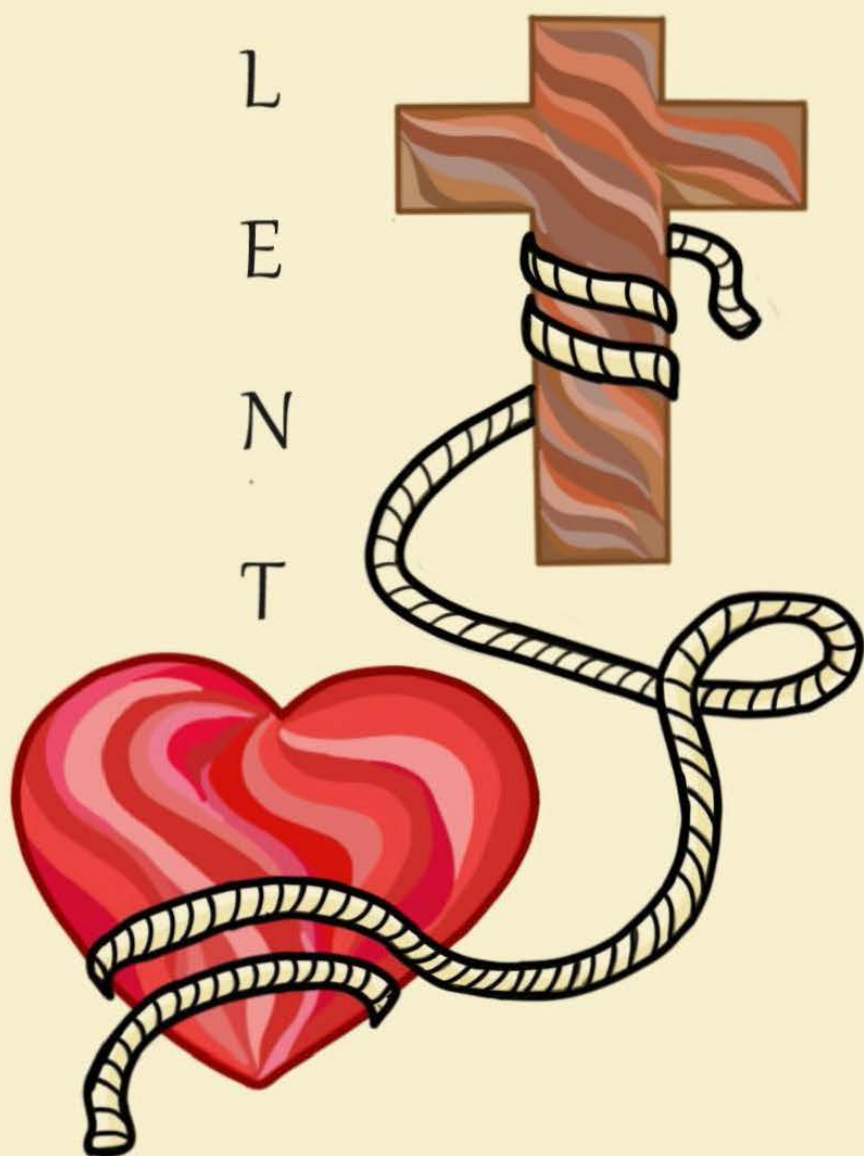


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Reflections by the Benedictine University Community Lent 2023

Our community of students, faculty, and staff are excited to publish our seventh book of Lenten reflections. Our Benedictine Hallmark of Love of Christ and Neighbor calls us to grow in love this Lenten season. As you pick up this book each day, know you are united in prayer with the rest of our Christian community on both the Lisle and Mesa campuses. Listen to the voice of God speaking to you from the diverse and unified body of Christ. Let this book, and with it God and Benedictine, travel with you on your Lenten journey.

All readings can be found by date on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website, www.usccb.org

Lenten Opportunities with Campus Ministry

Lisle:

Ash Wednesday: 10:00a Christian Service, 12:20p Mass

Sunday Mass: 4:30p, Wednesdays: 12:20p

Sacrament of Reconciliation available before Mass

Mesa:

Mass: Mondays & Thursdays: 12:25p

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Mondays & Thursdays 1:30p-2

We encourage you to explore the options for worship at your local church during Lent. There may be special services and events for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and of course, Easter. If you need any assistance finding a community, email campusministry@ben.edu.

Cover art by Azucena Leon, '23, Mesa Campus



Benedictine University
Campus Ministry

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Ash Wednesday | February 22, 2022

[Joel 2:12-18](#)

[Psalm 51:3-14](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2](#)

[Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18](#)

As I have been thinking about Ash Wednesday the past few weeks, the phrase from the first reading “rend your hearts, not your garments” has been dominating my thoughts. First I am attracted to the poetry of it; prophets are often called to speak in art to challenge us to seek more from their words than simple directives. It is a much more compelling phrase than “stop pulling your clothes and make your attitude better.” It calls us to a real examination of conscience.

Jesus uses some metaphorical language in the Gospel, but most of it is very direct. He says very specifically not to be like hypocrites who are more concerned with people seeing how repentant they are than actually repenting. They are rending their garments, not their hearts. Jesus reminds us that our actions are important, yes, but just as important are our intentions behind them. The right thing done for the wrong reason may have some good results for others, but will leave our hearts untouched, unrended, unchanged.

Lent is our time for fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, three things Jesus speaks directly to in our Gospel today. All of these things are good, and all of these things can create wonderful results for others. Any charity director can tell you about that one donor who only gives at the big fundraising event in front of all their important friends, at the end of the year when they can get the most out of the tax break. They can also tell you about that one donor who gives faithfully every month without asking for any recognition. The director will accept both of those donors' money and both will be put to good use serving those in need; the real difference is the giver. One cares about the state of their own heart and one has other concerns.

Today we are called to look inward and examine ourselves, our hearts and our motives. We are called to grow in the Benedictine Hallmark of Humility which asks us to be truthful about ourselves. We must recognize our hearts need rending and have confidence in the graciousness, mercy, and kindness of our God. Then we can stand before our Creator in

humble truth and say like St. Paul that now is the acceptable time, the day of salvation, and our wonderfully made and deeply flawed selves will do what we can. We will fast, we will pray, we will give alms not because we want others to think we are good and holy people, but because we want to *be* good and holy people.

I invite you to spend some time with the beautiful cover art for our book. Imagine that is your heart, tied to the cross. Imagine that the rope contains what you want to give to Jesus and what Jesus wants to give to you this Lent. What kind of giver and what kind of receiver do you want to be?

Carol Allen

*Campus Minister, Coordinator of Retreats, Faith Formation,
and Liturgy, Lisle Campus*

Thursday after Ash Wednesday | February 23, 2023

[Deuteronomy 30:15-20](#)

[Psalm 1:1-6](#)

[Luke 9:22-25](#)

The readings for the Thursday after Ash Wednesday brings us to an insightful look into the decision we all must make as children of God; that decision is to turn our hearts to our savior or to turn away. Moses starts his speech with a timeframe: 'Today'; "Today I have set before you, life and prosperity, death and doom." As I reflect, I look at my life and ask myself when have I blindly chosen God; when have I turned away from him? I know I am a sinner, but the choice is laid out bluntly, it is a yes or no, there is no grey area, no options of maybe, or get back to me I need to think about it, or ask me next week; no, the timeframe is now. He gave us a choice between life and prosperity or death and doom. I think most people would want life and prosperity but along with a decision we must choose and act out this choice. In the decision to choose God, Moses says "you and your decedents may live, by loving the Lord our God, heeding his voice, and holding fast for him." He tells us exactly how we choose God, how to have life and prosperity; we must give every choice, every action to God.

As we move into the Gospel, Jesus tells us this choice to choose God will not be easy, "he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me," Jesus says to his disciples. Taking up your cross can be hard some days. Some people get lost

when reading this passage, we want salvation, we want eternal life and happiness, but we don't want to do anything hard to get it. Nowhere in the Bible does Jesus say "just be a good person and you are in" or "here are the magic words to enter the kingdom." He tells us exactly what to do, have faith, believe, get baptized, confess your sins have a relationship with God. In this passage he reminds us to pick up our cross. I asked myself what is my cross? My cross to bear looks different than my fiancé's, my friends', my co-workers', or even some stranger on the street. For some its addiction, for others its gossip; to bear it means to die to ourselves to say "no" to our desires and temptations and to say "yes" to Jesus. He suffered and died on the cross for our salvation. After this reading I asked myself "Am I willing to let go of myself and pick up my cross for Jesus? Am I willing to suffer with Jesus?" I realized I have been stuck in a grey area on my decision to follow God, I say it but do I do it? I'm happy to reflect on these readings and say today and every day I choose God, I choose to bear my cross, I choose eternal life and I hope more people do too.

Raychele Hernandez
Admissions Counselor, Mesa Campus

Friday after Ash Wednesday | February 24, 2023

[Isaiah 58:1-9a](#)
[Psalms 51:3-6, 18-19](#)
[Matthew 9:14-15](#)

"...Cry out full-throated and unsparingly..." (Isaiah 58:1). This is the beginning of one of the many prophetic calls that God commands each one of us. The Lord desperately desires us, as beloved Children of God, to proclaim His truth to our neighbors. Our neighbors are every one of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are all the other humans that inhabit the Earth. An essential aspect of this prophetic call is warning our neighbors of their sins as Isaiah states (58:1). This implies that we must be brave enough to make our neighbors realize their wrongdoings to hopefully change their ways in the name of our faith, so they can become closer to God. This reminds me of the Benedictine Hallmark to "Love Thy Neighbor" which promotes Jesus' commandment that we have to love our neighbor as ourselves. By obeying this sacred commandment, we not only make our neighbors happy, but through Christ, we make

ourselves truly happy. Thus, Isaiah essentially foreshadows what Christ wants us to do which is to love one another. Fasting ourselves is also a fundamental component to attach ourselves to Christ. Fasting is the process of self-denial of earthly pleasures such as food, money, and sex which should encourage us to focus more on Christ and realize we are nothing without Him.

The goal of the season of Lent is to abandon our bodily pleasures to purify ourselves that lead us to become more like Christ. In Matthew's Gospel, the Disciples of John ask Jesus, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but your disciples do not fast?" (9:14). Jesus simply replies, saying that He is the bridegroom, so His disciples do not have to mourn while He is with them on Earth (Matthew 9:15). However, now since He has passed away from this earthly life, we must fast from our earthly pleasures to ultimately give our hearts, minds, and souls over to Christ, the Divine Counselor, who renews our spirits through the Holy Spirit.

