



## Praying Through Lent 2014 Introduction and Lenten Q&A

St. Louis University High School

Dear SLUH Community,

It is our pleasure to bring to you this SLUH community-led Lenten reflection booklet. It is our hope that this may serve as an aid in your prayer life for the upcoming Lenten season. For each day, we encourage you to read the Scripture readings, read the reflection offered by a community member, and pray about how the Lord might be speaking to you that day.

A few quick Lent “Q & As” that you might have...

### **Is Ash Wednesday a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics?**

In most any church, Ash Wednesday liturgies are traditionally among the best attended of the entire year. In spite of that reality, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation. It is encouraging to see how so many people choose to attend this liturgy to begin the Lenten season in order to set their hearts and minds on the purpose of the season ahead.

### **Why do we receive Ashes on Ash Wednesday?**

Ashes serve as a reminder of our nature as creatures who are apart from our final home in heaven. They are a joyful reminder of why we want to turn away from sin. They are not something worn as a sign of personal holiness or pride. They are a sign to the world that we are sinners, aware of where we came from and where we are going. They are recycled from last year’s Palm Sunday palms, connecting us back to the previous season.

### **What’s the deal about fasting?**

There are two days during Lent in which Catholics between the ages of 18-59 are asked to fast—Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fasting means having one “full” meal and two smaller ones, with no snacking in between. Liquids are permitted at any time. It seems reasonable that any healthy high school student could also participate. Fasting doesn’t in any way try to “earn” God’s attention; it aims to clarify our own thinking and feeling. Eating too much, we feel sluggish. Eating little, we feel more alert and possibly more aware of the suffering of others. Non-Catholics are certainly welcome to fast for similar reasons.

### **Wait...what about not eating meat?**

Abstaining from meat is something that is asked of anyone 14 years or older, both on Ash Wednesday and each and every Friday of Lent. It’s a small gesture of sacrifice that will hopefully help us grow in our ability to make bigger sacrifices. It doesn’t make sense to abstain from meat if we are going to have a more enjoyable meal. On the Fridays of Lent, we remember the sacrifice of Christ on Good Friday and unite ourselves with that sacrifice through abstinence and prayer. Access to good, healthy meat is a luxury enjoyed by our society, and it helps puts us in solidarity with those who lack such access. For the vegetarians amongst us, it would make sense to abstain from a luxury staple in our diet. Non-Catholics are certainly welcome to abstain from meat for similar reasons.

### **What if I forget about whole the no-meat thing and have a breakfast burrito?**

That doesn’t mean you are going to hell. It does suggest that perhaps you should offer a prayer of humility. *Lord, help me to put aside myself during this Lenten season and bring me closer to You.* Intentionally “forgetting” is not in line with what the season asks of us.

### **What about the “giving something up for Lent” practice?**

This is an excellent idea that we hope everyone embraces! The purpose of giving anything up for Lent should be to help grow in freedom, apart from that something. It makes no sense to give things up to which we have no real attachment. Perhaps you might give up judging other

people or another particular bad habit. Perhaps vulgarity or screen addiction to your mobile device is something restricting your freedom. Or, perhaps your Lenten sacrifice could be for the Activity Period snack money that, instead, you give to the Rice Bowl. How you spend your time could be another area for sacrifice: rather than playing video games after your homework, spend that time in prayer, or in doing something nice for your family or friends. Perhaps you might resolve to attend daily 7:20am Mass at SLUH once or twice a week. Even if you “mess up” on your Lenten promises, pray for strength and God’s help to start again!

### **What’s this I hear about Sundays “not counting” for my Lenten sacrifice?**

Because Sundays celebrate the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus, and thus are not prescribed days of fasting and abstinence, some people choose to “relax” their Lenten promises on this day. To that, we say: what is the point of your sacrifice? Lent is a season of conversation, a season to turn hearts back to Christ and away from sin. It makes very little sense to “relax” a promise to root out sin in your life and engage in that behavior on Sunday. True conversion is about a total change of heart—something that we need all the practice we can get at. Lent affords us the opportunity to make new behavioral habits, and habit creation is a seven-day-a-week job.

### **When does Lent end?**

Lent ends on Holy Thursday. That is when the Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday—begins, leading into Easter. The Triduum is a liturgical season unto itself, a season that condenses the entirety of the Christian mystery and message into three beautiful days. Easter is not only a day but an Octave (eight day) celebration leading to another season of the Church—the Easter Season—which ends on Pentecost Sunday.

### **Why does the date of Easter always change?**

The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) set the date of Easter as the Sunday that follows the paschal full moon. The paschal full moon is the full moon that falls on or after the vernal (spring) equinox. In the Jewish calendar, Passover is held on or very near this moon. Since we know that Jesus’ Last Supper was a Passover feast, the Sunday after Passover is always Easter. The earliest possible date of Easter is March 22, and the latest possible date is April 25. Got that?

### **What’s with the Rice Bowls that are all around school?**

Rice Bowl is a program from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) that has been a popular Lenten tradition in parishes, schools, and families since 1975! CRS Rice Bowl is a way for Catholics to live Lent. It is an invitation to *pray, fast* and *give* to deepen your relationship with Christ and bring hope to our brothers and sisters in need. Of the money we collect, CRS will send 75% to support CRS’ humanitarian relief programs in nearly 100 countries worldwide. The other 25% of the donations go to hunger and poverty alleviation efforts in our own St. Louis community. For more information on CRS Rice Bowl, go to <http://www.crsricebowl.org/>.

A final thank you to members of the Sophomore Pastoral Team, teachers, and alumni who worked on these reflections. Also, a big thank you to Mr. John Penilla and Mr. Craig Hannick, both of whom were instrumental in the creation of this project.

With that, blessings on your Lenten journey!

Mr. Brian Gilmore and Mr. Dan Finucane  
SLUH Campus Ministry



# Praying Through Lent 2014

## The First Four Days of Lent

### March 5 - 8

St. Louis University High School

## THE FIRST FOUR DAYS OF LENT

March 5-8

These days serve as an introduction to our Lenten journey. Before we begin the first full week of Lent, we have a powerful set of readings about our Prayer, Repentance, Almsgiving and Fasting. We place ashes on our foreheads and learn about the meaning of death and life. Over two days we pray over the powerful challenge of Isaiah 58. And Jesus reminds us that he is inviting us to a "change of heart."

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



**Wednesday, March 5: Ash Wednesday**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030514.cfm>

First Reading: Joel 2:12-18

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-5, 16-18

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

I’m a baseball guy. Always have been. Sitting on a roof, a patio, or a porch on a summer night with the voices of Jack Buck or Mike Shannon coming through the radio, with family or a good friend... to me, that’s a beautiful, wonderful, and pure thing. That’s about as good as it gets.

But before Opening Day comes Spring Training. It’s a time of preparation. A time to iron out the kinks and rust that developed during the offseason. To build a team approach and develop new sense of community and cohesion in the clubhouse. It’s the beginning of a new season, where the sins and goats of yesterday are forgiven and hope for new success comes in.

Today’s readings call us in to a different kind of training. Lent presents us the opportunity to prepare our minds and hearts for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus and await the beginning of a new season of life. If Easter Sunday restores us, Lent calls us to see the ways in which we are broken and in need of help. Receiving the ashes, we are reminded of being human beings in need of God’s unending mercy and love. Today, the Lord God calls us back home.

This Lent, I want to reduce the amount of time I spend so mindlessly—checking gadgets, visiting the same website over and over again—in favor of other things I all-too-often neglect: writing or calling lost friends, reading, and most importantly, prayer.

*God, you are our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. We do not fear, though the earth shakes and the mountains quake. You, the Lord of hosts, are with us. Help us to be still and know that you are God. You are with us. Help us to be still.*

Mr. Brian Gilmore ‘02  
Campus Ministry and Theology Department

**Thursday, March 6:** Thursday after Ash Wednesday

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030614.cfm>

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Gospel: Luke 9:22-25

In today's readings we are given a choice. That choice is one of discipleship—yet it is a difficult choice. The difficulty is not necessarily in choosing, but rather in living out that choice fully. But that IS the choice—it is the choice to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We have free will, but Moses recounts the abundant blessings for those who choose life.

God literally gave the Israelites life in the land he promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He promises us life in the Kingdom of God as it is present in our reality today. The Gospel reflects the seriousness of this choice of following Jesus: we must take up our cross daily and follow Him. This is the paradox of Christian discipleship: we must lose our lives for the sake of Jesus in order to save our lives. Ignatian spirituality models this paradox as it requires us to be contemplatives in action. Our focus is on our relationship with God while our efforts are on serving others. The cycle repeats. We are strengthened in our faith by our service to others, which strengthens us to remain faithful to our choice. It is an act of love – love of God – that leads to us heeding his voice, answering his call of service. God who is love itself gives us the world and all that is in it to help us make this choice.

What does it profit us to gain that same world but to lose ourselves? What have we gained for ourselves that is holding us back from true discipleship, true giving of ourselves fully to others in action, true giving of ourselves fully to God in prayer?

Choose life!

Mr. Craig Hannick  
Math Department

## Friday, March 7: Friday after Ash Wednesday

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030714.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-9A

Gospel: Matthew 9:14-15

"This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the 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. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn. . ."

During Lent, we are really only encouraged to fast from food twice: on Ash Wednesday and on Good Friday. On these days, fasting means two small meals or one normal meal over the course of the day. We often choose to give up a particular food or drink throughout Lent - I routinely give up soda for Lent, many others give up candy. Additionally, we abstain from meat on Fridays, opting instead for macaroni and cheese or the local fish fry. These are small, though important acts in the midst of these weeks. However, we often dread these things, or do them without much thought.

Isaiah, however, puts forward a challenge to us - to consider in a conscious way: *why am I fasting?* And he goes one step further: he suggests that our fasting should manifest itself in reaching out to the vulnerable. As I reflect on this, I consider what fasting and abstaining from meat mean to me, or what "giving something up" might be. One year, I restricted my use of water: quick showers, never leaving the water running, never dumping my water bottle, but consuming it all. And I tried to remember how scarce water is for many people around the world.

