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Return to Me: Lenten Reflections from Holy Cross (2022)

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RETURN TO ME
Lenten Reflections
from Holy Cross | 2022

*A clean
heart create
for me, O
God, and
a steadfast
spirit renew
within me.*

PSALM 51:10

As we begin this Lent—the third affected by the Coronavirus pandemic—it feels especially fitting to pray with the psalmist for a sense of renewal. This year the Society of Jesus celebrates the Ignatian Year, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Struck by a cannonball in battle, his life-threatening injuries started a journey of transformation. We have all experienced “cannonball moments” in our lives, including over these past few years. The psalmist reminds us today that amid those moments, God is present and active; eager to bring about our renewal and transformation.

Within these pages you will hear many voices from the Holy Cross community—faculty, staff, students, alumni, administrators, Trustees, benefactors, and Jesuits—as they reflect on the readings for each day’s Mass. This year, in hopes of more fully sharing the rich gifts of our community, we have also invited four artists to offer visual reflections on the readings. You can read more about the artists and view their work in higher resolution, as well as learn more information about all of the photographs from around campus at the *RTM* website: holycross.edu/returntome. We hope that these prayerful reflections—written and visual—will help you pray more deeply during this Lenten season, and to experience renewal and transformation yourself. We hope, too, that the reflections and images in this year’s collection will serve as your bridge to the College, where faith is nourished and character is formed.



Preparing this booklet, both in print and online, involves many members of our community: writers and artists, editors, graphic designers, website administrators, and former coordinators of *Return to Me*. Pioneering the new artistic element in particular required the expertise and talents of our terrific colleagues in Marketing and Communications, Graphic Arts and Visual Arts. To each of these people — too many to name here — we offer our profound thanks.

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

Be assured of our prayers for renewal as we journey toward Easter together.

Crista Mahoney '02
Return To Me Editor

Rev. Timothy W. O'Brien, S.J. '06
Director of Mission Initiatives





MARCH 2 | ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:12-18; Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17; 2 Cor 5:20—6:2; Matt 6:1-6, 16-18

My son, Christian, is a professional musician. Over a recent dinner, he shared his struggles with managing Instagram in his effort to bring some order to his personal and professional lives. Many of his contemporaries might ask, “If it’s not on Instagram, did it really happen?” But he often finds not being on Instagram a way to bring peace and positivity to his life.

Today’s gospel offers support to Christian’s observation in its celebration of the understated who quietly pursue God’s path. It’s a message we all should heed, but as a father, it’s wisdom I seek to impart to Christian, my two other young adult sons, and the Holy Cross students I work to serve. Jesus said: “*Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them.*” But these words can be contradictory. College is a time of extraordinary growth as students prepare for meaningful lives after graduation. Some professions, like music, require self-promotion if one is to be successful. How do we juggle the need to stand out with Jesus’s admonition for restraint?

The answer is faith. Through Jesus, we trust that our good deeds will be recognized. In modern parlance, he encourages us to let natural light shine on our everyday experiences. Life is not a series of carefully curated public triumphs, but a glorious mélange of fasts and feasts that often unfold in the “*inner rooms*” of our lives. God will follow us there and we will be rewarded for our faithfulness.

Vincent D. Rougeau

President

MARCH 3 | THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Dt 30:15-20; Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6; Luke 9:22-25

Take up your cross. Every person experiences waves of joy and pain, hope and fear, faith and doubt; because of the human condition, we all have crosses to bear. In life's journey, this human experience makes believing in God important and impactful. Our crosses offer us opportunities to trust God, follow God and become closer to God. I had this realization when participating in the Holy Cross Spring Break Immersion Program. My group met with the Chicago-based organization Working Family Solidarity, which advocates for labor rights and intersectionality. The founder of this union discussed the injustices we face in our world, the need to fight against the forces that divide us and fight for the ties that bring us together. He said that is why we call life 'the struggle.' Life is not always easy, but it is possible for all of us to unite in this mutual experience and come together to help all people.

God walks with us on those paths that can challenge and reward us. What seems impossible can actually bring us peace in the end, such as making a difficult but necessary decision, recovering from a setback, or continuing despite obstacles. By persisting and persevering, we witness not only our own strength but also the strength of God. Believing in God allows us to keep, spread, and live the faith. Choosing to believe, carry hope, and maintain faith makes 'the struggle' worth it.

Maggie Hannick '23





MARCH 4 | FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Is 58:1-9a; Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19; Matt 9:14-15

“*Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke...*” Today’s first reading speaks directly to an issue that I am very passionate about: social justice. Three years ago, I taught a Montserrat seminar that examined racial, gender and economic injustices around the world. One day after class, a student asked me why I cared so much about these issues. The world was firmly set in its ways. Why bother? A decade earlier, I had been asked a similar question by young women on a college campus in Zimbabwe where I led a gender equality and HIV prevention program. Why bother? The world was set in its ways and the oppression of women would never end.

Today’s reading is both a reminder of the brokenness of our human societies and an urgent call to action. Racism and sexism remain rampant in our communities. Extreme poverty, political violence and corruption displace millions every year leaving them homeless and stateless in foreign lands where they are often not wanted. Africa has received only 5% of the global COVID vaccine supply even as COVID sickens and kills millions globally. The richest ten Americans increased their personal wealth by billions during the pandemic while twenty million Americans lost their jobs. I could go on.

Today’s reading enjoins us to strive for a world where such injustices and inequalities are the exception rather than the norm. We must be bothered by all forms of injustice. We must fight injustice everywhere. Indifference costs lives. This is why I bother.

Tsitsi B. Masvawure

*Professor of Practice & Health Studies Coordinator and Advisor, Health Studies,
Center for Interdisciplinary Studies*

MARCH 5 | SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

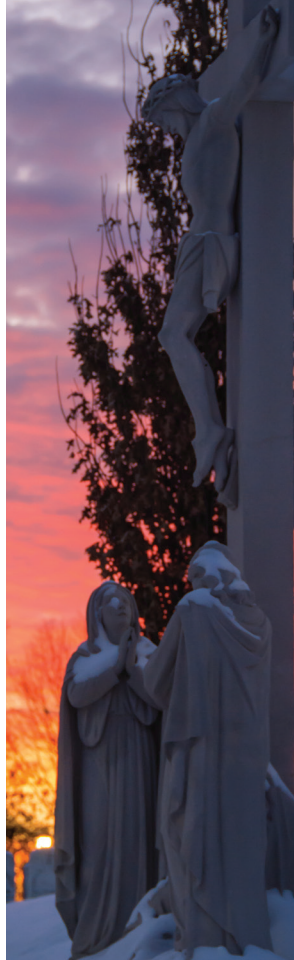
Is 58:9b-14; Ps 86:1-6; Luke 5:27-32

In today's gospel, we are reminded of what the Lord requires of us: To leave everything behind and follow Christ. But what does that look like? It may look different for everyone, but one practice that helps me do this in my everyday life is to say little prayers that offer up whatever is on my heart and on my mind to Christ: my worries, my hopes, my sorrows, my joys, and most importantly my gratitude. This simple practice helps me reflect, recenter and rejoice in my relationship with God.

There are times when this is easy and I feel very close to God, but there are also days, weeks, months when I feel that my relationship with the Lord has grown distant. This is often caused by the overwhelming hustle and bustle of campus life at Holy Cross. It is during these busy and stressful times that I need to recenter the most, and the practice of naming whatever is on my heart and on my mind and lifting it up to the Lord has helped me to do so.

The good news is that Jesus has always and will always want us to follow Him. Luke reminds us that Christ has come to call all people to follow Him, no matter where we each are on our faith journey. As we reflect during this Lent, what little practices will us bring us closer to a loving God whose only wish is for us to follow Him?

Levi Cass '24









MARCH 6 | FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Dt 26:4-10; Ps 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15; Rom 10:8-13; Lk 4:1-13

In this time of great challenge, both locally and globally, today's readings provide a much needed reminder: None of us has to get through this alone. We may be strong and resilient but we are not immune from suffering. And that is okay. God sees us. God hears us. In times of trouble, let God be our refuge and strength. Ask him for help.

