

**Holy Trinity
Catholic
Newman Center**



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**Lenten
Reflections**

Ash Wed. Feb. 17, -- Easter Sun. April 4, 2010

Lenten Observances

In Catholic liturgical and spiritual tradition, Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. This is accomplished through mass attendance itself, and by penitential practices such as fasting, almsgiving and intensive prayer. These are designed to foster conversion, reconciliation, purification, and healing with God, oneself and the community, especially for those preparing to celebrate the Easter Sacraments.

Abstinence from Meat

All Catholics who have reached their *fourteenth birthday* are bound to abstain entirely from meat on *Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent*.

Fasting

All Catholics between the ages of *eighteen and fifty-nine inclusive* are also bound to observe the law of fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This means limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Two other light meals, which together do not equal a full meal, may be taken during the day.

Dispensations from Abstinence and Fasting

Catholics are not to consider themselves lightly excused from the obligation to fast and/or abstain. However, Catholics who have a good reason not to abstain or fast are not bound by the law. Although not required, they are encouraged to substitute another penitential practice, prayer, or work of charity.

The obligation to do penance and to observe the appointed penitential seasons is a serious one. Those whose work or health would be impaired are excused from fast and abstinence. Individual conscience should decide proper cause for excuse. A more serious reason is required to excuse oneself from Ash Wednesday and Good Friday fast and abstinence.

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Easter Sunday April 4

Acts 10:34a,37-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

Once, my Youth Minister told me a phrase that has never left me. When reading these scriptures, this phrase came back to me like a dog playing fetch. “To err is human, to forgive is divine.” Divine, being of or relating to deity, or, in this case, God.

As Catholics, we know and understand God's superiority over us. That as humans, we're flawed and lacking in many ways. In contrast with God, who is so much more righteous and almighty. What makes him so almighty being that he heals and forgives each and every time. “To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.” It speaks, in the first reading, of all who believe. “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty...” We proclaim it every week in mass, because God is Divine. Heavenly divine, and as the second reading says, we must ask forgiveness and think to heaven. To think of above, if we hope to sit at the feet of God, with Christ at his right. Because that is the reason for everything we do, and the reason for everything He does. He sent His Son for our salvation, had him die for our sins, and today has resurrected him, for us. Each one of us. For when we believe, and when He forgives, we come that much closer to the eternal, inextinguishable love of God. In the Gospel of this Holy day, the other disciple goes into the tomb, he sees the empty burial clothes, and he believes. “For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.” We have the faith, and we believe that he has risen on this day. That all His trials and all His glory will save us with this final act. To err, is merely human. To forgive, is supremely divine.

Dear Friends of Holy Trinity Catholic Newman Center,

I hope this booklet finds you at peace and eager for the spiritual and personal growth God has awaiting you this Lent. While God is always calling us to turn to him in gratitude, prayer, and praise, Lent is a special time where we examine and open ourselves to even deeper conversion. Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days as a way of being strengthened for the journey ahead. We pray and fast for forty days to remind ourselves of what is really important: our need for God. We also pray and fast to ask pardon for past sins, to become more aware of our weakness, and in joyful expectation of the Paschal Mystery of our Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection. As we walk these days together, these Lenten reflections unite us in prayer as we allow our Lord to draw us closer to Him.

Thank you for all your prayers and support of our Northern Arizona University students in their walk of faith. As a thank you, and as a way to support your own journey of faith this Lent, the students have put together this collection of reflections based on the daily Mass readings during Lent. The reflections begin with Ash Wednesday and continue through the celebration of Easter Sunday. Our hope is that along with our usual Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, this booklet will offer you new insights regarding God and His infinite love for us.

I want to thank the many students who contributed to this booklet. Thank for using and sharing the talents that God has blessed you with. May God who has begun His good work in us, bring it to completion!

Peace,

Fr. Matt Lowry
Chaplain/Director

Saturday April 3

Ash Wednesday February 17

Genesis 1:26-31 Genesis 22:1-2,9,10-13,15-18

Exodus 14:15-15:1 Isaiah 54:5-14 *Isaiah 55:1-11

Romans 6:3-11 Baruch 3:9-15, 32 - 4:4 Ezekiel 36:16-17,18-28

*Romans 6:3-11

*Luke 24:1-12

Joel 2:12-18

2 Corinthians 5:20—6:2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Joel 2:12-18

This bible verse stood out to me because it was written similar to a psalm and I personally feel like reading psalms is the closest thing to singing for Christ and about Christ. Someone once told me that singing was like praying twice and that is how I felt when I read this beautiful passage. The description of Jesus is what stands out to me most in this passage. It says in lines 15-17, “For gracious and merciful is he/ Slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment.” It discusses that even though we should be pure, God will love us regardless of what we’ve done, as long as we ask for forgiveness. The act of fasting was brought up two times in this reading. This emphasizes the humility we should have towards Christ and that we should do as little as fast to thank him for his suffering on the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

When I first read this passage I was stirred by a sense of urgency to better represent the Christian faith. It is easy to fall into worldly possessions and ideals, when in fact we should be living to give to others, not to receive. Verse 21 says, “For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” To me, I feel responsible for spreading the word of God and his positive teachings to the world so that the death of the Lord will not go in vain. Jesus was the true Savior and he left us scripture to remind us that we are the hope for the church and that we should remain as Christ-like as possible.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

This powerful chapter in the bible has the most profound effect on me, perhaps because of that fact that I am a college student and that this lesson is one that I see kids my age struggle with. Being vain and prideful is one of the wicked ways that the devil leads us away from God. Matthew talks about the selfish ways of the world and that doing good deeds should be for the glory of God, not for personal glory.

Forgiveness. Not something talked about now-a-days. Not much of a surprise with everyone in a rush. It is pretty easy, once you realize our God and Savior did it for us. However, he has an advantage; he is not restricted by time (where did that social concept come from anyway. That should not stop us from forgiving and living for God. Let me tell you a story.

Buster has a short temper and a long memory, which does not help when you live in a small town. It does make for good town rivalries, though. When Buster started studying the Bible, he did not become a peace loving, long haired hippy. Buster actually started forgiving people less; he knew of the standards in the Bible. But now Buster had the standards in front of his eyes to compare with people on earth to great Biblical leaders. Buster thought everyone should be just like Jesus, or even at least like the lesser men such as David, Abraham, and Solomon. After all, even Jesus said Solomon was a great man to live up to. When someone did something wrong to Buster, he would have no patience for such behavior since it did not meet up to Jesus’ standards. This led Buster into a lot of fights, and occasionally trouble.

