

DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS 2016

PRAYER, MEDITATION & STUDY



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL 2016 LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The Church calls all Christians to a season of preparation for the remembrance of the saving acts of God that took place during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday. This season of preparation is known as Lent.

To prepare our hearts, souls, and minds for the observance of Holy Week, the Church encourages us to take on the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, study, and almsgiving.

These daily Lenten meditations have been prayerfully prepared by clergy, members, and friends of St. Vincent's, and it is our hope that through the daily reading of this booklet, you will be drawn into a deeper walk with our Lord.

I personally pray that the words written here will help you hear again with fresh ears the Good News of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and in His Resurrection.

Additional copies of this booklet are available in the parish office if you want to share with family, friends, or neighbors.

The Very Reverend Ryan Reed
Dean of St. Vincent's Cathedral
Bedford, Texas



HOPE AND GOOD NEWS

There are two Prayer Book services that refer to dust and ashes. The first is the liturgy for today – Ash Wednesday - where we recall from Genesis that God created mankind out of the dust of the earth. We are marked on the forehead with ashes as a reminder of our mortality, and the priest solemnly recites those ancient words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The second service is for the Burial of the Dead, where at the end of the liturgy the priest stands by the casket and says, “we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto earth shall we return... All we go down to the dust.” (BCP p. 482) At the gravesite, the priest casts earth on the coffin saying, “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” (p. 485)

Today, we are confronted with our mortality. We cannot escape the cold finality of death and the grave. “For the wages of sin is death,” the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 6:23. But that is not the final word. He goes on to say, “but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” So the ashes traced on our forehead make the sign of the cross, which is the sign of our Lord’s victory over sin and death.

At the heart of the Ash Wednesday liturgy is a message of hope and good news. Sin and death do not have the last word, for through faith in Jesus Christ we are assured of the gift of eternal life, won for us by His saving death on the cross.

Repent and believe the Gospel. Turn from sin to God, once again. Die to sin – die to self – die to the things of this world. Place your whole trust in His grace and love and forgiveness, as you follow Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Remember that you are dust – but remember also that “when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens.” (BCP p. 382)

The Rt. Rev. Jack Leo Iker
Bishop III of Fort Worth

Psalm 32, 95, 102, 130, 143
Amos 5:6-15

Hebrews 12:1-14

Luke 18:9-14



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH

LIVE A HOLY LIFE

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us.

I was recently reading a book, Bonhoeffer Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy by Eric Metaxas. In the forward, Timothy J. Keller wrote:

We know that true grace comes to us by costly sacrifice. And if God was willing to go to the cross and endure such pain and absorb such a cost in order to save us, then we must live sacrificially as we serve others. Anyone who truly understands how God's grace comes to us will have a changed life. That's the gospel, not salvation by law, or cheap grace, but by costly grace. Costly grace changes you from inside out. Neither law nor cheap grace can do this.

It reminded me how St. Paul tried to live his life once he accepted Jesus as Christ. He changed his life. Paul was willing to accept how he had first persecuted the church. After meeting Jesus, he turned his life around. He lived the example that Jesus had showed him. Paul earned his own living, traveled, taught others, was beaten, thrown in prison, and was martyred. He showed others how his life was changed because of Jesus. He enjoined others to live that same life and noted others who did the same. In doing so, he was able to write in verse 13 - *Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ.*

Each generation, whether the very first with Paul, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's around World War II, or my generation today, must learn to live a life of sacrifice as we serve others. In doing so, we show the love of Christ and bring others to that life. It is not easy. It is costly, but the end is glorious.

Let us commit ourselves to our God, and pray for the grace of a holy life that we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection. Amen.

Lenore Rothman
Catechist, Lay reader, Vestry and choir
Physician Assistant

Psalm 37:1-18, 19-42

Habakkuk 3:1-10

Philippians 3:12-21

John 17:1-8



THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING

Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; . . . For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. Ezekiel 18:30, 32 (KJV)

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:3–7 (KJV).

The Book of Common Prayer says (p. 17) that Fridays "are observed by special acts of discipline and self-denial." On this first Friday of Lent, it is right that we think about repentance from our transgressions, and perhaps practice a little extra of whatever Lenten discipline we have decided on. The readings today can contribute to understanding our need for repentance, discipline, and prayer, and how we should approach God in these acts.

In Psalms 31 and 35, David expresses the pain and anxiety of someone beset by enemies, and aware that God is his only hope of succor. The Prophet Ezekiel utters the message that God calls us to repentance, but reassures us that He is a fair judge and His ultimate wish is for our salvation. The Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Philippi with the command to rejoice always in the Lord, and to behave as God's people before all mankind. But he also tells us not to be anxious ("Be careful for nothing"), and to bring our requests to God—not because He's a sort of cosmic Santa Claus who needs a letter from us to know our needs, but instead to keep us aligned with His will, so His peace can sooth our anxiety.

O heavenly Father, help us rejoice in your blessings, and learn to bring our troubles and worries to you, that entrusting them to your wisdom and mercy, we may find Thy peace, which is truly far beyond our understanding; through our Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Charles M. Gatlin, Jr.

Adjunct professor and cantor

Psalm 31, 35, 95

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Philippians 4:1-9

John 17:9-19



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH

STRENGTH ON THE GO

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

I'm not a fan of writing anything that other people are going to read but, I repeat, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Interesting how that works. I try to make excuses to run from it, but then, I read that verse and find my reason to turn towards the challenge, and with confidence and a bit of joy, no less.

I have pieces of jewelry with the verse on them. I would have it on notepads, magnets, bumper stickers, t-shirts, mouse pads, the dog's collar... chime in if you have a few... but I can't buy everything. That is my favorite verse. When I wear the jewelry, I don't just wear it, I read it and am reminded of the strength that comes from Jesus. As I go through my day and face a challenge or struggle, I read it again and find peace. I'll even stop and read it just because I know it's there, and I seek a little jolt of joy. I wear it with purpose. I know God is always with me. I know Jesus is carrying me. I wear the verse to be intentional, to reach out and choose to read the words that mean so much. It is a small verse with an enormous message.

I had a young cousin going in for a surgery recently, and although the surgery was minor, her fear was not. She was met that morning, before going to the hospital, to an uplifting message on her whiteboard from her sister that read, "I hope your surgery goes well & I know God is looking out for you! Pray to him & he will give you strength! 'I can do all things with Christ who strengthens me.' Stay strong!" That verse is beautiful on its own, but put it in the hands of faithful children and how could anyone doubt its power and joy?

Our Heavenly Father, there is no greater joy than this huge reminder, in just a few words, that your love for us shines so brightly in Your Son. Guide us always to seek strength through Him in all we do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Mindy Jackson

Choir, hand bells and Adult Sunday School teacher
Business Systems Analyst

Psalm 30, 32, 42, 43
Ezekiel 39:21-29

Philippians 4:10-20

John 17:2-26



SO FAR AWAY

44 Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. 47 "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:44-50

I've pondered these verses ever since Susan sent them in an email a while ago. In placing the scripture in context from the previous verses, Jesus has raised Lazarus from the dead and then made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Crowds shouted "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Jesus then predicts his death and the people turn against him.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I make things so complicated. I try to overthink situations. My parents taught me to plan ahead, have an alternate plan so that I wouldn't be caught "flat footed". Heaven forbid there is even a hint of not having thought things through, weighed the options, and even have an "out" if the plan didn't work.

So today's gospel is very comforting. I don't need to "do" anything. I don't need to plan anything. I don't need to have an "out". I only have to believe in Jesus and what he had told me through his words and deeds in the gospels. And this believing is THE PLAN to end all plans.....one that leads to eternal life.

Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Jane Bauch

Newcomers

Retired Librarian

Psalm 63:1-11, 98, 103

Daniel 9:3-10

Hebrews 2:10-18

John 12:44-50



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH

FEELING GOD'S PRESENCE

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

God wants an intimate relationship with us. He reaches out to us throughout the scriptures. He calls us to trust and love him as He loves us. That kind of love is unfathomable to me, but we can only try. How do we do this?

He asks us to spend time with him. That means reading his Word and slowly digesting what is said to us. It means receiving the Sacraments to receive his grace. It means slowing down our lives to make him a priority. God came to Elijah, not in an earthquake or fire, but in a gentle whisper. We have to be quiet and listen for that whisper, so we can truly know Him and feel his presence in our lives.

"I am with you always, even until the end of time" Matthew 28:20. What comforting words to our thirsty souls!! We just need to be still and present to hear his voice.

Father, teach us how to make room for you in our hectic lives so that we may truly know you and feel the comfort of your presence. We know that intimacy involves suffering, so give us strength and courage to put our trust in your will for us.

Julie Dowden
Parish Nursing
School Nurse

Charles Dowden
Usher, Church Treasurer
Banker

Psalm 41, 44, 52
Genesis 37:1-11

1 Corinthians 1:1-19

Mark 1:1-13



OUR CALL TO BE FAITHFUL

*“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”
(1 Corinthians 1:25)*

The passage from Corinthians assigned for today is, in my humble opinion, one of Paul’s best letters. He had been in Corinth where he had helped establish a church, preached the gospel, baptized believers, and formed a community to carry on his work. I have to believe he left there thinking things were in good hands, and now he is in Ephesus hearing about discord, doubts and suspicions in the church in Corinth. He truly loved this church and its people, and this news is very disturbing to him. Appears all of this is about who is the “wiser” in the church and community, the Jews or the Gentiles. He has to be thinking, “Really guys?”

In his gentle way, Paul had to set them straight on who is “wise”. He wasn’t just writing to the people in Corinth, but was writing to us today. The situation in Corinth in Paul’s time is not unlike ours now. We have discord and strife in our churches and communities. As in Paul’s time, the teaching is the same:

God does not call us to be wise. He calls us to be faithful. He calls us to follow him. He calls us to believe in him, to love him as he loves us. He calls us to love each other. He calls us to love unconditionally. He calls us to bring unbelievers to him for their salvation. He calls us to live our lives so that others can see Jesus in us. And, he calls us to pray without ceasing.

