

DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS 2017

PRAYER, MEDITATION & STUDY



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL



ST. VINCENT'S CATHEDRAL 2017 LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The following Lenten meditations have been prepared by members, friends, and clergy of St. Vincent's Cathedral based on the Lectionary readings for each day of Lent. Beginning with Ash Wednesday and moving through Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and finally, Easter Sunday, this book will allow us to journey together through the Season that points to our salvation.

Lent calls us to "holy" preparation. Through study, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and worship, we prepare ourselves to remember and recall the saving events of our Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Please feel free to share these devotions with friends, family, and neighbors. Additional copies of this booklet can be picked up from the parish office.

I want to thank each person who has contributed prayerfully to this project. Each year it is a daily gift to hear how God is working in the lives of His people. Most importantly, I want to thank Susan Frey, who as the chief editor and organizer of this project, makes this Devotional Booklet possible.

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



MARCH 1ST

ASH WEDNESDAY

By the longstanding custom of many centuries, Ash Wednesday is the day for each of us to adopt a Lenten Rule of Life, a specific discipline that we will try to live by for the next six weeks. It is meant to help us keep a devout and holy Lent. Traditionally, it involves giving up certain things and taking on certain things in order to strengthen our spiritual will power and to bring us closer to God and to His will for our lives. Many people give up things like sweets, caffeine, or alcohol, and take on things like participation in weekly devotion like Stations of the Cross or attendance at a weekday mass or Bible study.

Each year, I like to return to a favorite formula that I try to recall and put into practice each day. It is attributed to Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger (who served in the early 1960's), and I commend it to you for your daily devotions.

Fast from criticism, and feast on praise;
Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy;
Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;
Fast from jealousy, and feast on love;
Fast from pride, and feast on humility;
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service;
Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

In addition, try praying this short verse several times a day: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:11)

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

Psalm 95, 32, 143, 102, 130;
Jonah 3:1-4:11; Hebrews 12:1-14; Luke 18:9-14

THURSDAY, MARCH 2ND

DO NOT PASS JUDGEMENT ON ONE ANOTHER

“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgement on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgement on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Romans 14



With a quick read of Romans 14, Paul appears to be talking about two specific areas of dispute between the new Christians and the Jews. The issues are unclean versus clean food and proper respect for the Sabbath. However, the heading at the beginning says **“Do Not Pass Judgement on One Another.”** That is a good synopsis of the chapter. For instance, if one believes a food is “unclean” then to that person it is unclean; while to others, all food might be “clean.” The common requirement is that we thank God for the food, then we eat as our belief tell us. Likewise, the Jews had very strict beliefs regarding the Sabbath; the Christian’s attitude was much less restrictive. Remember, in Luke 14 when the Pharisees challenged Jesus for healing on the Sabbath?

The important message is that no matter how we think of food or how we choose to respect the Sabbath, it is not our position to judge others because they think differently. This concept is not confined to limited subjects; it’s a lesson on how we react to those we encounter who think differently. It’s a matter of respect for others and is not a natural tendency; to develop a Christian attitude toward those with whom we disagree requires work and prayer. Do not let your criticism become the reason someone stumbles or discounts his own beliefs.

Our most kind and merciful Heavenly Father, we thank you for the many blessings you have given us. We thank you for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Church and its clergy, the parishioners who put forth the extra effort that keeps our church going, and our good health. God, we ask you to help us refrain from judging or being critical of others that have beliefs that differ from our own. Help us to develop a Christ-like attitude when dealing with others. Amen.

Jake Hart

Psalm 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Genesis 35:1-20; Genesis 37; Romans 14; Matthew 24:29-end

FRIDAY, MARCH 3RD

THE CATALYST

The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Matthew 25:40

The man lay on the downtown sidewalk, sleeping against a building beside an overfilled parking lot. His coat was his blanket; his arm was his pillow. He wore only one shoe. On his other foot, he wore a sock with a hole worn in it so large that his entire big toe was exposed. Thankfully, I noticed his other shoe beside him; at least both his feet would have some protection from the elements when he awoke. The few possessions he had were beside him, including a walker with a tray on top of it similar to the one my grandfather uses from time to time. I watched as a lady and a man walked to their parked car, which just so happened to be the one right beside the man. They noticed him



lying there. The man opened the passenger door for her and she got in. Perhaps he was being a gentleman, or perhaps he was wanting to be a barrier of protection between her and the sight. I watched as they fumbled around for a minute, the car door still open. The gentleman then proceeded to walk over and place a banana, a Coke, and two other items on the sleeping man's tray. The gentleman looked down at the sleeping one but must have decided against disturbing him. After that they left – a small, simple act of compassion seemingly unnoticed by the world.

I witnessed God's love in action in many lives that day. I was not there when the man awoke, but I can picture it in my mind. Surely, he would find these small gifts that were left for him and realize that somebody cares about him. Somebody loves him. Somebody saw him and knew he IS important if simply for no other reason than he is a human like you and me. Hopefully, he would acknowledge that despite his circumstances and hardships, God is still with him, loving him and watching over him. As for the couple, I know that God placed that compassion and love in their hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit. And I know how infectious that love can be. Once you experience it, whether by giving or being the recipient, it changes you. The love grows inside you, and you want more and more of it.

But that is not the end of this story. God took that one small act of love and He is spreading it still. I do not know if I was the only one who witnessed it, but I do know that God let me see it. He put it in my heart, and I know I am changing because of it. And now, I have been given the opportunity to share it with you. How can we spread God's love each day? Is it a large act of service or a simple smile and hello to someone who you may not even realize really needs it? I encourage you to find a way each day, whether great or small, to share God's love with others. The most interesting thing about all of this? I didn't even want to be downtown that day, but now I understand just how important it was for me to be in that particular place at that particular moment in time.

Heavenly Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit fill us with the love of Your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, so that we might become a reflection of You, shining Your light and Your love in this world which so desperately needs it. Please open our eyes and our hearts so that we may find ways to help and serve others, and in doing so let us remember we are honoring and serving You. In Your Son's precious name, we pray. Amen.

Rhett Golsan
Elementary Art Teacher

Psalm 15, 16, 17, 18
Genesis 39; Genesis 40; Romans 15; Matthew 25:1-30



SATURDAY, MARCH 4TH

THE FINAL JUDGEMENT

“Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Then the righteous will answer him saying “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25:31-46

We believe that humans are selfish by nature. We spend our time worrying about ourselves and our families, the schedules that we keep and the money that we make. We are too quick to put the needs and sufferings of others out of our heads. There are times when we want to help others but our busy lives get in the way. This passage tells us that we have to make time to give, to care for and to minister to others. The good in us is driven by Christ. He calls on us to help the suffering and to give to those in need. We just need to make sure that we are listening with open hearts and hear his message. St. Vincent’s allows us the opportunity to participate in giving back. Without our church family, we would not have had the chance to bring Christmas presents to a needy family, sing Christmas carols at the nursing home, bake cookies for those in prison, and provide teddy bears to sick kids at Cook Children’s Hospital.

During the Lenten season, let’s take the time to pray about Christ’s desire for us to be his servants.

Dear Lord, help us to remember your desire for us to provide for the needy, to care for the sick and to help the suffering. Please guide our hearts and make us know the joy of giving. Help us to remember that every time we give to someone in need, it is as if we were giving directly to you. We know that you gave us the ultimate gift and that it is the least we can do to give to your other children that are in need. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

Tex and Jeanine Chapman
Band director and Business Analyst

Psalm 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Genesis 41:1-40; Genesis 41:41-end; Romans 16; Matthew 25:31-end



SUNDAY, MARCH 5TH

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed. The rain from the heavens was restrained and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him.

In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the earth was dry. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. Then God said to Noah, Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your son's wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh – birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth – that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth. So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his son's wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

God's covenant with Noah.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart: "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease."

Noah trusted God and did what God commanded. We need to trust God as Noah did and try our best to follow his commands.

Dear Heavenly Father, show us the way you would have us go and give us the strength and perseverance to follow you. Amen.

Shirley Dansby
Retired SW Bell Telephone Company

Psalm 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Genesis 8; Genesis 13; Matthew 9:1-17; Mark 14:1-26



MONDAY, MARCH 6TH

PRAY FERVENTLY AND NEVER TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED

“Sing to the Lord, all you Godly ones! Praise His holy name! His anger lasts for a moment, but His favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may go on all night, but joy comes in the morning.” Psalms 30:4-5

You really need to read all of Psalm 30 to understand the full meaning of what David the author is saying. In a nutshell, David had become complacent and his security had made him feel invincible. David knew his riches and power came from God, but they had gone to his head and made him proud.

How many times have we done the same thing? When things are going well in our lives, do we take the time to thank God and ask for His continued guidance, or go blindly throughout the day intoxicated by our power and success? We go to God when things aren't going well in our lives, but what about when they are? We tend to think we are in control and as long as we work hard and stay diligent at what we are doing, things will continue to go well. Don't get me wrong, hard work is expected to achieve success, but what we need to do is keep God in the loop! We need to continually thank God for His blessings in our lives, and ask Him for guidance and instructions. If we are in continual communion with our Father, He will help us weather any storm that comes our way. He will guide us safely through trials and tribulations we endure, and we will come out stronger than before.

Don't become like David and let your security and success make you feel invincible. In this world, and especially in the past few decades, we have found things can change profoundly at a moment's notice. Be one with the Lord and He will guide us safely through our storms.

Lord, help us to be humble and thank you for all things. You are our Father who has given us everything. We thank you for everything in our lives, and ask that you will continue to guide us and lead us through each day. Let us not take things for granted, but always give you the praise and glory for all our successes. Thank you Father in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Laurie Connely
Coordinator of Youth and Children Ministry

Psalm 30, 31, 32, 33, 34
Genesis 42; Genesis 43; Philippians 1; Matthew 26:1-30

TUESDAY, MARCH 7TH

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:3-4

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul asks them to stay committed to Christ and to one another. The passage above sums it all up: take care of others, not just yourself.



