

REFLECTIONS  
*for the* SEASON *of* LENT

EDGEWOOD COLLEGE 2024



## –INTRODUCTION–

*Lent is the forty-day preparatory period before Easter, beginning on Ash Wednesday. Lent begins this year on February 14 and culminates on Easter Sunday, March 31. In the Christian tradition, the season of Lent is a time of soul searching and repentance—a time for reflection while taking stock of one’s life in preparation for the Easter celebration of the risen Christ.*

*The “Reflections for the Season of Lent” booklet is an annual tradition in which the reflections are written by members of the Edgewood College community. For this year’s booklet, we chose to include reflections that were primarily published in previous Lenten booklets over the past several years. Each day’s reflection includes a brief biblical text drawn from daily Lent Scripture readings selected for the Christian Common Lectionary.*

*We hope these reflections provide inspiration for you during this year’s observance of Lent.*

*Blessings to you during this holy season as Christians throughout the world prepare for Easter through prayerful listening to God’s Word, openness to God’s mercy, and compassionate outreach to needs within the human family.*

*Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion  
Edgewood College*

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*† - Deceased*

## ASH WEDNESDAY | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

**Joel 2:12-14.** *Even now, says our God, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to your God. For gracious and merciful is God, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Perhaps God will again relent and leave behind a blessing.*

No one loves to focus on what they've done wrong. Yet everyone makes mistakes—small and large. In education, faculty cast a critical eye on the work of students and point out errors not to shame or sadden students, but to help the student acknowledge the error, learn from it, and correct it in the future. Without that acknowledgment, students are doomed to make the same errors repeatedly. We're all students of life, students of God. On Ash Wednesday, taking time to consider our errors, to ask forgiveness, and to learn from them can lead to a stronger walk with God, a stronger faith, and a stronger community. The shame of error lies in pretending error doesn't exist. Great students admit error. And no surprise, admitting error is the best way to move on and improve, both in academia, in our community, and in our personal faith walk.

*Jeanne Leep, Professor of Theatre Arts, Chair of Theatre Arts Department*

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

**Deuteronomy 30:15-20.** *See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of your God...by loving God, walking in God's ways...then you shall live...and God will bless you...But if your heart turns away and you do not hear...you shall perish.*

The words today are profound, yet the message is simple. Follow God's commandments and you will live, but turn your heart away and you perish. That makes sense, right? But the almost forceful command in this passage is "Choose life so that you may live." Jesus Christ is life. Yesterday, Ash Wednesday, we renewed our baptismal promises, and in that way we chose life, we chose Jesus Christ. Every step of this Lenten journey we remember that at the end Jesus must die. But there is new life and a new beginning in the Resurrection. Perhaps for your Lenten journey you have decided to "give something up," like a New Year's resolution. Maybe this year, instead of giving up chocolate for the tenth year in a row, you can "choose life" for a daily Lenten activity – smile, hold the door, help someone or listen to them. All these life-giving activities are a way to celebrate our life through Jesus, our Savior.

*Rachel DeBruin, B.A., 2009*

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

**Isaiah 58:7.** *Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.*

The thought-provoking passage from Isaiah asks us to turn to the dispossessed and the downtrodden, to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and set free the oppressed of this world. While countless families in our own communities cannot afford to pay rent or put food on their tables, the message of the Scriptures carries new significance and relevance for us. These ageless words of wisdom and compassion compel us to open up our hearts to our neighbors and invite us to be empathetic and responsive to human suffering and adversity.

*Sayeeda Mamoon, Professor of French (Emerita)*

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

**Isaiah 58:13.** *If you call the Sabbath a delight...if you honor it by not following your ways, seeking your own interests, or speaking with malice -- then you shall delight in God...*

Only you, in your heart, know what the best Sabbath time is for you. Donna Schaper in her book, *Sabbath Sense*, calls it "spiritual leisure," "a turn in the road back to grace." I especially like this image. It makes the dictionary definition of grace as "the influence or spirit of God operating in humans to regenerate or strengthen them" come alive. Whatever Sabbath is, I like to call it an intentional time and space for God to enter in. Sabbath is a time of re-creation, a time of remembering who and whose we are.

