



2023 Lenten Reflection

Cover artwork by Anaelda Ramos, Art & Sciences '26  
**The Catholic Student Center, Washington University in St. Louis**

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**Lenten Schedule :**

**Ash Wednesday 2/22**

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*Medical Campus Services:*  
Mass: 12:05pm, Medical Campus, EPNEC, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor.

*Main Campus services:*  
Ecumenical Ashes Service: 12:15pm, CSC Chapel  
Mass: 5:30pm, CSC Chapel

**Palm Sunday 4/2**

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

## **Holy Thursday 4/6**

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Mass: 7pm, CSC Chapel  
Adoration afterwards until midnight

## **Good Friday 4/7**

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Service: 7pm, CSC Chapel

## **Easter Vigil 4/8**

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

## **Easter 4/9**

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Mass: 10am, Graham 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 3/12)

#### **Mondays:**

Evening Prayer with Sean, 5pm  
Women's Grad student Bible Study, 7pm @ CSC

#### **Tuesdays**

DUC Lunch with Jenna & Kate: 11am-1pm  
Mass and soup, 5:15pm (except 3/14), CSC living room  
RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults: 7-8:30pm CSC Social Hall

#### **Wednesdays**

Medical Campus Soulful Conversations with  
Fr. Gary, 11:30am-1:30pm, Danforth Chapel.  
Adoration (except 3/1, 3/15, 4/8): 8:30pm-9:30pm

BD Dinner with Kate 5-7pm

Thursdays

Choir Practice, 7-8pm

Fridays:

Rosary group: 4:30-5pm, CSC chapel

Special Events:

Grad Student/Young Adult Deepening Retreat

2/24-2/25, @ Il Ritiro Retreat Center

Retreat in Everyday Life (Busy Person's Retreat)

2/26-3/3

Tuesday Mass and Talk with Fr. Matt Malone, SJ

2/28, 5:15pm Mass, Talk on American Catholicism - 7pm

Spanish Mass

3/1, 3/29, 8-9pm

Grad Student Spirituality & Healthcare Professional

3/2 & 3/30, 12-1pm, Med Campus, Danforth Chapel

Grad Student Spirituality & Professional Life

3/9, 12-1pm @ CSC

CSC Friends Speaker Series (students can attend too!)

3/22, 7pm, Fr. Joe Kempf - "Don't you Dare Forgive, Unless..."

Stations of the Cross

3/24 & 3/31, 5:30-6pm

Confession Marathon

3/28 3pm-10pm @ CSC

CSU Fish Fry

3/31, 6-8pm

Dates To Look Out For:

LGBTQ+ Soul

## A Note from the Director of Ministry:

### **An Abundant Harvest, Many Laborers are Called**

*So shall my word be, that goes forth from my mouth;  
It shall not return to me void, but shall do my will,  
achieving the end for which I sent it. Is 55:11*

Do you believe in a generous God? Is your faith one of abundance or scarcity? In the Lenten reading above Isaiah promises us that when God's Word goes out it has the power to work on us and return abundant and fruitful. Lent is a time to examine how willing we are to allow God to sow seeds of abundance in us.

Do we allow for abundance in our lives though? Lent interrupts the busyness of our lives to remind us of the importance of making time for abundance. The harvest is abundant at the Catholic Student Center and this Lent we are challenging our community to become the laborers that God desires. To put it plainly and boldly, the CSC is challenging every member of our community, students and CSC friends alike, to take the abundance of the harvest at the CSC out into the rest of the world.

As laborers you deserve to be equipped for this work and the CSC is launching a special Lenten campaign to help. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we believe that "God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work." 2 Cor 9:8

**Abundant prayer:** The CSC will provide every member of our community (of all ages) a Mass journal to help deepen the experience of Mass so that we can take the richness of our prayer into the rest of our week. If you aren't a member of the CSC we encourage you to do the same on your own this Lent. Starting each Mass with a simple prayer, "Lord show me one way during this Mass that I can be a better version of myself."

**Abundant Fasting:** The world gives the message 'more is better' from a mindset of scarcity; take, consume, and hold onto so you won't run out. Jesus teaches that less is better because the Lord our God provides for us abundantly. May your fasting this year be about making space in your life so that you can share God's abundant love with others more readily.

**Abundant Almsgiving:** *You are being enriched in every way* so that you can share generously; and the CSC is encouraging our community to do that through corporeal and spiritual acts of mercy this Lent. Each day or each week pick an act of mercy (there are 14 of them) and become laborers of the

harvest. In a particular way, share the story of God’s abundant love in your life with different people you are in relationship with, just as our students have done through this Lenten Reflection Book.

Together, we can ensure that God’s Word will “achieve the end for which (God) sent it.”

Troy Woytek  
CSC Director of Ministry

## Introduction to the Booklet:

Welcome to the Lenten Reflection Booklet! Students from almost every one of Washington University’s colleges and every year group wrote reflections for this booklet. I hope it serves as a guide for you this Lent. I hope it will be a source of fresh perspectives on familiar readings that lend to new spiritual insights.

In the Bible, periods of 40 days often mark periods of intense growth or trial; The Flood, Jesus in the Desert, and the time Jesus was on Earth after the Resurrection, are just a few examples. I encourage you to take this time to be contemplative of Jesus’ role in your life and how we can more intensely love Him.

Thank you for your support for this booklet year-after-year and I hope you have a blessed Lent.

Zane Watson, 2022-23 CSU Spiritual  
Chair

## 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/>

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

## February 22<sup>nd</sup> – Ash Wednesday

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

Today's Gospel is probably one of the most well recognized and least listened to: "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father." I don't like Lent, not because of difficult Lenten commitments, but because of the competitive self-serving way that many of us use this holy time. I used to be like that. Each year, I gave up more and more foods and became increasingly vocal about it. My Lenten commitments became the perfect excuse for my developing eating disorder and allowed me to starve myself without anyone suspecting. I have never received more praise. "Wow, Angela's so *committed*, so *holy*, so full of *self-control*." I wasn't thinking of God, I was thinking of myself. I would guess that for many of us, giving up a food item does not actually help us grow closer to God. I pretended it did for many years, but what it really did was pull me *away* from God.

After I started recovering, it became almost intolerable to be around a church during Lent because of the constant comments from people hoping to use Lent to lose weight, to get in shape, and to change themselves, supposedly in the name of God.

I beg you as we start this season to truly reflect on what you want to do for Lent and, more importantly, *why*. Who are you serving, God or yourself?

Angela Gormley, Arts & Sciences '23

**Reminder: day of fasting and abstinence**



February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Luke 9:22-25

Today's Gospel speaks to the difficult journey all followers of Jesus undertake. When our lives are proceeding smoothly, it is easy to trust in the Lord's plan for us. We remember to pray daily, do good deeds, and dedicate time to growing deeper in our faith. However, it is not so easy to set aside time for our relationship with the Lord when we are faced with the challenges of school, work, and daily life. But this is when we must truly take up our crosses. Faced with challenges, it is tempting to take shortcuts, even in our faith life. A few years back, I found myself skimming through daily Bible readings without absorbing any of His message, frequently skipping the weekday Mass I usually went to, and occasionally studying while I attended Sunday Mass. I was going through the motions of living a good faith life, but the intentional act of following Him was not there.