Sounds a lot like Christ's commandment to love thy neighbor. This is fairly easy to do at home or Church, but what about on the job?

I'm encouraged to see more of this attitude taking hold in corporations and in management styles. No longer is the manager seen as the lord of his fiefdom, ordering his workers around and treating them like servants. More and more, I see the idea of the servant-manager taking hold. The manager is there to make sure the workers have what they need to do the job. He's there to help them grow their careers. He's there to remove the roadblocks so they can meet their objectives. You don't see too many management books that acknowledge the Christian roots of the idea, but some, such as Dave Ramsey's books, do. It's led to a much more pleasant work environment, and a more productive one, too. When everyone is looking out for one another rather than trying to climb on top of the pile at others' expense, problems get solved quicker. The quality of work goes up. People are happier, and happy people are more productive.

I've worked for the screaming boss, and seen close up how he manipulated people. He faked kindness as a tool to get what he wanted. He could get away with it with strangers, but everyone at work saw right through the act. Attrition was high, morale was low, and success always seemed just out of reach. I learned a lot working for him, especially how NOT to treat people.

Treating coworkers or employees with compassion isn't hard, and the results are amazing. When people are treated like brothers and sisters, supported instead of ruled, they will do amazing things for you. Don't do it for selfish gain, do it because it's what Christ commanded. But I guarantee you, when you treat those around you with genuine compassion and caring, it will be paid back tenfold.

Dear Lord, help me to treat those around me with compassion and caring. Help me put the needs of others ahead of my own. Let me always be mindful of the needs of those around me, and help me to follow Christ's example of selflessness. In His name I pray, Amen.

Mike McWithey
Systems Engineering Senior Manager

Psalm 35, 36, 37

Genesis 44; Genesis 45:1-15; Philippians 2; Matthew 26:31-56

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8TH

JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.



The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:57-75

The reading above is about the truth, fear and how the pure spirit of Christ faces both while a man's fallen nature runs from the same as self-preservation. Truth does not have an agenda. It does not love or hate. It does not hurt or heal. Alone, it cannot create or destroy. Truth just is...it is a pure thing (for this purpose let's not complicate things with discussions of relativism or perspective). The expression, or not, of the truth is, more often than not, an all too human comparison between the value of the truth and fear of a reaction to the truth. Christ, imprisoned, beaten and knowingly facing death, honored his role in God's plan by telling the truth of his nature and his place in his Father's kingdom. It was not the truth that incited the high priest and the Sanhedrin in that late night meeting. It was their preconceived fear-laden and murderous agenda that set the Passion events in motion that night. The truth which remained pure, played no part.

The Matthew gospel then presents us with Peter to represent ourselves in stark contrast to Peter in how the truth is treated. In the case of man, truth is denied. Truth is rejected and so Christ is rejected. Peter puts his own worldly fears ahead of Christ and the truth out of fear. Peter does not trust the truth. He has seen Christ captured, beaten and scorned and it has robbed him, even if momentarily, of his faith in the truth of Christ's word. "I am the way, the truth and the light" has meaning. There is purity in the truth as there is purity in the lamb. Peter's human nature betrays his Lord, the truth and himself. One cannot serve the Lord perfectly and deny the truth. To deny one is to deny the other.

There is an inverse relationship between being righteous and pious that hinges on the truth. A pious man believes that he is close to God which he believes makes him purer and is therefore proud of himself and his accomplishment...a saint among sinners. This pride cannot be based on the truth because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". A righteous man sees himself in comparison to Christ. Recognizing how impure and unworthy he remains throughout his life he is humbled and in all ways the opposite of prideful. This humility is based on the truth.

Our modern world is full of examples where the truth is rejected simply because there may be perspectives that describe a truth as offensive. A truth is not offensive.



A person can be offended by the truth. But truth itself is not offensive. The color of the light being emitted from a light fixture in a normal classroom is white. This can be proven simply by holding up a white card. The only way a white card shows white under light is if the light is white (a mixture of the full visible color spectrum). Does a person holding up a red card in the room change the nature of the color coming from the light fixture? It does not. The red card gives you a perspective on the white light in the room that absorbs all of the color spectrum except red. Thus the red light being reflected (not absorbed) gives those looking at the card a red perspective on the white light. But the truth remains constant...the pure white light remains unchanged by the presentation of the red perspective. Truth is truth, and a red perspective on that truth has no effect on the nature of the truth of the light.

Heavenly Father, we come to you as sinners. We come to you unworthy. We come to you fallen and broken. We come to you thirsting for your grace. Have mercy upon us. Guide us, most merciful Lord, for you are the light of the world and true source of our salvation. Please give us the strength to hold fast to the truth in our daily life and work. Give us courage to speak the truth when asked and the grace to listen patiently to the truth even if it impeaches our actions. More than anything, we ask you to forgive us. Please, Lord God of Hosts, forgive your fallen children that we may someday reside in that heavenly Kingdom with you and the Father...our eternal home...our place in the light. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jerry Lambert
Executive

Psalm 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

Genesis 45:16-46:7; Genesis 46:26-47:12; Philippians 3; Matthew 26:57-end

THURSDAY, MARCH 9TH

FAITH FOR GOD'S POWER

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:5-7

After November's Presidential election, about half of the country severely protested.

Citizens were angry, shocked, and horrified. There were protests that turned violent and nationwide marches. Pressure was placed on electors to change their votes. Protests were made to have the election decided by popular vote. Our country with a history of peaceful transfer of power almost lost our habit of character.

As Christians, we should be looking above politics with our faith in God's power. No one is ever completely happy or satisfied with this world. Our nation is not perfect and we will never completely agree with each others' views. Where is our faith and trust,



not in ourselves or other people, but in Christ Jesus? God gave his only son's life for his love for us. Can we not look higher than national politics and start praying?

Have strong faith that God is looking out for us and we should have no anxiety.

Dear Lord, we are so easily caught up in our own lives and views that we forget that you have our backs in all things. We should look forward with your guidance. Please forgive us for our lack of faith in your love shining on us. Help us to always look higher for answers and solutions. Please help us increase our faith and look to you for true peace of mind. Amen.

Marilyn Keith
Retired Teacher

Psalm 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49

Genesis 47:13-end; Genesis 48; Philippians 4; Matthew 27:1-26

FRIDAY, MARCH 10TH

A CLEAN HEART

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

Psalm 51

How often have we heard, or recited these familiar words. Striving to be clean in God's eyes is a challenge we must constantly work towards. Today, fighting the pull of the modern world to deny that there is a spiritual side of existence is something that has to be 'renewed' continually. Worshiping with like-minded individuals, in our parish, provides some of the strength we need to resist the continual pressure to bend to the cultural environment around us, but our true strength comes from God, keeping us in the arms of the Holy Spirit. This is the hope that the cultural world is trying to find, one that is promised to us, if we only believe and proclaim Christ as our savior. We cannot do this alone, no matter how strong we think we are. God is willing to help, and this Psalm is one of the best prayers for that assistance.

Oh God, we pray that you send us, through the Holy Spirit, the strength we need to fulfill your desires for us, and that hearts may be clean, and our spirits willing and right. Amen.

Tom Bauch,
Retired from IBM,
St. Vincent's Choir member

Psalm 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55

Genesis 49:1-32; Genesis 49:33-50:-end; Colossians 1:1-20; Matthew 27:27-56



SATURDAY, MARCH 11TH

THE ROCK

"Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy."
Psalm 61:1-3

Psalm 61 is a good reminder of God's presence in our everyday lives. As Christians, we seek God in times of trouble just like David did. We may go about our daily lives without acknowledging God's presence but in times of trouble, you will always hear someone say, "Oh my God!". I always tell my kids not to use God's name in vain but is it really in vain when they call upon him in times of trouble? Well it is sometimes in vain when they are surprised by something or when they are carrying out conversations amongst themselves that does not relate to turmoil or God. When we cry out to God, deep inside our hearts we know that he is our rock and one that is higher than us. We lean to him in times of trouble and that is what David is doing in Psalm 61.

Let us learn from David that beyond our troubles and weary hearts, there is a rock higher than us that we can lean on. When you think of a rock, it is sturdy and hard to penetrate. Our troubles are like that when presented to God. They do not break him or penetrate through him, instead he makes us strong because we are leaning on him.

My prayer this lenten season is to remember God's presence even when he seems far away and my troubles seem so big.

Dear Lord, I thank you for being my refuge and strong tower against my enemies. I run to you today and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Help me to depend upon you and live in your presence forever for you are the rock that is higher than I am. Amen.

Barbara Kakembo
Accountant

Psalm 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61

Exodus 1:1-14, 22-2:10; Exodus 2:11-22; Colossians 1:21-2:7; Matthew 27:57-28:end

SUNDAY, MARCH 12TH

THE PRODIGAL SON (OR MAYBE THE PRODIGAL NATION)

Luke 15:11-32

We can probably recite the story of the Prodigal Son by heart. When you hear "A certain man had two sons," that is probably all the introduction we need. In fact, we have heard so many sermons on this story that it may be hard to listen to a new "approach." I think most of us can identify with everyone in the story. I want to focus on the younger son. Let me approach this from a different perspective. Let's think of the Prodigal son from the standpoint of the United States.



For most of our existence, the United States was like the younger son before the story started. The United States was founded on Christian principles. From the beginning, God played a major part in the foundation of the country. The early settlers were strong Christians, and came here to be able to worship as they wanted. The founding fathers were strong Christians, and followed Biblical principles in their everyday activities. The Bible was an essential part of the school system, and prayer and Bible reading was universally accepted. In fact, reading was taught from the Bible. The Ten Commandments were also a part of the school system. In other words, the younger son was faithful to his father.

Unfortunately, in the 1950's and 1960's, the situation began to change. Prayer was no longer permitted in the school system. The Ten Commandments were no longer posted in the classroom, and the Bible has become a forbidden book. The United States has become secularized, with Jesus Christ no longer welcome in schools, and to some extent, in society itself. At this point, the Prodigal son leaves his father and becomes worldly.