Heavenly father, we come to you in humility and gratefulness for the blessings you give us each and every day. Help us to remember that we are not meant to be wise but to be your servants. Help us to follow you in love and faithfulness so that we may reach out to others in your name. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

Darlene Pruitt
Daughters of the King
Construction Bookkeeper

Psalm 45, 47, 48
Genesis 37:12-24

1 Corinthians 1:20-31

Mark 1:14-28



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH

MAKING BAD CHOICES ON OUR OWN

Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?"
Genesis 37:26–30 (ESV)

When the jealous brothers of Joseph plotted to kill him, the eldest, Reuben—instead of standing against the others to protect Joseph—pretends to go along, with an idea to come back later to rescue him. In the meantime, another of the older brothers, Judah, convinces the rest to save Joseph's life by selling him into slavery in Egypt. As a result of their actions, their father, Jacob suffers for many years thinking his favorite son was killed by wild beasts. God was still at work, however, and ultimately many people survived seven long years of famine by the counsel and management of Joseph.

Notice that while both Reuben and Judah each took action to save Joseph, neither communicated these plans to the other, and each came up with a solution that was a limited good mixed with a definite evil. How might things have been different if they had opposed their brothers, or discussed how to rescue Joseph! Nor is there any hint in the text that either man thought of praying to God for help. What effective measures and strength might God have put in their hearts, if they had turned to him?

When we're in the middle of a situation where we have to choose between good and evil, we should always choose the good. But what if all choices look evil to us? We should learn from the example of the sons of Jacob, and not be isolated as they were. When faced with troubling choices, rather than going it alone, we should reach out to God, and to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Dear Father in Heaven, teach us to seek out the counsel of Your divine wisdom, and let us approach You through the reflection of Your image in our fellow believers, who are our brothers and sisters in the fellowship of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Charles M. Gatlin, Jr.

Adjunct professor and cantor

Psalms 49, 119:49-72

Genesis 37:25-36

1 Corinthians 2:1-13

Mark 1:29-45



DIVINE INTERVENTION

This is the beginning of the book of Mark. Jesus has just started his journey among the people where John baptizes Jesus, and he starts his ministry. In chapter 2:1-12, Jesus has already found Simon, Andrew, James and John, and they have seen him preach in the synagogues and perform miracles along the way. As chapter 2 starts, Jesus has returned to Caper'na-um, and it was reported that he was at home. People were gathering to hear him preach the word. Many had gathered, and four men were bringing a paralytic to see him, but they couldn't get close to him. They took the paralytic to the roof and opened a hole to lower him down so Jesus could cure him. When Jesus saw him, and saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." In chapter 2 verse 6 some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy!" I'm sure most of you are aware of this story, and if not, please read it.

I know that miracles happen every day - we just don't see them as that. What about the person that is in an automobile accident and the vehicle is crushed so badly the fire department has to cut the person out. There is barely enough room in the vehicle for them, and yet they survive. The other day, I saw a report of a man driving a vehicle who lost control, rolled the vehicle, and he was thrown from the vehicle. He walked away without a scratch. Could this be Divine Intervention? A miracle!!!

Wikipedia definition: **Divine intervention** is a term for a [miracle](#) caused by a [deity's](#) supposed active involvement in the human world.

If we Believe and have Faith that God is with us, we must believe that God would intervene on our behalf, if that is His plan. And if that is true, we must believe in miracles. I believe they happen all around us, you just have to recognize them and be thankful.

Faith in God! WE must believe, then life makes sense.

God we ask that you guide us through life to do good in your name. Let us always remember that our life is in your hands and be thankful. Amen.

Tom Bransford
Lay reader, Vestry
Retired Firefighter/Paramedic

Psalm 19, 46, 50, 59, 60
Genesis 39:1-23

1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15

Mark 2:1-12



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH

PRAY FOR SALVATION

Save me, O God, by thy name and judge me by my strength. Hear, my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. Psalm 54:1-7

This reflective poem was written by David when the Ziphites shared with Saul that he was in hiding. At this juncture in David's life, he was scared and asking God to protect him from his enemies.

Let's consider that enemies do materialize before us in all shapes and sizes. They also wear different faces and exhibit a wide variety of characteristics. So with this in mind, can we not conclude that, like David, when we pray to God, we are, in fact, asking him to protect us from our enemies? Here is a brief sampling of some of my most persistent enemies: fear of the unknown, long term financial security, peace after the loss of my son, and righteous standing with God.

Verse 7 of Psalm 54 is particularly engaging for me as it reflects what I have experienced through God's grace after the tragic death of my son. This particular enemy, the enemy of loss, has been tenacious and unrelenting.

For those who have suffered the loss of a child, no explanation is necessary. For those who have not, and I sincerely hope that you never do, it is difficult to imagine. In my case, the enemies that I face in this regard are two fold; profound sorrow, accompanied by the crippling loss of my only child. Verse 7 reminds us that *God can deliver us from every trouble and we can triumph over our enemies.*

Giving your enemies over to God may not always feel comfortable, especially when we reflect on this paraphrase: "The Lord helps those who help themselves." But I see this paraphrase in a little different light because, for me, the truth is this: when I turn my enemies over to God, I am helping myself!

Today, I enjoy a level of peace that I would not be experiencing had it not been for God's intervention and my ability to let go and let God have his way with my enemies.

Prayer: Believe in and trust in the Lord. This is my prayer for you during this precious and most holy season of the year.

Wilma Mabrey
Arbitration Event Coordinator
Sales Associate

Psalm 40, 51, 54, 95

Genesis 40:1-23

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Mark 2:13-22



GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING

Psalm 139:1-6 Lord, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways. Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O Lord, know it altogether. You press upon me behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it. Where can I go then from your Spirit? where can I flee from your presence?

If you read only the first few verses of Psalm 139 (it actually contains 23 verses), there is no doubt that God has absolute perfect knowledge of us and has a personal relationship with us. He is aware of everything we do - all of our actions, thoughts, words and deeds. He knows all of our habits, the good and the bad. He knows them better than we do. He knows what is in our heart. We cannot hide anything from Him. We cannot hide in any place not known to Him. We cannot be separated from Him.

At first, this can be a frightening thought - God knows everything about ME - a sinner for sure. However, it also means that God knows everything about ME and is always present to help and guide me. I am accountable to HIM, and this can lead to a deep and personal relationship with our Lord. He knows where I am weak and where I am strong. He knows the struggles going on in my mind, and He has the power to encourage me in what is right. In the end, it is actually comforting to know and believe that "God has this." It is up to me to be open to the Holy Spirit daily and respond in the manner set forth by God.

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of the people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Harriet Wade

Altar Guild

Retired litigation paralegal

Psalm 55, 138, 139:1-17, 18-23

Genesis 41:1-13

1 Corinthians 4:1-7

Mark 2:23-3:6

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD

Our heavenly Father who taught us to ask for our daily bread and to deliver us daily from temptation and evil; teach us also to live each day to thy service that we may fulfill our vows of growing closer to Jesus and of making him our sovereign and Lord through the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Robert Boyer, Choir, Retired Library Administrator

Psalm 61, 62, 68:1-36

Genesis 42:1-17

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Mark 3:19b-35



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST

BURIED WITH CHRIST

Romans 6:3-4 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

One of my favorite sermons I heard preached in my time at Nashotah house was on the occasion of the baptism of one of my brother seminarian's baby girl. The service was held in St. Mary's Chapel, but the baptism was to take place out in Nashotah Lake. Fr. Steve Schlossberg began by saying that we were about to go out and drown an old man in the lake. It was just such a powerful image that it has stuck with me and been quoted by me on countless occasions. The problem is that in our context the imagery of our being baptized into Christ's death is somewhat lost when we baptize by sprinkling. Obviously, the effect is still the same, but at no point is the immanency of death really experienced. When baptizing by immersion, everyone is aware of what would happen if the person being baptized was held under just a little too long. We get a glimpse of how fragile our lives really are.

But, nonetheless, every time we baptize another member into the body of Christ, we are drowning that old man, sin. That unfortunate condition which we inherited from our first parents is put to death, and we are brought up from the waters into new life in Christ. We begin again, having died to our old self and freed from sin. But old habits die hard, and although we are being renewed day by day and molded into the image of Christ, we still commit sin. But our victory remains in our new life, and so we fight. We fight against temptation, and when we fall, we confess our sins, trusting in the forgiveness promised by Jesus, and get right back up. We work to develop habits of righteousness and make sure that old man stays good and dead, and we continue to walk in newness of life and grow in holiness day by day.

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (Collect for Easter Day)

Fr. Alan Horton

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84

Genesis 41:14-45

Romans 6:3-14

John 5:19-24



THE BRIDGE TO PARADISE

"We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered we answer kindly." 1 Corinthians 4:12-13

The apostles took chances while spreading the Word of God, yet remained focused on His greatest Commandment. Chance is defined as a remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without causal connection. How often do we attempt to justify an incident that appears to occur without an explanation? When I was given the opportunity to pick an appointed reading for a devotional, I could have easily thought it to be just a random assignment. However, of the 1,189 chapters in the Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 4 caught my attention as it was part of our Wednesday Bible Study this past autumn.

In this reading, Paul addressed a division within the church of Corinth that may have been the result of unethical leaders. Paul's plan of action was clear and it highlighted him as a true spiritual leader of a fruitful ministry. In order to instruct the Corinthians about God's Kingdom, he used irony and sarcasm as a means to spotlight the commanders' condescending attitude and spiritual immaturity. It was not Paul's intention to shame them, but help them to surrender control so they might recognize the power and knowledge that comes only from God. Paul was personally concerned about the Corinthians' well-being, while at the same time defending the apostles' charge to follow, teach and proclaim God's Truth.

As Christians, we can be true leaders within our homes, as well as our communities and the world. It takes courage to relinquish control in order to take chances and assimilate the Word of God in our daily lives. Of all the tools at our disposal for this charge, the fail-safe ones are love and constant prayer. God has given us the free will to choose the pathway to Him, and He has a hand in everything we do. It is not by coincidence that our prayers are answered, but by grace.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we humbly ask for Your guidance and blessing as we set out to represent You with our actions. Please encourage us to walk in a way that reflects Your love. AMEN.