*Holly W. Whitcomb, (Augsburg Books, 2002), p. 16*

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## FIRST WEEK OF LENT

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

**Genesis 9:12-13.** *God added: “This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”*

Lent is a time of sacrifice, prayer, and reflection. .... Lent brings with it the promise of Easter rebirth and renewal. We truly have gotten this far by faith. It is a faith that has been sustained by prayer and the promise of God’s covenant with Noah and the promise that God’s ways are love and truth.

As we reflect on this first Sunday of Lent and in the days and weeks to come, we must not forget the sacrifice and suffering we have borne and witnessed in the last year. Doing so would dishonor all of that pain and all of that loss. Instead, we must prayerfully embrace it because that will allow us to see the rebirth and renewal that comes with the light of Easter.

And through it all, we remember that...

God is good...

And all the time...Amen.

*Tia Noelle Pratt, Assistant Vice President for Mission Engagement and Strategic Initiatives, Villanova University, excerpt from reflection for First Sunday of Lent, Catholic Women Preach website, 2021*

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

**Leviticus 19:11-17.** *God said to Moses...“You shall not steal. You shall not lie or speak falsely to one another...You shall not defraud or rob your neighbor... You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment...You shall not go about spreading slander among your kin...You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart...”*

We are in a constant search for happiness, but we would like the short and easy road. However, happiness takes real work. In the Scripture text from Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18, God tells us we shall not steal, defraud, act dishonestly, spread slander or bear hatred. To me, the overarching

principle is that you shall not lie; your actions, thoughts and words shall be truthful. Acting and saying the truth will bring us closer to the possibility of living a fulfilled life, in which we can have a positive impact in the lives of everyone with whom we come in contact. We would leave the world in a better state than we found it; we would come closer to God’s command and expression of love, and therefore to happiness. Selfish attempts to be loved will not make us happier; being truthful and living the truth will. Then we will flourish.

*Beatriz Aguilar, Professor of Music and Director of COR*

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

**Isaiah 55:10-11.** *Thus says your God: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.*

If our words, our actions, our whole beings carry reverence for all Life, we have the power to bring light to other lives. In the Greek translation of the Bible, the ‘Word of God’ spells LOGOS, and during the early centuries of the church, LOGOS was also a direct reference to Jesus. Such interpretation speaks again of God’s ultimate sacrifice that comes from boundless love. Just look at all the life that in early spring will emerge from the winter ground. A little, defenseless, lonely seed, buried in the dead, frozen soil all winter, blooms into a beautiful flower. Science can explain every stage of this miraculous process, but only faith can assure us of the power behind it. And when in moments of hardship, you doubt God’s love and feel alone and forgotten, be patient, because your spring is coming.

*Sergei Pavlov, Associate Professor, Director of Choirs*

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

**Psalms 51:12.** *A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me.*

Lent is a time of truth, a time to drop the masks we put on each day to appear perfect in the eyes of the world. It is a time, as Jesus said in the Gospel, to reject lies and hypocrisy: not those of others, but of ourselves: We look them in the eye and resist them. ...

Once we return to the truth about ourselves and remind ourselves that we are not self-sufficient, we realize that we exist only through relationships: our primordial relationship with the Lord and our vital relationships with others.

Lent, then, is a season of grace when we can rebuild our relationship with God and with others, opening our hearts in the silence of prayer and emerging from the fortress of our self-sufficiency. Lent is the favorable time when we can break the chains of our individualism and isolation, and rediscover, through encounter and listening, our companions along the journey of each day. And to learn once more to love them as brothers and sisters.

*Pope Francis, Excerpt from Homily for Ash Wednesday, 2023*

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

**Psalm 23:4.** *Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for You are at my side with Your rod and Your staff that give me courage.*

At times, the darkness of winter can weigh heavily on my ability to encounter each day with a positive outlook. There always seems to be an endless to-do list which just never seems to get finished. There are countless commitments that require a schedule to be stretched to its limits. At times, small disagreements between colleagues or friends snowball to the point where reconciliation appears impossible.

Life's challenges continue to present themselves each day and every day. It can be too much to handle.

