



RETURN *to* ME
Lenten Reflections

2026

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

—JOEL 2:12

We begin this season of Lent with the invitation from the prophet Joel to rend our hearts and return to the Lord. The God of Abraham and Sarah, the God of Joseph and Mary, the God of Jesus, our God beckons us back. We are called back home as members of the human family—from infants to the elders, the priests and ministers, even the bride and bridegroom. If we listen closely to the words of Joel, we hear the clarity of this invitation. As the world around us continues to spin, as violence and oppression seem to spiral, the words of the prophet whisper and ask us, “Can we allow our hearts to break wide open for and with the suffering of others?”

Truly, anyone associated with Holy Cross and a Jesuit education has heard the phrase “becoming a man or woman for others.” In the pages that follow, we hope you will hear through the many voices of our Holy Cross community—faculty, staff, students, alumni, administrators, Trustees, benefactors, and Jesuits— that invitation articulated anew in this season of Lent. May these reflections for each day’s Mass remind you that you are not alone. We walk together, accompanied by our loving and merciful God, and by one another.

We pray, too, that the reflections and images in this collection will serve as a touchstone for you, a bridge back to Holy Cross, a very real reminder that in our walking, learning, and praying together, our faith is fed.

As always, this project involves many members of our community: writers and artists, editors, graphic designers, and website administrators. To each of these people and many others, we offer our sincere and profound thanks.

Be assured of our prayers as we journey towards Easter together.

Christine Bridges Estes
Associate Director for Mission Engagement
“Return to Me” *Editor*

Rev. Keith Maczkiewicz, S.J.
Associate Vice President for Mission and Ministry

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“Return to Me” throughout Lent,
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SCAN TO VISIT ►





FEBRUARY 18 ✦ ASH WEDNESDAY

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

“Return to me with your whole heart.”

After five days with the God of Jesus Christ on the Spiritual Exercises at the close of my freshman year, I left aware of two realities I have been trying to live into ever since. Let yourself be loved, whole-heartedly. Love invites a whole-hearted response.

In thirty-five years as a college chaplain at Holy Cross I have tried to witness to my experience of God’s whole-hearted love. My deepest desire for each of us is that we experience the God who loves us as we are. My hope is that if we can receive this love; we can be released from the tyranny of performance, free to respond to God whole-heartedly. Sometimes responding whole-heartedly comes naturally for me. Other times discouragement or fear get in my way. Yet, the invitation comes again, “Return to me with your whole heart.” God sees my desire, our desire, and always calls us back.

Marybeth Kearns-Barrett '84 P13,14,18

Director, Office of the College Chaplains

FEBRUARY 19 ♦ THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

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

“If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin on you today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grow numerous, and the Lord, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy.”

“What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?”

When I read today’s readings, I immediately thought of the inscription above the old Courthouse in Worcester, Massachusetts which reads, “Obedience To Law Is Liberty.” Like today’s readings, I have always found the inscription to be a challenging phrase, especially when I was a much younger person. How could obedience lead to liberty? We are on the eve of the 250th celebration of the founding of the United States, an experiment with a form of government that placed the title “Citizen” above all other offices. No country had ever tried such a radical idea. Except, perhaps, Jesus of Nazareth. While his message was not about government, it was about the importance of every individual human being. All of us were formed in the image and likeness of God. This is true of every person ever born or ever to be born. If we truly believe that maxim, then the challenge of the Gospel is to find the freedom in following the example of Jesus’ life and death: to love one another, to find and give hope to others, to feed the hungry, to walk with the poor and to live your life in generosity and gratitude. The journey of our lives is a short one. How can we each find a path to heaven? I am older now and I see only wisdom in the courthouse inscription. Find freedom, joy and salvation in closely following God. In that way you will never forfeit yourself and the rewards will be immeasurable.

J. Christopher Collins ‘80

Member, Board of Trustees





FEBRUARY 20 ♦ FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

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

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.”

When I was younger, I was very dedicated to my Lenten fast. It was important to me that I give up something. As a child that mostly meant candy and sweets, maybe a few hours of watching television a week. It was my duty as a “good Catholic” to follow Jesus in fasting, and fasting means to give up, to go without. My own private, insular sacrifice.

As I grow older and as my faith evolves, I move away from this singular idea of what my child self saw as being “good.” I was thinking of Lent as a solitary practice. But to “give up” something also involves, well, giving - and isn’t giving an action that involves two parties: the giver and the receiver? Now, I choose to use this time to reflect on what parts of myself I give to others- the time I spend calling my mother, the hours of sleep I give to my infant daughter, the meals I share with my family.

And what do I give to those who are not in my close circle, to my neighbors and community? Is there an opportunity this Lent for me to give to the causes I’m most passionate about? To care for those in the margins of my life?

This Lenten season, as you contemplate your fast, I ask that you reflect on not only what you give up, but to what or to whom you give. What are you giving your time and energy to? With whom are you sharing your plate? To whom do you offer your seat at the table?

Amina V.O. Bristol (Gomez) '16

Associate Director of Donor Relations/Writer, Office of Advancement

FEBRUARY 21 ♦ SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

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

*“Then light shall rise for you in the darkness,
and the gloom shall become for you like midday.”*

In today's reading from Isaiah, God presents us with a challenge and a promise. In a world of division and derision, we are tasked with fighting against indifference and finding compassion. In a world full of people who feel abandoned, we are driven to live for and with others. God's promise cannot be fulfilled by rituals alone but in how we treat people. If we express our faith through acts of mercy, God shows us his graces: light, strength, guidance, and renewal.

In the world of professional athletics, the value of genuine compassion can become lost in the noise of competition, pressure, and performance. At times, mercy feels countercultural. I often sense myself being pulled in different directions, and it's easy to be swept up in it all. Today's reading is a reminder to start small with the people in front of me and let God's light shine through, in my interactions with others: a kind word, a patient moment, or choosing understanding over frustration. It is in these everyday encounters where God's love, and his promise, takes root.

Declan Cronin '19





FEBRUARY 22 ✦ FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

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

Several years ago, colleagues at Holy Cross gathered during Lent to savor the poetry of Mary Oliver. When I am among the trees stays with me, inviting contemplation of the ways in which the natural world saves us. More recently, the Class of 2028's common read was *World of Wonders* by Aimee Nezhukumatathil. While Oliver stirs reverence with familiar landscapes and creatures, Nezhukumatathil astonishes with flora and fauna from all over the world. She asks us to thank the trees and learn their names because "the trees give us back to ourselves." Trees have provided for us and have borne witness to innumerable injustices.

These remarkable poets have changed how I read today's Scriptures. I place myself among the trees that are indeed "good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom," the trees of the garden and the wilderness. I sense desire for more without regard to what is enough – enough wealth, power, information - and temptation to acquire even knowledge and wisdom through theft rather than presence and accompaniment. Lent among the trees is less about denial of what fails to satisfy, let alone denial of what brings joy, and more about receiving provision with humility and profound gratitude: fruit, shelter, shade, the company of other creatures, roots that run deep, branches that reach out, seasons of slumber and new growth, and the very air we breathe. Did you know that [Holy Cross is an arboretum](#)?

Mary M. Doyle Roche '90 P24

Professor of Religious Studies

FEBRUARY 23 ♦ MONDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

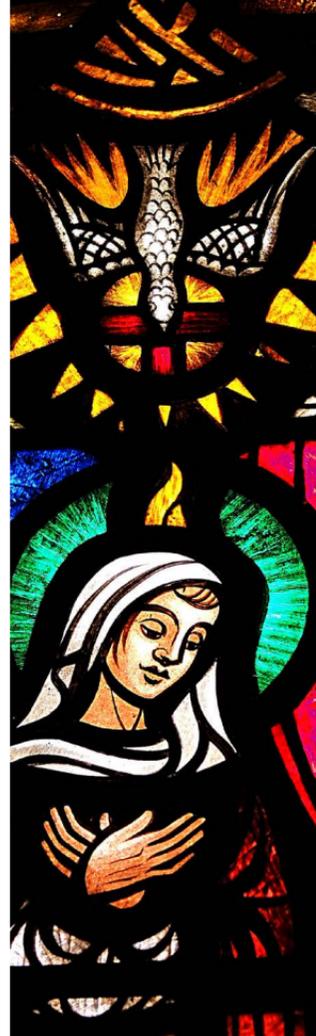
“You shall not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. Though you may have to reprove him, do not incur sin because of him.”

The commands from God in today’s readings provide a comprehensive “playbook” for us to follow as we pursue eternal life. Among them, loving your neighbor as yourself is, to me, the most nuanced and challenging. We are called to react to the words and deeds of others based not only on our own values but also with wisdom, judgment and empathy for those who are of different cultures with varying life experiences. A tall task indeed!

In our lifetimes, we have been forced to confront an increasingly complex world which seems to be growing smaller by the day. Technological innovations have spawned a multitude of social media applications which, in turn, have empowered unfettered communication that knows no geographic or cultural boundaries while messaging at warp speed. When used constructively much good can and has been achieved. Too often, however, we see instances where the “public square” is abused in ways that foment falsehoods, misunderstandings, anger and worse. The resulting social discord is compounded by the mistaken belief that a larger megaphone is a key ingredient to effective rebuttal.