Perhaps you have already made a decision about "what to give up"; perhaps as you fast, abstain from meat and enter into your commitment of giving something up, you can consider the following questions as a way to live out Isaiah's words:

- When I fast, do I ever consider sharing my food with the truly hungry?*
- Do I try to gain any understanding of the situation of those who are chronically hungry?*
- When I abstain from meat, am I aware of how meat arrives at my table? Is it a just system?*
- Have I ever considered that meat is a luxury for most people in the world?*
- Have I ever considered giving up some of my time to be with the homeless? the hungry? the naked?*

Mr. Dan Finucane '06  
Campus Ministry and Theology Department



**Saturday, March 8:** Saturday after Ash Wednesday

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030814.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 58: 9B-14

Gospel: Luke 5: 27-32

*“He said to him, ‘Follow me.*

*‘I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners.’” – Luke 5:27, 32*

This narrative complements the many gospel stories about healing. Those are beautiful stories of the compassion of Jesus. Also they are powerful allegories to the broader spiritual healing that Christ extends to all through prayer. When healing a deaf man, Jesus *took him off by himself away from the crowd (Mark 7:33)*. When restoring the sight of a blind man, He took him *by the hand and led him outside the village... (Mark 8:23)*. Jesus leads the deaf and blind away from worldly preoccupation so that, once physically healed, they might rest a moment, and in quiet prayer hear His whisper and see His light of truth before returning into a very noisy and blurring world. In the same way He leads you and me, should we choose to follow, to a quiet place of prayer, a healing prayer that nourishes and prepares us for our very loud and blinding day.

Today's story of Levi and his tax collector friends is not about finding a quiet place of prayer, but still it speaks of healing – and a different kind of prayer. There is no allegory in this story - Jesus goes straight for a spiritual healing. In the days of Jesus no one was more preoccupied with and immersed in the worldly than a tax collector. They wore the label of de facto sinner. In the midst of this tax collector world, Jesus opens the eyes and ears of Levi. *“Follow me”* is all He says, and then something dramatic happens. Those two words start Levi on a journey with Christ. *And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him.* Levi accepts the invitation of Jesus, and then He does more. *Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them.* He surrenders himself and his possessions to Jesus. He prays, but not in a quiet place. This prayer of Levi is a prayer of action, a prayer not of word but deed. He detaches from the things of His life and puts them into action for the greater glory of God.

Through both quiet prayer and prayer of action, through word and deed, may we find Christ. Preoccupied and sinners like Levi, may we see, hear, follow, and reflect Jesus amidst the swirl of our lives.

Steve Hutchison '68

Alumni Board



# Praying Through Lent 2014

## The First Week of Lent

### March 9 - 15

St. Louis University High School

## THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

March 9-15

It is wonderful to see the early weeks of Lent as a catechism for those who are on a journey toward Baptism at the Easter Vigil. Each liturgy offers a new "lesson in the faith" for these new believers. Viewed this way, Lent can be a journey of renewal in faith for us all. We listen, with the hearts of children, learning old lessons, as though for the first time.

And each day, we pray these special prayers that simply help us keep turning to God for the graces we need for the day. Throughout the day, we find moments, perhaps "in the background" while we are doing other things, that help us remember what we are asking for. Our desire grows as we make changes to our daily patterns. As we make sacrifices, in order to experience freedom from self-directed needs, we also experience a freedom for other-directed love and generosity.

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



## Sunday, March 9: First Sunday of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030914.cfm>

First Reading: Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7

Second Reading: Romans 5: 12-19

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

We can't help but look at Noah through the lens of our modern sense of what's acceptable behavior. Building an ark in your neighborhood is probably not calculated to win the approval of your neighbors. Comedian Bill Cosby, as well as the film *Evan Almighty*, saw the potential for humor in the story of Noah.

In reality, though, Noah's response to God's call is seen by the scriptural text as an act of faith. The risk Noah took, whatever his neighbors thought about his strange building project, made possible the display of God's care for Noah and his family. It also helped introduce the biblical theme of covenant.

Following the flood, God makes a promise never to destroy his creation again by a flood (apocalyptic filmmakers, take note!). God's promise takes the form of a "covenant," a promise on God's part, which in turn calls forth a response on the part of humanity. Creation on God's part is an act of love, and the covenant with Noah reinforces that love.

The notion of covenant will surface again and again, until we hear it at the Last Supper. Jesus will offer us his Blood, poured out in a new covenant of love, helping to make each of us a new creation in Christ.

Step out today to observe God's creation and make your own covenant response to help protect that creation.

*God of the covenant, stretch your rainbow above us as a sign of your faithfulness. In the beauty of creation may we see your love written large and make a response of faith, with your help. Amen.*

Greg Friedman, O.F.M.

*Post taken from Friedman's Lent With the Saints: Daily Meditations.*

**Monday, March 10:** Monday of the First Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031014.cfm>

First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

I was in my high school's production of *Godspell*, so today's reading from St. Matthew brings back many memories. I have always loved the way *Godspell* brings the Gospel of Matthew to life. Yes, I remember well my cast mates and I being separated into two groups – sheep on Jesus' right and goats on His left. (No, you may not ask to which side I was assigned. However, you may recall that in almost every production one of the goats tried to sneak in with the sheep!)

Today's Gospel covers six of the seven corporal works of mercy and apparently the sheep nailed them all. Sadly, like a lot of us, the goats seem to have missed some golden opportunities.

"For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink."

"Aw, Master, if we'd of known it was you we would've taken you to the Currigan Room for a chicken wrap and a soda!"

Which one of us wouldn't visit Jesus, or feed Him or clothe Him? But so often we fail to recognize Him when He is standing right in front of us. Can we find Him in the habitually tardy student, the classmate who seems strange to us, the grumbling co-worker, or the driver who cuts us off in traffic? Perhaps, sometimes, it's easier not to see Him. Seeing Him always demands that we love - even those who are difficult to love.

Today's reading from Leviticus echoes those thoughts. (LV 19: 1-2, 11-18) We must practice justice and charity in our dealings with one another. We must love our neighbors as ourselves.

St. Francis of Assisi said, "Remember when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received, only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage."

Today, may our actions be filled with charity for those who are in most need of His love.

Mrs. Mary Fischer  
Manager, Accounts Payable

**Tuesday, March 11:** Tuesday of the First Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031114.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11

Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15

*So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.*

Taken directly from today's reading from Isaiah, God is saying a few things here. The first is: whatever God says has a meaning to fulfill. God spoke us into existence. So, does that not mean everyone has a meaning to fulfill? God's word will not return to him empty. He will speak so that everything He says reaches its full potential, just like us. In Lent, let us think about what God has called us to do. His word will not return empty. The question is, will we fulfill what God has called us to do, or will we let someone else step up instead to do our work?

In today's Gospel, Jesus preaches about prayer. Jesus begins his sermon by warning his disciples to not pray like the pagans, who ramble on in prayer saying empty words, hoping others will hear them and consider them pious. There are two things wrong with this kind of prayer. First, your words have no value, so you are wasting your time. Secondly, the intention of your prayer should not be to glorify yourself, but rather how you can glorify God. Jesus then proceeds to teach his disciples the "Our Father," a powerful prayer that focuses on bringing glory to God.

Liam Cler '16

Tim Juergens '16

**Wednesday, March 12:** Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031214.cfm>

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-10

Gospel: Luke 11:29-32

Consider the signs in your life: the street signs that orient you to your environment, the road signs that create order and safety as you move about, the bright billboards and business signs that invite you to spend or join or support something. These, of course, are all material signs. Take a minute before reading further to consider the less obvious signs—good or bad—you encounter. Who or what comes to mind? Try to name four or five. *[pause for a few minutes]*

Toward what values, what ways of living and being do these signs point?

Today, at this moment, reflect on your relationship to these signs. Am I noticing primarily the powerful, the popular, the pretty, the pleasurable? Am I seeing those that challenge me, ask me to consider a less comfortable path, invite me to care or to give more of myself that I want? *[pause for a few minutes]*

Today's Old Testament reading tells the story of that great, wicked city of Ninevah, who received a sign in the form of a reluctant prophet name Jonah. Known best as "that dude who got swallowed by a whale," Jonah was a man who preferred to see the signs he wanted to see. When God called upon him to journey to a distant city to tell its people to repent, he instead went his own way until he found himself trapped in the belly of a whale, forced in that dark, lonely cavern to confront that sign. Strangely, the sign was something of a mirror; Jonah was running away not from God but from himself, for he was the sign. Reluctantly, he submitted, the kind whale spat him out, and Ninevah received its sign.

What if God wants to send you, too, as God's sign? Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?

Dr. David Callon  
English Department

**Thursday, March 13:** Thursday of the First Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031314.cfm>

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

Gospel: Matthew 7: 7-12

The tale of Queen Esther has all the elements of a great story. We can imagine her, the beautiful bride of a pagan king, ruler of Persia, reigning in a lavish Middle Eastern court. Into this scene of elegance and splendor comes a threat to Esther's kin—the Jewish people who are exiled in her land.

The drama, essential to any good story, develops as the king's advisor, Haman, is angered by the refusal of Esther's uncle, Mordecai, to bow down to Haman in the court. In revenge, Haman plots to destroy all the Jews in the land.

When Esther learns of the plot, she risks her life to go to the king, her husband, and plead on behalf of her people, after praying the prayer found in the First Reading. Her prayers, and her pleas to the king, are answered positively, and the Jews in Persia are saved.

The Gospel follows with the simple assurance given us by Jesus about *our* prayer. "Ask, and it will be given to you; search and the door will be opened for you" (Matthew 7:7). It's a promise based on a relationship, the relationship of Jesus to his Father, a relationship that we're invited to share.

Reflect on Jesus' words about how God, our loving parent, treats us. Then write a prayer of petition for some special need.

*Generous Father, may we believe what Jesus has told us about your willingness to hear our prayer. May we never fear to ask, seek, and knock, confident in your love. Amen.*

Greg Friedman, O.F.M.

*Post taken from Friedman's Lent With the Saints: Daily Meditations.*



## **Friday, March 14: Friday of the First Week of Lent**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031414.cfm>

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:21-28

Gospel: Matthew 5:20-26

Sometimes the readings can feel harsh when we first read them. Today is one of those times. In the first reading from Ezekiel we are likely to feel the same lament as is noted by the author: "The LORD'S way is not fair!" The prophet has spoken of the destruction of the virtuous after they have turned away from virtue and the saving of the evil ones after they have turned away from their evil ways. We wonder how that can be. How can someone who has done so many evil things be put to rights while someone who has been so virtuous be rejected? It doesn't seem to make sense. Yet the prophet asks: Is it God's ways that are not fair or is it humanity's ways that are not fair?

