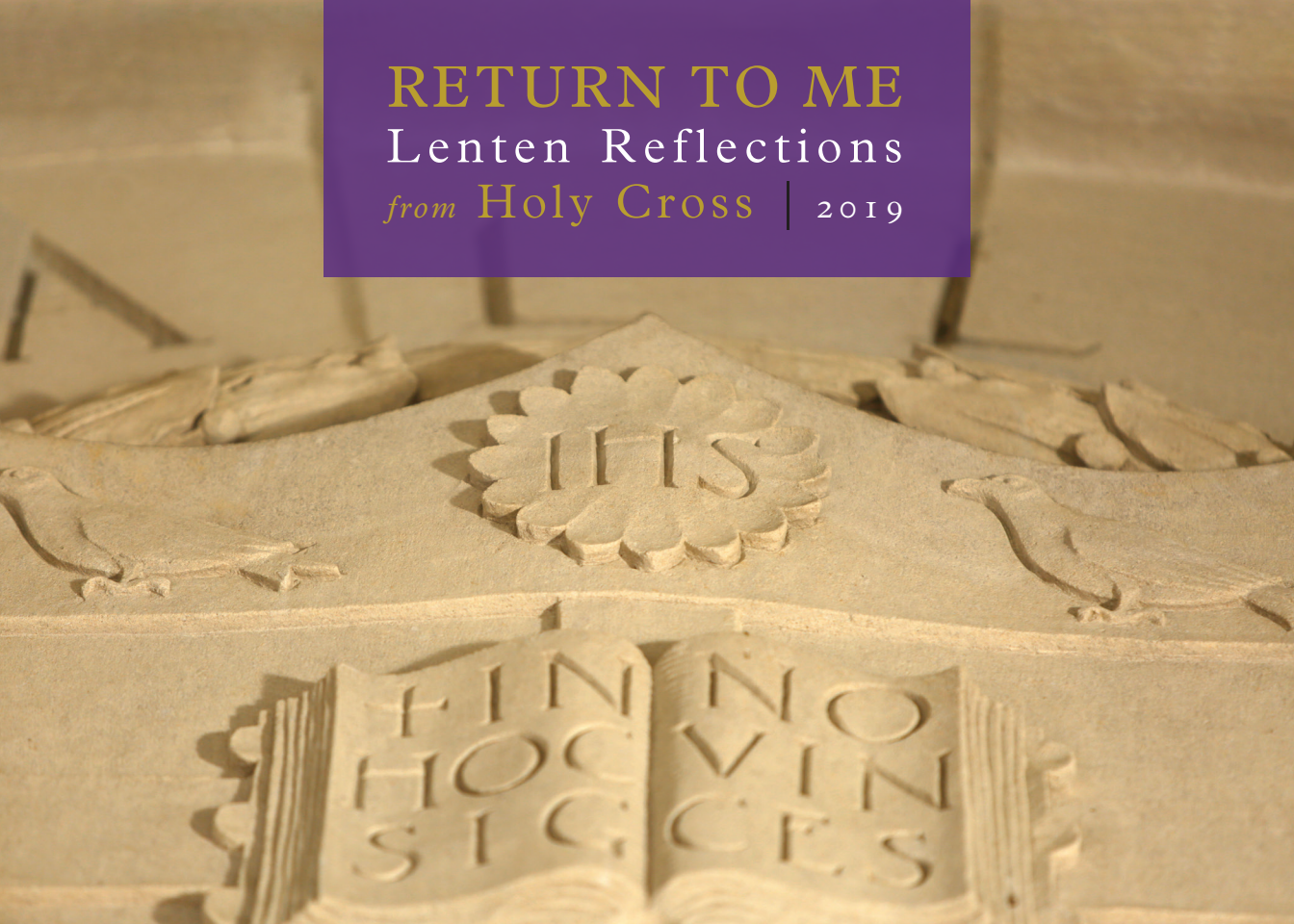


RETURN TO ME

Lenten Reflections

from Holy Cross | 2019





“Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, with weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.”

(JOEL 2: 12-13)

Included among the many definitions of the word “march” is one that indicates steady movement (when used as a verb) and one that indicates a border shared between two spaces (when used as a noun). How fitting, then, that the annual season of Lent should begin this year in the month of March, since Lent invites people of faith to move progressively from one reality towards another. How ironic that this progressive movement forward is here envisioned as a return!

It is our hope that this resource, *Return to Me: Lenten Reflections from Holy Cross 2019*, will assist you as you move along on your way.

Within these pages you’ll hear the unique voices of many people from within the Holy Cross community: faculty, staff, students, alumni, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, benefactors of the College and Jesuits. Each contributor reflects on the readings prescribed for the Mass of a given day, and while we hope that their own prayerful reflections help you to pray, we hope, too, that the reflections contained herein might help to serve for you as a bridge to the College where faith is nourished and character is formed.

Preparing this Lenten reflection booklet and its accompanying digital format involves many members of our community, from the writers, to editors and graphic designers and website administrators. To each of these people — too many to name here — we offer our profound thanks.

To subscribe to daily emails from *Return To Me* throughout the season of Lent, please visit our website: holycross.edu/returntome

Be assured of our prayers during the season as our hearts journey to Easter.

Rev. William R. Campbell, S.J. ’87
Vice President for Mission

Joie Dillon ’21
Return to Me intern



MARCH 6 | ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:12-18; Ps 51; 2 Cor 5:20-6:2; Matt 6:1-6, 16-18

Lent can be such a gloomy season — it starts during the dark, cold days of winter, and we tend to focus on fasting and giving things up. When we were young, giving things up seemed like the price we had to pay for the fun of our Easter celebrations. However, as we have gotten older and our lives have become busier and noisier, we are more appreciative of the quiet time that Lent offers.

In today's readings, we are called to turn our focus inward. The reading from Joel calls all of us to drop everything and return to God. In the psalm, we ask God to “*wash me from my guilt*” and create “*a clean heart.*” And the Gospel reminds us that our private relationship with God is what's important — to “*pray to your Father in secret.*”

Lent is a wonderful opportunity to quiet the noise that surrounds us and to refocus our attention inward. When we get caught up in the frenzy of our lives, we can get disconnected and become more selfish or thoughtless in our words and actions. Taking the time to stop, reconcile with God and get a fresh start — that clean heart — is a profound gift. We are looking forward to being reconnected in a prayerful dialogue and in mindful actions each day in the coming weeks.

Today, we are entering a season that doesn't feel gloomy at all!

James L. '87 and Kathleen M. Griffin (Goldsmith) '88, P18, 21, 23

MARCH 7 | THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Deut 30:15-20; Ps 1; Luke 9:22-25

“You must write this paper. You must arrive on time. You must be polite. You must do your best.”

Throughout our lives, there are many things that we have been told that we “must” do. But, technically, we do not “have” to do any of those things. Indeed, we have free will to do whatever our hearts desire. But then, the question becomes: what do our hearts desire? And where will these desires lead us?

Many of us desire success, health, happiness, a good family and even God. However, as Moses says in today's first reading, whatever we choose to desire, we ultimately are left with just two choices – “*life and prosperity [or] death and doom.*” I imagine most of us wish to choose “*life and prosperity.*” But how, exactly, can this be done? In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells us precisely how it can be done: we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him. Jesus does not simply say to us that we “can” or that we “could” do so, but that we “must” in order to be with him — there is no other option. And all of those smaller “musts” in life, even if we despise them, help us to do so.

Luckily, we are not alone. Like us, Jesus had a desire: to save us. Like us, he had to “*suffer greatly and be rejected.*” Like us, he had to deny himself.

And the beauty is that he did all of this for us.