However, we are reminded in today's psalm that we are not meant to tackle these challenges alone. God has promised to walk through the darkest valleys with us; to share God's love with us. We may experience that love through silent prayer, a conversation with a good friend or through the kindness of a stranger, but regardless, God is always there. God's love is forever present to bring warmth and light to the darkest days of winter.

*Linda Wilder, Executive Assistant to the Provost, B.S., 2011, M.A., 2015*

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

**Ezekiel 18:23.** *Do I indeed derive any pleasure from the death of the wicked? says God. Do I not rather rejoice when they turn from their evil way that they may live?*

Sometimes it feels awesome to sit in our own wickedness, doesn't it? Our culture even celebrates it. The wittiest jab at another gets rewarded with laughter and praise; "ghosting" people has become an acceptable means to "address" uncomfortable situations; sitting in our own righteous anger becomes a pastime as we replay for others how we shot the cleverest comeback; we even rehearse imaginary conflicts that haven't actually happened just to hear our wickedness preside! It's exhausting. Ezekiel reminds us that we do not have to live like this. Despite the momentary high that "wickedness" brings, it is not sustainable nor lasting in joy. God provides a consistent soft place to land for us, even in our hardest moments. While wicked tendencies might look tempting, we are called to choose kindness, understanding, curiosity, and love. I hear it – it sounds very "kumbaya" and I hear my own snarky (wicked?) voice sneering at those fluffy words. And still, I know that in practice, choosing a soft landing feels healthier, cozier, and closer to God for me.

*Hollie McCrea Olson, Director for Community Standards and Student Wellbeing, M.A., 2017, M.S. 2022*

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

**Matthew 5:43-44.** *But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of the heavenly Father.*

Who are enemies? No one is trying to persecute me, but there are people in my life who cause me to hurt. Enemies can mean those who repeatedly go against my desires- in dramatic or casual form. Enemies include my tweenage daughter, my stubborn mother, my cranky neighbor. Enemies include the difficult student. What does Jesus say? Greet them. Do practical acts of helpfulness in ordinary ways. Want good for them and express this want in prayer. Loving our enemies is not natural; we need the grace of God and the Holy Spirit to do so. Let's pray.

*Emily C. Zoeller, Assistant Professor of Education/ Coordinator of Language and Literacy Program, Ed.D., 2020*

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## SECOND WEEK OF LENT

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

**Mark 9:5.** *Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”*

In our Gospel reading from Mark, Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John. His appearance is dazzling. He converses with Moses and Elijah, prophets and leaders of old. In the wake of these remarkable sightings, Peter responds: “It is good that we are here.”

And that is true for us as well. Yes, indeed it is good that we are here - in whatever state we find ourselves in - because God is with us and prepared to reveal Himself to us.... To the three apostles, Jesus revealed His true nature as the Son of God, the fulfillment of all the prophets had foretold. Jesus confirmed that the men were right to follow their hearts when this strange man from Galilee called out to them and told them to abandon their fishing boats. Abraham, Peter, James, and John were able to witness God’s revelatory power when they chose to simply follow where God led - no matter the sacrifice, no matter the mystery. Do we have the faith and trust to say “Here I am. Meet me here. Work on me. Move within me - right here”?

*Vickey McBride, Vice President of Mission & Ministry, Saint Martin de Porres High School, excerpt from reflection for Second Sunday of Lent, Catholic Women Preach website, 2021*

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

**Luke 6:36-38.** *Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.*

This is my kind of passage. No confusion for me here; be the good and the rest will follow. In practice, I’m constantly reminding myself that it is not my place to pass judgement. The reward that I see isn’t a direct correlation that others aren’t, in turn, judging me. It is more that I am set free from the bounds of an imperfect judgement of another. Similarly, forgiveness isn’t so I will then be forgiven, but more that I (and they) may

benefit from the freedom, the connection, and the lightness that forgiving another brings. To me, these words tell us to bask in the glow of keeping a door open. Tangible “good things” may or may not follow, but a generous, compassionate heart brings its own rewards both inward and outward.

*Claire Mand, Executive Director for Student Life, M.A., 2018*

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

**Matthew 23:10-12.** *Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ .... Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. But now it is with the voice of our contemporaries that He speaks, with the eyes of store clerks, factory workers, and children that he gazes; with the hands of office workers, slum dwellers, and suburban housewives that He gives .... And giving shelter or food to anyone who asks for it, or needs it, is giving it to Christ ....