The Gospel today urges us to act so that our righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees. How can we make this ideal happen? The Pharisees were strongly religious people. They obeyed the Law as closely as they could. How are we ordinary people supposed to surpass their obedience? This Gospel is taken from the part of Matthew's Gospel known as the Sermon on the Mount. In this part of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is imaged as the new Moses. He is on the mountain giving the new law. In fact, there are a series of quotations of the old law followed by an interpretation by Jesus. His interpretation goes beyond the letter of the law to find the spirit behind the law. In this section he quotes, "You shall not kill," then goes on to speak of anger and harsh language to those around you. He then speaks of being reconciled with one another. This reconciliation is so important that we should not go offer sacrifice at the altar until we have accomplished the reconciliation. This reading feels harsh in the sense that it calls us to a very high ideal of loving our fellow human beings. It feels impossible.

As often happens in the daily readings, the psalm is the source of comfort for us today; the good news is found in the psalm. We cry out to God: "If, you, O Lord, mark iniquities, who can stand?" Our cry reminds us that none of us can stand before the Lord as fully righteous or virtuous. We beg God to hear us. We remind God (or ourselves) that with God is found forgiveness. We remind ourselves to trust in the LORD and to wait for God. There is kindness and plenteous redemption. Therefore we can hear the readings from Ezekiel and the Gospel of Matthew in the light of that trust and that hope. We need not fret about what happens if we turn from virtue, since we know that our lives are a mixture of virtue and vice. We are among those who are struggling to turn from evil to righteousness. Our righteousness will only surpass that of the Pharisees if we are able to let the grace of God permeate our lives. We can trust in the Word of God who has told us that with God there is kindness and plenteous redemption. So we rest in peace, knowing that the Lord does not mark iniquities. His way is indeed fair. Better to say, perhaps, that his way is more than fair. It is generous and full of compassion.

Carl J. Heumann, S.J. '77

Superior of the SLUH Jesuit Community

**Saturday, March 15:** Saturday of the First Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031514.cfm>

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:16-19

Gospel: Matthew 5:43-48

The transition from the First Reading to the Gospel is one I find fascinating. Though the overall message is the same – be a good person – there is a seismic shift in the motivation. Deuteronomy has this quid pro quo feeling to the message. As it says, this is an agreement, a contract with God and his people. Moses, speaking on behalf of God, lays out the terms of the contract: we follow the laws, and God will glorify us above all other peoples. This must have been a no-brainer proposition for the Israelites as they trekked to the Promised Land to escape the Egyptian enslavement.

But, in Matthew, Jesus offers a different motivation altogether. Jesus goes one step further; not only does he suggest that we be law-abiding, but that we be perfect. And why should we be perfect? There is no carrot-on-a-stick, hanging there for us as a reward. Rather, we should be perfect because it makes us more like God. We are to do strive for perfection solely because it is the right thing to do.

Removing that external motivation makes the journey to perfection harder but certainly more meaningful. As Robert Furey wrote in the St. Louis Review in 2008, being “the person God wants you to be sometimes involves doing things you’d prefer to avoid.” In Jesuit terms, I think of the magis, the “more.” There is always more that we can do to grow toward our perfection in God.

The Lenten season gives us a chance to measure how well we are doing on our personal path to perfection. Likely, this is a race that has no finish line. But, though we may not be able to judge how close we are to the finish line, we can (hopefully) determine how far we have come from the starting point and what we need to do to distance ourselves from there even more.

John Penilla '99

Associate Director, Annual Giving



# Praying Through Lent 2014

## The Second Week of Lent

### March 16 - 22

# St. Louis University High School

## THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

March 16-22

We continue the first part of Lent, during which we learn, along with those preparing for Baptism, wonderful lessons in our faith.

We can feel the rhythm developing. Sunday is always our celebration of the Lord's resurrection, and establishes our theme for the week. Wednesdays and Fridays remind us of our commitment to a change of heart. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday reintroduce us to wonderful scriptures for our journey. Saturday is always uplifting and joyful.

The Opening Prayer of the Liturgy each day continues to guide our prayer. As we experience how simple these prayers are, and how easy they are to make our own, we find ourselves praying together in the same Spirit, with one another on this journey, around the world.

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



## **Sunday, March 16: The Second Sunday of Lent**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031614.cfm>

First Reading: Genesis 12: 1-4A

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1: 8B-10

Gospel: Matthew 17: 1-9

In Lent we read stories about Abraham—the description of God’s covenant with him and the story of his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, for example. These stories have undergone a long process of telling and retelling. Many hands have worked over these stories, for theological purposes.

Nevertheless, the stories communicate the common understanding we share about Abraham; that is, his strong faith in God. We marvel at the man’s willingness to trust in God so much that he would undertake a long, difficult journey to seek a land and a heritage promised by God. Though separated by millennia and by different cultures, we are yet the children of Abraham.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus confronts his opponents who claim that inheritance but fail to go beyond paying lip-service to it. Lent is all about renewing our faith in God through Jesus Christ, his Son.

May we use our Lenten immersion in the stories of faith as opportunities to allow God to strengthen and challenge that faith, as God did for Abraham. May we share our stories of faith with those entering the church this season.

*All-merciful God, worshipped by People of the Book, may we imitate our father Abraham in fidelity, trusting where you would lead us. Amen.*

Greg Friedman, O.F.M.

*Post taken from Friedman’s Lent With the Saints: Daily Meditations.*

**Monday, March 17:** Monday of the Second Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031714.cfm>

First Reading: Daniel 9:4B-10

Gospel: Luke 6:36-38

Today's reading is a testament to the power of honesty as well as that of forgiveness. Daniel starts this verse by addressing the Lord as "great and awesome God." He sets the stage for a confession in which he admits, on behalf of Israel, that they have sinned, been wicked and done evil. The most powerful statement to me is when Daniel respects the fact that justice is on the Lord's side. Through trials and tribulations the Lord remains compassionate and forgiving but ultimately this hinges on our ability to be honest and forthright.

In addition to the sins that Daniel listed, he also admitted how Israel was guilty of not listening to the prophets that God had sent. A prophet by definition is a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God. When we are quick to judge we often miss the greater good of God.

Personally this passage serves as a reminder to remain open-minded, faithful and merciful. It also highlights the importance of keeping our faith at the front and center of our lives. As we are influenced by our surroundings we must remain open to the Lord and all that He has given us. We must also be quick to admit when we have sinned and be honest with ourselves in times of immorality.

Forgiveness starts with honesty and appreciation. Once those can be established we have the ability to move forward knowing we have something great and awesome on our side.

Tim Wells '99  
Alumni Board

**Tuesday, March 18:** Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031814.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 1:10, 16-20

Gospel: Matt 23:1-12

Today's reading from Isaiah focuses on becoming clean by completely changing the things wrong with your life. Isaiah is taking the role of a motivational speaker who is asking us to "cease doing evil" and "learn to do good." He stresses that if we can change our life, God will let us "eat the good things of the land." While reading, I was reminded of my own Lenten promises that are attempts to cease doing evil in my life and learn to do good. Did I end the bad habits that were distracting me from God? Have I done my best to fill those habits with good deeds? As Lent goes on, these promises often become empty promises, but Isaiah is instructing us to make a positive change in our lives.

As you may know, often the first reading and the Gospel share a common theme. Today's Gospel is no exception. It connects cleanly to Isaiah, yet adds to the message. It asks us to "practice what we preach." So not only should we talk about being the best person we can be, we also need to physically go out and prove that all of the evil in our life really has been turned into good acts. Jesus uses the Pharisees as a prime example of what it means to "preach but not practice." The Pharisees, as Jesus reveals, make the lives of the Jewish people extremely difficult while "never lifting a finger." While telling these Pharisees what they have done wrong, I can imagine Jesus standing there thinking of the exact passage from Isaiah that was today's first reading. He teaches them how to turn this evil into a positive worship of God. Jesus preaches that they need to humble themselves in order to be exalted in heaven. Maybe our Lenten promises haven't worked out so far. Today's readings remind us not only to continue to strive to be faithful in those promises, but they also give us a great suggestion for a new promise. We should humble ourselves by doing things like extra service, not just because it is Freshman CSP or required for National Honor Society, but because we know it is at the heart of being Christian.

Cade Dernlan '16

Ethan McIntyre '16

Billy Balossi '16

## Wednesday, March 19: Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031914.cfm>

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:4-5A, 12-14A, 16, Second Reading: Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22

Gospel: Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24A

*"Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her." - Matthew 1:20*

The story may sound stale, heard too often, told perhaps too early in life. Does the virgin seem prudish and the man too old? Besides, is this not a Christmas story; and is it not Lent? We are mistaken to feel this way.

Let us slow down for a moment...slow down and listen. Listen to a profound love story about two people chosen to parent the Uncontainable Lover, the Incarnate Christ. These two are IN LOVE, the strongest love humans can experience. Love resonates throughout their being and creates an overflowing sense of oneness. There is a deep spirituality in their relationship, a holy longing, a sacramental love longing to reflect and serve the Creator God. Then suddenly the two lovers face the most socially unacceptable situation of an engaged couple. The man hears his lover saying she is with child, claiming something that from all appearance sounds as though an "angel" seduced her. This sounds preposterous...but the man so loves this woman! Despite the appearance and perception, he is utterly helpless to do anything but believe in her.

The two people in this story wrestle to exhaustion with both God and their hearts. In a sense this is a heart breaking love story. Yet it is also a story about faith and hope and love and becoming. It speaks of the spiritual formation of two people whom God is shaping so that they might enfold their joy and suffering into a loving acceptance of each other, of God, and of His Son.

Now THAT is a love story!

*Like the Virgin  
neither conceiving  
nor perceiving  
like she His child  
loved and favored  
created for beholding  
through Spirit abiding  
since ever was  
and before  
and will be  
forever  
then more.*

*And like the man Joseph  
let me be  
awakened from slumber and  
uncertainty  
freed by an angel  
from rule and lawful obligation  
to follow the heart  
that Christ Emmanuel might be  
with all  
freeing all  
to rise above worldly  
encumbrance  
to join the Creator  
now Incarnate*

*in creating  
His universe  
ever more becoming  
joyfully becoming.*  
  
*Yes  
indeed yes  
Christ come and be  
in flesh and blood  
enter me  
if like the man and the Lady  
proclaim I a yes.*  
  
*AMDG*

Steve Hutchison '68  
Alumni Board



**Thursday, March 20:** Thursday of the Second Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032014.cfm>

First Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Today's Gospel says,

*"Lazarus received what was bad; but now he is comforted".*

It is difficult to think that when we are going through a rough time, our troubles will all be over in eternity. Yet, the Gospel tells us just that. Yes, God knows us, and yes, for every trouble we have here on earth, we will be rewarded in heaven. So if you are going through a particularly rough time, take comfort in knowing that God sees you, knows you, and will reward you for being with him in the bad times by giving you everlasting joy. No problem lasts forever, and most of us did not endure what Lazarus did: open sores licked by dogs all over his body, and no food or drink or home. A terrible life, yet he ended up with Abraham. Have faith, stay by God, and in the end, he'll be by you.