Jack McGraw '23
Lisle Campus

Saturday after Ash Wednesday | February 25, 2023

[Isaiah 58:9b-14](#)

[Psalms 86:1-6](#)

[Luke 5:27-32](#)

One of the agonizing mysteries of this life is why so much affliction, separation, and suffering is the natural state of things. Disrepair, neglect, and pain comes no matter how we strive to hold them back from our lives. Finding joy, kindness, or hope, often is viewed with cynicism, or seen as toxic positivity instead of facing the bleak realities of life on planet Earth torn apart by pandemics, wars, and climate change.

This first Saturday of Lent, God is speaking to a beyond burned out Israel—an Israel tired of giving sacrifices, hoarding their scarce resources, and fighting over crumbs of wealth and power. Yahweh says: You want me to show up for you? Here's what you must do. Lift up your face from your own troubles. Rest. Give up your striving. This rest is beyond self-care—this is Sabbath rest, where the grind culture no longer dictates how you work. This kind of rest makes way for a new strength in the Spirit, which enables us to stand in the gap for the oppressed

and the broken, the ones without the “right” degrees, without the “right” immigration status, the ones without the “right” sexual identities. Repair the broken relationships, sow love where there was hatred. Then Yahweh will “nourish you with the heritage of Jacob”, and “ride on the heights of the earth” (Isaiah 58:14).

The Repairer of the breach, they will call you. Rev Dr. William Barber, who came to visit Benedictine just a few weeks ago, started an organization called “[Repairers of the Breach](#)”, to address injustice and organize folks to a new movement based on an agenda that prioritizes love, truth, and justice. These are people who know how to stand in the gap for the oppressed, to organize and mobilize. When we focus solely on our own troubles, our own scarce resources, we remain in the cycle of violence, hoarding, and power grabbing. Just as Jesus called Matthew (Levi) out of the money lender’s tent, and into a new way of living, He invites us to do the same. We must, if we want to be among the Repairers of the Breach. Ask God how you can rest, to make space to dream before we act with love, truth, and justice.

Joy Matteson
University Librarian, Lisle Campus

First Sunday of Lent | February 26, 2023

[Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7](#)
[Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17](#)
[Romans 5:12-19](#)
[Matthew 4:1-11](#)

While reflecting on the readings for this day, I could not get the idea of being grateful to God for his creations out of my head. Within society during this time and age, there are so many ugly things out in the world that can easily distract us from seeing the beauty we could find instead. There are some days where we should just take a step back from the stress the world has for a moment and really embrace our surroundings. To take a look at all of the beautiful things that God has created for us and what’s even better? It comes without a price. There is no cost to admire the first snow fall of Winter or the sun when it comes to relieve us from the cold. There is nothing that God asks from us but love for him and all of his creations. It is such a beautiful concept to think about and I find a sense of comfort in

knowing that God is the Creator of it all.

In the Gospel, I love how the reading conveys Jesus while he's traveling through the desert. For forty days and forty nights he was tempted by the Devil. That part of the reading really stands out to me because it makes me wonder what things he must have gone through like stress, exhaustion, worry, and maybe even fear. I have heard and read this reading multiple times throughout my life but I truly resonated with this one due to the period of time I am in right now. Just as Jesus went through the desert and was presented with all these temptations and hardships, so too have I been presented with other temptations. I find that it is so easy to fall into the temptation of relaxing and falling into the distractions that take away from my time with Jesus. There are many weeks I feel the stress and the anxiety, but knowing that Jesus himself went through so many obstacles and challenges that the Devil tried putting him through just makes me know that I can overcome any obstacles the Devil tries to put me through as well.

Satan's deceiving antics of trying to pierce and harm our souls is such a constant thing in life. It seems almost every day the devil tries to throw inconveniences our way through people, places, and objects, making it harder for us to focus on the path God has set for us and to be happy in general. I believe the entire purpose of the obstacles the devil throws at us are to take us away from God and ultimately break our relationship with Him. Knowing this however, shouldn't inflict fear within someone, but strengthen the trust in God. Going through these hardships gives us opportunities to ask for help from Him and confide in Him when we feel as though we have been struck down. Through the love God has for us, I have no doubt in my mind that we are safe and by trusting in Him and his words, I have every bit of faith that the world will shine brighter with His light.

Isabel Molter '26
Lisle Campus

Monday of the First Week of Lent | February 27, 2023

[Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18](#)

[Psalms 19:8-10, 15](#)

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

In the Old Testament reading for today (Lv 19:1-2, 11-18), the Word describes how we are to mirror God's holiness. Interestingly, the passage emphasizes all that we should not do...do not steal, lie, or speak falsely to one another...do not rob your neighbor, act dishonestly, bear hatred in your heart for your brother, or take revenge. It ends, though, with what we must do..."You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

The gospel reading (Mt 25: 31-46) is one that may be familiar and helps us understand how to live out holiness in our words and actions. Jesus tells the disciples how the nations will be separated as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats...those to one side will enter the kingdom of heaven and those to the other will banish to eternal fire. Jesus explains...those of you who fed me, gave me drink and shelter, who welcomed and clothed me, cared for me when I was ill and visited me in prison will inherit the kingdom. The perplexed disciples ask, when did we do these things? Jesus replies, when you did these for the least of my brethren, you did them for me. And for those of you who gave no food or drink, did not welcome or clothe me, or care for me when ill or in prison...you will be condemned. Once again, the disciples ask, when did we do these things? Jesus replies, when you did not do these for the least of my brethren, you did not do them for me.

Do you recall how young you were when you learned the golden rule?...Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In other words, treat others as you want to be treated. It is such a simple rule to live by...but so hard to live out each day! It is what God is saying in the Old Testament, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus is telling us in the New Testament reading that we are living out God's law and are holy when we treat others with kindness, love, patience, understanding, empathy, respect, and commit to creating a just and equitable community with *all* our brothers and sisters. How will you push away the daily noise, the barrage of hatred, and the actions of others that make clear they are more concerned with self-

interest then in the well-being of others? What will you do to live out the golden rule, to be holy, each day?

Dr. Alison Ridge
Associate Professor, Nursing and Health, Director, Master of
Science in Nursing, Lisle Campus

Tuesday of the First Week of Lent | February 28, 2023

[Isaiah 55:10-11](#)
[Psalms 34:4-7, 16-19](#)
[Matthew 6:7-15](#)

I recently asked my sixth-grade religion class, "What is prayer?" The majority of answers came in some form of, "asking God for something" or "asking God for help." But one answer in particular caught my attention, "telling God how you feel." I was struck by these words of wisdom because I think it captured well the essence of prayer. Dialogue with God. Personal sharing. Intimacy.

In our Gospel today, Jesus says "*Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*" So then why do we spend so much time in prayer asking for things? Our heavenly Father already knows what we need. Perhaps that is why when Jesus gave us the "Our Father," known as the pattern of all Christian prayer, there is only one line in which we ask God for something we physically need.

What strikes me about the *Our Father* are the first two words that set the tone of the prayer. "Our Father." Notice Jesus did not say "My Father." So there is an intimacy when we pray to God. It is the intimacy between a child and their father. That is how we are to address God. And if this weren't enough, Jesus tells us to address God as *Abba* which literally means *daddy*.

The ancient Israelite word for God is *El*. And the Israelites had various names for addressing God. *El Shaddai* which means God Almighty. Or *El Elyon* which means God Most High. Or *El Olam* which means Everlasting God. All these titles had a way of emphasizing the greatness of God, and the smallness of the person addressing God. How radical was it that Jesus taught us to call the all-powerful, creator of the universe, and supreme being...*daddy*? Nothing gets more intimate than that.

It doesn't mean that we diminish God in His greatness when we pray the "Our Father." After all we do say *Who art in*

Heaven, pointing to the otherworldly, supernatural nature of God. When we say *Hallowed be thy name*, we are acknowledging the sanctity in God Himself. By saying *Thy kingdom come*, we profess God's absolute dominion over all creation. And *Thy will be done* expresses our absolute belief that the will of God is always accomplished, even among the wicked.

When we say *Give us this day our daily bread*, we are professing our absolute trust that God will provide for our physical needs each day and our spiritual needs in the Eucharist. *Forgive us Our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us* means that we are asking God to forgive us in the same measure that we forgive others, even our enemies.

And lead us not into temptation is a petition for God's grace to assist us in a special way so that we will not fall into sin. And finally, we ask the almighty God to *deliver us from evil*, to ward off and protect us from all spiritual danger.

What a personal way to "tell God how we feel." May we have a new appreciation for this prayer, and of our relationship with God, each time we turn to God, Our Father, in prayer.

Fr. Alex Juguilon, O.S.C.
Chaplain, Mesa Campus

Wednesday of the First Week of Lent | March 1, 2023

[Jonah 3:1-10](#)

[Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19](#)

[Luke 11:29-32](#)

One theme of today's reflections is prayer petition. This particular aspect of faith is something with which I have struggled a lot in the past. In fact, I am still uneasy about it. After all, if you need or want something, won't God know about it without me spelling it out? I reasoned that God knows everything, and since He loves me, He will give me what I need. Matthew 7:7 states that, "For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." And surely enough, while some people receive what they ask for, in many cases they don't. And if so, what are the benefits of petition for the petitioner itself, EVEN if their wish does not come true?

In recent years, I came appreciate the influence the prayer petition has on all of us. Foremost, when saying out loud

what you want or need, you convert your inner thoughts and struggles into words and sentences, and that itself carries a transformative power. It distills your sea of desires into something specific, something more manageable and approachable. It helps you focus, and in some cases even realize that what you are saying is not at all what you really wish for. Wishes said out-loud may appear “small” and not necessary to fret about. Praying is very much like sharing, and as you confide in God all your inner thoughts and desires, you feel calmer and more centered. And above all, praying makes you HOPEFUL. You cannot help but think that you MAY receive what you wish for, and dream about how wonderful that will be. And if you HOPE, your life has meaning and the purpose. So please, go home tonight and try it (even if you have done it before). You will feel better, and thoughts will become clearer, and maybe your wish will come true!