Sherry Heiser
Usher, Vision Team Leader
Counselor

Psalm 56, 57, 58, 64, 65
Genesis 41:46-57

1 Corinthians 4:8-21

Mark 3:7-19a



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD

OUR DAILY TASKS

So will I always sing the praise of your Name, and day by day I will fulfill my vows.
Psalm 61:8*

Fr. Radamiller, a Holy Cross brother at Whitby House monastery that was in Flower Mound next to the Bishop Mason Retreat Center, once said in a meditation, “The problem with life is that it is so daily.” By that, he went on to explain that so much of our life is not glamorous or dramatic, but rather is as routine as constantly cooking, washing dishes and doing laundry. However, tucked in between the unrelenting chores are the opportunities to make little incremental choices with eternal consequences. There are frequent challenges to give up our best intentions and let slide our promises. Truly, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions not acted upon just for today or put off just until tomorrow. Eventually, the momentum is lost and the opportunity is past. On the other hand, we are given the chances through little baby steps that add up, eventually, to have an enormous cumulative effect to glorify God with our hearts, praise God with our thoughts, and honor God with our actions.

Some mornings, I feel that all I want to do is pull the covers up over my head. Another thing the monks taught visitors on retreats was that at wake-up time someone would knock on the door while saying, “Let us bless the Lord.” The guest was expected to respond loudly, “Thanks be to God” not only to indicate that he was awake and would show up on time for Morning Prayer before breakfast, but also to begin the day in the best possible frame of mind for one of God’s creatures whose purpose is to know Him, love Him, and praise Him. I find in my own life that this way of greeting each new day after the alarm clock goes off can make all the difference between dedicating the day to God or lapsing into the resentment of a reluctant curmudgeon. The discipline of Lent gives us an incentive to bear down on our intentions and vows to make God the center of our lives and to make Jesus known in everything that we do. This can include a renewed awareness of those obligations large and small that we have made to our fellow church members, family members, co-workers and neighbors. I find that I run into temptations large and small just to let things slide or be swept under the rug rather than do the work of following through on that commitment I agreed to six months ago or that call or e-mail I casually said I would make but then really don’t want to do. It really does boil down to labors of love if one places God, rather than oneself, in the center of one’s world. With the correct perspective, it becomes obvious what we ought to do. Those actions can be turned into a positive way of praising God.

When I see this psalm, I am always reminded of the wonderful poem that St. Richard of Chichester penned in the very early 1200s, that is set to stately music in our hymnals. It was incorporated into the 20th century musical “Godspell” as well with a new pops melody:

Day by day,	Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,	Love thee more dearly,
Follow the more nearly,	Day by day.

Continued on page 13



THY WORLD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH

Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. Psalm 119:89, 92-93

“Those that delight in the law of God may depend upon the favor of God, for it shall certainly make them happy. The best evidence of our love to the word of God is never to forget it. It is the will of God that all people should acquaint themselves with his word. It is a rule to all, and therefore should be read to all.” – *Matthew Henry*

I have always considered myself a Christian; saved by baptism and my acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Son of God. For over fifty years, I considered the study of God’s word to be a task that others pursued in order to attain that same strong faith that I had obtained without the drudgery of “Bible study”. *What an arrogant idiot!*

In 2007, Sherry finally convinced (harangued) me to start going to a non-denominational Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) class for men which was meeting at Broadway Baptist Church near downtown. The weekly classes consist of four parts: a set of questions to be worked on daily throughout the week, a small-group session going over the questions from the past week, followed by a lecture to the entire assembly on the prior week’s questions. (Currently, there are over seven hundred men in my full assembly.) Lastly, we take home a printed Lesson’s Notes of the prior week’s study.

I have never fought against a system so hard in my life! How I endured that first year I will never know; and the next two years were just as painful, and to top it all off, the fourth year was a study of Isaiah which was pure agony! (I later learned that Isaiah is a walk in the park compared to Leviticus.) Intrepid man that I am, I kept going and finally I found myself looking forward to the weekly lessons, discussions, and lectures. I started putting more and more time and effort into my answers; I started taking more (and better) notes during lectures; and I started finding more meaning in the necessity (now need) to study Holy Scripture. After nine years, it finally dawned on me: my Baptism and acceptance of Christ wasn’t an end point – it was a starting point!

Lord God, send your Holy Spirit into our hearts; so that as we read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest your Holy Word, we may better understand it and adapt it into our lives so that all with whom we meet may see your Word reflected in our actions.

Mack Wood
Choir
Owner/Agent, KEMA Real Estate

Psalm 72, 119:73-96

Genesis 42:18-28

1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8

Mark 4:1-20



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH

YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE !!!

Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. Mark 4:24

The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. We are taught this from a very early age. It is important in raising responsible and ethical children. It is the standard by which adults must live as well. In this passage we are warned that the “measure,” that is the rules and performance that we use on others, will be used against us as well. However, what is this about still more being added?

Another translation of this verse in the King James Study version is accompanied by this very poignant footnote. “This may be paraphrased: Give careful attention to what you hear. For according to the proportion of study given God’s Word, a corresponding amount of knowledge will be given you, and generously multiplied at that. The point is that God’s truth, instead of being divinely hidden from man [as in the image of the light hidden under a basket], will be understood in proportion to one’s attention to and study of it.”

Well, in that case, if I would like to have more understanding of God’s Word, then I had better snap to attention and sharpen up my concentration skills. Obviously, this means providing Bibles and scriptural commentaries in my house in the first place, and in the second place, making it a rule of my life to spend regular quality time opening them up and reading them. It is hard to find quality time to do this. It may take a lifetime of starts and stops, experiments and failures, longer and shorter amounts of time, this time or that, this location or that location, but all of the effort is worth it. The goal is to spend regular times listening to God. Sometimes that means reading the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer for daily prayer. Sometimes there is only enough time to read the Gospel passage from that schedule. Some families do this at the breakfast table. Many busy folk use a compilation or magazine of short daily devotionals. Some people use a study plan for reading the entire Bible over a given span of months or years. The important thing is to start doing something that you can continue to do and that speaks to you. From a basic habit of regular devotion, more lengthy study can be grown as time goes by. This passage points out that for us to get any benefit from this study, we must take the message to heart and make it apply to our own lives. In other words, “Pay Attention!” When we do, more is given to us and it becomes clear what God would have us do with our lives, our families and among our neighbors.

Almighty God, the source of all blessings, learning and hope; Narrow our attention and focus our vision that we may hear and receive Your word and also perceive and act upon the opportunities You place before us to be of service both to You and to our neighbors, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Robert Boyer
Choir , Retired Library Administrator
Psalm 70, 71, 74

Genesis 42:29-38

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Mark 4:21-34



THE SWEETNESS OF A STORM

Mark 4:35-41 “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

Mark’s gospel provides us with the familiar story of Jesus and his disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee. The sudden storm, with its intense wind and fierce waves, gives cause for great panic among the disciples, many of whom were already very experienced on the water. Though the disciples had already seen His miracles, heard His wisdom, and witnessed His power, the storm shakes their faith to the core. They feel abandoned and uncared for as Jesus sleeps.

Obviously, this passage is not simply a story about weather and a boat trip. This is a story about our own lives, about our own faith, and our own fear. In Mark’s passage, the disciples are crossing over from one side of the Sea where they are comfortable and very familiar to another side which is new, different and unfamiliar. Their path is marked by fear, challenges, and uncertainty. We may have never been to the Sea of Galilee, but we’ve been in that boat before.

The winds in our lives are not always calm, and the storms of life can be rough. They can come from the challenges of raising a family, to maintaining a job and making ends meet, to dealing with a medical diagnosis or assisting an ailing parent. In these difficult times, we have a tendency to feel that we alone can control the situation, or that we need a “magic bullet” to make the problem go away. We abandon our faith in the hopes of something more immediate and temporal, in an attempt to “overpower” the problem.

“Do you not care if we perish?” In other words, “Fix it! Make it better!” In the middle of our challenges, sometimes it may seem as though Jesus doesn’t care. We ask in despair, “How can He sleep at a time like this?” However, through his reaction to the disciples in the boat, we come to realize that the storms we often experience are not necessarily the ones *around* us, but the ones *inside* of us. It is the storm inside of us that pulls us off course, challenges our faith, and threatens to drown us. Through calming the storm, Jesus isn’t changing the environment for the disciples and for us, he is asking **us** to change. “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” Jesus teaches us that having faith does not change the storm, it changes us. By having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, both in times of prosperity as well as in times of peril, our faith does not navigate us *around* the storms of life, it takes us *through* the storms.

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”. Serenity Prayer... Reinhold Niebuhr (1892 – 1971)

Mark Jeffers
Director of Global Sales Training, Surgical Division

Psalm 69:1-24, 73, 95

Genesis 43:1-15

1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Mark 4:35-41



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

OUT OF BONDAGE AND SIN AND INTO PEACE

1 Corinthians 7:23, 24 "You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, let him there remain with God." (bondservant or freedman)

Mark 5:1-20 Jesus and the disciples crossed the sea to Gerasenes and when they landed a large, strong, demon filled man approached him and fell down before him. Crying out in a loud voice he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Legion, for we are many." They begged Jesus not to send them out of the country. They begged to be allowed to enter a herd of pigs nearby. He gave them permission to enter the pigs. But the pigs then rushed down a steep slope and into the sea and drowned in the sea. The previously possessed man begged Jesus to take him with him. Jesus did not permit him, but said, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

The world is full of the call of bondage to this world and to men. The most glaring to me is the constant bombardment of advertising that we all endure. If you don't own this or that...or if you don't look this way or that...or if you don't have this or that kind of job or education...then you are somehow subpar. Less than a real person. They never say it just like that...it's always innuendo, suggestion. Our own self-centeredness, our pride, our free will...actually a gift from God...carries us along down this steep, suicidal trail of bondage to this world. I'm going to buy this, be that, or do "so and so" to elevate myself in the eyes of my fellow man. Trouble is...no matter how much you acquire, or do, or how you "look" in men's eyes, you are actually looking through their eyes, and often through the lens of their eyes with your own prideful eyes. Measuring with man's yardstick is an impossible mission because it is always changing. How can you hit a moving target?