Ian Hurford '16

Jacob Longinette '16

**Friday, March 21:** Friday of the Second Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032114.cfm>

First Reading: Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13A, 17B-28A

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

In the first reading today, we hear about Joseph and his brothers. His brothers were jealous because their father loved Joseph the most. They sold him away as a slave out of hatred and received money. Even though he was sold into slavery, Joseph trusted in God. We, too, are called to trust. We must try to persevere with our promises and sacrifices during the Lenten season and accept them joyfully, knowing the Resurrection is coming.

In the Gospel, we hear a parable about the evil tenants who killed many servants and the son of the master. The Pharisees expect the tenants to be killed, but Jesus tells them: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." He tells us that those who were rejected in their life by others will be an important part in heaven. Jesus tells the Pharisees that the tenants will not be killed but will miss out on heaven, the eternal reward. We, too, may be rejected by others during Lent and thought of as weird or as outsiders. But we must not let that put us down, knowing that Heaven is our eternal reward. The next time someone mocks you for giving up things during Lent, do not argue with them, or give up, but know in your heart you are doing God's will.

Thomas Nowak '16

Joe Butler '16

**Saturday, March 22:** Saturday of the Second Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032214.cfm>

First Reading: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

*“My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours.”*

Each story has “good guys” and “bad guys.” I think that the three characters portrayed in this parable each have bad and good qualities. The younger son is foolish and impulsive, but he is willing to admit his mistake and face his father. Plus, who doesn’t love a good comeback story?

The father’s best quality, his willingness to love unconditionally, could be considered his greatest weakness as it also opens himself up to be hurt.

Then there is the older son. In the little we hear of him, he seems to be a good kid, a hard worker, and doesn’t complain (at least until his brother returns). But, he is ultimately the least likable character for me because of his seeming lack of compassion.

The older brother lost sight of what he had because it wasn’t shiny like a ring or loud like a party. Sometimes it is impossible to see the greatness in our lives because we cannot see beyond ourselves. When we spend our energy waiting for a sign of love, we lose the opportunity to experience the full effect of that love in our lives. While the older son toiled and waited for his father’s approval, he missed the reality that all he ever wanted was already his.

Especially in today’s world, it is all too easy to focus on the things that we don’t have. The older brother wanted to be able to have a party, eat some nice food, because he felt he had *earned* that right. For us, perhaps it is the clothing or new iPad or car that we feel like we have *earned* the right to have. This focus on what is missing in our lives – rather than finding the joy in all the things that we do have – is a selfish, me-first mindset that is contrary to how God wants us to live. We are called to live like the father in the story who did not dwell on the past but rather celebrated at the exact moment that he saw his son had returned.

In this season of Lent, I ask the Lord to help me be mindful of the times that I do not appreciate the things in my life and the times that I care only about my own wants. May I realize that when I recognize these gifts in my life, “everything [God] has is mine” too.

John Penilla '99

Associate Director, Annual Giving



# Praying Through Lent 2014

## The Third Week of Lent

### March 23 - 29

# St. Louis University High School

## THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

March 23-29

With this week, we conclude the first part of Lent. We continue our lessons in the faith, as our practices of Lent become deeper and more full of grace.

We enter into this week reflecting upon the Scrutiny that makes up our intense prayer for those Elect, preparing for Baptism. And, as we beg, as Church, that they be freed from sin and from all anxiety, we ask those same desires for ourselves.

The simple and powerful words of the Opening Prayer guide our daily prayer. We continue to wake each morning, pausing to ask for the graces we desire for the day. Throughout each day, the background of our thoughts and feelings is more and more taken up with what this journey means for our personal change of heart, the renewal of our Baptismal commitment to be placed with Jesus, and our growing desire to act in solidarity with the poor. We go to bed each evening, after pausing to give thanks for the gifts of the day.

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*

My  
GOD  
in whom  
I trust.

**Sunday, March 23:** Third Sunday of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032314.cfm>

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2

Gospel: John 9:1-41

*“After the way this week’s been, I’m not really sure I’m on speaking terms with Jesus right now.”*

I think we’ve all felt, at some point or another, something like what Father Brian Christopher described in his address to us at the beginning of Mission Week. A feeling that despite your best, most holy efforts, God has left you to endure the world alone. You try to be kinder to others, go to Mass, and heck, even pray more. And for what? So that you can be made fun of? So that you can have your car break down on the way to church? And so that, at the end of it all, you have to sit there in silence as you talk to a God who doesn’t even seem to be listening to you?

The Israelites must have felt something similar. They were God’s chosen people, and yet for some reason, they ended up becoming enslaved. Even their escape from Egypt was filled with trial, as today’s first reading shows. Dying of thirst, the Israelites begin to doubt the Lord, only to have their needs filled when Moses strikes the rock.

Out of all the liturgical seasons, it’s perhaps during Lent that we can feel the most forsaken. We’re already over two weeks into Lent, and at this it might be hard to see how fasting, abstaining from meat, or giving something up has brought us any favor with God. But it’s important to remember that God is ever-present among us and, even more importantly, that he sent His son to free us from the slavery of sin. Perhaps God is speaking to us through these sacrifices.

Giuseppe Vitellaro ‘15

**Monday, March 24:** Monday of the Third Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032414.cfm>

First Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-15AB

Gospel: Luke 4:24-30

Today's first reading describes the ways of the Aramean, Naaman, the commanding officer for the king of Aram. Naaman, a leper, captures a small Jewish girl who promises his wife that he shall be cured if he travels to Judea to be cleansed. After he is persuaded to enter the River Jordan, Naaman is cleansed of his leprosy by Elijah, and he further pledges himself fully to the God of Israel.

Naaman goes on a journey in this story, a story that is full of twists and turns, as well as anger and frustration towards God. He wrestles with his own leprosy and his decision to be cleansed in the Jordan rather than a river in Damascus, which is his home country. In the end, Naaman comes to believe in the God of Israel after being cleansed of his ailment.

We are also on a journey, one that includes many challenges to test our faith. But we must realize that if we go to our God, his loving arms will welcome us. Naaman, though not an Israelite, is a great model of nearly blind faith, and during this Lent, let us trust in God's healing power. Even though we may not understand what God is doing or how he is working in our lives, let us have faith like Naaman and be willing to offer ourselves to God. He has a reason for what he does, and we need to trust in him that he will guide us down the right path. God wants us to be with Him, but we must first have faith and give God a chance in our lives, like Naaman did. When we give God that chance, we are opening our hearts to his love and grace.

Luke Thibodeau '16

Patrick Schuler '16

**Tuesday, March 25: Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032514.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 7: 10-14, 8:10

Second Reading: Hebrews 10: 4-10

Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

In Luke's Gospel, God sends Gabriel to tell Mary about Jesus' conception. He shows his favor to the lowly, to those who are humble and receptive to his word. We see the unfolding of God's plan of redemption in the events leading up to the Incarnation, the birth of the Messiah. Gabriel's visit shows the power and grace of the Holy Spirit and the Father. This Gospel asks us to trust in God's ways that are often above our comprehension. We can learn from this reading that we are always part of God's methods to help others and we may not know, but we are always playing a role in God's plans.

Gabriel tells Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found the favor of God." Anyone who has God's aid shouldn't have any worries because God's aid is limitless and powerful. We can learn from this reading that if we really want the help of God and truly accept and embrace it like Mary then we can accomplish anything we want and take on any challenge. Just like Mary must feel overwhelmed by the new life within her, we sometimes wonder why or how things happen to us. Mary quickly responds yes to the message and acts as an example for all believers. Mary believed God's promises even when they seemed impossible. She was full of grace because she trusted that what God said was true and would be fulfilled. She was willing and eager to do God's will, even if it seemed difficult or costly. When God gives us grace, we are expected to act with the same eagerness and obedience as Mary. When we do, God gives us the help and strength that are needed for the consequences of such a response.

Aidan Moore '16

Sam Heagney '16



**Wednesday, March 26:** Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032614.cfm>

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

*"Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17)*

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He is trying to change our perspective on the way we look at the rules and the laws that govern our lives. Jesus advises us to appreciate the laws that have been given to us, and not to follow them blindly. We can reap the most fruits from them by truly trying to understand why God calls us to obey these "statutes." In the reading from Deuteronomy, Moses provides a different motive for following rules. He cites the source of the rules as God, our loving Father. This father implements statutes and ordinances for the same reason that an earthly father or mother would; for the well being of their beloved children. These rules act as a thread through generations, knitting together people of all times who follow them.

*"Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" (Deuteronomy 4: 6)*

A common theme that Jesus preaches is the perseverance of morals despite the hate you may receive for it. One example is preaching a pro-life message in the midst of what can seem like a hateful, pro-death culture. The passage from Deuteronomy preaches a reassuring, hopeful message that helps us understand what Jesus meant. Deuteronomy says that at times, preaching a message of good will earn recognition. "When [people] hear all these statutes, [they] will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Jesus' teaching of keeping laws in the face of hardship builds on Deuteronomy's message about the just finding reward. Sometimes when we do good, we encounter hardship and other times, we receive recognition. Either way, our hope is that good will come.

Jack Zimmerman '16

Jimmy Reddy '16

**Thursday, March 27:** Thursday of the Third Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032714.cfm>

First Reading: Jeremiah 7:23-28

Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

In the reading from Jeremiah, God promises protection to his people who follow him and keep the commandments. But, the people in the story did not follow God. Instead they chose to walk their own way without God. As Jeremiah says, they “turned their backs and not their faces toward (God).” The Lord goes on to speak to Jeremiah, saying that he will preach and preach and the people won’t listen to him and that his efforts will fail.

Who are we without God? We are doing nothing good without God in our lives because God is good. God gave us free will, so this gives us the ability to choose our own path. In preparing for the passion of Christ and Easter, let us ask ourselves: are we going backwards or forwards? Are we living everyday to become better people? If not, where can we go to move closer to God? Because ultimately, God helps us progress and as humans it’s our choice whether or not we let God into our lives to help us change for the better.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of driving out demons. He preaches to the crowd, telling them that he drives out the demons not by Beelzebub, but through the kingdom of God.