How do we address these challenges? I, for one, maintain a very low profile on social media and have never used it to communicate a point of view. Further, I rely on my instincts to anticipate where a conversation may be headed and what the other person(s) is trying to achieve from a discussion and ask a lot of questions to help guide me to a fruitful, respectful outcome. However, there is no single solution; rather we must be guided by our individual life experiences and faith in God’s teachings. Lent is the perfect time to reflect on this question and recognize we are all vessels of God who can achieve great things in his name.

Joseph Vicidomino '75 P03,08





FEBRUARY 24 ♦ TUESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

“From all their distress God rescues the just.”

As I read through today’s Scripture readings, I took comfort in the message that God does not demand perfection, even if we often demand it of ourselves. As a mother, I often feel the weight of expectations - my children’s, society’s, and my own - and fear that I will not, or can not, live up to them. As a class dean, I see firsthand the tremendous pressure many students put on themselves to show perfection inside and outside the classroom. But these readings remind me that God does not expect us to get everything right. Instead, God asks only that we trust Him and turn to Him in prayer when we are in need. “From all their distress God rescues the just.” We do not need to be perfect; we need to trust that God will be there when we fail.

The Lord’s Prayer, in particular, has always grounded me; the simplicity of the message and the familiar rhythm are as reassuring as they are guiding. As someone who spends much of her working life - and a non-zero amount of her life as a mother, too - explaining and clarifying ideas to others, I’m grateful for simplicity wherever I can find it. The Lord’s Prayer reminds me that my silent prayers don’t need to be perfectly clear. God already knows what I need. What He asks for is my presence, my trust, and my willingness to forgive as freely as I hope to be forgiven when I fall short.

Sarah Petty

Associate Professor of Chemistry; Class Dean, Class of 2025

FEBRUARY 25 ♦ WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

“Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you.”

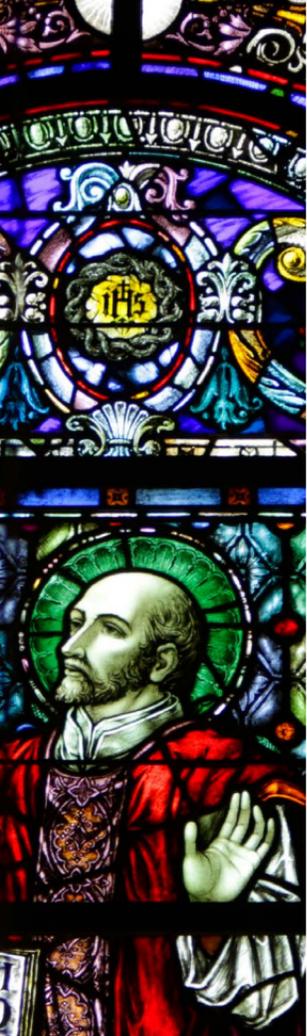
How many times have we heard God calling yet chose to ignore it? For Jonah, this didn't work out so well. He first set out west instead of east and look what that got him. He was thrown overboard and consumed by a fish. When he finally got around to obeying God's call, it turns out that he was able to save the Ninevites quite easily.

How many times have we procrastinated and then finally relented to doing something only to find out how easy it was? Jonah was called to evangelize to the Ninevites, and we likewise have been commanded as his disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations” and to “preach the gospel to all creation.”

When I was working in the secular world, I started to hear God's calling to do something that made a difference for His kingdom. It took a few years, but I finally decided to join the Augustine Institute whose mission is to form Catholics for the New Evangelization. From there, I went on to lead Catholic Charities to serve the poor and those most in need. It has been a fulfilling experience that has allowed me to use my talents for the Church. I am deeply grateful that I was able to answer the call.

Darren Walsh '82





FEBRUARY 26 ♦ THURSDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

“Seek and you will find.”

It is so easy to get lost in the morning rush—strike that, in the hurried pace of each hour. More often than not, I’m spent by the end of the day and yet still trying to check-off a final item on my to-do list. I find myself longing to live more deeply, attentively, but unable to name what it is exactly I’m seeking.

In such moments, I’m reminded of my paternal grandmother, who always danced in a slow rhythm with God despite the hurried pace of the day. In our rush to leave the house, she would place her hand on the open doorway in blessing. And while the rest of us shoveled food in our mouths during dinner time, she would take three sips of water in a prayer of gratitude and to seek the Trinity’s intercession for her health.

My grandmother knew what she was seeking, or rather, whom. In all her searching, she found a God who was also eagerly looking for her. And God, a giver of only good gifts, understood just what she needed. Perhaps the next time I swiftly retrieve my car keys in the morning, I might pause to notice what has been in front of me this whole time—a keychain with a winding road and the words: “What you seek is seeking you.” This Lenten season, how might you dance in a slower rhythm with the God who is also searching for you?

Salena Ibrahim

Assistant Chaplain, Office of the College Chaplains

FEBRUARY 27 ♦ FRIDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

“I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word.”

I've always had a fondness for St. Martha, the biblical figure who is the sister of Mary and Lazarus and a close friend of Jesus. Martha is hard working and focused; she aims to serve and goes above and beyond to demonstrate hospitality to Jesus and his friends. Yet, she is a bit of a perfectionist and a worrier. She frets over small details, and, at times, is anxious and uptight. Though she has admirable strengths, Martha struggles with her weaknesses. I can relate. There's a bit of Martha in me.

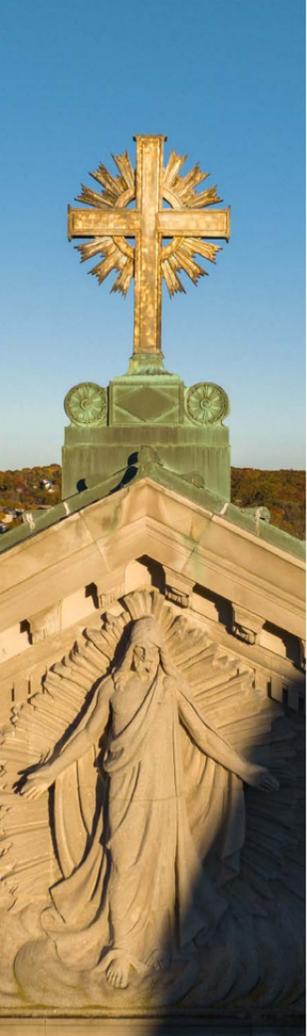
Like Martha, I prefer to be in control of my surroundings. I take comfort in planning and anticipating what may be around life's next corner. I don't often like to delegate and I cringe at seeking help. Do I ever stop to smell the roses? Maybe, but only if I schedule it in advance!

It isn't easy to trust, especially to trust in God. When we trust, we give up some control (how scary!). God, however, lovingly rewards our trust. As today's psalm reads: “for with the Lord is kindness and with Him is plenteous redemption.” Martha overcame her weaknesses and experienced redemption (spoiler alert: she learned to trust Jesus wholeheartedly and it changed her life). This Lent, may we all find redemption through trust in God - and smell those roses along the way.

Tom Cadigan '02

Director of Alumni Regional and Special Programs





FEBRUARY 28 ♦ SATURDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

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

“So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus tells his disciples, “love your enemies,” encouraging them to go against the grain and engage in behavior that is “unusual.” His words challenge us to love those who would do us harm, to embrace rather than exclude those who do not belong to our professional, social, or family circle. The last line, however, seems at odds with the rest of the message: “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Can seeking perfection be considered an unusual act? By today’s standards, at least, “being perfect” aligns more with conformity than with eccentricity.

In the classroom, when I am trying to help my students to understand the difference between the imperfect and perfect verb tenses in Italian, I sometimes point to the Latin etymology of the word “perfect”: per (completely, thoroughly) + fect (done, finished). While the perfect tense describes a completed action in the past, the imperfect tense has more flexibility in terms of whether or when an action was completed. I have a fondness for the imperfect tense, which is less definitive and more nuanced, used to describe the shifting aspects of human life, like emotions, the weather, and time. But, perhaps, the perfect tense is about humanity, as well. Considering Jesus’s exhortation to “be perfect” in this light, as an invitation to be complete, I see the harmony in his seemingly discordant messages. He is challenging us to be our whole human selves, for better or for worse, and to recognize the same whole humanity in others. Unusual, indeed.

Susan Amatangelo P27

Professor of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

MARCH 1 ♦ SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Gn 12:1-4a; Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22; 2 Tm 1:8b-10; Mt 17:1-9

Sometimes words jump off a page. They fill you with hope, unlock emotions and inspire. *“He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full,”* accomplished all three for me.

From my perspective, the Lord represents all of humanity. Working at Holy Cross has only deepened my belief that every creature on earth is connected, or as the Jesuits may say, God is found in all things. Because of this, each being on Earth is greater than the sum of itself.