Dr. Darya Alienakava
Associate Professor, Physical Sciences, Lisle Campus

Thursday of the First Week of Lent | March 2, 2023
[Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25](#)
[Psalms 138:1-3, 7c-8](#)
[Matthew 7:7-12](#)

My reading is the Thursday of the first week of Lent and I felt like I was meant to read it. While reading Esther chapter 12 I gained an understanding of the concept of asking for help. Everyone needs help whether they like to admit it or not. Everyone has good days and bad days, which is okay. Finding someone to lean on in times of help is something we all can benefit from.

Being a First Generation student has been difficult, but my faith in Christ has allowed me to lean on him in times of need. In the reading, Queen Esther said to the Lord, “Help me, who am I alone and have no help but you.” She is pleading with the Lord because she needs help from him, she tried doing it alone and she realized Jesus is always there for us. I can relate to that quote because there are times I have struggled with getting my homework done or struggling to get up for class, and taking a step back and asking God to help me has always allowed me to gain some sort of peace. One of my favorite

quotes to repeat to myself is “let go and just let God.” When I pray and ask Jesus for help with something, I try not to dwell on the circumstances anymore because it is now out of my control and I trust him.

Esther said to the Lord, “When I called, you answered me; you built up strength within me.” This quote right here was golden. This quote made me feel so much joy because it is true. My strength to continue school and finish strong is something Jesus has helped me with. Without him, I would have not made it, and I thank him for that. Jesus has saved me and he can save you too. God bless.

Mercedes Wynter '23
Lisle Campus

Friday of the First Week of Lent | March 3, 2023

[Ezekiel 18:21-28](#)

[Psalms 130:1-8](#)

[Matthew 5:20-26](#)

Today's Lenten readings invite us on a path to reconciliation and forgiveness. In the first reading from Ezekiel (18: 21-28) we are reminded that “if the wicked, turning from the wickedness he has committed, does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life; since he has turned away from all the sins that he committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Similarly, in the reading from the Gospel of Matthew (5:20-26), we are reminded to not hold on to grudges but to “go first and be reconciled” with those who might feel wronged by us before bringing our gifts to the altar. As we reflect upon today's readings how are we, as a Benedictine campus community, engaged in reconciliation and preparation for Easter? The readings provide us with further direction towards our commitment to the Hallmark of Community. In our first fully in-person Lenten season since the pandemic what role does each of us play in healing ourselves, working to forge relationships and reconciling our differences with our fellow students, faculty and staff, and collaborating to support each other to create a more close-knit campus community?

Dr. Cheryl Mascarenhas
Dean, College of Science and Health

Saturday of the First Week of Lent | March 4, 2023

[Deuteronomy 26:16-19](#)

[Psalms 119:1-8](#)

[Matthew 5:43-48](#)

As we Journey through Lent, let's ask ourselves "how does Jesus want me to live..."

When we look at the beginning of Matthew chapter 7; Jesus says, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." Many brothers and sisters in Christ usually take that verse out of context... you might hear someone saying "hey don't judge" trying to quote Jesus, but not realizing that, that sentence in itself is a judgement. Let's keep reading...

"For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Self explanatory, right?... let's read a bit more...

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all this time there is a plank in your own eye?" "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

OUCH!... as we can see brothers and sisters, Jesus isn't telling us not to judge but simply how to judge... Removing the speck from our brother's eye requires judgement! That judgement or correction means nothing if we ourselves are still blinded.

It's so easy for us to point fingers, or throw the first stone but we fail to examine our own life... during this season of Lent, let's ask Jesus to reveal to us where we are spiritually blinded in hopes that we can lead others more fruitfully.

DON'T FORGET! Correct with Love!

Johnson Joseph '24
Lisle Campus

Second Sunday of Lent | March 5, 2023

[Genesis 12:1-4a](#)
[Psalms 33:4-5, 18-20, 22](#)
[2 Timothy 1:8b-10](#)
[Matthew 17:1-9](#)

In today's reading God is calling out to us. He is asking us to give ourselves and fully trust in Him. In this time during Lent, God is giving us time to reflect on our lives. There is so much turmoil and destruction surrounding the world, but He is here to pull us out from that. He desires for us to join him in love and glory. Once we let go of the passing pleasures that only leave us empty, we can become our true selves that are not tied down by pain or emptiness. God asks of his people to trust Him for He has everything to offer. The direction that the world is headed, is not towards God, and He is calling out for us to look back at Him and trust that He is willing to give all that He has to His children. Although it is terrifying to leave the comforts of our habits, we must focus only on God as He is eternal love that will satisfy every speck of emptiness we may have. But first we must let go and let ourselves fall into His arms and Lent gives the opportunity to do so.

Angeles Camarena '23
Mesa Campus

Monday of the Second Week of Lent | March 6, 2023

[Daniel 9:4b-10](#)
[Psalms 79:8-13](#)
[Luke 6:36-38](#)

In the reading for today, it focuses on the compassion of the Lord. Through His mercy, we are forgiven for all of our sins. Further, the reading emphasizes the idea of covenants and following the Commandments the Lord has given us. God gives us examples on how we should act and honor others throughout this reading. It also represents the sins and failures humankind falls into every single day. No matter the number of sins you commit, God still leans to you with compassion. In times like today, people are very quick to judge and turn away from the ones who are sinning and struggling. God sent Jesus to show us that it is our goal to help the struggling and work on

our own struggles. Jesus ate with sinners, so why do we tend to judge so quickly? Lent is a time where we must reflect and repent on what we have done and what we are to do in the future to change. During this Lenten season, it is important to lead your life with compassion and forgiveness like Jesus did. What has God done for you in your life that has led you where you are today? How can I be more compassionate to others?

Caitlin Cardamone '25
Lisle Campus

Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent | March 7, 2023

[Isaiah 1:10, 16-20](#)
[Psalms 31: 5-6, 14-16](#)
[Matthew 20:17-28](#)

As we journey through this Lenten season, our Lord is constantly reminding us of the importance of listening to his word and the vastness of His love. "Hear the word of the LORD, princes of Sodom! Listen to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrah!" (Is 1:10) Through the prophet Isaiah, Our Lord is calling to Sodom and Gomorrah to repent of their sinful ways and through His endless mercy be absolved of their sins. Even to this lost city our Lord was ready to welcome them back with open arms...if only they had listened!

We are then called to again listen in the words of the Gospel, "Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen." (Mt 23:3-5a) To watch and follow the statues of the law but to be vigilant to avoid the pitfalls of vanity and the desire to be considered a "Master."

To listen and to love go hand in hand. In fact, according to the Benedictine Hallmark of Obedience we are all called to be "listening with the ear of our hearts." There may be a few instances where we are obviously being called in some grand way, clearly and unmistakably to act in one way or another. Yet many times, our Lord speaks to us in the silence of our hearts often as a whisper of a thought. My brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us use this Lenten season to spend time with our Lord, perhaps we can meditate upon His great love as we

complete our daily tasks or be with Him in silence before the start of Mass. Then through meditating on His great love we will be called to turn aside from the noises of the world and our vain pride, to join Him with a repentant heart and have our sins turned as white as snow.

Elizabeth Reiniche

Director of Operations for the College of Business, Lisle Campus

Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent | March 8, 2023

[Jeremiah 18:18-20](#)

[Psalms 31:5-6, 14-16](#)

[Matthew 20:17-28](#)

Prophet

Job description: Do not apply. Must be “called”. This job requires the ability to deal with difficult, hard-headed, hard-hearted people. Must be willing to take rejection, threats, and possible death at the hands of the people you are trying to help. Travel is involved, sometimes to deliver messages that people won’t want to hear; at other times to escape injury or death. Expect to be repaid evil for your good work.

Jeremiah was a prophet, called by God to do a job - even before he was born. Oh, he complained, had excuses: “I’m too young. I don’t know how to speak.” But God didn’t seem to care about those. He was “called” and there was work to be done. At least when he found himself in trouble he knew he had backup, “for I am with you and will rescue you” declared the Lord.

Times have changed since 650 BC, but maybe we aren’t so different from Jeremiah. We may use different excuses when “called” to speak out or take action against racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, xenophobia: “It’s not my issue, I’m too tired, too busy, too scared, too inexperienced, too poor, too old...” or “I’ll lose friends, people won’t like me, they’ll think I’m weird, I don’t know what to say...” We’re called to do different tasks than Jeremiah was, usually not at the risk of death, although sometimes that still happens when we speak out, take a stand, push back.

In Matthew’s gospel reading for today we are reminded that the way to become “great,” at least how God measures it, means being a “servant.” That’s a word loaded with all manner of negative connotations, and not a role many would ask for.

Jeremiah didn't ask to be a prophet either, not a job he was looking for, but he was "called." Maybe we're each called to do things we don't feel prepared for. We think we're not smart enough, strong enough, experienced enough to do them. Well, maybe we aren't. Maybe we're just called to be servants. But at least we know that like Jeremiah, we always have backup.

Dr. Pat Somers

Assistant Professor, Psychology, Lisle Campus

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent | March 9, 2023

[Jeremiah 17:5-10](#)

[Psalms 1:1-6](#)

[Luke 16:19-31](#)

When we need something, where do you seek your help? Do you rely on others to fulfill your needs? Or do you have hope in the Lord to provide you with everything your heart desires?

When we are struggling doing a task, or when we can't pay bills, or even when we are on the brink of losing someone, we cry to the Lord to help us and guide us through what we need. Why do we do this? Pray when we need something in that immediate moment? We must stop and realize that prayer is a continued action way before you need something and way after all needs are met.

To put this in perspective, earlier in my life I had never been too involved in my faith journey. I just knew that there was a higher being and that I cannot create the path that I have to follow. In 2017, I was going to take a trip to a place called Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp, to become a counselor for campers all over the Colorado state and more and to dive deeper in understanding the Lord. With this trip, I had never been to Colorado, never been on an airplane, (as I have a fear of heights) and I had never been in the mountains. As it was that time to board the plane, and the plane began to ascend, I gripped the armrest and started praying to whomever that was willing to listen. Stating the following words, "Help me Jesus!!" "Please land this plane safely" and even the words, "I can't do this Lord!" I was praying thinking the worst of what could've happened through this plan ride.

When the plane finally landed, I thanked the flight attendants and the pilots, almost hugging them for the work

that they do. I had put all my faith and hope in them as they were carrying a few hundred people on a plane thousands of feet off the ground. What a simple and light experience for a first-time flyer! Throughout the continuation of my trip, I learned that I needed to relax and put my faith in the Lord and to continue to pray before and after events occur, before and after a want or a need, and to have hope in the Lord that everything that is to be possible will become possible through His will.