It would be foolish to pretend that it is always easy to remember this. If everyone were holy and handsome, with “alter Christus” [“another Christ”] shining in neon lighting from them, it would be easy to see Christ in everyone. If Mary had appeared in Bethlehem clothed, as St. John says, with the sun, a crown of twelve stars on her head, and the moon under her feet [see Revelation 12:1], then people would have fought to make room for her. But that was not God’s way for her, nor is it Christ’s way for Himself. In Christ’s human life, there were always a few who made up for the neglect of the crowd. The shepherds did it; their hurrying to the crib atoned for the people who would flee from Christ. The wise men did it; their journey across the world made up for those who refused to stir one hand’s breadth from the routine of their lives to go to Christ. ....

We can do it too, exactly as they did. We are not born too late. We do it by seeing Christ and serving Christ in friends and strangers, in everyone we come in contact with.

*Dorothy Day (1897–1980), Co-Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, Selected Writings: By Little and By Little, ed. Robert Ellsberg (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983, 1992), 94, 97*

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Matthew 20:25-26.** *But Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant.”*

At this time of my life’s journey, as I reflect this Lent on the early discovery of the immensity of the nature of this Mother Earth both in her mountain and ocean, it makes me think of the theological virtue of Hope as our brother Thomas Aquinas dubbed it. Hope expands my vision beyond the immediate horizon. Hope seeks to break open our hearts and helps us not to fear and to love who we are because our God, Creator of all this, has called us to this task or way of life. Our heart is then open to the whisperings of the Trinity. Our heart hears the Father who calls us daughter or son; our heart opens to the Son to whom we have given our lives; and to the Spirit who inspires us to love and serve others as we should from each sunrise to the daily sunset.

*Monica Socinski, O.P., Dominican Sister of Hope, “Lenten Reflection: On the Day at Hand, From Sunrise to Sunset,” 20 March 2018, Dominican Sisters of Hope website*

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29

**Jeremiah 17:10.** *I, your God, alone probe the mind and test the heart.*

This statement tells me that Edgewood College and our five Values of TRUTH, COMPASSION, JUSTICE, PARTNERSHIP, and COMMUNITY define the essence of a spiritual life. “Veritas” is the foundation of the Dominican existence. It requires us all to participate in life in such a way that brings a positive, Godly review at life’s end. Dominic defined how to give rather than always receive and illustrates our Compassion value.

Jeremiah 17 illustrates for us that virtues which reflect personal gain, lacking a compassionate heart will not gain favor with our Lord. As stated, “More tortuous than all else is the human heart” and only God will be able to see within and make judgment according to merit and deeds.

So, it’s incumbent upon us all to find ways to live a Truthful, Compassionate and Just life. We all are required to partner within our community and strive to make each day one that will make God rejoice.

*Gary Oftedahl, former Edgewood College Golf Coach (retired)*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 1

**Genesis 37:3-28a.** *Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age...When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his sons, they hated him so much that they would not even greet him...they plotted to kill him.*

This reading from Genesis is a somber scripture story about family dynamics. Israel the father loved his son Joseph the best. The brothers of Joseph were so jealous of their father’s love for him that they planned to kill him.

When I reflect about this reading, I can only imagine Israel loved all of his children but showed it differently to each child. Joseph’s brothers were selfish and lost sight of what Joseph brought to their family.

Family dynamics are interesting and it’s easy to compare ourselves to our siblings. Each individual is unique and has different relationships with each family member. However, there are always some similarities in family. As we move through Lent, we have the opportunity to reach out to our families to reestablish bonds and reconnect with our family roots. Family is the foundation of life.

*Suann Saltzberry, Director of Athletics, B.S., 2005, M.B.A., 2009*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 2

**Micah 7:14.** *Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance...*

The Shepherd with staff is among the first images of God presented to us as children. It was a reassurance of God’s love, guidance and protection for us. The shepherd uses the staff to gently guide and reunite the sheep when they have strayed. God does not respond to our straying with disgust or disdain. We are guided back, not in shame, but in the realization of God’s abundant mercy and compassion. It may be difficult to embrace and feel worthy of such mercy and compassion, and at times we might even reject it; but God does not give up on us. God’s persistence is an expression of God’s love seeking our conversion. It is the experience of being the beloved of God and a reminder that even in our darkest moments, we can “be-loved” by God. How might I experience and express God’s mercy and compassion with those I encounter today?