Our humanity is limitless when we recognize the gift of life and share in it with others. We can overcome even the most impossible obstacles, including death or famine. Hate infiltrates our minds, poisoning us with the ideas of narcissism and cynicism. Love, though, amplifies everything around us.

The current state of our planet lures us into a feeling that life is better alone, divided and secluded. This reading buoyed me with the reminder that life’s purpose is to trust others and put our faith in humanity. With trust comes vulnerability. Faith is required to rely on someone else.

“May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us who have put our hope in you.”

The world feels chaotic, but the path to calm travels through our humanity. No one being is greater than another. Each is a gift that can unite us all. With unity comes hope, kindness, and the cure for the impossible.

Michael Bonner

College Marketing and Communications





MARCH 2 ✦ MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Dn 9:4b-10; Ps 79:8, 9, 11 and 13; Lk 6:36-38

“Stop judging and you will not be judged...For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

In today’s polarized environment, we can be quick to judge, stereotype, or make assumptions about those with whom we disagree. When we experience this kind of judgment, we respond in kind, ending up in a vicious cycle that drives us further apart. We are no longer friends, neighbors, or individuals, simply “the other side,” or even worse, enemies.

As a dialogue practitioner, I facilitate conversations between people who hold diverse identities, values, and beliefs. It can feel incredibly risky to sit across a circle from someone with whom you disagree and discuss a topic you care deeply about. This is especially true if every other time you’ve done so, you’ve walked away feeling judged, blamed, or dehumanized.

But I have seen what is possible when, instead of choosing judgment, someone offers a curious question, like “Can you share a story from your life that would help me understand how you came to believe that?” The ripple effect creates its own cycle of compassion and generosity.

Today’s Gospel reminds us that we have the capacity to choose how we are in relationship with each other, especially when we don’t see eye to eye. Our Lenten invitation is to choose compassion, generosity, abundance, and mercy. Not just because it will be returned by a loving and merciful God, but because in doing so, we choose our own humanity.

Meg Griffiths ‘04

MARCH 3 ♦ TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

“Come, now, let us set things right,” says the Lord.

In an imperfect world permeated by personal and structural sin, today’s readings remind us of the perils and possibilities on the path ahead of us. God tells us to “make justice [our] aim.” In the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges- such as discrimination and inequality, violence, and polarization, and our nation’s increasingly frayed social fabric- is this aim even possible? Is witness and solidarity enough?

In this social context, it becomes easy to withdraw from one’s broader social obligations, to tune out the news, and turn our backs on our neighbors. Yet it is up to us—yes, us—to “set things right.” Like the Pharisees and scribes in Matthew’s gospel, some of those in power today have failed to lighten the burdens that we face as a society; they have ignored, and in many cases villainized, those on the margins. While a merciful and liberative God is there to accompany us in our quest for justice and belonging, we are not absolved of our own obligations and responsibilities. After all, one plural pronoun—“us”—does much of the heavy lifting in Isaiah 1:18, blurring the boundaries between our personal and communal roles. And only through collective action can we turn our sins from a deep “scarlet” to “snow.” Regardless of how you are called to take action during this season of hope and renewal, remember, the burdens you face are not yours to take alone.

Evan Garcia '26





MARCH 4 ✦ WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

“The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.”

It is easier than ever to get wrapped up in ourselves. Everywhere we turn we are told to put our self-interests first, to choose to stay away from discomfort. Jesus sees this in his disciples as they clamor to get his attention and special treatment. The message at the core of Jesus’ teachings is to love fully and expect nothing in return. In a society focused on individual gain, we have forgotten that in order to seek comfort we need to provide it to others.

We need to show up for each other. It is easy to show up for others when we are happy or even to ask for comfort from others. It is much harder to provide that comfort to ourselves on our worst days. It is hard to show up for others without expectation, but it is what Jesus calls us to do. Serving others is often seen as literal - time at soup kitchens, donations, and weekly visits. But, showing up is also being there- for a friend’s birthday when we had a bad performance review at work; listening to our friends when they are going through a breakup that you knew was coming; altering plans to meet people where they are at. Jesus challenges us to push ourselves and there is no better time to accept his challenge than during Lent.

Anne Rogers '23

MARCH 5 ♦ THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

“Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.”

While prepping a dinner for three hundred people recently, I had a version of a conversation that I’ve had many times. We were just about on time with our preparations, but we all knew we had reached the moment to hustle. A cook approached me and started detailing what had put us in this position. The fish should have been portioned yesterday, the lemon dill sauce should have been prepped on Tuesday, someone should have been called in earlier. I was quiet initially. I just listened.

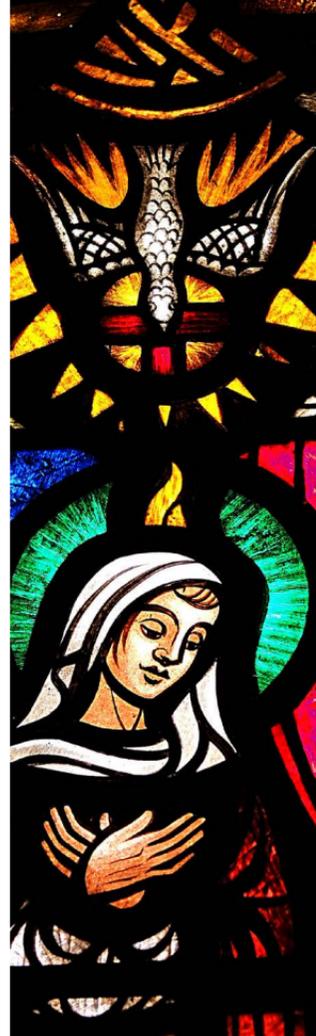
This kind of conversation frequently happens in kitchens. As cooks are often juggling timelines, success today often was decided by the prep done on a different day by a different person. When there are challenges it’s easy to look for someone to blame. There’s a chef joke that goes something like this: “When I die, I would like my prep crew to lower me into the ground, so that they can let me down one more time.”

When she finished, I told her she was right - things could have been done better. “We’re here, and we have what’s necessary to make this work,” I said. With a little hustle, we got the dinner out flawlessly. The guests never felt our stress.

I’ve thought about that interaction often since. Hope, I’ve learned, isn’t about everything going perfectly. It’s about trusting that we have enough - enough skill, enough time, enough grace - to meet the moment before us, even when things haven’t gone according to plan.

Michael Muscarella

Chef/Manager, Joyce Contemplative Center





MARCH 6 ✦ FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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

“Remember the marvels the Lord has done.”

That simple line from today’s psalm stayed with me. There is something almost tender about the invitation to remember, not to perform or prove anything, just to remember. In the first reading, Joseph’s brothers act out of jealousy, frustration, and hurt. Their choices lead Joseph into hardship, but not into abandonment. Even in this uncertainty, God is already at work in ways no one can see. When I read that, I thought about how often I overlook the quiet ways God is present in my own life. Most of God’s work in me does not arrive with clarity. It shows up in small, almost forgettable moments: a peaceful walk across campus after a long day or even a moment of silence in Mass when I suddenly feel grounded again. On their own, these moments seem insignificant. But when I look back, I can see they were steady reminders that God has never been far.

Lent often asks us to look inward, but today’s readings gently invite me to look backward, to notice what I missed the first time around. Remembering the marvels God has done doesn’t require a dramatic story; sometimes it’s simply recognizing that I am being guided, even when I’m unaware of it. This Lent, I hope to practice that kind of remembering: slowing down enough to notice the small ways God has been faithful, and trusting that the same quiet faithfulness is at work now, even in the places that feel uncertain.

Kate J. Hong ‘26

MARCH 7 ♦ SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Mic 7:14-15, 18-20; Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12; Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Today's reading settles my heart and my soul, because I am reminded that "the Lord is kind and merciful." This theme appears in multiple instances throughout our readings for today. We serve a "God who removes guilt...does not persist in anger forever...and will again have compassion on us." How marvelous it is to be reminded of this gift in moments and times where we might not always feel worthy of God's love or compassion. Yet, we are still welcomed when we fall short and the Gospel parable exemplifies this for us. No matter how far we may move away from God or how much we squander our inheritance, God is longing for us to return to His presence, to be in relationship with us, and to hear more from us.

On this day, we are called to pause and reflect on the moments where we were lost and how we found our way back to God's love and his grace. We're asked to think about those who might have been like "the sinners" the Pharisees and scribes complained about. How have we welcomed them into the presence of God and shown them the love that has been extended to each of us?