During the season of Lent, we are preparing for Jesus’ glorious Resurrection. Therefore, we can use this passage as a reminder to drive out our own personal “demons” and be ready when the time comes. We need to reflect on our lives and ask ourselves some of the following questions: Have I tried to improve myself and my school during this season of Lent? Have I been making an effort to be a man for others? Have I been praying and asking for guidance?

It is important that we do indeed ask for help from God during this process. When we let God in, he stays with us and directs us in our preparation.

Nick Scheer ‘16

Jeff Cooley ‘16

**Friday, March 28:** Friday of the Third Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032814.cfm>

First Reading: Hosea 14:2-10

Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

In Hosea, the Lord talks about the healing and flourishing that awaits his people Israel. This reminds me of a quote that says, "God does not get beaten in generosity." This means that no matter how much you give, God will always give you more. God will do anything to help us on the right path toward living a good Christian life. He talks about all these beautiful things growing and how they are guided and started through his hand. I see God doing work in my life blessing with me and guiding in the right direction. God watches over me and makes sure that I am growing the way that I am supposed to everyday. I just remember as long as I am doing God's will, then I will be fine.

In today's Gospel, a scribe confronts Jesus and asks him about the Ten Commandments. He replies, "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, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This phrase sticks out to me as it calls us to drop the distractions of our daily lives that draw us away from God, moving our attention to loving God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. Many of us find it hard to dedicate our thoughts, words, and actions to God, but this part of Mark's gospel can provide as a deeper wake-up call to God's grace and to return our attention to God. During this Lent, I hope that many find the same inspiration in Scripture to grow closer to Jesus through the actions of our daily lives and to pursue that hunger of growing closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Sergio Goodwin '16

Mario Thomallari '16

**Saturday, March 29:** Saturday of the Third Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032914.cfm>

First Reading: Hosea 6:1-6

Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

The reading from Hosea says, “As surely as the sun rises he will appear.” In this passage we find out a lot about God and how he works not only for us, but through us. We can fully picture, by reading these words from Hosea, that he is always with us. To rephrase what Hosea points out: whenever the sun rises, God is at our side and will be forever.

You can interpret this two different ways. On one hand, God made creation and he made the sun, one of the most important things to humankind. If you slow down for just a minute out of your day and think of that crazy fiery ball of flames and what it does for us on this earth, you may learn to appreciate all God did and continues to do for us. So, this first way you could interpret this line is that God literally appears to us whenever we think of the sun. He made it for us and it reminds us of him.

The second way you could interpret this passage from Hosea is that every morning when you wake up, no matter how bad of a mood you’re in, no matter how early you had to get up, no matter where you have to go or what you have to do that day, and no matter how much stuff is on your mind, God is there.

People often forget God’s presence and overlook the fact that he is always there for us. If you are in a time of need or trouble or hurt, emotionally or even physically, you can turn to God, and he will help you. Whether it’s taking away your pain or even just pointing you in the right direction, God will never leave you because that’s how much he loves you. Personally, when I read this I get that feeling deep inside that there truly is a Being bigger and more unimaginable than anything that loves us so, so, so, much. Hosea puts this love into these perfect words and that is why I am sharing them with you today. As we go through Lent, always remember that God loves you—no matter what—and he will always be at your side so if you are ever in any uncomfortable or difficult situations, he will save you. *“As surely as the sun rises, he will appear.”*

Jack Casey ‘16

Roman Livingston ‘16



**Praying Through Lent 2014**  
**The Fourth Week of Lent**  
**March 30 - April 5**

St. Louis University High School

## THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

March 30 - April 5

With this week, we begin the second part of Lent. We ask more and more deeply to be with and like Jesus. We desire to celebrate the approaching mystery of our salvation with greater freedom and greater joy.

Each day's gospel will now be from the Gospel according to John. We can't avoid the feeling of being in a courtroom for a grand trial. There are "witnesses" and "testimony." It is a battle between the forces of Darkness and the Light. The opposition to Jesus mounts. It is inevitable that he will be killed. But, we know that the ultimate Judgment in the trial is against Sin and Death. We grow in gratitude and grace as we experience more deeply that this is all "for me."

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



**Sunday, March 30:** Fourth Sunday of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/033014.cfm>

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel: John 8:1-11

Obviously, the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Lent touch upon blindness, but the underlying question is “What causes blindness to the light of Christ?”

In the first book of Samuel, people are preoccupied with appearance. In the gospel according to John, the parents of the blind man are afraid of the likely repercussions for speaking the truth. The Pharisees are obsessed with holding onto their power and influence. Any perceived threat is to be squashed.

How about us? What are the ways in which we occupy ourselves with appearances? Are we afraid of speaking the truth? Do we hold tight to any perceived power?

The blind man, on the other hand, is able to break through any barriers with God’s help. When asked by Jesus, the blind man responds, “I do believe, Lord.”

*Jesus, help us to believe that you are the light of the world and give us the courage to live out this belief in our daily lives.*

Mr. Rob Garavaglia '94  
Theology Department Chair

**Monday, March 31:** Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/033114.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 65:17-21

Gospel: John 4:43-54

Today begins a semi-continuous reading of the Gospel of John. The organizers of the Roman Catholic Lectionary for Mass wanted to present a healthy portion of the fourth Gospel, to help us appreciate its richness. The sequence of texts also helps us to focus on the person of Jesus and his mission.

John's Gospel is at once profound and elegantly simple. From its opening words announcing the Word made flesh, to the accounts of the signs of Jesus (such as today's cure of a royal official's son), to the three great scrutiny Gospels used in the rite of adult initiation, to the majestic Passion Narrative, the fourth Gospel offers us a portrait of Jesus uniquely different from those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

The Gospel, in its simplest terms, shows us how Jesus has come to reveal the Father. In our Lenten selections, that mission is presented in great dialogues between Jesus and his opponents.

(The term "Jews," used throughout these dialogues, reflects hostility between Christians and the Jewish synagogue near the end of the first century, not meant to foster anti-Semitic reading of the text into our time.)

We'll hear those dialogues over the next two weeks, cast in a kind of courtroom drama. Jesus testifies to his identity and mission. His opponents are frustrated as Jesus presents evidence of the works he has performed in doing his Father's will. He calls Abraham as a witness and claims identity with God in the divine name, I am.

In a season that asks us to scrutinize our Christian identity in preparation for the celebration of baptism and renewal of our commitment to Christ, John's Gospel is an ideal companion for prayer and reflection.

*Word Made Flesh, show us the Father. May we accept your truth and come to have life in you! Amen.*

Greg Friedman, O.F.M.

*Post taken from Friedman's Lent With the Saints: Daily Meditations.*



**Tuesday, April 1:** Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040114.cfm>

First Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Gospel: John 5:1-16

Ezekiel offers a big metaphor for Jesus. As Ezekiel wades through the water, an angel guides him. As the angel uses a measuring cord to measure the water, Ezekiel sinks lower and lower until he must swim. I see this as a metaphor for God's love. As a child, we experience God's love and compassion at a very low level, for we do not fully understand who God is or what he is like. As we grow in our relationship with God, His love and our love for him become very deep connections. This also shows that, as the water gets deeper, our awareness of God's love for us deepens. There is no way to find an end to God's love, just like how the angel continued to measure and measure until Ezekiel could not wade. After wading through the water, he sees hundreds of trees along the riverbank. The angel tells Ezekiel that the water is very fruitful for the trees and animals that live along the river. I see this water as God's love for the human race. Whoever comes to the waters of His love can have life in Him.

Dan Hirlinger '16

In the Gospel, Jesus sends us several important messages. Most obviously, he extends an invitation to us to perform good works and, in particular, to care for the ill when they are sick. By caring for an old, frail man who has been ill for 38 years, Jesus encourages us to not be afraid to care for the sick, even if they may appear incurable or gross. Such encouragement allows us to grow closer to Jesus during these Lenten days by promoting acts of self-sacrifice to others. By curing the sick, we act in Jesus' name and dedicate a good deed to God and do as Jesus has taught us in the Scriptures. Jesus also teaches us not to get caught up in the particular laws of the Sabbath (such as those not allowing us to do work on Sabbath). In other words, he is saying that we should never use the Sabbath rule about work as an excuse not to do good for another. We should never let the law get in the way of doing what is right.

Jerry Duggan '16

**Wednesday, April 2:** Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040214.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 49:8-15

Gospel: John 5:17-30

*“Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for what he does, the Son will do also.”*

Community is one of the most important aspects of Church. Promotion of the role of the community gathered was one of the major outcomes of Vatican II and is one of my favorite parts about going to Mass. Community is not only there for support and companionship but to help us grow closer to God. We can learn so many things from our neighbors and how faith works in their life that it most likely brings us closer to God just by spending time with them.

In the Scripture today, we see that even Jesus cannot operate by himself, except for what God has done before him. As a community, we need each other to operate, or else we will grow stale in our faith. As a community of believers our ultimate strength comes from the Father. Just as Jesus looked to the Father for his strength, we follow in his path, so that we live our lives with Jesus as our example.

Often times in life we feel that we are in control of all things. We are happy and no one can touch us, but eventually tragedy or sadness strikes. We realize we are no longer in control. Actually, we are never in control. In these times we need to let go and surrender to God. By surrendering to God, we become vulnerable, looking for answers. Most times there are no answers, and our best hope is to trust in God. Ultimately we know that he will take care of our every need.

God shows us his love through other people. Whether we are alone praying and meditating, singing at mass, or meeting with parishioners, we are always a community—a community that helps each other find and connect to God.

Tim Nile '16

Austin Klarsch '16

**Thursday, April 3:** Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040314.cfm>

First Reading: Exodus 32: 7-14

Gospel: John 5: 31-47

The first reading today is all about second chances. God is ready to destroy the Israelites for betraying him, but Moses manages to persuade God to give them a second chance. This is exactly what we are called to do for those in our community. Whenever we feel hurt by somebody, we are called to forgive, just as Jesus told us to forgive “not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Not only are we called to forgive others of their wrongdoing and to give them second (and even seventy-seventh) chances, but we are also called to be peacemakers like Moses. In forgiving and helping others to forgive, we can all lead our community to become more peaceful, hopeful, and open to God’s forgiveness as well as others.

In the gospel, Jesus calls the Pharisees out on their hypocrisy, pointing out how they claim to believe in Moses and God, but ignore the signs that these figures gave that Jesus was the messiah.

However, there is a lesson for us as well: the Pharisees, as depicted in the Gospels, are a good example of a group who wasn’t “open to growth.” Anything beyond the Scriptures and word of Moses wasn’t valid to them, even though clues left in the Scripture and by Moses pointed to this next step in Jesus.