François Venne '19





MARCH 8 | FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Isa 58:1-9a; Ps 51; Matt 9:14-14

“*Here I am!*”

God is so close in today’s first reading. Through Isaiah, God invites us to let go of our “*own pursuits*” and open our hearts to divine friendship. God is with us, just as “*the bridegroom is with*” the disciples in the Gospel, drawing them more deeply into relationship. The fruits of this relationship are greatly needed in today’s wounded world — justice, freedom, charity, peace, love and healing.

How, then, do we “return” to God this Lent? The psalmist approaches God with a humble and contrite heart and asks for mercy, open to receiving what God wants to give. The Dave Matthews Band performs a song titled “Mercy” that includes this comforting refrain: “I want to give you what you need.” I’ve often sensed God speaking those words to me in prayer when I’ve resisted opening my heart. Our merciful, generous, compassionate God desires to heal our wounds and make us whole.

The invitation awaits each of us this Lent. With trust, let us turn towards the One who wants to give us what we need.

Andrea Santoriello '98

MARCH 9 | SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Isa 58:9b-14; Ps 86; Luke 5:27-32

This week, the 58th chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah calls to us with a series of “if/then” appeals. Most of them begin in an ordinary way: “*if you stop pointing fingers and speaking evil*” and “*if you stop oppressing and instead care for each other.*” Yet, these “ifs” are followed by “thens” that are anything but ordinary: “*then your light will rise in the darkness,*” “*then you will become a watered garden*” and “*then your community will be renewed.*” In these extraordinary metaphors, I hear both a call and a promise: all I have to be is ordinary. In my simple, daily life, I am called to be kind and generous. I am called to care for people.

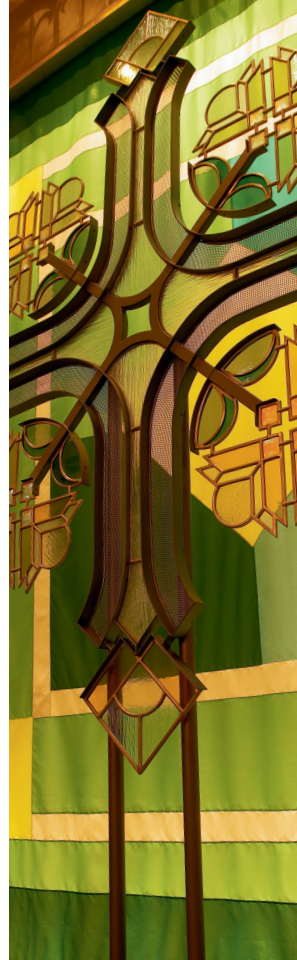
In these ordinary actions, God will act extraordinarily.

Perhaps the truly extraordinary promise comes at the end of Isaiah 58, the climax of the chapter. Again, the “if” is simple enough: “*Honor the Sabbath.*” Guard it. Stop pursuing our own desires. If we do this, then we will “*delight*” in the Lord. The Hebrew is stronger than the English translation: we will not just delight but take “*exquisite delight*” in the Lord. This delight will be like riding on the heights of the earth. It seems this exquisite delight is the ultimate promise, the truly extraordinary gift in our ordinary lives.

Does this promise sound extraordinary enough? What would it feel like, look like and mean to live a life of “*exquisite delight*” in God?

Mahri Leonard-Fleckman

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies





MARCH 10 | FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Deut 26:4-10; Ps 91; Rom 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-13

We mark this first Sunday of Lent with readings that remind us of both the forty years the Jewish people spent wandering in the desert after they fled their enslavement in Egypt and of the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert being tempted by the devil prior to his public ministry. As Lent leads us to the celebration of Holy Week and Easter, we have our own forty days ahead of us.

This Lenten journey calls us to reflect on our lives, the wandering we have done, the temptations which we have experienced, the struggles we have endured and the dark places we have entered. But like our Jewish ancestors, we are reminded that God is faithful and compassionate as we wander, leading us forward with “*a strong hand and outstretched arm.*” And Jesus, no stranger to temptation, kept walking forward united with the Father and committed to the mission he had received.

During these forty days, we are invited to remember God’s faithfulness to us no matter where our journey has led us; to discover that our wanderings surprisingly may be the very place where the power of God’s mercy and love for us are most evident; and to acknowledge that the gifts that come from mercy are gratitude, humility and freedom. Receiving them, we can stop our wandering and begin building a home where the gifts we have been given provide a restorative place for fellow wanderers.

Rev. Philip L. Boroughs, S.J.

President

MARCH 11 | MONDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Lev 19: 1-2, 11-18; Ps 19; Matt 25: 31-46

“Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

There are times when we may not be holy ourselves, when we are too distracted by our selfish thoughts to respond to our neighbor in need. As children of the Lord, we are invited to make decisions and to act not just for ourselves but also for others. It is hard at times today, with so many distractions that life offers us. We are all so alike — people with feelings for the understanding of love for each other as children of God. As holy as God is, we need to follow His words, not just as an action but a passion to be greater than ourselves: to love each other with God in our minds. The Lord spoke to Moses about His plan for His children; today, God’s children are tempted to forget His words. Let us do more for each other with God’s plan in our actions, not only put a little more peace and love in our hearts but have a little more God in our thoughts.

Kathleen Parlante

Environmental Services





MARCH 12 | TUESDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Is 55:10-11; Ps 34; Matt 6:7-15

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Today’s readings make me think of the words we hear when we receive our ashes to start our Lenten journey each year. The words from Ash Wednesday remind us humbly that we are only of this world temporarily.

Today’s readings help me understand why we are in this world: to achieve the end for which we were sent by God. We are here to fulfill God’s will for each of us. Just as the rain and snow come down to nourish the earth, we are each here for a specific purpose. What the purpose is for each one of us is not always easily known. We must make sure we consider what God wants of us. We cannot rush it, force it or fake it. We must allow ourselves to continuously consider our purpose and act towards that end. This can take some time to figure out, just as it takes time for snow to melt and so nourish the earth.

This year, these words also bear additional meaning for me, as I mourn the passing of a dear loved one — my mother. I have been comforted, since her passing, by the thought that she left us when she was ready. These readings remind me that she returned to God having achieved the end for which she was sent. And for all she did achieve, I am truly grateful and forever blessed.

Brian Duggan '96

President, Holy Cross Alumni Association and Member, Board of Trustees



MARCH 13 | WEDNESDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK IN LENT

Jonah 3:1-10; Ps 51; Luke 11:29-32

One thing my mother asked my sister and me to do each year as part of our Lenten practices while growing up was to listen to and follow her directions the first time she asked us to do something. While this may sound like an easy task, I still found myself periodically getting distracted and forgetting to clean my room, write my grandmother a thank-you card, or any other little thing she might have asked me. In today’s reading, we see how Jonah, too, needed to be asked twice by God to carry out his mission in the city of Nineveh, a mission to remind the people there to repent and turn back to God.

While the reminder that the Ninevites received from God was of a somewhat less threatening nature than my mom’s, the Gospel reveals to us that the most important and ultimately best reminder that God gives us is Jesus. Lent is a time when we can strive to be especially conscious of the examples of Jesus’ love that we encounter in our everyday lives, such as the family visiting their aunt in the nursing home, the high school students volunteering at the soup kitchen, or the person who sits down to listen to a friend going through a difficult time.

During Lent, we can challenge ourselves to internalize the love that Jesus showed to others so that we can better initiate similar acts of love. In this way, we, like Jesus, can serve as reminder to the world that we are called to live in love and solidarity with each other.

Grace Mascha '19

MARCH 14 | THURSDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Ps 138; Mt 7:7-12

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

How easy it is to let the beauty of this simple, yet eloquent, phrase escape us. It's easy to get overwhelmed. We all have responsibilities and tasks to perform, and sometimes these can wear us thin. At times of high stress or crisis, the burdens we feel, mentally and physically, can be tremendous.