In our reading, it states that “lessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose hope is the LORD.” As the trip came to an end and now it's time to return home, I had to believe in the crew members to get me through the two hour trip back home, but I knew deep down that I had to trust and put my faith in the Lord to guide me through whatever I needed to make sure that I am safe and healthy. I could not fear when I have the Lord on my corner to cheer me on, to help me have a conversation with Him, and to know that He will bless and keep me forevermore.

I may not pray every day, but when I am in need, I know that everything will be fulfilled if I stay the course, and if I have faith that the Lord will make everything right.

Joshua Williams
Residence Life Coordinator, Lisle Campus

Friday of the Second Week of Lent | March 10, 2023

[Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a](#)

[Psalms 105:16-21](#)

[Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46](#)

When I first read the reading, I immediately focused on the fact that the brothers were jealous of Joseph. However, in the reading, it is clear that Joseph had not done anything to his brothers but was favored by his father, Israel. I think his father, Israel, should not have shown favoritism; instead, he should have treated all his children equally. When I think about my own family, I don't see someone being favored or liked more. For example, I am the oldest of four, but that does not automatically mean I am the favorite child. When I have asked my parents which of us they like the most, they have always answered that they see each of us as their favorite and cannot

choose between us. I am grateful that my parents are loving to all of us and see us as equal.

Further, I thought about how Joseph was truly innocent in this situation because he had not done anything wrong. It seems Joseph was simply being himself and minding his business. He had no control over how his father viewed him and his brothers. I believe that is how I live my life despite society's attempts to make me want to compare myself to my peers. However, if he was boasting to his brothers that he was the favored child, that would have been wrong, yet it does not justify how his brothers reacted to Joseph, but it is a bit easier to have some sympathy for his siblings. Nevertheless, it was horrible of them to say that they wished Joseph dead, let alone want to kill him themselves. Also, when the chief priests and the elders of the people answered Jesus's question, I thought about how it is best to be the bigger person and not seek revenge when others have done you wrong. I believe that silence can sometimes be more powerful than words. The person doing the hurting is probably hurt, and in pain, so they wish for others close to them to feel that way. It also made me think of the quote my sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Lawrence, has on display on her classroom door. The quote reads, "What you do, shows who you are." I have always remembered it since then. It has constantly been in the back of my mind and has helped me make decisions. Overall, I believe Lent is a time to reflect on ourselves, specifically our character and how we have treated the people we have encountered and those around us.

Jackie Alcantara '23
Lisle Campus

Saturday of the Second Week of Lent | March 11, 2023

[Micah 7:14-15, 18-20](#)

[Psalm 103: 1-4, 9-12](#)

[Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32](#)

"Who does not persist in anger forever,
but delights rather in clemency,
And will again have compassion on us,
treading underfoot our guilt?"

This passage stood out to me in today's reading, as we often forget that God is a loving father and not an angry one

who wants to see us suffering, full of guilt and regret. I think many of us stray away from God when we feel guilty because of our sins, and think that God has abandoned us, as we don't feel worthy of His love and mercy. But it is in these times that we must run to Him, repent, and ask for forgiveness and guidance, as His mercy and love are boundless. Just as the parable of the prodigal son so beautifully illustrates, He will rejoice at our return and lift us from misery and despair, bless us with abundance and love beyond what we can imagine.

It is sometimes difficult to put our faith in God, to relinquish control and trust that He has a plan for us, especially when we face challenges that are greater than what we think we can bear. So today, I challenge you to think of your biggest worry and give it to God, entrust Him with your suffering and have faith that in return He will take your pain and turn it into your biggest blessing. It is through hardship that we grow into better and kinder versions of ourselves, so strengthen your faith and pray tirelessly and God will carry you through everything.

During this beautiful time of prayer and reflection, as we strengthen our faith and feel closer to God, I hope we can all find it in our hearts to be a little more patient and loving, more accepting, and more understanding of one another, as we never know the journey and struggles of others.

Dr. Florina Salaghe

Assistant Professor, College of Business, Lisle Campus

Sunday of the Third Week of Lent | March 12, 2023

[Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15](#)

[Psalms 103:1-4, 6-8, 11](#)

[1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12](#)

[Luke 13:1-9](#)

In the first reading from Exodus, the Israelites are upset and complaining to Moses because they are thirsty during their long journey through the desert. The Israelites are experiencing a physical struggle, which comes as a result of sin in this world. It makes them doubt the plan, purpose, and promises that God made for them. Water is essential for human survival. In fact, humans can only survive 3 days without water, so from a human perspective, we can see how their thirst in the hot desert was urgent to them. When Moses tells the Lord about

the situation, He instructs Moses to strike a rock with his staff and water flows from it. By this miracle, God proved to them that He had not abandoned them. It taught them that they should trust God's plan because he provides what is needed to fulfill his promises—and nothing is impossible for him. The gospel reading then adds another component to that message. Yes, God walks with us as we face earthly struggles, sin, and death. But besides taking care of our physical needs, he also nourishes our eternal souls by sending us his Son. At Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, he explains to her that he provides "living water." He tells her: *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* Jesus' words should bring us all gratitude and hope this Lenten season. Let us always remember that God satisfies our spiritual thirst for him. By Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, he is our source of eternal life.

Victoria Alvarado '24
Lisle Campus

Monday of the Third Week of Lent | March 13, 2023

[2 Kings 5:1-15ab](#)
[Psalms 42:2, 3, 43:3-4](#)
[John 4:24-30](#)

Naaman, an army commander for the King of Aram, traveled to Israel to visit the prophet Elisha, to be cured of leprosy. But Naaman was angered by the prophet's instructions and rejected what he was told to do to be cured. It wasn't "flashy" enough. It was servants who finally lead him to his cure. First the servant girl in his country urging him to go to the prophet of Israel. Then, once there, it was his servants who convinced Naaman to follow the prophet Elisha's instructions. God used others around Naaman, to encourage him to hear and receive God's blessing.

While undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer a few years back, I was having a particularly rough day, not feeling God was near, not feeling supported. A colleague (a crafter) from another site across town showed up in my office that morning with a beautiful quilt she had made. She said she was

awoken at 3 in the morning with God telling her to bring that specific quilt to me. It moved me. It was beautiful and the colors looked like it was made just for me, which I guess it was! Later that evening at a religious study class, a friend brought me a gift of a pink bracelet. She stated she had this for a while, waiting for the right person to gift it too. She felt she needed to give it to me that night.

What started as a despairing day ended with me knowing God was with me all the time. It took others to open my eyes. It took others actions for me to hear God's voice. He was with me, he didn't leave.

Is there a time when you felt alone, abandoned and God spoke to you through others? Is there a time your actions, inspired by the Holy Spirit, open others eyes to God's presence?

Cate Croteau

Director, Office of Institutional Grants, Lisle Campus

Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent | March 14, 2023

[Daniel 3:25, 34-43](#)

[Psalms 25:4-9](#)

[Matthew 18:21-35](#)

The main idea of this reading was to show the guidance of the Lord and that we seek for answers. It is an invitation for us all to welcome the Lord's guidance throughout life and how we live our life. This phrase really stuck with me because I have looked through answers all my life, I've turned to God about many questions I have had in my life. However, through time and patience I have learned that that does not come with direct answers; however, during your lifetime it is eventually shaped with many answers, you just must find them in unexpected ways. Also, what stood out to me was to be a forgiving person. It is beneficial for your soul no matter if people have done you wrong, you should always be a forgiving person. Holding grudges is not good for your soul and sometimes letting things go can be the best medicine. Another great word that stood out to me was kindness. Kindness is one of the most influential words that has a significant impact in my life because I am an exceedingly kind person at heart. I always look for ways to kindly impact someone's day. Living this way has made my life a lot more meaningful because it does not take effort to simply

be kind to others, you may not know what a person is going through and small acts of kindness go a long way.

One experience from my life that affected the way I read and related to this passage is for example being the oldest daughter of 3. It has been a roller coaster for me because I feel the pressure to exceed my expectations to show the best version of myself for my younger siblings. Many times I've felt very lost or very under pressure and I've turned to the Lord and say, "God, please help me find myself and guide me for the answers I'm looking for." Going through many new experiences by myself, I've fallen many times and been up high as well. I have noticed that at my highs and lows I have found many of the complex answers I have been asking God to help me find. In the context of Lent, I believe we should be forgiving because from the reading of the Gospel, a master had pity to forgive the servant from a large debt he owed. Later that servant did not forgive someone who owed him a smaller amount of money. I believe if someone forgives us, we should forgive others the same way we are forgiven.

Stephany Mondragon '26
Lisle Campus

Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent | March 15, 2023

[Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9](#)

[Psalms 147:12-16, 19-20](#)

[Matthew 5:17-19](#)

In our first reading today, there is a focus on the relationship between God and His people, as well as obeying the law that God has given the Israelites. What stuck out to me is the very end of this passage, verse 9, which discusses the passing on of memories, tradition, and the testimony of God. Often times, this is still practiced in families today. I would like to invite you to look back on your life and how God has moved within it, or through yourself.

Moving on to the Gospel for today, Jesus states that he comes to fulfill the Law and the commandments. Particularly in verse 18, Christ states that until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. No matter what happens in our world today, the salvation and fulfillment that Christ brings us will always be present and active in the world.

During this Lenten season, how can we try to see Christ's presence in our world? Some may see it in other people, their friendships, or even the natural beauty of the world. However you see Christ's presence in your life, embrace it and share it with others.

Giandaniel Faccini '23
Mesa Campus

Thursday of the Third Week of Lent | March 16, 2023

[Jeremiah 7:23-28](#)

[Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9](#)

[Luke 11:14-23](#)

In Jeremiah 7:23-28, God asks us to listen to His voice and to walk along a particular path—that is, to act according to a certain set of guiding principles.

The book of Jeremiah was written around 300 B.C., and its authoritarianism is a bit jarring to our modern sensibilities, exhorting us, as it does, to “Walk in all the ways that I command you...” Another of today’s readings, Luke 11:14-23 (written around A.D. 85), has God threatening that “Whoever is not with me is against me,” and warning that “whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

I think we can jettison the authoritarian tone and still appreciate the original meaning of these passages. Let’s replace God’s “commands” in the originals with “what we know to be right,” “what is good for society,” “what nourishes the soul,” or something along these lines. These sentiments capture the crux—the content—of God’s message laid down in the Bible. If we recontextualize it this way, then the second part of Jeremiah 7:23-28 makes sense: we are to “Walk in all ways” (that God commanded) - in other words, we are to be good, do right, care for others, and follow all the teachings expressed so beautifully in other parts of the Bible.