One day Buster had happened to visit St. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit Community. The Jesuit Priest talked to Buster about his fighting, the Priest asked what the reason was. Buster told him flat out, “Jesus.” The Priest laughed, and asked how so that Jesus was starting fights. Buster explained the reasons to the Priest. The Priest thought for a moment, and explained it to Buster this way, “the standard held by Jesus, is not obtainable for men. There is a reason why Heaven is above, because God’s standards will always be above this world’s standards. When you use Jesus as a standard whether man is good enough or not for God, you are condemning yourself to Hell. Jesus’ characteristics are not for you to perfect, but to strive for. The Bible does not tell you how to be Jesus, it shows you how he lived, and that you cannot possibly live up to it. That is where grace of salvation comes from. Because son, you nor me can ever reach them, and that is why you and me are not called Savior and Lord.”

So slow down, forgive those who do not meet up to Jesus’ standards, because neither you nor Buster will ever meet up to those standards. And if people do not happen to believe in your morals, there is nothing you can do about it. Just have patience forgive and wait for them to want to learn about them. Otherwise, you push them away when you demand they become like Jesus, just like Buster used to. Now Buster is a long haired peace loving hippie who lives in the Coconino National Forest weeks at a time with no shower.

Good Friday April 2

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

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

John 18:1-19:42

Good Friday.
A day filled with anger
Thorns
Death
Why is it Good?

Smitten for the sin of his people
Buried among the wicked
Death of the innocent
To pardon the guilty

Good Friday.
Death to bring life
Hopes crushed
Tears fall
Why is it good?

Fulfillment of God's word
An offering for sin
The unblemished lamb
Brought to the slaughter



Good Friday.
The Lord's will
The inevitable
The only way
Why is it good?

Eternal life for sinners
Pardoning for sins
A king, not of earth,
But of Heaven,
Brought to save us all

Good Friday.
Salvation
Forgiveness
Great Exultation
Good Friday.

Not only good.
But beautiful.

Thursday February 18

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Luke 9:22-25

Lord, I ask your forgiveness for all the times that I have put myself before You, for the times when I sought to serve the needs of the flesh before the needs of the spirit. Daily you place two roads before me, and daily I chose the path that takes me away from Your everlasting and infinite love. I have failed to keep your commandments, but with the help of Your grace I can return to You and love You as I should.

Lord, help me to reject the counsel of the wicked and the company of sinners. Help me to find joy in Your love, so that I can live every day of my life in the warmth of Your light. Help me to bear fruit that is pleasing to you, to prosper in your service.

Lord, I pray that you would send me your grace, that I might have the strength to choose You, to choose the eternal life that you have offered me. Grant me the strength to reject my sinful desires, the strength to deny myself. Grant me the strength to pick up my cross and follow you, Lord Jesus. The rewards of this world are fleeting, but the reward that You have for me is forever. Lord Jesus, never allow me to lose sight of You. Never allow me to place the world before You.

The weight of my cross is heavy, and I can't carry it on my own. I ask for your assistance, Lord.

Holy Thursday April 1

Exodus 12:1-8,11-14

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

Exodus 12:1-8; The Passover

This scripture explains one definition for sacrifice. To many people when they hear the word sacrifice they think death and suffering but not all sacrifices lead to sadness, some lead to joy! For instance, in Exodus a lamb was sacrificed (killed) in order to feed the hunger. A sacrifice can be as simple as giving up the time to hangout with friends to study for an exam! It's giving up something that you want/care for in order to gain something that you need.

1 Cor 11:23-26; The Lord's Supper

This scripture hits home for most Catholics. It is basically the foundation of our faith. It is the remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we thereby receive. The bread which in the Lord's Supper is broken, given, and eaten, is meant to remind us of Christ's body given on the cross for our sins. The wine which is poured out and received, is meant to remind us of Christ's blood shed on the cross for our sins. He that eats that bread and drinks that wine is reminded, in the most striking and forcible manner, of the benefits Christ has obtained.

John 13: 1-15, Jesus washes the disciples feet

Jesus teaches his disciples an important life lesson. Do to others, what you'd like done to you! Jesus washed Peter's feet in hopes that he would go and wash others feet. Jesus set an example for his disciples to follow. In addition, Jesus washing Peter's feet is also symbolic to Jesus forgiving Peter of his sins! It means that unless we are willing to let Jesus serve us by washing us, we may not have fellowship with him. We need be "bathed" in this way only once. This refers to the once and for all forgiveness we receive the moment we put our trust in Christ as Savior.

Friday February 19

Isaiah 58:1-9a

Matthew 9:14-15

Isaiah 58: 1-9

This passage explains the importance of fasting and why we do it. Isaiah compares the type of fasting that he asked to do, and the type of fasting that he wants. He talks about fasting as self-inflicted punishment, self torture and humiliation, which is what the Israelites call fasting. He then talks about another kind of fasting, a kind that is more practical and serving to God. He says, "... release those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke" (59: 6). This new kind of fasting is more thoughtful of other people, being willing to go out of your own way to help someone else: "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" (58:7).

Matthew 9: 14-15

Jesus is approached by some disciples and they ask why they and the Pharisees fast, but Jesus and his disciples don't. He gives them the analogy of the wedding guests and the bridegroom. He says to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" This means that when Jesus is there with them, there is no need to suffer. But in his analogy, once the bridegroom leaves them, then they will have time to suffer and fast.

Wednesday March 31

Isaiah 50:4-9

Matthew 26:14-25

Isaiah 50: 4-9

Knowledge is provided, to us, by the Lord

To help those who have been ignored.

He fills our ears with understanding of His will

So that we will not rebel and honor him still.

Because the Lord is on our side

We will not be disgraced and forced to hide.

He who justifies us is near

So we must complete His will and persevere.

If the Lord helps me, who will condemn me?

My enemies will wear out like moth-eaten debris.

Matthew 26: 14-25

Who will turn against the Lord?

Someone who will turn Him in for a reward.

On the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Disciples asked where Jesus wanted to be fed.

After Jesus poured the wine

He said, "one of you will be a betrayer of mine.

The one who dipped his hand in my bowl

Will be the one who sells my soul."

It will occur just as the book predicts

The Son of Man will die on a crucifix.

The one who forced Him into a crown of thorn

Will wish he had never been born.