God's measuring tool is constant, never changing. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your fellow man as God loves you. Pray constantly, get as close to Him as you can. Go home and tell your friends how much the Lord has done for you.

Psalms 23 "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Amen.

Steve Schooling
Choir,
Manufacturing Engineer

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76
Genesis 43:16-34

1 Corinthians 7:10-24

Mark 5:1-20



BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES

*I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
2 My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!*

The first few verses of Psalm 34 remind us that at all times and in all places, we should bless the Lord for all his gifts to us – the sights we see, the air we breathe, our accomplishments, and all the people in our lives—truly everything!

Even our hard times are a blessing, for without them, the best of times wouldn't be as sweet as they are.

By living an example of thanking the Lord for everything we have, we can hopefully inspire others to also be thankful for their gifts and to learn about and follow the good works of our Lord.

Dear Lord, please help us remember that we should always thank you for your many wonderful blessings in our lives. We also hope that in doing so, our example helps show or reinforce the one true way for our friends, our families, and neighbors. Amen.

Jason W. Mraz
Usher
Sales Director

Andria Mraz, R.N.
School Nurse

Psalm 34, 93, 96
Genesis 44:1-17

Romans 8:1-10

John 5:25-29



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29TH

FAITH LEADS TO HEALING LEADS TO PEACE

Mark 5:34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

My granddaughter moved in with me in August. For most of the previous year, she had experienced a series of major high stress changes, which resulted in a case of severe depression. She even experience thoughts of harming herself, and her doctor prescribed an antidepressant. The antidepressant put a smile on her face but the depression was merely covered up, not removed.

Between Christmas and New Year's, my granddaughter went to a week-long revival in Kansas City with several friends from her church. I want to share with you two e-mail messages I received from her during the week.

December 28, 2015 she wrote, "Recommitted my soul to the Lord tonight, guys!! There's gonna be a lot of life changes for 2016."

December 30, 2015 she wrote, "I have been healed!! I feel no depression. No hatred. Nothing but God's love!!!!!! I'm ready to fight His battle!!!!!!!!!"

Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Dear Lord,

I pray that faith in our Savior Jesus will bring healing and peace to many hurting souls this Lent.

Amen.

Linda Littlefield
Daughters of the King
Retail Management

Psalm 77, 79, 80
Genesis 44:18-34

1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Mark 5:21-43



RECOGNIZING AND ACCEPTING GOD'S GREATER PLAN

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. Genesis 45:1-15

Two things struck me with this scripture. First, I am constantly amazed how God's works are so much greater than I can imagine. After Joseph's brothers sold him to some passing Midianite traders, I would have expected that only negative could come from this sin, but Joseph remained faithful to God, grew and became a great ruler in Egypt. During the great famine, Joseph recognized his brothers who were there to buy food and had them brought to him. When they were brought to him, he wept and sent everyone else away. This is when he revealed himself to them as his brother and told of how God had blessed him. Joseph recognized God's plan for him to be able to provide for them and all their families.

The second thing that struck me was that Joseph told them not to be grieved or angry with themselves. We seem to think we have more control over things than we do. Joseph pointed out to them that it was God that sent him there, not them, and God that made him lord of all Egypt. He wanted them to put aside their sin, quit dwelling in it, and go gather the family to receive the blessing God was providing. Getting too caught up in our sins prevents us from recognizing God's desires for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we ask that even in hard times, we turn to you and recognize that you are in control and always caring for us, giving your forgiveness of our sins.

Jennifer Holbrook

Newcomers Committee
Auto Finance Funder

Psalm 78

Genesis 45:1-15

1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Mark 6:1-13



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2ND

THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER

“For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero’di-as, his brother Philip’s wife, because he had married her. For John said to Herod, “it is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” And Hero’di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him.” “For when Her’di-as’ daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests: and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it.” And he vowed to her “Whatever you ask me, I will give to you, even half of my kingdom.” And she went out, and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the baptizer.” Mark 6:14-29

Per my research; “However one understands the relationship between John and Jesus, one thing is certain: agents of God who challenge those in power usually suffer significant consequences.” The comment stands out due to the fact that John the Baptizer told Herod that it was unlawful to have your brother’s wife—in violation of the 7th and 10th commandment’s. John endured the ultimate sacrifice death by beheading.

A modern day example of: “agents of God who challenge those in power usually suffer significant consequences” as in Iraq where the Christian population once was 1.3 million in the early 2000s to 300,000 today. These Middle East Chaldean Catholic members have lived with religious diversity for centuries. Just recently reported by the media, the monastery of Deir Mar Elia was destroyed in August 2014. The monastery is named for the Assyrian Christian monk, St. Elijah—who built it between 582 and 590 A.C. It was a 1400-year-old structure that survived assaults by nature and man for centuries before it was deliberately destroyed by the Islamic State group. Christianity is being challenged again as John and Jesus were challenged 2000 years ago.

Prayer for Repentance from Unbelievers —Father in heaven, my heart grieves for individuals that do not want to know YOU. They are the lost souls wandering wherever the devil takes them. They are fulfilling their own desires of the flesh instead of yearning for the life that You give. Father, use me, or anyone that You please, to show Christ-like love to them. Father, I love these men and women and to think of them in eternal torment is tormenting me! I pray that the seeds that are planted in them Lord will be grown by You. You make miracles happen every day, and I pray that You make one today in the lives of those who are lost. I praise You Holy Name! Amen.

Steve Otto
Adult Sunday School teacher

Adjunct Assistant Professor

Psalms 81, 82, 119:97-120

Genesis 45:16-28

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 6:13-29



LITTLE IS MUCH WHEN GOD IS IN IT

³⁵By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. ³⁶Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” Mark 6:35-36

I am always humbled by Jesus’ miracle of feeding 5,000 men with just five loaves of bread and 2 fish. We have all wondered if we will be able to make the rent, pay our school loans or even have enough to cover our meals. We contemplate, wonder and have sleepless nights over these issues. When Jesus was faced with 5,000 people to feed, he had faith that the 5 loaves and 2 fish would be sufficient to feed the men, even when his apostles had little faith. As Christians and human beings, we are just like the apostles who thought it would take almost a whole year’s wages to feed the people. Mark 6:37-38

There are many lessons to learn from this miracle:

1. We do not need to have super powers to spread the word of God. We can start by telling our neighbor, co-workers, or even our own family members, and through this, we, too, can feed 5,000 people with the word of God.
2. If we took time out of our busy lives to spend reflecting on God’s word, just imagine what that would do for us in one year. We would build our knowledge of his wisdom and our faith would grow stronger every day.
3. As Christians, we should know that our problems are never too big for God to handle, obviously feeding 5000 people was not a huge problem for Jesus. Why can we not put our faith in God and believe that he will always see us through any hardship? We can all be like the apostles, who put all their trust in the Lord as they distributed the bread.
4. Finally, if only we would be thankful for what we have, just imagine how many people would be happy and more focused on serving God than looking to fill their pots with worldly goods.

My prayer is that God will teach me to be thankful, to remember that little is much when God is in it, and to bring my life to God in a spirit of obedience, trust and sacrifice.

Barbara Kakembo
Accountant

Psalm 42, 43, 83, 85, 86
Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34

1 Corinthians 9:1-15

Mark 6:30-46



FRIDAY, MARCH 4TH

KEEP THE FAITH

When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. ...They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. Mark 6:47-52

How many times have you wondered at the truth of Jesus' life, death and resurrection? Have you ever struggled with your faith? I know I have. College was the first time I was really exposed to atheists and their ideas. They are skillful at calling on logic and science to try to explain away God, and then they throw in the ridicule. It's easy to throw doubt into a young, impressionable teenager's mind. Our society, today, does its part, too. Secularism is "in". Christianity is "out".

How do we keep the faith under these outside pressures? As I read Mark's recounting of Jesus walking on water, it gives me courage. Even the disciples were amazed by his miracles. They had just seen Jesus feed the multitude with five loaves and two fish, yet they "had not understood about the loaves". They doubted, even though they saw it with their own eyes! To question is to be human. I would venture a guess that everyone has had these thoughts at some time in their life. Seeing that the disciples had moments of doubt, even as they witnessed Christ's miracles daily, encourages me that I, too, can overcome doubt.

Our faith is under attack all over the world. Christians are being persecuted and killed for their faith in other parts of the world, yet they persist even unto death! Surely we can overcome the minor discomfort of the atheists' ridicule. And when I have moments of uncertainty, I will remember that even the disciples had their moments. Thanks be to God that they wrote the Gospels for us to read 2000 years later!

Mike McWithey

Trumpet soloist
Aerospace Engineering Manager

Psalm 88, 91, 92, 95

Genesis 47:1-26

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

Mark 6:47-56



GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD. HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.

*He remembered us in our low estate; His love endures forever.
And freed us from our enemies; His love endures forever.
He gives food to every creature; His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven; His love endures forever.
Psalm 136:23-26*

Psalm 136 teaches us how to give thanks and praise to God. We start by praising God for who he is. In the middle, we give thanks for what he does for us in creation, redemption and daily provision. If you read the whole Psalm, you will see the phrase 'his love endures forever' repeated twenty-six times. We are reminded over and over again of what is important.

God also gives us the strength to say 'thank you'. God also deserves our thanks. What are you thankful for? Some ways we can thank God: Love him; Spend time with him; Spread the word; Pray.

This Psalm invites us to draw close to God and to thank him for who he is and what he has done for us. No matter what's happening, no matter how dark the moment, God is in control. He can be explicitly trusted. He's working out a purpose beyond what you can imagine. Give thanks to God, always and for everything! Thank Him for the hardest part of your life. Just say, "Thank You, God, even for this," and trust in His steadfast love which endures forever.

*Dear Father,
You have been with your people since the beginning. Your loving care has protected us, fed us, and sheltered us. We give you thanks for creation, for the wonderful things you have done in the past and for being with us today. Amen.*

St. Vincent's Jr. AYC

Psalm 87, 90, 136
Genesis 47:27-48:7

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Mark 7:1-23



SUNDAY, MARCH 6TH

JUST “BELIEVE”, BUT THEN WHAT?

