



# Lenten Reflection Booklet 2020

Artwork by Lauren Pavelec '22

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## Lenten Schedule:

Ash Wednesday 2/26

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### **Medical Campus Services:**

12:05pm, Medical Campus, King Center, 7th Floor Becker Library.

5pm: STLCOP Spirituality Center

### **Main Campus services:**

Ecumenical Ashes Service: 12:15pm, CSC chapel

Mass: 5:30pm, CSC Chapel

Palm Sunday 4/5

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Mass: 11am & 4:30pm (Candlelight Mass), CSC Chapel

Holy Thursday 4/9

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Mass: 7pm, CSC Chapel

Adoration afterwards until midnight

Good Friday 4/10

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Service: 7pm, CSC Chapel

Easter Vigil 4/11

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Mass: 7:30pm, CSC Chapel, RCIA party to follow

Easter 4/12

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Mass: 9:30am & 11:30am, CSC Chapel (no evening Mass anywhere in Archdiocese)

## Weekly Ongoing Events:

### **Sundays:**

Mass: 11am and 4:30pm & Sunday Supper for Students, CSC Chapel (no 4:30pm on 3/8)

### **Mondays:**

Women's Grad student Bible Study, 7pm @ CSC

### **Tuesdays**

DUC Lunch: 11am-1pm

Mass and soup: 5:15pm (except 3/10), CSC living room

RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults: 7-8:30pm CSC Social Hall

### **Wednesdays**

Adoration (except 2/26, 3/11, & 4/8): 7pm-8pm

### **Thursdays**

DUC Lunch: 11am-1pm

### **Fridays:**

Mass and lunch 12:05pm, CSC Chapel (except 3/6, 3/13, & 4/10)

## Special Events:

### Spring Break Service Trip Trivia Night fundraiser

2/29, 6-9pm @ CSC

### Adoration and Silence

3/4, 7-8pm @ CSC chapel

### LGBTQ+ Soul

3/16, 3/30, 6pm-8pm, CSC Living Room

### Adoration and Reflection

3/18, 7-8pm @ CSC chapel

### Endings & Beginnings: Evening for Class of 2020

3/19, 5-6:30pm

### Stations of the Cross

3/20, 5-5:30pm

### Adoration and Appetizers

3/25, 7-8pm @ CSC Chapel

### Adoration and Stations of the Cross

4/1, 7-8pm @ CSC Chapel

### CSU Fish Fry

3/20, 5-7pm

### Retreat in Everyday Life (Busy Person's Retreat)

3/22-3/28

### Murder Mystery Party

3/26, 6:30pm @ Herring Intern House

### Confession Marathon

3/31 2pm-midnight @ CSC

### Wilderness Retreat

4/3-4/4

## A Note from the Director of Ministry:

Behold, now is a very acceptable time...

In the Gospel on Ash Wednesday we get a stern warning from Jesus not to showboat our faith practices so as to bring attention to ourselves. And yet, ironically, on Ash Wednesday we smear dark ashes on our foreheads for all the world to see as we walk around doing our daily tasks. Although our foreheads may not make the sounds of trumpets, the ashes rarely go unnoticed. What then do we make of this contradiction as we enter into Lent? Has the church for centuries snubbed or disregarded this teaching of Jesus on the very day we proclaim it?

I think not, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings may shed some light on why our publicly displayed ashy foreheads are not a rebuke of Jesus' teaching but rather a call to action through an implied question, "what are you willing to do for your faith?"

You'll notice Jesus' rebuke of public displays is not a rebuke of the spiritual practices, but instead the motivation behind those practices – if you do it for notoriety then cut it out. Which is to say to us on Ash Wednesday, if we attend services to collect our ashes simply so we can feel included or display we are part of the Christian "in" crowd then maybe we should cut it out and stay home. However, it is the call to action that Jesus does have interest in. We hear in the first reading, "blow a trumpet, proclaim a fast, call, gather, notify, assembly, weep..."

**Do Something!**

That's what the prophet is saying, **Do Something** to carry out your faith in this world. As Pope Francis once challenged young adults at world youth day in Poland, "The time we are living in does not call for young

couch potatoes but for young people with shoes -- or better -- boots laced,"

**Do Something** about your faith!

And if we have any doubts about the urgency of this message this lent, then let Paul stir us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, "Behold, now is a very acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation!"

**DO Something...Now!**

It is all too easy for Catholics to take the Gospel today as justification for living their faith timidly, only in private, and without conviction. There is no better time than now to leave that attitude on the couch and strap on some boots. This Lent journey with the CSC by strapping on your boots through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – three ways to **Do Something** about your faith.

Prayer: Perhaps you can use this booklet to aid your prayer life.

Fasting: Perhaps you can give something up that is blocking you from being your best self.

Almsgiving: Perhaps you can give of yourself in service or leadership in ways you haven't before.

Ash Wednesday marks us with crosses as if to say, this cross is your work to do in the world – no more sitting on the sidelines, go out and do it. What will you DO this Lent to practice and share your faith?

Now is a very acceptable time!

Troy Woytek  
CSC Director of Ministry

## Online Resources:

**United States Catholic Conference of Bishops:**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/index.cfm>

**Catholic Student Center at WashU:** <http://washucsc.org>

**Creighton University Spirituality Resources:**

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/>

**Archdiocese of St. Louis:** <http://archstl.org/>

**Dynamic Catholic- Best Lent Ever:**

<http://dynamiccatholic.com/bestlentever/#signup>

**Word on Fire, Bishop Barron:**

<https://www.lentreflections.com/>

**Word Among us - Daily Meditations:** <https://wau.org/>

**Loyola Press – Ignatian Spirituality:**

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/lent>

**Center for Action and Contemplation – Daily Meditations:**

<https://cac.org/sign-up/>



## Introduction to the Booklet:

Welcome to the Lenten Reflection Booklet! This booklet is made up of student reflections that will guide you in your daily meditation of scripture. Daily readings can be found online at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org).

Encounter God this Lenten Season and allow Him to guide you. Allow Him to give you the strength to live out your journey of faith and invite others to join you on your way. Lent will help you to understand and go deeply in the mystery of redemption. May these forty days allow you to accompany Christ to the cross, knowing that the cross is not the end but the path to Resurrection, to your own redemption and happiness.

Each student who contributed to this booklet gave their time to offer their own unique perspective on the daily readings. They are a great resource to aid you in encountering Christ this Lenten season.

Maria Rivero, 2019 CSU Spiritual Chair

## February 26<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:12-18  
Psalm 51:3-6b, 12-14, 17  
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2  
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Today is Ash Wednesday, one of the most glorious days of the year. It is the first day of Lent, a day in which we come before the Lord through prayer, penance, and fasting so that we may prepare our minds, hearts, bodies, and souls for the coming of Christ on Easter Day. On this day we wear the Cross upon our foreheads to signify that Christ is with us, and as a reminder of the ashes we were born from and will return to. In our first reading, we see the beauty of the reciprocal relationship God asks of us. When we come to Him, He provides for us. When we are faithful, penitent, and mindful of tradition, we fully open ourselves to the blessings that God wants to bestow upon us. In our responsorial psalm, King David bares his soul to the Lord, asking His forgiveness and for Him to restore David's grace. When we come before the Lord in Confession with true consciousness of our sins and a true desire to act in ways pleasing to Him, He grants upon us forgiveness; not forgiveness as we often view it, but true forgiveness, in which our sins are completely erased from our souls, no matter their gravity. God does not want us to wallow in regret of our sins, on the contrary, He wants us to rejoice in our renewed relationship with Him and the ways in which we have learned from our errors! In our second reading, Paul reminds our fellow Christians in ancient Corinth of all Christians' role as ambassadors of Christ on Earth and of the reconciliation and subsequent blessings available to us through God, if we but ask it with a resolute heart. In ancient Corinth, in the modern United States, across space and time is the Lord, and His blessings wait for us to make room for them in our whole being. In today's Gospel, the good word of God, Jesus Christ speaks to His disciples (not only those with him in physical being but all of us in the Church, the earthly Body of Christ), reminding us of an ageless rule which we all love to abide by: an eye for an eye. Rather than referring to justice in criminal law, He is talking about our deeds. When we work, we expect compensation. However, when we do the work of the Lord and expect earthly accolades and glory, that is what we receive. We have been paid, and it would be presumptuous of us to expect more. Thus, we should take glory in doing

good deeds with no expectation of earthly reward, for that is how we open ourselves up to receive our rewards in Heaven and our blessings on Earth. Throughout all our readings for today, we witness the true glory of Christian life. It is one of prayer, penitence, and faith. Pray unceasingly, and live life as a messenger of the Word of God and a sharer of His Gifts.