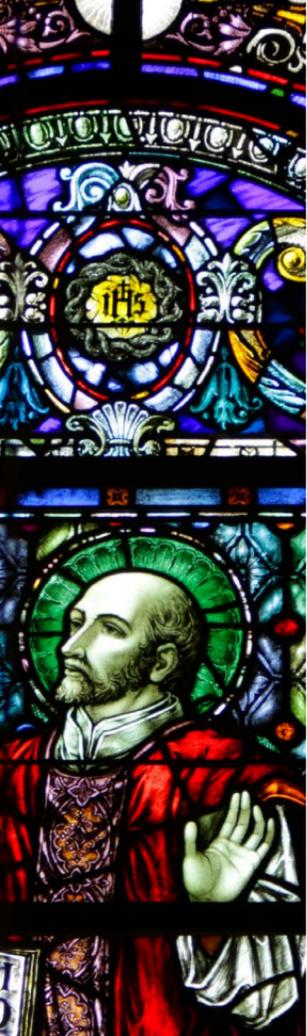
This Lenten season, I plan to be more attentive to those society has pushed aside and to share the Lord's kindness and mercy with them.

Personally and collectively, we may not deserve God's love at times. But God's unconditional love and mercy are promised to each one of us. Now, that is a cause for celebration!

Antonio Willis-Berry '13

Director of Residence Life and Housing





MARCH 8 ♦ THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Ex 17:3-7; Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42

“Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.”

Both the first reading and the Gospel today are about asking for and providing water. One is when the people ask for water to survive the desert, and the other is when Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for water. Before the Gospel, in a prayer to God, we ask, “Give me living water, that I may never thirst again.” The theme of giving (water) runs throughout the readings.

Lent has always seemed like a time for sacrifice. Give up candy, give up meat, stop fighting with your sister (just for 40 days...is it even possible?) But as an adult, the focus on giving and serving seems more relevant. The message I heard and felt so much during my time at Holy Cross was one of service: take care of others, feed them, clothe them, do something for them. In these readings, God is giving water to help keep Moses and his people alive. Jesus is asking for a drink of water, and then offering the water of life to the Samaritan woman. This reminder to give to others seems a fitting path for Lent. This nudges me to do more for those around me during this season, to fill someone else’s cup, literally or figuratively. Perhaps generosity, sharing, and showing kindness are even more powerful than giving something up.

Martha Horst (Dill) '89

MARCH 9 ♦ MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

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

“Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel.”

In today’s first reading, Naaman, the powerful army commander, learns of a cure for his leprosy from a captured servant girl. He should go to see the prophet in Samaria. He is incredulous when he is told to bathe in the Jordan, but his servants encourage him, enabling his healing. In both cases, God speaks through those with little power or worldly prestige leading the military leader to his acknowledgment of the God of Israel as quoted above.

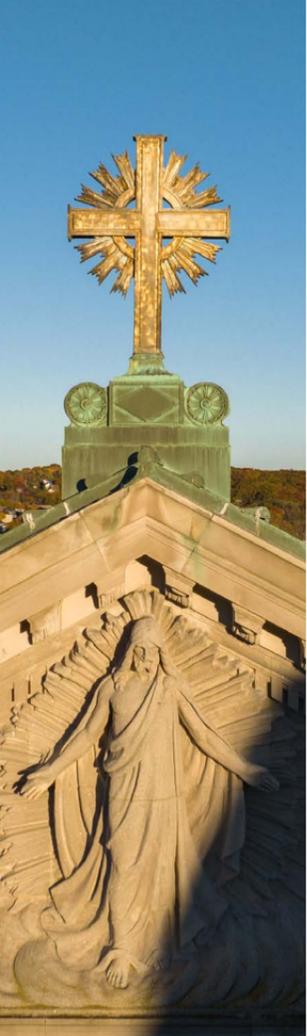
In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us of Namaan and the widow at Zarephath. Each in their own way was an outsider sought by God. Jesus’ message did not sit well with the authorities in the synagogue in Nazareth.

Over the last few years, a local bishop and I have had an occasional, friendly discussion about who qualifies as lepers in today’s church. For him, it is those seeking the Latin Mass. For me, it is LGBTQ+ Catholics. Perhaps, under Pope Leo, the Latinists are feeling a bit more love, a good thing, and a sign of hope perhaps for queer Catholics, like me.

Each of us in our own way is imperfect, marginalized or “less than” and in need of God’s grace and healing. We can only trust that God, who healed Namaan through the encouragement of a servant girl, will be there with each of us to heal us, strengthen us and support us as we seek to build the Kingdom.

David Harvie '82





MARCH 10 ✦ TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Dan 3:25, 34-43; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9; Mt 18:21-35

“And now we follow you with our whole heart.”

I was initially at a loss with what I could pull from today’s readings that would feel positive. I feel so aware of the injustice, hatred, and violence in our world that I struggled to see anything other than harshness. It took some time for me to identify the hope in Daniel’s message. Daniel calls for us to remain faithful to God and to trust that we will be rewarded for our faith. Given the intolerance and cruelty around us, it feels like a particularly good time to be reminded to remain true to our faith, no matter what.

As a queer person navigating this anti-trans political climate, I often feel scared for myself, my family, and my community. As a psychologist, I sometimes feel angry with people and political systems for the abuse and pain that they cause my clients. There are days where I have wondered if life would be easier if I was cisgender and heterosexual, or if I was not a therapist. And maybe it would be. But I am glad that I will never know because I cannot imagine my life any differently. I love my queerness and my community, and I am endlessly grateful for the work I do in CAPS. I am lucky to have complete trust in my identities and my work. Whether it is faith in God, human rights, the survival and dignity of marginalized communities, or in our roles on campus, we must all follow our faith with our whole heart.

Kelsey Moran

Assistant Director and Coordinator of Clinical Services & LGBTQIA+ Psychological Services, Counseling and Psychological Services

MARCH 11 ♦ WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

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

“...teach them to your children and to your children’s children.”

To be a professor is to be one who professes, from a Latin root meaning to publicly proclaim. We read today the words of both Moses and Jesus that speak of teaching. They suggest a question for us on this campus: what is it that I profess? Holy Cross, whose work might be described as that of professing, proposed some answers for us a century ago in St. Joseph Memorial Chapel. If you enter and look up to your left, you see seven windows lit with vibrant color depicting Doctors of the Church. These Doctors might themselves be called professors, because they publicly proclaimed—not only lives that were founded on faith—but a faith that was informed by their intellectual life and a willingness to inquire deeply. Each was a teacher who “obeys and follows these commandments” as Jesus insists, yet who also asked the questions and sought the answers that their own times demanded.

Historian Henry Adams famously wrote, “A teacher affects eternity, he can never tell where his influence stops.” That quote is especially salient in a college guided by a high mission, confronted with hard questions, and filled with eager young minds in formation. These Scriptures summon us to proclaim what it is that we profess, and articulate the values that we teach to our children and our children’s children, that both we and they may be known as “truly wise and intelligent people.”

Laurence Rosania

Director of Liturgy and Music, Office of the College Chaplains and Lecturer, Music





MARCH 12 ♦ THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

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

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

We have arrived at the midpoint of our Lenten journeys! This is a good time to check in. Have these weeks been meeting your expectations? It is never too late to partake in deepened prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

This week, I keep returning to the principle of “finding God in all things.” God invites us to be in continuous conversations. Sometimes messages are received loud and clear, while in other times through glimmers in everyday moments, through difficult situations, or on happy occasions. It is up to us to be open to His invitation.

I recently participated in a 5K fundraiser. The route was a course through the hills of Worcester. At one point, I reached a flat street and slowed down. I took a minute to notice the October foliage. An elderly man on the street approached me. He was wondering what event was taking place. He commented on how the street was “alive with people.” With great enthusiasm, he said, “I wish every day was like today!” After the encounter, I could not help but meditate on his words. Our group of 5K participants touched a stranger in an unexpected way, uplifted as he was, by the people cheering along on the street. The man clearly felt a surge of emotions on the normally quiet street. I couldn’t help but think that this is exactly how God wants His house to feel: “alive” with us through various actions, whether they be large events, times of quiet reflection, or times of joyful worship.

Paula Shanley

Office Coordinator, Office of the College Chaplains

MARCH 13 ♦ FRIDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Hos 14:2-10; Ps 81:6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14, 17; Mk 12:28-34

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love sounds simple when we don’t ask what love is or what it requires. What if Scripture said instead: invest your time in your neighbor, invest your money, fight for them as you would yourself. Would we hear it differently? We speak of love often, but lovelessness is more common. Many of us don’t even know what we mean when we talk about love.

I wonder what loving myself means; because, most days, I do not. I want to retreat into comfort, quiet my anxiety, turn off the noise. To love myself would require pausing long enough to see my own pain and committing to the slow work of healing in community. If love had a texture for me now, it would be water, sometimes still and reflective, sometimes a storm in the middle of the Atlantic—fearless, depthless, unyielding.

Because I wrestle with this, it affects how I love others. Fear shows up as my desire for emotional, spiritual, and physical safety—my compliance, my neglect, my ignorance. Of course I love my community, but what am I willing to sacrifice for it? bell hooks writes that sacrifice, and therefore, love are “annihilated” by greed. Is my own greed getting in the way? So I ask: Is my own greed—the greed for safety, comfort, predictability— getting in the way of loving my neighbors? What am I willing to give up?