When society seems to glorify “doing your own thing” and “doing it my way,” how do we encourage our children to have a strong faith in God, and seek His will for their lives? Are we like the young son who wants to live life his way; or, do we take time to communicate with our Father, God, and encourage our children to do the same? I thank God that He not only allows us our freedom, but is always ready to welcome us back with open arms. As the father of the Prodigal son welcomed his young son back into his home, I thank God that He is there to welcome us when we are ready. We should be praying not only that we “return to the Father,” but that our “Prodigal” Nation also return to our Father and we become a Christian Nation once again..

O Lord, “if my people who are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.”
2 Chronicles 7:14

Bob Barcus
Retired

Psalms 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67

Genesis 18:1-15; Genesis 9:1-17; Luke 15:11-end; Mark 14:27-52

MONDAY, MARCH 13TH

CHRISTIAN DUTY

O my Lord, please send someone else!

Exodus 4:13

“Christian duty is an essential expression of the privilege of knowing Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, believers can please God by continually offering their lives to Him as



an expression of thanksgiving demonstrated by doing good in obedience to His word.” *Alistair Begg*

Many years ago, (my daughter, Keal, wasn’t even ten yet) I was asked by one of the parish leaders to organize and lead a monthly dinner group, much like our Astute Anglicans group. I was mortified! I told her that I didn’t think I could do it and that surely there was someone better suited than I. She raised an eyebrow at me and replied, “Mack, it’s your Christian Duty”. This one statement started a series of parish involvements that lasted for thirty-plus years: from Youth Leader, to Lay Reader, to Chalice Bearer, to Acolyte Master, to Vestryman, to Junior Warden, to Senior Warden, to Stewardship Chairman - all the way to involvement in various Diocese Commissions and Councils. Each time I accept a new commitment (including agreeing to submit this letter), I remember her simple statement, “Mack, it’s your Christian Duty.”

We are all called by God to Christian Duty and sometimes it takes a willingness and courage that we don’t think we possess. It’s at these times, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to direct us and guide us—whether it’s in our prayer-life, when we don’t feel our words are adequate; or in our call for a deeper knowledge of God’s Word, and we find all sorts of reasons why we just don’t have time for a structured Bible study program; or in our financial commitment to the Church, when we tell ourselves that what we’re giving is enough.

In his commentary on Exodus Chapter 4, Matthew Henry wrote: “An unwilling mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those services upon others that have anything of difficulty or danger in them....an eye to God as Creator would help us over a great many of the difficulties which lie in the way of our duty.”

Lord God, instill in me a willing heart and obedient mind to fulfill my Christian duties; that in all my works I may glorify your Holy Name. Amen.

Mack Wood
 Owner / Agent
 KEMA Real Estate

Psalms 68, 69, 70
 Exodus 2:23-3:end; Exodus 4:1-23; Colossians 2:8-3:11; John 1:1-28

TUESDAY, MARCH 14TH

READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-4:1

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience . . .” Colossians 3:12

When our daughter began taking piano lessons in junior high, she enjoyed the lessons but sometimes practicing would take a lower priority to other activities in her life.



Things that in her opinion were more important. She told me, “Don’t worry, I’ll practice twice as long tomorrow or three times as long the next day.” I had to explain to her that daily practice, even if only for a few minutes, was far more beneficial than allowing days to pass between practice sessions. There’s something about that daily workout for your brain and fingers that just can’t be accomplished by practicing every few days. I think this is the same for throwing a football or learning a foreign language. We’ve all heard that practice makes perfect.

These characteristics that St. Paul wants us to “put on,” compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, are not at all easy when you really think about them. They’re difficult. It’s not always easy to be compassionate all the time; or how do we show humility or meekness if it’s not the way we really feel. It takes practice.

These are all characteristics of Jesus. If we want Jesus to grow in us, and we in him, we have to find a way to “put them on” with sincerity. These things just don’t come naturally to some of us. After all, we’re only human. We have to practice daily. Verse 17 tells us “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” In this way, we can rise above our human nature and put on the nature God wants for us.

Lord Jesus, help us to focus our lives on you every day. Give us opportunities in everything we do to practice your characteristics in our lives. Amen.

Tom McDaniel
Mechanical Designer, retired

Psalm 71, 72, 73, 74

Exodus 4:27-6:1; Exodus 6:2-13, 7:1-7; Colossians 3:12-4:1; John 1:29-end

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15TH

Lent is a season of PENITENCE! And after reading the scripture lessons for today, I can’t help but think like a prophet on a street corner soapbox. Man, turn from your evil ways! Remember the incredible saving acts that God has done and go forth as an example for Him. Praise His Name, tell his stories, and pray that you might know Him personally.

The Exodus lesson for today details the Lord sending Moses and Aaron to the Pharaoh to begin the plagues that were visited on Pharaoh and his people for refusing to let the Jews free to serve God. God did mighty acts through Moses and Aaron to convince him that He was God...but Pharaoh did not believe, his heart was hardened because men (his sorcerers) were able to duplicate Aaron’s first act. But the mighty acts continue and escalate until Pharaoh finally relents and agrees to free the Jews. And then he changes his mind again. We all know the results of that.

The Psalms are a recounting of these times. The psalmist makes a point in these scriptures that can be found in Psalm 78:5-8. “He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,



that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.”

John 2 is Jesus’ first great act (miracle), an act of kindness and love, the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. And not just any old wine...the BEST wine. John goes on to tell of five more signs that establish Jesus’ position as the Messiah. The savior of mankind...the reconciler, God’s grace to us.

Paul’s letter to the Colossians 4:2-5 is an exhortation for us to continue in prayer and that God will present us with situations (and provide us with the words) to spread His words, His deeds, and the same grace that He has extended to us.

My witness is that I was not hit with the “bolt out of the blue”. The knowledge that He is the creator and I am the creation has come slowly over time. The certainty that I only control a very small part of my life (He controls the universe and most of my life) has come as I put narcissism aside and consider the reality of most of my life situations, the important ones for sure. As I look back at all the narrow escapes and all the good fortune that has been granted me, I cannot deny that God’s loving hand has been at work in my life. The proof is out there...everywhere. All I had to do is consider my own fallibility and consider that something greater and mystical is at work. Believe and follow. I am humbled and grateful. I pray that I can come to know and serve Him better.

Father in heaven, Thank You for your saving grace in our Lord Jesus Christ and for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Give me the strength to be the example and to be the herald of your love, your great deeds, and of your Grace. Give me the opportunity, wisdom and faith to know you better in this life and to be with you in the next. I pray this in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Steve Schooling
Mfg. Engineer

Psalm 75, 76, 77, 78

Exodus 7:8-end; Exodus 8:1-19; Colossians 4:2-end; John 2



THURSDAY, MARCH 16TH

PLAGUES O'PLENTY

1 st Plague	Exodus 7:14	Blood
2 nd Plague	Exodus 8:1	Frogs
3 rd Plague	Exodus 8:16	Gnats or Lice
4 th Plague	Exodus 8:20	Flies
5 th Plague	Exodus 9:1	Livestock death
6 th Plague	Exodus 9:8	Boils
7 th Plague	Exodus 9:13	Hail
8 th Plague	Exodus 10:1	Locusts
9 th Plague	Exodus 10:21	3 days of darkness
10 th Plague	Exodus 11:1	Death of firstborn children & cattle

Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained. But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.
Exodus 8:30

Wow! I'm dizzy from going round and round with Moses and the Pharaoh in these verses. The Pharaoh changed his mind more often than a supermodel in a shoe store.

Moses, the son of a slave, but raised in the palace of the Pharaoh, was chosen by God to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt to freedom. With his brother Aaron, Moses asked the Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave Egypt in order to celebrate a feast in the wilderness to honor their God. The Pharaoh refused, foolishly saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2).

So God promised Moses that he would demonstrate his power to show Pharaoh that the Egyptians' gods were nothing, and at the same time, demonstrate to the Israelites that the God of their fathers was alive and worthy of their worship. God "hardened the heart" of the Pharaoh, making him adamantly against the Hebrews' leaving and then He produced a series of plagues whose escalating severity culminated with the death of every firstborn Egyptian male. With each plague and its destruction, the Pharaoh would agree to release the Israelites then change his mind and refuse to let them go. Finally, after the slaughter of all the firstborn Egyptian male children and blood literally running in the streets, Pharaoh was convinced of the undeniable and unstoppable power of God. He released Egypt's Hebrew slaves, who then started their Exodus back to Canaan.



Are we convinced of the power of our God? Do we obey his voice?

Heavenly Father, we ask Your guidance for this day and we ask that You bestow on us an open ear and a soft heart. Amen.

Rebecca Cervantes
Paralegal

Psalm 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85
Exodus 8:20-9:12; Exodus 9:13-end; Philemon; John 3:1-21

FRIDAY, MARCH 17TH

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them. John 3:22-36

The selected verse above is part of John's testimony about Jesus while baptizing in the Judean countryside. The concluding verse above is very clear and concise. It made me think about the fact that I do believe in the Son and Lord Jesus Christ. It also made me wonder about the word "rejects." While I believe, do my actions also "reject" the Son and Lord Jesus Christ? How can I truly believe if some of my every day actions are in conflict, and therefore essentially "reject" Jesus' teachings? My actions must follow beliefs or the beliefs are hollow and meaningless. It was humbling for me to read this, but at the same time created a sense of intent. I need to learn to set aside earthly desires, things and emotions and recognize that when my actions are inconsistent with my beliefs and with God's teachings that I recognize that, repent and change.

How can I ensure my day to day thoughts and actions are aligned with God's teachings and my beliefs? How can I constantly reinforce my beliefs through thoughts and actions?