THOMAS FILICE, ARTS & SCIENCES '20

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### **Reminder: day of fasting and abstinence**

#### **HIGHLIGHT:** Precepts of the Church

The *Precepts of the Church* describe the minimum requirements of Catholics, with the intent to grow in love of God and neighbor.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2041-2043)

1. Attend Mass on Sundays & holy days of obligation
2. Confess your sins at least once a year
3. Receive Holy Communion (at a minimum) during the Easter season
4. Observe the holy days of obligation similar to the Sabbath
5. Observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence
6. Provide to the material needs of the Church to your ability

During the Lenten season, we have special emphasis on the 5<sup>th</sup> precept, fasting on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday and abstaining from meat every Friday.

February 27<sup>th</sup>

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Luke 9:22-25

Sometimes it might not be as epic as taking the ring to Mordor, defeating an evil wizard who's terrorizing a high school of magical students, or flying a ship into the core of the Death Star, but our lives certainly have their own share of struggles and hardships. After all, Jesus never promised that this kind of life would be easy.

In the Gospel today, He tells His friends that there would be a cross to bear each day. Sometimes, we'll feel that we're hopelessly lost, but the thing is, we don't bear it alone. The thing that Jesus did promise was that He was going to be with us always and that's where He is found. Jesus is found right there beside us on this wonderful adventure. He's there in the thrill. In the rush. In the in-betweens. On this adventure, He reminds us that it's okay to be lost and it's okay if we don't totally have it together all of the time. It is in the losing of ourselves that we will find who we are meant to be.

We're not meant to be stationary. We're not meant to stay the same for all eternity. We're meant to become new creations, the fullest expressions of who God is shaping us into.

We are called to amazing heights.

It all starts with a "Yes".

Yes, Lord.

For everything that is yet to come, yes.

Scott Nguyen, STLCOB '22

LENT 2020

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February 28<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 58:1-9a

Psalms 51:3-6b, 18-19

Matthew 9:14-15

Perspective. Such a simple term yet so powerful; depending on what point of view you choose; it can drastically transform your mood and attitude towards a certain action. Especially in Lent. When I was younger, I merely viewed it as forty days where I had to give up soft drinks, and I resented it. So much so that when it was over, I would drink as much soda as I possibly could. But as I have grown older, my perspective has greatly altered towards Lent. It's no longer about loss, but rather about gain. How I can strengthen my relationship with God and those around me. Last year, I chose to commit to morning and evening prayer as well as becoming vegan. In doing so, I was able to foster a true prayer life for the first time in my life; I discovered what worked for me, and now, I am able to have an intentional conversation with God. No, I don't pray every day and night, but that experience provided me with the tools to better my faith. And so did becoming vegan. I didn't look at it as giving up meat, but rather, a way to appreciate all that God has provided us. That's why perspective is so important; we don't like changing habits, but when we have a reason for doing so, we transform ourselves. We may go back to old habits, but at the very least, for these forty days, we provide ourselves with a concrete chance to grow.

Audrey Ulfers, Arts & Sciences '22

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

LENT 2020

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February 29<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Psalm 86:1-6

Luke 5:27-32

Have you ever done something that you didn't think you could forgive yourself for?

We were all taught the same feel-good (but very true) message as children: that making mistakes is a way to learn and that nobody is perfect. But to me, the general public's actual attitude seems to be, "Once you sin, you're a bad person forever." The criminal justice system is now based more on revenge than rehabilitation. People are quick to "cancel" celebrities for past transgressions even after they issue sincere apologies. Of course, people should have to take responsibility for their actions, and no one should be forced to trust or forgive anyone else. But in my experience, the lack of room for forgiveness in our culture not only discourages people from showing mercy to their fellow human beings but also makes people more ruthless toward themselves. I have labeled myself as a "failure" for getting a bad grade on a test, or as a "bad daughter/friend/girlfriend" for hurting my loved ones, and I'm sure most people have similar experiences. None of us deserve to be that mean to ourselves. And most importantly, that kind of attitude doesn't at all emulate God's.

Ezekiel 33:11, today's verse before the Gospel, encourages us not to gleefully rejoice in the demise of "wicked [men]" but to pray for them to become better. And in today's Gospel reading, Jesus eats with tax collectors to make the point that He came to mankind and sacrificed Himself to redeem even—and especially—the gravest sinners. And we should extend that same mercy to ourselves—Christ's saving grace doesn't give us free rein to make excuses for our sins or to stop trying to be better people, but through Him we gain the hope of knowing that our misdeeds don't doom us forever.

Lauren Kang, Arts & Sciences '21

## March 1<sup>st</sup> – First Sunday of Lent

Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7  
Psalm 51:3-6, 12-13, 17  
Romans 5:12-19  
Mt 4:1-11

Sometimes history has a way of repeating itself.

In the first reading, we witness the creation of man. We witness too how Adam and his wife, Eve, disobeyed God, their creator, through the influence of the Devil. God had given Adam and Eve an earthly paradise, a garden that held everything necessary for life. He had given them the animals of the earth and even one another for company. Adam and Eve had it all. Yet, they lost sight of what they had and who they were meant to be. They let the Devil dictate their identity, convince them to become gods, something they could never hope to be.

In today's Gospel, we again witness temptation but in a starkly different setting. Gone is the garden of plenty with its lush green vegetation and fruit ripe for the picking. Gone too is all human company. Alone, Jesus fasts in the desert. He is hungry. He has nothing. The Devil appears. The circumstances are different than before, but Jesus should be easy to tempt, certainly easier than Adam and Eve.

The Devil digs at Jesus' insecurity. He begins the first temptation with these words: "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." In other words, "if you are who you think you are, prove it to yourself, prove it to me, right here, right now." When Jesus refuses, the Devil takes Jesus to the parapet of the temple and again challenges his identity. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." In other words, "You are special, Jesus. You

mean a lot to God. Prove it to yourself and to me. Let yourself be rescued.” Again, Jesus withstands the temptation. Undaunted, the Devil tries once more. He shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world and promises to give them to him if Jesus bows to him. The Devil’s promise could be understood as such: “You will be accepted by everyone. They will acknowledge you for who you are, respect you, love you. I can make it all happen, just as long as I get to say who you are, just as long as I get to erase your individuality.”

Ultimately, Jesus refuses to let his enemy define or shape his identity. He knows where he stands with his Lord and his God. *“The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.”*

Sometimes history has a way of repeating itself. But this is not one of those times.

We know we are God’s beloved children. We know who we are meant to be.

We don’t have to prove it to anyone. Jesus proved it himself by dying on the cross for our sake.

Amanda Arbuckle, Arts & Sciences '21



March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18

Psalms 19:8, 9, 10, 15

Matthew 25:31-46

Today's readings encourage us to recognize the divine influence of God in each individual. In Leviticus, the Lord instructs Moses to "bear [no] hatred for your brother in your heart" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" a principle that underlies all of God's commands. Each of the Lord's dictates prohibits actions of one individual against another but mentions nothing relations between humans and God. But as Catholics we are instructed to love God above all else. Why, then, does the Psalmist describe dictates such as those in Leviticus as "perfect" and "refreshing to the soul" if their focus is primarily on relations between humans and not between an individual and God? The subjects of our Gospel reading -- both good and bad -- ask the same question. When praised or confronted by God for their actions toward others during their lifetimes, both parties express confusion about when they had ever encountered God personally. God's response offers an explanation of the scriptures' emphasis on relations between humans: "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." As creations of God each individual has an inherent dignity -- or divine influence -- that deserves respect. Recognition of this presence enables us to appreciate our interactions with each other as exchanges with God himself. While we might not encounter God directly in our everyday lives, we are able to love God through our interactions with each other and to strengthen our spiritual and human relationships along the way.