“Without justice there can be no love,” hooks writes. When you are called to love your neighbor, think of the ways you must commit yourself to justice for love to flourish. Be courageous, because to love is to act. It is to expose the seduction of comfort, the ways whiteness, capitalism, and fear have trained some to choose safety over solidarity. Love refuses that bargain. So ask yourself plainly: What will you give up so that someone else might live a full life?

This Lent, God invites us to confront our worship of comfort and the fear that keeps us from genuine connection. God invites us to act.

Kya Roumimper Ascani

Associate Director, Donelan Office of Community- Based Learning, Teaching, and Engaged Scholarship





MARCH 14 ✦ SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

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

*“For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice,
and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”*

When I see teenagers and young adults reflect on their relationships with loved ones on social media, the most common Instagram caption is “to be loved is to be known.” Those who love you, who truly care about you, don’t necessarily make grand gestures. Rather they check in on you when they know you have a huge exam on Friday, send you pictures of bumper stickers that you’ve laughed at before, and let you know when your favorite ice cream flavor is on sale in Walmart. I feel most loved when my roommates call me on my drive back to the Hill from Long Island and tell me they’ve been tracking me to make sure I’m okay. I feel loved when my friends cue up one of my favorite songs while we’re hanging out, even though they’re not Taylor Swift fans. It’s an amalgamation of the little things, rather than massive, flashy gestures, that make me feel most loved.

It’s hard to not get too caught up in the busyness of life on the Hill. With classes, exams, lab meetings, rehearsals, extracurriculars, and just trying to sleep, I struggle to find time to spend with God, and I’m certainly not making grand gestures or large sacrifices to be with God. But God doesn’t need that from us. God doesn’t even want that from us. We are called to love God and each other, not by being overly showy, not by exalting ourselves and the acts we do for God like the Pharisee in the Gospel, but by knowing God. In spiritual direction, I learned three very simple prayers, three very simple ways that I can communicate my love with God: “Help!” “Thanks!” and “Wow!” Much like the way that I love when my friends send me a quick text to check-in, God doesn’t ask for much from us: just to love God by knowing God.

Elaine Kelly ‘26

MARCH 15 ♦ FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41

What do I see? Whom do I see? Which people and things in my community and in this world do I choose to see, and which do I choose not to see? If I choose to see, what am I doing about it? These questions about seeing – and acting on that seeing – are forced upon us by today’s readings.

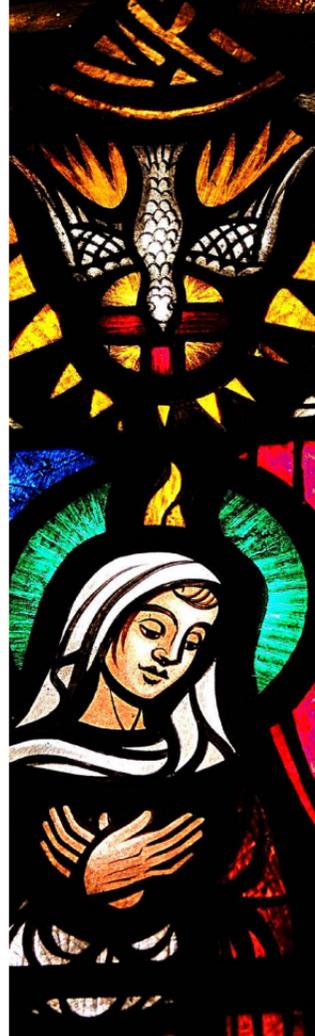
In the passage from 1 Samuel, the Lord cautions Samuel about the limits of human sight, saying, “Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart.” In the reading from John 9, Jesus, after healing a man of blindness, states, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.” With these words Jesus declares the possibility of – and urgency for – a new way of seeing, a way that is radically different from the superficial human manner of sight identified by the Lord in 1 Samuel.

To me Jesus’ words in John 9 read as a call to reset what we choose to see – in other words, a call to not look the other way. So: do I see the powerless in my community being mistreated? If so, what am I doing for them? Do I see those around me being unlawfully targeted, threatened, carried off, and arbitrarily incarcerated? If I do, what am I saying and doing about it, and what personal risks am I willing to take on?

Timothy Joseph '98

Professor of Classics

Garrity Distinguished Professor in Human Nature, Ethics, and Society





MARCH 16 ✦ MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Is 65:17-21, Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12a, 13b, Jn 4:43-54

The latter half of Lent has, since 2024, held particular meaning to me. Two years ago, I witnessed my mother enter the hospital for her final time, then; unable to shake the effects of advancing congestive heart failure and chronic kidney disease. At the ripe old age of 98, she far outlasted her six siblings, and survived longer than her grandmother who died at the age of 94. She returned from the hospital to enter my brother's home under hospice care, and it is there that I stayed with no set return date home.

I ministered to her as she slowly slipped away from us, much like, I think, the royal official from today's Gospel must have ministered to his dying son. And while I did not pray for her miraculous recovery, which the royal official joyfully witnessed through his faith, my faith-driven prayers focused on how soon she could experience the joy of the Resurrection. How wonderful for the royal official that his faith in Jesus's promise (immediately rendered) brought him to believe. Does our faith, even when tested, keep us believing in Jesus's promise of eternal life?

Mom died on Easter Tuesday of 2024. Her faith in Jesus's promise was fulfilled. May we all be so blessed.

Donna (Castelli) Lies '83 P17

MARCH 17 ♦ TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

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

“Do you want to be well?”

We live in a moment overwhelmed by rapid change: accelerations around artificial intelligence, climate instability, political and regulatory whiplash, social upheaval, and the lingering effects of a global pandemic. As a technologist, I like to think I’m attuned (at least partly) to some of these shifts, yet I still feel their force. There are days when it feels outright crushing. And when a moment of rest comes, I notice how easy it is to slip into escapism, blame, tribalism, or despair, especially when the pressures behind those reactions come from forces like hunger, fear, and suffering in our very community.

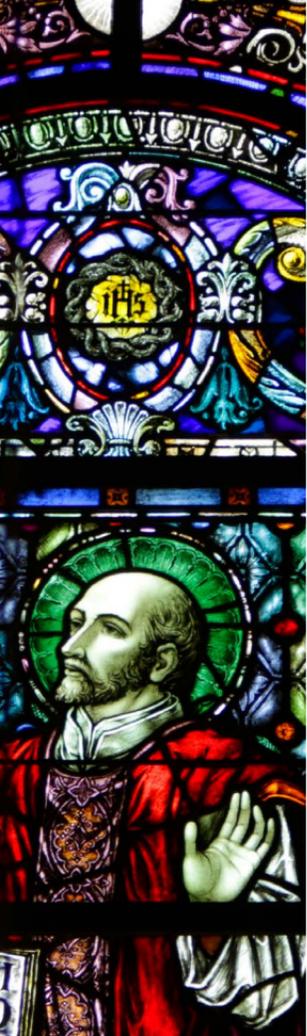
Today’s readings serve to remind us that amidst all this is God’s plan; a stabilizing force woven into the chaos, holding it all together. *“Do you want to be well?”* the Gospel asks. And if we are mindful, and willing to look up even for a moment, we may see that this presence, this plan, has been there all along, bracing us as we encounter it and recentering us on what it means to “be well.”

For me, it is often something simple: the crisp morning air on a winter walk, or the sunrise over a snowy mountain ridge. When I take my earbuds out and lift my eyes to the horizon, I am able to see that stabilizing force quietly at work, whether I notice it or not. It brings life, comfort, and measured stability, and it does so with unimaginable strength and consistency, like the trickle in Ezekiel’s vision that grows into a mighty, life-giving river.

David Shettler

Vice President of IT & Chief Information Officer





MARCH 18 ♦ WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

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

*“The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.”*

The Lord is “slow to anger” and we are called to follow this example. To live with patience is to walk in the way of the Lord. We are invited to guide others with patience, listening with composure even to those who hold different beliefs. This is something I find deeply important in my own life, remembering that we are all made in the image of God.

In today’s world, especially when engaging with divisive media, it can be easy to foster dislike for someone simply because we disagree with them. Our national landscape has created the idea that disrespectful rhetoric and actions are appropriate. Yet disagreement does not need to lead to division. Being “slow to anger” acknowledges that anger may arise, but it calls us to pause, reflect, and respond with understanding. I believe this means striving to recognize the beauty of God in each person, for doing so helps to soften and diminish the need to divide.

What I also find crucial is the Lord’s willingness to accept all. God sees both our mistakes and the beauty within each individual, and God’s love for us never wavers. This truth has brought me great comfort throughout my life. I know that I am not perfect, and it brings peace to know that God is “compassionate toward all his works.” We are the “works” and God sees glory in each one of us.

Reflecting on the Lord’s example, we are called to extend that same acceptance to everyone we encounter. We must seek and recognize God’s presence in each person and in all things, for God’s image and love are truly there.