Dear Lord, we are blessed with your teachings to constantly remind us of your Love and Grace towards us. Teach us to not only believe but to live our lives in a way that supports our beliefs. Help our thoughts and actions to be in alignment with your teachings and our beliefs. We pray for your patience and Grace as we learn each day to live each day in your will and have eternal life. Amen

David Coburn
Senior Warden

Psalm 86, 87, 88, 89
Exodus 10:1-20; Exodus 10:21-11:end; Ephesians 1; John 3:22-end



SATURDAY, MARCH 18TH

SMALL WORDS, BIG MEANINGS

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
Psalm 91:9-11

Grace. Merriam-Webster (MW) says, “Unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification.” ESV Bible commentary states, “By grace, refers to God’s favor upon those who have transgressed his law and sinned against him. But grace may also be understood as a “power” in these verses. God’s grace not only offers salvation but also secures it.”

Saved. MW: “To deliver from sin.” ESV: “Saved refers to deliverance from God’s wrath at the final judgment. The verb form for “have been saved” communicates that the Christian’s salvation is fully secured through faith.”

Faith. MW: “Belief in the existence of God; strong religious feelings or beliefs.” ESV: “Faith is a confident trust and reliance upon Christ Jesus and is the only means by which one can obtain salvation.”

“For by grace you have been saved through faith.” Three small words, defined with much likeness between the dictionary and the bible, means the world to me. I am so grateful for God’s grace, that I feel I do not deserve. I can live my life with a calm heart knowing that I am saved by His grace. One of my top three spiritual gifts is faith. That one is my favorite because that is something that is all mine and no one can take it away from me. Life is hard because evil forces absolutely hate faith because they know that’s the one thing they can’t steal. It is the biggest obstacle they face, which is our triumph!

During this Lenten season, we all must rely heavily on our faith that our Lord and Savior will see us through these weeks of sacrifice and transformation. This five-letter word will be our saving grace as we prepare our lives for the remembrance and celebration of Christ Jesus’ sacrifice of body and blood for our salvation.

Our Heavenly Father, the world is full of people lacking faith. Lord, please send to them, the right person or event that they need to open their hearts and minds to your divine love and grace. May their understanding of faith be that of a confident trust and reliance upon your son, Jesus Christ. In His Name, Amen.

Mindy Jackson
Sr. Business Systems Analyst

Psalm 90, 91, 92, 93, 94
Exodus 12:1-20; Exodus 12:21-36; Ephesians 2; John 4:1-26



SUNDAY, MARCH 19TH

ST. JOSEPH

THE KINDNESS OF THE LORD

I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done.
Isaiah 63:7-16

Most of this chapter and that of the next, express the prayers of the Jews on their conversion. They acknowledge the great mercies and favors provided to their nation by God. They also confess their sins and wickedness and beg for forgiveness, and deplore the horrible conditions they have suffered under so long. Although the Son of the Father became the messenger of his love, redeeming them and giving them tenderness, they resisted his Holy Spirit, persecuting his prophets, and rejecting and crucifying the Messiah promised to them.

All of our comforts and hopes come from the loving kindness of the Lord and our miseries and fears from our sin. Yet He is the Savior and when sinners seek him, there is good ground to hope they are finding the true way of peace.

May we rejoice that the Lord is our Savior. May we be reminded of his great and loving kindness throughout all generations.

David Johnson,
Cathedral Verger, Lay Minister, Acolyte Master
Sr. Strategic Sourcing Coordinator, Atmos Energy Corp.

Psalm 34, 132
Isaiah 63:7-16; 2 Chronicles 6:12-17; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 14:53-end

MONDAY, MARCH 20TH

COME SEE THE MAN

The woman said to Him, "I know the Messiah is coming (he who is called the Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see the man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" And many more believed because of His word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."
John 4:25-27, 28-29, 41-42

I read about the Samaritan woman, and understand that she represents all of us, sinful and broken. Yet when we encounter Christ, all is forgiven and we have only to share the tiny nugget of faith with others to bring them to Christ. Each of us do not need to be eloquent theologians or religious scholars, just brave enough to share our faith, and invite the people we meet to experience Christ in person, through the Church and



Sacraments. Once someone enters the Church, and is welcomed, the entire body of Christ is enriched.

The Great Commission instructs us to bring others to Christ. It is not an easy commission to accept, but as part of the baptized faithful, we must be diligent in the world to transform the hearts and minds of others. Not alone, but as part of the Communion of Saints and that great cloud of witnesses, we can lean on each other with the power of the Holy Spirit to reach the faithless and those who have lost their way. St. Vincent's is in a period of transition, and we have the ability, with God's grace, to enrich the Church by reaching out to others and bringing them to Christ.

From Saint Augustine's Prayer Book:

O Lord of the harvest, send forth, we beseech thee, laborers into the harvest of the world, that the grain which is even now ripe may not fall and perish through our neglect. Pour forth thy sanctifying Spirit on our fellow-Christians and thy converting grace on the heathen. Amen.

Alice Peacock
AML Compliance Testing, Citibank

Psalms 102, 103, 104
Exodus 12:37-end; Exodus 13:1-16; Ephesians 3; John 4:27-end

TUESDAY, MARCH 21ST

INSIGHT INTO OUR SOULS

*We have sinned, even as our ancestors did;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
When our ancestors were in Egypt,
they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,
and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.
Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
to make his mighty power known.*

Psalm 106

I love the psalms because they reveal so much of our humanity. I recently read an excerpt from a book by Eugene Peterson that gave me a lot of insight. He said that we look into the mirror to see how we look; we look into the Psalms to see who we are. We will find total exposure to what it means to be human beings before God.

This psalm recounts the story of the Israelites and their repeated rebellion towards God when things were not going their way. They became envious, ungrateful, greedy, and angry. Does this sound familiar? God remained faithful and merciful despite their unworthiness. I am so grateful to have him walking with me on this earthly journey.



Father, teach us to reflect on the Psalms with our eyes turned inward. Guide us as we strive to become the people you would like for us to be. Hold us in your arms when we struggle and fall. Show us your mercy, O Lord. Amen.

Julie Dowden RN
School Nurse

Psalms 105, 106

Exodus 13:17-14:14; Exodus 14:15-end; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 5:1-23

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22ND

THE POWER OF GOD

*Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
For his steadfast love endures forever!*

Psalm 107

Psalm 107 is one of my favorite psalms to read for two reasons. The first reason is that the Psalm is full of hope, promising that God will love us forever. That He is good, and full of mercy, no matter what we have done or have failed to do. Secondly, it describes in detail the wonderful works of our Lord. The awesome power He has over us and the world he created for us.

Psalm 107 begins with a charge for people to give thanks to God for the incredible love He has for us. It describes how He has, from the beginning of time, delivered mankind from every distress imaginable. He has led His people out of darkness and sin, out of hunger and thirst, out of fear, danger and death. Even when man has caused his own misfortune, God has shown mercy. For this love and mercy, we should give Him thanks and praise.

The second part of the psalm describes God's incredible power over the earth which he demonstrates through His wonderful works. It details how the Lord calmed the winds and the seas, made barren land fruitful, brought pools of water to the deserts. Reading about these wonderful works should fill us with awe, as we marvel at what a truly wonderful God He is. It is important that we are grateful, appreciating Him for all he does for us.

Dear Lord, help us remember to be grateful, giving thanks to you for your enduring love. Help us to appreciate that you bring us out of darkness and despair, out of fear and danger, out of sickness and misery. Help us to appreciate your wonderful works and the earth you created for us. May we praise your goodness and mercy all of our days. Amen.

Elissa Polley
Kindergarten teacher
Vestry member

Psalms 107, 108, 109

Exodus 15:1-26; Exodus 15:27-16:36; Ephesians 4:17-30; John 5:24-end



THURSDAY, MARCH 23RD

AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us: a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 4:32- 5:2

The world has always been a harsh place. Daily life for the early Christians was dangerous. In our day, work can be a place of “dog eats dog”. Traffic can be hazardous with one driver rushing to be first through the intersection. Our neighbors can be less-than neighborly. The fast pace of our busy lives can be overwhelming.

Then, we walk through the doors of the church taking a quiet leap of faith. Will we be made welcomed? See a kind face? Be included with God’s people to worship? Be able to share something going on in our life? Are we taking a chance to share our thoughts with fellow travelers? In giving of ourselves, we can give and receive relief from our stressful journeys and gain a new prospective.

The rule laid out for us is to be kind to one another. Now this is where we can reach out to others – greet long time members and those new to our church family. How can we make a mistake here? Well, I’ve been known to introduce myself to long-time church members; re-introduce myself to people who I met just a week or two earlier, and I have forgotten the names of people I’ve known for a long time. Believe me, I’ve made countless errors and I am grateful to the kind smiles given to me – even if they are matched with raised eyebrows.

The chance to help connect people together with others of similar interests, direct to classes, childcare or coffee is so doable. You don’t have to know all the answers to assist, but you can give directions to the chapel, restroom, or soda machine, see another parishioner with kids to ask about classes, ask an usher for directions, or walk and talk with the new people to the Parish Hall for coffee.

Dear God, empower us to greet and treat one another in kindness – to those familiar and to someone new. Fill us with the strength from the Holy Spirit to walk in love as Christ loved us. Amen.

Susan Frey
Secretary
Choir member

Psalm 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115
Exodus 17; Exodus 18; Ephesians 4:31-5:21; John 6:1-21



FRIDAY, MARCH 24TH

BELIEVE ON HIM

They said, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them and said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. John 6:28-29

I have to admit this has caused me to do a lot of soul searching. I still don't have everything settled. It sounds so easy to just believe, after all, Jesus is the Son of God. I absolutely believe He is who He says He is. I absolutely believe He can do what He says He can do. But do I really expect things to change when I pray? I know He will do it for others, but will He do it for me?

We want to work for God. So, often we pray, "What do you want me to do, Lord?" Then, we wait to hear. Or, we look at all the needs around us and choose one we think will make God happy. If we are to believe, we have to know the Person of Jesus. That means spending time in the Bible, spending time in His Presence, and fellowshiping with believers. Our concept of Jesus may not be accurate.