*Eileen McIltrout, Edgewood College, B.S. 1978*

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## THIRD WEEK OF LENT

### SUNDAY, MARCH 3

**Romans 5:5.** *And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Love people even in their sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love, and is the highest love on earth. Love all of God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

*Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov*

### MONDAY, MARCH 4

**2 Kings 5:1, 6-7.** *Naaman, the army commander of the king of Aram, was highly esteemed and respected by his master... But the man was a leper... Naaman set out...brought the king of Israel the letter, which read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." When he read the letter, the king of Israel tore his garments and exclaimed: "Am I a god with power over life and death, that this man should send someone for me to cure him of leprosy? Take note! You can see he is only looking for a quarrel with me!"*

While reading this scripture, I was struck by Naaman's search for the truth. Naaman's quest to cure his leprosy led him to the king of Israel. Naaman expected the king to wave his hand and cure him of his problems and was in disbelief when the king sent him away. His search for truth reminds me that no one person has the answer to our questions or solution to our problems. Rather, it is our responsibility to seek out the truth from multiple perspectives and resolve our problems through thoughtful action. As Naaman discovered, sometimes the solution to our problem is found where we least expect, but we must have faith that we are being led in the right direction.

*Bill Dougherty, B.S., 2006*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 5

**Matthew 18:21-35.** *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus answered: "Not seven but seventy times seven..."*

Forgiveness calls for grace, compassion, and is truly a gift. It is a gift not only for the person receiving forgiveness, but also for the one offering it. Forgiveness speaks to the heart of others – Cor Ad Cor Loquitur – “Heart Speaks to Heart” – the motto of Edgewood College. It allows us to remain true to our Dominican Mission as we, a community of learners, commit to building a just and compassionate world. Forgiveness creates an atmosphere of peace and growth and is limitless. There is no limit to the number of times we have the opportunity to forgive one another and forgive ourselves. We must be prepared to forgive, as it releases the burden of a heavy heart and creates a place where one can be free, let go, heal, and continue one's journey on a lifelong search for truth.

*Katie Vesperman, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, B.S., 1999*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

**Deuteronomy 4:9.** *Take care and be earnestly on your guard not to forget the things which your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live, but teach them to your children and to your children's children.*

Moses repeated in this passage, “...hear...observe, that you may live...,” instructing how to keep God's law. My children have been through driver's training, as I did years ago. Their instruction with these educators and practice with experienced drivers imparted laws that protect the lives of all who navigate the roadways. Traffic laws become ingrained because we put them into practice every time we get behind the wheel. Moses gave MANY laws to the Israelites, and he assured them that their observance would result in wisdom, intelligence, and that God would be close whenever they called for help. Jesus calls us to love God and our neighbors. If we do our best to remember, practice, and inspire in others this call to love, our life's journey and those around us will be blessed through our diligent efforts.

*Dinean Thelen, Liturgical Music Accompanist, Campus Ministry*

## THURSDAY, MARCH 7

**Jeremiah 7:23-28.** *Thus says our God: This is what I commanded my people: Listen to my voice; then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper...But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked in the hardness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not their faces, to me.*

Jeremiah is a prophet who always spoke with emotion and conviction. He recounts God's generous promises to the people: Walk in all the ways that I command you, so that you may prosper.

But the people didn't pay any attention to God and not to Jeremiah, either: The word itself is banished from their speech.

What do Jeremiah's words and the people's response say to us? They say to me that now during Lent, I want to ask myself if there are any parts of my life--attitudes, thoughts, actions--that seem to reject God's offer to be my God.

I want to accept God's offer. I want to wipe the slate clean of any of my attitudes or actions that prevent this.

Luckily, we have nearly three weeks of Lent left to work on accepting God's presence and love more deeply in our lives!