It is okay to ask for help. People often feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness or defeat. It's not. I believe it is a sign of strength and courage. Whether we are asking for help from God, an individual or group, the support and relief we experience is often surprising. Furthermore, it can give the strength to soldier on.

I have found that the simplest of gestures during a time of need can significantly improve a situation. The next time someone asks you for help or is in distress, take the time to assist or comfort them. I promise they will not soon forget your kindness. So, the next time you need help, ask for it!

Mark Murray

Leadership Giving Officer, Office of Advancement

MARCH 15 | FRIDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

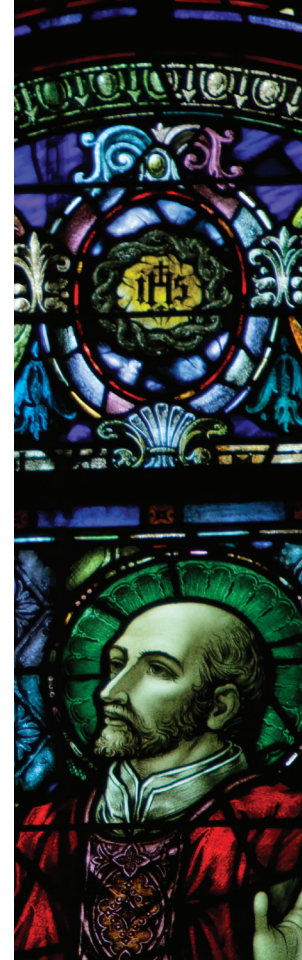
Ezek 18:21-28; Ps 130; Matt 5:20-26

Last semester, each of my professors gently reminded me that the material we would cover was not confined to absolutes. Even so, I consistently struggled to leave the bounds of black and white and enter into the full spectrum of gray that exists in between. In academics and most every other aspect of my life, the “grays” are hard for me to acknowledge and even more challenging for me to accept.

Naturally, I defaulted to this extreme way of thinking in my first couple of reflective passes through today's readings; those who do good will have eternal life and those who do bad will not. Once again, I failed to see the in-betweens. While our highest and lowest moments do matter, they're not the totality of our existence. We are blessed to have a God who forgives us in our lower moments, recognizes our potential to again experience higher ones, and deeply values us in all the ordinary moments that lie between. Today's readings do not portray a God whose judgement is confined to black and white, but rather a God who sees, embraces and loves us in the gray.

As we enter this Lenten season, may we consider the ordinary that makes up the gray in our own lives. It's easy to see only the black and white in ourselves, others, and the world, but in doing so, we miss out on all of the beauty that lies in the gray. What gray do you overlook?

Katherine M. Elacqua '19





MARCH 16 | SATURDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Deut 26:16-19; Ps 119; Matt 5:43-48

Moses speaks of the covenant between the Lord and his disciples. The covenant is a striking contract that reaches important terms of agreement. The Lord will bestow renown and glory upon those who faithfully observe his commandments.

When I reflect on this scripture, I think about what building a community demands and offers. Perhaps above all, a community demands agreement, commitment and trust. That is, we must agree on the values that govern our community, be committed to preserving those values, and trust each other to give our best and do what is required. In the scripture, not even the Lord is above agreement, commitment and trust! This is a powerful lesson in these times. Our differences seem to imperil our larger commitments, and agreement seems elusive. Might we place more faith in each other's good intentions? Today's scripture challenges us to strengthen our covenant. Can we honor our agreements, prioritize the values that govern our community, and invest fully in each other? And can we do so with our whole hearts and beings—not just with reason, for gain, or when it is convenient? If we can all agree, commit, and trust, we can achieve a glorious, renowned, and praiseworthy community above all others.

The promise of what our community can be fills me with great hope.

Danilo Contreras

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

MARCH 17 | THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gen 15:5-12, 17-18; Ps. 27; 2 Phil 3: 17-4:1; Lk 9: 28b-36

A popular song from the musical “Man of La Mancha” includes these lyrics: “To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable fight...” The song speaks of faith in oneself, allowing one to reach the unreachable star “...no matter how hopeless, no matter how far.” I hear this theme echoing in today's readings — but with a twist. Abraham and Jesus place their faith not in themselves but in God, the Lord of light and salvation.

Jesus and Abraham, two men from different era in history exhibit a common element of their deep faith in God that is richly rewarded by an experience, an encounter, a transfiguration which not only transforms their personal lives but also has far reaching effects and influence that transcend beyond space and time, to be of eternal value. The blessing of Abraham with a progeny unlimited like the stars in the sky, is a blessing not only for Abraham but for generations to come, while the YES of Jesus to the will of his Father transfigures not only Jesus but, through him, humanity at large.

Faith in God does not mean that there will be no moments of doubt or uncertainty. Abraham and Jesus doubted. Yet, this faith in a loving God enables them and us to take the plunge. Such faith in God when expressed becomes a blessing to us personally and in turn it makes us a blessing to people around us as well.

Rev. Lawrence Fernandes, S.J.

International Visiting Jesuit Fellow, McFarland Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture





MARCH 18 | MONDAY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Dan 9:4b-10; Ps 79; Luke 6:36-38

Today's readings call us to look deep within ourselves and recognize our mistakes, as difficult as this introspection may be. It is so easy to violate God's commandments and to take actions contrary to those God asks us to take. The first reading reminds me of the daunting feeling I sometime feel after making my examination of conscience before receiving the sacrament of reconciliation. Feelings of regret and unworthiness come to mind.

But, as the Psalmist tells us, the Lord forgives and has compassion on us, even though we may not have fulfilled what we have been asked to do. We must ask for the Lord's assistance and mercy as our Savior and truly believe in the love the Lord has for us.

In addition to prayer, our actions must reflect the golden rule in different aspects of our life. Whether we are talking about another person, forgiving them, or giving them a gift, it is essential to remember that these actions are reciprocal.

The bottom line is that the Lord has unconditional love for each and every one of us. At the end of the day, we are human beings, living in a world that is often ruled by evil. There is however, an opportunity for each and every one of us to resist temptation and take a different path such as participating in a generous act you wouldn't otherwise or resisting degrading an individual. Let us ask for the Lord's mercy and to bestow His strength on each and every one of us.

Adriana Guadana-Huizar '21

MARCH 19 | SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Patron Saint of the Society of Jesus)

2 Sam 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Ps 89; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matt 1:16, 18-21, 24a

"Loving father, precious son, faithful husband all three in one." I use these words to describe a man who helped give me life and raised me to be the woman I am today — my father. Today, I can't help but see how these same words could be used to portray Joseph and how both he and my father were similar in the greatest of ways — love.

As we know from this gospel reading, Joseph, the husband of Mary, made a selfless decision to be true to the vows that he made to his wife and remained married to her after learning the news that a child was conceived in her that was not biologically his. We can infer that it was Joseph's faith and his love for Mary that allowed him to accept what the angel of the Lord had destined to be his will.

When my parents married almost fifty-nine years ago, they were very eager to have a family of their own. Although fifteen years went by, they continued to pray and hope for that special blessing. Yet, they were still without a child. As my dad shared with me, never once did it matter if they never had children, because their love for each other and their faith in what God had destined for them was enough. Just when they had fully accepted themselves as a family of two, a year later they became a family of three. A miracle child is what he called me, a blessing and the greatest gift that came from three things: faith, hope, and love.

"Joseph...was a righteous man.... When [he] awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him..."

Nicole Cunningham

Interim Director, Financial Aid





MARCH 20 | WEDNESDAY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31; Matt 20:17-28

Does one assume leadership, ascend to it, or live one's way into it? Are our most effective leaders the ones who, like the sons of Zebedee, think they can assume positions of prominence simply by asking but not by acting? Is leadership defined by power, titles and chalices or by thoughts, words and deeds?