In a way, doesn’t this interpretation give us back some agency? If we think about God as our parent, then the God of the Old Testament is more likely to answer our questions with “because I said so” than He is to explain His logic, whereas the New Testament God (through the words of his son/self Jesus Christ) often tells us why we should be good people and treat others fairly.

Keeping these points in mind, “Listen to my voice” and “Walk in all the ways that I command you” now become calls to action, as they were originally intended. God’s message to us is to love others, to be kind, to honor our parents and spouses, and to refrain from all manner of bad deeds. Walking in God’s ways is to follow these guidelines; to not listen, to not obey, to not answer—to walk in other ways—is to fall out of line with what is good and right.

The New Testament God explains all this to us. Scientists, philosophers, psychologists, teachers, and others can enumerate the benefits of living a virtuous life and even speculate about why we strive to be good. The God of the Old Testament depicted in Jeremiah 7:23-28, on the other hand, asks us to “obey” His commands because that is what He said. Let’s all plan to be good and lead virtuous lives anyway.

Dr. Rob McCarthy

Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, Lisle Campus

Friday of the Third Week of Lent | March 17, 2023

[Hosea 14:2-10](#)

[Psalms 81:6-11, 14, 17](#)

[Mark 12:28b-34](#)

“Thus, says the Lord, return O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity” (Hosea 14:1-10). In today’s first reading, the Lord is telling the Israelites to renounce all their wrongdoings and return to him. The Israelites were God’s favored people. Though at times the Israelites went astray the Lord did not forsake them, he continued protecting and loving them as he did not want anyone of them to perish.

Today this reading is directed to me and you as Israelites of 2023. Oftentimes we also collapse through our sins due to our human weakness. The right time is now, the Lord is inviting us during this Lent, to reject anything that is contrary to his teachings. Let us return to him and ask for forgiveness. Lent is the time to re-look into our lives and get rid of anything that hinders us from doing his will. It is also a time for bringing our heavy loads to the Lord.

In the Gospel, one of the scribes asked Jesus which is the first of all commandments, Jesus replied “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is Lord alone. You shall love the Lord Your God with all

your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

Personally, I reflect on Lent as another season that the Lord exercises his love for me. All that he is going through is because of my salvation. So, I am obliged to love him as he loved me first. My love for God is demonstrated through loving my neighbor because I don't see God physically. The Gospel is illustrating that “to love your neighbor as yourself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” We ought to love one another because love is from God. By loving God through our neighbors, we will not be far from the Kingdom of God.

Sr. Celestine Shakungu '24
Lisle Campus

Saturday of the Third Week of Lent | March 18, 2025

[Hosea 6:1-6](#)

[Psalms 51:3-4, 18-21A](#)

[Luke 18:9-14](#)

We are brilliant at complicating things including assuming we know what God **really** wants. I trust and believe that love is an equal opportunity gift, given to all. We are reminded over and over in our everyday lives the depth and breadth of God's love. It's there, in us and around us 24/7. Simply being who we are created to be, sharing love freely, acknowledging the grace God gives us, and the space to be more connected to ourselves and others is all that's required.

This passage makes clear that God isn't looking for sacrifice or gifts, simply love and knowledge of the endless blessings we're given.

In his first letter, John reminds us, “God is love, and whoever remains in love, remains in God and God in her or him.” (1 John 4:16). This is pretty clear, God is love and His love is in us.

I have found that sometimes we try to find an angle, a way that might make us more favorable to God, but the truth is simply loving and acknowledging God and God in others is all that is required. No more, no less. He makes it so easy, we make it so hard.

1 Corinthians 13:13 sums up love, “So faith, hope and love remain, but the greatest of these is love.”

Nicki Anderson
Director of University Development, L.E.A.D.S., Lisle Campus

Sunday of the Fourth Week of Lent | March 19, 2023

[1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a](#)

[Psalms 23:1-6](#)

[Ephesians 5:8-14](#)

[John 9:1-41](#)

God does not see us in the same way that we see ourselves or others. This is a common thread through the first reading and the Gospel today. In the first reading, Samuel is sent to choose a new king for Israel and upon seeing Eliab, he thinks that he has found the anointed of God. “But the LORD said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.”” God reveals to us in this passage that He does not judge us by our outward appearance, He judges us by our heart. He knows the deepest parts of ourselves. He knows us better than we know ourselves. God chose David to be the next king. David was the youngest and a simple shepherd when he was chosen, but God knew his heart.

In the Gospel for today, Jesus and His disciples pass by a blind man which prompts His disciples to ask: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus informs His disciples: “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.” Once again, the LORD corrects the assumptions of others based on outward appearance. The blind man is seen as a sinner, with his blindness being a punishment for either his own sin or the sin of his parents. The Pharisees also bring this up when the man (with the gift of sight bestowed upon him by Jesus), tries to convince the Pharisees of Jesus following the will of God. While the blind man is seen as a sinner, Jesus tells us his blindness is not related to sin. These readings can give us two reminders. One- that God loves us and knows us better than anyone else. This can be freeing, especially if we find ourselves bogged down by the opinions of others. And two- we are reminded to be mindful of the way we think about and treat others. Do we judge outward appearances? Or do we look to discover the person within? Every person is a child of God born with inherent dignity. Do we treat our neighbor with this in mind?

Sean Hancock '24

Lisle Campus

Solemnity of St. Joseph | March 20, 2023

[2 Samuel 7: 4-5a, 12-14a, 16](#)

[Psalms 89: 2-5, 27, 29](#)

[Romans 4: 13, 16-18, 22](#)

[Matthew 1: 16, 18-21, 24a or Luke 2: 41-51a](#)

Our Lenten journey prepares us for the most sacred of mysteries, the Resurrection of Christ and triumph over death. Today, as we move along this path, we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph, and read of the angel's message to Joseph that it was through the Holy Spirit that Jesus was conceived and would save the people from sins. Hearing the words of the angel in a dream and acting upon the command took courage and faith in accepting the role of serving as a father to Jesus. Joseph could have easily chosen another direction and not believed that he and Mary were chosen by the Holy Spirit to guide Jesus through his life on Earth and ultimately save the world of sin.

This calling to Joseph must have been a heavy burden to carry. Joseph had to trust in the Lord and his faith to know that his role as a father was extremely important. In reflecting on today's reading, I thought of Jesus' lifelong ministry to others and what impact Joseph had on the journey Jesus took. A father is called upon to love, support, encourage, teach, and guide. I am sure that Joseph took the responsibilities of fatherhood seriously and because of Joseph, we have a positive model of fatherhood to follow.

On this day of celebration of St. Joseph, what can we learn from his humility and the way in which he listened to God's call through the angel? Will we be as open during the season of Lent to hear with word of God?

Dr. Kenneth Newbold

Provost and Chief Academic Officer

Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent | March 21, 2023

[Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12](#)

[Psalms 46:2-9](#)

[John 5:1-16](#)

May we always remember God's unconditional love, grace, and mercy. As we are blessed and cared for by God, we are all called to move forward in our lives and show this same

stewardship for all of creation. God is our guide through everything – joy, conviction, sadness, and fear – through which we are offered an example of how, we, too, can exhibit that same generosity to others around us. We should not doubt His unwavering presence, for He is the ultimate power in our lives. Nothing is too great for Him to help us overcome. As we are preparing for Easter, let us keep Christ close to our hearts and minds.

Ryann O'Malley '26
Lisle Campus

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent | March 22, 2023

[Isaiah 49:8-15](#)

[Psalms 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18](#)

[John 5:17-30](#)

“Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth,
break forth into song, you mountains.
For the LORD comforts his people
and shows mercy to his afflicted.”—Isaiah 49:13

That the Lord comforts the afflicted is a theme seen many times in Scripture. Jesus tells us, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,* and I will give you rest.”—Matthew 11:28. The Psalm for today tells us, “The LORD lifts up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.”—Psalm 145:14. We hear again later in John: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.”—John 14:27.

Bring your suffering to God and he will bring you comfort. Sometimes in prayer God will take our affliction away. Sometimes he will not, but he understands it and can bring comfort to us. Bishop Sheen once asked:

Does God know anything about pain? Does God know what I suffer? Did God ever have a migraine headache as if his head was crowned with thorns? Does God know anything about the starvation in India and Africa? Did he ever go without food for two days? Or three? Or five? Does God know anything about homelessness? Was he ever without a home? Does he know what it is to be a refugee? To flee from one country to another?

Does he know what it is to be in jail? To be the victim of scourging? Does God know any of these things? Yes! God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.—from *Through the Year with Fulton Sheen*

So what does seeking comfort from God in our sufferings mean? It means that our faith in God will show us that joy transcends suffering, that even in the midst of affliction the heavens and the Earth and the mountains will rejoice and break out into song. In Christianity, suffering is not pointless, it is redemptive; each of us is called, to paraphrase St. Paul, to fill up in ourselves the sufferings that are wanting to the passion of Christ.

In a few weeks we will remember the afflictions of Christ on Good Friday. But we all know that the suffering isn't the end of the story, rather Jesus rises again glorious and immortal. I close with the words of St. John Paul II in 1986: "We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery – the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!'"

Dr. Matt Wiesner
Associate Professor, Physical Sciences, Lisle Campus

Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent | March 23, 2023

[Exodus 32:7-4](#)
[Psalms 106:19-23](#)
[John 5:31-47](#)

Today's reading from the book of Lectionary speaks on the people of Israel turning their back to God, and worshipping a golden calf. These people had just been rescued from slavery in Egypt by God, and yet they still were ungrateful enough to turn to false gods. It is very easy to judge the Israelites for doing this. But in reading this passage, it occurred to me that I as an individual, have acted like the Israelites in many ways. God does so much for me. Nevertheless, I still commit sins. Although I might not worship a golden calf, in choosing to reject God and commit a sin, I am turning my back to Him just as the Israelites

did. I am creating a metaphorical “golden calf” which I choose over God. This golden calf may be lust, anger, greed, or any other action which, in choosing to commit, causes me to turn my back to God. This passage made me realize that I need to be grateful for everything God has done for me, and when I feel tempted to turn my back on Him and commit a sin, I should remember how good He is to me.