If we are honest, we are more like the father in Mark 9:23-25. He asks Jesus to heal his son. Jesus answers him, "If you can, all things are possible for one who believes." To this the father says, "I believe, help my unbelief." This is where I am. I KNOW God answers prayers. I've had my prayers answered and I've seen others answered many times over. But, will He answer THIS one? The larger the crisis, the more I am like the father in Mark.

To grow our belief, we need to step out of our comfort zone and risk being thought strange or failing. We need to stop listening to the "What if's?" As we learn to know Jesus, we learn He is to be trusted. I thank Him that He is so patient with my areas of "unbelief."

Help us, Lord, to know you in such a way that believing You is as easy as breathing. Forgive us when we doubt you. I know that must grieve you. Amen.

Nina Barcus
Retired teacher

Psalm 116, 117, 118; 119:1-32
Exodus 19; Exodus 20:1-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:9; John 6:22-40

SATURDAY, MARCH 25TH

THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL

"Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."
Hebrews 2:5-10



Jesus was, and continues to be, our single glimpse of perfection in an imperfect world. God's gift of salvation through Christ is our sign that He is in control, even though "at present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him."

It is a struggle sometimes to see God's work in the world because media and politics give us such a myopic view. We turn on the news or scroll through social media feeds watching images of the destruction of God's creation and mistreatment of our fellow humans flashing across our screens. Outraged, we turn to our world leaders to remedy these problems and enact justice. The solution is just never enough.

When I am disheartened, I try to look heavenward, and trust that God has much more in store for us and for all His faithful people. Because of Jesus' suffering and death, those experiences of our fellow humans will be lifted up. God's justice is ultimate and therefore, it is always enough.

Lord, help us remember to put our faith in you as leader in this life, so that we may see clearly into the next.

*"All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall,
bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all."*

Alissa Davis, Director of Music
St. Vincent's Cathedral

Psalms 85, 87, 110:1-5, 132
Isaiah 52:7-12; Hebrews 2:5-10; Wisdom 9:1-12; John 1:9-14

SUNDAY, MARCH 26TH

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

*And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus...And he was **seeking** to see who Jesus was... And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down'...So he hurried and came down and **received** him joyfully...And Jesus said to him, 'Today **salvation** has come to this house...For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.'*

Luke 19:1-10

The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus is a Sunday school favorite, one that has captured the imaginations of children for generations. For me personally, it is one of the first stories of the Bible I remember being taught and I still remember most of the words and hand motions for the Zacchaeus song. Reading it as a child, I remember being comforted by Jesus' willingness to see Zacchaeus and invite him down. Jesus' love and compassion for Zacchaeus is evident in his kindness to Zacchaeus.

Moving beyond the nuts and bolts of the story, we see an example of God's beautiful plan of salvation. We see someone who is seeking Jesus. Perhaps not even fully knowing what he's really seeking, Zacchaeus feels the pull of Christ on his life and seeks to know more. Zacchaeus is filled with a need and a desire to know Jesus.

Because Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus, he was prepared when the time came and "received him joyfully." Zacchaeus recognizes within Jesus the one who has authority



over his life and Zacchaeus is prepared to receive Jesus into his heart and life that day. To do so “joyfully,” conveys that Zacchaeus knows he is receiving a great gift.

Jesus responds to Zacchaeus seeking Him and receiving Him by assuring Zacchaeus of the beautiful gift of Salvation that now belongs to Zacchaeus. Jesus tells him, “Today salvation has come to this house. For the son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”

Dear Lord, help us to recognize the great gift of Salvation that you offer. May we seek you and your will and may we receive you into our lives joyfully. Show us, O Lord, how we can share this great gift with those around us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Keal Cleveland

Wife, mother, real estate broker

Psalms 119:105-144; 119:145-176

Exodus 1:8-14, 22:-2:10; Genesis 24:29-end, Luke 18:35-19:10; Mark 15:1-21

MONDAY, MARCH 27TH

The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Psalm 121:8

I believe that to be merciful is to be kind. It implies that there is a deep and genuine concern for another. For whatever reason, my peace comes from pleasing God. He has given me the overwhelming need to do for others, to genuinely care.

To know Him, there is a joy even in the presence of suffering and sorrow. Jesus was concerned about His followers' families, homes and health. He was willing to take time for people in need, even though His ministry was calling. Jesus, for some reason, has chosen me to have love and compassion for the sick and elderly. I see sadness each day and sometimes it overwhelms me. God has always been there for me. I have been hit, had an attempt made on my life, and more recently, within a twelve-day period, I lost five people I loved very much. Three were family members and the others were a mother and daughter who died within two days of each other.

These things will be with me always, but God has given me the strength and patience to carry out his will. A sense of humor comes in handy also because you never know what may occur so you have to be ready for the unexpected. You smile through the day, give lots of hugs, hold many hands, but go home in the evening and cry at times.

I ask for Gods help every day to guide me to make the day a little brighter for someone. I trust that God will keep me safe and meet my needs whatever they may be. God is in control; I can relax for there is nothing to worry about. God keeps his promises.

Loving Father, while you hold my hand I am safe and secure. Strengthen my faith daily. Amen.

Edyanne Pankau

Retired

Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131

Exodus 24, Exodus 25:1-22; 1 Timothy 1:1-17; John 7:1-24



TUESDAY, MARCH 28TH

ETERNAL WATERS FOR THOSE WHO THIRST

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:25 – End

Previously, John describes in great detail the rising hostility and opposition toward Jesus as he continues his ministry. Many knew that the authorities had previously threatened to seize Jesus and put him to death for his preaching, yet He continues, undaunted by the threat of his own death. What is impressive about this scene is the boldness and courage of Jesus. Even those in His midst, who knew Jesus and where he was from, openly questioned whether Jesus in fact was the Messiah, since the scriptures indicated that “no one will know where he is from”. When Jesus hears these doubts, He cries out, saying, “You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know Him because I am from Him, and He sent me.”

As Jesus says this, the Pharisees sent temple police to arrest Jesus for speaking these inflammatory words. Yet despite their efforts, they are unable to detain him. Jesus admonishes them, saying, “You will search for me, but you will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come.” This only confuses the Jews further, as they openly wonder how this could even be possible.

All throughout the Gospel, we see continued evidence and example of the boldness and courageousness of Jesus. Though not seen, God is protecting his messenger. Our Lord feels this protection, and feels confident enough that He continues his ministry with the awareness that all the opposition against him could go no further than what God would permit. This is encouraging for all of us. If we are walking in the will and strength of God, we can be confident that nothing can happen to us except what God allows. If He allows it to happen, then it will only happen at the right time, at His hand.

Most notable about this section of John’s gospel is what Jesus says on the last day of the Festival. Jesus cries out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” As you rely on Jesus’s grace, enjoy His love, and bask in His acceptance, you will begin to think of someone other than yourself. Through the Holy Spirit, when you put others before yourself and become a blessing to them, only then can your own thirst be eternally satisfied.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, and for our blessings, which all come from you. With your grace, please help us remember that you are truly the source of eternal life. Remind us to put others before ourselves, and work constantly to raise them up. And help us remember that when we walk in your ways, and follow your will, we, too, will continue to enjoy your eternal water. Amen.

Mark Jeffers

Director of Global Sales Training, Surgical Division

Psalms 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138

Exodus 28:1-4, 29-43; Exodus 29:38-30:16; 1 Timothy 1:18-2: end; John 7:25-end



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29TH

HOW GOD WANTS US TO BEHAVE

Then they said to him, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God that you believe in him who he has sent."...So they said to him, "What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written. He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus said to them, "My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall not thirst."

John 6:28-34

All of the readings for today concern how we are to behave if we truly believe.

Exodus is about how when Moses spent so much time on the mountain, the restless people made a golden calf to worship...Not what God had in mind!

Timothy has instructions for Overseers (priests) and Deacons.

John tells us that the people still didn't get it. Jesus was trying to get across to them that HE was the bread of life that God sent and what God wants us to do is believe in Him and behave as people who believe. In other words, when you leave the church building on Sunday morning, continue to behave as God would want you to.

We are to be kind to people, giving to those who have less than we do. Think about NEED, Angel of Giving, St. Vincent's Vision Clinic, or to whatever you are drawn.

Smile at people you see; it may be the only smile they see all day.

Obey the law. That means even the speed limit-especially if we have others in the car-like our children or grandchildren who can read the speedometer.

It's important to remember that God is watching us, but so are the people we meet every day. We need to set a good example.

Our world is in trouble right now and it is up to us to try and make it a better place. I think that's what Jesus would want us to do.

Heavenly Father, please guide us as we try to behave according to your will. Help us to make a difference in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Polly Post

Retired schoolteacher/bookkeeper

Psalms 139; 140, 141, 142, 143

Exodus 32, Exodus 33, 34; 1 Timothy 3; John 6:27-40



THURSDAY, MARCH 30TH

ST. JOSEPH, MODEL OF A LOVING FATHER

1 Timothy 4

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will depart from the faith. The first verse in this chapter carries a similar message echoed throughout Paul's letters to Timothy. In this scripture, Paul provides a warning to watch for the apostasy and deconstruction of the Christian faith and not fall subject to it. Initially, chapter 4 describes how the people have fallen into an outward form of religion in which they deny themselves things, such as marriage and certain foods. However, as we progress further into Paul's letters, we get an even greater picture of the battle waged against the Church. In 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Paul provides a full laundry list of godlessness, attributing such acts to peoples' departure from faith. In 2 Timothy 4:3, Timothy says that the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but have itching ears. They will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. There is a subtle campaign to cloud our minds and thoughts which are led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:3). Even Peter stated that false prophets and teachers (even Leaders) secretly brought in destructive heresies among the people, and the way of truth will be blasphemed (2 Peter 2:1-3). We are bombarded every day with the tolerance of idols of sensuality, greed, money, immorality, and self-worship. We've endured and tolerated when our authorities contradict God's Word and ask us to do things contrary to the laws of God, and we are expected to disobey and honor God instead. Peter and the apostles are recorded as defying the governmental authorities of their day in Acts 5. The root cause, according to Paul, is contributed to the devotion to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons noted in the first verse. As Christians, we must remember that the daily battle is not in front of our eyes, but under a spiritual cloak. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12). Therefore, (WE MUST) take up the whole armor of God so that we may be able to withstand in these evil days.