Jesus had just fed the five thousand the day before, and His disciples had witnessed Jesus walk on water the evening before, which had to be the talk of the town. After having the crowd’s attention the next day, they continued to press Jesus about how He managed to be in Capernaum when he obviously did **not** get in the boat at Tiberius with his disciples. Rather than answer their question, Jesus cut to the chase, as was His manner of perception and teaching:

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Then they asked Him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.” (John 6:27-29)

How simple was that!? Or was it? There are 93 references to “believe,” “believing,” “believes,” “believers” or “believed” in the New Testament. There are 10 in all of the Old Testament. Think about that. Some of the most quoted scripture passages include just that concept. It is fairly clear that Jesus expects us to believe in Him first, execute our works second. In that way, we may execute our works with the proper message in mind.

But what followed Jesus’ proclamation of belief as being the work of God was what the crowd perceived as a metaphor of eating the bread of life (“Him”) and drinking His blood in order to attain the “true life.” But, it wasn’t just a metaphor. He meant it to be understood at the proper time, and that we would believe the rest of His teachings and put them into practice.

Dear Lord, help us to believe all of your words and be with us as we put them into action. In Your Mighty Name we pray. Amen.

Don Bendure
Sunday School Teacher

Psalm 19, 46, 66, 67

Genesis 48:8-22

Romans 8:11-25

John 6:27-40

MONDAY, MARCH 7TH

Prayer “Heavenly Father give me the strength and courage to face my faults and weaknesses but also the courage to make changes to honor you so that I can walk as Christ did. Thank you for the greatest gift of all, your love and patience.”

Maria McDaniel

Daughters of the King, Order of St. Luke’s, Order of Benedictine BSN,RN

Psalm 89:1-18, 89:19-52

Genesis 49:1-28

1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1

Mark 7:24-37



“SO THEN DEAR FRIENDS, SHUN IDOLATRY. I SPEAK TO YOU AS MEN OF SENSE” (*CORINTHIANS 10:14*)

We share in the Lord’s cup, sharing the blood of the Lord. We break the bread of the Lord, sharing in His Body. Even though God has given us the freedom of choice to do as we want, He does not want us to partake of the Demon’s table. Though we are many, we all are one in God’s body but break bread together from one loaf.

The Lord created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in it and found it to be good. As we go about our daily lives, we enjoy the bounty that is provided by this world without so much as giving a thought to who created it or how it came to be. If I may be so bold as to say, some of us are too proud of our skills, education, jobs, professions, incomes and power we hold, that we forget who gave us these privileges/skills. The influence or positions bring us power we never thought we could attain. This in turn fills us with feelings of Grandiosity a type of self idolatry or self worship. Humans are so self absorbed or involved in fulfilling themselves with addictions such as food, drugs, alcohol, sex, money and materialism without regard to others. The constant seeking of bigger and better jobs, incomes, bigger/better vehicles, or bigger homes is a sick cycle seeking to fulfill a void that is in all of us. Yet, with the means and luxury that we have, without God, our lives will continue to be empty and remain unfulfilled. As much as we would love to close our eyes and deny that idolatry exists today, sadly it still does and in so many ways. Idolatry existed in Biblical times with the worshipping of animals, idolizing images, or creatures. Idolatry denotes the etymological divine worship given to an image and to anything or anyone but the true God.

Humans go about worshipping without even knowing. For when we place value on materialism, addictions, and hunger for money, power, popularity, pride, self importance, continue with self indulgence, and fill ourselves with vanity, this is Idolatry. The old method of worship of false gods, creatures, animals, and sacrifice of humans still continues although not as open and some have been replaced by modern means. What, you may say, “I don’t worship false gods or idols!” But when an altar, or place of honor or obsession in excess veneration, is given to an image whether it is an object or human, and when petitions of substance are asked or we place a trust in them for our own lives’ happiness, or for health, this is idolatry. For this place of honor, and this throne, belongs only to our Lord. We should not provoke the Lord’s wrath and jealousy.

Idolatry often happens when we stumble and fall away from our paths leading to our Lord. Ignorance because of distorted love, affection, veneration beyond measure for people, objects, or dependence on addictions. We are unfulfilled seeking to fill a void, and we find it easier to fill it with idolatry rather than seek Him, our Lord who has been patiently waiting for us to give us the Love that can fill that void. The world, as we know it, will come to an end. God will destroy it when He comes again. So place your focus where it belongs, in our Lord. Give Him that place of honor. For as Disciples, we must set the example and follow Christ as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1. “Follow my example as I follow Christ’s. We must not cause others to stumble and always bear in mind the welfare of others and not just think of ourselves.”

Continued on page 28



TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH

THE MIRACLE OF LOVE

Mark 8:1-10: In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat He called his disciples to Him and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes they will faint on the way and some of them have come from far away." And his disciples answered Him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" And He asked them, "How many loaves do you have? And they said "seven and a few small fish" And He directed the people to sit down and he took the seven loaves and the fish and after giving thanks He broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the people and they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces and there were seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately got on the boat and went to Dalmanutha.

My first three drafts of this were about the miracle of expanding the bread and fish to feed 4,000 people, but I didn't feel that was the message I was to convey. So the night before it was due, after I had said my prayers, I asked Jesus to tell me what I was to get out of this. I went to bed and went right to sleep, as I do almost every night. BUT this time, I woke up at 4:00am and knew that the real miracle was not the bread, but was the great love of Jesus! It was Jesus who felt sorry for the people because they had been there for three days and their food had run out.

Can you imagine how mesmerizing Jesus was that 4,000 people sat for three days? We fidget if the service lasts more than an hour. I think that must be what heaven is like. Jesus is so awe inspiring that we will be content to be still and listen to him.

There are a little over two weeks left in Lent. We know Jesus loves us. So I would like to propose that we each ask God what he wants St. Vincent's to do now that we are closing the school. It was our identity in the community, and we need a new one. Ask Jesus, and then be prepared to listen. When you get an answer, share it with the Dean or a member of the Vestry. Who knows what wonderful things Jesus could lead us into doing!

Heavenly Father, Lead us in the way you would have us change. Help us to spend more quiet time listening to you and following your instructions, so that we may do a better job of doing your will. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Polly Post
Co-chair, Dinners for 8
Retired school teacher/bookkeeper

Psalm 94, 95, 97, 99, 100
Genesis 49:29-50:14

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Mark 8:1-10



DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. ⁵ There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. ⁶ There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to all for their particular service. ⁷ **The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.** ⁸ The Spirit gives one person a message full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge. ⁹ One and the same Spirit gives faith to one person, while to another person he gives the power to heal. ¹⁰ The Spirit gives one person the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. To one person he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said. ¹¹ But it is one and the same Spirit who does all this; as he wishes, **he gives a different gift to each person.** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

These spiritual gifts are found in three passages:

Administration	Exhortation	Knowledge	Pastor/Shepherd	Tongues
Apostleship	Faith	Leadership	Prophecy	Interpretation of Tongues
Discernment	Giving	Mercy	Serving/Ministering	Wisdom
Evangelism	Healing	Miracles	Teaching	

Wow! Who knew there were so many spiritual gifts? I wish there were a “spiritual gift registry” that we could use to sign up for the ones we like! How do we know which gift God has given us? Sometimes the gifts are obvious to us—our gifted musicians, our devoted clergy—but what about the less obvious gifts?

Try to notice the things that seem to come naturally. Every spiritual gift gives off clues to make itself known. Your spiritual gift will cause you to react a certain way in a given situation. Once you've gathered enough information to create a list of some possible gifts (perhaps gifts of mercy, teaching, evangelism, encouragement, or hospitality), exercise your options. A great place to start is right here at church. While you're trying it out, you'll start to discern whether you're good at it or not. (Also, note that part of learning what you're good at is having to go through the pain of learning what you're *not* good at. Don't despair!) Our gifts will be discovered when we are in submission to God, available to Him, and asking of Him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we ask Your guidance for this day. We ask that You help us to discover which spiritual gifts You have given to each of us and that You bestow on us a servant's heart. Amen.

Rebecca Cervantes
Paralegal

Psalm 101, 109:1-30, 119:121-144

Genesis 50:15-26

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Mark 8:11-26



THURSDAY, MARCH 10TH

HELP US TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND

“But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned...” Psalm 73:16,17

How this verse resonates with me! Over the years I have learned (and should be able to remember) that when writing on spiritual matters, all is a jumble of thoughts until I spend time in a chapel with God. In silent prayer, my thoughts seem to focus as I plead for God to help me find the right words. It’s happened again. I couldn’t get anywhere with today’s readings until I stepped away from the ordinary—the things that needed to be done and the distractions that call to me on a regular basis. I am reminded of how important it is to take time away to really be with God, be quiet, and listen.

The psalmist records his thoughts in a song to remind the singer of what really matters. He begins by recognizing God is good to Israel and those with a pure heart. He realized he was about to get himself into a lot of trouble. He saw that the wicked, or unfaithful, did not suffer the trials he experienced on a daily basis. He saw their prosperity, their enjoyment of their riches, of plenteous food and drink, the pride they flaunted, and their viciousness as they ridiculed and threatened him and others, especially the faithful among God’s people. They questioned and spoke against God and spread their falsehood to others so much so that the faithful had difficulty seeing their faults for the selfish and indulgent behaviors they were. (sound familiar?) These people were arrogant, and the writer realized that he was jealous of them.

The psalmist asks if he has been faithful in vain, as his life seemed so much more difficult than the unfaithful. When he thought about it, he couldn’t understand how his innocence and obedience resulted in ridicule and reproach while the arrogant seemed to enjoy an easy life. He couldn’t reconcile his thoughts until he went into the sanctuary of God where he was able to see the reality of their road to ruin. There, he recognized that God was with him, guiding him by his right hand. Nothing on earth was more precious and important to him than God. Everyone chooses to walk either toward, or away from God, according to his true desires. Let us continue on our path toward God.