Saturday February 20

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Luke 5:27-32

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Let my heart be fortified in they well. Each of us is his and her own worst enemy. In my selfishness and pride, I withhold my generosity and compassion from those who need it most. These people are the people who set themselves against me, they mock and curse me, they ignore and defile my family and friends and even themselves. Lord, teach me to be kind to them, teach me to be patient, make me an instrument of your love and compassion, so that I be a light to those lost in the darkness of sin and ignorance. Teach me to surrender my own pride, for in Your sight we are all brothers and sisters to one another. Help me to see that my enemy is not the man or woman who upset me, nor even my own short comings. No, my enemy is the devil and his minions.

Lord, grant me the courage to conquer my selfishness for the sake of my own good, for brothers and sisters and most of all for You to whom I owe my existence.

Amen.

Sunday February 21

[Deuteronomy 26:4-10](#)

[Romans 10:8-13](#)

[Luke 4:1-13](#)

Most Heavenly God,

Thank you, Lord for your unending patience and love of your people, “For you hear our cry and affliction, toil and oppression.” You are a mighty God, full of love and compassion for our failings and struggles. When we cry, you weep with us. When we are weak, you too feel heavy. When we suffer Lord, you hear our cries and answer them by holding up your only son for us. Because of your great sacrifice, the word is near us- not only “in our mouth and in our heart” but in the joy of one another. You call us to believe in our hearts and confess with our lips, and make it so easy for us to do so. When we see the sun slowly peeking through dark clouds, it is you. When we hear the laugh of a loved one when we feel tired, it is you. When the world seems too burdened and lonely, you are the twinkle in the eyes of lovers holding hands. You God, are ever present and all around us. Mighty father, you hold us in your hands and though you don’t ask for perfection, you do ask for holiness. Even when tempted daily, and weighed down in our sins and actions, you ask us to believe in you. Help us Lord, to turn our troubles to you, to persevere through the darkest hours, and to readily proclaim your greatness.

AMEN.

Tuesday March 30

[Isaiah 49:1-6](#)

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

The title of the reading from the book of Isaiah is “The Servant of the Lord”. We are all servants of the Lord. However, the Gospel proceeds to tell of Jesus’ prediction of Judas’ betrayal and Peters’ denials. We are shown how two of Jesus’ servants do not fulfill their role as servants of the Lord.

I find the foretelling of Peter’s denial of Jesus particularly relevant to my own life. For the prediction is on the heels of Peter saying he would lay down his life for Jesus. I often feel at times as if I would be willing to anything and everything for the glory of God, and yet it is in the small things that I don’t find important or I find to be cumbersome that I suddenly become unwilling to do. I also wonder how often I am afraid of the tasks God has for me to do and would rather deny their existence than faithfully and joyfully accept and strive to carry out for God.

We are all servants of God and He has a plan for all of us. May we always listen to His voice and faithfully answer His call.

Monday March 29

[Isaiah 42:1-7](#)

[John 12:1-11](#)

Do you know the love that knows no bounds? As Jesus dines with his beloved friends, Mary does something which only love can do. She took the most precious thing she had and spent it all on Jesus. Her love was not calculated but extravagant. Mary's action was motivated by one thing, and one thing only, namely, her love for Jesus and her gratitude for God's mercy. She did something, however, a Jewish woman would never do in public. She loosed her hair and anointed Jesus with her tears. It was customary for a woman on her wedding day to bind her hair. For a married woman to loosen her hair in public was a sign of grave immodesty. Mary was oblivious to all around her, except for Jesus. She took no thought for what others would think, but what would please her Lord. In humility she stooped to anoint Jesus' feet and to dry them with her hair. How do you anoint the Lord's feet and show him your love and gratitude?

Why was Judas critical of Mary's lovely deed? Judas viewed her act as extravagant wastefulness because of greed. A person views things according to what is inside the heart or soul. Judas was an embittered man and had a warped sense of what was precious and valuable, especially to God. Jesus had put Judas in charge of their common purse, no doubt because he was gifted in financial matters. The greatest temptation we can face will often come in the area of our greatest strength or gifting. Judas used money entrusted to him for wrong and hurtful purposes. He allowed greed and personal gain to corrupt his heart and to warp his view of things. He was critical towards Mary because he imputed unworthy motives. Do you examine your heart correctly when you impute wrong or unworthy motives towards others?

Monday February 22

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

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

“Judge your fellow man justly”

Hello, I am new in your company, do not shy away, but let us love the Lord together. Do not look at me with unfamiliar eyes; you know nothing of my life or my journey. The Lord has given us all our trials to face, but if you stand strongly at my side I can overcome any persecution. In the midst of battle and wrongful accusation there is Love to be felt from you and God.

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”

In the presence of the Lord your heart will be lifted and your spirit free of the weight that you allow life to pull. Your face will no longer be turned to your feet, but up toward the sun, and your face will glow with the righteousness of Christ.

“...But the righteous to eternal life”

This is not a metaphor for your death but the life you can live in Christ; a life of love in its most purist form. Yes, the road to the Savior is here, it is available to be skipped on now, as you joyfully wait the approach to the kingdom.

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me”

Lift your heart and feel his love, only then can you understand a love for yourself and others. In this way you are truly with Lord Christ, the Messiah, who was sent for you!

Tuesday February 23

[Isaiah 55:10-11](#)

[Matthew 6:7-15](#)

In today's gospel, the Word of God described in Isaiah teaches us how to pray.

Do we really need this lesson?

We all know how to petition God for favors and graces, to tell Him what we're convinced we need. And the "Our Father", just like the "Hail Mary" or "Glory Be", is a prayer most of us know by heart. Yet when we recite the Lord's Prayer, do we really understand what God is teaching us to ask for?

When we come to God with lists of requests—even requests for others—it is easy to think that the solutions we propose ("Just help me pass this test!" "All she needs is a little courage, Lord.") are the right ones. Sometimes we seem to go to God only for His power to grant what we ask. The first two words of the "Our Father", however, clearly indicate that the focus of this prayer and any prayer is God and His vision for us rather than our own. God alone is holy and king—even his name is hallowed. Recognizing this, we are thus to petition the Lord with hearts open to answers we may not understand or see. This is the daily bread for which we ask. As Jesus said "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him," in prayer we need to ask God to care for us His way rather than our own. This does not mean we should never come before God with specific intentions. Rather, when we do, we should remember that God's will, not ours, should be done.