When Jesus states, "Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it," in today's Gospel, He is referring to the sacrifice, struggle, and possible rejection we are all called to endure on an intentional faith journey. There will be times when "taking up [your] cross daily" will feel too difficult and the rejection and the sacrifices made along the way, overwhelming. However, we do not carry our crosses alone. We must never lose sight of Jesus, who bears the combined weight of all our crosses. Ultimately, the little acts of faith which comprise the entirety of our faith journey, acts like truly honoring the Sabbath Day or taking a moment for self-reflection, will renew our minds, bodies, and souls.

During this Lenten season, I pray that the Lord gives you the strength to continue to follow Him and the grace to forgive yourself for whatever makes your cross too heavy to bear at times. You are not alone on this journey. I hope you use this Lent as an opportunity for insight and see for yourself the ultimate gift of love that Jesus has poured out for this world.

Jessica Bigley, WashU Med

February 24<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 58:1-9a

Psalm 51:3-6ab, 18-19

Amos 5:14

Matthew 9:14-15

When John the Baptist was in prison, several of the prophet's followers asked Jesus why His disciples were not fasting like the Pharisees. For them, fasting was a way of honoring God. Similarly, fasting and many sacrifices we make as Catholics are acts of love that help draw us closer in our relationships with God and others. It's important to remember that we are not called to sacrifice for the sake of suffering. We are called to love, and it is through prayer and through giving ourselves away to others that we fulfill this calling. Sometimes, this involves sacrifice. In this Gospel, Jesus reminds us that we have to be fully attentive to the present if we are to love. There will be a time to mourn, He informs us, such as when He is momentarily taken away. Fasting is a way of atoning for sins that push God away and reflecting on how to love better; it has its time and place.

Appreciating the present and being attentive to opportunities to draw closer to others and to God may require day-to-day sacrifices that enrich our lives. I start by trying to be constantly attentive to what my family members need and to ways that I can help my friends in and outside of the CSC in our daily lives. It might be as simple and small as offering them a ride home late at night or any acts of kindness that the moment requires. From my personal experience, when we are more constantly tuned into those close to us, we become more present to those who need us most.

Sebastian Laboy, Engineering '23

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

February 25<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 58:9b-14  
Psalm 86:1-6, 3-6  
Ezekiel 33:11  
Luke 5:27-32

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges a tax collector named Levi to leave his sinful ways and follow Him. Without hesitation, Levi abandons his worldly pleasures, wealth, and power and follows Jesus. Levi then hosts a banquet for Jesus with other tax collectors at his house. Seeing this, the Pharisees complain about how Jesus eats and drinks with "sinners." Jesus says in reply, "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

In my eyes, there are two main takeaways from this Gospel. First, the Pharisees provide us with an example of how NOT to think and behave. The Pharisees were selfish, arrogant, and judgmental, wondering why Jesus was spending time with "sinners" and not with them. They did not recognize that they too were sinners. We are all sinners, in need of God's grace. Second, we are called to be like Levi, to have the faith to do what God desires. Just as Jesus called to Levi, He calls to us, "Follow me." He encourages us to turn away from sin and temptation, and showers us with His love and mercy. We are called to recognize our own sins and repent.

Take a few minutes to reflect on the last few hours, days, weeks. When were you drawn into sin? Know that you are not the only one. Recognize those moments, repent, and learn and grow from them. Do not be afraid to seek God's grace, strength, and forgiveness.

Vytautas Staniskis, Business &  
Engineering '24

## February 26<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Psalms 51: 3-6, 12-13, 17

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

The Gospel for today details the temptations that Jesus experiences over His forty-day fast in the desert. In my opinion, this reading is one of the greatest depictions of who God is and how great He is, and I will explain why. As a kid and even still now sometimes. I would frequently say prayers like, "Dear Lord, if you help my basketball team win this game, I promise I'll never miss Mass again and I'll believe in you forever, I swear."

In general, those prayers were like, "God, do this thing for me real quick to prove to me that you are real and powerful." It doesn't take a theologian to notice that that sounds an awful lot like what Satan was demanding of Jesus in the Gospel. That's why I think this story is an amazing example to draw back on whenever we feel like we're doubting God or our relationship with Him. It's a normal thing to feel. Life is unfair sometimes, and it's full of hardship, so who are we not to wonder why we have to deal with some crap from time to time. We are human. However, this story offers a great response to us when we feel desperate or even let down by God. God is good and is greater than a basketball game. He's better than any bad day. He's greater than Satan and anything Satan can throw at you, so let's not forget that.

Will Giffen, Engineering '24

February 27<sup>th</sup>

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18

Psalm 19:8-10, 15

2 Corinthians 6:2b

Matthew 25:31-46

Today's Liturgy of the Word introduces the Ten Commandments to Moses as well as the Corporal Works of Mercy to the disciples. While it's easy to feel overwhelmed by these responsibilities as Christians, let's take the opportunity this Lent to make space for what the Lord is calling us to do. Rather than viewing these expectations as seemingly insurmountable sets of rules, let's examine the invitation into holiness. What is the Lord calling us into this Lent? Where do we see a need for change in our own lives and the lives of others? How do we respond to Jesus as He proclaims, "What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me"?

Though it's easy to settle into our routines on campus, Jesus is calling us to see Him in everyone. How might we make an effort to view others with fresh eyes? This Lenten season, let's challenge ourselves to be truly present with all those we come across. How might we treat everyone if we truly saw them as Jesus? How might we reach out to those we've written off, as if this is the first day we've met them?

Mary Kate Charles, Sam Fox '24

February 28<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalms 34:4-7, 16-19

Matthew 4:4b

Matthew 6:7-15

The Lenten Gospel for today is so well-known that every Catholic can recite it by heart: The Lord's Prayer.

Jesus spoke to His disciples and left them with a guide on how to pray, a guide that we continue to use today. As we begin our Lenten journey, a time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we have a prayer from the Lord that we can fall back on.

Jesus says to His disciples before He recites the Lord's Prayer that God knows what's on our hearts. Even in times where we may be at a loss for words or overwhelmed by everything happening in our lives, our God knows our heart's desires. When we recite the Lord's Prayer, we recite the Word of God. As it says in Isaiah 55, the Word of God does not return to Him empty. Rather, it achieves exactly whatever purpose God has intended for it.

Whenever you are unsure of what to say in prayer, look to the Lord's Prayer.

Siobhan Davenport, American Culture  
Studies '23

March 1<sup>st</sup>

Jonah 3:1-10  
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19  
Joel 2:12-13  
Luke 11:29-32

The message for today's reading shows that God always forgives those who repent of their sins. People in Nineveh all repented and asked for God's forgiveness, and even the king gave away his power and wealth for God. The king's action shows that everyone is equal under God, and no one gets special treatment. Also, the readings show us we should believe in God under any circumstances. God warned Jonah; Jonah could have ignored the message if he had been lazy. Also, the citizens of Nineveh could have ignored the message, as fasting is challenging. The king could have ignored it, as he might want to retain his wealth and title. They all believed God and listened to His message, although the message of the whole city getting destroyed in forty days seemed unlikely. As long as people have faith and ask God for forgiveness, God will show mercy and forgive our sins.