*Ann McCullough, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 8

**Hosea 14:2-3, 5.** *Thus says our God: "Return, O Israel, to your God; you have collapsed through your guilt. Take with you words, and return to God"... "I will heal their defection," says our God, "I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them."*

This text reminds us that forgiveness is critical for us to flourish and be happy. Even God needed to forgive Israel for turning their backs and embrace them once again. In the same way, we must be strong and forgive those who have wronged us. We must give them the opportunity to make amends and move on with our lives.

Just as Israel, we must also be willing to ask for forgiveness, learn from our past and move forward with new conviction and hope for prosperity. As hard as granting forgiveness can be, it is often more difficult to seek

forgiveness and not just hope things will take care of themselves. And, as with Israel in this text, our need for forgiveness may simply be because we believed things will be better if we turn our backs on those who love us most. It is easy to take them for granted.

*Al Brisack, Associate Vice President for Athletic Development/Head Baseball Coach*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 9

**Hosea 6:3.** *Let us know, let us strive to know God; as certain as the dawn is God's coming, and God's judgment shines forth like the light of day! God will come to us like the rain, like spring rain that waters the earth.*

As we allow our lives to be consumed with countless commitments and activities at work and home, we must also find the time and space for God. How refreshing to think of God coming to us "like spring rain that waters the earth." We need this rain so desperately, yet it can be easily forgotten in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. We must open our hearts to show God our love and be open to the nurturing and grace that God can provide in our lives. Let this spring be a time for us to recenter our lives, ask forgiveness for our sins, and seek to know the goodness of God.

*Sara Liang, Director, Center for Global Education, Study Abroad & International Student Services, B.A., 2003, Ed.D. 2016*

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## FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

### SUNDAY, MARCH 10

**2 Chronicles 36:13-15.** *Early and often did the God of their ancestors send messengers to them, for God had compassion on the people and God's dwelling place.*

In this reading, we see a compassionate God giving the people of Jerusalem every opportunity to turn away from their sinfulness. Instead of condemning them, God reaches out to them, sends them messengers and tries to spare them. Like the lost people of Jerusalem, God continues to reach out to us today. Let us remember God's love, enfleshed in Jesus, sent to save us and not condemn us. We are people of light and not to remain in darkness. During this midpoint in Lent, Jesus invites us to journey in the light of God. How do we respond to our encounter with Jesus, when we meet him in others like classmates, colleagues, family, those different from ourselves? Are there behaviors, thoughts, fears or injustices Jesus is asking to see and let go of? Remember God wants to be in relationship with us and awaits us with unconditional love and mercy.

*Priscilla Torres, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa*

### MONDAY, MARCH 11

**Isaiah 65:17-21.** *Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy...the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*

As a child, my limited understanding of the season of Lent was as a time for sacrifice and sadness at the death of Jesus, ending with chocolate bunnies, a fancy dress, and a very lengthy Mass. Of course, eventually I began to see the true message of the season as hope and renewal. It is that idea of optimism that I take away from this passage... the hope that current problems will someday seem very foreign to us.

I believe that we are called to rejoice not only in what God has created, but also in the potential we have to make a better world. We still struggle against violence, disease, poverty, and injustice...perhaps we always will. But we should not give up the struggle, excusing our inaction on the premise that these things are inevitable elements of the human

condition. God has given us the tools to improve our circumstances and those of our sisters and brothers: our minds, our hearts, our natural resources, each other. I think we can leave "new heavens" up to God, but it is up to us to create this "new earth." What are we waiting for?

*Louise Stracener, Associate Professor of Chemistry*

### TUESDAY, MARCH 12

**Ezekiel 47: 1-9, 12.** *"The angel led me outside by the north gate.... where I saw water trickling.... there was now a river through which I could not wade; for the water had risen so high it had become a river that could not be crossed. Along the banks of the river, fruit trees of every kind shall grow; their leaves shall not fade, nor their fruit fail."*

Water is metaphorically used throughout the Bible as the embodiment of spiritual life, growth and blessing. In this passage, water begins flowing as a small trickle emanating from underneath the temple. As it continues, a river forms that grows larger and deeper (as measured by thousands of cubits) such that Ezekiel must turn back as he cannot cross to the other side. Everywhere the water from the temple flows everything comes to life, transforming everything it touches. Fruit trees of every kind grow and fish become abundant. This is a story of hope and revitalization in our daily lives, understanding that God's metaphorical waters, starting as a small trickle within us, can grow in depth bringing with it spiritual growth, renewal and a new life to each of us and to the world through the resurrection of Jesus.