We can also honor God by helping others who may be suffering. God's compassion for the oppressed, for the marginalized, is without limits. *"No one who believes in him will be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* This Lent, how can we honor God by offering what we have to those in need, knowing that salvation is by his Grace rather than by our efforts?

Heather Hayes

Vice President and Chief of Staff

MARCH 7 | MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mt 25:31-46

Today's readings remind me of the Ignatian emphasis on finding God in all things. In the gospel reading, Jesus praises those who fed, clothed and cared for the least among us because, in doing so, they fed, clothed and cared for him. Conversely, he reprimands those who did not help the hungry, the sick, or the imprisoned for, in ignoring those in their time of need, they were ignoring him. Reflecting on this reading makes me think of people who do good things not because they are looking for glory or attention but because it is the right thing to do. Their actions are based on a genuine desire to help others without concern for being recognized or rewarded.

I live next to a lake which is considered the jewel of our town. I love starting my days by walking around the lake, being in nature, and seeing familiar faces. One of those faces is a gentleman who walks around the area to gather and dispose of debris. Since the lake is a popular spot for visitors, it can get messy with litter. This early morning walker is not a town employee or park ranger, but rather someone who cares deeply about sustaining the beauty and safety of this public space. In doing so, he not only creates a safer environment for the area birds, ducks and swans but also ensures a more pleasant experience for the countless strangers who enjoy the lake. And he inspires those around him.

Laura Cutone Godwin '96

President, Holy Cross Alumni Association





MARCH 8 | TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Is 55:10-11; Ps 34:4-7, 16-19; Matt 6:7-15

Deliver Us, 2021

Coffee on cold pressed paper

5 x 7 inches

“Deliver us!” we cry.

I painted this piece with instant espresso from my kitchen, as part of a daily meditative series similar to this Lenten reflection. Each day, I would sit with the news working through my own grief and paint what came to mind. I chose coffee for its soothing aroma, but also because of its associations with transcontinental trade and power. I worked small-scale like a page from a journal entry to mark the time passing.

For this piece on August 16, 2021, I reflected on a photo by Haroon Sabawoon as it was published in *The Guardian*. The corresponding report read:

“This image could become one of the defining symbols of the west’s failure in Afghanistan.

Men, women, and children pictured climbing a wall desperately trying to enter Kabul international airport in an attempt to flee the country after the capital fell to the Taliban.”

I could not help but hear the cry “deliver us” from today’s Gospel, echo in the voices of those who tried to escape Kabul. I thought of how so many of us have prayed secret cries of deliverance through the months, now years, of this global pandemic.

In walking through our own journeys, no matter where we come from, I hope this can be a small portal for you to reflect on the grace of people who carry us through.

Lorena Sferlazza '15

See more about this artist and the artwork at holycross.edu/returntome





MARCH 9 | WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Jon 3:1-10; Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Luke 11:29-32

Amid all the recent campus construction in this Ignatian year, a new sign “COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS,” stands at its center, beckoning all brightly each night. Fifty-four years ago, no such signs welcomed my classmates and I when we arrived, but we were looking for signs of hope that might transform our lives, and even help direct us as we commenced life beyond Mount St. James, in those turbulent times of assassinations, war and protests.

Similar signs of hope shine forth in today’s readings for a world also riddled with sin and suffering. Jonah emerging from the whale’s belly to proclaim God’s threatened destruction of Nineveh prompted a quick and thorough conversion. It invites us to reflect on the signs of hope we all need for an equally thorough conversion of mind and heart in our world, one transformed by the pandemic and climate crisis. In today’s gospel, Jesus reminds us that his passion, death and resurrection is the primary transformational sign of hope we need to keep alert for as we enter more deeply into this Lenten season.

How do we remain alert in our daily lives? Responding to the gospel acclamation’s invitation “*return to me,*” we can keep Christ at the center of our lives and allow the light of God’s love for each of us to burn brighter than that new campus sign of welcome. Let’s resolve this Lent to let that hopeful sign of Christ’s sacrificial love shine out through us to guide others home, so they too can experience God’s transformative love, mercy and grace.

Rev. Edward J. Vodoklys, S.J. '72

Senior Lecturer in Classics

MARCH 10 | THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Est 4: 12, 14-16, 23-25; Ps 138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8; Matt 7:7-12

When I was younger, the verse “*Ask and it will be given to you*” was my favorite one in the entire Bible. From the new *Cheetah Girls* movie to a new leotard for gymnastics, I used to sit on my bed with a furrowed brow, reminding God of the things that I had asked Him for but had yet to receive. As I got older and my knowledge of God and His gifts became more refined, I realized that in this verse Jesus is saying that God wishes to meet us where we are, in our wants and needs, and give us what we truly need.

In today’s reading, Esther is begging God to grant her favor and protection as she goes before the king without an invitation, something forbidden and punishable by death. While I am normally wary of giving spoilers, I believe that it is important to reveal that God hears Esther and protects her when she approaches the king. When we call upon God for help, He hears the desire of our hearts.

This Lent, let us remember that we have a God who loves us and always hears our prayers. Whether we receive a “yes,” “no,” or “not yet” from Him, may we trust in God’s grace in our lives and know that He has and always will have our best interest in mind.

Christine Dapaah-Afriyie '22





MARCH 11 | FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Ez 18:21-28; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8; Matt 5:20-26

“*Hear, O Israel...*” These words begin the most important prayer in Judaism, Shema Yisrael. And the words that follow are what Jesus would then cite as the greatest commandment: “YHWH is our God, YHWH alone. Love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” Any Jewish listener of the prophet Ezekiel would have recognized those words “*Hear now, house of Israel,*” and would have immediately thought of that prayer. But instead, Ezekiel surprises his listener.

Speaking to a complaining people, Ezekiel uses Shema Yisrael to put the people in their place. He reminds them who they are in relation to God. YHWH is the God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt and made an everlasting covenant of steadfast love. And yet the people have forgotten God’s ways, saying, “*YHWH’s way is not fair.*” In reply, God reminds them: “*Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair?*” In this passage, it is important to realize that God is addressing all of Israel. This means that God is denouncing social sin — the sins of the community. For us today, social sins like racism and economic inequality are perhaps the most sinister because they are so ingrained in our culture.

Complicity in social sin is widespread and evasive. Today’s reading from Ezekiel invites us to examine more closely how we are complicit in social sin. This Lent, let us ask ourselves: What works of justice can I do to reverse social sins like racism and economic inequality?

Mr. James Antonio, S.J. '09

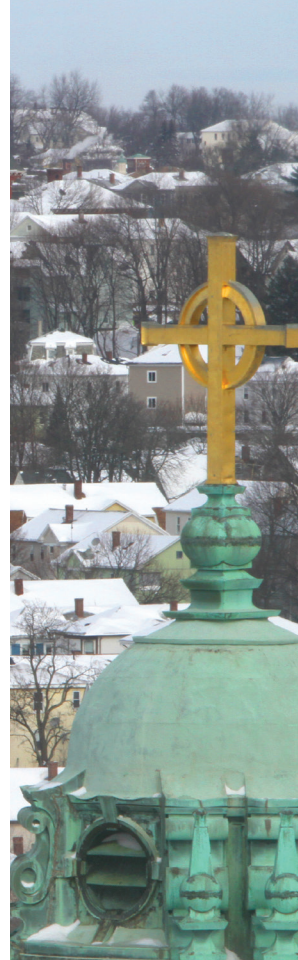
MARCH 12 | SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Dt 26:16-19; Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Matt 5:43-48

During last semester's fall break, I finally became aware of God's unconditional love. While I was on the Spiritual Exercises, the unsettling yet reassuring message of Archbishop Desmond Tutu clued me in to what I had been missing: You can't do anything to make God love you any more or any less. I was absolutely struck. Now, I've been a fairly active Catholic my whole life, and it is slightly embarrassing to admit to my tardy realization of something that most Christians learn about at a young age—that God loves them. As a human, I can't quite fully grasp all that comes with unconditional love; for now, I'll just bask in it. The message of today's gospel, though, teaches us a bit more about this love and, perhaps more importantly, how we can share it to those around us.