Tim Chung, Arts & Sciences '24

March 2<sup>nd</sup>

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

Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8

Psalm 51:12a, 14a

Matthew 7:7-12

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus reminds us of the importance of prayer. He reminds us that in order to receive something, we need to ask for it first, and in order to find something, we must first seek it. However, this does not mean that God will give us whatever we ask for. I have often caught myself praying for worldly, materialistic things hoping that God would grant them to me. These prayers have usually gone unanswered. This is not because God isn't listening or doesn't have the power to grant me these things, but because God blesses us with good and holy things because He knows what will help us and what will hurt us. Thus, we should only pray for good and holy things, trusting that God will listen and help us.

The statement, "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you," from today's Gospel should also remind us to be willing to listen and help others when they ask for it, just like God does for us. God has a plan for us, and if our prayers align with His plan, they surely will be answered. But in order to receive these things, we must ask for them. This Gospel highlights the importance of action. If you want something to happen, you can't just sit and wait for the right moment. Opportunities don't just happen. You have to create them.

Kevin Bernal-Lazo, Engineering '24



March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Ez 18:21-28  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Ezekiel 18:31  
Matthew 5:20-26

“Miss Mia, why does Carson get the blue crayon when I want it? It’s just not fair!”

When I taught religious education, I struggled with the phrase “that’s not fair.” Some “unfair” situations could be solved (through the sharing of a blue crayon, for example). Others were far more complicated.

I felt that many things in my own life were unfair, too. Rather than directing my outrage at my classmates (for taking the blue crayon) or my teacher (for letting Carson take the blue crayon), I found myself pointing at God. Why do I have to love everyone? Why do I have to forgive when it hurts? Why are You calling me to teach middle school (Lord, have mercy)?

As I attempted to teach my students to let go of their resentment against each other (and against me, at times), I began to understand that I too needed to let go of my resentment for God. As Jesus said in today’s Gospel, I needed to be reconciled before I could come and offer my gift. We had been arguing, which in retrospect, mostly looked like me whining, “That’s not fair!” as Jesus sat and listened and loved. I needed to hand over my pennies, one by one, until I had nothing left but trust for the Lord. That can be scary. But it is also unbelievably freeing.

What is your “last penny”? Hand it over to God. Only then will you truly be released.

Mia Burkholder, Arts & Sciences '26

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

March 4<sup>th</sup>

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

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

2 Corinthians 6:2b

Matthew 5:43-48

Last year I chose to write a reflection on my birthday. This year I decided to write one on the birthday of someone I love, and to my luck, the Gospel is about love.

The readings today all have a central theme of following the Law of Moses. Moses describes the covenant being made between God and the Hebrew people, describing the rewards they will receive if they follow the Law. In the Gospel, Jesus challenges His followers to go beyond just following the Law, primarily calling us to love everyone even our enemies and persecutors.

As is typical for Jesus, He offers us wisdom that seems perfectly natural and sounds easy. He calls us to do more than the bare minimum of loving those who love us and make our lives better. It is worth noting the Gospel is part of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus also introduced us to the Golden Rule. One consistency in the descriptions of Heaven is those that follow Jesus' Law will be allowed to enter. This would mean that the Kingdom of Heaven is full of people who all love each other and their enemies.

A question remains of what love of everyone looks like. To that, I look to St. Ignatius: "Love is shown more in deeds than words." If we can follow Jesus' calling and by example, lead others to follow His teachings, we can go about creating a heavenlike society on Earth.

Will Labrador, Arts & Sciences '24

## March 5<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalms 33:4-5, 18-20, 22

2 Timothy 1: 8b-10

Matthew 17: 1-9

In the first reading, God seems to offer a pact to Abraham. He commands that Abraham go out from familiar lands and pledges His help as a guarantee of His allegiance to Abraham. A crucial part of this is the action on Abraham's part is that *he* must go out into foreign lands. As I peruse this first reading, I cannot help but think of myself and my fellow college students. We too are called to leave behind the familiar as we pursue the realization of an undetermined life. Our only safeguard is our trust in God. It makes me wish that I had what Abraham has: an iron-clad guarantee from God of success. But perhaps that uncertainty of success and of the future in general is an inseparable part of college's appeal. For many of us, it is the last frontier of exploration and childhood before the relative stability of adulthood. So even as I navigate through uncertain times, I do not flee from them, for there may be a time when I wish for some uncertainty once more. Until then, I shall trust in God and carry on.

Jared Gelerter, IPH '24

March 6<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 9:4b-10  
Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13  
John 6:63c, 68c  
Luke 6:36-38

The Lord our God possesses love for all of us, which is filled with mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. His love is one of the greatest gifts to humanity. Although we all have strayed from the path of true character and have undermined the importance of faith more than we all care to admit, it is vital to remember that God's love never wavers. Even when we find it hard to love ourselves, we must remember that God loved us first and has continued to love us throughout every day of our existence. We must not abuse this love but cherish it for all it is. God's love is unable to be put into words, greater than any love with Earthly bounds. When we fail, it is essential to ask for forgiveness for our shortcomings, as it is merely human to fall into temptation. No matter how egregious our fault, God never loses His faith in us. In order to fully understand the power of God's love, offering penance allows for us to build a stronger relationship with our Father. It is essential to strive to be the best version of ourselves every day. In addition to this, we must not lose our faith when things seem to go according to plan. We all must practice daily prayer and attend Mass in order to strengthen our relationship with God.

Anthony Kuceba, Olin '26

March 7<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 1:10, 16-20  
Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23  
Ezekiel 18:31  
Matthew 23:1-12

Today's readings emphasize the importance of acting morally and humbly despite temptations life may throw into our path. The first reading commands the people of Gomorrah to cleanse themselves of their wrongdoings and to "make justice [their] aim." The Lord addresses the crowd with the promise that their sins will be washed away if they are willing to "set things right," but He isn't suggesting that one must be perfect to be forgiven. Instead, as Jesus tells the crowds and His disciples in the Gospel, treat everyone around you as if you are their servant.

As Jesus often displays, respect and righteousness are not earned by ordering others around, but through forgiveness, empathy, and even sacrifice. As a member of the WashU Track & Field Team, I have become very familiar with our core team pillar of Servant Leadership. The team is more interconnected, supportive, and successful when the leaders are thinking about the rest of the team over themselves. This phenomenon is evident not only on a team, but in workplaces, community groups, families, and many other contexts that emulate the messages of this reading in our own lives.

Kaitlin Day, Engineering '24

March 8<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 18:18-20  
Psalm 31:5-6, 14-16  
John 8:12  
Matthew 20:17-28

All of Lent has been a time of preparation through sacrifice and an active emptying of oneself. This Gospel shows us that the disciples were just as prone to the temptation of leaning into one's ego as we often are. The humility of God and His great sacrifice are so powerful and great that we are always falling short. In fact, the sense of entitlement that the brothers had is something rather common today in a world that constantly tells us we need to get every bit of what we deserve and get away with more if we can.