Abby Manning '25
Lisle Campus

Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent | March 24, 2023

[Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22](#)

[Psalms 34:17-21, 23](#)

[John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30](#)

There is always one thing that encourages me about God's word and his promises and that one thing is that the battle has been won. A lot of times we are always looking for battles to fight, or we are always trying to find ways to win in whatever we may do. However, often we forget that a lot of the times the battle is not ours to fight. We must learn to not be too prideful and just know that it is okay to leave our circumstances in God's hands. He always knows what is best for us and God doesn't like to see us hurting or trying to do things out of our power. God loves us so much, in fact, that he sent his only son Jesus Christ to carry our burdens for us. He sent his perfect son without any sin to bear the weight of the cross. A weight only Jesus can handle and to me that is the most generous thing I can think of.

I mention the battle being won and how Jesus has fought our fight for us because in today's reading, it seems like the people who are speaking about Jesus seem to have lost sight that Jesus is indeed for them and is coming to save the world. Throughout the reading the people speaking about Jesus are found doubting Jesus and questioning the way he goes about living his life. In today's reading, you get the message that the people speaking about Jesus are missing the point that Jesus removes our burdens. They seem as if they are burdened by the idea of Jesus, simply because he is not confirming to the sinful nature of the world we live in today. They are clearly not seeking “blameless souls.” They are seeking

their own selfish ways over God's way when all God really wants for them or anyone for that matter is us to not have an ounce of shame, guilt, regret, or blame in us. God wants to wipe us clean from sin, and he purifies us and leads us closer to his all good divine plan to prosper our lives.

Today's reading is relatable to Lent and today's issue of always trying to conform to the way of the world. This is because often in life we may feel as if we are being ridiculed by others for our faith or even our disciplines, like Lent for example. In all reality the goal is to be seen as righteous in God's eyes. I think this scripture is relatable to today's culture of always trying to fit in and do what the world advertises is good for us. It is as if these people in the passage are speaking louder than ever. They are persecuting believers, and they get confused when they don't conform.

The great part about this is that Jesus knows we face these persecutions. Jesus knows how we feel when we get talked bad about or shunned because of our faith in God. Jesus clearly lived through the same just on scale beyond our imagination. He went through all the pain and ridicule and died for our sins, and he did all of this knowing some people still may reject him just like the people in the reading are. So, what I take from this reading is that even when you feel like you may be looked down upon about your faith, or even if you are staying true to your core values and morals and people still reject you, don't fret and cling to God's promise that he is always with you.

If things get difficult, try to look for the ways God is calling you to be the person God so interestingly, lovingly, and perfectly made you to be. I took from this reading that it is okay to be bold in my faith in God and that it brings me pure joy that I can wake up and hold on to the everlasting promise of salvation that God gives us through faith in his son Jesus. So if you ever feel like buckling to the pressure of some of negative things this world has to offer, know that God has the blueprint. God writes the script, and he is holding you ever so close to him every step of the way. God just needs us to have authentic faith in him and a heart that is after his. When we learn to submit to God and let him fight our battles and not conform to some of the ways of this world we truly feel that burden being lifted from us. We can be happy and know that God who is all caring, loving, and utterly awesome in every way is for us and not

against us. Knowing that gives me all the strength I need to live my best life according to God's will and I hope it can do the same for anyone who has faith in God and his promises.

David Haywood

Records Specialist, Registrar, Lisle Campus

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord | March 25, 2023

[Isaiah 7: 10-14, 8: 10](#)

[Psalms 40: 7-11](#)

[Hebrews 10: 4-10](#)

[Luke 1: 26-38](#)

Today is the Solemnity of the Annunciation and it is like Christmas in March...sort of. Today, we hear from the prophet Isaiah a prophecy that is quoted in the Gospel of Matthew's infancy narrative, as well as passages from the Gospel of Luke that we hear during the Advent season. These readings and this solemnity happening during Lent is a beautiful reminder of the interconnectedness of the liturgical year. In fact, there is an ancient tradition in the Christian faith that Christ's crucifixion took place on the anniversary of the day he entered the world; but not December 25th, as many of us are accustomed to believing, but rather March 25th, the date of his conception. In fact, in his work *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) notes that March 25th is also the traditional date of the Creation of the world, and the near-sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Other long-standing Jewish and Christian traditions point to March 25th also being the dates of Adam and Eve eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as well as the Passover of the Angel of Death over the Hebrews in Egypt and their subsequent exodus. As Ratzinger would note in *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, "These cosmic images enabled Christians to see, in an unprecedented way, the world-embracing meaning of Christ."

Just as the Son of God became man and dwelt among us, bringing cosmic earthquake to salvation history, can be felt in a personal way through the living out of our Christian faith and hope, so too can Mary's *fiat* that we hear in today's Gospel be a cosmic earthquake that is lived out personally. Mary says "Yes" to the angel Gabriel, and in doing so, she also says "Yes" to life. Here, in the very heart of Lent, we are reminded the purpose of

the season. It is not a season of give-ups, or of nos. It is not a time to focus on Christ's death at Golgotha or our own mortality as we begin the season with ashes on our forehead and the words "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Rather, it is a season that calls us to look ahead to Easter, to the new life Christ rises to, and to the new life we are all called to rise to. Mary says "Yes" to life, and summons all of us to do the same. Find the courage. It may not be what you want, but seldom does the spiritual journey begin with us getting to do what we want to do. Rather, the Annunciation and Mary's *fiat* summons us, challenges us to shake off our mortal coils and say "Yes" to life, and to defend it everywhere and at all times, from the moment of conception to its natural end. Lent is the season of life because on this cosmic day, March 25th, life won.

Rico the Redhawk
Mascot, Mesa Campus

Fifth Sunday of Lent | March 26, 2023

[Ezekiel 37: 12-14](#)

[Psalms 130: 1-8](#)

[Romans 8: 8-11](#)

[John 11: 1-45](#)

For my reflection, I read about St. Catherine and the power of reconciliation, the responsorial psalm (130: 1-8) refrain of "with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption," and the two readings that contain themes of faith, patience, and one's spirit. In the Gospel reading for today, Lazarus's family and friends suggested that Jesus could have saved him had he arrived before Lazarus died. However, the timing of raising Lazarus from the dead seems to be an important detail. Taken as a whole, these texts communicate to me a message of the value of humility, trust, and patience. I usually think of those values or attributes when I consider how I interact with others, but my reflection today takes an inward look. How do I know my true self through humility? How can I more fully trust or have confidence in myself? How do I practice patience with myself?

In our busy lives, it can be common to put a lot of pressure on ourselves, experience imposter syndrome, or feel

inefficient or overwhelmed with responsibilities and things competing for our attention. That's certainly true for me at times. We may also think that we're behind when comparing ourselves to other people or to our goals, and may ask ourselves "When will I arrive? How much further until I get there?" In those times when our light appears to shine less brightly, especially as we emerge from a dim winter into a brighter spring, we may need to remind ourselves that, through mindfulness and patience, we'll make it to the light in the next season – in nature and in life. God shows us mercy and patience, and that can be a good reminder for us to work towards doing the same for ourselves.

Dr. Al Legutki
Associate Professor, Music, Lisle Campus

Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent | March 27, 2023

[Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62](#)

[Psalms 23:1-6](#)

[John 8:12-20](#)

I am a professor of U.S. History and African American History; my fields of specialization and primary focus are African American Women's History and Gender Studies. Thus, from the outset, this Lent Reading and Gospel viscerally spoke to me, professionally and personally. They speak to power, the people who we entrust with power, how some of those people use their power to control, oppress and hurt those whom they see are powerless for their own gain. They are also about how women are viewed in society, women's oppression and sexual violence against women.

Susanna is targeted, stalked, and her stalker/assailants (respected, elder-judges) threaten to use the weight of their powerful position(s) to have her shamed before all and put to death, under penalty of adultery, if she does not acquiesce to their sexual coercion. It is important to note that not only are the elder-judges sure their threatened retribution will come to fruition solely on their word, *Susanna is sure too*. Yet she still says no, resists: "...it is better for me to fall into your power without guilt than to sin before the Lord." The elder-judges and Susanna are correct. On the elder-judges word alone, Susanna is condemned to death. But one person, a child no less, speaks up: "What is this you are saying? ...Are you such fools to

condemn a woman of Israel without examination and without clear evidence?" Upon further examination, Susanna is exonerated. I can't help but wonder, how many women in similar situations acquiesced to an oppressors' sexual violence before Susanna? How many times did the people blindly accept oppressed women's deaths, on trumped up charges? The Reading ends: "Thus was innocent blood spared that day." But Jesus takes us one step further, gets to the heart, minds and intentions of us all – 'cause that's how He do: what if the woman in question did exactly what she was accused of?

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, the scribes and the Pharisees brought to him a woman who had been caught in adultery. The lynch mob said: "Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" Jesus replies to the lynch mob: "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." He waits. After a time He looks up. Only He and the accused woman remain. Jesus: "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" Her reply: "No one, Sir." Jesus: "Neither do I condemn you."

Lent is a 'spiritual workshop' where the character of we believers are spiritually uplifted and strengthened; where our lives are rededicated to the principles and ideals of the Gospel, culminating in deep conviction of life; where apathy and disinterest turn into vigorous activities of faith and good works; where we prepare to reach for, accept and attain the calling of our Savior – Jesus. Unfortunately and frustratingly, some of our current leaders (respected elder-judges), continually refuse to accept Lent and Jesus' assignment. Instead they appeal to and manipulate the worst in us; weaponize their influence and powerful position(s) to encourage and stoke the lynch mob: they persecute and punitively legislate against our LG TQIA community (targeting children and their families); their conception of who deserves legal recognition, protection, respect and justice under our law(s) fall along *their* color, class and gender lines; they laud, gaslight and overtly give support to State violence (against groups of Americans and immigrants they choose), believe it is their right to legally intrude and insert their will into the most intimate spaces of woman's life, and demand to *always be the determinative/normative protagonist* of any and all cultural, social, scholarly and legal story and understanding – all in the name of their constructive religion

that reifies their vision of gender, 'race', class, history and patriotism ideology.