In my experience, the most effective leaders are those who use their gifts and talents in service to others. They empower the individuals they lead rather than exert power over them. The very best have stood for and with others in humble and sincere solidarity. And sometimes, those are the same leaders who, as in the case of Jeremiah, are "*repaid with evil.*" Sometimes those leaders find, in the words of a dear friend, that "no good deed goes unpunished."

So, why bother? I believe it is because those leaders are our light. They are the light to which others turn and in turn, become the light of the world.

As members of the Holy Cross community, we each have an obligation to stand with those who do not have a voice. If not us, then who? Whether we find ourselves behind a podium with a microphone or getting our hands dirty in the trenches, how can we use our unique gifts, talents and passions in service to our world and those who need it the most? How can I be a light?

Amy Murphy

Director, Center for Career Development

MARCH 21 | THURSDAY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1; Luke 16:19-31

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord."

During times of stress and uncertainty, it is very easy for folks to question their trust in God. We both find ourselves doing this sometimes when things aren't ideal and it seems the entire world is falling apart around us. Yet, whenever we catch ourselves losing faith, we try to remind ourselves that God is right here with us as we continue to fight through all of these challenges.

Both in our personal lives and as SGA Co-Presidents, it has been a year filled with unexpected experiences that have deeply affected us and the rest of the Holy Cross community. As tough as it has been this year, there have been silver linings as we are constantly reminded of the love, strength and hope that we find within our community. Our experience of these virtues has helped us to move forward and to work towards a more inclusive, empathetic and just environment for the many communities to which we both belong — on campus and beyond.

May we all be able to acknowledge these same virtues of love, strength and hope throughout this Lenten season and beyond.

Adrian Cacho '19 and Meredith Coolidge '19

Co-Presidents, Student Government Association





MARCH 22 | FRIDAY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Gen 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Ps 105; Matt 21:33-43, 45-46

“They said to one another: ‘Here comes the master dreamer! Come on let us kill him... We shall then see what comes of his dreams’.”

Many of us make judgments in our everyday lives about what we cannot see, what we do not know, or what we may not understand. In today’s interactive world of email, social media and other forms of electronic and digital communication that do not account for tone and feeling, we can easily be led down a path of misconception and misunderstanding, not fully understanding the entire circumstance or situation at hand.

In this Lenten season, we must challenge ourselves in much the same way that both Joseph and Jesus did by staying true to ourselves and our guiding values regardless of the opinions of others and the circumstances we face. It is important that we live our faith, values and beliefs in all of our judgements, perceptions and understanding regardless of the situation.

Jesus reminds us that *“the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”* What are the cornerstones I reject or that I all too easily forget? I have the opportunity each day to listen, learn, and lead. Can I listen carefully and not form an opinion instantly? Can I inquire charitably when someone else perceives a situation differently than I do? Can I lead based on my values rather than simply follow what is popular? It is for this integrity that I dream.

Nicholas Smith

Senior Associate Director of Athletics, External Operations

MARCH 23 | SATURDAY IN THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Mic 7:14-15, 18-20; Ps 103; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

“Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old...”

During the extended New England winters, hibernation beckons. By curling up with Netflix, binging on a new series while avoiding the cold outside, we risk overlooking wonderful signs of renewal: budding trees and greening snowdrops. By fasting, giving up sweets, embracing a “shopping diet,” we make do with less while realizing just how much we usually indulge ourselves. Lent, like a New England winter, offers us less a hardship, and more a liberation from too much of just about everything.

By embracing both the quiet of a snowstorm and the lack of distractions, we can re-discover the overlooked, we can remember the forgotten, and we can replenish ourselves from the abundance hidden in plain sight: reawakening nature, a cleansed body and mindfulness of the gratitude, forgiveness and creativity which sustains us. Forty days allow us to rest, to resist, to recover our inner resources and to restore our sense of self in the world, a world that not only deserves our attention but needs it, like Carmel, Bashan and Gilead suffering from the effects of conspicuous consumption: drought, desertification, and death.

May our inner resolve be strengthened to reflect on the global ill effects of privilege.

Sylvia Burgard Schmitz

Associate Professor, Coordinator of German





MARCH 24 | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15; Ps 103; 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12; Lk 13:1-9

Evil. Repentance. Protection.

I recently visited the city of New Orleans and heard a parish community recite a prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel at the conclusion of Mass. The prayer asks Saint Michael for “protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.” I appreciated the reminder to be aware of evil in these unsettled times before I headed towards the door. I also appreciated having another helper interceding on my behalf.

The parable told by Jesus in today’s Gospel reading reminds me of that prayer and the heavenly protection that is offered to each of us. Once more I am appreciative of the reminder, in this case through the parable, that we have a protective gardener helping us and encouraging us against the evils of our day. This season of Lent invites us to tend to the wickedness of our lives, to prune and to fertilize where needed to lead fruitful lives each day.

Richard H. Patterson ‘80

Chair, Board of Trustees

MARCH 25 | SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Isa 7:10-14; 8:10; Ps 40; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

We are called always to be alert for signs from God, for opportunities to do his will, to do good, and to do the right thing. It is up to us to seize those opportunities just as Mary, mystified though she was, chose to follow the angel’s message and accept God’s invitation to become the mother of Christ. But such signs and opportunities will not always be obvious.

I was recently in New York City with my son and teenage grandson, riding in a near-empty subway car headed to some obscure museum in the Bronx. Across from us dozed a disheveled man, very likely hung over and homeless, rocking side to side with the rhythm of the car. I was content simply to read the *New York Times*. When we got up to exit the subway car, my son reached over to put something in the sleeping man’s pocket.

“What was that?” I asked.

“I gave him cash. He’ll be hungry when he wakes up,” my son said.

My son is far from wealthy, and he is not religious in a conventional way. But, he is the one who seized an opportunity to do good, an opportunity to which I was blind. God constantly sends these opportunities to us, but we must be alert to see and act on them.

David J. Martel ‘65

Class Co-Chair





MARCH 26 | TUESDAY IN THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Dn 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25; Matt 18:21-35

Doesn't God already know what needs to be forgiven? Why do we have to ask?

The Psalmist cries: *"Remember us Lord, remember your promise to your people, so you can guide us, and we can learn your ways."* That last bit is key. When we request God to remember us, it is always for our benefit. Azariah's pleas to God are not necessary because God needs to be goaded into compassion or because God has forgotten his promises. Rather, the asking serves to remind the people that even their most sacred external laws are secondary to the internal condition of humbleness and contriteness. They have genuinely remembered their God, and He will remember (and forgive) them.

Jesus, too, is helping us remember what God has already demonstrated – a desire to forgive. In order to receive forgiveness and continue to be in relationship, we have to ask. Asking for forgiveness is a form of remembering, of acknowledging that a debt is owed. God knows full well what the debt is and what the consequence should be, but when the other party acknowledges his debt, He forgives. Jesus warns that if we, like the servant, refuse to extend the mercy and compassion we have been given, we break the relationship – not just with our debtor, but with the One who has the ultimate ability to forgive all debts. If we desire a relationship with each other and with a forgiving God, then we have to remember that when asked to extend forgiveness to others, even when we have the right to refuse, we must choose to do so.