Damiano Servidio, Arts & Sciences '22

LENT 2020

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March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Isaiah 55:10-11  
Psalm 34:4-7, 16-19  
Matthew 6:7-15

Whether it be structured prayer, or a more casual chat know that God knows you better than anyone knows you. This is hard to understand, but God is omnipotent and omniscient meaning he is all powerful and all knowing. The way I understand God is that God is ultimate creator of everything, and he has the keys to your happiness. The first reading from Isaiah talks about the ultimate power of God's commands, and yet God chose to give us free will. Because of this I see God's commandments to us as not commands, but instead as guidelines to live a happy life. To trust in the words of God is to live a life that will fulfill his commands and to understand that God wants everyone to be happy and fulfilled. Now and then, I find myself wondering how the heck am I supposed to know exactly what God wants from me? In the Gospel today, Jesus tells us that we should not babble about this and that but instead to keep it short and sweet, and Jesus tells us to say the Our Father. Jesus also tells us, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." The Our Father, consists of three major points, doing God's will, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil. In other words, Jesus says if we want to reach heaven we learn, understand, and fulfill God's will, forgive people that fail to do so, trust in God to take care of the rest.

Ian McWilliams, Architecture '22

March 4<sup>th</sup>

Jonah 3:1-10  
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19  
Luke 11:29-32

A classic metropolis, the Assyrian (of course it's Assyrian) capital of Nineveh was notorious for its wickedness and rampant sin, and after years of watching the morals of this great city disintegrate, God had had enough. Much like Sodom, Nineveh was to be destroyed, but not before God gave the city's residents a chance to redeem themselves. After hearing Jonah's alarming prophecy, each of Nineveh's citizens (even the king!) repented, abandoning their vices and materialism in hopes of saving the city. Upon seeing this, God took pity on its people, and Nineveh was withheld from the divine wrath.

The power of God's forgiveness and redemption is truly awe-inspiring, isn't it? Centuries of transgressions were forgiven (but not forgotten) by a unified display of penance, even though the genuineness of this act can certainly be questioned (Was it only done to save the city, not fueled by a recognition of wrongdoing?). Nevertheless, our God is a forgiving one, and it's never too late, no matter who you are or what you've done, to find God, live a righteous life, and enjoy eternity in paradise. As intrinsically flawed as we all are, we are still adored by our creator, and it is our responsibility as Catholics to help others discover this eternal love as well.

John Biziorek, Arts & Sciences '22

March 5<sup>th</sup>

Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25

Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8

Matthew 7:7-12

Today's readings all focus on the power of prayer and God's eagerness to help us when we call upon Him. Making this call first requires us to acknowledge that we need God's help in our lives. Queen Esther exemplifies this humility in the first reading, saying that she has "no help but" God and is "an orphan." I encourage you to take a few minutes today to reflect on your own prayers. How do you pray? When do you pray? How could you strengthen your prayer life? In the Gospel, Jesus says "ask and it will be given to you," but this leaves us with a question: what to ask for? Sometimes this may be obvious, but oftentimes it takes some thought. Think about the places in your life where you need God's help. Maybe you need Him to give you the strength to get through a rough time, the courage to enter a new phase of life, or the understanding to grow in a particular relationship. Whatever it is, don't be afraid to invite God into the most difficult and confusing parts of your life by asking for His help. As Jesus assures us today, He will answer.

Will Carter, Arts & Sciences '23

LENT 2020

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March 6<sup>th</sup>

Ez 18:21-28  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Matthew 5:20-26

The main message of this passage is about God’s forgiveness. No matter how much we have done wrong or sinned God will continue to love us unconditionally. Even though we do not always follow the path of God, He shows compassion and love and we should strive for that every day. We will all make mistakes. We all need forgiveness.

We must give forgiveness too. It is important to try to be the best versions of ourselves everyday “for the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Nicole Hay, Arts & Sciences '22

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

March 7<sup>th</sup>

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8

Matthew 5:43-48

In today's readings, Jesus asks a lot of us. He asks us to "be perfect, just as [our] heavenly Father is perfect." He makes the task sound so simple. Knowing this is a high standard, he tries to give us some guidance on how to do this, but the one suggestion he gives is to "love [our] enemies and pray for those who persecute [us]." It is so easy to love our friends and our family and pray for good things for them, but even pagans and tax collectors can do that. As members of the covenant with God, we are called to go above and beyond, to perfection.

Lent is the ideal time for us to remember that Jesus calls us to do what is hard and has this high standard for us, since this season is full of constant reminders. We do not sing Alleluia in Mass, we fast on Fridays, and most members of Christian society abstain from certain foods or activities all season long. Readings like this remind us that we are always called to strive for perfection and to do what is hard.

The Lenten season allows us to refocus our lives and remember that the sacrifices we make during Lent pale in comparison to the sacrifices that Jesus made for us. If Jesus can suffer in the desert, we can pray for someone who wronged us. The physical actions that we perform during Lent can help us make strides towards Jesus's lofty request that we "be perfect."

Molly Isaac, Arts & Sciences '22

# March 8<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a  
Psalm 33:4-5,18-20,22  
2 Tm 1:8b-10  
Mt 17:1-9

After some reflection, I think this week’s readings and gospel are centered around the theme of faith in action, all while trusting that God will provide our strength. God’s primary command in the First Reading is to “Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk...” This command is not easy to accept. It may bring feelings of trepidation, uneasiness, or fear. Or perhaps others may hear the statement and feel exhilaration. As a first-year college student, I can relate to a mix of those emotions, feeling anxious about moving 800 miles away from home, but also excitement about embarking on a new adventure. But beneath those emotions, God’s words are clear: He will lead us “...to a land that I will show you”. He reassures us that we are not alone on our journey. He does not send us out into an unknown place blind and alone, but instead He promises to direct our hearts to where we are meant to be. When we wholly trust this promise of His, we are practicing faith in action.

Faith in Action is beautifully complemented with another example from the Gospel, when Jesus was transfigured, and God spoke on the mountaintop. Although the disciples fell to the ground and felt afraid, they did not run away. Jesus’ command was simple: “Rise, and do not be afraid”. And so, the disciples did. Applying this example to our own lives, there will certainly be times where we fall. Perhaps there are times where we don’t even feel God’s presence and we become afraid. Despite us falling, the key is that we do not run away from Him but rise. Just like Jesus gave the disciples courage to witness His transfigured self, so too will He give us the courage to overcome anything that we may feel tempted to run away from.

Natasha Kuklis, Arts & Sciences '23

March 9<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 9:4b-10  
Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13  
Luke 6:36-38

To me, the first reading and the gospel passage each have something to say about the nature of God’s love with regard to justice and fairness. The first reading shows a confession that perhaps we all make at some point as followers of Christ. Like the speaker, I know myself at times to be wicked, to be uncontrollable, to run from God. But surprisingly, I often feel God’s love the strongest at these times. And this is strange to me and to the speaker of this passage. The speaker even tells God that “justice, O Lord, is on your side,” yet you treat us with “compassion and forgiveness.” God calls me to Him even louder when I do Him wrong, and that confuses my human understandings of justice and fairness.

The short 3-verse gospel reading also makes me think of the concepts of justice and fairness. Jesus implores us to act in merciful ways by appealing to these concepts. It is an appeal to the Golden Rule: how much we are judged, condemned, forgiven, and given will be determined by how much we judge, condemn, forgive, and give to others. While not necessarily in opposition to the theme of the first reading, this gospel describes God’s love differently, as completely fair and just. This idea of God’s love is frankly much easier for me to grasp. But these two readings juxtaposed speak to the mysterious and multifaceted character of God’s love, and how difficult it is for us to understand.