When the mother of the sons of Zebedee asked Jesus if her sons could sit at His right and left, Jesus prompted them a question. In essence, He asked them if they could take on the covenant, the promise, the sacrifice that He will make. And in their determination, say that they can. What they don't remember is that God only gives us what we can handle. He did not put Jesus' task on their shoulders, but nor are they the Son of God. What they did not fully comprehend yet was what Jesus said next. He told them that to be great, you must strive to be the lowest. Lower yourself in terms of glory, pride, and worldly fortunes, not in virtue, integrity, hard work, or joy. It is in this lowering where we will find greatness, not in requesting recognition and making promises you can't keep.

Emily Swoboda, Arts & Sciences '25

March 9<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Luke 8:15

Luke 16:19-31

In today's reading from Jeremiah, we are reminded of our desire to know and understand other people. Why do they act the way they do? What makes them tick? How come they made this decision? I think that trying to understand other people is a way that we can attempt to understand ourselves. Why do I experience this suffering? What purpose do I have in the world?

Jeremiah tells us that these concerns are to be left up to God: "More torturous than all else is the human heart, who can understand it? I, the Lord, alone probe the mind and test the heart."

In this excerpt Jeremiah emphasizes that our worries and our needs are under divine supervision, and that those who trust in God will be rewarded. I struggle a lot with giving God the reins; I grab onto every thread of hope that I can take full control of my relationships, of my situations, and of my future. But holding on to God as He guides me through life provides me with a gift I can't live without, flexibility.

Holding on too tightly to my own plans eventually causes me to fall into any storm that passes me, but by holding on to God, my roots keep me afloat "like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: It fears not the heat when it comes, its leaves stay green; In the year of drought, it shows no distress, but still bears fruit."

Mason Leffler, Arts & Sciences '25

March 10<sup>th</sup>

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

Psalm 105:16-21

John 3:16

Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Growing up, I always found today's Gospel reading confusing. Who in their right mind, seeing their previous envoys of servants murdered at the hands of tenant farmers, would send their *own son* to the same dangerously violent place? Then it hit me: God did exactly that, out of love for us.

Across the Old Testament, God spoke through prophets. Like the servants in the parable, these prophets were often mistreated or killed for proclaiming God's will. From Joseph of today's first reading (enslaved) to John the Baptist (beheaded), prophets were feared by religious and political leaders because of their radical calls to repentance. When Israel didn't heed these prophets, God sent Jesus the Son, who would also be killed for His revolutionary beliefs.

Prophets aren't just historical; the Holy Spirit continues to speak divine wisdom through the mouths of humans. Like their biblical predecessors, modern prophets call out social sins that are an affront to God, like racism, economic inequality, and environmental destruction. Because they call for a change to the status quo, they are frequently ridiculed, ignored, or cast out to the margins by those in power, just like in biblical times.

It can be uncomfortable to hear prophetic wisdom – it highlights our wrongdoings and calls us to think and act differently. Today, I challenge you to reconsider who might be prophets in our own time. Who cries out in the face of injustice? How can we listen, even when it's hard?

Grace Anderson, Brown School '23

**Reminder: day of abstinence**



March 11<sup>th</sup>

Micah 7: 14-15, 18-20

Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12

Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

Today's readings remind us of our Lord's profound mercy. When the scribes and Pharisees that gathered around Jesus grumbled about the fact that Jesus was allowing tax collectors and sinners to join them, He shared the Parable of the Prodigal Son with them.

Through the parable, Jesus explains that God's mercy IS both ever-present and omnipotent – the Lord will always forgive us of our sins, no matter how serious they are. So

long as we acknowledge our sins and choose to return to the Father, repenting and leaving behind the things that caused us to sin in the first place, God will save us. No sin is greater than the Lord's mercy. However, as is exemplified by the faithful brother from the parable, it can sometimes be difficult for us to give others the same mercy that we receive from God. It might seem Irrational, or unfair, or too demanding to be generous and loving towards others who have done things that we might not agree with. At times, we might even feel that some people are simply undeserving of our mercy.

However, despite these feelings, we have to remember that it is important to give mercy in abundance to those who need it most. We do this to receive that same abundant mercy from others in our own times of need. How merciful and compassionate are you willing to be? God's mercy is often shockingly powerful. How can you share that with others?

Sofía Then, Arts & Sciences '25

## March 12<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17: 3-7

Psalms 95: 1-2, 6-9

Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8

John 4: 5-42

### Water to Quench Our Doubt

Doubt is a familiar feeling. It can take form as doubt in others, but more sinks its unrelenting teeth onto our own hearts. Doubt loves to take root in situations where the questions outnumber the answers. When this happens, we freeze, second-guess ourselves, and hide from decision. In doing so, we hinder our ability to choose good, whether that be choosing to love ourselves, others, or God.

In the first reading we see the Israelites doubt that God is with them as they thirst for water. How quick they are to forget the seas being parted. In the Gospel, Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman, and she too is quick to doubt that Jesus is able to provide. It's not until He displays His knowledge of her that she is able to remove her doubt. In the second reading we see ourselves: children of God who are quick to forget and doubt the door that Jesus has opened to us.

In all of these readings, doubts are quenched by God. First through the water from the well, then through the water of life given to the Samaritan woman, and finally through the blood and water of Christ as it spilled from His side on the cross. At the end of the day, doubt is human, so when it reaches me, I reach for the water and answer God provides and work to find solace in knowing that the way has already been made.

Noah Maguigad, Engineering '23

March 13<sup>th</sup>

Second Kings 5:1-15ab

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

Luke 4:24-30

During this time of Lent, we often create new habits or fast from existing ones to prepare for the season of Easter. I know that I have occasionally made extravagant changes in my lifestyle during Lent that I am hoping will bring me closer to Jesus. In today's Gospel, Jesus mentions that "no prophet is accepted in his own native place" shortly before the people of His hometown become angry and run Him out. This makes me think of my own experience with returning to my hometown, maybe during summer or winter break. There have been times I have felt as though when I go home, many of those extravagant lifestyle changes naturally revert to habits I got used to when I was growing up.

I think it is important to make some changes for the better during Lent, but it is also good to spend some time considering how we act when we are comfortable in our own homes, whether that be a dorm, apartment, or the place we grew up. Sure, I can find Jesus in starting up a new prayer schedule, but how can I find Him in the prayers that I have said every day for years? What is it about the way I wake up every morning or the route I always take to my 11:30 class that can help me grow closer to Him? How can I hear His Word from the comfort of my home, without traveling some great length to find it?

Matthew Schwartz, Engineering '24

March 14<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 3:25, 34-43

Psalms 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9

Joel 2:12-13

Matthew 18:21-35

Saying “I’m sorry” may be hard, but it is often even more difficult to say, “I forgive you” and truly mean it. However, this is exactly what God calls us to do in today’s readings. It can be easy to get into the mindset of, “It’s no big deal. I’ll just go to confession later,” but we should really stop and think about how lucky we are. Despite the numerous times we have defied God, God still forgives us completely when we come to Him to ask for forgiveness. In today’s readings, God commands us to extend the same forgiveness to those around us.

When someone comes to us to apologize, instead of feeling resentment, we should think of all the times we’ve failed others. What would our lives be like if all the people we had wronged never forgave us? How hopeless would everything be if there was no mercy, if the first mistake was the end? In this time of penance, we should strive to let go of the resentment we hold and remember that since we have relied on compassion, it is only right to give that same compassion to others.