Heavenly Father, we are easily led astray. Help us to discern and choose your ways. Keep us from the deceptions and arrogance of the world around us. May our lives be an example and influence to those who seek you and to those who do not yet know you. Protect us with your guiding hand and lead us into your Sanctuary so that we may hear your voice and know your will, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Cindy Crook
St. Vincent’s Bookstore Manager

Psalm 69:1-38, 73

Exodus 1:6-22

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Mark 8:27-9:1



MEDITATION ON PSALM 107

"O Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious and His mercy endureth for ever. Let them give thanks whom the Lord has redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy."

We found this to be a very interesting Psalm. God's people seemed to be constantly straying and getting into trouble. Some strayed from the way, others became hungry and thirsty. Others became miserable and downhearted. Still others rebelled against God and His ways. God was always there, but let them do their own thing until they finally turned back to Him. God, then, regardless of their situation, stepped in to rescue and restore them.

How many times do we, like them, get caught up in the world's activities and go our own way (and like them get ourselves into trouble). Yet, when we turn back to the Lord, He will hear us and restore us as He did them. Thank God. He never changes and is the same God yesterday, today, and forever.

To us, this is saying that until we seek God's will, we, too, will go astray and find ourselves not in accordance with God's plan for us. Thank God. He will come to our "rescue" like He did in Psalm 107 for His children.

Prayer

O God, help me to turn to you first for your guidance and help, and stop trying to 'go it alone' without you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Bob and Nina Barcus

Kairos and Lay ministers
Accountant and retired educator

Psalm 95, 102, 107:1-32

Exodus 2:1-22

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3

Mark 9:2-13



SATURDAY, MARCH 12TH

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.

When Jesus was asked what is the most important commandment, he responded, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love. Jesus teaches us to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Love. Jesus commands us to "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Love. It is not just important. It is essential.

But what does it look like? In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul teaches us. Take a moment to reread verses 4-7. Now read it again, but this time replace the words "Love is" with "I am". I am patient. I am kind. I do not envy. I do not boast. I am not proud. I do not dishonor others. I am not self-seeking. I am not easily angered. I keep no record of wrongs. I do not delight in evil but rejoice with the truth. I always protect. I always trust. I always hope. I always persevere. Does this describe you? It sure doesn't describe me! I want it to. I can even talk myself into believing that I am almost there, that several of these characteristics really do accurately describe me. But when I swallow my pride and take an honest look inside my heart, I know this is so very far from being the truth about me. I have such a long way to go.

To see this perfected, we need only turn our eyes toward Jesus Christ. For in His sacrificial death on the cross for us, He is the epitome and embodiment of this kind of love. As Christians, we are to be a reflection of Christ. So, perhaps, this should become one of our Lenten devotions: we should strive to display this type of love to those whose paths we cross in our daily lives. We should love and accept others as they are, not as we want them to be. We should love people without conditions, always looking for ways to put them before ourselves. We should love with a completely selfless love. Let us love one another, just as Christ has loved us.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your perfect love. During this Lenten season and throughout the year, fill us with your grace and love, and help us, and teach us, to love one another, just as you have loved us. In Your Son's name we pray, Amen.

Rhett Golsan
Usher
Elementary Art Teacher

Psalm 107:33-43, 108:1-13, 33

Exodus 2:23-3:15

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Mark 9:14-29



CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

Phil 3:20-21 “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

In St. Paul’s day, only a small proportion of the people who lived within the Roman Empire were Roman citizens. Those citizens enjoyed special rights and privileges (e.g., legal protections, government benefits) that were denied to others, but they also bore responsibilities that non-citizens did not (e.g. the possibility of being drafted into military or government service). Roman citizens knew what their status was worth, and they were fiercely proud of it. The sense of honor and self-discipline Roman citizenship inculcated in its bearer’s hearts helped a small city on the Tiber River subject virtually the entire known world to its power.

Paul has this in mind when he says that Christians have a “citizenship in heaven.” As heavenly citizens, we will enjoy the privilege of a resurrection life similar to that shown forth in our Savior’s risen glory. But, we also have a responsibility to walk with the high dignity reserved for the people of God, and not grovel in the dust of this fallen world like “enemies of the cross of Christ.” The Christian must not follow in the path of those whose “god is their bell, and [who] glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.” We must have mature minds and disciplined hearts in order to become effective soldiers of Christ and ambassadors of the Lord who has “the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” If you and I had a sense of honor consistent with the exalted status received at our baptisms, and a self-discipline appropriate to our other-worldly citizenship, what might we accomplish for the Kingdom of God?

The Rev. Randall W. Foster
St. Vincent’s School, Bedford, Texas
Chaplain & Upper School Instructor

Priest-in-Charge, St. Michael’s Anglican Church, Richland Hills, Texas
The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth of the Anglican Church in North America

Psalm 118, 145

Exodus 3:16-4:12

Romans 12:1-21

John 8:46-59



MONDAY, MARCH 14TH

BECAUSE OF FAITH, GOD IS ALWAYS OUR REFUGE

Our Family has gone through various challenges. Our faith elevated us to have the strength to overcome all the road blocks in our way. Our world is full of challenges that are catastrophic, but faith is the only insurance that keeps us strong.

People are mistreated and lonely, but with faith, problems are simplified. With faith, we take one day at a time. The human spirit is so strong, it is capable of overcoming all challenges as long as there is faith.

Our father, let us have faith for all our challenges. Free me from the trap that is set for me for you are my Refuge. Amen.

Helen Serwanga
Secretary

Psalms 31, 35

Exodus 4:10-31

1 Corinthians 14:1-19

Mark 9:30-41

TUESDAY, MARCH 15TH

Each one of you has a testimony to give. Where would you be if it had not been for the LORD? Your testimony may bring someone to salvation. You should tell it and give praise to him who sits on high, for he deserves all the glory for the wonders he works in our lives.

My prayer to you is what Paul wrote to the people of Colosse. May the LORD strengthen you with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, and the forgiveness of sins.

Cyrus Campbell
Vestry Member, Sunday School Teacher, Corporate Paralegal

Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127

Exodus 5:1-6:1

1 Corinthians 14:20-33a, 39-40

Mark 9:42-50



IF IT HAD NOT BEEN THE LORD WHO WAS ON OUR SIDE

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—let Israel now say— 2 if it had not been the LORD who was on our side when people rose up against us, 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; 4 then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; 5 then over us would have gone the raging waters. 6 Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth! 7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Psalms 124

Psalms 124 is a chapter fully dedicated to giving the God of Israel glory, honor, and praise for saving his people from their troubles. The first verse, although fragmented, is the most profound of the whole chapter. How many times have we said to ourselves or testified to others, if it had not been for the LORD on my side, I would not be here today?

I often testify of an incident that has been edged into my memory. One day, I was driving and approached a four way stoplight. There were large buildings on the corners of the intersection ahead, so I could not see traffic coming from either direction. Seconds before I entered the intersection, something touched me and time stopped. During that moment, I saw a black SUV racing through the intersection. My instant reaction was to slam on my brakes. The next moment, a black SUV shot from behind the building on my left through the intersection just as I had seen it seconds before. The accident would have claimed my life. Verse 7 reads that “we have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped!” It was nothing but his grace and mercy that allowed me to escape the snare, but only for his purpose, which is to serve him and declare the Kingdom of Heaven. The Apostle Timothy (2 Tim 4:17-18) stated “*the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed... The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.*”

The psalmist also wants us to think about what our life would be like if the LORD was not on our side. If we did not have God on our side when people turned against us, their anger would eat us up, the flood would engulf us, the torrent would sweep over us, the raging waters would have taken us away (verses 3-5). But then he shouts in verse 6, “*Praise be to the Lord!*” The scripture is evidence that the path to thanksgiving is to take our experiences and celebrate how the Lord delivers us from our troubles (Psalms 34:17). We are here to sing about those times when God shows his glory, and how the LORD sets us free, how he keeps our head above water, how he saved us from being swallowed alive. He keeps us from the traps they have laid for us and from the snares of evildoers! (Psalms 141:9)

Continues on page 36



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16TH

LET GOD SHINE THROUGH YOU!

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

Have you turned on the news and listened to what is happening to our world? It is scary! Sometimes, we feel so overwhelmed and helpless because we think there isn't anything we can do. During those times, we need to spread God's word to all who will listen. It is a time that we all need the encouragement God has for us, and as Christians, we have the words to give that encouragement to others.

This year, our dear school is going to have to shut its doors after educating and caring for students for 53 years. This has been a traumatic blow to everyone who has been touched by the blessings of St. Vincent's School. That blessing has reached many in an infinite number of ways. God is good. He has given us his word, and those of us in the trenches have depended on his word to help us through this time. We pray with, and for, each other every day. God is rewarding us with many new experiences and paths on which to travel. We realize our ministry does not stop just because conditions may change. We need to continue to minister and spread God's word in all circumstances. This is a good lesson for all of us. We need to spread God's word through our prayers, words, and actions where ever we go. Those words are what give us, and those that hear, the strength we need to carry on.

When we share God's word, some will accept it as a blessing, a sweet perfume from heaven above. Some will not. Be not discouraged! God has given us the authority through his spirit in our hearts, to spread his word with sincerity and love. He will bless those who minister his word and to those who believe. Be blessed, and be a blessing. "Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant..."2 Cor. 3:4-6.

Dear Lord, grant us the strength and wisdom to spread your word to all that will bear. Give us the confidence to minister to others as we see them struggling through life. Let us minister to them through our prayers, our words, and our actions. Help us to spread the sweet aroma of life and show people that God's love penetrates through all circumstances. Amen.

Laurie Connelly

Teacher and Assistant Head of School at St. Vincent's School

Psalm 119:145-176, 128, 129, 130

Exodus 7:8-24

2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

Mark 10:1-16



JUDGEMENT DAY

Psalm 131: "my eyes are not raised too high"

Exodus 7:25-8:19: "But the Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them"

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face" ; "we all...are being changed into his (Lord's) likeness"

Mark 10:17-31: "Sell what you have, give it to the poor,.....come and follow me."