Carter Rholl, Engineering '20



March 10<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 1:10, 16-20  
Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23  
Matthew 23:1-12

In this reading, Isaiah issues a call to action to “Hear the word of the LORD” and to “wash yourselves clean” and hidden amongst his proclamations sits another subtle yet powerful command. Not only are we told to cease doing evil, but we are also called to \*learn\* to do good. It is all too simple to believe that we have learned how to be good to others and fall into complacency, but how often do we genuinely practice being good? The word “Learn” is such a powerful and compelling word because it implies that being good is not a state of being, but rather a process in which one must labor and focus in order to truly progress. The steps of learning something start with an interest, lead to the studying of the given subject and is made complete through practice and precise execution. Learning also allows for us to make errors and fail, much like one would do learning any other skill such as cooking. It is through the acute awareness of these mistakes and the drive to improve ourselves that push us to be better than the person we were yesterday. Often, we can forget the lessons we once previously learned, but it is never too late to take the steps to reteach ourselves and come closer to the person that God made us to be.

Noah Maguidad, Engineering '23

March 11<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 18:18-20  
Psalm 31:5-6, 14-16  
Matthew 20:17-28

When the mother in today's Gospel reading petitions Jesus to let her sons sit beside him in his kingdom, she does not know the weight of her request. She recognizes Christ's favor as an honor and hopes her sons will live in such a way as to secure it. Yet by fixating on the acclaim good deeds will bring her sons rather than the impact of the actions themselves, the mother misunderstands the value of a principled life. Our actions towards others should not be a means to gain their approval nor to convince ourselves of our own goodness. People and the impact we have on them are ends in themselves.

The passage holds particular relevance for leaders, whom it admonishes not to make their authority over others felt. In reading it, I was reminded of my confirmation Saint Bathildis, who grew up in slavery before becoming Queen of France. Never forgetting her humble beginnings, Bathildis abolished the trade of Christian slaves, reduced the taxes that forced struggling families to sell their children, built hospitals, and sold her jewelry to help the poor. Eventually relinquishing her royal rank for a modest life at an abbey, she never let her elevated station extinguish her propensity to serve.

The strongest leadership comes from listening, recognizing our own limitations, and centering the needs of others regardless of what they offer us in return. By recognizing the humanity in people, we may not even know, we can all come "not...to be served, but to serve."

Melissa Oberstaedt '23

LENT 2020

2  
6

March 12<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalms 1:1-4, 6

Luke 16:19-31

Today's gospel reveals that no matter how much money you have, no matter how elevated your status, no matter how much privilege you possess, nothing matters except than what you choose to do with it all. Many people can think of a time when they have been the "rich man"—acting out of greed, selfishness, or overindulgence—detached from or dismissive of the suffering happening right outside their front door. During times of good fortune and prosperity, it's easy to forget struggle and hardship—it kind of brings down the mood. But isn't it a bit hypocritical that we always expect God to be there when we are suffering? Maybe you turn to God in times of need or maybe you curse Him and ask Him how he could have done this to you, but when was the last time you thought of Him in times of joy and celebration? When was the last time you took a moment from your excitement to pause and thank God for your good fortune or prosperity? When was the last time you took a moment from your excitement to pause and ask God to look after all those who are not as fortunate as you? When was the last time you took a moment to pause and actually help those who are less fortunate than you?

"Blessed are they who hope in the Lord." Hope, like love or forgiveness, is one of those things that has the potential to be infinite. When properly nourished and placed, hope can initiate change, save a fallen soul, rebuild relationships, and unite a people. Hope can prevail through hardship and be present in times of happiness. Hope is often a driving force in everything that we do—hope that one day, things will be better. As Catholics, we know that when we hope in the Lord, this statement is true. When we take the time to give our gifts for the benefit of others, we are hoping in the Lord that one day, things will be better for that person too. This is what Jesus is calling us to do: to love and serve others and hope for their good fortune. Imagine a world where everything everyone did was driven by a hope that it would benefit their neighbor. What do you hope for?

Kristie Houghton, Architecture '20

LENT 2020

2  
7

March 13<sup>th</sup>

Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

Psalm 105:16-21

Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

The scriptures reveal to me that life will always come with challenges, but if God has a purpose for us, he will see us through. He will always find a path out of no path if we allow him. In the midst of human fears, we sometimes focus on the tangible, short-term 'gifts' rather than trusting in the faith of our God and the amazing opportunities that can come with patience. However, he is here, and we are important and needed.

These scriptures also show sometimes the people we trust with all of our hearts can still disappoint us. However, we are human and come with faults. Forgiveness is key especially because God is the only one that we can fully trust. He never said we would not face trials, but he promised that he would be merciful and loving.

Our God loves us tremendously and he knows why we are all here. He invests in how we influence this world while we are here. He works tirelessly in the background making sure to support us in all the ways we did not know we needed. He is caring and purposeful. If we remember that we are a cornerstone to his overall plan, then we will always find a path to our destination and purpose, regardless of the challenges that may come our way.

Overall, these scriptures remind me that faith is trusting in the process, knowing we have a purpose that God is leading us in.

Chinwe Amazu, School of Medicine '22

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

LENT 2020

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March 14<sup>th</sup>

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

During this great season of introspection, I find myself examining the ways in which I have made mistakes and fallen from God’s grace. Today’s gospel, the story of the prodigal son, particularly resonates with me because it reveals the ways in which we are loved by God for who we are, who we are not, and who we are yet to become. It is easy to see ourselves in the shoes of both sons at different points of our lives. Sometimes we can resonate with the “good” son, constantly following the rules, praising God, and doing what is right. But other times the crosses we each bear become too much to handle and we fall, getting entangled in certain vices like the prodigal son. I think that the best parts of my life come after a great fall because, when I gather up the courage to get back up, there God is, waiting to celebrate my triumph like a father welcoming home his lost child. My faith would be a fraction of what it is today without the hardships I have faced in my life. How truly wonderful is it to see that, even at your lowest, there is someone there to pick you back up and love you unconditionally for every imperfection and every flaw.

Irene Hamlin, Arts & Sciences '21

March 15<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:3-7  
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9  
Rom 5:1-2, 5-8  
Jn 4:5-42

Sometimes during tough times it's easy to doubt whether or not the lord is with us and whether or not he is looking out for us. Even during these times, we must not doubt the Lord's presence. He is always looking out for us and is responsive to our needs.

The peace and hope that the Lord provides for us does not disappoint and is always present. His never-ending love for us is evidenced by the fact that he died for us all; he died for our sins.

Prayer and relationship with God set us on a path to eternal life. Through prayer, relationship, and by following in the Lord's footsteps, we will never thirst, but those who refuse relationship with the Lord, will always thirst.

Mikaela Arredondo, Arts & Sciences '20

March 16<sup>th</sup>

Second Kings 5:1-15ab

Psalms 42:2-3; 43:3-4

Luke 4:24-30

For some of us, one of our first--or sometimes one of our last--responses to experiencing suffering and hardship is prayer. We "offer up" what is troubling us with the great trust that God will either help to deliver us from said suffering or that He will give us the strength to embrace it. Oftentimes, however, we go to God with our own plans in mind. After all, we know ourselves more intimately than anyone else. We know what needs to change and exactly how our lives would be improved if only this thing or that worked out exactly as we think that it should. In this way, we fall victim to our own ego, letting our will supersede that of God. It becomes dangerously easy to rush into developing our own solutions, to project them onto God, and to reinforce them in a kind of pointed prayer. Afterwards, if that which we prayed for so fervently is not realized--or not in the way we imagined--we are left feeling disappointed and, sometimes, even resentful.

To avoid this, in our prayer we should truly look to God for guidance, not with particular goals. We must cast aside our ego and look for God's hand in our lives instead of wishing He would work in the ways most convenient for us. God will assist us and give us strength, and He will never leave us to suffer alone. So, when we move with patience, perseverance, and faith in Him, we can face all things.