Matthew Denton, Engineering '25

March 15<sup>th</sup>

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20

John 6:63c, 68c

Matthew 5:17-19

The passages today point to a tension within Catholicism: the problem of adherence to Jewish law. In the first reading, Moses reminds us of the importance of observing the rules that God has set forth for His people to serve as an exemplary nation of wisdom.

Nevertheless, when I reflect on my Catholic faith today, it seems evident that Catholicism has greatly branched out from the traditions and rigor of our Jewish counterparts despite our cultural proximity to the Jewish tradition. Peter and Paul embodied this tension during the days of the early church, with Peter arguing that Christians must follow Jewish law, while Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, suggested that Christians can dismiss certain laws (regarding kosher customs and circumcision, for example). Why then, is it that us Catholics today are not bound to the laws of the Old Testament? There are, of course, political reasons for the split like the facility of spreading Christianity to gentiles. However, the Gospel today reminds us of the ideological contents of this perceived “split.” In the Gospel, Jesus protects the Old Testament Law which He has “come not to abolish but to fulfill.” For Catholics, Jewish law is more than an aggregate of rules – it is a connection to God. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The Law has not been abolished, but rather man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his Master who is its perfect fulfillment.” Although we might not abide by all the rigorous rules of the Old Testament Moses reinforces, we are still theologically bound to their significance and greater meaning through our connection with God, through Jesus.

Antoinette Manteau, Arts & Sciences '25

March 16<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 7:23-28

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9

Joel 2:12-13

Luke 11:14-23

In today's readings there is an overarching theme of believing in and having faith in our God and turning away from Satan. The Gospel, which particularly stuck out to me, tells of Jesus driving out a demon from a mute man and the crowd questioning His intentions. They wonder if He has the power to do this from Beelzebub instead of from God. What I take away from these readings is that God is not going to force us to believe in Him but that returning to Him and turning away from Satan will always be in our best interest. The Psalm for today also has a similar message: "If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts." This is telling us to turn to Jesus when we feel called to Him. This is not always an easy thing, and it can be particularly hard to do when we fear judgment from others who are not Catholic in the world. However, by discussing our faith with others, we can grow stronger in it, making it even easier to turn toward God and away from Satan.

Sophia Miller, Arts & Sciences '24

## March 17<sup>th</sup> – St. Patrick's Day

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

Reflecting on today's readings brought me back to a recent online shopping spree. As I hit the checkout button, a rush of dopamine came over me. However, a few weeks later when my purchase arrived, I felt extremely unsatisfied. Why do I constantly feel the need to fill my life with more stuff? As I pondered this question, I felt Jesus speak directly to my disappointment. "If I put my value, my hope, my love, and my time into buying more clothes and more 'stuff,' I am always going to turn up empty. Nothing is ever going to fill the God-shaped hole in my heart except for Jesus Himself."

In today's psalm, our Heavenly Father says, "I am the Lord your God: hear my voice." It isn't always as simple as a wave of peace rushing over us with the thoughts of Jesus, but in that moment, I truly heard the Lord speaking to my heart. The psalm goes on to say, "If only my people would hear me... I would feed them the best of wheat." I need the constant reminder that God will provide for me everything I need in Him.

My infinite desires are never going to be satisfied by anything finite. If I simply give the Lord my heart and accept His outpouring of love for me, only then will I truly be satisfied. I invite you to listen and see how the Lord is speaking to your heart today.

Kate

Kate Sanderson, Communications Intern

**Due to Feast of St. Patrick, Archbishop Rozanski has given a dispensation to the faithful of St. Louis from abstaining from meat on this day.**

March 18<sup>th</sup>

Hosea 6:1-6

Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21ab

Psalm 95:8

Luke 18:9-14

How many times is love mentioned in the Bible? I don't know the exact number, but I know it's a big one. The last verse of this passage reminded me that our relationship with Christ is rooted in love and not other things, like sacrifices or burnt offerings. Beyond that, I am reminded that we are unable to earn the love of God through things that society deems important – grades, looks, and the like. All fall short. Instead, we should do as it says in verse 3, which is to “press on to know the Lord.” To whoever is reading this, I hope and pray that you would find encouragement to press on. And no, I don't mean to press on with pulling those coffee-fueled all-nighters or some other nonsense. Keep reading and keep praying. Press on, little by little, with love. It is the least we can do when we have such a loving God around us. Take heart.

Grace Lai, Arts & Sciences '24



## March 19<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Lent – Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday

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

Psalm 23: 1-6

Ephesians 5: 8-14

John 9:1-41

God uses topics and language that are familiar to His audiences to highlight nuances in interactions and relationships. As we see throughout the Gospels, Jesus used parables about farming and fishing to relate to many of his audiences because of their agrarian background.

Although many of us are not farmers, we are able to relate to the concept of light. In the Gospel reading, we see the Pharisees dismiss the restoration of sight to a man born blind. The Pharisees viewed the man's ailment as a physical manifestation of his parents' sins. In the Pharisees' minds, his inability to physically see IS his inability to see God. Therefore, they shun him as someone "born totally in sin" and someone that God has abandoned.

St. Anthony the Great points out that the Pharisee's response is nonsensical; "To say that God turns away from the sinful is like saying that the sun hides from the blind." In fact, the restoration of the blind man's physical sight parallels the restoration of spiritual sight to a great saint, centuries later. Augustine describes his conversion; "You flashed, shone, and scattered my blindness."

Today, let us ask God to scatter the blindness in our hearts, minds, and souls so that we may love, reason, and pray without a shadow of doubt.

Zane Watson, Engineering '24

## March 20<sup>th</sup> – Solemnity of Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

2 Samuel 7: 4-5a, 12-14a, 16

Psalm 89: 2-5, 27, 29

Romans 4: 13, 16-18, 22

Luke 2: 41-51a

In Luke 2:41-51a, we listen to one of the more known stories of Jesus when He was 12 years old and remained in Jerusalem to learn from the teachers in the temple. Like any parents, Mary and Joseph were overcome with worry and looked for Him among His relatives and acquaintances. And when they finally found Him in the temple after 3 days, foreshadowing Easter, Mary asks, “Son, why have you done this? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” Jesus then replies, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

Of course, how is a parent, even those who are saintly, holy people, supposed to respond or understand what Jesus meant? It made me wonder if maybe Mary and Joseph were not ready to give up their Son, even though they knew He was the Son of God, the Lord. We know that Jesus will be crucified and will die for our sins. Mary expects Jesus to act like any other child and Jesus expects His mother to know why He doesn’t act like any child. But the future is coming, and Jesus is growing older. After this, while Jesus remains obedient to His parents, His concern is the will of God and the mission laid out before Him.

Gaby Mendoza, Arts & Sciences '24

March 21<sup>st</sup>

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12  
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9  
Psalm 51:12a, 14a  
John 5:1-16

In today's Gospel we are encouraged to rethink how and where we look for God. In this Gospel, Jesus cures a man who has been ill for many years, but the Jews represented in this Gospel are unable to appreciate the miracle due to their higher obedience to their rules. It's a reminder that sometimes in the midst of trying so hard to follow God, if we lack humility, we can miss the true miracles in front of us. If we hold onto an attitude of "we know best" and only accept the beauty of God when it fits the molds we've created, we are at risk of missing the other mysterious and beautiful ways that God reveals himself to us.