Sunday March 28

[Isaiah 50:4-7](#)

[Philippians 2:6-11](#)

[Luke 22:14-23:56](#)

Thank you Lord for giving me all of my gifts, all of the things I will ever need. Not the things that I think I need, but what I truly, divinely need. Your glory and honor penetrate my full being. Your Holy Spirit is with me and guiding me. Help me to recognize your love in my life, so I can teach and support others with your word and hear your love being whispered in my ear. Channel your love through me. Make me your happy servant; obedient, humble, and good. Your Son was obedient to the end, because of Your grace and love. Help me to do the same today, tomorrow, next week, and all the years of my life. Help me to recognize that the sacrifices and torments I suffer is nothing compared to the love and grace you have for me. Then allow me to pass on that love to the ones who cause my suffering. My trust is in You, Lord.

Amen

Saturday March 27

Ezekiel 37:21-28

John 11:45-56

In the reading from Ezekiel, God speaks of the “one prince” who will rule of all the people of Israel. It is an interesting fact that this prince is David, a forefather of Jesus. In the reading from John, the Pharisees were afraid the people would believe in Jesus, the True Prince. Also, God promises in the book of Ezekiel that He would bring them forever to the land where their fathers lived, but later the people are afraid of loosing their land to the Romans because of their Prince. God did all of this because he loved his people, but when the time came for his Son to walk among his people, they were too concerned with worldly possessions to notice his true intentions. It was this concern that prevented them from seeing the Love and Word of God alive in their midst.

Personally, I feel that these readings are trying to tell us that this Lent, we should work harder to think less of our worldly things in the hope of seeing God in the world around us.

Wednesday February 24

[Jonah 3:1-10](#)

[Luke 11:29-32](#)

The first reading from the book of Jonah describes Jonah warning the people of Nineveh of the wrath of God that will fall upon them unless they repent. And after they do, they are spared. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the people that He is, in a sense, the new Jonah.

We often focus on the fact that Jesus came to redeem the world and offer salvation to all; and so He did. However, we must remember why we needed redemption in the first place. We are a fallen people. We are all sinners and we all need Christ. This aspect, though, is not too popular, especially in our current culture. But it is the reason Christ came in the first place and it must never be forgotten.

Confession is probably the most underappreciated of the seven sacraments. It has played a very significant part in my own life and is a constant source of self-recognition and healing.

Christ preached a message of repentance. And so again, He is like Jonah. However, there is one difference between the people who Christ speaks to and the people of the city of Nineveh. After hearing the message of Jonah, the king of Nineveh says in Verse 9, “Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath, so that we shall not perish”. But we are not in the dark. We know that God will forgive us and have mercy on us if we repent, faithfully carry our crosses, and never take our eyes off Christ.

Thursday February 25

[Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25](#)

[Matthew 7:7-12](#)

“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find.

Knock, and the door will be opened to you.” This command seems so simple, but for myself, it can be one of the hardest concepts to understand. So often my human pride comes between God and I, and I believe that I can handle everything by myself. Surely, God does not care to hear about my trivial requests, and my bigger prayers are just too much to ask Him for. And yet, in this passage I am reminded that “everyone who asks, receives”, in one way or another. I also need to constantly remind myself that He does not always answer the way I want Him to, but He will always take care of me completely. It is natural for us as humans to think back on memories of times we’ve been hurt or mistreated by other humans, but we must remember that God does not work the way we do. He does not forget about us. The passage says, “If a child asks his father for a loaf of bread, will he be given a stone instead?” Sometimes it feels like all I receive is a stone, but God knows what is in my best interest. Even when the answer is not what we expect, we can expect that if we continue to follow Him, it will be the best answer for us.

Friday March 26

[Jeremiah 20:10-13](#)

[John 10:31-42](#)

This passage reminds me that being a good role model, and being a good witness to the faith, it not always well received by others. It seems that there is a common way people react to those who are good witnesses to the faith and who exude holiness; they are either well respected, or they are disliked. I suspect that they are disliked because their lives present a measuring stick for our own lives. And that can intimidate people. It takes a great deal of humility to look up to someone when you can instead try and tear them down. As the first passage shows, even those who were his friends closely watch his every move so that they might be there to condemn him when he falls. I notice myself doing this. How unfortunate to waste such a good opportunity to grow in holiness by way of learning from someone who lives a life of good example, by instead criticizing their every mistake. At the same time, I sometimes notice myself becoming frustrated at those who do the same to me, when instead I should rejoice that I have those who will always be there to criticize me (regardless of their intentions in doing so), as they help me to strive to grow in virtue and holiness.

These passages also remind us that, just as the Lord rescues “the life of the poor from the power of the wicked,” our Heavenly Father will guide us through our trials. Through any persecution or criticism one may endure from friends and even family, the Lord is by your side every step of the way. He also closely watches your every move, and when you fall, He is there raise you back up.

St. Margaret Clitherow, whose feast day is today, converted to Catholicism in 1574 in England. During this time of persecution of Catholics, she actively practiced her faith and harbored priests in her home. Once arrested, she was threatened with death if she did not renounce her faith. She would not, and she was killed. Her witness to the faith helped many return to the Church, and all three of her children entered religious life. And as such, the impact on others of her courage and witness is a testament to one more message contained in the last two verses in the passage from John’s Gospel. That in the midst of those who will see your witness to the faith as a threat to their own ego, there will also be those who will have the eyes to see Christ in you, and they will begin to believe.

Thursday March 25

Genesis 17:3-9

John 8:51-59

“God, make your covenant with us, and see our hope in the betterment of ourselves. Help us to be more like our father Abraham. Help us to be unselfish in devotion to your will; for I am your follower, and I follow you because you are my choice. Please help me in my imperfections and guide me; so that someday my name may be changed, like that of the man who gave his son up to you- in the sacrifice for your love. Please hear my prayer, and grant me the forever belief in your unending love. ~Amen”

As much as it pains me to say, and as bitter as the words are in my mouth, there will always be those who do not believe. There will always be people in this world that reject Christ and all of his teachings. It can arise from such things as men who have seen death in wars, or women who have been brutalized by abusers. It can even be the neglect of “civilization” upon cultures still inhabiting in third world countries, people living in cities where Christianity hasn’t spread, where the Bible isn’t read. Their salvation lies in God’s hands alone, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is not our place to decide the final resting place of those who do not believe, that power lies in God’s hands alone. I was once told a story of a priest who was walking down a street proudly displaying his Roman Collar. He was stopped by a woman that accused him of wasting his time, believing in something that wasn’t true and didn’t exist. The priest waited for her to finish, and quietly humbly said, “If what you say is true, then pray for me,” In my opinion that was the best response for that situation. So it is my prayer to give to the Lord what is his to have and control, and let me humbly follow and serve him to the best of my abilities.