Laurie-Ann Britt-Smith

Director, Center for Writing

MARCH 27 | WEDNESDAY IN THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

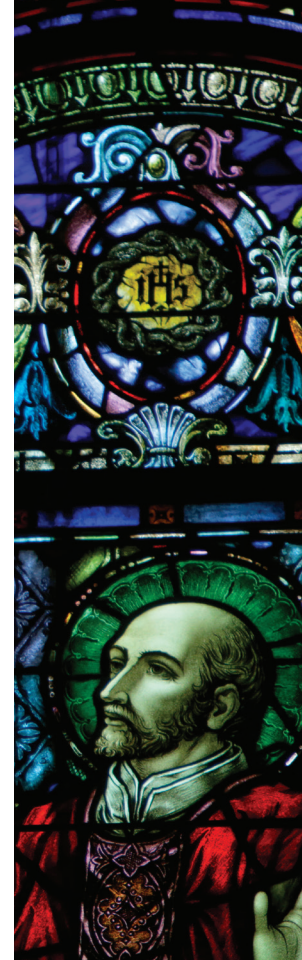
Deut 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147; Matt 5:17-19

Our readings today remind us that the Word of God is the pathway to eternal life for us and that each word of the law has an abstract meaning which we must seek. For example, when Moses declares his new *"statutes and decrees,"* he doesn't view these laws simply as rules. Rather, he describes them as symbols, representing a strong community, rooted in a unique connection with God. And in Matthew, Jesus expands upon how our following of the law will grant us eternal life in Heaven.

I attempt to find such "symbols" in my experience at Holy Cross. I am a student, and I have taken some classes that I have not found of much interest. In some cases, I even believed that I was wasting my time with a liberal arts education, since I was not focusing on what I wanted to do. But after careful reflection, I realize that although not every lesson is interesting, they are essential to my success. For example, I don't excel at math. However, I know that by learning it, I build confidence to try new things and to challenge myself in areas of less interest.

I entered Holy Cross with a specific path, and now this path has changed. I have found God calling me to keep my heart open and to acknowledge that every experience contains a deeper symbol that I must seek. If I take the chance to reflect on what symbols appear in my life, answering God's call becomes truly natural.

Joseph Coss '22





MARCH 28 | THURSDAY IN THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95; Luke 11:14-23

“Listen to my voice; then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper.”

I love it when we try to tell the Lord what we think we need: “God, if I just get this promotion, then I will be happier. God, I want to be accepted by this particular group. God, will you open the doors for me to access this real estate investment property?”

Our tradition reminds us that God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. God knows what we need. God knows how we need it, and God knows when we need it. So, why do I seek to take control of the “steering wheel” when God already knows my innermost thoughts and desires? Isn’t He the One who created me after all? How will I prosper if not by living according to His ways and His leadings?

Lord, today, I choose to be with You and not against You. I will listen for Your voice and go the way You command me.

Suzanne Richeson '06

President, Holy Cross Club of Washington D.C.

MARCH 29 | FRIDAY IN THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81; Mark 12:28-34

“...to love your neighbor as yourself...”

I love stories. In my culture, the Luo’s from East Africa, we learn great lessons from the elders and teach others through stories. I remember my grandfather who, before narrating a story, would gather us around the fireplace, remove his tobacco pipe from his mouth, spit on the ground and call upon the ancestors to witness what he was going to tell us.

He would commend himself to the Spirit of Wisdom and Love. Though many years have passed and grandpa is long gone, I still remember him calling upon a part of this “self” and blessing it before sharing his wisdom with us, his grandchildren.

Today, Jesus reminds the scribe of his need to love God and of his need to love his “neighbor as yourself.” That “self” that is the spirit, the goodness, the source of kindness must be shared with others for more blessings. The “self” that we must treat our neighbors with, is deeper, wise, kind and full of faith. It is slow to anger. It is the “self” that makes us great individuals in our society. This is the self where the saints, the ancestors and gods reside. It is in the “self” where God is and each one of us is born with it!

Today, I choose to make use of myself, and love my neighbor, because with this, Jesus assures me that I am “not far from the kingdom of God.” What about you?

Andrew Omandi

Assistant Chaplain, Athletic Ministry





MARCH 30 | SATURDAY IN THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51; Luke 18:9-14

“...and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Often life here on the Hill can be demanding: a meeting here, a study group there, homework everywhere. There is little time to decompress, except, perhaps, on the weekends. But these seem to fly right on by! Today is Saturday, so I sit to ponder today’s readings, and I hear words of humility and mercy. As my week draws to its end, I review it to see how I have humbled myself before God, to reflect on how merciful (or not) I have been to others. Where have I felt resentments and anxieties over grades and friendships?

My mother is wise, reminding me: “Jared, be kind to yourself.” It can be overbearing to attend an incredibly competitive (sometimes ruthless!) academic institution, during years of tremendous social, personal and cognitive growth, while trying to live (mostly!) on my own. The easiest thing to do is to fight like it’s “me against the world,” and in such a mindset, it is easy to grow in resentment — when I see that my classmates are doing well, and instead of feeling happy for them and celebrating their accomplishment, I resent them because I didn’t do so well.

I have learned in my four years at Holy Cross how important it is to be humble and merciful. Yes, I can be proud of my own gifts and talents and accomplishments, but I am also called to be humble and to be thankful for the opportunities that are in front of me.

Jared Cosby '19

MARCH 31 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETERE SUNDAY)

Jos 5:9a, 1-12; Ps 34; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

When I was young, our family would drive to Springfield to visit my Aunt Therese at the Monastery of the Mother of God. I was always curious about my aunt’s life in the Monastery, so, when I was allowed to speak, I would ask many questions. When I was about ten years old, I asked, “How do you get food if you can’t go shopping?” My aunt looked at me and answered, “God provides for us.” As I left her, I wondered, “How does that work?”

The next time that my family visited my aunt, I went with my father to the side of the Monastery and helped him put large boxes of food down a chute that led into the kitchen. Later when I got a chance to talk to my aunt, I told her what I saw and asked, “Doesn’t this mean that it’s my father who provides the food and not God?” Aunt Therese winked at me and whispered, “God uses many different ways to provide what we need.”

Today’s readings made me think of those long-ago visits. Joshua tells us: “*On that same day after the Passover, on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased.*” The manna that had been miraculously provided for the ancient Israelites as they wandered through the desert for forty years ceased when, instead, they were able to “*eat the produce of the land.*” This shows me that God always provides for His people. God will do it miraculously, if needed, or God will do it through common every day experiences.

David McKenna

Director of Auxiliary Services





APRIL 1 | MONDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Isa 65:17-21; Ps 30; John 4:43-54

“Thus says the Lord: Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth...”

As I reflect on today’s reading, I hear my mother’s voice saying: *“There is a greater plan for you out there.”* We all experience trying times in our lives, and when we do, it is so easy to focus on the negative aspects and slide into what I call “why me?” thinking. These are the times when our faith needs to be stronger than our fears. For when we entrust ourselves in faith to God, we know that God is our compass to lead us beyond the moment. And often it is when coming out of these trying times that we realize how truly blessed we are. Just as Jesus trusted God, we need to as well. We all have a greater plan mapped out for us. Trust in the Lord — there is always something to be grateful for.

Karen M. Brosnihan

House Coordinator, Ciampi Hall

APRIL 2 | TUESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Ezek 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46; John 5:1-16

People handle fear differently. Some are ready to fight and tackle it head on. Others, like myself, take flight. We often find ourselves hiding from our fears, and, therefore, we may find ourselves alone. Whether at work or at home, I do find myself hiding from my fears. But, I have come to trust that I am not hiding alone. That is because God promises refuge. When overcome with fear, God calls us to “hide” with God. By doing so, I feel God’s presence, and in that presence, I feel safer and begin to find the strength to overcome.

When we seek refuge, God becomes our strength. God’s strength makes me feel able to go back out and face my fears. I no longer feel alone; instead, I feel stronger knowing that He is closer to me than my problems. The feeling of anxiety leaves my body and I am ready to tackle any problem head on. I am no longer taking flight; instead, I am ready to fight.