Clarissa Gaona Romero,  
Arts & Sciences '23

March 22<sup>nd</sup>

Isaiah 49:8-15

Psalm 145:8-9, 13cd-13, 17-18

John 5: 17-30

For me, the Lenten season is about being selfless, reflective, and trusting in God. Life gets difficult, and sometimes, in the midst of all the darkness, it's hard to remember that we aren't alone. It's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In our lowest moments, when all hope seems lost, we find our Lord. It doesn't matter what we do or what we say. God will always be there for His children.

Today's reading captures that sentiment perfectly: "In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you." No matter the time of the year, God will always be there for you. He's available 24/7, particularly during Lent. When you might find it difficult to uphold your commitment, you can rely on God to help you through it.

My favorite part of the reading is the ending when Zion says that the Lord has forsaken and forgotten him, but He responds, "Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you." Sometimes in life, it feels like everything goes against you. It feels like no matter what you do, nothing goes your way and there's nothing you can do about it. I know I have felt at times that even God Himself was not acting in my best interest. In those moments, it's important to realize that God's plan is always the best plan.

God brings upon us so many blessings in our daily life, that we begin to take them for granted. We become selfish, and that's why I think Lent is important. I think it's a way of keeping us humble and close to God.

Julian Trejo, Arts & Sciences '26

March 23<sup>rd</sup>

Exodus 32:7-14  
Psalm 106:19-23  
John 3:16  
John 5:31-47

God's aggravation and jealous attitude stand out immediately upon reading the first passage. His impatience with the Israelites as expressed to Moses seems almost out of character. Despite deliverance out of Egypt through Moses' leadership under God's guidance, they resort to idolatry, which flies in the face of their moral law, the very Ten Commandments shared with them from God through Moses.

In the Gospel reading, Jesus makes a case for Himself to the Jews, urging them to understand that He is the Messiah they have been waiting for and should follow. They contradict themselves by claiming to believe in God the Father, but not the Son who was sent to Earth on their behalf, despite God's endorsement of said Son as the world's Savior. Jesus brings to their attention the human testimony, the miracles He accomplished, and the very scripture they study as proof of His incarnate divinity.

Regardless of the era, God remains a jealous God. He is not "jealous" in the sense of envy, but rather "zealous" – zealous for our praise in His continuous pursuit to not only establish a relationship with us but maintain and grow this spiritual bond beyond space and time – all the way into His eternal Kingdom. Although His plan may appear confusing or counterproductive at times, God will go through whatever means necessary to turn the eyes of our hearts toward Christ.

As much as He wants us to live in Him, so too He wants to live in us.

Josh Elboom, Sam Fox '26

March 24<sup>th</sup>

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22

Psalm 34: 17-21, 23

Matthew 4:4b

John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

In this Gospel, the people refused Christ because He was not from Jerusalem and they did not trust His background or the words He was saying. However, Jesus tries to tell them that He was sent by God. To the people of Jerusalem, Jesus just looked like a simple man who was breaking the rules. They were unwilling to look at what seemed ordinary to them and failed to recognize Him for what He truly was. What other things or people in our lives do we fail to see for what or who they truly are? Lord, open my heart to recognize all the people in my life that I may underestimate or struggle to deal with during this Lenten season. Allow me too, to see myself as one of your children.

Caroline Fesler, Sam Fox '24

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

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

Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10

Psalm 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11

Hebrews 10:4-10

Luke 1:26-38

The Gospel reading for this great solemnity recounts the Archangel Gabriel appearing to the Blessed Mother to announce the coming of the Kingdom of God and to show her the role that she will play in it. The words that the Lord gives to Gabriel to announce the coming of the Kingdom are rooted in the history of the Jewish people. They had been conquered, forced into exile, and after a short period of freedom, were under the control of the Roman Empire. To a first century Jew, such as the Blessed Mother, the words “the Lord God will give him the throne of David His father, and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever” meant the fulfilment of God’s promises to David and the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Jesus, as the new David, came into the world to reestablish the kingdom of His forefather, where He would rule for eternity over all the nations.

It was fitting that the Blessed Mother’s obedience would bring forth the one who would reestablish the Kingdom of David. It was through disobedience that the kingdom broke apart into two and was eventually conquered. The people of Israel’s choice to reject the Lord and His commandments was undone by the choice of one woman to embrace the call of the Lord and completely unite herself to His will. The disobedience of Israel being accounted for, their salvation was now able to come and restore their promised kingdom.

Ryan Dugan, WashU Law '24

## March 26<sup>th</sup> – Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37: 12-14

Psalm 130:1-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

After reading through the Gospel for this fifth Sunday in Lent, I've begun to realize that I imagine a lot of people are closer to Mary and Martha than we think. I often find myself questioning God when something bad happens in my life, and more specifically when I feel as if He has left me alone to deal with such great losses or challenges. Like Martha, I tend to believe that if "Lord, you had been with me... I wouldn't be doing the wrong thing or having to despair. However, I believe that it's essential to understand that our free will empowers this type of relationship between God and ourselves. We are not held hand-in-hand and led in the way that God chooses, but instead, we get to choose the level of involvement of God in our lives due to our free will.

Building off our free will, we begin to create independent faith journeys that bring us closer to God, although this varies from person to person. As someone who still feels like they need to find the place of faith in their life, I feel as if we can commonly misjudge the relationship we have with God and assume that He has the power to fix all issues, and therefore He should fix it for our benefit. However, if we lived without sorrow or discomfort, we would never grow as people. I am only coming to realize after 19 years of life that this feeling of blaming God will never bring closure for ourselves since its part of God's will that we are uncomfortable and sad at times. Instead, I believe this reading implores that we embrace vulnerability in our relationships (more specifically with God) which, in turn, will strengthen our faith journey.

Juan Sanchez, Arts & Sciences '25



March 27<sup>th</sup>

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

Psalm 23:1-6

Ezekial 33:11

John 8:1-11

The first reading reminds us to stay strong in our faith despite the difficult and uncomfortable circumstances in which we may reside. Although we are often tested and easily fall into sin, we are reminded that God favors those who embody the truth. Sometimes committing sinful acts and lying about them may be easier in the situations we find ourselves in. God reminds us that if we hold steadfast to the truth, He will protect us and keep our word true. The verse before the Gospel reminds us that we are to forgive rather than to wish harm on those who have done wrong. The Gospel is a great lesson that always reminds me to reserve my judgment of others. Jesus teaches us that although we may see people in the world who commit sinful acts, it is not our job to judge them, but rather God's. We should not point fingers at others, especially if we cannot first understand that we are sinful creatures too. Nobody is perfect in following the many teachings given by God to guide us, but we must remember that each of us is loved by God, we are equally deserving of God's mercy, and each of us has a seat in God's kingdom. Rather than throwing stones at others, let us look upon ourselves and ask how we can forgive, love, and care for others in greater ways.