By seeing the signs, we can learn always to be open to growth both in our lives and in the Church, no matter how different or difficult it may become.

Joseph Schultz ‘16

Chris Weingart ‘16

**Friday, April 4:** Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040414.cfm>

First Reading: Wisdom 2:1A, 12-22

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

As Holy Week approaches, the readings for today focus on violence and how Jesus is misunderstood. In our first reading, from the Book of Wisdom, the Just One is mistreated but remains patient and gentle. Even through the injustices he experiences, he stays calm and does not retaliate. It is through this gentleness and patience that we should imitate Our Lord and strive to be just in our ways even in the face of adversity. Although we might face a moral battle between choosing to be the persecuted or the persecutor, it is up to us to respond to God's eternal calling—even if it means enduring pain and suffering. We must be willing to bear the pain of injustice. Through Jesus' inconceivable amount of suffering, we are called to give ourselves completely to him, and in the process, grow closer to him.

This week's Gospel reminds us that we must always be strong, even in the face of ridicule and judgment. As Jesus was preaching in the Temple during the Jewish Festival of Booths, he was in great danger of being arrested for blasphemy. His critics claimed that he could not be the Messiah because they knew where he came from, and it was believed that no one could know where the Christ came from. In response, Jesus stated: "You know me and you know where I came from. Yet I have not come of my own accord: but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I have my being from him and it was he who sent me." Soon, we will be remembering Jesus' death on the cross, through which He displayed the ultimate strength throughout extreme ridicule.

Matthew Jansen '16

Daniel Lally '16

**Saturday, April 5:** Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040514.cfm>

First Reading: Jeremiah 11:18-20

Gospel: John 7:40-53

When given the opportunity to write a Lenten reflection, I looked for this day and found it still available. I selected this date because it has loomed large in many of the minds of my colleagues, volunteers, and my own: it's our 45<sup>th</sup> annual Cashbah.

I am deeply moved and humbled by the dedication of the individuals who serve to make the event a success. I see God in the seemingly endless preparations and mounds of minutiae. I witness His heart and passion for our young men in the way in which the volunteer moms, in particular, go about their work.

Holding an event such as Cashbah and raising money are part of my faith walk. I have been in fundraising for a long time, and I know I cannot do these things alone...I must trust in Him to work through His people and know, by faith, that He will provide.

Trusting and knowing aren't always easy, though. The responsorial psalm today is "Oh Lord, my God, in you I take refuge," based on Psalm 7. Psalm 7 is much like Psalm 91, which I recite to myself when I'm feeling overwhelmed or lacking in faith. "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust,'" verses 1 and 2. "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart," verse 4.

Divergent images, a fortress and feathers. Yet both describe the refuge of our God. Dwell inside the fortress, a strong shelter against attack. Nestle in His feathers, be taken up under His wing, and find rest. Trust and know.

Mrs. Melissa Jones, CFRE  
Director of Advancement



# Praying Through Lent 2014

## The Fifth Week of Lent

### April 6 - 12

# St. Louis University High School

## THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

April 6-12

This week is filled with drama. We continue to prepare ourselves to be open to God's graces. We continue to try to choose Lent, to act Lent, in very concrete ways. We are examining our patterns and realigning our priorities. Our hearts are being renewed, as we experience God's reconciling love and beg for the gift of healing.

All this is wonderfully supported by the drama of the daily liturgies. We begin with the raising of Lazarus (and we may celebrate Scrutinies. During the week, we have powerful stories about the accusation against Susanna, a healing image lifted up in the desert, the three faithful witnesses who survive the fiery furnace, the account of God's covenant with Abram, Jeremiah's fearful trust in the midst of the plot against him, and Ezekiel's incredible vision of restoration of the nation - that God will make a new and everlasting covenant.

Each of these readings is matched with a gospel from John. We hear about witnesses and testimony and judgment, about his being lifted up (on the cross and in glory), about the freedom/liberation he has come to bring, about himself as the fulfillment of God's covenant, the new and everlasting covenant. And, we can feel the opposition rising against him. And we grow in devotion, and grace, as we realize that it is all "for me."

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



**Sunday, April 6:** The Fifth Sunday of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040614.cfm>

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14

Second Reading: Romans 8:8-11

Gospel: John 11:1-45

**Passion Narrative**

He turns once more to face Jerusalem,  
where, days before, the holy took up stones.  
*Let us also go, that we may die with Him,*

says Thomas, future skeptic—yes, the same  
who'll probe His later wounds in search of bone.  
For now, he turns to face Jerusalem.

They follow. Jesus leads them to the tomb.  
*Oh, Lazarus, he weeps. Where he is gone*  
*let me go, too, that I may die with him.*

The miracle's mere practice triduum:  
The tomb reminds Him too much of His own.  
He turns once more to face Jerusalem

while Thomas, Lazarus and the rest, in grim  
voices, swear, *I'll not leave Him alone.*  
*Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*

Does he hear all that we now hear in them—  
their fickle treacheries (and ours) foreknown?  
He turns once more to face Jerusalem.  
Let us also go, that we may die with Him.

—Mr. Terry Quinn  
English Department



## Monday, April 7: Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040714.cfm>

First Reading: Daniel 13:1-14, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62

Gospel: John 8:1-11

Today's readings about Suzanna, a woman who was falsely accused of adultery, deals with the complex nature of sin: our propensity towards sin that is intensified by our failure to announce it, the temptation to sin to avoid worldly and practical consequences, and finally, that even those we look up to as political and worldly leaders should not be thought of to be beyond sin.

In the beginning of the excerpt, the judges succumb to their base desires and fail to take any necessary steps to overcome their sin. The powerful element to this passage is that it does not condemn the men for their initial sinful desire, but because they did not act to resist that desire. It is not that they were initially enamored by Susanna, but because they "suppressed their consciences" that they are morally blameworthy. They refuse to "allow their eyes to look up to heaven" to pray, and, in the missing verses, they refuse to speak aloud these thoughts to one another. We all face the temptation to sin, it is part of our human nature, but this passage gives us two very practical ways to overcome this desire – to bring it to God in prayer and to bring it, humbly, to the community. The judges failed to do either of these things, and were enveloped by their sinful desire.

In addition to this practical advice to avoid sin, the passage also illustrates the real-world temptation to sin to avoid practical consequences. Susanna is faced with this choice: either to submit to the men's desire and sin or to refuse and face execution. Susanna has no desire to sin, but also has the human desire to avoid consequences. When faced with her choice, however, she chooses to save her soul rather than her life. It is this same idea that inspires us to admire martyrs – those who would not yield to the pressures of the world. We all often face this same choice, although it is usually less drastic. There may be real-world consequences to our resisting sin – we may be ostracized or excluded from a group we were once close to; we may be made fun of; we may just simply feel tired and worn-down in our efforts to live a good life. Susanna teaches us though, that our responsibility is to resist these urges and to trust in the Lord.

Beyond these personal lessons on resisting sin, the passage also shows us that nobody is above sin, even if they are recognized as an authority. The crowd believed the word of the judges "since they were elders and judges of the people." But, Daniel heroically decides to speak truth to power – to recognize the sinful deeds of people who were looked at as leaders. There were many reasons that Daniel could have used to justify why he should remain silent. For one, he was a "young man" in the crowd – a nobody – who was about to challenge the respected elders of the community. I imagine him wondering, "How seriously will I be taken?" Yet, he rebukes them for their deed, valuing the merits of their soul over their merits in life. He decided that regardless of the many societal reasons to stay silent, God calls all of us to speak out against injustice.

Daniel's courage in this story inspires me to speak against injustice in whatever capacity it is manifested, even when I am intimidated. From small instances of unfairness in our own lives, to raising awareness of global social structures that keep people marginalized and oppressed, God is calling each of us to be a light in the darkness. During this Lenten season, it is especially important to stand up against injustice and to work for the kingdom of heaven on earth that Christ stood for.

Mr. Scott Hessel, English Department & ASC Volunteer

## **Tuesday, April 8: Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040814.cfm>

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

Gospel: John 8:21-30

*But with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert?"*

Patience is one of those virtues that I have always wanted and yet always lacked. I want to be good at waiting, but it is not in my nature. In the reading from Numbers today, the Israelites have lost all their patience wandering through the desert, waiting for what God and Moses promised – delivery to the Promised Land. I can only imagine that if I were stuck in the desert without bread or water, I, too, would grow impatient quite quickly. Lent is the Church's time to test our patience. We are asked to wait, to sacrifice, to repent, even to feel uncomfortable. The season of Lent challenges us to make changes and it is often distressing when we do not see the results of these changes (be they spiritual, emotional, or physical) immediately.

At first encounter, the Examen can be an awkward two minutes that gnaws at your patience when you are forced to sit with your own thoughts every afternoon. It is only once this prayer becomes an integral part of your school day that you begin to sense its power on your daily spiritual life. In a similar way, let us use this time to appreciate our journey of growth and change during Lent, but also to look forward to the future discomfort and uncertainty that comes with making our way towards who God has called us to be. May He grant us the patience to allow Him to work though and for us.

*"Above all, trust in the slow work for God...that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete" – Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ*

Ms. Tracy Lyons  
Math Department

**Wednesday, April 9:** Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040914.cfm>

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

Gospel: John 8:31-42

The first reading begins in the Book of Daniel with three subjects of King Nebuchadnezzar. This reading is very fitting for this fifth week of Lent for its call to take up Jesus' cross and recognize him as the true God. Perhaps the line that captures both ideas is the third to last that describes the virtuous decision of the three men.

"They disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God." Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we must refuse to worship any other god. In our case, this god is what we have given up for Lent. Have you worshipped this god when you vowed to give it up, whether it is chocolate, Twitter, or even a phone? We are simply challenged to give up a small "god" while Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were challenged to give up their life.

Just reflect on the times when you have failed to resist this god. If you cannot choose God in small matters, how do you expect to be able to choose God when a greater challenge comes? Though just over a week of Lent is left, focus on choosing God. Lent is a time for us to prepare for challenges that we will encounter through our lives. Every time you deny the false god like the three subjects, you grow a little bit closer to Christ. A final part of the reading to notice is that King Nebuchadnezzar saw four people being burned, not just three. In the same way, Jesus will join us in our fight against the devil if we take the one step to deny evil. Just remember, our minute inconveniences will never compare to the suffering experienced in the Paschal Mystery.

Alex Wang '16

Chris Kreienkamp '16

## Thursday, April 10: Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041014.cfm>

First Reading: Genesis 17:3-9

Gospel: John 8:51-59

"I will give you the land of your sojourning."

