the prophet of God, he’s just as convinced that he’s a prophet unlike most of his predecessors. He’s not going to cry out or shout, not even going to make his voice heard in the street. He’ll deliver an extremely low key message, never resorting to anything which will squelch or break his people [Isaiah 42:1-7].

Our sacred authors are convinced that whenever one commits oneself completely to God, one always discovers unique dimensions of his or her personality. Though in the giving process we all become disciples of God or the risen Jesus, no two disciples are exactly alike. Each lives his or her commitment in ways completely different from all others. Each sees roads to travel down which others don’t notice.

The sacramental way to show our adult commitment to God and Jesus is by receiving from the Eucharistic cup. As we hear in Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth, it's the outward sign Jesus instituted for us to show that we are to carry on his ministry — one of the ways we discover who we really are and what God uniquely expects of us.

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

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

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

### PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Andre Polsinelli, who is undergoing treatment for Parkinson's Disease.
- For Denise Linkov, cousin of Anna Akkus, who is a civilian war prisoner, and who is ill.
- For Veronica Pauer, sister of Brother Charles Smith, C.S.C., who is under the care of hospice.
- For Michael Gray, brother of Brother Shaun Gray, C.S.C., who is critically ill.
- For Author Lafave, grandfather of Ursuline College Student, Annie McCarthy, who is seriously ill.
- For Jan Leavitt, who is preparing for knee replacement surgery.
- For Bill Kral ['87], brother of Jennifer ['86] and Michael ['90] Kral, who is recovering from brain surgery.

### PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Elaine Willey, sister of Father John [anniversary].
- For Sister Jeanne Moenk, S.N.D.
- For Father Tom McNally, C.S.C.
- For Brother Carlos Parrilla, C.S.C.
- For Jack Grdina, father of John ['98] and Nick ['08] Grdina.
- For Carolyn Bauer, mother of Jack Bauer ['85]
- For Father Michael Troha, pastor of Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parishes



### 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.

## THE CHOSEN – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8<sup>th</sup>:

We had a wonderful group of people join us for our last episode of *The Chosen* in January. The viewing was followed by a very inspiring sharing among those present.

**Our NEXT gathering will take place on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm. We will continue to gather once monthly, viewing a new episode each month, followed by discussion.**



*The Chosen* is an American Christian historical drama television series. Created, directed, and co-written by filmmaker Dallas Jenkins, it is the first multi-season series about the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Primarily set in Judaea and Galilee in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the series depicts the life of Jesus through the eyes of the people who interacted with him, including the apostles and disciples of Jesus, Jewish religious leaders, Roman government and military officials, and ordinary people. In contrast with typical Bible-focused productions, Jenkins has given more depth

## Baptism of Jesus

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].**

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

## **~ A Prayer of Baptismal Promise ~**

**Father,  
I believe that  
I do not just happen to exist —  
I have been planned in your love,  
And gifted with your spirit.**

**I come today  
to listen for the word you speak,  
to commune in prayer,  
to offer myself  
in Christ.**

**For the gift of life  
And faith  
I thank you.**

**I ask your help  
to live my baptismal promise —  
to be more like Jesus  
releasing people from evil  
and doing good works.  
Let me glorify your name, O God,  
In every face that I encounter,  
In every person that I am called to serve.**

**Lord,  
grasp me by the hand,  
renew your Spirit within me.  
make me your good servant,  
for I am baptized  
in your name.**

**Amen.**

**CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:**

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

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

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