Zach Patterson, Arts & Sciences '25

**Confession Marathon tomorrow  
3pm-10pm @ CSC**

March 28<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 21:4-9

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

John 8:21-30

On this fifth week of Lent, the first reading speaks about the temptation to repeat sins we gave up during Lent. In this passage, the people complained to God and Moses about being stranded in the desert and having no food or water due to their patience on the journey. The people were punished due to their ungratefulness of the journey. In our society today, we always tend to complain or be ungrateful of our journey when we try to accomplish something. We always strive to fulfill our desires without thinking about the consequences. Sometimes we make permanent decisions for temporary satisfaction. The readings remind us that our journeys will not always be pretty, but we must trust and appreciate the process. As a college student, I do not always enjoy the things I have to do. I encounter struggles and moments of doubting the process. The readings remind me that I should always acknowledge and trust the process, no matter how tough or dull things get. Overall, these passages conclude that believing and trusting in the Lord will help us persevere against the doubts and uncertainties we are bound to face in life.

Alvin Bacani, Engineering '24

March 29<sup>th</sup>

Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95

(Psalm) Daniel 3:52-56

Luke 8:15

John 8:31-42

In this reflection, I will talk about the Gospel, which was John Chapter 8, Verses 31-42. During this time of Lent, it is very common for us to give up something voluntarily, as a way to strengthen our faith and self-discipline. These 40 days of Lent are not meant to be easy, and oftentimes, the temptations of breaking our Lenten promises can make their way inside our head and heart, but we must resist the urge and stay strong until the end. In the Gospel of today, we learn about the importance of remaining loyal and faithful to God. Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8: 31-32) The relationship with God is an eternal relationship; this time of Lent should only move us forward with our spiritual path, not backwards. In a society where some bad things are considered good, and some good things are considered bad, it is difficult to trust or believe everything we see or hear; however, one thing that we can ALWAYS trust is the Word of the Lord, because John 1:1 tells us that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." By trusting the Word, we are trusting God, and God's plan in our life. During this time of Lent, one way to strengthen our relationship with God is through reading the Bible each night, because that is where we will find truth, love, and guidance that will make us better people in life.

Francisco Quiñones, Arts & Sciences '22

March 30<sup>th</sup>

Genesis 17: 3-9

Psalm 105:4-9

Psalm 95:8

John 8:51-59

In the Gospel today, we hear Jesus speaking to the Jews, and He says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death." This is a stunning moment of revelation in which Jesus unveils that we need only follow His word to achieve eternal happiness: in other words, He promises eternal life if only we follow Him. To do so, we must constantly commit to the ongoing task of living the way Jesus taught us in order to prepare ourselves to join Him. Also in this Gospel, the importance of doing good deeds without looking for praise is emphasized. It can be hard to not desire admiration and acclaim for your actions, but we have to remember the greater goal: God's approval.

As you go about your day today, I encourage you to remember what you are living for: eternal life with Christ. Find a new way to live out His word today and be content knowing that He sees the good work you are doing.

Kate Flynn, Arts & Sciences '24

March 31<sup>st</sup>

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalm 18:2-7

John 6:63c, 68 c

John 10:31-42

For me, the readings for today are about having faith in the Lord, no matter what those around you may say to distract you or dissuade you from your faith. It can be especially hard to stay faithful, especially when, as in the first reading, it is your friends, the people about whom you care most deeply, who don't support your relationship with God. For us as young people entering college, it can be difficult to stay committed to our relationships with God. Time becomes our most valuable resource, and we are tempted on all sides with ways to spend our time. Whether those temptations be traditionally negatively connotated things, like partying or substance use, or even positively connotated things, like spending time studying, it's essential that we find time to really build that strong connection with God, so that we can have peace and balance in our other endeavors. I find that it's easiest to live out my faith when I surround myself with friends, Catholic and non-Catholic, that support my commitment to my faith. The community that I've found at the CSC is by far the strongest faith support network that I've ever encountered. My Catholic friends encourage me to listen for God's voice and inspire me to act as the light of God for others. They make it easy to believe in the works of God, as mentioned in today's Gospel, because I can see the Father in them and in everyone I encounter at the CSC.

Olivia Garman, Arts & Sciences '25

**Reminder: day of abstinence**

April 1<sup>st</sup>

Ezekiel 37:21-28  
Jeremiah 31:10-13  
Ezekiel 18:31  
John 11:45-56

*"You know nothing, nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish."*

*He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.*

In this passage, the high priest uses logic to make a decision, not realizing the extent of what he was saying. We cannot stop God's plan. Even if we choose to do nothing, God is in control, which reminds me of Esther 4:14: "... Relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place."

Even when we are a long way off, our good Father will watch for us to return home (Luke 15:20). Every child returning home is a cause for celebration! God, our Good Shepherd, does not forget His children. Just as a language allows us to have fellowship with each other, faith in Jesus allows us to have fellowship with our Father.

Members of the Deaf community have shared with me that they have left the Church because they were told "faith comes by hearing" and they must "confess with their mouth." One can hear the message of Christ but not actually listen. One can speak but not actually believe. God cares about what is happening in the heart (1 Sam 16:7). A Deaf person hears with their eyes and speaks with their hands. Through sign language, God has provided a way for the Deaf to be in a relationship with Him.

No matter what happens, God will gather His children from every nation and every language. God was in control when we were sent out into exile. He was the one who carried us there in the first place (Jeremiah 29:14)! A good father allows His children to mature under

His protection, but He does not leave us abandoned. The creator of the world gave up His son to save us and restore our relationship with the Father.

Steven Kramer, University of Health  
Sciences and Pharmacy '23

## April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Palm Sunday

Matthew 21: 1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

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

Philippians 2:6-11

Phil 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

If you were in the crowd of people we hear of in Matthew 27:15-26, would you have chosen Jesus to be released over Barabbas? When reading the scripture I just mentioned, it can be easy for us to condemn those in the crowd who advocated for the release of a murderer over an innocent man.

Yet if we look at the situation broadly, we may have more in common with the crowd than we think. Barabbas was the easy way out for the people. Not only was he a rebel (his arrest was due to a violent protest to free the Jews), he asked nothing of the crowd. Unlike Jesus, he did not demand mercy, repentance, and the establishment of a relationship with God.

Jesus, on the other hand, was a radical, reforming the church and spending time with social outcasts like criminals and the poor, diseased, and powerless. He took the established societal norms and turned them upside-down, making people uncomfortable, so they reached out to ground themselves through violence. At least Barabbas' version of change didn't ask them to put in as much work.

Jesus asked society to change their ways, proclaiming the truth that asks people to become vulnerable and put in the work to become closer to God.

Barabbas was more convenient.

Our faith journey will not always be easy or convenient, and it will certainly ask us to put in work. I implore you, don't take the easy way out. Don't choose Barabbas. Take the time to be merciful, kind, and seek the glory of God.

Samuel Reynolds, Arts & Sciences '26



April 3<sup>rd</sup>

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

We've reached Holy Week, when as a Church we're called to focus on the details and lessons of Jesus' final days.

The speaker of today's reading, Isaiah, is describing the character and the coming of Christ. It features an insight on Christ's ministry that began with baptism.

This suggests a representation of who each of us is called to be - The Lord's special servant. How do we live our lives in fulfillment of this role? We're made by the Father in the image of Christ and find our answer through obeying and living the values of the Son's teachings. More importantly, we're asked to believe in Him as the Redeemer and hope of our salvation. In all that we do, we're asked to witness and live out God's standard of justice. We are asked to continue this momentum every day, even outside of this notable week.