Friday February 26

Ezekiel 18:21-28

Matthew 5:20-26

In this passage from Ezekiel, we hear the people of Israel cry, “The LORD’S way is not fair!” How often do we utter the same statement? Rather than admit sin, it is far easier to justify the action:

- * “I have sex outside of marriage because I am in love. That is all that matters.”
- * “Sure I took \$10 dollars from his wallet, but he is rich. He will never miss it.”
- * “I only use the Lord’s name in vain when I’m angry and want to get my point across.”

Justification is the devil whispering in our ear,

“It’s not you... it’s Him, God, and his unfair laws. His laws are outdated and unreasonable. What you did wasn’t wrong; there was good reason behind it.”

God, on the other hand, has a different response to sin. He tells us that sin is not relative. We cannot fabricate our own laws depending on what is convenient for us. Sin is sin, no matter what the reasoning behind it. When we choose to commit sin, we are condemning ourselves to death. However, when we choose to keep his statutes and do what is right, God tells us that, “None of the crimes committed shall be remembered against [us].” What a generous gift!! Confession is the opportunity God gives us to own up to our sins and admit our transgressions.

Reflection

- 1) What sins do I try to justify?
- 2) Do I place the blame of my sins on God, or do I recognize them as my own choice?
- 3) When was the last time I thanked Jesus for dying for my sins, so that I may go to heaven?

Challenge

Go before Christ in the SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION before Easter Sunday .

Sunday, February 27

[Deuteronomy 26:16-19](#)

[Matthew 5:43-48](#)

In today's world, it is so easy to hate those you don't like. The world seems to be filled with a hatred of so many—by so few.

What do you fear?

Hatred comes from fear and the fear comes from no understanding the other person and their beliefs or way of thinking. It would be so much easier to hate that man half way around the world for something evil, but how much harder it is to love him.

We are all God's children and he loves us all the same, no matter what we have done. He commands us to be perfect, like Him.

Love your enemy, no matter what. It is hard to love that ex who cheated on us, or the person in class who is so mean. But death on a cross is also hard. Christ died because He loved each and every one of us, so much that he commands us to be like Him. He did not come just for the 'good' people in this world, but also for the 'bad.'

Wednesday March 24

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

[John 8:31-42](#)

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31 & 32)

How many times do we go to church and not truly take in what we are hearing? How often do we leave church feeling ready to do God's will, only to blend back into an immoral society? Hearing the truth that Jesus proclaims is one thing; having faith and living in that truth is entirely different. As Catholics, we are called to not only hear God's truth, but to live in that truth as well.

The best example of living in His truth occurred all the way back in the Old Testament, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to false gods because they believed in the truth that God alone was God. They believed it so much that they risked being burned to death in a furnace. Because they knew and lived in the truth, the Angel of God came down to them and saved them from death. That truth made them free.

The truth will make us free too as long as we live it. Though it can sometimes be hard to see through the cloud of sin and suffering in our world, we can find it through living out God's Word. Whenever we feel like the society we're in is bogging us down and making things hard for us, all we need to do is remember God's truth, and in that truth, we are free.

Tuesday March 23

Numbers 21:4-9

John 8:21-30

Today's readings call for us to believe in God as the Almighty Father.

Through this belief, through our faith, God will work in us to supply us with all we need to journey through today, tomorrow, and the rest of our lives. The first reading parallels our own faith journey. Just as the Israelites wandered in the desert complaining that God was neglecting them, we too often find ourselves in the deserts of life thinking of why God has done this to us. In reality, God never abandon's us, despite our sin, nor does he intentionally harm us. God uses adversity to raise us for a higher purpose. The serpents that bit the Israelites are like our own talents and skills when used for malice instead of good, and by raising a bronze serpent God polishes our talents to make us realize how we can serve him and his people. But beyond just our blessings, God desires a relationship with us which is why he sent his son to die for our sins and be raised in glory. In a sense, this is a call for reconciliation with the Father. We must acknowledge that Jesus is God and that his mission was to save us or else we shall die in our sins, as the Israelites did when bitten by the serpents. Then, we must lower our pride and seek forgiveness for our wrongdoing. Jesus tells us in John's Gospel that, "if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins." Believe in Christ and let his mercy and forgiveness transform your life this Lenten season.

Sunday February 28

[Genesis 15:5-12,17-18](#)

[Philippians 3:17-4:1](#)

[Luke 9:28b-36](#)

Today in Luke we hear about the first time the apostles learn that Jesus is more than just a spiritual leader; they learn that he is actually the Son of God. When we imagine what it would have been like for these men who had been with Jesus for quite some time to find this news out it must have come as quite a shock. They already held Jesus in a high enough standard to drop their lives at home and follow him because they thought he was a good leader. They respected him before this point. Now to hear from God, in quite a dramatic fashion that He is more than just a spiritual leader, but the son of God, they must have been in awe of him. How blessed they must have felt to have been chosen as an apostle by the Son of God. Jesus gave them such a gift by choosing them as one of the few people he confided this exciting news in. We should feel blessed and in awe of Jesus just as the apostles did. Sometimes it can be hard to be in awe of Jesus when things in life are difficult, but if we think of how much he loves us, so much that he gave his life for us, maybe we can start to imagine what the apostles must have felt when God made this glorious announcement.

Monday March 1

[Daniel 9:4b-10](#)

[Luke 6:36-38](#)

It is hard to be a Catholic all the time. It is hard to try and walk in God's shoes perpetually. God has given us so much, but that does not mean that being a Catholic is easy because of God's many gifts. It is hard to smile at an enemy. It is hard to admit to your beliefs and be judged by others. It is hard to make time for God when every inch of life seems to be filled with responsibilities. It is hard not to judge others and point out shortcomings. It is hard to put others before ourselves. The followers of God, have fallen many times from the very beginning.

It is hard to carry the cross all the time and everywhere we go. Sometimes we fall and drop our cross. This is not so much the problem, as even God's son has fallen to some of the weight that he was given on earth. This is just an inevitable part of life. The main part is not the fall, but standing back up. Falling to sin and not doing the right things is bad, but we must never push our crosses to the side and walk on without God. Never give up hope... never.

The most important part is not the fall, but placing our eyes towards heaven and standing back up with Christ. We must realize it is hard, we must realize we will fail, we must find a way to get up every time... to find hope, and that hope is God. That hope is the promises and road he paved to being one with him. We must realize our last step was, then take the next step toward God.