Jackie Bazazi '26

SGA Co-President

MARCH 19 ♦ SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

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

“She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Whenever I am faced with a challenging decision, I turn to the Lord for spiritual guidance. In today’s Gospel, Matthew recounts a moment in which Joseph’s devotion to God is deeply tested. Confronted with confusion and uncertainty, Joseph is asked to trust not what he can see, but what God reveals to him. His story reminds me of the moments in my own life when I, like Joseph, have been called to walk by faith rather than by sight, when God has invited me to a particular place or purpose before I could fully understand His plan.

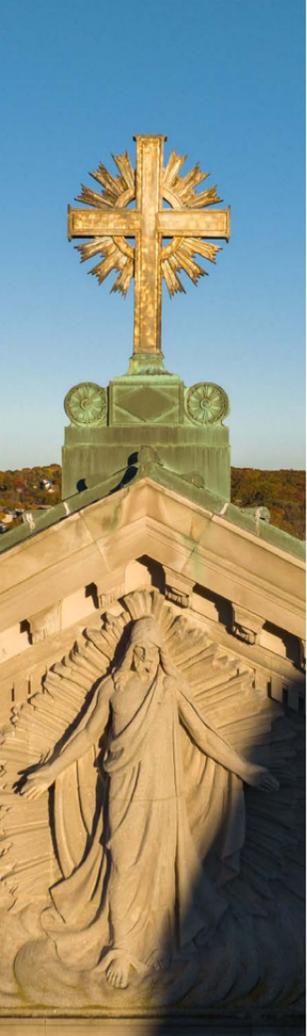
Only God knows the path that lies ahead of us, yet we are called to put our trust in His mission. This trust does not come easily. Upon waking, Joseph does exactly as the Lord commands, welcoming Mary into his home and embracing the role God has entrusted to him. Joseph teaches us that faith is often lived not in our words, but in our actions.

I see reflections of this trust in the turning points of my own life, in my decision to attend Holy Cross, or the semester I spent in Washington, D.C. These moments of transition tested my willingness to surrender control and trust in God’s guidance. Like Joseph, I was called to step forward without knowing every detail, trusting that God was already at work.

Lent is a season that reminds us of God’s enduring love and faithful presence as we navigate the joys and uncertainties of life. As we continue our Lenten journey, let us trust in the Lord, for He is our light, even when the path ahead is unclear.

Ben Franzone ‘26
SGA Co-President





MARCH 20 ✦ FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

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

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.”

How do we look forward if whatever lies ahead is so uncertain, or worse, threatens our sense of safety? How do we trust that in this moment we will remain quiet and tended to with care by others?

When grappling with a tough decision ahead of me and its impact on others, I tend to look back-- at my last struggle, my last mistake, or at the unresolved something that surfaces during the solemn moments of a walk across campus. Head down, I lean into hard places, pushing through systems, forces and circumstances that-- perhaps owing to tradition or legal proscription -often push back. I can see the long shadows of a complicated history of imposing and opposing forces stretching across the current conflicts and pain we are witnessing all around us. In these times, in these decision- making moments, some part of my inner self remains constant, despite the chaos. I hold fast to my faith that consistently guides me through and forward.

We are all brokenhearted from time to time, measured differently among us. To be clear, I am not crushed in spirit, at least, not as I write this. My life's work, though, necessarily places me in the company of people who are struggling, either because of what happened to them or what they did to others. I hope that the tough decisions I make that may impact their life—while acknowledging a clear obligation to law—are made when I lean into those hard places and pause to look back—to look inward. The resolution is seldom perfect and in fact, I usually still feel a bit unsettled in the end. But I know it is there, in the inner self, where I will find strength nourished by my faith and knowledge that I am— we are— not alone.

Shawn de Jong

Associate Vice President of Public Safety and Chief of Police

MARCH 21 ✦ SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Is 7:10-14; 8:10; PS7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

“A just judge is God....”

Perhaps like many Catholic Christians, my reflections on Divine Judgment are mostly limited to the season of Holy Lent, even though as a parish priest I am confronted regularly by the death of parishioners and try to help their families and friends to understand this inevitable life experience. There is no escaping the reality of Divine Judgment – whether that be the judgment I will undergo when the Lord’s angel calls me to stand alone before Him or at the Second Coming when all of God’s holy people will be caught up together and find themselves coram Deo. It is so easy - and comforting - to believe that certainly I will be numbered among the sheep who will gather on His right and certainly not among the goats who will be placed on His left. God’s judgment is not mine to make or even influence; I fool only myself if I believe that. Judgment belongs to God alone.

Thus, when I consider that one day I will be called to answer for my own life and later on at the Parousia I will share in the Judgment of all God’s people, my only comfort is knowing that, as David sang in Psalm 7, “A just judge is God...”

Rev. Kevin G. Donovan '83





MARCH 22 ✦ FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Ex 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

Today's psalm starts with a sentiment familiar to many of us when we are facing troubling moments: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!" In difficult times, how often do we just cry out to God to hear us, to listen to us, to help us? Yet the refrain of the psalm assures us that "with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption." Later, we also hear that "with the Lord is kindness."

Mercy and kindness. The psalm today reveals God's promise to be there for us, in all our challenges, disappointments, and times of sadness. I have felt God's mercy and kindness most vividly in the experience of losing both of my parents in the past year and a half, less than a year apart from each other --wonderful people who lived lives full of love for their family and others. It has been hard to see them go and to carry on with all the busyness of life without them. Yet, mercy and kindness. I felt mercy and kindness in the privilege of being with both of them when they died peacefully in my sister's home where they had been living. I felt mercy and kindness in the beauty of their funeral Masses and gathering with family. I have felt kindness through the support shown by so many friends and colleagues. Most of all, I remember my parents' lives of love and kindness and only hope that God can help me to live similarly. May we all experience mercy and kindness this Lenten season and strive to extend mercy and kindness to others.

Susan Crawford Sullivan P25

Professor of Sociology, Director, Montserrat Divine Cluster

MARCH 23 ♦ MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dan 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Ps 23:1-3A, 3b-4, 5, 6; Jn 8:1-11

Today's readings, and the Gospel in particular, give us much to think about during this Lenten season. First, the scribes and Pharisees bring a sinful woman before Jesus to test Him, to which Jesus responds, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." This message disperses the crowd, and Jesus, who is the one without sin, goes on to forgive the woman. How often in our own lives do we look for the faults and imperfections of others without first looking at ourselves and considering our own actions?

While this message would be enough on its own to give us something to ponder, it is the final line of the Gospel that truly challenges us: "Go, and from now on do not sin any more." We know that Jesus is forgiving and tolerant of our sins, but do we take His forgiveness for granted? How often do we truly accept this challenge to change? During this Lenten season, let us spend less time focusing on the actions of others and instead look inwards to find ways to change ourselves for the better.

Peter M. Zona '14

Director, College Store and Campus Services





MARCH 24 ✦ TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

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

“But with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses.”

In today’s first reading, Moses has led the Israelites out of Egypt, and they’re headed to the Promised Land. But first, they must journey through the wilderness. It’s a nonstop trip for the decades — literally — with only the most basic of accommodations, and by this chapter in Numbers, the Jews are tired and about done: “Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!”

Who can’t empathize? How many times have you experienced something challenging, painful or disappointing, and uttered a single syllable at God: “Why?” Whether it’s a promising opportunity turned sour or a blow from out of the blue, it’s natural to wonder why God is letting us endure suffering.

And at this point in Lent, with a little more than a week to go, it’s easy to relate to weary people losing patience. Oftentimes, I’ve started this season with a heart full of passion, only later to find myself feeling very deprived or burdened by my Lenten undertaking. Forty days can feel like 40 years.

It’s human nature to question or complain when we’re tired and frustrated. Yet here is where we can stop and think, resist our hard-wired reactions, and instead turn to the divine. This is where we can talk to God like the father He is, explaining our feelings, and asking Him for the grace and trust to follow where He leads. He knows where we’re going.

Melissa A. Shaw

Editorial Director, College Marketing and Communications

MARCH 25 ✦ SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

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

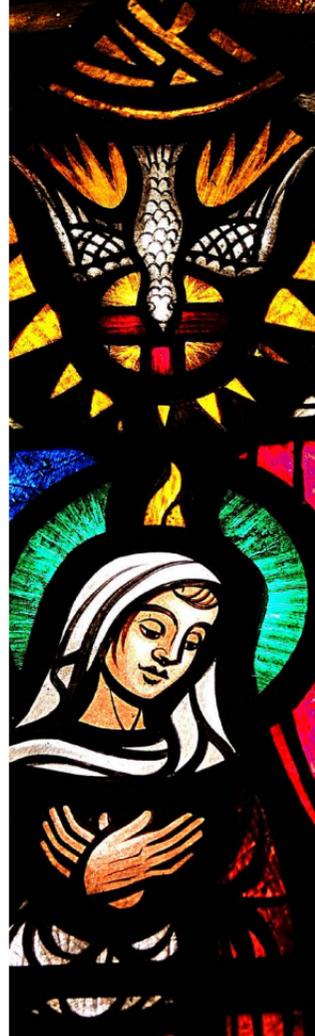
In times of despair and wavering hope, I am called to look for signs. While Isaiah's promise of God's love is directly embodied through Mary, there is more subtle evidence of mercy all around us - as long as we are attuned to noticing it.