In our quest to be servants, we shouldn't aim to be "perfect" but to come as we are and model ourselves from our best example, Jesus. There is no fanfare or performance necessary to come to Christ. God is interested in showing us truth with love.

This is not to say that this journey will be smooth without trials. Fortunately, the Lord's presence is always there, ready to guide as the Holy Spirit. We only need to call on and intently listen with the openness of faith.

Christine Muoghalu, Arts & Sciences '24

April 4<sup>th</sup>

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

Perhaps one of the most unnerving characteristics of God is His infinite knowledge. Knowing ourselves, recognizing all our shortcomings and our failures, the idea of another being having even the slightest bit of insight into those parts of us which we wish to hide away from others and oftentimes not even acknowledge ourselves is frightening. Knowing that there is a God from whom we can hide nothing, one that understands us wholly and intimately and has from the beginning of time can quickly become a point of anxiety when conflated with our own feelings of unworthiness. How can someone know me, how can someone know *that* about me and still love, respect, and value me?

The issue is, unlike God, we tend to define ourselves—and sometimes other people—by our failures much more than is reasonable. We see the broken or incomplete parts of ourselves and allow our sense of shame to hinder our authenticity out of fear of having our perceived inadequacies exposed. We spend so much time focused on trying to deny or hide the parts of ourselves that we dislike that we can forget that God calls us all as individuals to always share in His love as our present selves, not just once we have achieved our ultimate idealized self.

God's knowledge of the ongoing battles within us don't make Him ashamed or disgusted. He supports us and seeks to strengthen us, calling us to live and work and love not only despite our imperfections but emboldened by them.

Perhaps instead of being fearful of the extent to which God knows us as imperfect people, we can instead find comfort in knowing that He knows and understands our struggles and still recognizes our ability to bring light and goodness to others.

Alayna Mickles, Arts & Sciences '23

April 5<sup>th</sup>

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

Today's reading is particularly relevant to Holy Week. This passage describes in first person the suffering that a servant of God must endure. During Lent, suffering is a prevalent concept as we strengthen our spirits. It serves as a reminder to us that following Jesus is not a straightforward path, but one that is worth it. This passage shows the devotion of a servant of Jesus during hard times. We can use this passage as a model for our own devotion to Jesus.

This passage also reminds us of the importance of humility. The servant says, "I gave my back to those who beat me." The servant reminds us that the sufferings of today's world are temporary and that we must look forward to everlasting life in heaven. During hardships, it is important to keep in mind that our worth is determined not by others, but by God.

Cynthia Viets, Sam Fox '25

## 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 6<sup>th</sup> – Holy Thursday

### 7pm Mass @ CSC

#### Mass of Chrism

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

Psalms 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

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

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

The Washing of the Feet has always been one of my favorite Gospels because of the way Jesus defies our expectations. Jesus chooses the day before His death to teach one of His final lessons: to serve one another as equals. He begins by stripping Himself of His garments in preparation to serve the twelve by washing their feet. By stripping Himself of His garments, physically kneeling to wash the feet of the twelve, and symbolically stripping Himself of what we think a “master” should do, Jesus teaches us to look beyond labels to serve each other simply as human beings.

*Peter said to Him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.”*

Jesus poses this act as an invitation to be in community with Him – something about this subtle act of washing one another humbles one human to another to expose their common humanity. Without acting humbly in this way, Jesus clearly states that there is no place for status and pride among His followers. Each time I hear this Gospel, I am reinvited to be in community with Christ and accept His inheritance through serving others.

Sarah Ayala, Arts and Sciences '24

April 7<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

Why did Jesus die for us? Well, simple answer: He loved us.

Now there is so much more that ties into why His death is an act that we as humans will never fully grasp. Deacon Jim once said that we can ask all the questions that we want but we may never find any answer. That is because God and all His being and creation are so much greater than we are, than what we can comprehend. But what can I say about this reading, this day? In recent years, Good Friday has been a powerful, heavy day for me, and it amazes me that I can take my suffering to the foot of the Cross. And while mine will never compare to what Jesus endured, He still accepts it.

While Good Friday is whole day to really consider Jesus's death, we have every Sunday to pray, worship, and fill ourselves with His body and blood. Sitting in the pew looking at the Eucharist, at Jesus hanging on the Cross, I often wonder, "Why? Why is this so important? Why am I here?" Suffice to say, there are moments in the reading of the Passion and on Sundays when I am struck. All the suffering and agony that Jesus endured fills me with an awe and reverence that I want to spend my whole life showing Him. On this day I think about how Jesus's own people were so vehemently shouting for His death. And He did not choose to speak with bitterness or revenge. He continued walking to His death, even for them.

There is such a weight to this day, but I think it is one we should hold and turn into our own passion. A passion that will seep into the lives that we touch and show His love that we should spend every day trying to embody.

Jenny Nguyen, Arts and Sciences '24

**Reminder: day of fasting and abstinence**

## April 8<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

Today's first reading stresses to us: we were created in God's image. It reads, "God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Gen 1:27). This might immediately lead to questions of appearance, as it did for me the first time I ever read this verse. It led me to ask questions about what God might look like. But I think these questions of appearance are beside the point. I think it is more about purpose. We were created to be like God; we were created with love so that we could then go forth and continue creating with love. Immediately after creating man and woman, God gives them dominion over everything on the earth that He has just created. God gives to us this world of immense beauty and tasks us with filling it. Quite literally, it is the opportunity of a lifetime. But it is also difficult, and we often fail, acting and creating out of resentment or greed. However, on this Holy Saturday, as we await the resurrection of Jesus, we are again reminded of that love and called once again to imitate God in His infinite love. We are called to create and make something beautiful in our lives, so that one day, we may be able to look upon what we have done and see how good it is.

Erick Saucedo, Arts & Sciences '23

April 9<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday  
10am Mass at Graham Chapel

Acts 10:34a, 37-43  
Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23  
Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8  
John 20:1-9 or Mt 28:1-10 or Luke 24: 13-35

It is easy to dismiss the initial confusion felt by the disciples upon seeing the empty tomb. Clarity and joy did not immediately consume Jesus's followers even on what we know, and celebrate, to be the glorious summation of the Triduum. Rather, as Peter and Paul remind us, the resurrection invites you and me, His chosen ones, to look up with gratitude and awe. There is someone that will consistently raise us up alongside Himself. Alleluia!

Perhaps we are then tasked with an even more challenging call. Although never physically seeing His empty tomb, we have a Savior whose resurrection invites us to see, with new eyes, His Spirit amidst our daily crosses. I cannot help but imagine what perspective the reality of the resurrection brought Jesus's disciples and provides for us today. Even when we do not find ourselves overwhelmed with joy, but instead confused like the disciples gazing over the empty tomb, let us wait patiently for our risen Lord to reveal Himself to us. Just as the disciple who arrived at the tomb first saw and believed, Jesus can appear, in our lives, at any moment. We too do not want to be distracted.

So let us enthusiastically speak life, as Mary Magdalene ran to Simon Peter, throughout our daily encounters, as a testament to the risen One. This is how our universal call to be an Easter people begins.

Jenna Calabrese, School of Occupational  
Therapy '25