Jesus' foremost message today is his radical call to "love your enemies!" While it's a difficult call to ignore, it may be more difficult to understand, especially coming from the One who loves freely and unconditionally. This initial instruction, though, may overshadow some key directions Jesus poses later in the passage. He asks his disciples what is unusual about a love that is reserved only for friends? The Greek word for 'unusual' is *περισσόζς*. A more literal translation would be 'beyond the regular size or number.' With this in mind, we find that Jesus indeed calls us to love those most difficult to love, but in a way that is beyond the regular (or comfortable, perhaps?) size. I don't promise that this different translation makes Jesus' call any easier to regard. For me, however, it sheds a bit of light on what it means to be loved unconditionally.

Stephen Dierkes '22





MARCH 13 | SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gn 15:5-12, 17-18; Ps 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14; Phil 3:17—4:1; Lk 9:28b-36

The passage from Luke begins with Jesus and His disciples going up to the mountain to pray. As He prays, Jesus is transfigured. The disciples too are transformed by this moment. They had fallen asleep and then became “*fully awake*.” They see Christ in His full glory and hear the voice of God proclaim, “*This is my chosen son; listen to him*.” The disciples understandably want to stay in this moment of grace, putting up tents and settling in. But they are called to go back down the mountain and continue their ministry

In our very busy and stress-filled world, it can be difficult to set aside the time to go up to the mountain to pray and we can easily become frightened by some of the clouds that might surround us. As we move through this Lenten season, I pray that we all might draw strength from the moments of grace we have experienced; that we might seek moments of silence, free from the distractions of the world, where we might hear the voice of God in our lives; and that we can return to the work we are called to do with courage and hope in the Lord who is our light and our salvation.

Margaret N. Freije P19, 13

Provost and Dean of the College

MARCH 14 | MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Dan 9:4B-10; Ps 79:8, 9, 11 and 13; Luke 6:36-38

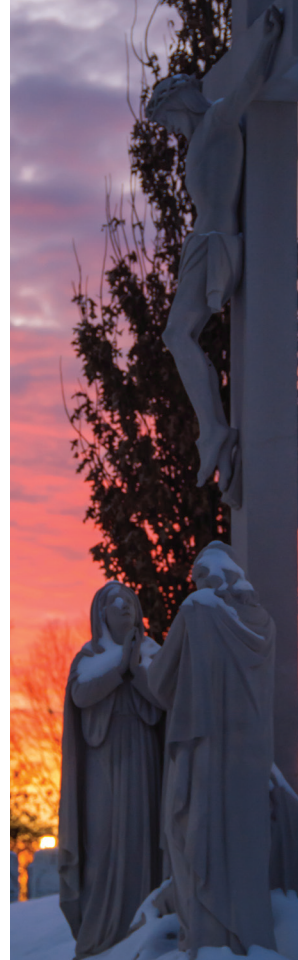
Very early in my career, I held myself to unrealistically high standards that were near impossible to meet. And I was hard on myself when I failed. Every mistake I made became part of the ever-growing burden of imperfection I was carrying. How, I thought, would I ever be worthy when I couldn't get everything exactly right?

When I first became an administrator, I worked very closely with students whose own work wasn't perfect and whose mistakes seemed career-ending. "*We have rebelled and departed from your commandments and your laws.*" Except I soon discovered that these mistakes weren't career-ending. Instead, I watched as colleagues worked with them to find a way forward. I watched as anxious parents sat next to them, worried about what was next. "*Lord, do not deal with us according to our sins.*" And I watched as emails from faculty conveyed a willingness to help. In the end, these students weren't defined by their mistakes. "*But yours, O Lord, Our God, are compassion and forgiveness!*" Rather, they were treated as people who were loved and deserved a second chance. It was then I realized I could let go of the burden I was carrying because I, too, was worthy and loved.

In the readings for today we are reminded that, despite our sins, we are still worthy of compassion and forgiveness, and we are called to treat others with the same, regardless of their past actions. This Lenten season, may we all be reminded of our worthiness.

Michelle Bata

Associate Dean for Student Engagement





MARCH 15 | TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Is 1:10, 16-20; 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21 and 23; Matt 23:1-12

In today's gospel, Jesus invites us not to love for the sake of glory and honor but to love humbly. Showing love in little ways is a practice that my five roommates and I implement as we navigate our senior year on the Hill together. We are there for each other when one of us inevitably burns her grilled cheese and sets off the fire alarm in our off-campus triple decker, built in 1890. We are there to celebrate when one gets her first job offer, despite the impending fear that our comfortable community on the Hill will change next year.

One practice of support we have implemented is the "self-care Gatorade." When one of us is overwhelmed, gets a bad exam grade, or is just having a bad day, another will go over to Hogan to buy a "self-care Gatorade." Maybe it's the electrolytes and sugar that helps dull the day's qualms, but I believe it's the recognition that someone is there for you, thinking about you when you need it most. These little acts are not contingent on a lengthy "thank you" text or a reciprocal gift, they are out of love and care for one another. This Lent, how can we love others in little ways, not for the sake of glory and honor, but to love humbly like our God?

Alexa Michon '22

MARCH 16 | WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Jer 18:18-20; Ps 31:5-6, 14, 15-16; Matt 20:17-28

Ambition is a powerful desire that can truly shape our course in life and impact our decisions. I have often been told that I am an ambitious person. I strive for greatness in all that I do. As a Holy Cross student, I was driven to succeed academically, socially and spiritually. As a young professional, striving for greatness resulted in upward career mobility. Throughout my life, I've wrestled with questions that stem from my ambition. How can I be the best daughter, wife, mother, friend, colleague?

As I have gotten older (and perhaps wiser), I have realized that greatness can take on many forms. It doesn't mean you have to rise to the top of the corporate ladder or to the top of your class. For me, striving for greatness means that I am fulfilled in whatever I do – in my career and personal life. That change in perspective has been freeing and allowed me to leverage my ambition in a positive way.

In today's gospel, Jesus says, *"whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant... the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve."* He reminds us that greatness lies within us all. How can we use our ambition to find that greatness, put it to good use for others and let it shine?

Julie Mure (Draczynski) '99

Director, Employer Engagement, Center for Career Development





MARCH 17 | THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Jer 17:5-10; Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 16:19-31

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream,”

As the past years have shown us, the only constant in this world is truly God. I often reflect upon God’s presence in my daily life and consider if I connect deeply enough with Him. Do I check in often or just in times of duress? Am I tapping into this source of abundant love? Today’s scripture reminds us to place all trust, hope and wanting in Him. The analogy of a tree beautifully illustrates how we can soak up His love, protection and guidance. Rooting ourselves in our faith allows us the richest opportunity for a fruitful life.

This sentiment is easier said than practiced. It is worthwhile to note that tree roots are naturally imperfect. Knots, cracks and crossovers lace the surface. Perfectly imperfect, we are created to come as we are with our cracks. As children of God, what if we use this Lenten season to deepen and re-root ourselves in our faith? Deepening our roots creates an unshakable bond with our Creator that is unmoving. We grow and transform daily, constantly evolving into who we are meant to be. As we grow, how can we remember that we owe our transformation thus far to God? Moving forward, how can we seek transformation in hope and trust from that source of life as we develop our spirits?

Margaret Mary Telling '22

MARCH 18 | FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; Ps 105:16-17, 18-19, 20-21; Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

When I was 16 years old, I visited St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. I remember being mesmerized by Michelangelo's sculpture *Pieta*—the carving depicting Mary holding Jesus after He was taken down from the cross. Early in Michelangelo's career, the legend is that he was too poor to buy the marble he needed for his sculpting. Michelangelo picked his way through the marble that was rejected, ruined, or discarded by sculptors. He would drag home all the pieces to make something beautiful.