We are not Catholics because there are things we should do,. We call ourselves Catholics because there are things we do. We are as much Catholics as for what we believe as for what we do. Our actions justify our beliefs and our beliefs justify our actions. It is with this faith, this believing in an ultimate truth that we realize what we must do. We must smile at our enemies and lay a hand out for the poor. We must not condemn, but show others the right ways through how we live out our lives. It is by this that we not only lend ourselves to others through God, but God lends himself through us. We are instruments of God. It is living our lives like God has shown us in his word that we are measured. It is through our actions, our faith, and the hope it has brought, that someday we might find ourselves looking and smiling at God and see him smiling back. He will not smile because we are perfect... but because we got back up.

Monday March 22

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

[John 8:1-11](#)

Visions of carnality
Perambulations of the Soul
Saved only by the Grace of above

What do we intend to make of it?

Shall the wise & wicked...elders of old
Seek out their inner lust?

Why do those who have no merits
Make accusations against those who do?
Is it not fair?

Do we not all fault against ourselves?
Do we not lose sight of life and Its importance, occasionally?
Do we not strive to seek salvation?
Do we not look for the Glory of the coming Kingdom everlasting?

Man...woman...child
They should not be condemned by those who have transgressed
Condemnation is reserved to the Lord
"Vengeance is mine," saith He
Judgment is eternal, and not of this world

We are the guilty ones

Through guidance, we shall become one with the Alpha & Omega
Through understanding, we shall see ourselves for who we are
Through Him, we are with Him

Sin no more, for neither does He condemn you

Sunday March 21

Isaiah 43:16-21

Philippians 3:8-14

John 8:1-11

It is said that beauty is in all things. While this is true, it is important to know why. In the Gospel reading today, John tells us about the woman caught in adultery. It is clear that adultery is not good or beautiful, but if true beauty is in fact in all things, then where is it in this circumstance? The answer is in creation. God's creation of all things innately makes them beautiful. The devil can only twist what God makes pure. And so it is with the woman at Jesus' feet. The pure and beautiful act of sex is twisted to no longer include God in what is His. Jesus shows her mercy because he sees in her what was created by His Father. Beauty IS in all things. Even in the darkness every color exists. Even in the sadness of loss, joy can abide. Even in the hopelessness of since, mercy conquers all. This clarity is not free however. It must be sought. It must be earned. It must be fought for. Without conviction and a path set before us, we are lost. Well, my brothers and sisters, luckily for us the path is already laid out before us. Now is the time for conviction. Believe and be free.

A quote to think about "if the world knew the value of suffering, it would want nothing else." (Padre Pio)

Tuesday March 2

Isaiah 1:10, 16-20

Matthew 23:1-12

God asks us to do very little in life and the ultimate thing He asks is to love him. Wholeheartedly love Him. This is at times difficult especially when we feel inadequate or simply just feel lazy. He asks us all directly, in Isaiah, to "wash ourselves, remove evil, learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow." These may seem outdated for our time, but they have direct correlation to things we can do in our lives. We can go to reconciliation to remove the evil in our lives and wash our sins so it may be like snow. We can learn to do good by not repeating the offenses we just repented for and to strive to be the best person we can be. Seeking justice may be the most obvious—to stand up for others that cannot stand up for themselves and to do what is right even if we are the only one. Rescuing the oppressed may be the one we struggle with the most and the inadequacies may shine through, but doing what we can and providing time and effort into helping those that cannot help themselves, is another way can feel closer to God as well as helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. Defending the orphan and pleading for the widow can go back to seeking justice because although some have no one around them for support we can show them love which God has shown us. Often this can be difficult if the person does not believe in Him or you both do not get along. However, by asking for God's blessings for that person and simply just loving them will help them in more ways than we can possibly think.

In Matthew, Jesus talks about how rabbis would simply put themselves higher than others and look for the public satisfaction in their deeds and work. Jesus said that what they would say is exactly what we should do, but to not do as they did in their lives. Simply it comes back to the old adage that these men did not practice what they preached. We can often fall into this slump and it is difficult to pull ourselves out of. It is far easier to do what we want and to forget about what God wants. It is also far easier to place the difficulties we have on someone else. If we have a continued prayer to ask God to place us on His path and to stray away from our distractions, we can grow closer to Him and really feel the unconditional love He has for us. So as the song goes, "Be still and know that You're in this place, washing my eyes to see Your Holiness." Be still, close your eyes and just open yourself up to God's Holiness and Love.

Wednesday March 3

[Jeremiah 18:18-20](#)

[Matthew 20:17-28](#)

Jeremiah 18: 18-20

In this reading, Jeremiah prays for his enemies. Even though we may love and serve others, we may be scorned by many on God's behalf. We are reminded not to become angry when we are wronged, but to pray for those who are offending us, so that they will be shown mercy by our all, just God and that they may be shown wisdom to not judge lest they be judged by God in heaven. How have you been wronged? Ask God to give you the strength to push through adversity and also ask God to bless those who have wronged you.

Matthew 20: 17-28

This scripture passage tells of the misconception of how to obtain greatness in the kingdom of heaven. It is not power but service that determines one's seat in heaven. The sacrifice of Jesus is the ultimate form of service for he gave his life to deliver the human race from sin. As Catholic Christians, we are called to aspire to be like Jesus and to serve others as Jesus served the world. In what ways can you think to walk like Jesus? How does service effect your life?

Saturday March 20

[Jeremiah 11:18-20](#)

[John 7:40-53](#)

What does it mean to believe? For that matter, what does it mean to have faith? Is it enough to just attend Mass every Sunday, to go through the prayers, to read the Bible? Or does it mean something more? These two readings we encounter for today illustrate the definition of faith for us by example. In our reading with Jeremiah, we see that the Heavenly Father has opened his eyes to the future. We see in Jeremiah a reflection of our Prince of Peace. As Jeremiah had a plan laid out for him by the Lord, so does Jesus. Both of them are shown their plans by God, and both accept them. To openly accept something that our Father has planned out for us takes a lot of courage and faith. In the reading from John, there are those who openly accept and believe in Jesus (those who proclaim he truly is the Messiah) and there are those who completely ignore anything Jesus says, simply because he comes from Galilee. As always, these are the chief priests and Pharisees. Then, there are those who want to believe, but are not sure, like the guards. The question we are left with after these two readings is this: Who are we most like? Pausing for a moment and looking into our hearts, we can feel our faith. Let us pray to God to open our hearts to His words, and to believe without impediments.