In the last reading, Jesus stated this to a rich man. The disciples then asked if they would be saved since they had done what he asked. He answered "But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

There are many ways to interpret this statement. One way is to think of Adam and all the people who have lived until now. It means that we will be judged first. Another interpretation can review the development of religion, first Jacob, and then Israel, the Gentiles, and Christians. We will also be judged first. Next is the idea of saints, martyrs, bishops, priests, lay persons, and the congregations. Most of us would again consider our place to be last, and therefore, first, in judgment by God and Jesus.

But the real interpretation may be by humility, or faith. Where exactly do we stand now? Even the disciples were worried about their judgment. David's psalm indicated that he did not raise his eyes too high. Pharaoh hardened his heart. Jesus suffered the ultimate humiliation and judgment of man for us, the dead, the living, and those to come after us. Our place in line should not be our concern. We will be judged any way God chooses.

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus who saved us. Help us to not judge ourselves or others, but to focus on the present time where we can become more in your likeness. We pray to lose our hardness of heart and pride, and to improve our spirit and faith. We know with God nothing is impossible. Amen.

Marilyn Keith
Retired Teacher

Psalm 131, 132, 133, 140, 142

Exodus 7:25-8:19

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Mark 10:17-31



FRIDAY, MARCH 18TH

FRAGRANT OIL

Can you just imagine what your world would be like if everyone walked with peace and harmony with one another? You can start by being the catalyst toward making it happen where you live your life every day. Begin your day by investing quality time in the Word and in prayer. These elements will help you flourish and blossom with the newness set before you on a daily basis.

Psalm 133:1-2 "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!"

The precious oil illustrates “brother dwelling together in unity.” The oil used to anoint Aaron was holy anointing oil that was a mixture of four spices in olive oil: myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia. They were different spices mixed together to make a wonderful fragrance—a holy oil. What a picture of unity. It is a picture of very different people, yet people who are united.

These spices mixed together with oil became holy oil. It was not the oil that was holy but the mixture. By themselves, the spices could not make a holy oil. God did not ask for three measurements of myrrh, but required four different spices. God could have used just one spice, but He did not do that. It is a great reminder for us that we need each other to make up the body of Jesus Christ.

God puts one race with another race, parents with children, wealthy with the poor, the lazy with the diligent. He has mixed different spices together and called it the body of Jesus Christ—the Church—Christians! He calls us to live in harmony and unity. We are family! Do more than imagine: ACT!

Dear Lord, thank you for the variety of your people I get to speak with and be with every day. Thank you for our differences, and our unity in You. May we see each other as you see us, with your eyes of love and compassion. Let us enjoy each other in every situation, always aware of you alive in each of your children. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Michelle Briggs

Oblate, Order of St. Benedict. Order of St. Luke's

Psalm 22, 95, 133, 141, 143:1-12

Exodus 9:13-35

2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Mark 10:32-45

**IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE**

And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:48-49)

Joseph loved his foster son, Jesus. His sole duty was to protect this child entrusted to him. When Jesus was young, Joseph took his family to safety in Egypt and, after Herod's death, returned to settle in the remote district of Galilee, where Jesus grew up in the village of Nazareth, obscured from the attention of the rulers in Jerusalem. Later, when Jesus stayed in the temple, Joseph and Mary searched for three days before they found him safe and sound. Imagine the distress they felt!

Now, meditate for a moment: Imagine the distress that God our Father feels when he cannot "find" our souls lifting up in prayer and thanksgiving to Him...

Commentary on Romans 4:13-18 in the ESV Study Bible imparts that, despite our imperfect faith, we enjoy the gift of God's unmerited favor—His grace. We, His people, will displease Him, and God may chastise us, but He will not allow us to fail. In reading Psalm 89, we are reassured that God the Father's love is steadfast and faithful...even when it might sometimes *feel like* God has abandoned His promise.

God, our ultimate Father, we are sorry that we so often displease You. We praise You. We give thanks for Your gift of grace which inspires us to be our very best selves and to constantly be present for You in praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Warren T. Jackson
Lay reader, Adult Sunday School Teacher, Vestry
Psychologist

Psalm 89:1-29

2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16

Romans 4:13-18

Luke 2:41-52



PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 20TH

“BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's....

....The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

...For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.

as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. "Psalm 103:1-5,8,11-12

There are days in one's life where God's blessings are abundantly clear. We can see His hand; we can feel His care for us. Our response may be to recite a prayer of thanksgiving where we list all that is on our mind to be thankful for: thank you God for my husband, my children, my parents, your provisions for us, my church, etc. I believe with all that is in me that this response pleases God. However, there are other days and responses that I believe bring Him perhaps more pleasure; these are the days when we don't quite know how to pray. These are the days in one's life where God's hand and love and presence can be felt and seen in such a physical way that we are overcome with the magnitude of what it says about God's very real presence in our life. On these days we catch a glimpse of God's power and love for us that leaves us wordless. On these days, we better see who we are in relationship to God.

Sometimes these days present because of unimaginable blessings, and other times these days present because of inexpressible sorrow. These are the days when it is harder to pray. But, these are the days when our very souls call out to God. I can recall a day where my sorrow felt so heavy, that I had no words. I wanted and needed God, but there was nothing left within me to pray. And yet, my soul called out to God. It called out to hear the promises of God. I needed to hear of Him, “who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good. (Psalm 103:4-5).”

Beyond the days of sorrow are the days of such joy that we are overcome with God's goodness. Several months ago I experienced a moment of overwhelming appreciation for what God was doing in my family's life. It was as if I had a glimpse behind the veil and could see, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. (Psalm 103:11).” On this day I wanted to shout my thanksgiving for this love, but none of my words felt adequate. I see now that nothing I could have prayed equals the response found in Psalm 103:1, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!”

Heavenly Father, We thank You that on days when we feel unequal to praying, You do not leave us unequipped. Thank you for the gift of your Word, rich in promises and rich in right responses to You. May we each grow closer to You through the study of your Holy Word. Amen.

Keal Cleveland, Wife, Mother and Real Estate Broker

Psalm 24, 29, 103

Zechariah 9:9-12, 12:9-11

1 Timothy 6:12-16

Luke 19:41-48



BEARING FRUIT FOR CHRIST

I remember those olden days when I was a young boarding student in Junior High School back in Uganda, how, every so often, we sneaked out of school on Saturdays to go and scavenge for mangoes. I remember how glad we felt whenever we landed on a mango tree that had so many mangoes that the owner did not mind us taking all we wanted. However, often such trips also took us into the wild to search for fruit. The most disappointing moment came when we went to a location where we had harvested fruit the previous year, but, for some reason, found none on our second visit. The walk back to school was always sad and miserable – filled with disappointment, and anger – indeed the return trip always seemed longer and very tiresome.

So, I can very clearly understand Jesus' frustration when he found no fruit on that tree.

It is true, many people have spoken out in defense of the fruitless fig-tree -after all, even the author also adds that 'it was not the season for figs. This does not necessarily mean that Jesus was totally unaware of the 'out-of-season' nature of fig trees, especially the one onto which he sought to pluck fruit.

Just like other numerous episodes in Jesus' ministry, this too had a message beyond what appears on the surface. Yes, it is true, that going by the fig trees' calendar, it was not the season for bearing fruit; but Jesus is not addressing fig trees per se, instead he uses the moment to teach a deeper truth. Such truth that is applicable to all Christians that unlike the fig trees which only bear fruit in certain seasons and not others, Christians or followers of Jesus must bear fruit in and out of season. Our light must shine both day and night. Our lifestyles must manifest the true nature of who Jesus is by always emulating him. Therefore, too, there is no season when Christians are excused from bearing fruit. Ours is an all year round expectation – whether we are sad or happy, rich or poor, tired or not!!

As students in Jesus' class (or disciples), we are constantly reminded of the obligation to bear fruit which pretty much implies having some evidence to prove our affiliation and allegiance with Jesus.

Just like those unhappy days during our times in the boarding school, it grieves Jesus to find no fruit on us – especially when the 'master has need of it'.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, make my heart one with you and your Son, so that I may bear fruit that brings you glory and honor. Help me know that there is no season for being yours and one for straying away from you. Being constantly yours, help me always to manifest your holiness thereby keeping light burning to illumine to the darkness that surrounds me in this dark world. Amen.

The Rev. John S. Kalimi,
Vicar, African Fellowship

Psalm 51:1-20, 69:1-23
Lamentations 1:1-2, 6-12

2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Mark 11:12-25



TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 22ND

THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS' AUTHORITY

Mark 11:27-33 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus was not unfamiliar with people questioning his authority during His life, and He is not unfamiliar with people questioning His authority still today. While being challenged by the high priests, Jesus responds to their inquiry with a question back to them. It is a question that creates a challenge back to the high priests. Jesus is not avoiding the question, but it presents more of an exposure of the lack of clarity that they might have of their own beliefs and understanding of Jesus and God, Our Father.

Every day, we are faced with the same challenge and the same questions that Jesus was faced with. Who are you, and why do you have the authority to believe how you believe? We should ask ourselves what we believe, and why we believe, daily. The more we can answer the question of why we believe, and why His word is our guide and compass, then the closer we become to Jesus. It makes us stronger in faith and in determination.

Heavenly Father, Thank you for giving us the strength to know You and to learn from You. Thank you for giving us guidance to understand You and Your Word. Please continue to give us the tools to help others know you and understand Your Gifts of Grace and Love.

Bradley and Doreen Mengwasser
Elementary School Principals

Psalm 6, 12, 94

Lamentations 1:17-22

2 Corinthians 1:8-22

Mark 11:27-33



WORKING SALVATION IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH

Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Psalm 74:12

In Psalm 74, the psalmist expresses excruciating anguish and despair. God’s temple has been completely destroyed by the enemies of His chosen people. Adding to the utter distress that the psalmist is voicing for God’s people is God’s silence amidst the ruins and the absence of any sign of His presence.

After describing the destruction of the temple and lamenting and questioning God’s silence, the psalmist recounts God’s saving works in the midst of the earth, especially His parting of the Red Sea during the Exodus. Upon remembering God’s past deeds, including His glorious creation, the psalmist prays to God.

This psalm teaches us how to endure those personal trials in our life when God seems so far away from us. We can remember all his past acts of deliverance in our life and persevere in prayer, trusting He is present and listening even when we don’t feel like He is near.