In today's readings, we see Joseph hated, rejected and sold as a slave by his brothers, even though Joseph did nothing to deserve this treatment except be a servant of the Lord. However, even throughout this trial, Joseph was not alone, and neither are we. From Moses through David, all the prophets God sent to lead Israel experienced rejection. Jesus said, "*the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord, has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?*" The good news is that although some rejected Jesus' message and invitation, he will become the cornerstone of our life for those who accept Him as their Lord and Savior. Be encouraged during this Lenten season if you are going through a rough time, feeling alone or rejected. Let your heart reflect on the marvelous things God has done and continue to do through you. And remember with hope that, like Michelangelo, Christ uses the broken, ruined pieces of our lives and makes beautiful things.

Rev. Marcus Hill

*Assistant Chaplain of Protestant Students and BIPOC Ministry,
Office of the College Chaplains*





MARCH 19 | SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 and 29; Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22; Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a

Today's readings include frequent references to faith as both trust in God and a firm belief in something for which there is no proof. One of them, in particular, tells the story of how Saint Joseph, after discovering that Mary was pregnant without having consummated their marriage, "*decided to divorce her quietly.*" He changed his mind when an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that Jesus had been conceived through the Holy Spirit. Why did Saint Joseph conclude that this was a 'true' message from God, rather than just another dream? And how do we know when we are hearing our Higher Power, and not one of the many stories we tell ourselves to rationalize things away, whether in our sleep or while we are awake?

I am still learning the answer. Counting breaths on my meditation cushion provides some valuable clues. It starts with the humbling realization that my mind is constantly bombarded by thoughts, some of them wise and inspiring, but others quite petty, irrational and unkind. Then comes a more hopeful insight: when I pay mindful attention to that torrent of thoughts and just let them come and go, I can rest in a quiet space in which—even for the briefest of moments—I feel more connected to myself and others, and I am able to discern which thoughts are actually worth believing. To me, that space of inner peace, intuitive clarity, and loving connection is where faith resides.

Josep Alba-Salas

Professor and Chair, Spanish Department



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MARCH 20 | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15; Ps 103: 1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8, 11; 1 Cor 10:1-6, 10-12; Lk 13:1-9

◀ *Untitled, 2021*

Oil on Canvas
50 x 50in.

This piece served as a reminder to pour love into my daily life. *“I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future.”* (Lk 13:1-9). As a senior I find myself moving towards more intentional daily interactions. I am reminded of the daily dedication and even small intentional efforts towards reflection, improvement and love through Jesus.

Julia Covelle '22

See more about this artist and the artwork at holycross.edu/returntome





MARCH 21 | MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

2 Kgs 5:1-15AB; Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Luke 4:24-30

Obedience to God begins with humility. We must believe that God's way is better than our own way. We may not always understand but by humbly obeying, we open ourselves to receive God's blessings. To be forgiven, all we need to do is humbly receive God's mercy, a mercy that has been manifested in our Lord Jesus whom God sent to take away the sins of the world. Jesus reminds us in today's gospel that God's mercy knows no limits, no bounds. His love and grace extend to all of humanity. God does not take sides.

We can therefore take comfort in the fact that God's truth provides the path for all of us to follow. God's light provides us vision to follow that path. Once we are on that path, God will use us through His blessings, for His good purpose, until the day we meet him face to face. In other words, God will never be done with us. May our humility, therefore, be joined with compassion, kindness, love for one another and forgiveness of others as God has forgiven us. Are you ready to respond to His light and follow His path today?

Bob Yienger '80 P18

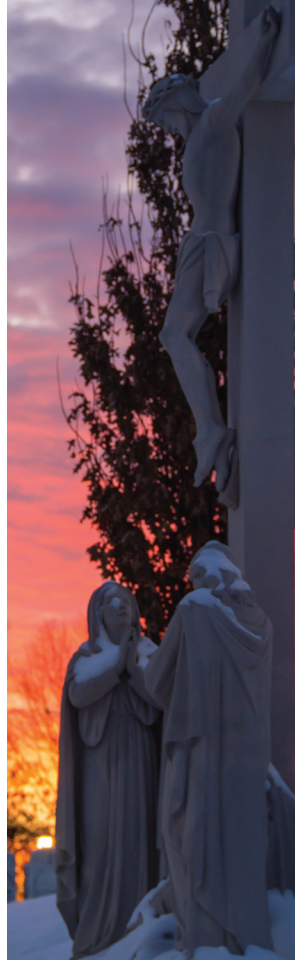
MARCH 22 | TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Dan 3:25, 34-43, Ps 25:4-5AB, 6 and 7BC, 8-9, Matt 18:21-35

There are times when I have felt I did not need to forgive others for their transgressions against me, no matter how small. When I was wronged, I would choose to divert my attention away from whatever hurt me, and move on. However, forgetting is not the same as forgiving. When I held on to my grievances, I only hurt myself more. Like most people, my life has been marked by moments where forgiveness was due, but not given, and the hardest person to forgive has always been myself. I can shrug off small matters that bother me, like hurtful comments or others doubting my intentions or morals. But when I have wronged myself or others due to sin, I carry that weight with me. Only by opening my heart to God and others can I clear the clouds in my life and see clearly.

Forgiveness is integral to the Christian experience. If we cling to the past without resolution, we cannot effectively prepare the way of the Lord. Remembering our mortality and acknowledging that everyone's struggles are steps towards harmony with self and God. We all feel moments of shame, thinking God will not accept us as we are. This is not so! Made in the image of God, we are called to love and forgive as Christ did. In this time of Lent, how can we be open to giving ourselves and others another chance? God never stops forgiving or loving us. Why should we?

Aidan J. Scamby '22





MARCH 23 | WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Dt 4:1, 5-9; Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20; Matt 5:17-19

In June of 2020, I lost my dad very suddenly. It was completely unexpected, and I continue to struggle with grief even as I write these words. To say this experience has caused a transformation in my life is an understatement.

Since my dad's passing, I have gone through a lot of changes in my own life. One area that has changed significantly is my relationship with my kids. My dad and I were incredibly close (he was also the best grandfather to my kids) and he has had such a profound impact on the way in which I live my life. I miss him terribly... *and...* I am seeing and experiencing so much of the wisdom he has passed on to me that I, in turn, am passing on to my own children. Whenever I think of my dad, I am reminded "*not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen...but teach them to your children and to your children's children.*" His example of living was so inspiring.

As I reflect on today's passages, especially as they relate to the last year and a half, I am reminded to try and live the best life I can each and every day, to live along spiritual lines, and to pass along bits of wisdom to those who come after me.

Ian Kaloyanides

Digital Media Services Coordinator, Information Technology Services

MARCH 24 | THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Jer 7:23-28; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Luke 11:14-23

Sometimes it feels hard to know how to live our faith or even where God fits into today's society. We are all so busy. There are so many temptations and distractions. I often feel that it is outside of the norm for someone to keep religion as a priority in today's world. It is easy to blame the demands of modern society for this but the first reading today reminds us that following the path of God is hard and has been since the beginning of time. It also reminds us that even though it is difficult to follow, God wants us to try.

The readings today serve as a reminder of human imperfection but the Responsorial Psalm is my favorite because it tells us what to do about it: *"If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts."* In many areas of my life I am constantly reminding myself and others to control the controllable. That today is the only day we have complete control over. We have all strayed in the past and we will all stray in the future but the psalm reminds us to be open to receiving God in our hearts today. How can we commit today, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of life, to being open to and aware of the ways God is showing us he is present in our lives so that we can serve as this reminder, in some small way, for at least one other person?

Kathleen Colpoys '12

Head Women's Volleyball Coach





MARCH 25 | SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Is 7:10-14; 8:10; Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

Three Lents ago, in 2019, on Ash Wednesday, I distributed ashes at the high school where I teach. This is usually one of my favorite liturgical rites, one ripe with gravitas. I have vivid memories of several Ash Wednesdays: one in Rome with a classmate from Holy Cross where we received ashes at the Church of Saint Ignatius, and one in East Harlem when I gave ashes to the pizza delivery man who could not make it to services.

And yet, that year, during this communal meditation on mortality, I had to suffer through it. I was aware of the new life growing within me: the nausea and fatigue of the first trimester, the physical pains of my uterus expanding, and the fear of the unknown for the next eight months after a previous miscarriage. I needed no additional penances that Lent: no fasting on Fridays as during my days on Mount St. James, no abstaining from desserts, and certainly no hair shirt. Forty days of Lent feel like nothing when compared to nine months of pregnancy. My body—like Mary’s, my own mother’s, and those who birth the world over—would be broken but then transformed to make room for Love.