Friday March 19

Wisdom 2:1,12-22

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

Adversity is something we all face, and we all have to overcome. The first reading today shows how we as good Catholics may, at times, be prejudiced against, even hated for our beliefs. This, however, cannot stop us. We cannot let other people influence our beliefs just because they do not agree with our core beliefs. In the first reading, the people decided that they would “beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to [them].” They could not accept the righteous person, because that person did not approve of their actions. People will not always approve of what is right, and some people will oppose our doing the right thing, because it is the right thing to do, and that they won’t get anything out of it. In the second reading, Jesus goes into the proverbial “lion’s den”. He goes to the Jewish feast of Tabernacles, where the Jews gathered there wanted to kill him. While at this feast, Jesus begins to teach. This is a prime example of doing what is right. Jesus knew that they were not happy with Him, but he went anyway, because He knew that it was what needed to be done. These are the things we need to learn from: learn to love our enemies, and not to hate them for the evils that they do. We need to be strong in our faith, without allowing other people to lead us down the wrong path. Without faith, without the knowledge that God loves us, we are... Incomplete.

Thursday March 4

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Luke 16:19-31

Jeremiah 17: 5-10

Through this scripture the Lord reminds us to always confide in Him. Putting our trust and hope into imperfect human beings is called for destruction. Because no one is perfect, no one can be fully trustworthy and we will always be disappointed at one point or another with our friends or even our family. On the other hand, God tells us to put our trust and hope in him for he is perfect and will never disappoint. Also, God tells us that if we give Him our hearts instead of the world, we will be guided in His ways and rewarded by His graces.

Luke 16: 19-31

In the gospel of Luke Jesus tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In this parable, Jesus reminds His people that those who suffer will be rewarded in heaven and those who are selfish will be punished. This parable explains the Beatitudes as an example of what happens when you do not help those who need your help when you can offer it. This gospel reminds us to follow the scriptures and to help those in need. What ways can you serve others every day? How can you not only help others with food and clothing, but also spiritually?

Friday March 5

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

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

Hate, Greed, and Jealousy

I envy you, I'm jealous.
You have all that I want.
Getting the love and money,
I hate you more each night.

Sometimes I want to kill you
at the forefront of my mind.
The one thing you don't notice,
To you I'll never be kind.

For me money's more important
I will push you away.
Break you down so brutally,
to me that's how you'll pay.

The hatred, greed, and jealousy,
makes me want you to die.
That side of me you'll never see,
The side I know I hide.

So I envy you, I'm jealous.
You have all that I want.
Getting the love and money,
I hate you more each night.

Lord, show me when hate, greed, and jealousy have taken the place
of love in my life. Lord, change my heart. Amen.

Thursday March 18

[Exodus 32:7-14](#)

[John 5:31-47](#)

Very familiar with the first reading, we are often quick to judge the Israelites as they worship the golden calf. Yet, most of us are guilty of the same sin: idolatry. We create our own idols out of wealth, money, power, and even food. And, just as Moses pleaded to the Lord on behalf of the Israelites, Jesus pleaded for us in his sacrifice on the cross.

Moving into the gospel, Jesus explains that it is not just in scripture that we find salvation, but in his life and works; for it is through his works that he testified to the greatness of the Father. Furthermore, if we truly read and believed in the words of scripture we might understand God's love for us, and in turn love Him. Just as the Israelites lost faith in and ignored the words of Moses, we often take for granted and begin to ignore Christ's word. We turn to the idols we have smelted of temporal pleasures and lose sight of the one true God; the God who leads us out of sin and darkness and towards his kingdom, the promised land.

Today, we should reflect on how well we follow His first and second commandments. Have we created idols for ourselves? Do we worship these idols above the one true God?

Wednesday March 17

Isaiah 49:8-15

John 5:17-30

How often do we ignore God working in our lives? The group of Jews in John 5:17 ignored the fact that God works 7 days a week. That is one of the many great things about God, he is a 24-7 worker in everyone's life. Even in those who have not met God in their lives and suffer, God eases their suffering (Isaiah 49:13). Often we forget about God's perseverance in our lives and how his Son, Jesus, gave us redemption for all those times we ignore God. Perhaps today would be a good day to thank God for his work in our lives. How has God worked in your life today?

Saturday March 6

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Forgiveness takes a lot of self control for human beings. Both readings deal with different forgiveness, but both relate. The reading from Micah talks about the forgiveness of the Lord. He forgives like no other, “[He] pardons sin for the remnant of his inheritance.” He is our shepherd and we’re his flock. We need Him to live a fulfilled life. He forgives easily, whereas we humans don’t as easily. We need to follow the Father’s example, even if it may be difficult at times.

Relating back to the Gospel of Luke, it starts with Jesus’ forgiveness of sinners and tax collectors and transitions into the Parable of the Lost Son. The younger son is forgiven by his father even after everything he has done. The father in this parable represents God and how quickly and easily He forgives. Even when we stray from Him, He will be waiting there with open arms for us.

These readings challenge us during Lent to follow in Jesus’ footsteps to forgive the ones in our lives that frustrate or have hurt us. This is the time to let go of our discomfort and be happy. Show the compassion that our Father showed the tax collectors and sinners. It is what He would like us to do.

Sunday March 7

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

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

[Luke 13:1-9](#)

God is all around us, but are we paying attention to him?

When Moses first comes across the burning bush he doesn't realize that it is an angel from God. It isn't until God called out to him "Moses, Moses! Here I am," does Moses realize His presence. God wants us to see him! For that to happen, we need to always be looking for Him. Even if we don't notice Him at first, as Moses did, God will call out to us to catch our attention and bring us to Him. Also, when Moses first sees the bush aflame, his first thoughts are not of awe in God's miracle. In fact, his first reaction was to try and see why the bush wasn't burning. He wasn't really thinking of God at the moment, he was just trying to figure out how this miracle was even possible.

When we see a miracle, do we question it and assume it's simply a trick, or do we have faith and believe that it is from God? We seem to be less and less in awe of miracles. In these days of special effects, its sometimes hard to notice the real miracles that are from God. We tend to overlook some of this world's most beautiful miracles given to us from our Lord: like sunsets that burst across the sky in an array of warm colors after a storm, or the miracle of life when a child is born and they first open their eyes to this whole new world. God is still trying to call us to him through his miracles. We just need to be listening for Him and looking closer at the big or even little ones that He gives us each day.

Tuesday March 16

[Ezekiel 47:1-9](#)

[John 5:1-16](#)

Jesus brought us all life. Like the water flowing from the temple bringing fruitfulness and life to all it touched, Christ gives us life through the Church. Christ spreads his love through the congregation and followers of the Church. We are all part of the stream, and preaching brings life to those who have none. In the end, without Christ as the beginning spring, there would be no streams, no life, no fruitfulness. Since there is a stream, there shall be no lack of fruit or withering of faith, because we are all given what is needed to live by Christ. With all he has given us, we can lead the world to Christ.