"If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

Today's readings make bold promises. What do they mean?

Does an ancient promise made to Abram mean we can count on reaching our own "land" of security and plenty in this lifetime? Do Jesus' words mean that our experience of death—something that feels so real and final to us when we lose a loved one—is just an illusion, that it hasn't really touched them and won't touch us as long as we "believe?"

No.

I had a philosophy professor in college Seminary who loved the word *contingent*. He punched the word out every time he used it in class as if he were angry about something, literally spitting it out sometimes. I was a reasonably verbal kid, but the term didn't move me much. I had a vague notion that it meant "conditional," but at the age of 20 I didn't see what the fuss was all about.

At 55, I see his point. *Contingent* describes the vulnerability of our flesh to cancer, gunfire and tornadoes. Our hearts to the calloused hands of unfaithful lovers. Our minds to the assault of lies and distractions. This vulnerability is real. Faith will not save us from it and God didn't promise that it would.

The clue to what God *is* promising can be found in Jesus' response to the Pharisees who, we must remember, are offended because Jesus is challenging their claim to *control of reality* through the authority of the law. That is why they had him killed in the end.

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing."

It's as if he is saying: "Don't you see? I'm not *competing* with you for power and prestige. Can't you guys forget about *yourselves* for a minute and put your hearts on *others*?"

Which is to say on Love?

Which is to say on God?"

Lent is a time to meditate on how Jesus' challenge to the Pharisees applies to us.

God's Easter promise is that if we surrender control before life's contingencies, accepting even our vulnerability before death in the service of Love, we are making it possible for our descendants to enter a land more fulfilling than any we had longed for. And, in a way we can understand only by faith, somehow we will all be there together.

Mr. Jim Linhares

Assistant Principal for Mission

**Friday, April 11:** Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041114.cfm>

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:10-13

Gospel: John 10:31-42

In today's first reading, we encounter a different kind of Lenten message. Jeremiah describes whisperings of his own friends who are distancing themselves from what he is asking of them. There are many that would like to see Jeremiah denounced, and they circle like vultures waiting for him to make a mistake. But instead of retaliation, Jeremiah shows us a model of complete faith in the Lord God.

Even today, it can seem like the Church is under constant scrutiny and examination. While it is tempting to be small and avoid any confrontation, Jeremiah's example of faith serves as inspiration for us to stand up for what we believe in and demonstrate our faith in the promises of Christ. We have faith that we will receive strength to help us through the times that test our will and determination.

We must also remind ourselves that we will be rewarded for our faith in Jesus Christ. Heed Jeremiah's call in these closing days of Lent and pray for the faith to place your struggles in God's hands. With this model, we can all strive to be better Christians to inspire those around us.

Derek Rieke '16

Manny de Legaretta '16

**Saturday, April 12:** Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041214.cfm>

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:21-28

Gospel: John 11:45-56

In today's reading from Ezekiel, God does something for his people that he's done quite a bit before: He makes them a promise. This time, that promise is to bring all of the Israelites scattered across the world back to God Himself in one unified nation. And this isn't just some relocation plan that God's putting forward here. In that kingdom, everyone will be free of sin and all that other garbage that sin brings along. Wouldn't that be a place to see? The greatest part of that promise is that it extends to everybody—you, myself, and all of us. Unfortunately, there's a catch. We can't go there just yet. More specifically, we aren't ready. We need to prepare if we want to enter God's kingdom.

This brings us to where we are now: Lent. Most people seem to see Lent as a time of bleakness and sorrow. They are somewhat right. Lent isn't that shallow, though. It is the time we must take for ourselves to refine our souls in preparation for Christ's return, and refinement requires work.

Here's an analogy. How do you create a fine sword? You thrust it into a roaring fire and hammer it against a block of iron. How do you make a beautiful statue? You pound off bits of rock with a sharp blade. Both of those sound unpleasant, don't they? Now, how do you refine a soul? Prayer alone isn't enough. Making ourselves ready for Christ requires some giving and some work on our part. In Lent, we fast. Although it can be unpleasant, it helps us recognize that we don't need a lot of the things we think we do, and we do need a lot of the things we disregard. Keep that in mind, and you, too, will be on the road of preparation.

Paul Daues '16



**Praying Through Lent 2014**  
**Holy Week, The Easter Triduum, Easter**  
**April 13 - 20**

St. Louis University High School

## HOLY WEEK: THE FIRST FOUR DAYS

April 13-16

We enter into a week made “holy” forever by the self-surrendering love of Jesus - for us all. All week, we remember how he loved us. Whatever we do, no matter how busy or “distracted” we might be, we can let the power of this week be in the background of our daily reflections. He entered into our life - with its profound joys and its punishing evils - that we might never experience those struggles alone. So no matter what we experience this week, we can let it become a “holy” week, letting it all be touched by the graces of this week. From the humble, yet triumphant, entry into Jerusalem, to our standing together at the foot of his cross, this can be a week which helps us bring all of the elements of our lives, all our experiences of sin and death, into the font of his redeeming, liberating death resurrection.

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*





## Sunday, April 13: Palm Sunday

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041314.cfm>

Palm Procession: Matthew 21:1-11

First Reading: Isaiah 50: 4-7

Second Reading: Philippians 2: 6-11

Gospel: Matthew 26: 14-27: 66

*“Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2: 6-8)*

Great literature both extends its hand in gentle invitation and presents to the reader no shortage of richness or complexity. Today’s reading from Philippians is such a piece of literature.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned through the last four years of my graduate studies, it is that this is one of those *really* important passages of the New Testament. The passage, known as the Christ hymn, has been referenced again and again in my classes. It’s truly one of the jewels from the New Testament canon.

Its comment on humility is a beautiful element that might be rich for our imagination and reflection here today. How are we at SLUH with humility? Almost daily, I try to remind myself that I am but a piece of a much bigger plan. That I am no better than anyone else because I went to or work at SLUH. My prayers are often prayers in search of humility and prayers expressing my gratitude for the life I have been given, a life that I hope is aimed at the service of others. It is not easy or comfortable to encounter this need for humility in my own prayer life.

In today’s second reading, we have Christ, the eternally begotten Son of God, willingly emptying himself to acquire the likeness of a human. He humbled himself to the point of death by extreme means. Not only does Christ set the example *par excellence* of humility, but also he became man in order to help carry us home, back to the loving arms of the Father.

*Lord Jesus, when you walked the earth, your humility obscured your Kingship. Your meekness confused the arrogant, hindering them from grasping your purpose, your nobleness attending to the destitute. Teach me to model after your eminence, to subject my human nature to humility. Grant me with a natural inclination to never view myself greater than anyone. Banish all lingering sparks of self-importance that could elevate me greater than you. Let my heart always imitate your humility. Amen.*

Mr. Brian Gilmore '02

Campus Ministry and Theology Department

## **Monday, April 14:** Monday of Holy Week

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041414.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-7

Gospel: John 12:1-11

To me, today's first reading from Isaiah is all about justice - what God's version of justice is and how God brings about justice. First, what is God's version of justice? God's justice is full of mercy. It's not a punitive justice with shouting and crying out; but rather it's a restorative one, a personal justice. That is comforting to me to know that in my humanity, God is not reprimanding me, instilling guilt in me; but rather God is forgiving - and guides me to the good in a gentle way.

But how does God bring about justice? - I think it's through empowerment. "I have called **you** for the victory of justice." That's me God has called. That's you who has been called. That's all of us. We are called to first recognize that we have been formed by God and then secondly to live just lives, especially concerned with those who struggle. The first step of recognizing that our formation is from God is very important - that reminds us that we are to live justly, as God does - in a merciful, non-punitive way. If God does not judge me harshly or seek to punish me for my mistakes, who am I to do that to another?

So, for me, as Holy Week begins, I remind myself that I am created in God's image and I should strive to lead a life of mercy.

Mr. Nick Ehlman '99

Campus Ministry and Math Department

**Tuesday, April 15:** Tuesday of Holy Week

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041514.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 49: 1-6

Gospel: John 13: 21-33, 36-38

*“Yet my reward is with the LORD, my recompense is with my God.”*

Today’s Gospel asks us to consider the primacy of Jesus in our lives. The proclamation of the eventual betrayals by Judas and Simon Peter ask us to think about what we are focused on. Is it ourselves, or is it Jesus? There is a tendency to dwell on the drama of these eventual betrayals instead of the Jesus’ words. He says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he glorify him at once.” These words highlight the fact God and Jesus are one, and that Jesus’ actions glorify a God that loves us so much. How can a God that does such things for us and loves us in such a way not be constantly be a part of our thoughts, words and actions? It is because we are human just like Judas and Simon Peter, and doing such things is not easy. Much like Simon Peter many of us claim that we would lay down our lives for the Lord, but when tested we often act in a much different manner. Holy Week challenges us to regain our focus, and turn our thoughts, words, and actions towards Jesus and his ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross.

Mr. Shane Monaghan

Campus Ministry, History Department, and ASC Volunteer

**Wednesday, April 16:** Wednesday of Holy Week

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041614.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9A

Gospel: Matthew 26:14-25

Thirty pieces of silver

Thirty pieces of silver

Thirty pieces of silver

Judas accepted thirty pieces of silver to hand you over, Jesus, to betray you. I do not know how much money that would be today but I know I would never have done that to you. I know I will not do that to you.

Thirty pieces of silver

But as Lent draws to a close, as our community gathers in prayer to mark this Holy Week, as we prepare to enter the Triduum, as I keep my distance from Judas, can I at least be honest with myself and with you about the smaller ways I betray you, Jesus? We both know it is a lot subtler than thirty pieces of silver for me. Please help me to not hand you over, to not dismiss you today. Please help me to truly dedicate my thoughts, words and actions to you today.

Amen.

Ms. Meg Beugg  
Campus Ministry

## HOLY WEEK: THE EASTER TRIDUUM

April 17-19

Our long journey to the font culminates in the three days that make up the Easter Triduum. These three days draw us into the mystery of our salvation.

How do we prepare for these holy days? By taking just a few minutes each day to understand the liturgies we will participate in during Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Visit the sites below and read them ahead of time - or out loud at the family dinner table before you go. It will help better understand the rites and symbols we will see. Or print off the “printable” versions at the top of the linked page and carry it with you to Church. It will give each of the rituals so much more meaning.

Whatever we are doing these days, these prayers and resources can help us be open to the graces the day offers. Each morning, we can pause to acknowledge the meaning of the day ahead. Each night, we can give thanks.