On this Solemnity of the Annunciation, I hold in prayer and compassion those who endure more than 40 days in the desert, those who say, “*Here I am*” and “*Nothing is impossible with God*” every day—those who do the invisible work to make Love visible.

Katie Seltzer '06

MARCH 26 | SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Hos 6:1-6; Ps 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21AB; Luke 18:9-14

“He just loves you.” This is something that I was taught about God when I was a little girl. It seemed so easy to be loved by God back then. However, as I have gotten older and experienced more, undergone transformations and become more acquainted with what is on my heart, I have come to feel a deeper responsibility for my faith. This struggle for perfection, which I know so many of my friends at Holy Cross also struggle with, has at times prevented me from allowing myself to experience God’s love and grace.

A few months ago, I found that I was stopping myself from praying. I almost felt like I didn’t deserve it. I had this thought that if I had to ask God for something, I wasn’t appreciating the blessings in my life he had already given me. One night, I was overcome with frustration and shared my situation with Father Stormes. He told me, “I think it’s wonderful you want to ask God for things.” With these words, I remembered who God is.

Today’s reading reminds me of that conversation. “*It is love that I desire, not sacrifice.*” The simple message of God’s love and essentiality in our lives can become clouded by our perfectionism. During this season of Lent, as we strive to be better, I hope we all remember the very heart of why we do what we do. He just loves you.

Isabella Sampino '23





MARCH 27 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Jos 5:9a, 10-12; Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

IT'S A RIVER—NOT A PIE.

My Brother has come back and they killed the fatted calf?

Your dad is overjoyed.

But my brother's scum.

Your dad loves him.

A party? What has Dad ever done for me?

I know how the older brother feels. Have you ever had the experience of getting angry because someone who's screwed up has just been forgiven? Have you ever wondered, 'Why am I busting my rear-end?' when there are others who seem to coast along on other people's graciousness? How is this fair?

Two thoughts. The first: It's not fair. Yet, we do well to get on our knees and say, "Thank you Jesus." It's not fair, and that's okay because we are incapable of *always* being the big brother. I may identify with him, but that's only because it's easier for me to feel righteous than to remember all the times that I have been in desperate need of completely unwarranted forgiveness. It's not fair. And that's good news.

My second thought: IT'S A RIVER—NOT A PIE! God's love for us is not a 9-inch, deep-dish strawberry pie. God's love for us is a roaring, rainforest-fed, class five river of grace. It's an ever-flowing stream of abundant love. God's love for us isn't limited. God's love is not finite. It's not a pie that's whacked up and given out parsimoniously to the deserving. God's love, God's grace, is distributed recklessly, washing over all in its path. God's love is a river—not a pie. That was good news for the prodigal son. And it's even better news for us.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry '84

Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

MARCH 28 | MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Is 65:17-21; Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12A and 13B; John 4:43-54

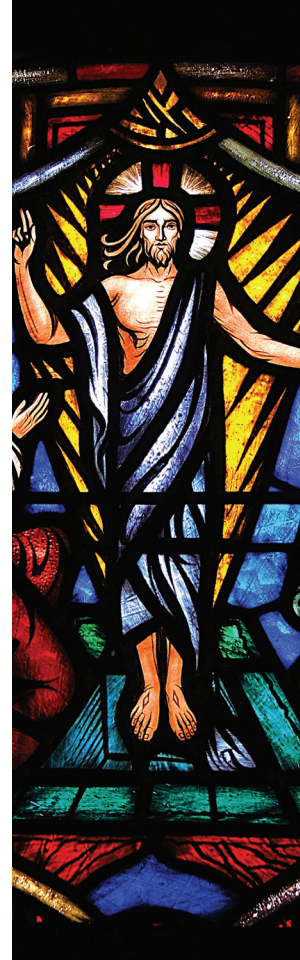
In light of everything we have been through in the past two years (a global pandemic, increased awareness of racial, economic and social injustice, unprecedented climate disasters across the globe, and the anxiety and uncertainty that accompanies the loss and struggle many of us have experienced) this reading speaks of hope. That God cares for us and provides for us and will “*create new heavens and a new earth.*”

This means it is important to examine where we have been. Taken literally “*the past shall not be remembered*” leads me to think that the past and all that was problematic is behind us. Although God may forgive our past transgressions, it feels important that we do not forget. The past is what helps define us, what we have lived through, survived and even triumphed over. So as we embrace our future it is important that we reflect on our past hurts and foibles, so as not to repeat them. Hope lies in our awareness and intentions to live differently and to live better going forward.

There is a rebirth in moving forward. In reflecting during this Lenten season, we have opportunities to recognize where we may have fallen short; moments where we could have taken the perspective of our neighbor; occasions where we would have been able to show more kindness and compassion for our community members; instances when we did not exhibit compassion and care for ourselves; the times we let fear control our actions. It is in this recognition and commitment to change course that we can fulfill our purpose of living in God’s image by caring for ourselves and our community and truly embodying *cura personalis*.

Adriana DiPasquale

Associate Director, Counseling Center





MARCH 29 | TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; John 5:1-16

In today's readings, we encounter images of flowing water and its abundant presence which leads to life and renewal: "*Wherever the river flows, every sort of living creature that can multiply shall live, and there shall be abundant fish.*" After graduating from Holy Cross, I spent a year in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) in Detroit, Michigan. Before I arrived for orientation in August 2013, I had never been to Michigan and knew very little about the city of Detroit. There were so many unknowns leading up to the start of that year and I was worried about what I was leaving behind at home. Should I have taken the job opportunity with a salary I was offered back in Boston? Will I be behind my peers who are starting their careers or graduate school? What does living in community really mean?

During orientation, there was time devoted to each of the four core values of JVC: spirituality, simple living, community and social justice. On the topic of simple living, John Staudenmaier, S.J. spoke to us about entering our volunteer year with a mindset of abundance versus scarcity. Instead of focusing on the limited resources we had as volunteers, notice what new gifts present themselves when our traditional way of thinking and living is challenged. Starting with a foundation of hope and gratitude, opportunity abounds.

My year in Detroit has given me gifts that are still revealing themselves to me, over seven years later. In this Lenten season, 40 days in a spiritual desert, how can God's limitless love inspire a deep sense of possibility and gratitude each day?

Elizabeth Deliberto (Mahoney) '13

MARCH 30 | WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Is 49:8-15; Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18; John 5:17-30

In today's passage from the Gospel of John, Jesus has just healed a paralyzed man in Jerusalem, and religious leaders take issue with his willingness to perform this work on the Sabbath. Jesus responds by saying, "*My Father is working at this moment, and I am working too.*" The description of God as "*working*" – the Greek verb here, *ergazomai*, is commonly used of physical labor – is striking. It complicates any simplistic understanding of divine omnipotence and in fact wonderfully enriches it. The Jesus of John's gospel is characterizing both himself and God the Father as workers.

Reading this passage now leads me to think of the difficulty and precariousness of the lives of working people during this time of pandemic. Front-line workers supporting others' well-being (those in health care jobs, the food service industry, cleaning and maintenance, and pre-K-12 teaching, to name a few professions) have labored under extraordinary demands and unjust conditions. It is not sufficient to laud their work as admirable and sacrificial. In the case of these worker—the co-workers, we might say, of the God of John's gospel—how can we duly respect, justly value, and rightly honor their work?

Timothy Joseph '98

Professor of Classics





MARCH 31 | THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23; John 5:31-47

At times in my life it is easy to get lost in a sea of other people's voices. This is especially true as a parent of four kiddos, but also arises as I consume the news, see advertisements on TV and online and as I sort through priorities at work. Often these voices trigger in me waves of reaction, sometimes of reassurance (wow my kids are eating the dinner I prepared!) and other times shame, and wanting to be different.