However, most importantly, Lent, the Readings and Gospel are not about them; they are about everyone else, *the best that lies within of all of us*. The lesson, Jesus' assignment, is clear and in bold: speaking truth to power requires us to reject the pejorative temptation of lack consciousness, common decency and knowing in order to persecute and oppress those we see as weak solely because it satiates our lynch mob lowest selves. If Suzanna can speak to power and injustice, if Jesus can speak to power and injustice (and strongly encourage us to do the same) *we can, we must, too*. Not only during Lent but everyday: in our pews, classrooms and voting booths.

Dr. Temple Tsenes-Hills
Adjunct Faculty, History, Lisle Campus

Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent | March 28, 2023

[Numbers 21:4-9](#)
[Psalm 102:2-3, 16-21](#)
[John 8:21-30](#)

The Old Testament and Gospel readings for today contain several profound parallel messages. In Numbers, the LORD punishes the Israelites for their sin by sending killer serpents. When the people confess their sin, the LORD does not take the serpents away; instead, He instructs Moses to create a bronze serpent statue and mount it to a pole as a method to be saved from the venomous bite. In the Gospel of John, the Jews also learn about how their sin leads to death because they are of the world. Jesus explains that He will be lifted up (implied on a cross) and will demonstrate that He is the Son of God who is in perfect union with the Father. This explanation helps many believe in Jesus and be saved.

So here is an example of how the entire Bible contains lessons from the omnipresent God who foreknew Jesus' death and resurrection during Moses' time. God does not take sin away from us. Instead, we must come to the conviction of sin on our own and confess. Through looking upon the cross, we are reminded of Jesus' deity—the perfect I AM who belongs to what is above. The action of looking up to Him will prevent us from dying in our sins.

Both of these stories provide multiple reminders of God's

salvation—some of them obvious (the cross), and some of them not-so-obvious. I teach many Health Science majors who aspire to be a part of the medical field. Medicine is symbolized as the snake wrapped around the pole, which is actually based off of Greek mythology. When you see this symbol on a parked ambulance or a flyer on campus, are you reminded of God's salvation? It's the action of looking and believing that saves.

Dr. Lindsey Mao

Assistant Professor Biological Sciences, Lisle Campus

Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent | March 29, 2023

[Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95](#)

[Daniel 3:52-56](#)

[John 8:31-42](#)

In this Gospel of John, Jesus is speaking to his disciples. He reminds them that to be true disciples of him they need to follow Jesus' words. One of the phrases that stuck out to me was "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." By Jesus explaining that the truth will set us free, is that his words will provide us spiritual freedom from sin. Later, in this passage Jesus says, "I say to you, everyone who commits sin is slave of sin." Jesus reminds the act of sin can keep us spiritually bound to sin. It is through his words that we can be set free from the hostage of sin. During this lent season, as Catholics we should take the time to go to Confession in order to ask for pardon for our sins. Let us remember it is because Jesus died on the cross that we can ask him to set us free from our sins.

Anjali Maliekkal '22

Lisle Campus

Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent | March 30, 2023

[Genesis 17:3-9](#)

[Psalms 105:4-9](#)

[John 8:51-59](#)

God has asked us to keep a promise, a promise to trust him. Sometimes there have been barriers and difficulties in our past that have led us to not trust in God's word and plan that we are put on this earth for a purpose. We often struggle with this

during Lent. Lent is all about leaving behind something that has long affected us. But what about believing in God's plan? It is difficult for us to trust God's word when we are going through the most difficult times in our lives. But that is when the real test is done. Being able to trust God throughout all of it even when at the moment it feels like he has not been keeping his promise. Even after you have kept your promise. Just like Lent, when we give up something, we must surrender ourselves to him. To let him enter our lives and keep him there until our very last day. God promises us to be with us every day so when we don't see him, we should slow down and look around. God is around us in every shape and form, within our friends, our community, and within ourselves. Let God guide you throughout Lent and in our lives.

Jovana Kantun '23
Mesa Campus

Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent | March 31, 2023

[Jeremiah 20:10-13](#)

[Psalms 18:2-7](#)

[John 10:31-42](#)

We live in times of mistrust. We live in times of trouble. We sense danger, both real and imagined, at every turn. We may feel that those we have come to rely on, have all but abandoned us, or worse, they have been sent to inflict deliberate harm.

They lay in wait in the shadows for our missteps. They take to public forums to openly damage our minds, bodies, and souls. They are the ones who inflict the grave distress that allow the seeds of distrust to be sown. War, famine, brutality, hate, prejudice, misinformation, disease, destruction of the land, personal attacks in both the real- and cyber-world. It all seems so overwhelmingly hopeless.

However, the readings for Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent show us that if we call out to the Lord, he will rescue us. He is our champion. When he hears our cries of despair, he responds with clarity in times of doubt. He protects us when the threats and perils hit too close to home. He nourishes us with strength when we are depleted. He provides solace when we are overwhelmed.

Once we have heard the word of God and allowed him to

console us in our time of need, we must not rest. We must show our gratitude through the demonstration of how God lives in all of us. As the Gospel (Jn 10:31-42) shows us, through good work we can escape the injustices and the tyrannies that pervade our lives. Through good work, we are able to we can rebuild the foundations of trust, we can calm the troubled waters, but perhaps most important, we can demonstrate that we have not given up on each other, we have not lost hope, and we have not abandoned our Father.

Dr. Elaine Davies
*Director of the Office for Multicultural Student Affairs,
Lisle Campus*

Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent | April 1, 2023

[Ezekiel 37:21-28](#)
[Jeremiah 31:10-13](#)
[John 11:45-56](#)

We are getting closer to Good Friday and Easter. One more week. The course has been set; Caiaphas has given his direction. Jesus knows the situation and is preparing.

We have the benefit of history – we know what happened: Jesus was crucified, He suffered, died, and was buried. And we know that He rose again.

God has promised (a long time ago) an everlasting covenant of peace, to dwell with us, and to be our God. We know what happened some two thousand years ago. Are we ready now? Are we ready to be God's people and to live as one people within this covenant of peace? What will it take for us to listen to Jesus and to become a people who are recognized as God's people, a people of peace?

Dr. Rob Rebman
Assistant Professor, College of Business, Lisle Campus

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion | April 2, 2023

[Matthew 21:1-11](#)
[Isaiah 50: 4-7](#)
[Psalms 22: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24](#)
[Philippians 2: 6-11](#)
[Matthew 26:14 – 27:66](#)

Isaiah 50:4, "Morning after morning he opens my ear that

I may hear.” In this context you can refer ‘ear’ with the ear on your head listening to words, or you can refer to the ear that is on your heart. God does not sit us down and make us digest his words or teachings, rather we must freely choose to listen to the call that is place upon our hearts. Matthew 22: 14 says this perfectly: “For many are called, but few are chosen.” For most of us, including myself, I have no clue what that call is but that is the beauty of the uncertainty of life. However, throughout the entire bible, God gives us different blueprints or guides on how to live. One of which being from Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth.” If you think about the uses of salt, especially on food, it is normally used to elevate the elements of that food. Same goes for us humans. When we live for and with other people, we can lift other individuals.

Another blueprint that God gives is seen again inside of Isaiah 50: 4-7. It is one of the last lines in this passage and is foundational in our faith: “The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced.” At this moment our Lord is revealing to us that no matter what situation we are in or sin we may perform, he is always going to have our backs. What even sparked my thought is ‘therefore I am not disgraced.’ In today’s world we talk a lot about individuality and how special we are, and indeed we need to embrace that. God created us in his image and likeness; however we are all different from one another. No matter our positive or negatives we are always going to be loved, we just must believe it ourselves and trust that he is there to help us.

Nick Ried ‘25
Lisle Campus

Monday of Holy Week | April 3, 2023

[Isaiah 42:1-7](#)

[Psalms 27:1-3, 13-14](#)

[John 12:1-11](#)

Today’s reading emphasized the need for belief and the reminder of being chosen. Trust in God because He is salvation and do not be afraid of the world. Let us think of this while we are engaging in Lent. Lent is a time of contemplation and reflection. It can be difficult, scary, and sad. Sometimes we can get caught up in our own mind and hurt ourselves. We remember all the bad that we did and what was done to us.

Regret, anger, embarrassment, and forlornness are just the few emotions that rumble and drive themselves into the deep corners of our mind. Yet, we must not forget why or for Whom we are engaging in this practice. Jesus Christ is our light, so it is not for misery that we are doing this for, but for love. This is not a time to confine ourselves to the darkness, but to let Jesus set us free as we humble ourselves for Him. Yes, fear is real and all of your emotions are real. It is hard to just let them go and it is easy to say "open yourself," especially when you are not sure about how to feel or where to start. Especially when you are doubting and do not feel that life, your life, is worth something.

ut, this is not a time to be alone either. Maybe, just maybe, if you do something that is not in your usual schedule, whether that be asking your friend some crazy question or thinking of how beautiful the grass looks when it rains, it might show you a glimpse of what it means when we say, "it's alright after all." Here is where you start, with love and hope because that is God. And remember, do not be afraid to seek the light because God said He did not make a mistake when He made you, His child.

Maria Rodriguez- riseno '23
Lisle Campus

Tuesday of Holy Week | April 4, 2023

[Isaiah 49:1-6](#)

[Psalms 71:1-6, 15, 17](#)

[John 13:21-33, 36-38](#)

How deep the Father's love
Knit in a mother's womb
Counts every hair
Speaks the thought before it is spoken

Pursuer of rebellious hearts
Even Judas and Peter
 etrayers and deniers
Divinely forgiven

How deep a mother's love
Reminiscent of the Fathers
Traces the shape of an angelic face with her finger
Holds the weight of a tiny body in her arms

His body, bread of life
 His blood, shed for us
 Salvation is ours
 Proclaimed in worshipful servanthood

Rescued from the depths
 Spared from the devil's snare
 Righteousness prevails
 He hides us in His hands

The hands that formed the vessel
 A treasure set in clay
 roken pieces, mercifully gathered
 We are redeemed

A life given for a life lived
 An offering beyond measure
 rings forth an offering of humble gratitude
 Leaves a legacy of hope

God knew you before you were formed in the womb. He pursues His people in love. What He asks in return is to be a servant of His goodness. How can we sing of His salvation? Our life should reflect Him. Isaiah speaks a word of hope to the people of Israel who have been defeated. He is our eternal hope. Jesus is the gospel message of hope, despite those who betray and deny Him. Judas' and Peters actions were foreseen in God's omniscience. Jesus gives them an opportunity to take warning. Even so, He forgives them before they have committed the sin. We sing His salvation in recognition of that. But also, we sing His salvation by calling out to Him to rescue us from sins deception. In response, God asks us to accept our call to serve in humble gratitude, that we may be attuned to the whispers of the Holy Spirit as both encouragements and a discerning guide.