Mike Leavitt

Director, Recreation, Intramurals and Club Sports





APRIL 3 | WEDNESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Isa 49:8-15; Ps 145; John 5:17-30

In today's first reading the prophet Isaiah depicts Zion crying out: "*The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.*" Now, Zion may seem a little overdramatic, but how often do we cry out like Zion, overwhelmed by the suffering of our existence? This cry is deeply relatable. Life can be hard and rife with pain, and so often God can feel distant, if not absent altogether. In these times when things go wrong, it's all too natural to cry out, to complain, to wallow in our misery and to wish things were different.

Most certainly, there are times to cry out to the Father; Jesus, our Lord, and model of faith, cried out as he hung on the cross. Still, we must not spend all of our lives, nor all of our time in prayer, wallowing over the suffering of existence. Our lives, after all, are gifts from God. Our Christian vocation calls us to view our lives as such; it even invites us to gestures of praise.

Today, I ask myself these questions: Do I take time to praise the Lord for the gift of my life and its many blessings or do I, like Zion, see only life's suffering? Do I give thanks for my mission, given to me by the Father or do I instead focus on the inevitable pain that my mission entails?

During this Lenten season, when we find ourselves crying out to God, may it be cries of praise.

James Dooley '20

APRIL 4 | THURSDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Exod 32: 7-14; Ps 106; John 5:31-47

As I considered today's readings, my initial feeling was one of confusion. Why would God's people, whom He had just freed from slavery, be so blatantly disrespectful by worshiping a molten calf, a clearly unworthy idol? It makes no sense at all. Wouldn't at least one person stand up and object?

But, then, it hit me: isn't this something that I, along with so many of God's people, struggle with every day? Our phones, technology, news, celebrities, professional athletes and a million other distracting indulgences are our molten calves. They obscure our vision, so that we do not see the simple beauty of what is right there in front of us, the miraculous gift of God and His unwavering love for each of us. We internally battle with not only worshiping unworthy idols, but also with losing ourselves in the group, of not standing up for what we know to be right. Our need to belong is strong, sometimes overpowering.

We all, like God's people in the first reading, need to remember the gift of God's love, appreciate it and cherish it. We are reassured of God's love by His ultimate forgiveness at the end of the reading. During this reflective time of Lent, I plan to take more time to recognize God in my everyday life and try and show deeper gratitude for all I have been given.

Amy Tesoro

Director, Prospect Development, Office of Advancement





APRIL 5 | FRIDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Today's readings call me to stay focused on what truly matters in both this life and the next.

Wisdom literature was common throughout the ancient Near East. It sought to prevent the ancient Israelites from being easily tempted by evil ways and turn them to the rewards of a just and good life. There are many parallels to the challenges and temptations that we all face in today's modern world. It is so easy to get caught up with the ideas of power, money, prestige and recognition, especially with the advent of modern technology, social media and the 24/7 news cycle. God's invitation reminds us, however, that if we stay focused on living a life of kindness, service, humility and justice, our reward in the next life will be truly great. There are many small acts of kindness that each of us can do every day to remind us of this important fact. It is my belief that this is the lesson Jesus is teaching us when he sacrificed his life for our eternal salvation, and it is the primary focus of the Lenten season.

Stephanie Coleman Linnartz '90

Member, Board of Trustees

APRIL 6 | SATURDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7; John 7:40-53

As a child, I remember once asking my grandmother: "Why doesn't God punish evil people who commit crimes and create so much chaos in the world?" She responded that the "wheat and the weeds had to grow together until the day of harvest." Today, Jeremiah cries out to the Lord, angered by those who hope to hurt him and desperate for God to discipline them for their actions.

It is difficult to experience or witness injustice in our daily lives. Living in a world where crime, violence and hatred towards marginalized groups are rampant and increasing in their frequency, we can become demoralized. We cry out to God to rescue us. We hope for an immediately better world filled with peace, understanding and empathy. The promise of a brighter future often rings hollow when one has to endure suffering or watch others they love suffer. But as Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. reminds us: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

I have learned to trust in God's plan for a better world. Like Jeremiah, my world will be determined partly by my ability to speak truth to power; standing firm in my convictions and my desire for a more just, equitable society.

Andre Isaacs '05

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry



APRIL 7 | FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Is 43:16-21; Ps 126; Phil 3:8-14; John 8: 1-11

Is our God a vengeful God or a kind God? How do I praise him? And am I doing enough to move towards the prize of his call that lifts me upward?

These were questions that I had growing up in a devoutly religious household. So, the words of Isaiah and Paul bring me a great deal of comfort. I'm reminded, as Isaiah invokes the memory of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, of a God who both saved his people and destroyed the Egyptians with the parting of waters. The image is powerful and invokes awe and a little fear. As a child, hearing this story, I distinctly remember hoping never to be the recipient of this type of wrath. But as Isaiah reminds us, God also nourishes and cares for His people. He makes a way in the desert and in the wastelands makes rivers. He makes things new. In this way, God nourishes and cares for His people, both physically and spiritually so that we may praise Him. Am I worthy of His care? Have I done enough? Paul reminds us in Philippians, that we should strive towards righteousness but know that it is through the righteousness of Christ and his sacrifice that we are saved.

Because God is merciful, we are not condemned for our sins.

Egetta Alfonso

Head Women's Track and Field Coach

APRIL 8 | MONDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dan 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Ps 23; John 8:12-20

"I am the light of the world."

Interestingly, in the joyful season of Advent, light may seem hard to come by. The days are short, with nightfall arriving earlier each day. Natural light may be scarce, but it's well supplemented by everything from bright holiday decorations to the four candles of the Advent wreath, all dispelling darkness and illuminating our excited anticipation of the arrival of the Christ child.

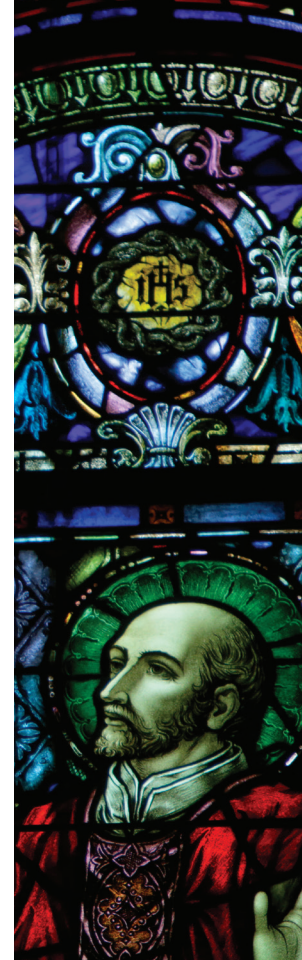
By contrast, in this solemn season of Lent, Jesus is on his journey to Calvary and we are in days of reflective sacrifice and repentance, yet there is much more light! Days are longer and spring is close at hand, with its promise of greening grass, blooming flowers and budding leaves.

Why does God offer us so much light during a time one may initially view as one of darkness? Jesus provides the answer in today's Gospel: *"Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

As we follow Jesus on the road to the cross, he reminds us, through light and the life of a new spring, that he is with us. Through the hope of his sacrifice and our faithful discipleship, we will not remain in darkness. Look for light and life today and see the Lord's unwavering presence and love for you.

Melissa Shaw

Managing Editor, Holy Cross Magazine





APRIL 9 | TUESDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Num 21:4-9; Ps 102; John 8:21-30

When one mistakes Christian teaching for weakness, there is John 8:21-30. Christ defends the truth of God and calls us to follow him. Jesus is admonishing the Pharisees for their self-absorption, their selfish preoccupations with this world and their preconceived notions of who he is. Sometimes, the world tries to encourage us to understand God through the lenses of our time and place. However, Christ admonished the Pharisees for the same sins. We cannot understand Christ without a singular focus on what is eternal, rather than what is only temporal. We cannot understand Christianity and Christ without understanding that his teachings are eternal and from the Father. However, the call to conversion in the text is most striking when Jesus pulls no punches, telling the Pharisees: “*For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.*” Either we accept the new and eternal life that Christ offers us, or we are left bereft of the grace He desires to give us – eternal life.