Beneath all of these voices, what is real, where is truth? I am called to listen for my truth, a caring and courageous one, and I believe it is from this authentic place that Moses speaks in today's first reading, and Jesus in the gospel. Both speak a challenge informed by love and care. Moses challenges God (wow!) to remember God's covenant, and Jesus challenges the community of faith to remember God's voice, which is still and small, rather than focusing on the praise of others.

How do you notice your own truth, your own authentic voice; do you ever have the courage to share that with God? It is such an act of genuine sharing that Moses models for us. Jesus also reminds us that we are God's beloved children; in my heart this is God speaking not in 'shoulds' or in shame but in love, as well as challenge, caring about what each of us experience and have to say.

Sean Doll O'Mahoney '04

APRIL 1 | FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

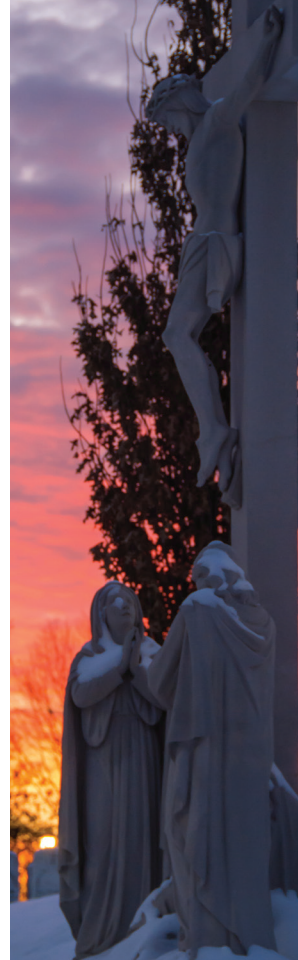
Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

What does it mean to stand in solidarity with another person? What does it mean to console? In my opinion, to stand with someone and console means to accept that although we cannot know their suffering, we support them nonetheless. Our brothers and sisters who are afflicted with pain or suffering in any way are deserving of our love.

In today's scripture, we see instances of comfort and solidarity from God. In the responsorial psalm, God is "*close to the brokenhearted.*" In the gospel, Jesus speaks out in the temple when he is challenged, claiming his connection to the God the Father: "I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." During Lent, we are reminded, from day one, that we will lose our Lord Jesus on Good Friday near the end of the season. The ash put on our foreheads is a potent reminder to remain faithful in the midst of a world filled with sin and death, because we are ultimately saved from brokenheartedness and evil.

How, then, can we learn from God's example of comfort and solidarity? I like to think that every time I have been in a dark place, God has been there with me, and he calls us all to stand with others in their dark moments. In our everyday lives, how can we move beyond our own needs, to support others as God supports us, to live our lives in a way that cares for our fellow human beings?

Davey Sullivan '22





APRIL 2 | SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7:2-3, 9BC-10, 11-12; John 7:40-53

Today's readings remind us of the obstacles we often face in standing up for our beliefs. In the first passage, we learn of a conspiracy against the prophet Jeremiah—a man in whom God finds favor. God has informed Jeremiah of his plan to punish the people of Judah for their sinfulness—namely, their worship of false gods. Incensed by Jeremiah's message that they had broken God's covenant, the people of Judah conspire to slay the prophet. Jeremiah, however, remains steadfast, trusting that God will protect him. Similarly, today's gospel passage outlines the doubt with which those who trusted in Jesus were met. The chief priests and Pharisees criticize the guards for not arresting Jesus when presented the chance; the guards, however, insist they had never heard a man speak in such a way before.

Like Jeremiah, many of us have had the experience of feeling like our values and deeply held beliefs are out of step with those around us. This can even be true of those closest to us, including those with whom we live and work. We might feel that, somewhat like the prophets, we risk being marginalized if we remain true to the person we are called to be. We sometimes face incomprehension and misunderstanding. I recently found myself in a situation like this in my work as an advocate for mental health on campus. Jeremiah's example is not an easy one to follow, but it reminds of the importance of discerning God's call—and, once discerned, remaining true to it knowing we have the Lord's support.

Aidan Ruppert '22

APRIL 3 | FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Is 43:16-21; Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Phil 3:8-14; Jn 8:1-11

Having recently found their way out of slavery, the Lord calls on the Israelites to “Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers.” Where might the heartache of the past prevent us from embracing the awesome newness and potential joy of the present moment? It’s a call that deeply resonates with me.

Surely, there are grudges to be softened and harms to be released, each of which could create space for more hope. On many days, it would definitely serve me to do as *Frozen*’s Elsa advises, and just “let it go.” Of course, what it means to “let it go” is often quite complicated.

Assuming, like the Israelites, we have found ways to extract ourselves from relationships and contexts that are abusive or disrespectful, the past is an important teacher that should be embraced and integrated, not ignored. Careful processing of painful experiences is a foundational practice for those who seek to thrive in the face of trauma. Talking about past injuries with those who have caused harm can also be a step towards collective healing. Unfortunately, all too often abusers and wrong-doers are unable or unwilling to name these harms, apologize, and take accountability for their actions. In those moments, self-healing offers a path forward.

Hope is, indeed, ahead for those who hold onto their truths—as messy and complicated as those might be—and who remember, as the ancient Sufi poet Rumi observes, “The wound is the place where the light enters you.”

Stephenie Chaudoir

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology





APRIL 4 | MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Ps 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6; Jn 8:12-20

What does it mean to live as people of faith when we walk through the trials or “*dark valleys*” of our lives?

The scriptures offer powerful witnesses. In the first reading, Susanna “*trusted in the Lord wholeheartedly*” while facing entrapment and the unjust accusation of adultery and condemnation of death. Rooted in her faith and integrity, she did not succumb to the false attacks upon her character. Instead, she turned to God, crying out for help and making her plight known. Despite the desperation she must have felt, she trusted that God would stand with her. And in so doing, God inspired Daniel to speak out and vindicate her name.

Jesus, too, faced attack when the Pharisees challenged his testimony as the “*light of the world*” and the Son of God. Yet, Jesus knew where “*he came from*” and where “*he [was] going.*” Grounded in God’s love and his identity, Jesus found strength to carry on his mission.

As we face our own small and large trials this Lent, let us remember who we are: God’s beloved ones, called to receive and share God’s light and love. May we, like Susanna, trust God wholeheartedly and communicate our fears, worries and suffering to our loving God who compassionately stands by our side. Empowered by our faith and identity, may we also have the courage to stand with others in our own families and communities who need our vocal support and advocacy because of pernicious judgments, discrimination and injustice.

Anne Theriault '00

APRIL 5 | TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Nm 21:4-9; Ps 102:2-3, 16-18, 19-21; John 8:21-30

In today's gospel, Jesus reassures his followers that he is the Son of God after they begin to doubt him. Jesus reminds them that he does not belong in this world, but his Father sent him. God is always with him, and his intercession brings the disciples closer to God's love. Jesus's words reassure his disciples, and they begin to believe in him once again. Trust is restored because his followers realize they are in God's presence.

As one of the Co-Presidents of the Student Government Association, I frequently have to make difficult and important decisions that impact the campus community. I often doubt myself and question whether the choices I make or the paths I follow are the correct ones. During this transition back to in-person events, work and school, I believe that many of us find ourselves looking for reassurance. We look towards those we love to see if we are doing the right thing or making the right choices. This gospel reminds us that we never walk alone; God is always with us. His love is always there to guide us, even in times of doubt.

Margaret Ober '22





APRIL 6 | WEDNESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Dan 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31-42

I used to think that moments of conversion would result in a permanent transformation, like unlocking a new ability in a video game. I, too, would one day have the confidence and clarity of purpose of a Shadrach, Meshach or Abednego. Bring on the proverbial white hot furnaces!

The reality is far more muddled. I am quick to lose sight of the truth of the gospels in the chaos of the mundane. Often I find myself feeling far less certainty while facing far less than a Babylonian king's anger. Like most people, the furnace intermittently runs hot and cold on an average day. My emotions often run higher than they should as my wife and I try to keep up with our young sons and the ups and downs of any given stretch. It is easy to feel like we are always moving but often in circles.

In my own experience, the truth of the gospels is not a state, but rather a landmark. It is something that when we find once, we can hopefully find again in those moments when we need to recenter and reorient ourselves.