I see these signs most often during my time spent with the L'Arche Boston North community, where individuals with and without intellectual disabilities share life together. I lived here for a year with my friend named Devin. Devin is non-verbal, yet he speaks to me clearly. His embrace of me as I am, even at my lowest, is evidence of unconditional love. His care for me when I was sick or injured is a testament to divine healing. And most importantly, his presence affirms that there is hope for a world in which every human may both receive and offer merciful understanding.

While I wish everyone could know Devin as I do, graces are available for us all to discover. As Mary's confusion during the Annunciation reminds us, these signs may not always be immediately clear. Yet often they are found in the places where we feel most grounded, or through the people who make us feel most grateful. How might you pause and remain open to radical change during this season of reflection and connection?

Delaney Walch '24

Assistant Director of the Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning, Teaching, and Engaged Scholarship





MARCH 26 ♦ THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

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

“He remembers forever His covenant, which He made binding for a thousand generations.”

Last year I attended four weddings. Each time, I witnessed two people profess their love for each other and promise to love each other fully, faithfully, and forever.

How fortunate we are to have a God who loves us so generously and expansively! God chose to be with us “throughout the ages.” God promised a home, first an earthly one and then a heavenly one. God promised eternal life through his Son, Jesus. And the best part? This promise wasn’t limited to a particular person, time or place. Rather, this promise is limitless and extends to “a host of nations” for “a thousand generations.”

But it is more than a promise, a one-sided assurance of something one party will or will not do for another. Instead, God uses the word “covenant,” a formal, binding agreement between two parties. In this way, God is inviting us to be personally involved in a committed relationship with him, and for him it is “an everlasting pact.” The love of God is and will always be there; we are invited to enter into and remain in that love. Through this covenant we have with God, should we choose to do our part, we can celebrate Easter with all the hope and joy a wedding brings.

Lisa M. Villa (Sacovitch) '90 P20, P22, P27
Public Services and Engagement Archivist

MARCH 27 ♦ FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

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

As we near Holy Week, today's Gospel reading highlights the growing hostility toward Jesus. What is the cause of this hostility?

The Gospel shows that Jesus did good works, including healing, teaching, and forgiving in God's name. Despite His good deeds, He was put to death. Why? Because of who He claimed to be.

Jesus' actions and words point to His divine origin. We believe He was fully human and fully divine. The Gospels show that Jesus experienced a wide range of emotions, such as joy, sorrow, sadness, fear, and pain. However, they also reveal that Jesus shared a special closeness with God. He believed that God had sent Him on a unique mission and trusted that God was with Him.

The story of Jerusalem ends with anger and disbelief. But across the Jordan, they believed. So, what is the key to faith?

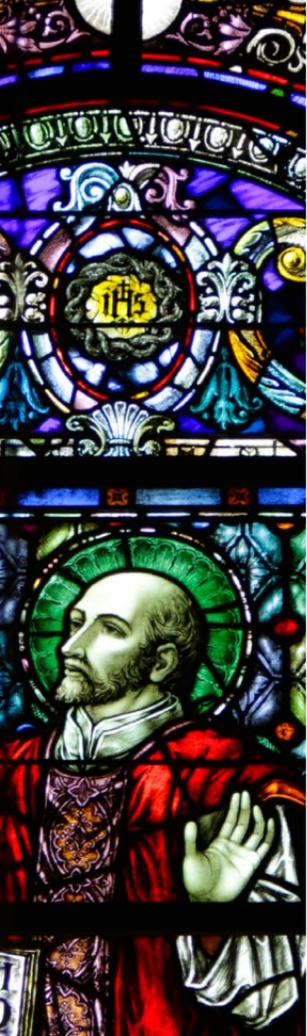
St. Augustine tells us how to get to faith: "The way to Christ is first through humility, second through humility, and third through humility."

St. Augustine emphasized that pride is the root of sin and that humility leads to salvation. He pointed out that humility helps us see our dependence on God. Humility is a way to imitate Christ, who showed humility through His incarnation and sacrifice. By following His example, we can cultivate a humble heart that is willing to serve others and to prioritize God's glory in Christ over our own interests.

Rev. Peter Nguyen, S.J.

Associate Professor of Religious Studies





MARCH 28 ✦ SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

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

“The Lord will guard us, as a shepherd guards his flock. Then the virgins shall make merry and dance, and young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into joy. I will console and gladden them after their sorrows.”

Today’s readings speak to God’s protection over us as his children, and the connection we have to one another as children of God. As our Father,, God holds with us an everlasting covenant of peace. In this way, we are all connected as brothers and sisters. In this covenant, it is our duty as well, as children made in the image and likeness of God, to protect and care for one another. In the responsorial psalm, we see the joy that God’s protection brings to us. Something I have struggled with in my faith is understanding God’s role in our lives and the lives of others, especially when they are suffering so greatly. In our world today, with so much despair and hardship, I have, at times found myself losing faith. How can He let this happen? Why must people suffer? Yet, what the responsorial psalm reveals to me is that God is the one who helps us through our sorrow and suffering. He turns our mourning into joy, and guards and protects us.

Throughout my life and as I have grown in my faith, I have found peace and joy in my reflections with God. I speak with Him as if we are friends, and this relationship with Him has allowed me to grow stronger in my faith. God cannot rid our world of hardship and despair, but He can guide us as we navigate life. I have noticed that when I bring God into my life and allow Him to guide me through hardship, I feel happier, more supported and protected. When I may shy away in my relationship with God, I feel more confused, lost, and out of touch with the greater reality of who I am and who I want to be.

Ashley Bunici '26

MARCH 29 ♦ PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14—27:66

The wisdom in the prophet Isaiah's words inspires my approach to leadership. By God's grace, I seek a "well-trained tongue"—not for self-promotion, but to be a humble vessel finding the gentle words that might "rouse the weary" staff member who needs spiritual and professional lift.

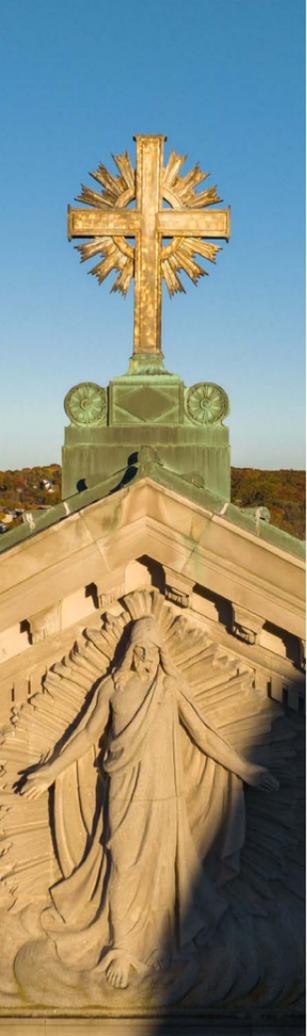
Central to this is my love for weekly office hours. They are the moments I commit to attentive listening, dedicating time "morning after morning" to hear the day-to-day challenges. But it's also my chance to really get to know my team members as individuals, and honestly, I learn from them constantly. This intense focus is what allows me to be the person my team knows they can lean on for strength and support, creating a space where they feel safe and valued.

In moments of pressure that test one's resolve, echoing the "buffets and spitting," my goal is to endure them for the sake of others. By setting my "face like flint," I strive for an unwavering, faith-rooted resolve. This strength is used to protect and guide the team. When I refuse to "turn back," I affirm the worth of their efforts and the integrity of our shared mission, ensuring our work will achieve its shared purpose. I hope that my leadership can serve as a heartfelt commitment to service and mutual success.

Michele Gagne Wertz '95

Associate Vice President for Individual Giving, Division of Advancement





MARCH 30 ✦ MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

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

“I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you.”

On this Monday of Holy Week, I am reminded of what it means for me to be made in the image and likeness of God. In the first reading from Isaiah, we hear: *“I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, who live in darkness.”* To be made in God’s image also comes with responsibility. It is not enough to only pray for those who are sick and suffering, but how can that take shape through acts of service and that offer hope, light, and restoration?

How might it look to put my faith into action in the accompaniment of those on the margins, guided by the examples of Jesus’ public ministry? I am learning to embrace the gifts of gentleness and tenderness that I can sometimes worry about being “too sensitive,” as something to be cherished and valued. Throughout this Holy Week, what are those unique gifts, bestowed upon you by a God of love and accompaniment to be shared with those you encounter? How might the Spirit be inviting you to move from a place of gentleness and inner light from and of God, breathing life into this world?

Mary LaVigne-Greeley

Assistant Chaplain, Office of the College Chaplains

MARCH 31 ♦ TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Is 49:1-6; Ps 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15, 17; Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

*“Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength,
Yet my reward is with the LORD, my recompense is with my God.”*

In reflecting on this quote above, it helps me realize how sometimes we can underestimate ourselves and feel like the things that we do and the hard work that we have done in our lives are often for nothing. I know there have been times and will continue to be times in my life where I have felt this way. But this quote from the readings emphasizes the importance of knowing that the work we do is not useless or for nothing, but that God has us covered and has a plan for us even when it may not seem like it.