Kirsten Loja '25
Lisle Campus

Wednesday of Holy Week | April 5, 2023

[Isaiah 50:4-9A](#)

[Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34](#)

[Matthew 26:14-25](#)

Let us not forget to forgive those who have wronged us. The Lord stands by us and will heal us when we are hurt, whoever brings harm unto us does not need payback. In most cases, the enemy is in dire need of direction from God. It feels better to live a life free of grudges and allow the Lord to help you heal from attacks than to strike back in anger. It is peace and unity that is the goal, and the first step to achieving these two items is to forgive. Look into the past and find something that has happened that hurt or bothered you and ask God to help you heal from it. After you heal, forgive all who've wronged you. Forgiving does not diminish the seriousness of the matter you dealt with, but rather relieves you from the pain and allows you to be at peace.

There is strength within compassion, for you could be the one to change a poor soul by just showing love in the face of their wrongdoing. Let us walk with peace in our hearts and love to give to all. Do not give into hate, it is a trap that only worsens the situation. Retaliation is key to fueling the fire, stay away from this. It's much better to walk away from fires than to fuel them.

Keep compassion as your priority, and you likely will find that peace will fill your heart and your life, making you happier overall.

Giovanni Carbonara '26
Lisle Campus

Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper | April 6, 2023

[Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14](#)

[Psalm 116:12-13, 15-18](#)

[1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#)

[John 13:1-15](#)

Holy Thursday begins what is called the Triduum, the three most important days in the Catholic liturgical year. The Triduum stretches from Thursday night of Holy Week to the final prayers of Easter Sunday, including in its sweep Good

Friday, Holy Saturday, and the dramatic midnight observances of the Easter vigil. With Christmas Eve as a close competitor, the Triduum offers the most majestic liturgical celebrations in the treasury of the Catholic repertoire. Curiously, it also represents the greatest stretch of empty space in the church's ceremonial calendar.

Holy Thursday itself commemorates the final evening meal of Jesus with his closest disciples prior to his arrest, trial, and execution by Roman authorities. Great solemnity surrounds the annual ritual recreation of the sharing of bread and wine. Some Christians call it Communion, some the Lord's Supper, some the Eucharist (from the Greek for "thanksgiving"). For all Christians, the image of Jesus at table with his apostles—captured so poignantly by artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Salvador Dalí—represents a moment frozen in time. The past of Rabbi Jesus has come to completion, and the Passion of the one who will be known as the Christ has not yet truly begun.

The scriptural readings for Holy Thursday frame the night in terms of sacred memory: Israel's memories of the ancient Exodus experience, Paul's memories of what he received from believers personally acquainted with Jesus, and the memories of the first-century community associated with the elusive figure known simply as John. The church has long connected Jesus's last supper with the Jewish Passover, calling Christ "our Passover," and the first three gospels of the New Testament clearly identify the event as a Seder dinner—or something close to one. The fourth gospel, however, portrays the meal as a pre-Passover gathering. Joseph Ratzinger's three-volume *Jesus of Nazareth* offers a fascinating survey of scholars who debate whether the crucial meal even took place on a Thursday.

The liturgy for the night centers on the celebration of the Eucharist, lauded by the Second Vatican Council as the "source and summit" of the Christian life. On this special occasion, the liturgy is supplemented by the rite of *pedilavium*, the washing of feet. Sadly millions of Catholics go their whole lives without witnessing or participating in this moving practice. All around the globe, priests, including bishops and the pope, remove their ceremonial vestments, take basin and towel, and genuflect before their parishioners performing what in the ancient world was the most basic expression of hospitality. Generations of biblical interpreters have seen this act as the ultimate

embodiment of Jesus's commitment to servant leadership: "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." It should have become the eighth sacrament.

For me, the concluding rite of the night has always been the most impressive: the stripping of the altar. The simple dismissal known to Sunday Mass-goers is omitted. Instead, the remaining consecrated bread is carried in solemn procession out of the sanctuary, accompanied by torches and incense. The assembly kneels and chants hymns a thousand years old. Lights are extinguished. Flowers, crosses, and altar cloths are removed. Bells and organs are hushed. The tabernacle is emptied and left open. For about forty-eight hours, the church is in effect a godless space.

Holy Thursday reveals the dark side of Planet Catholicism, the genius of the Christian imagination in its mastery of shadow and silence as well as light and sound. Its stark symbolism does not appeal to all tastes, but it offers a refreshing counterpoint to a church often perceived as trading solely in certainties and self-assurance. Its haunting rites mirror the world of risk and ambiguity known to us all—and known very well to the early Jesus movement "on the night he was handed over."

Dr. Peter Huff
Chief Mission Officer

Good Friday of the Lord's Passion | April 7, 2023

[Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#)

[Psalms 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25](#)

[Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9](#)

[John 18:1-19:42](#)

Good Friday. Its heavy. Its jarring. Its dark.

I've heard, listened to, and reflected on the readings from Good Friday countless times.

Sometimes, I wonder, "Where do we go from here?" Sometimes I feel lost afterwards. Sometimes I feel confused.

But, the same verse always sticks out to me. It is Jesus breathing his last with the psalm verse. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (31:3). I hear God asking me, "What will you give to Me?"

What is something you need to give to God that is a source of stress?

Pause now. In the quietness of this day. Give to God what you need to, knowing that God is a good and faithful God. Amen.

Carrie Ankeny
Campus Ministry Director, Lisle Campus

Holy Saturday the Easter Vigil | April 8, 2023

[Genesis 1:1-2:2 | Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35](#)

[Genesis 22:1-18 | Psalm 16:5, 8-11](#)

[Exodus 14:15-15:1 | Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18](#)

[Isaiah 54:5-14 | Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13](#)

[Isaiah 55:1-11 | Isaiah 12:2-6](#)

[Isaiah 3:9-15, 32-4:4 | Psalm 19:8-11](#)

[Ezekiel 36:16-28 | Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3-4](#)

[Romans 6:3-11 | Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23](#)

[Luke 24:1-12](#)

The Holy Saturday liturgy tells the story of God's eternal, ongoing relationship with creation. Through the call-and-response format of nine readings and eight responsorial psalms, we hear an ancient story:

- God's creation of all that exists in the book of Genesis.
- God's liberation of the Israelites from enslavement in the book of Exodus.
- God's promise of hope and justice communicated through the prophets.
- God's redemption of humanity from sin and from death in the resurrection.

It may feel to us as if this story is an old one; that all of this is ancient history. We hear these readings every year, and the story does not change.

But in truth, we repeat these stories every year not because they tell us who God *was*, but because they tell us who God *is now*. We are *invited into* this ancient, ongoing story – a story in which we play a role.

God creates, and calls creation good. How might we value our earth, our neighbors, our very selves as good creations of the divine?

God liberates the enslaved and the oppressed. How might we set those who are captive free?

God extends a promise of hope and justice to the suffering and the exiled. How might we extend this hope to

those who need it, and construct just societies to alleviate suffering?

God redeems us from the tomb of sin and death. How might we bring reconciliation and new life to others?

When we feel overwhelmed by the needs of the world, these stories remind us that we are not alone, because God is at work at in the world. We hear both the angel and Jesus tell the women in the Gospel – “do not be afraid.”

The story of God’s eternal, ongoing relationship with creation is the story of God’s eternal, ongoing relationship with us. Let us not be afraid, allowing this story to stir our hearts to further God’s work in our world.

Dr. Mary Kate Holman

Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, Lisle Campus

The Resurrection of the Lord | April 9, 2023

[Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43](#)

[Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23](#)

[Colossians 3:1-4](#)

[John 20:1-9](#)

As I write this (but obviously not as you read it), I am sitting in a city that is a buzz with the coming Super Bowl. This is the first Super Bowl hosted in the Phoenix area since 2015, and the fourth overall. It is always quite a spectacle, and each year it seems to get more dazzling and more hyped up. This year, the festivities are spread over three major areas of the Valley of the Sun with the Super Bowl fan experience, live concerts, and shopping being held in downtown Phoenix, the star-studded parties and club atmosphere is happening in Old Town Scottsdale, and, of course, the big game itself in Glendale.

So why am I talking about the Super Bowl while reflecting on Easter? Great question. We live in a culture that exalts the successful individual. From sports heroes to celebrities to Instagram influencers, our culture is obsessed with being seen, being noticed, being remembered, being “adored.” This culture has been on full display the last two weeks as everyone who is anyone has descended on Arizona. By the end of this extravaganza, some team is going to hoist the Lombardi Trophy and inscribe their name in history, a halftime show will become either legendary or infamous, Super Bowl commercials

selling every thing you can imagine will be immortalized on YouTube as the number of views continue to climb, influencers will get more “followers,” and, once again, this will all be deemed a success. Cue the applause.

ut this day, Easter Sunday, is the day that the Lord has made. The Triduum and Easter call us to a reorientation, away from the wealth, honor, pleasure, and power of the world, and to the self-emptying love of Christ. In today’s readings, St. Paul reminds us “to seek what is above.” He challenges us not to think of the things of this world, but to, instead, focus on Heaven. Why? ecause the things of this world will pass away, but Christ will not. The Resurrection is the pivotal moment, the crux of salvation history, where God reveals to us our ultimate destiny—to live eternally in communion with Him. Alone on the cross, Christ repelled the wealth, honor, pleasure, and power of the world all in an act of self-emptying love for us. We are called to that same self-emptying act...to make room for God in our lives. Advent calls to wait for Christ to be born in us. Lent calls us to journey with Christ, reflecting on our place in the world and our place with Him. Easter calls us to act, to let go of all we hold onto in life in order to witness to the Resurrection. In the paragraph just preceding today’s Gospel from John, Mary Magdalene has to physically turn away from the empty tomb to see the risen Christ. For Simon Peter, he had to physically see the empty burial cloth to understand. For us, we stand on the witness of the saints and martyrs, but we can also see the reality in our own lives. When we empty ourselves to love, we have room to receive the other. When we focus on wealth, honor, pleasure, and power, we only have room for ourselves, and it gets smaller really quick. So let us turn away from the things of the world and seek what is above.

Rob Curtis
Director of Campus Ministry, Mesa Campus

Thank you to everyone who contributed!

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