So let us take this time to stop, to look around, to re-familiarize ourselves with the truths of a God who loves us in all our brokenness and beauty and calls us to do the same for one another. In a modern world that is easy to get lost in, it is helpful to remember what guides us and what we are pointed towards to help us navigate through it all.

Chris Staysniak

Lecturer, Montserrat

APRIL 7 | THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Gn 17:3-9; Ps 105:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Jn 8:51-59

The power of the idea of covenant jumps out from today's readings.

For almost two decades, at First Year Convocation, the formal ceremony of matriculation into Holy Cross, we've framed the event as the beginning of a covenant. We start by learning about who the students are already—people with gifts, talents and hopes. Then we shift attention to help them think about who they will become. Students are told that a covenant is something different. They pledge “to be learners to the fullest extent possible... to strive to grow spiritually... to commit ourselves to shape a community of respect at Holy Cross.” Their Class Dean responds by affirming the faculty and staff's commitment to upholding their part of the covenant.

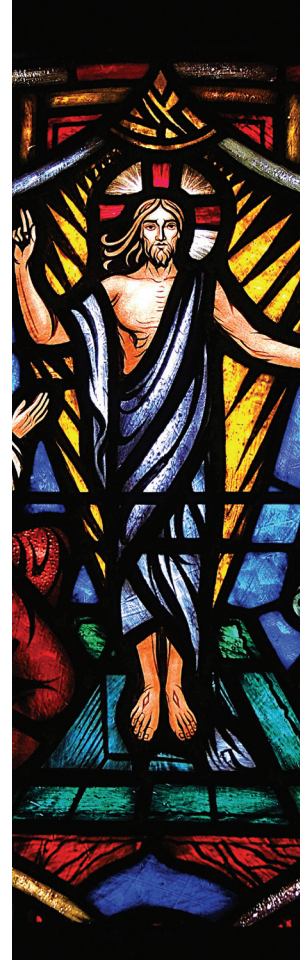
Rabbi Abraham Skorka, Pope Francis' friend and dialogue partner who will speak at Holy Cross in just a few days, tells me that this covenant story is understood in the Torah as a sign of God's “willingness and wish” to have a special relationship with us.

Explicit as God's promise was, could Abraham have imagined how it would unfold? I often wonder what students make of covenant language. We make commitments when we don't know how they will unfold—how they will be hard, or fulfilling beyond imagination.

In a world where most relationships are commodified and transactional, too few human relationships are conceived as covenantal. Though only a shadow of the covenant between God and us, our shared covenants have the power to transform the world.

Thomas M. Landy

Director, McFarland Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture





APRIL 8 | FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18:2-3a, 3bc-4, 5-6, 7; John 10:31-42

Four years ago, I was getting ready to enter Holy Cross as a first year student, and I was extremely excited to start this new chapter in my life. However, with the beginning of my first semester, I suffered from Imposter Syndrome. I had convinced myself that I got into Holy Cross by mistake and that I was on my way to failing all my classes. I was terrified that people were going to find out that I didn't belong here. I was unsure what to do, so I turned to prayer. God had made it clear to me during my senior year of high school that Holy Cross was the place for me, so I knew I needed to rely on His strength and guidance to help me in the transition. I did just as the psalm today says: *"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice."*

With God's help, I found my place and my people here. He carried me through and made me a home at Holy Cross. To this day, when I'm feeling overwhelmed, I remind myself to take a step back and call upon the Lord to support me and remind me what it is all for. I challenge myself, and you, to remember that *"with God, all things are possible."*

Kerry Bresnahan '22





APRIL 9 | SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31:10, 11-12ABCD, 13; John 11:45-56

◀ *Scattered, Gathered, 2022*

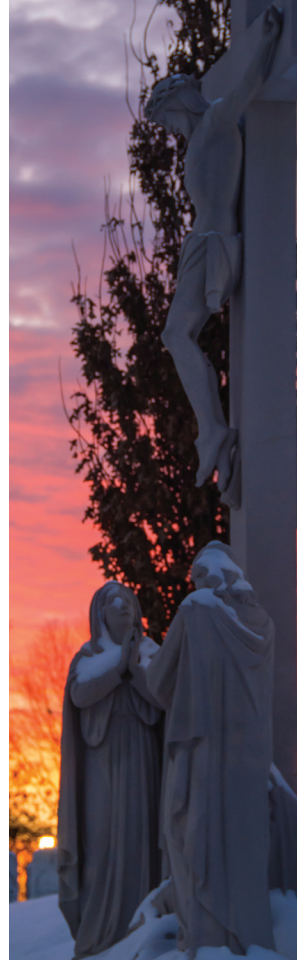
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Three years ago, my family and I moved into a home next door to a working sheep farm. For a theologian-artist hearing from Pope Francis that theologians should “smell like the sheep,” our move had interesting resonance! Particularly fascinating are moments when our neighbors feed the sheep with large bales of hay. The sheep rush from their disparate positions to circle round, jockey for position, feed heartily, voice their appreciation. The same year, I published a book on the theology of freedom. I argued that we should think of freedom in terms of gathering the scattered moments of our lives into a decision for or against life with God. Today’s readings tell us that God decides for life with Israel, to dwell with a newly gathered, formerly scattered nation. In Jesus Christ, God gathers the scattered; God not only “comes to the feast,” but becomes it—for and with us. May we rush from afar, unite, be nourished, offer praise.

Peter Fritz

Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies

See more about this artist and the artwork at holycross.edu/returntome





APRIL 10 | PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Lk 19:28-40; Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Lk 22:14—23:56

Today we hear and reflect upon what is perhaps the longest sequence of readings in the liturgical year. I invite you to focus your attention on the opposing images that permeate these passages.

The same crowds who praise Jesus (*“the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen...”*), also scoff at Him (*“All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips...”*)

Among the faithful who confess that Jesus is God (*“...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”*) may be the one who betrays Him (*“...the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table.”*)

Judas uses a gesture of love and tenderness to unleash his resentment (*“Judah, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”*) Pilate, though convinced of Jesus' innocence, still inflicts punishment (*“So no capital crime has been committed by him. Therefore I shall have him flogged.”*) And even Jesus, the target of contradictory feelings and reactions, uses opposing ideas to get His point across (*“Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.”*)

Why so many contradictions? So many opposites? So much dissonance? Might it be to help us embrace the greatest contradiction of them all: that there is no death without life, no life without death?

Maria Guadalupe M. Rodrigues

Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science

APRIL 11 | MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Is 42:1-7; Ps 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14; John 12:1-11

In today's readings, I am reminded of how God moves among us in ways we cannot explain, nor fully understand. What was to be expected of Him, when He was born into poverty? Did he feel like he constantly had to prove himself? We hear the unexpected in the first reading: God's chosen one will bring justice to the nations without shouting, but with humility and gentleness.

Going into the Holy Week, I find myself thinking of my own ideas of leadership: How can we join Christ in His humble leadership? It is through unconditional love and maintaining faith that we can begin to accomplish this, like the love he showed Mary who anointed his feet with costly oil in today's reading. Sometimes, the quiet leadership is the most meaningful. Of course, there is a time and place for outward expressions of confident leadership, but when we look to Christ, we see strength coupled with a merciful, honest kind of love, one that leads through compassion.

My prayer for the coming Holy Week is that we might find even just one moment to experience the merciful and unbounded love of Christ, and see the ways that He moves within us.

Brianna Cummings '22





APRIL 12 | TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Is 49:1-6; Ps 71:1-2, 3-4A, 5AB-6AB, 15, 17; John 13:21-33, 36-38

For many years I began my day at a 6 a.m. kickboxing class. A few months in, the coach singled me out saying, “Amanda, you are always smiling, even this early in the morning, even when I’m yelling at you.” I looked at him and with a big grin said, “It’s just easier to smile.” Throughout my life, there are many times I have thought, it’s just easier to smile and easier to be a happy person.