Even if we can't celebrate these days liturgically, we can reflect upon the symbols and rituals, and let the prayers of the liturgies draw us in. All, that we might know the depth of the love being offered us, and power of the gift of life won for us.

### **Holy Thursday:**

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/prep-holythursday.html>

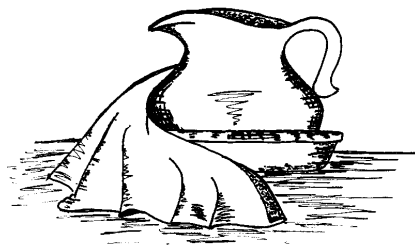
### **Good Friday:**

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/prep-goodfriday.html>

### **Holy Saturday:**

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/prep-eastervigil.html>

*(Description taken from Creighton University's Online Collaborative Ministries)*



## Thursday, April 17: Mass of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday)

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041714.cfm>

First Reading: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Gospel: John 13:1-15

There is an abundance of symbolism in the events of Holy Thursday. These symbols of the Last Supper have inspired great works of art and literature, such as the stained glass window in Chartres cathedral, Leonardo's Last Supper (below), and the meditation called Holy Thursday by the French novelist François Mauriac.

In John's Gospel, we hear Jesus say, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you." John's gospel and the Holy Thursday Mass in general stress the importance Jesus puts on the humility of service and the need for cleansing with water, a symbol of baptism.

The most vivid modern day image that comes to mind when reading this passage is that of Pope Francis washing the feet of inmates at Casal Del Marmo Jail just a couple short weeks after being inaugurated in 2013. Two young women were among 12 people whose feet Pope Francis washed and kissed at a traditional Holy Thursday ceremony. Just as Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent him," Pope Francis declared to the inmates to "Help one another. This is what Jesus teaches us. This is what I do. And I do it with my heart. I do this with my heart because it is my duty. As a priest and bishop, I must be at your service."

I was personally touched by Pope Francis' gesture. The washing of the feet ritual is a ceremony that has been etched in my mind since early childhood. Though I have never been a participant in the ceremony, I can imagine the sheer awe that those young people felt as Pope Francis washed their feet, just as the disciples probably felt with Jesus. Pope Francis showed humility and compassion and set a clear example for the way all human beings should be treated: Gentile or Jew, Servant or Free, Woman or Man.

Mrs. Simonie Anzalone

Campus Ministry and Fine Arts Department



**Friday, April 18: Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)**

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041814.cfm>

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53: 12

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Gospel: John 18:1-19:42

*Even as many were amazed at him so marred was his look beyond human semblance and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man ... He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem... Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured... Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away."*

Sometimes, the conclusion to readings from Holy Scripture comes to me as a shock. *The Word of the Lord*. This is one of those times. Marred beyond human semblance. Spurned. Avoided. Held in no esteem. Harshly treated. Like a lamb led to the slaughter. The Word of the Lord?

Yet, indeed, Tradition has passed to us Isaiah's words, read each year on this day. Each year the liturgy calls us back in to this moment. Today's readings force us to confront a squeamish, difficult reality. The Christian faith is a faith made possible by the worst kind of evil, one that cannot be avoided. Yet, Jesus looked evil squarely in the eye and said that it would not have the final word. But that's skipping ahead a few days.

Even now, God does not abandon us in our time of need. I truly believe that God was with Jesus on that bloody cross, even if Jesus had any moments of doubt. I think of the story of the footprints in the sand, where God carries us during our darkest days. I think of some of the darkest moments in my own life. What is it that holds us up during these moments? What is it that held Jesus on that cross? It was the love of God, poured out for us so that we may make our way back home and find life eternal.

In closing, I'd like to call our attention to today's psalm. *Father, into your hands I commend my spirit*. Jesus trusted and submitted his will to God's own. What an example of trust in the face of horror. What an example of faith. *This* truly is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God, indeed.

Mr. Brian Gilmore '02

Campus Ministry and Theology Department

## Saturday, April 19: Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter (Holy Saturday)

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041914.cfm>

When I think about Holy Saturday, I consider how quiet and still the day is. The previous day's events seem to hang in the air and I often sit and wonder what the disciples probably wondered: "Did this really just happen? Are we now alone? What was all of this about? What did I sign on to?" And yet, I can always sense something on the horizon when I watch silently at the beginning of the Easter Vigil, as the solitary Easter candlelight processes forward, piercing the darkness of the worship space. It is this light of Christ, I believe, that pierces the darkness and fear within each one of us.

A couple of years ago, I came across a reflection on Holy Saturday by Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner. He suggests that Holy Saturday is not just the day between Good Friday and Easter, but a symbol of everyday life:

"Holy Saturday is a strange day, mysterious and silent . . . [It] is, as it were, a symbol of everyday life which is a mean between the abysmal terror of Good Friday and the exuberant joy of Easter. For ordinary life is also mostly in between the two, in the center which is also a transition and can only be this."

Rahner touches on something real here. We remain in between Good Friday and Easter; we endure moments of deep sorrow and celebrate moments of great joy throughout our lives. But, as he says, we do not simply remain in between; we move forward as pilgrims in transition, toward something much deeper. He goes on to say: "The Holy Saturday of our life must be the preparation for Easter, the persistent hope for the final glory of God." We do not simply remain caught in between sorrow and joy. We are hope-filled people who walk forward together in faith toward the *fullness* of joy. For St. Paul, this is the hope we receive at our baptism:

"We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, ***we too might live in newness of life.***" (Romans 6:4)

The readings for Easter Vigil illustrate this moving forward through salvation history, a history of humanity coming to know and dwell in the life of God. And they culminate in three words spoken by an angel: "Be not afraid." *Do not fear that the Good Fridays of your life or the darkness you experience are the final word.* The final word is the Word made flesh, "[who] is not here, for he has been raised just as he said . . . He is going before you to Galilee, there you will see him." (Matt 28:7) On this day, over the course of all our days, we make our way toward Galilee, toward Easter, with Christ who pierces our darkness.

Mr. Dan Finucane '06  
Campus Ministry and Theology Department



**Sunday, April 20:** The Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Sunday)

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/042014.cfm>

First Reading: Acts 10:34A, 37-43

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-4 OR 1 Corinthians 5:6B-8

Gospel: John 20:1-9

*The following text is adapted slightly from a homily given by Pope Francis on Saturday, March 30, 2013. It is adapted from the original context in which it was given, at the Easter Vigil in St. Peter's Basilica.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Gospel of this radiant day of Easter, we first meet the women who go to the tomb of Jesus with spices to anoint his body (cf. Lk 24:1-3). They go to perform an act of compassion, a traditional act of affection and love for a dear departed person, just as we would. They had followed Jesus, they had listened to his words, they had felt understood by him in their dignity and they had accompanied him to the very end, to Calvary and to the moment when he was taken down from the cross. We can imagine their feelings as they make their way to the tomb: a certain sadness, sorrow that Jesus had left them, he had died, his life had come to an end. Life would now go on as before. Yet the women continued to feel love, the love for Jesus which now led them to his tomb. But at this point, something completely new and unexpected happens, something which upsets their hearts and their plans, something which will upset their whole life: they see the stone removed from before the tomb, they draw near and they do not find the Lord's body. It is an event which leaves them perplexed, hesitant, full of questions: "What happened?", "What is the meaning of all this?" (cf. Lk 24:4).

Doesn't the same thing also happen to us when something completely new occurs in our everyday life? We stop short, we don't understand, we don't know what to do. Newness often makes us fearful, including the newness which God brings us, the newness which God asks of us. We are like the Apostles in the Gospel: often we would prefer to hold on to our own security, to stand in front of a tomb, to think about someone who has died, someone who ultimately lives on only as a memory, like the great historical figures from the past. We are afraid of God's surprises; we are afraid of God's surprises! He always surprises us!

Dear brothers and sisters, let us not be closed to the newness that God wants to bring into our lives! Are we often weary, disheartened and sad? Do we feel weighed down by

our sins? Do we think that we won't be able to cope? Let us not close our hearts, let us not lose confidence, let us never give up: there are no situations which God cannot change, there is no sin which he cannot forgive if only we open ourselves to him.

But let us return to the Gospel, to the women, and take one step further. They find the tomb empty, the body of Jesus is not there, something new has happened, but all this still doesn't tell them anything certain: it raises questions; it leaves them confused, without offering an answer. And suddenly there are two men in dazzling clothes who say: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; but has risen" (Lk 24:5-6). What was a simple act, done surely out of love – going to the tomb – has now turned into an event, a truly life-changing event. Nothing remains as it was before, not only in the lives of those women, but also in our own lives and in the history of mankind. Jesus is not dead, he has risen, he is alive! He does not simply return to life; rather, he is life itself, because he is the Son of God, the living God (cf. Num 14:21-28; Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10). Jesus no longer belongs to the past, but lives in the present and is projected towards the future; he is the everlasting "today" of God. This is how the newness of God appears to the women, the disciples and all of us: as victory over sin, evil and death, over everything that crushes life and makes it seem less human. And this is a message meant for me and for you, dear sister, dear brother. How often does Love have to tell us: Why do you look for the living among the dead? Our daily problems and worries can wrap us up in ourselves, in sadness and bitterness... and that is where death is. That is not the place to look for the One who is alive!

Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life! If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won't be disappointed. If following him seems difficult, don't be afraid, trust him, be confident that he is close to you, he is with you and he will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do.

There is one last little element that I would like to emphasize in the Gospel for this Easter. The women encounter the newness of God. Jesus has risen, he is alive! But faced with empty tomb and the two men in brilliant clothes, their first reaction is one of fear: "they were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground", Saint Luke tells us – they didn't even have courage to look. But when they hear the message of the Resurrection, they accept it in faith. And the two men in dazzling clothes tell them something of crucial importance: "Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee... And they remembered his words" (Lk 24:6,8). They are asked to remember their encounter with Jesus, to remember his words, his actions, his life; and it is precisely this loving remembrance of their experience with the Master that enables the women to master

their fear and to bring the message of the Resurrection to the Apostles and all the others (cf. Lk 24:9). To remember what God has done and continues to do for me, for us, to remember the road we have travelled; this is what opens our hearts to hope for the future. May we learn to remember everything that God has done in our lives.

On this radiant morning, let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary, who treasured all these events in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19,51) and ask the Lord to give us a share in his Resurrection. May he open us to the newness that transforms. May he make us men and women capable of remembering all that he has done in our own lives and in the history of our world. May he help us to feel his presence as the one who is alive and at work in our midst. And may he teach us each day not to look among the dead for the Living One.

Amen.

Pope Francis  
Bishop of Rome