So how then do we take up this armor? How do we stand firm and stay strong during this apostasy of the faith?

WE MUST stay rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit (Col 2:7-8); WE MUST be praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints (Eph 6:18); WE MUST seek the Spirit of truth in all things. He will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13); WE MUST follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Tim 2:22); WE MUST be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, (1 Tim 4:12);



and WE MUST be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).

Cyrus Campbell

Sunday School teacher and member of Vestry

Psalms 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150

Exodus 35, Exodus 38; 1 Timothy 4; John 8:31-end

FRIDAY, MARCH 31ST

I WAS BLIND AND NOW I SEE

And they cast him [the man born blind] out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe" and he worshiped him. John 9:35-38

I have always reacted to this story with a great deal of empathy for the man born blind who was chosen by God to receive his sight through the healing power of the Messiah only to be criticized, discredited, cross-examined with prejudice, repudiated, mocked and eventually put out of the Synagogue. What a terrible injustice for one so favored by God. I have always been disturbed by the unfair treatment he was given. I can identify with him in times when I am treated unfairly. It's just not right!

Earlier in this chapter, the story of the miracle is relayed. As He was passing by, Jesus saw the blind man. The disciples asked if his affliction was punishment for his sins or even those of his parents. Jesus said his blindness was not from sin, but so that the works of God might be displayed in him. He went on to say, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He made a little mud from spit and dust to put on the man's eyes. One Bible commentary indicates that kneading the clay with His saliva was similar to the kneading of dough, which is one of the 39 classes of work forbidden on the Sabbath in the Old Testament Law. This gave the detractors a reason to criticize Jesus. Of course, such criticism completely misses the point that Jesus performed an unprecedented miracle and in doing so demonstrated that He came to establish a New Covenant based on love and mercy.

Moreover, He then gave the man a command to follow in faith, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (The name Siloam means "sent"). The man did go in faith and carried out the orders that the Lord had given him. He went and washed and came back seeing. We, too, must accept God's call by taking action in faith. After we have heard, we must act. After we understand a need, we must provide a remedy. After we observe an injustice, we must strive to right it. The religious leaders persecuted the man and even his parents, always refusing to see what was plainly a miracle and a manifestation of the Messiah. Eventually they expelled him from the Synagogue. Jesus heard about the incident and went looking for his lost sheep.



He stopped everything else that He was doing and searched until He found the man. Then He explained clearly that He was the Messiah, the Son of Man. The man, now seeing, said, “Lord, I believe.” Then something very precious and beautiful happened. While the man was in the presence of the Lord and had the brief opportunity, He worshiped Jesus. We should all take time to worship and adore our Savior and Lord who came to heal us.

Almighty God who sent Thy son to heal the sick and give sight to the blind; give us resolve and strength to go where You send us and to do what You require of us, that we may see Jesus clearly as the light of the world and worthily worship You, Him, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Robert Boyer
Choir

Psalms 51:1-20, 69:1-23

Hosea 13:1-14; Hosea 14; John 14:1-14; John 14:15-end.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST

JESUS LOVE ME, THIS I KNOW FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

“I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.” John 10:14-15

When I read the above verses, the following questions came into my mind. How can I be assured Jesus knows me as one of His own? Where does Jesus get the authority to claim me as his own? To answer these questions and bring peace to my mind, I turned to my Bible for answers. The following verses brought me reassurance of Jesus’ love and authority.

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” John 1:1

“The word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” John 8:58

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...” Romans 8:29

“If you really know me, you will know my father as well...” John 14:7

If I was known to God and Jesus before I was born, what is the ongoing connection that exists as I live my life in human form? Again, I turn back to my Bible for an answer.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters...” Genesis 1:1-2



"...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."

Romans 8:26

Now that we are reassured Jesus knows and loves us intimately, how do we respond to Him? How is He reassured we know and love Him? Again, together let's return to the Bible for an answer.

"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Romans 10:9-10

Dear Lord, I pray our hearts are brimming with love for and belief in your Son, our Savior. Let us remember we are spiritual beings on a temporary physical journey, and with a grateful heart confess our faith in the death and resurrection of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us. Amen.

Linda Littlefield
Daughters of the King
Retail Management

Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Leviticus 19:1-18, 30-end; Leviticus 25:1-24; 1 Timothy 6; John 10:1-21

SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND

GOD HEARD GROANS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL— AND ALREADY KNEW

And the angel of the Lord appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ... God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: ... The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to ... a land flowing with milk and honey." "...So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go."

Exodus 3:2-6, 15a,16b-17, 20

After escaping the troubles in Egypt, which threatened not only him personally but also his people, it looks like Moses had become comfortable in his new life in Midian, with a family and new occupation tending the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro. But when he saw the burning bush, he found that he had not escaped the attention of God. He recognizes the God of his fathers and is afraid to look at him.



Moses is reluctant when God reminds him of the afflictions of the people of Israel, and foresees many obstacles, making excuses why he cannot go to his people with God's message, much less approach Pharaoh. God reassures him that He sees all the obstacles as well as the troubles suffered, and that He will ensure that Pharaoh lets the people go.

When our normal and comfortable existence is troubled by the events of the world at large, it is easy to turn away our faces and retreat to the solitude of our own concerns. When we are forced by those events to pay attention, it is easy for us to furnish a plenitude of reasons why we can't do this or that, or why things can't get better. If we will only listen to God's voice, however, we can realize that He has already foreseen all circumstances, and will guide us through them if we will only cooperate.

Dear Heavenly Father, help us in the time of trouble to remember You are watching over us and that You take care for our afflictions; help us also that we may hearken to Your voice and trust in Your Holy Spirit to work His wonders in our lives, through the precious name of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Charles M. Gatlin, Jr.

Technical editor, former professor, and cantor

Psalms 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Exodus 2:23–3:20; Exodus 6:2–13; Mark 10:32–45; Mark 15:22–39.

MONDAY, APRIL 3RD

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:11

If only this were true! The Numbers 9:15 passage to the end talks about the children of Israel following God's pillar of fire. This was a tangible way of following where God wanted the Israelites to go in the desert. Just follow the pillar of fire.

The John 10:22 passage talks about knowing Jesus' voice, as the sheep know the shepherd's voice. Sometimes the voice of God is very difficult to hear. There are so many competing voices! Too bad, we can't follow the "pillar of fire" as in the Numbers 9 passage. This would make it so much easier!

God will make known his "voice;" we just have to ask him (sometimes more than once!) to make His voice clear above all others! God will do this for us. The Psalm passage lets us know that this is true!

A.J. Wolery Blood

Retired elementary school counselor

Psalms 15, 16, 17, 18

Numbers 6, Numbers 9:15-end, 10:29-end; Titus 1:1-2:8; John 10:22-end



TUESDAY, APRIL 4TH

I AM THE LORD'S SHEEP

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
4 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.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord.

Psalm 23

The first two verses depict our utter dependence on the Lord. As sheep rely entirely on their shepherd for vital resources such as water, so must we rely on the Lord for our every need. We ought to count God's provisions as the blessings they are when put into perspective of our own helplessness. Additionally, we must remember that we are often unaware of the blessings. The Lord must *make* us accept the blessings of rest and peace that we would otherwise ignore or forsake in our vain attempts to fulfill our own plans.

The *restoration of our souls* occurs daily as we turn to His presence, but this temporal cleansing is only a shadow of the eternal restoration Jesus provides with his sacrifice on the cross. We must remember that our own *righteousness* is only for the glory of the Lord, not our own glory to be taken as pride. It is important to remember about the following verse that we *fear no evil* because He is with us; it is His omnipresence in our lives that gives us comfort in our challenges. The *staff* connotes His saving grace and merciful reconciliation, but the reconciliation is forerun by suffering and stumbling on our part as His staff pulls us from our chosen path.

The *preparation of a table in the presence of enemies* must surely be an utmost discomfort for the person with the privilege to sit at that table. Therefore, we must remember that though we may enjoy our blessings, they function as part of God's plan involving our reach to our enemies. Although being *anointed* is considered a high honor, it also implies our duty to the Lord in this world, as well as his promise of eternal life with Him in the world to come.



Mercy following us reminds us that we will never be perfect on this Earth but rather will constantly be in need of God's mercy. Ultimately, for those who believe and enter into relationship with the Lord, their eternal truth will be, and is, and has been, ever-lasting life in the presence of their Lord God.

Mack Cleveland
Student and Acolyte

Psalms 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Numbers 11:10-33; Numbers 12; Titus 2:9-3:end; John 11:1-44

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5TH

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

"This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So you must never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord."
2 Timothy 1:6-8

"It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life."

2 Timothy 1:9

"Hold on to the pattern of right teaching you learned from me. And remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted in you."
2 Timothy 1:13-14

The youth chose these specific verses from 2 Timothy 1 that related to their lives. As teens, it is difficult to share God's word and not be singled out as weird. But the teens said they are not ashamed and discussed that even though they may feel timid at times, that if they look to God, their fear becomes less when they step out in His name. The more God has us share with others, the more confidence and strength He gives us. With this confidence comes the wisdom to know when God is nudging us to say or do something that we normally wouldn't do without His urging. The more we open our eyes to Him, the more opportunities He gives us to "fan our gifts" and share His love. Some of the youth even shared the experience of feeling the "Spirit's tingles" or goose bumps when they have shared with others.