While I would prefer to focus on lines from today’s readings and responsorial psalm that conjure up uplifting thoughts, such as, “*And I am made glorious in the sight of the Lord and my God is now my strength!*” and “*On you, I depend from birth... I sing of your salvation,*” I am quickly reminded that I cannot always simply turn to what’s easier. Because, on this Tuesday of Holy Week, the gospel includes one single word that seems impossible to overlook: *betray*.

Knowledge of betrayal can be among the most intense emotional pain we can feel because it threatens our every instinct. I feel pulled, almost by force, to wonder: what did a *deeply troubled Jesus* look like? What did Jesus tell Himself in order to maintain composure, in order to still speak and lead and profess? Indeed, what transformation might we allow within ourselves if we face the act of betrayal head on, instead of smiling because it’s easier?

Amanda Corbett Beaver '03

Leadership Giving Officer, Office of Advancement

APRIL 13 | WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Is 50:4-9A; Ps 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34; Matt 26:14-25

In today's reading, we are presented with the story of Judas Iscariot and his betrayal of Jesus at the Passover dinner. Judas has agreed to turn Jesus over in exchange for silver, and despite Jesus' knowledge of this betrayal, he still hosts a Passover dinner for his disciples.

Reflecting back on my own Holy Cross experience, especially in relationships formed freshman year, I can see examples of betrayal existing within my own life. The first year at college can be really hard and can challenge you academically, socially, and mentally. I was expecting the first friends that I made in the first semester to be my friends for all four years, but this expectation turned out to be false. As time went on, friendships changed and those who had become a huge part in my life began to drift away. I felt betrayed by those whom I had considered to be my best friends. Upon reflection, however, this shift in relationships was for the best.

I imagine that Jesus was probably hurt by the betrayal of his own friend. But as a Christian, I can look at the story and see that out of that betrayal came something even more powerful. Jesus died for our sins and saved humanity. What transformation might God be inviting us to see in our experiences of betrayal in our own lives? Challenging things will always happen, but it is how we learn and grow from these challenges that make the biggest difference.

Sean Sova '22





APRIL 14 | HOLY THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14; Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18; 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

Holy Thursday has been my favorite liturgy since I was a child. I felt a sense of anticipation and also apprehension, maybe because Easter is just around the corner, but first comes Good Friday. One Holy Thursday, as I watched the procession around the church to the side altar after Mass, I felt sure that Jesus Christ had passed by me once more before leaving. I continue to experience the in-betweenness of God, at once with me and leaving me. Holy Thursday appeals to me because it feels real, like life itself, full of in-between times and liminal spaces.

I bet the disciples felt apprehensive during that last meal. It is in this moment that Jesus offers an intimate gesture of care. Peter, as usual, misses the point and his apprehension causes him to resist at first. Jesus explains that giving and receiving acts of care and compassion will give us courage for the dark times. Only then can Peter say yes to what lies ahead.

This gospel clearly admonishes us to serve one another. But there's more. Jesus couldn't wash Peter's feet if Peter refused to let him do it. It seems to me that Jesus was also inviting Peter, and all of us, to receive acts of care and compassion, such as having our feet washed or having someone sit with us at our darkest hours. My prayer today is that I will act with care and compassion, but just as important, I pray that I will have the grace to receive the care and compassion offered to me by others.

Ginny Ryan

Lecturer, Montserrat





APRIL 15 | GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Is 52:13—53:12; Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25; Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42

en español

Cuando era pequeño, una de las preguntas constantes en mi cabeza era ¿qué quiere Dios de mí? Indudablemente, imagino que no soy el único que ha experimentado este deseo ardiente por descubrir su vocación. Es importante que en un momento de nuestras vidas nos preguntemos ¿qué quiere Dios de mí?, y ¿dónde quiere Dios que le sirva? La respuesta siempre se descubrirá mediante un constante diálogo con nosotros, con Dios, y con la comunidad.

En la liturgia de este Viernes Santo, encontramos a un hombre llevando a cumplimiento su Vocación. A un hombre que descubrió el camino que Dios le había invitado a seguir. Jesús nos enseña de qué manera debemos dar cumplimiento a nuestra vocación. El relato entero de la Pasión es una muestra del más sincero y puro “SI”. Este abandono, como vemos en el Evangelio, no es fácil, pero es posible.

Nuestro caminar vocacional puede y debe compararse con el de Jesús. Este camino nos conducirá a través de lágrimas, golpes, heridas y muchas otras dificultades. Sin embargo, esta “tempestad” es una oportunidad para reconocer nuestra vulnerabilidad y para mantenernos firmes en nuestra fe y esperanza. En el relato, también encontramos muestra de amor, compañía y amor comunitario.

Queridos amigos, este Viernes Santo el caminar de Jesús al Calvario nos propone abrazar nuestra vocación con amor y valor. Cada uno de nosotros ha sido llamado a manifestar el amor de Dios en diferentes caminos y de diferentes formas. Continuemos cargando con nuestra cruz en el cumplimiento de nuestra vocación.

When I was little, one of the constant questions in my head was what does God want from me? Certainly, I imagine that I am not the only one who has experienced this burning desire to discover his/her vocation. It is important that at certain points in our lives we ask ourselves what does God want from me? And where does God want me to serve Him? The answer to this question will always be discovered through constant dialogue with us, with God, and with the community.

In the liturgy of this Good Friday, we find a man fulfilling his vocation. This is a man who discovered the path that God had invited him to follow. Jesus teaches us how we should fulfill our vocation. The entire story of passion is a sample of the most sincere and pure “YES.” This abandonment, as we see it in the gospel, is not easy, but it is possible.

Our vocational journey can and must be compared to that of Jesus. This path will lead us through tears, blows, wounds and many other difficulties. However, this “storm” is an opportunity to recognize our vulnerability and stand firm in our faith and hope. In the story, we also find examples of love, companionship, and community.

Dear friends, this Good Friday the walk of Jesus to Calvary invites us to embrace our vocation with love and courage. Each of us has been invited to manifest God’s love in different ways. Let us continue carrying our cross in the fulfillment of our vocation.

Luis De Dios

Latinx Outreach and Liturgical Ministry, Office of the College Chaplains





APRIL 16 | HOLY SATURDAY

Gn 1:1—2:2; Gn 22:1-18; Ex 14:15—15:1; Is 54:5-14; Is 55:1-11; Rom 6:3-11; Mark 16:1-7

After spending around 40 days preparing for Easter by praying, fasting and giving alms, we have reached Holy Saturday: the period that bridges the grief of Good Friday and the hope of Easter Sunday. In today's gospel, three brave women visit Jesus' tomb and find it empty; they are "*terrified and bow their faces to the ground.*" I believe that the physical emptiness of the tomb parallels the emptiness of the shocked, mourning, and fearful hearts of those closest to Jesus.

Throughout college, I especially have felt a sense of emptiness while grappling with personal loss, systemic injustice, and crises of faith. This year, as a (perhaps over-committed) senior, I have had difficulty balancing the academic, extracurricular, spiritual and social dimensions of my life. Although I generally am fueled by these areas, I often feel my energy and ability to give of myself running "empty" by the end of each day and week. Even though this form of emptiness is not as jarring as what the women encountered at the tomb, they both are spaces for God's grace to enter.

Ultimately, the tomb found empty points to the transformation in the Resurrection. Where and when during this Lenten season have you felt "empty," searching for something to fill that void? Can you follow the example of the women disciples by bearing witness to moments of both emptiness and fullness? How might you enter the Easter season remembering God is near, to accompany and even transform our times of emptiness?

Julianne Esteves '22





APRIL 17 | EASTER SUNDAY — THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Acts 10:34A, 37-43; Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Col 3:1-4; John 20:1-9

Flynn's Jefferson Memorial, 2012

Acrylic paint on canvas

32" H x 48" W x 1.5" D

This piece was painted in honor of Flynn Fry. Flynn was born with Down Syndrome, and passed away when he was only two years old. Flynn was an extraordinary boy and his memory lives on through his family's work to raise awareness and support for those who live with Down Syndrome and their loved ones. For me, this painting represents rebirth through the season of spring and cherry blossoms, and also the remembrance of life passed. How might we experience rebirth and remembrance today?

Maggie O'Neill '00

See more about this artist and the artwork at holycross.edu/returntome



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