Alayna Mickles, Arts & Sciences '23

March 17<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 3:25, 34-43  
Psalm 25:4-5b, 6, 7bc, 8-9  
Matthew 18:21-35

As I went through today's reading, the first verse that came to mind was "We love each other because He loved us first" (1 John 4:19). From love springs compassion, mercy, and kindness. In "The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant", Jesus taught Peter to forgive a brother for seventy-seven times, from his heart, for any deeds, great and small. This is not merely a story of forgiving, but a lesson about God's mercy as an example for us to follow and about our sins. In the parable, the master forgave the servant with his great sum of loan without hesitations. This stood in stark contrast to the servant's reaction to his fellow over a much smaller amount of money. Similarly, God forgave all our sins, over and over again, and granted us a life. Yet I wonder how many times we got in a fight because of a trivial matter? How many bitter words have we thrown at someone we love just because we could not control our temper? I have and now I am in deep regrets and shame, more than ever. I have sinned against my brothers and sisters, and also against Christ. As the season of reflections and penitence goes on,

"And now we follow you with our whole heart,  
we fear you and we pray to you.  
Do not let us be put to shame,  
but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.  
Deliver us by your wonders,  
and bring glory to your name, O Lord." (Daniel 3:41-43)

Thao Cao, Engineering '20

LENT 2020

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March 18<sup>th</sup>

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9  
Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20  
Matthew 5:17-19

I read today's Gospel and immediately considered signing up for a different day's reflection. "Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments... will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven" isn't exactly the warm-and-fuzziest line in the Bible; it's actually quite harsh. But, upon further reflection, I discovered this reading is not as aggressive as it seems.

For one thing, it reminds us of what a gift the sacrament of Reconciliation is. Without that opportunity, the idea that breaking a commandment makes damn us to be among the least is cause for despair. However, that's not what we believe. Our Church teaches that we can bring our mistakes to God, and as long as we are truly sorry, God lets us start fresh, an unlimited number of times! What a great safety net for the inevitable messing up we're going to do.

Second, Jesus doesn't say that if we mess up, we're going straight to hell. In fact, he doesn't mention hell at all. He says we'll be the "least in the Kingdom of heaven." But hey, that's "least *in* the Kingdom of heaven" with an emphasis on "*in the Kingdom of heaven.*" Even if you're the worst player in the NBA, you're still *in* the NBA, which is pretty dope. So essentially, Jesus is telling us that we should do our best to follow all the rules, but even if we fall short, we can still make it to heaven. Even the saints were sinners, after all.

Mary Grace Gorman, Arts & Sciences '20

## March 19<sup>th</sup> -Solemnity of St. Joseph

2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16  
Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, and 29  
Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22  
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24

The reading of March 19<sup>th</sup> resonated with me for three major reasons. First, the reading proclaimed that as Christians we are ambassadors for Christ and that God is providing his wisdom to others through our actions. Second, the reading proclaims we as people are encouraged to reconcile to God. Third, the reading states that we can receive God's grace and obtain salvation right now. Now, this may be confusing for those who may not have had the gift of faith or were not fully educated about the scriptures, I do not have a full understanding myself. But based on the reading, I feel that no matter where we are in our lives, even up to the hour of our death, there is always hope. Hope that we can reach out to others not by boasting about our faith or how much we've accomplished, but through our actions and our charity, and that can be as simple as helping a kid find their basketball. Hope that while living in this era of unprecedented political and philosophical division, that we may find or rediscover God in our darkest moments, when we feel that the world around us is falling apart. Hope that now, with all our struggles and insecurities and imperfections, we can receive God's grace and love and find comfort in the fact that he is with us. God is empowered by hope, and so am I.

Cole Chavez, Arts & Sciences '23

March 20<sup>th</sup>

Hosea 14:2-10  
Psalm 81:6c-11b, 14, 17  
Mark 12:28-34

In the gospel reading today, Jesus lays out the foremost of the commandments. First, he orders us to *love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength*. Secondly, he commands us to *love your neighbor as yourself*. These are the greatest commandments, Jesus says. We should exercise correspondingly great care and devotion in following them as closely as possible.

First, *love the Lord your God*. Jesus puts this commandment first, and not without reason—for how can we love our neighbor if we hate the fountainhead from which they, along with everything else, ultimately sprang? We must find a way to love God in our everyday lives—usually, through prayer. Simple morning, evening, and mealtime prayers can help, as can the rosary, Lectio Divina, or adoration.

Secondly, *love your neighbor as yourself*. The way Jesus phrased this is important—not just to *love your neighbor*, but to do so *as yourself*. When you love yourself, you take care of your basic needs, of course—both physical needs like food and other ones like companionship. When you love your neighbor *as yourself*, you are as ready to help them improve their lives as you are to better your own. This is without doubt a difficult task, but it is the one Jesus has set out to us, so we must find some avenue—say, almsgiving or volunteering—through which to complete it.

Walter Treat, Arts & Sciences '22

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

LENT 2020

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March 21<sup>st</sup>

Hosea 6:1-6  
Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21b  
Luke 18:9-14

We (in some ways) are all like the wealthy man in today's gospel. We are fortunate enough to be at Washington University and in many ways, safe and healthy. I am not by any means saying we live a perfect life, but we are sheltered. Many people call it "The WashU Bubble". In many ways, we are here living for ourselves, working towards degrees for ourselves, so we can get the jobs that we want to do, or get into that grad school for ourselves and do such while blocking out the chaos of the outside world as much as possible. If you ever leave the bubble, you will see the more grim side of the city we call home: a place filled with run-down buildings, abandoned homes, and signs everywhere sharing messages such as "We must stop killing each other" and "We must start loving each other." People are struggling and suffering.

Nobody is forcing us to do anything. We are not at fault for the mess that has unfolded in this city nor are we in any power to rid it of its problems, but we could at least do a little bit to help both as individuals and as a community through acts such as volunteering. After all, the wealthy man could not cure Lazarus' leprosy, but at the very least could have given the man something to eat.

I end my reflection with a challenge for you: before the Lent season ends on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, either go out and volunteer or sign yourself up to volunteer somewhere, wherever it may be.

Sebastian Laboy, Engineering '23

## March 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Psalm 23:1-6

Eph 5:8-14

Jn 9:1-41

Too often we are blinded by darkness, often by worldly desires like power and wealth. We go about life, intending to please others and believing we can live without the love of others. We prioritize and use life events as an excuse from giving time to God through scripture and worship. God sees beyond the façade we try and blind ourselves with. In 1 Samuel 16, Jesus explaining his rejection Eliab says, “man sees the appearance, but the Lord sees into the heart.” The only way we can truly allow light into our lives is through God. In John 8:12, Jesus says “whoever follows me will have the light of life.” So, this Lenten, take a moment each day, to allow light to shine into your life. Jesus made a blind man see, and he has and can continue to do that for us. Let’s not be the Pharisees who refused to believe in the miracle and threw the blind man who could see out. This Lent let’s try to put God first. We do Lent resolutions not to flex on our friends but to be one with God. No matter how badly life blinds us, God can make us see. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, a day of relative celebration, so let’s celebrate our common light.

James Jin, Arts and Sciences '20

March 23<sup>rd</sup>

Isaiah 65:17-21

Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b

John 4:43-54

“Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”

Three years ago, I worked with a deaf boy who lived 11 years without language. He did not even know his name when I met him. A debate often discussed among people with disabilities is if Jesus would still physically heal them today. During this time, society considered people with disabilities unclean and unwelcomed, but Jesus knew that without signs and wonders of His healing, the community would not believe them to be clean. After all, their uncleanliness would spread just by being near them. Because of that, Jesus was intentional in healing both spiritual *and* physical needs. Although it showed that God is all-powerful, I believe that God is willing to do whatever it takes to restore His creation. Some are healed miraculously; others are not. No matter what, God has rescued us through Jesus from our sins, and we will be a new creation in heaven.