John reminds us that “*many came to believe in him*” not simply based on the content of what he said, but “*because of the way he spoke.*” In his brevity and directness, Christ Jesus makes it clear our focus must be on him, as he actually is, not as our world would have him be; either we stand with him, or our sins consume us. Pray that we may all be so fortunate to see the truth even in today’s world.

Alex Hindman

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

APRIL 10 | WEDNESDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dan 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Daniel 3; John 8:31-42

“*The truth will set you free.*” We often hear this expression. But what does this phrase really mean for Christians today? Telling the truth isn’t always easy and living the truth is even more demanding. Jesus calls us to be honest: to our colleagues, professors, students, family, friends, and to ourselves. Being honest with oneself requires prayerful discernment and listening to the voice of God inside.

Today’s Gospel reading reminds us that God our Father created a purpose for each one of us. Jesus said, “*I did not come on my own, but He sent me.*” What has God sent you for? What is God sending you to do? Life is full and filled with noise especially in our modern world of technology. When was the last time you paused to consider what God is calling and sending you to do?

During my sophomore year, I went on the Spiritual Exercises retreat offered for students at the Joyce Contemplative Center. It was much needed – a reminder and a good challenge for me to silence my surroundings, to listen more closely to God and to embrace solitude looking inward to my heart and soul. Today’s Gospel remind us that Lent is an opportunity for each one of us to check in and be honest with ourselves, pray about God’s individual plan for each one of us and prepare our hearts for the Holy Triduum.

Sarah Anderson '20





APRIL 11 | THURSDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Gen 17:3-9; Ps 105; John 8:51-59

“I will maintain my covenant with you and...your descendants after you.”

Genesis reminds us that God’s covenant extends both before us and after us. It also emphasizes that a covenant is a mutual agreement, not a one-sided promise. While God promises Abraham many wonderful things, God also tells him that he has a part to play and a duty to pass on this covenant to the generations that come after him.

How many generations have had to uphold Abraham’s end of the covenant to get to our own understanding today? My parents did their part in raising my sister and me to know the word of God. As a parent myself now, I honor that covenant by passing on the knowledge of God’s great love to my own children. It is my hope that they will someday do the same for their children, connecting their life stories to the many that came before them.

My parents met at Holy Cross while attending a wedding in St. Joseph Memorial Chapel. Every day as I come to work, I walk past the place where my own life story first began. It is a constant reminder that God’s plans for us are part of a greater promise and that it is to God we owe the glory, not our own striving. As Jesus tells us in the Gospel today: *“If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me...”*

Elizabeth Hastings

Director, Data Analytics, Office of the Provost and Dean of the College

APRIL 12 | FRIDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18; John 10:31-42

I am led to reflect on my marriage and a key aspect of being a Christian, thanks to today’s readings. In the text, people are trying to trap others based on words or questions and answers. They refuse to believe their own eyes (what Jesus has done), and instead want to find some “legalese” way to affirm their own beliefs. During Lent, we have an opportunity to reflect upon our own experiences and check whether we are testing others or setting subtle traps, rather than looking at actions. And similarly, the passages in today’s readings remind us that our own words and promises are not nearly as important as our actions and living up to the promises we make.

Thirty-three years ago, I married my loving wife, Mary. We exchanged vows – words and promises. Those vows were incredibly important. But more important is how we treat each other every day, and how we demonstrate our love for each other with our actions.

Today’s readings reveal this critical component of being Christian. In the passage from John, it turned out that even actions did not speak more loudly than words. Those who were offended by Jesus claiming to be God did not care that he had already given them evidence with the miracles he had performed.

Sometimes words are not enough. Sometimes, actions – even miracles! – are not enough. Welcoming Jesus into our lives takes more: it requires real faith.

Dan Kim

Vice President for Communications





APRIL 13 | SATURDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31; John 11:45-56

“I will take the children of Israel from among the nations to which they have come, and gather them from all sides to bring them back to their land...and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.”

I find so much meaning in these sentences. As a parent, I hope to instill in my children a sense of acceptance. We are mindful of discussions about accepting others for who they are, regardless of how they look or where they live or what they wear. As my girls have experienced new places and new people, they have often commented (sometimes at an embarrassing level of volume) on a person’s physical appearance or choice of action or even their religious beliefs. I try to take these times to teach my girls about the vast array of people they will meet — that what makes each person interesting to us is often what might seem “different.” Maybe our first step along the path of acceptance is to open ourselves up to simply learn about others, not to categorize one another into groups, but to truly understand what makes each of us unique.

It seems, however, that there is another important aspect of acceptance. As children, we are curious about differences. Yet as adults, our curiosity can lead to comparison and even judgement. Maybe our second step then, is to truly accept ourselves for who we are and to reflect on what is important to share about yourself with others. If we can feel grateful for the gifts that make us each unique, maybe that will allow us to become more accepting of the beautiful array of differences we see in the people around us.

Amber Hupp

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry

APRIL 14 | PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD’S PASSION

Isa 50:4-7; Ps 22; Phil 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56

In today’s Gospel, Jesus breaks bread with the disciples at the Last Supper. This shared meal is recreated in the amazing process of the transubstantiation revealed at Mass each week through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. As a parent, I continue to be humbled and awed by the depth of God’s sacrifice. Today’s Gospel also recalls the importance that food, and more specifically sharing meals with others, plays in cultures throughout the world. The generosity of inviting others to gather and sharing your food with them, on a continuum from simple to extravagant, represents the best of what we have to offer others. In a divisive world often focused on polarities, food serves as a common denominator that reflects the authenticity, nuance, fluidity, and beauty of our diversity. Food literally feeds our bodies, while the sharing of meals with others nourishes the soul through its opportunities for connection and understanding. As we prepare our hearts for Easter, may we each be inspired to celebrate by breaking bread in communion with others.

Paul R. Galvinhill

Director, Counseling Center





APRIL 15 | MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isa 42:1-7; Ps 27; John 12:1-11

Before his final week in Jerusalem, Jesus travels to Bethany (a name which means “The House of Affliction” or “House of the Poor”) to visit his friends Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus. During their meal, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with costly perfumed oil which Judas considers a wasteful act; he asks why she didn’t sell the oil and give the money to the poor.

Just as Judas misunderstands the intention of Mary, I, like many of us, am sometimes misunderstood, and this reading highlights difficulties in understanding one another. At the same time, we are asked by the reading to consider the response of Jesus that “*You always have the poor with you.*”

If indeed the face of the Lord is especially visible in the faces of the poor, broken-hearted, needy, disconsolate, down trodden and abandoned, how should we behave with the poor? Mary acts from love and devotion. Judas would rather take her gift of oil and sell it to give to the poor. His attitude reflects a supposed concern for the poor that would use “the poor” for self-promotion by giving to them rather sharing with them since in many places in scripture the poor man is defined as “your brother.”

Thomas Doughton

Senior Lecturer, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies

APRIL 16 | TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isa 49:1-6; Ps 71; John 13:21-33, 36-38

As a student, I experienced difficult classes, lack of time and effort that seemed to go unnoticed. As a teacher, I am faced with the challenge of educating the next generation – a work that also seems to go unnoticed. I write lesson plans, teach and coach, but feel as though my effort is never enough. I consistently press myself on how things could have been better, how my time could have been used more wisely or how I could have done something differently. It seems easier to judge and criticize actions, but today’s first reading invites me to do the opposite: “*Yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God.*”

God has an infinite amount of love for us, and our daily challenges shouldn’t have to be “applauded” by our audience. God’s love is more than enough. Our everyday challenges are a reminder that God loves us, He formed us and has made us his servants; He is our strength. It is because of Him, and through Him that we are allowed to do our duties. Our responsibilities are to spread His love and message, and so, in moments of sadness or feeling of failure, it is important to remember that God is always protecting, guiding and helping us to deliver His message. At the end of the day, our lessons, practices and projects are not really the end, but the beginning of a journey God has planned for us.