This point can be further seen in another quote from the reading that stuck out to me which states, “It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” Again, this shows that God’s plans for us are often more than we have planned for ourselves.

What does it mean to be a light to the nations? Perhaps, someone who, in their daily life, carries this word in their actions, both big and small.

Curtis Goines '27





APRIL 1 ♦ WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

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

“Lord, in your great love, answer me.”

I am sure we are all familiar with the saying ‘Patience is a virtue.’ Unfortunately, it is not my virtue. When I was younger, I didn’t see it as a negative quality. I was on time, always prepared, and eager to move on to the next event. As a student at Holy Cross and into adulthood, I have been battling my impatience. It may sound dramatic, but often, I worry how it can strain my relationships with those I care about most. At times, I struggle with articulating to others how this affects me. I bottle it up and feel alone.

In today’s psalm, we witness how Jesus feels in his final days before he is crucified – an outcast, a stranger, a victim of betrayal. It is then in the Gospel of Matthew where we learn that Judas will betray Jesus. Yet, even in His darkest hours, Jesus is certain of the love of God and knows that God will be present during His trials: “Lord, in your great love, answer me.”

Growing up, I viewed Jesus as being completely isolated in the days leading up to his crucifixion. However, he relies upon the unconditional love and devotion from God the Father, Mary, his mother, and the other apostles. Today’s readings remind me that when I am impatient or I have other struggles, I do not have to be alone. I can rely on God, but also individuals in my life who endlessly prove their compassion and love towards me.

Mia Beviglia '23

Assistant Director, J.D. Power Center for Liberal Arts in the World

APRIL 2 ♦ HOLY THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

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

He said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

When I turned 13, my father announced that I had a new important household responsibility: mowing the lawn. On a Saturday morning soon after, he did the yard work with me for the last time, instructing me on what to do and how to do it, including cleaning the lawnmower after I finished--ugh. From that day on, the lawn was my job.

Every once and a while, though, I would wake up late on a Saturday morning and find the lawn mowed and the yard work completed. My father would be relaxing--reading the paper or watching a game. I remember feeling such surprise and delight, and I would gush out 'thank you' and wrap my dad in a hug. Not only because I had been relieved of the work, but because my father had done it. He hated yard work, and he had made it clear that it was now my responsibility, so it meant a lot to me when he did it nevertheless. That act said things about his love and affection for me that we rarely put into words.

Hierarchy and power are things that we are often uncomfortable talking about, but they are baked into our lives and cultures in all kinds of ways. Parent and child; teacher and student. Christ's radical message of self-giving love is about upending our normal understanding of hierarchy. It reverses how we understand power and authority and offers a transformative message about what it means to truly serve others. Christ, as master and teacher, demonstrates how love can transform us when it is expressed by humbling ourselves and doing what we are not expected to do.

"Do you realize what I have done for you?" The disciples would soon learn of Christ's incredible act of self-gift and boundless love through his death on the cross. By washing the disciples' feet he sent a simple, powerful message now at the heart of our faith as Christians. "Love one another, as I have loved you."

Vincent D. Rougeau

President





APRIL 3 ♦ GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

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

*“Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,
and who would have thought any more of his destiny?”*

I’ve always had trouble connecting with today’s Gospel. Its sheer length and density can feel like a barrier to entry. However, the first reading for Good Friday offers something a bit more tangible.

Amidst so many trajectories of suffering across the globe, akin to Christ’s Passion and death, it may seem impossible to feel anything more than basic human sympathy, sadness, and anger. How else are we to react to journeys so profoundly different from our own? Isaiah challenges us to confront the cognitive and emotional dissonance between our own suffering, that of Christ, and those who carry the heaviest crosses in today’s world. Though Christ’s suffering was great, it was chosen freely—most others aren’t granted this possibility. From Gaza, to Sudan, to the southern borders of our own country, countless individuals are being stripped of their ability to control their destiny. Thus, just as we recount the Lord’s passion each year with the dignity it deserves, so too must we choose to tell the stories of those most severely oppressed, and ensure that their destinies are not reduced to mere casualties of injustice. In attending to the suffering of our neighbors across the globe, we also grow deeper in our understanding and love of the Divine, for it is precisely these neighbors in which we see the face of Christ anew.

Lauren Mlicko '26

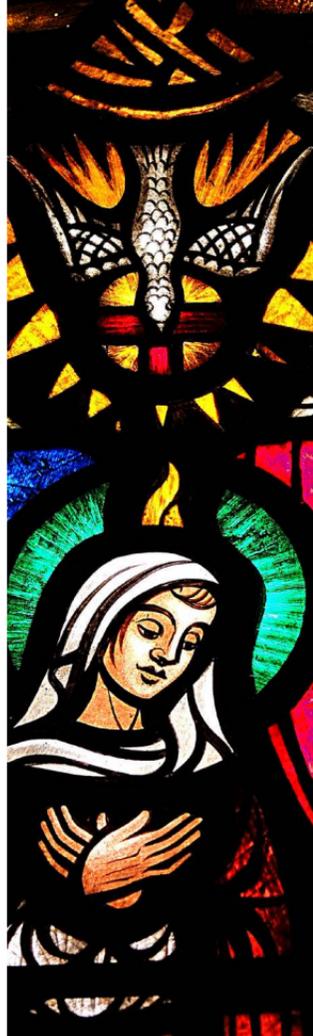
APRIL 4 ♦ HOLY SATURDAY

Gn 1:1-2:2; Gn 22:1-18; Ex 14:15-15:1; Is 54:5-14; Is 55:1-11; Rom 6:3-11; Mt 28:1-10

This is a day of beginnings and endings. “Do not be afraid,” the angel tells Mary, thunderstruck, as the world changes before her eyes. Death has become life; the angel’s appearance is like lightning, and its robe is white as snow. It’s a moment of stark poetry that crackles with revelation and rebirth. How can Mary not be afraid as a supreme power overtakes her? And yet how quickly her fear turns to joy as she sees the world anew, alive with the divine.

What strikes me about this passage is its juxtaposition with the day’s readings from Genesis, the first words of creation. I think we can sometimes be overwhelmed with the enormity of divine power, the towering heavens and the breath of an empty tomb. But I see the joy of resurrection in the smaller, everyday power of language, in the act of creation contained in voicing one’s wonder at the world. Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro called every poet a little god, invoking divine power in the word writ small, attentively crafted to create worlds in one’s own voice. Why sing about the rose, he asks; make it bloom with your words. Go tell my brothers, Jesus tells Mary. Speak, sing, proclaim the wonder of the world, that teeming dome in the middle of the waters, joining His word to yours, and in doing so, remake the earth again and again in your own voice, an echo through the ages.

Daniel Frost P27
Professor of Spanish





APRIL 5 ✦ EASTER SUNDAY – THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

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

“On that first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.”

My mom came to the United States in 1970 along with her father Joao. Joao had been diagnosed with cancer and they came to the U.S. to seek medical treatment at Dana Farber. Mom has told me the stories countless times: traveling the commuter rail, navigating the health system, renting an apartment in Attleboro, and learning to drive all while holding an English/Portuguese dictionary in her hands. But, as I read today’s Gospel and consider Mary of Magdala, I hear something else in mom’s immigration story.

I imagine Mary of Magdala in the early dark hours of the morning, frightened and stunned in that way we become when the unthinkable happens. I imagine her walking to the tomb alone, accompanied only by her sorrow. She sees the stone removed from the tomb. I imagine her fear and confusion. But, what she does next is really important. Mary “runs” to Peter and her friends to tell them what she has seen. The Greek word for run here (trecho) is important. Mary runs in haste and with effort. Full of grief, Mary does not remain frozen or stuck. In those dark, early morning hours, Mary is the embodiment of both despair and hope, both heartache and the promise of community, both the desolation of death and the consolation of resurrection.

I never lived to meet my grandfather. He died only two months after immigrating to the United States. My mother earned her high school equivalency when I was in high school. My own children and I have benefited from countless opportunities Joao could have never imagined.

Blessed are you Woman of Magdala, who did not allow your fear and grief to stop you from running to share your Good News. Blessed are we, men and women who can hold both grief and despair, while stepping into Easter hope.

Christine Bridges Estes

Associate Director of Mission Engagement

Easter Sequence - *Victimæ paschali laudes*

Christians, to the Paschal Victim
Offer your thankful praises!
A Lamb the sheep redeems;
Christ, who only is sinless,
Reconciles sinners to the Father.
Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.
Speak, Mary, declaring
What you saw, wayfaring.
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,
The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;
bright angels attesting,
The shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;
to Galilee he goes before you.”
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!
Amen. Alleluia.





Holy Cross

Division of Mission and Ministry
One College Street
Worcester, MA 01610-2395