A family who learned American Sign Language (ASL) adopted my student, and I am happy to report my student has gained an identity through ASL. There are roughly 350-400 sign languages around the world. Presently, we only have a full translation of the Bible into videos using ASL. You have heard God’s Word, but they have heard nothing. I want everyone to experience the description in the first reading. Heaven is a place for everyone in the community. No limits to those who are allowed, so it is our duty and privilege to be able to tell everyone about Jesus!

After all, “Faith comes by *understanding*, and *understanding* by the Word of God.”

Hearing Optional.

Steven Kramer, STLCOP '22

LENT 2020

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March 24<sup>th</sup>

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12  
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9  
John 5:1-16

God has a plan of purest intentions for you, even if it may appear the opposite. In Ezekiel 47: 1-9,12, the angel leads Ezekial through varying levels of water. It becomes increasingly difficult for him to wade through, and eventually it is deep enough to be a river. Upon first reflection, it seems counterintuitive for an angel of the Lord to put Ezekial in this situation. Yet it is then revealed that this river leads to an abundance of life. Even when he did not understand why he was being led through rising waters, Ezekial kept his faith. Like him, we should trust in the Lord in his goodness through rough waters to make it to the life-giving destination of eternal Heaven.

Similarly, in John 5:1-16, Jesus' act of healing the crippled man shows God's love for his children and mirrors the gift of salvation the Lord gives us. In a way, sin spiritually cripples us. However, we are not doomed to the imprisonment of sin. Jesus heals us so that we can one day walk alongside Him, just as the man in this passage.

Anna Haudrich, Arts & Sciences '23

## March 25<sup>th</sup> - Annunciation of the Lord

Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10, Psalm 40:7-11

Heb 10:4-10, Lk 1:26-38

“May it be done to me according to your word.”

Mary’s words to the Angel Gabriel are incredibly familiar. Not only because it’s a passage we hear over and over again, but because her words so clearly remind me of Jesus in the Agony in the Garden. Both Mother and Son have seemingly impossible tasks they have been asked to accept. Mary, a virgin, to conceive a bear a son, the Son of God. Jesus, fully God and also fully man, to be killed in the most humiliating way in order to redeem humanity. In the Agony, Jesus was filled with anguish, overwhelmed by what he knew he must do, and turned to the Father saying, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Mary, too, is overwhelmed with fear and confusion. For how could she become the Mother of God? What I find so beautiful in the Angel Gabriel’s words is that he comforts her with knowledge that someone else she knows is also in an ‘impossible’ situation. “And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren.” How often do we find ourselves looking for support from someone in our moments of fear, joy, suffering, stress? Gabriel’s words remind Mary that she can find comfort in Elizabeth—in community—to say yes to what God has asked of her.

I find this passage incredibly comforting. Mary’s yes at the Annunciation not only encourages us to bravely accept God’s will, but it encourages us to find support in those around us, who are also accepting the will of God, even in seemingly impossible tasks. This feast of the Annunciation allows us to enter into this humble acceptance of God’s will, to remind us of the power of Jesus’s yes, as he took up his cross to Calvary.

Liz Murphy, Arts & Sciences '20



March 26<sup>th</sup>

Exodus 32:7-14  
Psalm 106:19-23  
John 5:31-47

Let's put ourselves in Moses' shoes. In the first reading, God did not choose to save the people simply because Moses pleaded. Notice the relationship between Moses and God: one of trust, honesty, openness. It is easy to understand God's relenting to Moses' request as an example of how our own petitions and prayers can be met by God if we simply ask. However, I invite you instead to ponder how the salvation of the people in this reading can be understood as an example of God honoring the strong, loving relationship that Moses and God shared. Moses gave himself--his whole life--to God, and in return, God gave himself to Moses and his people.

How would it feel to have as close of a relationship to God as Moses had? How can we pursue such intimacy with God? The answer is prayer. Not prayer in which we ask for specific outcomes, but instead, personal prayer in which we feel connected with God. When do you feel closest to God? Your prayer could be exercising, writing, reading, singing, dancing, or any other activity that helps you feel God. Listen to the Holy Spirit inside you. In whatever way works for you, allow yourself to draw near to God as Moses did. In return, God will draw close to you as well.

Mattie Gottbrath

March 27<sup>th</sup>

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22  
Psalm 34: 17-21, 23  
John 7:1-2. 10, 25-30

To me, the message of these readings is a message of persevering in doing what's right. For his entire life, Jesus was ridiculed and heckled and hated because of what he stood for. He stood for what he knew, that He was the Son of God. No matter what people around him said or thought about him, he continued to preach and believe in what he thought was right.

I want people to take away from these passages the courage and strength to continue to pursue what they are passionate about and what they believe in. Regardless what other people say about you, I want you to continue to persevere. And this is so hard to do because everyone wants to be accepted by those around them, especially by those they love. But as the end of the gospel says, "So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand upon him". Always do what you believe is right.

Andrew Wessel, Arts and Sciences '21

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

March 28<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 11:18-20

Psalm 7:2-3, 9b-12

John 7:40-53

In today's Gospel, after Jesus has been talking with a crowd, the Chief Priests and Pharisees sent guards to arrest Him, thinking that surely, he couldn't be the Christ since he was just a man from Galilee. Yet, even though the guards were confused because Jesus was not who they expected, not one person laid hands on Him.

"Never before has anyone spoken like this man." The profound words that Jesus spoke touched the people around Him and everyone could recognize that they were in the presence of someone special.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, could not see past what they thought they knew about the Christ and were unwilling to listen to Jesus. How often do we condemn someone without listening to what they have to say simply because we think we know better than they do?

If we are only looking for God in places where we expect Him to be, we are closing ourselves off from so many other potential interactions with Christ. We have to constantly seek Him out in our life and look for Him in each person we encounter: in the homeless person on the sidewalk, in our friend that we might be upset with, in the person being attacked for believing something different.

In this season of Lent, let us always be open to seeing Christ, especially when we might not expect Him, and may we be truly changed by His words.

Jeffrey Eichinger, Engineering Masters  
'20

## March 29<sup>th</sup> – Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ez 37:12-14  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Rom 8:8-11  
John 11:1-45

Throughout the last two years without my uncle, I constantly think about how different my life would be if he were still around. Would he have shown up with ice cream during my first break up or laughed when I quoted Tupac during my graduation speech? During one of my panic attacks, I remember one of my closest friends looking at me and asking, “you know he’s still with you, right?”

Today’s gospel, the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, reminds those grieving of this beautiful message. The gospel tells us that death in comparison to power and love of God is so limited as Jesus reminds Martha, Mary, and every one of us that “whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live.” The readings reveal to us the never-ending love God has for all of us, despite the mistakes and choices we’ve made in this life and asks us to trust in his plan and bring our struggles to him.

While grief is a battle, I fight every day, it’s brought me closer to God in so many ways. This Lenten season help us remember that those who are not with us are in a better place and finding peace in the eternal love of God. Let us pray for those grieving to find strength in trusting the Lord’s plan and for us all to find ways to come closer to God and his everlasting love, even in the darkest moments of our lives.

Christine Nguyen, Business '23

March 30<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41c-62

Psalm 23:1-6

John 8:1-11

After reflecting a bit on the First Reading, something that strongly resonated with me was the concept of fearlessness. Susanna knew that she had done nothing wrong and she cried out to God to save her, knowing that he would. Daniel also exhibited this fearlessness. He, a young boy, raised his voice and challenged the larger community, but more important the elders. In this time, challenging the elders would have been highly irregular and probably frowned upon. However, his conviction was strong, and he knew Susanna was innocent. Thus, he fought for her. From the Gospel reading, something that stuck out to me was the seemingly dismissive nature of Jesus. When the Pharisees brought the woman to him, he hardly even paid attention to them. However, when he finally answered, he essentially said that we all sin. So, whether the woman committed the crime brought against her or not does not matter. She deserves to be set free. This is similar, yet different to the conclusion of the story with Susanna. In this case, there is no need to even prove this woman's innocence. As we enter the Lenten season, although things may be difficult at times, it is important that we continue to keep our faith in God. We have nothing to fear. To that point, even once we mess up and sin, we have nothing to fear. All we can do is be better next time. We must try again and be unafraid to do so.