Collectively, as His people, on Good Friday *we* will be filled with anguish as we lament the destruction of God’s temple - the very body of Jesus. But on Easter ,our tears will give way to “Alleluias” as we celebrate God raising up the temple on the third day, the day when He most gloriously worked “salvation in the midst of the earth.”

Almighty God, we thank you that you are always present in our lives even during those times when we fail to perceive you. We thank you that in your great mercy you sent your Beloved Son to live among us and that through His death, resurrection, and ascension you have raised us up to New Life. Amen.

Metah Boroughs
All Saints Choir
Former Teacher

Psalm 55, 74
Lamentations 2:1-9

2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11

Mark 12:1-11



MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 24TH

WHERE IS JESUS SENDING YOU?

Mark 14:12 "And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the passover?""

This is the beginning of the Gospel Reading for the Daily Office for this day. And it struck me that the disciples said to Jesus, Where will you have us go?, Where shall we prepare for you to eat the Passover? Yes, indeed, where will Jesus send his disciples? Where will Jesus send us, his followers? And if Jesus sends us, will we go, as his disciples did? If one continues to read this passage, we find that Jesus gives to his disciples specific instructions of what they are to do and where they are to go! And the disciples follow those instructions. They Listen to Jesus, and they follow His directions. They go to the upper room, and they prepare the Passover meal and Jesus institutes for them and for us and for the world the Eucharistic Feast.

The world would NEVER be the same again. All the disciples did was talk to Jesus, and listen to Jesus, and follow what He told them and the world changed forever.

The church calls for us to pray and follow the steps of Jesus in this the Great Sacred Triduum of the year. (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Great Vigil of Easter). Let us bend our knees to Jesus and ask Him, Where will you have us go? And then let us be silent, and let us listen for that still small voice, and then follow and do what Jesus tells us. In doing so, we may change the world, and it may NEVER be the same again.

Collect for Maundy Thursday:

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, did institute the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive the same in remembrance of him who in these holy mysteries giveth us a pledge of life eternal, the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

Deacon Kerwin Wade
St. Vincent's Cathedral

Psalm 102, 142, 143

Lamentations 2:10-18

1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32

Mark 14:12-25



HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DESPAIR

"For the Lord will not cast off forever, but though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of man: Lamentations 3:31-33.

First, a note about the day. If Christ was crucified this day, why is Good Friday called good? Because by his death, freely offered, Jesus showed his great love for mankind, taking on himself the sins of the whole world. And only by means of his death, could there be his glorious resurrection on Easter.

The book of Lamentations consists of five poems lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 b.c. In our passage, the author has entered into the sorrow and despair of the Jewish people. In the midst of this, he still remembers the loving compassion of God and cries out in prayer, urging the people to do likewise.

Let me reflect; in times of pain, sorrow, and disappointment, do I remember the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God? Do I remember that this life is transitory and Jesus promises to raise us with him on the last day? Do I appreciate, even in disappointment, my family, friends, home food and clothing, all provided by a loving and merciful God? What we see and experience now is not the end. Jesus shows us final victory in his resurrection to the right hand of the Father.

Prayer, Lord Jesus, help me to cling to you more closely, knowing that in the midst of suffering, despair, and even death, victory lies ahead. Thank you. Amen.

The Very Rev. William a. Crary, Jr.
Dean Emeritus
Diocese of Fort Worth

Psalm 22, 40:1-19, 54, 95

Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-33

1 Peter 1:10-20

John 13:36-38



HOLY SATURDAY, MARCH 26TH

HELP! I NEED SOME REST!

“Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.”

Nobody can rest while he is still working. In order to **rest**, a person must stop his own activities! Reading through all the passages above, this is the one that spoke to my heart.

I don't know why it amazes me that time after time, God speaks to me through His word. All I have to do is just open my bible and **rest** in his word. His word can reward even the smallest amount of faith. God's word is powerful: it always achieves its purpose. When I am exhausted by the struggles of life, when the world seems to be caving in around me, when I don't know what to do, He is there to guide me through, with His living word. He gives me **rest**. As Christians, we should not strive to earn favor with God, but we should strive to enter His **rest** by living our lives trusting and obeying Him.

But there is no reward for unbelief, just ask the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years. They had no faith in God's promises; time and time again, they trusted themselves more than God. The author of Hebrews implores us not to imitate them!

God in His mercy sent us a great high priest, Jesus. Jesus had the same troubles that are part of everyone's experience in this world. He knows what it means to be tired and hungry. He felt extreme stress. Often, people were trying to kill him! And because Jesus obeyed God completely, his work as our chief priest was completely successful. He dealt with **all our sin**. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom signifying that the way into God's presence was open for everyone. What an amazing gift of love, that God should sacrifice His only son for you and me.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your son. Help us to know that we can rest in your love by trusting in your promises and obeying your word.

Veronica Phillpott
Daughters of the King, Newcomers Committee
Lab Technician at Dannon

Psalm 95, 88, 27
Lamentations 3:37-58

Hebrews 4:1-16

Romans 8:1-11



ALLELUIA, HE IS RISEN. THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED.

On that first Easter Sunday, the women had no idea they needed to prepare themselves to be amazed. They arose early after the Sabbath and went to the tomb of Jesus to finish the burial preparations of his body. Can you imagine the shock they found when the tomb was empty? Can you imagine the disbelief they held when the angel tells them Jesus has risen? Can you imagine the initial fear in their hearts when Jesus himself stood in their midst? But with just a few words from Jesus, all that shock, disbelief, and fear turned to great joy. In fact, they were filled with so much joy that they had to share the news. Their joy was overflowing.

The women immediately run back to the apostles to tell them the good news. In disbelief, Peter and John sprint to the tomb and find it empty. Later that night, Jesus would come among them, show him his wounds, eat with them, and then bless them with his peace. He would conclude with a promise of the coming power of God, and they are told to wait in the city until the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

With the Easter day Resurrection of Jesus, and ultimately His Ascension to the Father, the Holy Spirit is then unleashed upon the follower of Jesus to unite them to God and to one another: to make them the Body of Christ; the Church.

Living in the power of His Resurrection is the goal of the Christian life. We are given the chance to open our hearts to the Spirit of God and to allow Him to lead us in the ways of holiness, peace, and love. It isn't just the intellectual acceptance to a body of knowledge that makes us Christian. It is the willingness to walk in the power of God, a power that can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. The world will know we are Christians not because we say so, but because it sees the power of God's love reflected out from us in the way we encounter others day to day.

For 40 days, we have anticipated this morning. We have walked our Lenten journey longing to hear the words of a message that not only changed our lives, but changed the entire world. "Alleluia, Christ is Risen". To which we reply, "the Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia". Beginning from this day on, we, too, have the opportunity to live in the power of His Resurrection. We have the opportunity to make the most of the second chance that God has given us.

Today, prepare to be amazed as we gather before the Lord in his House and hear the Good News of His Resurrection. But it doesn't stop on Easter Sunday. Go forward preparing to be amazed at the power of God working in you. The transforming love of Jesus Christ can be on display in each of our lives, and it all began on this day, when God did something so remarkable it changed the world forever. Alleluia, He is Risen!

The Very Reverend Ryan S. Reed
Dean, St. Vincent's Cathedral
Bedford, Texas

Psalms 113, 114, 118, 148, 149, 150

Exodus 12:1-14 Isaiah 51:9-11 John 1:1-18 John 20:19-23 Luke 24:13-35



LENTEN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Stations of the Cross

Our regular schedule of daily services is offered throughout Lent in addition to Stations of the Cross at 6:00 p.m.
Stations of the Cross & Sermon is followed by
a light Lenten Meal at 6:45 p.m.
The Nursery is available.

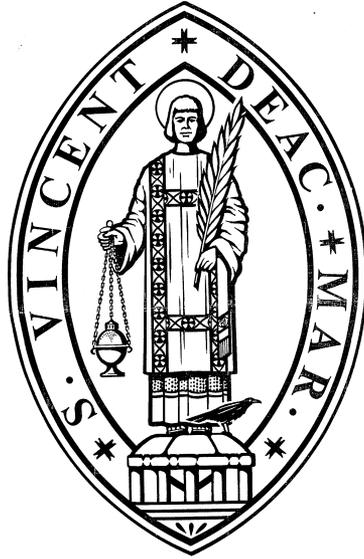
Feb 17	The Rev. Ron Drummond St. Stephen's, Hurst	I Am a Child of God
Feb 24	The Rev. Greg Crosthwait St. Mark's, Arlington	Prayer Works
Mar 2	The Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker Bishop III of Fort Worth	The Bible is the Absolute Authority in My Life
Mar 9	The Rev. Andrew Petta St. Barnabas', Keller	True Love is Sacrificial
Mar 16	The Rev. Lance Lormand St. Andrew's, Fort Worth	We are All made in God's Image



Holy Week Services

The Nursery is available for all services during Holy Week.

Sunday March 20	PALM SUNDAY (with procession of palms) 7:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m., Choral Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Choral Eucharist
Monday March 21	7:00 p.m., Holy Eucharist
Tuesday March 22	10:30 a.m., Mass of Collegiality 7:00 p.m., Holy Eucharist
Wednesday March 23	7:00 p.m., Holy Eucharist
Thursday March 24	7:30 p.m., Maundy Thursday Liturgy Altar of Repose
Friday March 25	7:30 p.m., Good Friday Liturgy
Saturday March 26	9:00 a.m., Holy Saturday Liturgy Sunset (approx. 8:00 p.m.), Easter Vigil
Sunday March 27	EASTER SUNDAY 7:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:00 a.m., Choral Eucharist Easter Egg Hunt/Reception 11:15 a.m., Choral Eucharist



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The Very Rev. Ryan S. Reed – Dean of the Cathedral
The Rev. Richard A. Cantrell – Assistant
The Rev. Alan S. Horton - Assistant
The Rev. John S. Kalimi - Vicar - African Fellowship
The Rev. Kerwin K. Wade - Deacon
Alissa Davis – Music Director & Organist
Barbara Marquart-Burton – Music Director Emerita

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