“It is too little, he says for you to be my servant, ... I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

Visaury Moreta '18

Member, Board of Trustees





APRIL 17 | WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isa 50:4-9a; Ps 69; Matt 26:14-25

Today, Matthew recounts the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. The evangelist tells us that the chief priests “*paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.*” A common Christian response to this passage is to be full of frustration. We ask ourselves why one of the twelve was willing to lose his rabbi and savior — the One who modeled perfect and sacrificial love. But, rather than being consumed by anger over Judas’ actions, seek deeper understanding and reflect on the times in your own life where you have modeled the behavior of the Iscariot and not the Nazarene. Think of the instances where you have fallen short, avoided love, and chosen greed and self.

Turn now to the words of Isaiah. Consider his prophecy as invitation to use your well-trained tongue and to open your ears so that you can serve as an instrument of God’s love and peace. Know that your face may be exposed to buffets and spitting, but that the Lord is in fact your help. Seek joy and humility, acknowledging that despite our attempts to reject the Lord, the Resurrection, which occurred for our sake, is soon to follow. Give all praise, glory, honor and thanks to Christ.

Joseph Ertle '21

APRIL 18 | HOLY THURSDAY OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Exod 12:1-8, 11-14; Ps 116; 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

Technically, Holy Thursday is not part of Lent. Tonight, we begin the Triduum, the three days that lead to Easter, and it is the occasion of the institution of the priesthood. After washing the apostles’ feet, Jesus said: “*I have given you a model to follow.*” And he gave them a new commandment: “*Love one another as I have loved you.*”

The overwhelming majority of priests live that vocation beautifully.

All my life, I have had a reverent respect for priests. I remain in awe of their sacrifice and faith. My parents never needed to tell me to respect priests; their actions taught me. My uncle, Dan Millard '47, was a priest, and it was always a special occasion when he visited. He was my father’s brother, yes, but more importantly he was a priest. He had a vocation, and in some special way he was holy. He was anointed.

When I attended Holy Cross, the chaplain’s office included Fathers Manning and LaBran. Like thousands of Holy Cross alumni, I am who I am today, due to the influence and inspiration of priests like them. And my children have been inspired by knowing Fr. Tom Henehan '63, who could have played in the NFL, but instead became a Maryknoll missionary. I hope I am teaching them the same reverence my parents taught me.

So, on this Holy Thursday, I pray for all priests, and I thank God for those whose vocations have helped us all grow in faith and prepare for Easter.

Charles E. F. Millard, Jr. '79, P13, 20, 22



APRIL 19 | GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Isa 52:13-53:12; Ps 31; Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

Good Friday! On a day that seems so dark, culminating in the death of Jesus after betrayal, trial, denial and abuse, how could it be termed “good?” This year has been one of news that reports the Church in such a negative light. In conversations with others and in my own thoughts, I struggle to address the situation that has seen the innocence of too many children destroyed, as well as the lack of responsible leadership in the Church. I know that forgiveness is what we all hope for and are committed to embrace, but this year it is so hard to understand the “how” and “why” of what has happened in the Church.

Today’s readings of the Passion of Our Lord speak to all of the negative things that have occurred. Betrayal in the garden by Judas, denial by Simon Peter, the crowd boisterous in its demand for crucifixion as Pilate sought for other solutions; followed by mocking and subsequent death of Jesus. All were works of darkness.

But it is in those moments that Good Friday became “good” because it signaled all that comes from that: rebirth, resurrection and overcoming everything on Easter Sunday. So, this Good Friday gives me the spiritual and intellectual strength and comfort that all that has not been positive for us as Catholics does not define our deepest beliefs but provides the opportunity for us to embrace the season and especially the Tridium as the hope and promise of better through a Risen Savior.

Shone L. Malliet '74

APRIL 20 | HOLY SATURDAY

Gen 1:1-2:2; Gen 22:1-18; Exod 14:15-15:1; Isa 54:5-14; Isa 55:1-11; Rom 6:3-11; Luke 24:1-12

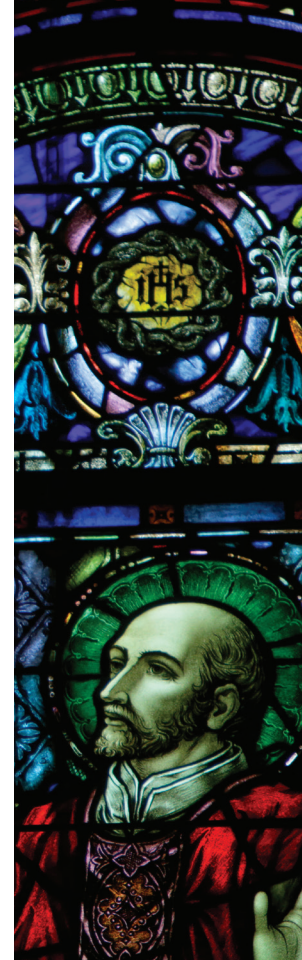
Numerous readings may be proclaimed tonight, the Easter Vigil, yet I find myself returning to this phrase in the Letter to the Romans: “*As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.*” I imagine the amazement, excitement and joy that fills the hearts of Jesus’s friends and disciples as they discover their leader has risen from death. Jesus’s resurrection fosters passion in his disciples: to spread his life and teachings for future generations to come.

Yet, this revelation surely comes at an interesting time for Jesus’s disciples. Only a short while before, they were grappling with devastation and grief at the loss of their friend. When have you faced a setback, only to shortly discover love and meaning just around the corner? Where do your passions spring from? Where do you find Jesus in what excites you and brings you joy? How do you live for Jesus?

At Holy Cross, we are continually encouraged by faculty mentors to discover our passions and pursue them in earnest. Often, we discover our passions through new experiences, where we can learn from setbacks faced along the way. I believe our passions — what brings us joy and awakens our spirit — help us cultivate areas in our lives where we can live for Jesus.

What does this look like for you?

Christian Realbuto '20





APRIL 21 | EASTER SUNDAY – THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Ps 118; Col 3:1-4; John 20:1-9

This is what life is about! Mystery and uncertainty are removed from our lives with Christ's Resurrection victory over death and sin. This is the foundation of the Church's beliefs. We can now say: "Death, where is your sting?" In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter, an eye witness to the Risen Christ, proclaims Christ's resurrection and the salvific effects it has for our lives and those of all who believe in Him.

The late Cardinal Avery Dulles wrote a small book titled: "Apologetics and the Biblical Christ." The Cardinal, who himself had once been an unbeliever, reflects on the historical questions proposed by unbelievers. He acknowledges the sincerity of their doubt, but with the eyes of faith, joined to reason and logic, he writes:

"The initial proclamation of the paschal mystery represents the unanimous faith of the infant Church. It is accepted without any shadow of doubt, though it contradicted the previous expectations of the Apostles and their contemporaries. Most importantly, the witnesses of the Resurrection were totally transformed by their experience. Face to face communion with the Risen Christ fashioned them into new men. It made them slaves of the Gospel, urgently compelling them to preach the Gospel with power to the whole world."

Neither threats nor ridicule could reduce the Apostles to silence. Their faith and the proclamation of the infant Church is the result of their life with Christ before His death and their meeting Him after His death. From that day on, they were willing to proclaim the Gospel in the face of suffering and martyrdom. Today, we can proclaim: "*This is the Day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.*"

Christ has risen!

Rev. Earl L. Markey, S.J. '53

Associate Director of Jesuit Relations, Office of Admission





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