



Lent reflection for March 19, 2025

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Psalm 32: 1-11

*Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.*

*Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

*While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up[a] as by the heat of summer. Selah*

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord',
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah*

*Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
You are a hiding-place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah*

*I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.
Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.
Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.
Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.*

Today's reflection if from Heather Kelly:

I find this psalm so heartening. It is a declaration of God's unconditional, "steadfast" love for us. It is a love so complete that when we come to God with the darkest and most shameful parts of ourselves we will not only be forgiven, we will also experience tremendous joy in our unburdening.

The alternative to revealing our sin to God is very bleak in this passage: "While I kept my silence my body wasted away through my groaning all day long...my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer." Anyone--and by this I mean every one of us--who has struggled with something before bringing it into the light of day, knows that the inner torment of dealing with our transgressions alone and in the dark is amongst the greatest of pains and leads to despair.

We are being presented with a choice from God--silence or acknowledgment. What's hard for me in this is that it can take me some time to know that I am choosing silence, even if I am suffering. These are often the times I feel lost and I don't always feel like I have a choice. I can be like a "horse or a mule without understanding" before the awareness, softening, understanding and reckoning comes. When the moment of awareness does come, there is joy in knowing that God sees me and can provide a path forward for me. Knowing that God can love our true, complicated, transgressing selves helps us get to this point, for it models healthy self love. It is very hard to acknowledge our sins from a place of self hatred.

I think to experience the joy God promises us, we must be committed to revealing the sin within ourselves but also the sin of our world. In reflecting on the meaning of silence in this psalm I thought back to the powerful slogan Silence=Death and my good friend Fred Mann who died of AIDS in 1990. It was very painful to witness what was happening then, and I feel very distressed in similar ways now. This passage was a reminder to me that I don't want to remain silent when I see transgressions that cause human suffering in the wider world. Our inner landscape and the world at large is bereft when transgressions are silent and hidden.

I returned from our church retreat just last night, reinvigorated in my faith and feeling the support of a loving community. It is church and all that it encompasses that keeps me aware and in dialogue with the part of myself that wants to acknowledge and not be silent. I could not do this alone.



Heather Kelly has been a member of Holy Apostles since 2017. She lives with her husband James, a naughty Chiweenie and two sweet but bewildered cats in Windsor Terrace. She loves her two young adult children very much. She is a co-mentor of The Holy Apostles Education for Ministry Group and loves riding Citi e-bikes.