Chibueze Agwu, Arts & Sciences '20

**Confession Marathon tomorrow  
2pm-midnight @ CSC**

LENT 2020

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March 31<sup>st</sup>

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 102: 2-3, 16-18, 19-21

John 8:21-30

After reading this passage through the first time, I will admit that I found the message of today's gospel slightly off-putting and convoluted. What could Jesus possibly mean by telling these people that he was going to a place where they could not follow, even though Jesus' ministry strives to usher his followers heaven bound? But in the case of this teaching, it is important that Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, devoutly religious men who were dedicated to the literal interpretation of scripture and tradition. In some ways, the Pharisees are much like ourselves who get so caught up in the little details that we fail to see the big picture, the greater message. And much like the Pharisees, we may find it challenging to see Jesus both in his divinity and his humanity since we are "of this world" and He is "not of this world."

How often have we looked for Christ with criteria that fits within our worldly perspective? We ask, "why won't Jesus just speak to me or give me a sign?" or "I just need some kind of physical proof that He's really here." But in looking for Jesus in the places we think we will find Him or experience his presence, we are missing out on the subtle ways that He may be trying to communicate with us, ways that are of His intention and not ours.

Jesus uses the phrase I AM in this passage to tell us just that. In the perfect expression of the trinitarian mystery, God, who reveals his name as "I AM", identifies himself as the God who is always there, present to his people through His son in order to close the gap between this world and the next.

Brianna Barkocy, Occupational Therapy  
'22

April 1<sup>st</sup>

Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95  
(Psalm) Daniel 3:52-56  
John 8:31-42

April Fools!

In some sense, being a fool is the primary vocation for a Christian. Just consider some of the aspects of the Christian calling: The call to sit quietly in prayer in a culture that worships being productive. The call to non-violence and reconciliation in a culture glorifies physical and emotional violence. The call to simplicity and generosity in a culture that always craves more. The call to humble service in a culture that promotes self-importance. The fool is one who sees the world differently than others.

If there is no aspect of your life that rubs against the conventional wisdom of this age, it's time for a serious spiritual reassessment. Not that this is unique to our time--today's readings show that being true to our call to follow God has always seemed foolish to many. In the first reading, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are "fools" for staying true to God rather than worshiping an idol...even if the consequence is death! In the Gospel, Jesus is a "fool" for claiming that he is Son of the Father, and for speaking against the conventional wisdom of his religious milieu. We see this foolishness through the ages, too, with figures like Perpetua and Felicity, Francis and Clare of Assisi, and Oscar Romero. Fools all!

Where might you embrace the call, on this our unofficial feast day, to be a fool for God's sake? What might that look like for you? Are you willing to throw yourself towards this outlandish Christian calling?

Sean O'Rourke, Campus Minister

LENT 2020

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April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Genesis 17: 3-9

Psalm 105:4-9

John 8:51-59

In the first two readings we learn of God's commitment to provide for the descendants of Abraham as long as they only worship God. God promises perpetual ownership of fertile land and the privileges of kings. The gospel then demonstrates the consequences when descendants deny God's grace.

In the gospel, Jesus says, "In all truth, I tell you, before Abraham ever was, I am," and the Jews respond by preparing to throw stones. For them, Abraham and the other prophets were dead, therefore Jesus must be a liar. In worshiping the physical world before death, the Jews breached their contract to worship God. When we attribute our accomplishments solely to our intellect, strength, grit or other earthly attributes, we deny God's role in our success. When people are told their success cannot be attributed solely to their personal capabilities, when you invalidate their truth, in their defense they may become aggressive.

I would ask the reader to question times in their lives when they overcame adversity and attributed it solely to their efforts. Who else was involved? Often, we immediately think of our loved ones and perhaps our professional relations. But what about those we may not see?

The janitorial staff who keeps your working space clean...The electrician who fixes the broken traffic light so you can quickly and safely get someplace on time...Those who offer prayers for those in need...God.

And what have you done for the janitor? The electrician? Have you repaid God's grace, or have you thrown stones?

Victoria Grace Assokom-Siakam



April 3<sup>rd</sup>

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalm 18:2-7

John 10:31-42

When I am hurt, the first thing I ask is, “why?” Why do they do this to me? Why do I deserve this? Why did God allow this? Jeremiah writes that God tests the just. God tests the just and the rest as well. We are asked to persevere through it all. It is hard to be Catholic, but through dedication to our faith we can find a community to lean on when in distress.

If you call on God, God will hear you. The hard part is that sometimes you don't get an answer. You can scream and cry and curse God and not even get the satisfaction of a retaliation or response. Having a relationship with God is like the ultimate marshmallow test of delayed gratification.

During this Lenten season, make an effort to be unapologetically Catholic. One of the most influential moments in my journey of being openly Catholic was watching my friend say grace before every meal. The image of her grabbing a Slim Jim for a quick snack and making the sign of the cross brought a smile/smirk to my face but also gave me great strength. The who, what, when, and where didn't matter. She was still Catholic.

It doesn't matter if you are a just person with the purest of intentions. You will be tested. Though you may be struggling, I urge you to do the difficult thing and stick to your faith even when the doubts are screaming louder than the assurances.

Angela Gormley, Arts & Sciences '23

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

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April 4<sup>th</sup>

Ezekiel 37:21-28  
Jeremiah 31:10-13  
John 11:45-56

The Pharisees are forced to choose between getting rid of Jesus or the threat of the Romans taking their land. We are faced with this problem many times in our life; do we sacrifice someone to protect what we have, or do we stand up for what is right. As we near the end of Lent and look forward to the time of Easter we must look inward and contemplate whether we will go the easy route, like the Pharisees, or stand up for what is right.

Benjamin Gaffney, Engineering '20

## April 5<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday

(Procession) Mt 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18a, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Mt 26:14—27:66

Thematically, today's Scriptures address the animosity directed at Jesus. The first reading from the book of Wisdom speaks of the so-called wicked, who say that "merely to see him is a hardship for us, because his life is not like that of others, and different are his ways." This illuminates for us then how the Old Testament is fulfilled in the Gospel with the growing skepticism that Jesus is truly God Incarnate and the threats toward his life. What is significant in these passages is the attention given to the way one lives. I ask myself, "Do I live in such a way that people notice something *different*?" Perhaps you took up a practice or gave something up for Lent. While we are encouraged not to boast of our sacrifices or piety, these things should be changing our minds and hearts. The more space we open in our lives for God, the more we are transformed to be like Him who is notably *different* than the culture and environment in which He entered. As we prepare for Holy Week, may our lives be ever shaped to pave a new way for our God in the world.

Ingrid Herrenbruck, Business '20

April 6<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 42:1-7  
Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14  
John 12:1-11

Anger is a common, understandable, and often powerful response to injustice. But I see today's first reading as a warning against anger. Prophet Isaiah tells us that God's servant "shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street." The contrast the passage draws between truth and justice on the one hand and making one's beliefs and anger known on the other hand is curious given that we know anger as a response to injustice.

Today's gospel offers an explanation. In that reading, Judas (who later betrayed Jesus) accuses another disciple of Jesus, Martha, of doing wrong by anointing the feet of Jesus with oil instead of selling the expensive oil and giving the money to the poor. As we learn, the real motivation behind Judas' words was his desire to take for himself the money intended for the poor, as he had done before. Jesus, God, could have known Judas' intentions and could have exposed them in front of the other disciples, alienating him from the community. But instead, Jesus justifies Martha's actions and only offer Judas a teaching, reminding him that He, God, is at the core of what is right and wrong, even prior to charity to the poor.

Jesus did not fix the structural issue within the group of his disciples; Judas would keep stealing. But, Jesus reminds us in this story that a human person is both the beginning and the end: a person is necessary for good to flourish through charity but also too valuable be given up on for the sake of a structural 'good.' Anger tells us to alienate. The Gospel tells us to keep loving, believing, and remain hopeful as we help guide each other towards holiness.