God is who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. It is our job to live in a Godly way so that others see us being special in some way. In other words, our actions speak volumes. We talked of how our actions speak louder than words. Even if we are timid about saying something to someone about God's word, we can act in a Christ like manner, which shows others there is something special about us. People see a love, an excitement, and a confidence that can't always be explained.

In 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Paul talks about holding on to a pattern of right teaching that Timothy learned from Paul. Talking about holding onto a pattern of right teaching led to the discussion of living a certain way that is the pattern in our life. Our pattern is to live in faith and love, and in turn people will see that about us.



Our pattern of living began with our ancestors years ago and has been passed down throughout our families. We in turn will continue that pattern and pass it on to others. As we step out living God's plan which He has for us, we need to carefully guard what He has given us. Stay true to our beliefs and live a Christ like life. Walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

AYC Teen Sunday School Class

Psalms 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Numbers 13:1-3, 17-end; Numbers 14:1-25; John 11:45-end; 2 Timothy 1

THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH

OH PRAISE THE LORD WITH ME

*I WILL, always give thanks unto the Lord; his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
O praise the Lord with me; and let us magnify his Name together.
I sought the Lord, and he heard me; yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.
They had an eye unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.
Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him; yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him; and delivereth them.
O taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints; for they that fear him lack nothing.* Psalm 34:1-8

This Psalm comes from David, as he is hiding in a cave. He is sharing with others his trust and fear of God. The glory and love of God is so very clear. His words share with us that He makes all truly blessed that trust in Him. David says that we can look to the Lord with faith and prayers and it will revive and comfort. He reminds us that when we have much to overcome, if we listen and not ask, our answers will come.

We have always had trust in God. To us, it is the foundation of our life. We try to live in a way that brings the blessings of God. We use the lessons that we learn each week as we worship, through prayer and finding ways to help others, leads us to do the work that God wants us to do. We praise God for his gifts in all situations and in all events. This psalm connects so well to our mission at St. Vincent's: "Making Jesus Christ known in all that we do." "I WILL always give thanks unto the Lord; his praise shall ever be in my mouth."

Heavenly Father, Thank you for the blessings that you give us each day. Thank You for Your love, trust and grace that are constants in our lives, no matter what. Your faith in us gives us the strength to have faith in You. You give us answers when we sometimes don't even know the questions. Your guidance and direction helps us every day in every way to help us live the life that you have prepared for us to do. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Bradley and Doreen Mengwasser,
Elementary School Principals

Psalms 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Numbers 16:1-35; Numbers 16:36-17-end; John 12:1-19; 2 Timothy 2



FRIDAY, APRIL 7TH

WE WISH TO SEE JESUS

I learn more each time I open my Bible and look at it with new eyes and a open heart.

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."

John 12:20-26

Everyone was there to celebrate the Passover, including some Greeks that wanted to see Jesus. There was a festive air, most were happy and ready to celebrate, but there were also those that spent their time conspiring to end the ministry of Jesus. People got their news by word of mouth, and people were talking about Jesus, did you hear... "Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!" I have a mental picture of the Greeks coming to Philip because they had heard about Jesus. Philip thinking, how do I handle this, Greeks wanting to see Jesus! I know, I'll go ask Andrew to come with me to talk to Jesus and together, we will tell him about the Greeks. Some believe that the Greeks followed and were there to hear Jesus' words.

Jesus answers by telling them that the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Earlier in John, Jesus told his mother that His time had not yet come. Why was this time different? Did He feel it in His Spirit? He told them that He, Jesus the seed, must die, so that we, his disciples could bear fruit. We, you and me, are the fruit of Jesus! We have the Spirit of Jesus within us.

What a gift to celebrate communion each Sunday, to receive the body and blood of our Lord and Savior. We take Him in. He is in us and we are in Him, (where I am my servant is also). Our mission to make Jesus Christ known in ALL that we do is the perfect way for others to see Jesus in us.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Let others see Jesus in me. Amen.

Veronica Phillpott
Quality Technician for Dannon Yogurt

Psalms 35, 36, 37
Numbers 20, Numbers 22:1-35; 2 Timothy 3; John 12:20-end



SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH

THE BIBLE DOESN'T CHANGE

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

The first few verses of 2 Timothy 4 remind us that we should obey the Lord's word, even when it's not convenient for us or goes against changing popular opinions. We can't change the words of the Bible to fit our present needs, yet we see this happening more and more as time goes on.

Yet, what's interesting to us is that Timothy talks about how even 2,000 years ago, men used teachers to interpret the law to fit their own likings, justifying whatever transgressions they may have committed. Look no further than today's news, where we see quite often that wrong is right and right is wrong. It makes it a challenge to stand up, unwavering in what we believe, as too often, those who do are cast as intolerant of the new ways, ironically by those who claim to have the ultimate tolerance. Timothy encourages us to endure the hardship that comes with doing so, as it fulfills our ministry.

Dear Lord, please help us let your light shine through us, not only in our words but in our purposeful actions, and help us demonstrate your unwavering love and true way. We hope that we can be an example for others to emulate. Amen.

Jason W. Mraz
Sales Director

Andria Mraz, R.N.
Utilization Review Nurse

Psalms 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

Numbers 22:36-23:26; Numbers 23:27-24:end; 2 Timothy 4; John 13.



APRIL 9TH PALM SUNDAY

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL

As a PA, I am often listening to people talk about the changes occurring in their bodies that are due to living. Some will say, “This is because I am getting old.” They frown and their whole countenance falls. I look at them, smile and say, “no, it is because we have gotten to live. All of these changes that take place with our bodies, I call badges of living. Some badges we don’t want, but we get them anyway.” We both then laugh and discuss what to do about these changes. It does not change the fact of what is happening, but it certainly changes our attitude about those changes. I will get that same uplifting feeling when I say the first verse of Psalm 103:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me bless his holy name.*

I cannot say “Bless the Lord” without my eyebrows lifting and feeling an energy I can’t explain. This verse reminds me of what is great and true about God, but it especially means more to me on this Palm Sunday. We celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We are shouting Hosanna! All is good and right with the world. Big changes are coming! In a few short days that all unexpectedly changes—then comes the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday with the terrible time in the garden when Jesus is praying so very hard and is betrayed by one of his own friends. Next is Good Friday, the trial and hanging of Jesus on the cross and his death. Holy Saturday with all our hopes dashed because Jesus died. Finally, Easter Day dawns when Jesus rises and overcomes death forever and for all of us.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. I say this with a deep gratitude and can add, And all that is within me bless his holy name.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, where by you have given us life and immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

Lenore Rothman
Member of Vestry, Choir member

Psalms 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 or 103
Exodus 11; Isaiah 52:13-53:end; Luke 19:29-end; Matthew 26



APRIL 10TH MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK,

WASH DAY

- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.*
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me and I shall be clean indeed.*
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.*
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.*
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Psalm 51

When I was a youth, our household ran with a specific day of the week for washing laundry, a day for cleaning, a day for baking, and a day for going to church. It was a comfort to have that stability in our lives and to know that every task would be handled in a systematic way, not overlooked or crowded out by all the other tasks and emergencies that came up during the week. Helping out with these activities was part of our assigned chores and it kept the family functioning. At least once a week, we knew we would have a new supply of clean clothes and sheets. In a sense, Lent is like the periodic return of spiritual Wash Day when we can remove the dirt in our lives and undergo a thorough cleaning.

I love the passages in Psalm 51 because so many of them are used as the texts for the anthems that the choir sings during Lent. Like the Old Testament story of Noah that prefigures baptism through death by water, the Old Testament psalm prefigures the spiritual cleansing of Godly washing by the water and blood coming from the side of Jesus. In the shepherding culture of King David's time, their life must have been a constant struggle with sand, blowing dirt, and sweat. What a relief a spring of water must have brought, and what a luxury a thorough washing and cleaning would have been. No wonder the psalms compare washing to the longed for relief for soul, heart, and spirit.

Today, we are tempted to take clean running water and household appliances for granted. However, just as my family members had to take part in the chores, including Wash Day, we as Church family must do the heavy work of self-examination, confession, commitment to reform, and letting go of resentment and injury. We must accept God's call and believe in His power. Then, He can complete the work of cleaning, purifying, and restoring us to the kind of lives that He so much wants us to have. Then, again, with a clean and right spirit, we can offer ourselves as a sacrifice back to God and open our lips to proclaim His praise.



Our heavenly Father who has shown thy Son to be the Way for the removal of sin; accept our sacrifice of a troubled spirit and a broken and contrite heart so that we may be made clean through the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross for our salvation, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Robert Boyer
Retired Library Administrator

Psalms 51:1-20, 69:1-23
Hosea 13:1-14; Hosea 14; John 14:1-14; John 14:15-end

APRIL 11TH

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

THE FOND FAREWELL

"This is my command: Love each other."

John 15:17

At the Last Supper Jesus was compelled to give his final instructions to his disciples with regard to His expectations on how they should behave, and how the Holy Spirit would assist them in His absence. Jesus did not instruct by commandment edict. He used all of the Law and Prophets already available. But at this apex of His ministry, he chose to take advantage of their complete attention and admonished them to "obey what I command." (John 14:15) He knew that the most important bread that they would need to stay together and faithful was to love each other. Nothing short of that was acceptable.

Dear Lord, Give us the Spirit of Truth that we may understand how to love our fellow man, our fellow Christians, and You, more and more, day by day, in Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

Don Bendure
Retired Sunday School Teacher

Psalms 6, 12, 94
Isaiah 42:1-9; Wisdom 2:1, 12-end; John 15:1-16; John 15:17-end

APRIL 12TH

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

FALLING AWAY

And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he may take away the serpents from us."