Monday March 15

Isaiah 65:17-21

John 4:43-54

Dear God,

Sometimes I find it hard to believe in you when there are so many troubling things happening in our world. Poverty, hunger, sickness, death, war...these incidents, though not your own works, make it difficult to keep believing. It is said in the gospel of John "unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe". I find that this is even more relevant in our world today. I also know that faith is believing without seeing. I want to believe in you more fully, in order to strengthen my faith. Please God, grant me the courage and strength to believe during the times that I face, now and in the future.

Perhaps this strength will not come through miraculous signs and miracles, but rather, with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Then, through the aid of the Holy Spirit I may also receive the courage and strength to help others who are also in need of a stronger faith. God, please allow all of your children to grow in faith and love during these hardships. If everyone allowed the Holy Spirit to live within them, then maybe, just maybe, we would no longer face such troubling times.

I know that this life is merely material, and will end soon, but I want to make the most of it while I am here by helping and caring for others. Please God, let me be a sign to others of faith and love, encouraging them to follow and to do the same. It is said in Isaiah, verse 65, "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth...be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating". During hardships, I believe that it is even more important to look forward to a time after I leave this world, where there will be no more misery and distress and everyone will partake in the fruits of your love.

God, please help me, so I may be more worthy of this new world and allow me to partake in the joys of heaven for the rest of eternity.

Monday March 8

[2 Kings 5:1-15](#)

[Luke 4:24-30](#)

Dear Lord,

Sometimes, I am like the lepers or the widows that you have described in your gospel. I desire to choose your path that you have for me and know that you help anyone and everyone who seeks you. Please help me to be holy. Help me to know when I have fallen from your grace.

Love,

Your

Faithful Servant

Tuesday March 9

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

[Matthew 18:21-35](#)

Gracious and Loving God,

The parable of the unforgiving servant teaches us the importance of forgiveness. You teach us that your forgiveness is above all others and is not to be taken for granted. Each day, we face strong temptations to sin and on certain days, those temptations become too overwhelming. Thankfully, we come humbly before you to ask for your forgiveness. As we wake each morning, we aim to follow you with our whole heart—praying to you and asking for your mercy and kindness.

And Lord, when I find it hard to forgive my brother or sister, I ask you to open my heart and help me to love like you; help me to understand that I should be an instrument of peace and compassion and not anger and frustration.

In your name, I pray.

Amen.

Sunday March 14

[Joshua 5:9, 10-12](#)

[2 Corinthians 5:17-21](#)

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

Joshua 5:9, 10 -12

The sons observed the passover

The manna was handed over

But on the day, manna was no more.

2 Cor. 5: 17-21

Verse 21 really stood out to me, it says 'He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of god himself.' It shows right there that God truly loves us and his son. Anybody that can make their pure and innocent son be the sin to set everyone else free is awesome.

Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

The second part, the 11-32 talks about the son finding life again and the other son being mad at the party for his brother. The way that the father is so happy that his son is alive shows the ultimate forgiveness, and he wants the other son to see how important it is to finally come to terms with themselves and finally release all of the evil that was inside of them.

Saturday March 13

[Hosea 6:1-6](#)

[Luke 18:9-14](#)

My Dearly Beloved,

More than anything I desire with you is for you to affectionately love me as I affectionately love you. I want so much to be united with you. More than anything, I would be happy to have a relationship of “beloveds” with you. I cannot make you have a relationship with me, though. I cannot make you honor me or sacrifice for me. If I did, then you would not be able to love me. Honor and sacrifice without desire and love are empty.

That Pharisee over there, he prays to me out of obligation. He follows the rules, but he does not know my heart. The taxpayer across the way, he broke the rules, but he has love for me and knows he hurt me. I can see how his own heart is broken because he hurt me. Our love for each other has grown even stronger.

My dearly beloved, the rules are to show you what true love is. But if you only follow the rules, you will not experience my love. You must be willing to risk your heart for me and others, like I do, if you are to experience my love. Then, by affectionately loving me, you will be following the rules, but they will no longer be rules for you. They will be your way of life.

Thank you for spending time with me. Let’s do this more often.

I love you.

God

Wednesday March 10

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

[Matthew 5:17-19](#)

Lord you teach us that the truth is with you and if we follow you we will not contradict the world or the law but will fully understand and receive fulfillment from it. If people become arrogant and believe that they can improve or only select some of God's commands then we are committing ourselves to living in a society that is offset from the life God wants us to have which is truly Good and nurturing. We must constantly strive for Christ in all ways because we are human and are easily distracted and led off the path.

God has wonderful respect and optimism for each of us. He knows what we are capable of and he tells us this and encourages us through our community, the world we live in, and even directly from himself. Sometimes, though, we make excuses and argue with the Lord, the one that knows more about us than we do. Who are we to put limitations on what God has created?

Thursday March 11

[Jeremiah 7:23-28](#)

[Luke 11:14-23](#)

My two readings gave me many thoughts and feelings. I thought about faith and the strength we have from God being in our lives each day. Every day we are given struggles and battles, if you will, with the demons of today's society. We can choose to follow them with abandon, but we should rather choose to follow God and be safe with Him. I live my life by the word of the Lord and feel safe with Him in my heart and mind. The demons in which we can interpret into in our day and age are the ones of pressure and conformity. If we stay close to our God we don't have to stray away and scatter. We can stay close and feel His love forever and be satisfied.

Friday March 12

[Hosea 14:2-10](#)

[Mark 12:28-34](#)

Hosea 14:2-10

This reading is a call to Israel to return to God who will respond with bountiful love. God's chosen people must repent through confession and prayer to find compassion and peace. By setting aside worldly possessions and idols, Israel will once again flourish in the graces that the Lord has bestowed upon them. The evils of former transgressions will be wiped clean and the Lord will watch over his people as they walk the straight paths that sinners stumble upon.

Mark 12:28-34

This reading is a call to Israel to accept the Lord, my God, with all my heart. Only then will the spirit of God come to live and work within me to do the Lord's will. By accepting the Lord I will find inner peace and the spiritual gift that will enable me to find my true calling in this life. In doing this I will understand the meaning of loving my neighbor as myself. I will understand and bring out the best not only in myself but those around me. Realizing the importance of the two greatest commandments will change my values to what is really important and allow me to once again be in harmony with the calling of the Lord. With perseverance and continued improvement I shall soon forget about my shortcomings and grow in the Lord to do his will.