Tomek Cebrat, Campus Ministry  
Intern

LENT 2020

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April 7<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 49:1-6  
Psalm 71:1-4a, 5-6ab, 15, 17  
John 13:21-33, 36-38

As Good Friday looms ever closer, Jesus knows what is ahead. His human body likely felt the weight of this burden, the anxiety boiling in his chest, knowing in this vulnerable moment that he has to tell his friends that one of them will betray Him.

But when Jesus said to Judas, “what you are going to do, do quickly,” none of the disciples realized what occurred between Love and the betrayer. Not all things are clearly revealed even to those who ask. When Jesus says that where he goes, we cannot come, he seems to say, “Children, there are some things you won’t understand until later, mysteries I’ve given you to ponder which you cannot now follow to completion.”

After Judas left, Jesus proclaims that God is glorified. Even though the remaining disciples did not fully grasp what was going on, God was glorified—in that moment all the Upper Room truly worshiped Him, truly revered His majesty and goodness, truly loved Him. Even when we question God, even when things aren’t clear to us, we can still love Him.

The first reading and psalm for today proclaim God as the source of salvation. “We are made glorious in the sight of the Lord” ...but in attaining this, we are also brought to our knees, to face our innermost vulnerabilities. The paradox of our faith is that it’s okay to feel deeply troubled even by God’s will, and, like John leaning against the heart of Jesus, we can continue to love and find refuge in Him.

Maria Schmeer, Arts & Sciences '22

LENT 2020

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April 8<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 50:4-9a  
Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34  
Matthew 26:14-25

In Today's Gospel, we read how Judas betrayed Jesus. Judas was one of the apostles that Jesus chose. But Judas willingly spoke to the High Priests and told them he could point out Jesus. In the garden, Jesus told the apostles that one would betray him, and Judas asked, "Was it I Rabbi?" He asked knowing he was betraying. Similarly, I have a close friend, who is like a brother to me and last spring he started dating someone I was interested in. I told him I was interested in her weeks before. The pain for me was enormous. I questioned why I was still friends with him and questioned ending the friendship. When we talked a few days later we ended up getting into a huge argument and said things that we both regret. Weeks passed and we finally talked about what happened. In the end, we decided to remain friends. But it took a long time to accept them as a couple. When I saw them together, it hurt. In both situations sometimes the people who are closest to us are the ones that hurt us the most. During your day today I want you to think about a couple of things:

1. Why do you think Judas asked Jesus "Is it I rabbi?"
2. Do you think Judas felt guilty for betraying Jesus?
3. When did someone wrong or betray you?
4. How did you respond?

Eric Starrs, Campus Ministry  
Intern

## April 9<sup>th</sup> – Holy Thursday

### 7pm Mass @ CSC

#### Mass of Chrism

Isaiah 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9

Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27

Revelation 1:5-8

Luke 4:16-21

#### Mass of the Lord's Supper

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

Confusion. Turmoil. Mistrust. Fear.

These are feelings I can imagine the disciples experienced the night of the last supper when Jesus was suddenly and fiercely arrested after a beautiful Passover feast. We celebrate this night as the institution of the Eucharist, though the first celebration didn't end as a joyous event, but instead as one of chaos and unknowns. It has led me to reflect on what we do with the unknowns in our own lives.

As a fourth-year medical student, I am currently in the process of deciding where to go for residency. I am ranking programs, programs are ranking me, and ultimately a national algorithm will determine where I train. I have found it incredibly difficult to live in this limbo of my unknown next steps, and with my often-times cloudy introspection in determining preferences and priorities. I like having control, and I like having knowledge. In this process, I have neither. Like a kindergartner learning 2+2, I am clumsily practicing how to let go and trust. Sometimes, I feel like Peter – lashing out at those around me or denying what I know deep down because I worry about my reputation. Sometimes I feel like the disciples in Gethsemane – so tired out by my day-to-day that I miss crucial, precious moments with people I love.

This Triduum, we have the historical luxury of knowing that Easter Sunday is just around the corner from the confusion and despair we read about tonight. It reminds me to reflect on how we can learn to trust during the unknowns of our own lives and wait in hope for the glorious Easter Sundays to come.

JACKIE KADING, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE '20

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### HIGHLIGHT: Chrism Mass

This Mass is celebrated once a year on the morning of Holy Thursday at the Cathedral in each diocese.

During the Mass, the local bishop will bless the oil of catechumens, the oil of the sick, and the oil of chrism (only the bishop may do this blessing).

We use the first for adult catechumens and infants, the second for anointing the sick, and the sacred oil of chrism for baptism, confirmation, the ordination of priests, and the consecration of altars.

In recent years, this Mass has also acknowledged the ministry of priests. It invites them to renew their commitment of service and to receive the prayers and support of the people.

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at 10 am at the Cathedral Basilica on Holy Thursday here in St. Louis and all are welcome to attend this ancient tradition.



April 10<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday  
7pm Service @ CSC

Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25  
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9  
John 18:1-19:42

Today's Gospel is a lengthy account of the events that took place the night of Jesus' crucifixion, from the betrayal of the apostle Judas to death on the cross. While this is a story most of us are very familiar with, I can't help but be filled with awe every single time I read it.

Throughout all the events of that night, Jesus was a perfect example of accepting God's plan for us and doing so with grace and selflessness. He also serves as a perfect example of forgiveness. No matter how badly He was being treated, He treated everyone with respect and kindness.

This Gospel reading always reminds me of how much God loves us. He loves you so much that He sent His only son to die for YOU. And he would do it again and again and again *just* for you. Even if you were the only person on this earth, He would send His only son to die for you. Now I don't know about you, but to me that is the most powerful and most comforting feeling in the world. To know that no matter what you've done in life or what your relationship is with God, He has always and will always love you.

Maria Rivero, Arts & Sciences '22

**Reminder: day of fasting and abstinence**

## April 11<sup>th</sup> – Holy Saturday

7:30pm Mass @ CSC

Genesis 1:1-2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a

Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Exodus 14:15-15:1

Isaiah 54:5-14

Isaiah 55:1-11

Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4

Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28

Romans 6:3-11

Mt 28:1-10

Our time of waiting is nearly over. Jesus has been dead for days, and the world is about to change completely and irrevocably. The disciples of Jesus had no idea what was coming. Love and life had been lost. So too were they lost and thus caught completely unaware when the Lord rose. However, we know now that the rising of the Lord is just one day away. How do we prepare for change in our lives? Do we ignore or forget about it until it comes? Or do we amend ourselves to be ready? The last forty days of Lent have been our preparations for the coming of the Lord. Prepare to celebrate, but also do one last check of your preparations. Do you have the state of mind that you want? Have you forgiven and love all? Is your relationship with God the strong guiding force in your life? When the kingdom comes and everything changes, you want to be ready. You still have time now, but that will not always be the case. Because the winds of change are coming, and they are going to hit hard.

Brace yourself.

Kane Koubsky, Business '21

April 12<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday

9:30am & 11:30am Mass @ CSC

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or First Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9 or Mt 28:1-10 or Luke 24: 13-35

In the first reading, we read, “He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed.” When I read this, I am reminded of the importance of “doing good” to others. It sounds so simple but can be difficult and complex. It requires us to step outside of ourselves and treat others with kindness, healing them when they need it most. Life can become so busy and stressful that it’s hard to make time to heal others but serving others can reenergize our heart and gives us additional untapped strength.

Additionally, in the Gospel, everyone is running around and freaking out that Jesus’ body has disappeared from the tomb. It says, “they both ran, but the other disciple ran faster.” This reinforces how chaotic life can be. A lot of times we’re just running from one place to another, hoping we can keep up with the “other disciple” running faster than us. But when we slow down and listen to God, we realize that we don’t have the fully story. In this case, the disciples are unaware that “he had to rise from the dead.” This Easter, we need to stop running and wearing ourselves down. We need to stop and listen to God and ask him for clarity and understanding, in hopes that we can see the importance and benefit of “doing good” in our lives.

Gracie Mersmann, Business `22

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