Numbers 21:7



During their long ordeal in the wilderness, despite the dauntless leadership of Moses, the Israelites repeatedly fall away from God, are punished, and then repent. Repeatedly, they fall away from God and into the same old bad habits. Does this sound familiar? In the Book of Numbers, Chapter 21, the Israelites whine, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” In response to this affront, God sends fiery serpents to punish the people. Many die and they beg Moses to intercede. Again, Moses prays to the Lord. God tells Moses to make an antidote—a snake out of bronze (likely reddish copper, suggestive of atonement, from nearby mines; as per ESV Study Bible commentary) which cures anyone who looks at it. Thus, the people sin, are punished, repent, and then are saved again by God’s grace and forgiveness. And, so on the cycle goes. Perhaps this is the cycle, the seasons if you will, of growth in the fallen world. We sin; we are punished, albeit, if only by our loss of closeness with God; we repent; and we are saved, often in extraordinary fashion. Our fallen humanity ensures that we will sin. Jesus’ death on the cross ensures that we will be forgiven. If our sinfulness is inevitable, perhaps the rapidity of our repentance determines our closeness to God, our spiritual growth. Perhaps, if we develop the habit of prayerfully repenting immediately upon falling away from God into sin, we will walk closer to God and have more success in overcoming of temptation into sin.

Jesus seems to address this idea in his words at the end of John Chapter 16: “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

God, our ultimate Father, the world often seems full of snakes! We give You thanks and praise for You have given us the antidote—Your Son our savior Jesus Christ. With Your help, we will walk closely with Him against all the snakes of the world. Amen.

Warren T. Jackson
Psychologist

Psalms 55, 74

Numbers 21:4-9; Leviticus 16:2-24; John 16:1-15, John 16-end

APRIL 13TH **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

MAUNDY THURSDAY

As we enter into these three most holy days of the church year (The Sacred Triduum), we recall and live out the final days of our Lord’s life. This day, we especially remember the washing of the disciple’s feet by Jesus and the institution of the Eucharist. As our Lord was about to depart his earthly life, He did two acts for others. When He could have been focusing on his coming trial, abuse and crucifixion, He chose to do acts for others. He chose to make others clean and to institute for them, and for us, and for all eternity, the sacrament of Thanksgiving.



He chose to institute for us and for others, that new commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. There is that wonderful passage in the Book of Hebrew: (10:8-11) “When he said above, “Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Lo, I have come to do thy will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Jesus, in fact abolishes the old law and establishes the new.

So, as we come to the altar of God and receive the most sacred sacrament, let us recall this night that Jesus remembers others. He washes their feet and He establishes the new law for us and for all the world—to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Deacon Kerwin Wade
St. Vincent’s Cathedral

Psalms 102, 142, 143

Lamentations 1:1-14; Lamentations 3:1-33; John 13:1-35; John 17

APRIL 14TH GOOD FRIDAY

“IT IS FINISHED.”

In the Gospel according to Saint John, we learn that as our Lord Jesus was about to “give up His spirit” and suffer death on the cross His final words were, “It is finished” (John 19:30, ESV). The great ministry of teaching and healing that had crowned His earthly life, undertaken over three tumultuous years, was ending in death at Calvary. God had “made Him sin, who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21), in order that the Messiah might become “the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Jesus was giving His life for the sanctification of humankind, offering His body “once and for all” (Heb 10:10).

The full meaning of the Atonement that our Lord Jesus made on the cross—the unfathomable depths of the mysterious reunion Christ accomplished between the all-righteous and all-loving Creator and fallen humanity by means of His sacrificial death—is beyond our understanding. But Christ’s last words leave a hint that boggles the imagination. The word usually translated “finished” in John 19:30 is *teleios* in Greek. *Teleios* can also mean “mature” or “perfect.” It sends chills down my spine to think that as Christ suffered in agony on the cross—enduring not only the physical torture of crucifixion but the full weight of every sin that ever had been or ever would be committed in human history within His own soul—He could see *perfection* from the cross. As His precious Blood ran down from the crown of thorns into His eyes, our Lord looked at the wretched specimens of humanity below Him—His weeping followers and mocking Jewish elders and indifferent Roman soldiers—and He saw perfection!

I take immense comfort from that knowledge. For although justified through faith in Christ, I know that sin still clings close to my heart. But when God Almighty looks at



my brokenness and failure, He sees me bathed in the Blood of His Son, Jesus my Savior. And when the Father sees me through the Blood of His only-begotten Son, He sees nothing but Christ's perfection. "For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified (Heb 10:14)."

The Rev. Randall W. Foster

Priest-in-Charge, St. Michael's Anglican Church, Richland Hills, Texas

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

Genesis 22:1-18; Isaiah 50:4-10; John 18:1-32, 19:38-end

APRIL 15TH

HOLY SATURDAY

LIVING OUR LIVES—AS IF LENT NEVER ENDED

Holy Saturday, is filled with lots of anxiety. Having just participated in the sorrowful events of Good Friday, normally the rest of the day (Friday) is spent in anxiety. Many questions arise in our mind: where were they? Why did they desert their longtime friend? What exactly happened? How could they do such a thing? How could the mob rally together to cause the death of someone they really didn't know?, etc.

As we contemplate on such unanswerable questions, then Saturday dawns, and yet more questions arise: Did my Lord really spend a night in the tomb? Is it true that such a celebrity could have been buried by just two distant friends? Could I have been among them? Could I stand the jeers to keep following to the end? Then, more questions: at what exact hour did he arise? How long is this watch going to be? Would I have been courageous enough to accompany the women and help them remove the stone?

One of the greatest things about Holy Saturday is that somewhere within that night to Sunday morning, he arose from the tomb. Yes, he arose. And now the task turned onto the guards to make up a story as to what happened. Professional guys who were hired to keep watch ended up concocting a story that while they slept, his disciples came and stole the body. No they didn't. They were so scared and hiding in the upper room – for fear of the Jews.

Secondly, Holy Saturday concludes the long period of forty days of self-examination during which we particularly focus on those areas in our lives which cause us to deny our Lord.

Like I have said before, Lent is not a time for doing away with those things which you pick up at the end of the solemn season. It is a time for analyzing our walk with the Lord and discovering how intimate our relationship is. By asking ourselves such questions listed above, we find answers in self-examination by assessing our affection to the Lord and how we can truly deny all for his sake.

As we contemplate, our action from now on, we come face to face with John's reading, which pretty much reminds us that we are spiritual vessels, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and so, we must keep that temple clean by allowing our Lord to banish out of it all things which tarnish our relationship with him.



My house should be a house of prayer and not a den of robbers.

Let us, therefore, allow God to use us beyond the Lenten season so that those habits we picked up during lent will be sustained to transform us into prayerful bodies (temples) and not abodes of conspiracy, hate, envy, malice, and all such sins which turn us into the devil's vessels.

At baptism, we were sealed as Christ's own and may God help us to remain truly his – prayerful and focused on living our lives as if Lent never ended – pure and holy.

Fr. John Kalimi
Vicar, African Fellowship and Assistant Priest

Psalms 27, 88, 95
Zechariah 9:9-12; 1 Peter 2:11-end; Job 19:21-27; John 2:13-22

APRIL 16TH

EASTER SUNDAY

On that first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene found herself grieving and perhaps in shock. She came to the tomb early in order to finish the burial preparation which was not done before the Sabbath had begun. As she arrived at the tomb, she was startled to find it empty. St. John tells us that the body of Jesus was gone and in her worry, grief, and anguish, she was unable to recognize the two angels that stood before her. And when she turned around, she was unable to recognize Jesus as he stood before her.

Of course, Mary didn't expect to encounter Jesus alive. She didn't recognize Jesus because no one before or since had risen from the dead. It would have been impossible. At the same time, in her worry and mourning, she was unable to see who was before her until Jesus called her by name.

At that moment, she realized that God had done the impossible. Jesus, her Lord and teacher, was now alive. Her very next act was to go and tell the disciples that Jesus was alive.

This Easter, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, we should realize that Jesus is standing outside the tomb and calling each one of us by name. And once we have had time to celebrate the gift of eternal life that He has won for us, our very next act should be to tell others that He is alive.

Because there is no other name under heaven by which we may be forgiven, let us shout from the rooftops that He is Risen. That He is Risen. Indeed!

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

Psalms 113, 114, 148-150
Exodus 12:1-14, Exodus 14:5-end; Revelations 1:4-18; John 20:11-23



LENTEN SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross & Sermon is followed by a light Lenten Meal at 6:45 p.m.

The Sounds of Lent

The year we are going to explore the different music and musical settings associated with the Lenten Season. Each of the following topics will be explained and then performed by **Alissa Davis, Music Director and Organist.**

Wednesday, March 8th 6:00 p.m.	Gregorian Chant
Wednesday, March 15th 6:00 p.m.	English Renaissance
Wednesday, March 22nd 6:00 p.m.	Lutheran Chorales in Bach's Organ Works
Wednesday, March 29th 6:00 p.m.	Psalmody
Wednesday, April 5th 6:00 p.m.	Anglican Hymns



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Week Services	
The Nursery is available for all services during Holy Week.	
Date	Service
Sunday, April 9th 7:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 11:15 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	Palm Sunday Holy Eucharist with Procession of the Palms (meet in courtyard) Choral Eucharist with Procession of the Palms (meet in parking lot by library) Choral Eucharist with Procession of the Palms (meet in parking lot by library) Seder Meal
Monday, April 10th 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist
Tuesday, April 11th 10:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Mass of Collegiality Holy Eucharist
Wednesday, April 12th 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist
Thursday, April 13th 7:30 p.m. 9:00 p.m.—12:00 noon Friday	Maundy Thursday Service Washing of the Feet The Watch in the Chapel (Sign Up Sheet in the Narthex)
Friday, April 14th 7:30 p.m.	Good Friday Liturgy
Holy Saturday, April 15th 9:00 a.m. Sunset (approximately 8:00 p.m.)	Holy Saturday Service Easter Vigil The Right Rev. Jack L. Iker Preacher and Celebrant
Easter Sunday, April 16th 7:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 11:15a.m.	Easter Sunday Holy Eucharist Choral Eucharist Choral Eucharist