*Colleen Gullickson, Former Associate Dean, Henry Predolin School of Nursing (retired)*

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

**Isaiah 49:8-15.** *"Thus," says our God: "In a time of favor, I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you; and I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to restore the land and allot the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners: 'Come out!'"*

Isaiah tells us that when the time is ripe, prisoners will be set free. We think of Bryan Stevenson and his work with the Equal Justice Initiative to represent people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in prison; or Brittany Barnett and her book, *A Knock at Midnight*, describing work to obtain clemency for those with

unjust sentences. What beautiful ways to embody our community with all people and bring compassionate purpose to the place where truth and justice intersect. Compassion can inspire action to release physical chains, and it can also soften the chains of our minds. A story is told of a Tibetan monk, who upon his release from a Chinese prison, spoke of facing danger. "What danger?" asked the Dalai Lama? "Of losing compassion toward my jailers," he replied. And what of the prisons in which we lock ourselves? What can you self-compassionately accept in yourself, paradoxically releasing its hold, tilling the soil for the day something new is ready to grow in you? This Lent, listen to your heart for the language of a wise and nurturing God to comfort and inspire you.

*Julie Luecke, Associate Dean, School of Education*

## THURSDAY, MARCH 14

**Exodus 32:11-14.** *Moses implored God, saying, "Why, O God, should your wrath blaze up against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with such great power and with so strong a hand? Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in punishing your people." .... So the LORD relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people.*

The movement from impatience to transformation, from making demands to hearing others, begins slowly. It may ultimately lead to the courage to stand up and speak truth to power. More than likely, though, it may also take time to become the kind of people God has called us to be.

Today's story from Exodus describes a scene that readers of scripture have pondered for many generations. It is fitting for this day in Lent, when prayer has deepened in us, hollowing out a space of welcome for the presence of a loving God.

Have mercy upon us, O God. Remember your promises to us.

Even when we forget, we count on you to remember.

Transform our hearts so that we may be a voice for others who have stumbled on their way.

Help us to be faithful, humble and patient as we await the fullness of your Easter glory. Amen.

*Ruth Poochigian, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa †*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 15

**Wisdom 2:19, 21.** *With revilement and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience...but they erred; for their wickedness blinded them, and they knew not the hidden counsels of God.*

I feel this passage illustrates how insidious the wicked can be in oppressing the just and righteous. In its effort to succeed, wickedness will test your patience a seemingly infinite amount. To defeat it, we must be steadfast in our defense. I also believe this passage warns of self-righteousness. Consider the possibility that you may be the one influenced and blinded by the wicked. We must not be so stubborn in our beliefs that we discount the possibility that we could be wrong. Righteousness will only come to all of us, by our willingness to listen to others with an open mind. Balancing these two concepts (a need to defend righteousness while being open to seemingly wicked ideas) is indeed difficult to achieve. Yet I believe we can only advance as a society by finding that balance.

*Jonathan Bloy, Head of Digital Initiatives, Oscar Rennebohm Library*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 16

**Psalms 7:2-3.** *O my God, in you I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and rescue me, lest I become like the lion's prey, to be torn to pieces, with no one to rescue me.*

This passage is about our vulnerability to temptations in our lives. We need to put our trust in God and know that God is with us, even through our toughest times. To follow God, we need to work hard on the temptations in our lives; to give our vulnerability to God and know that God will help guide us to do good things. During this season of Lent, let us face our vulnerability, and pray for guidance through each of our decisions. God loves each of us and with God's guidance will help deliver us to a more fulfilled life.

*Megan Neveau, B.S., 2015*

## SUNDAY, MARCH 17

**John 12: 27.** *Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.*

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ in me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down,

Christ when I sit down,

Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

*Excerpt from the Breastplate of St. Patrick*

## MONDAY, MARCH 18

**John 8:10-11.** *Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."*

As we reflect upon this Lenten season, we should challenge ourselves to remember that none of us is perfect, yet we are still loved and treasured in the eyes of God. Since God is forgiving of our repentant sins, so should we be forgiving of each other, and remember that we are all imperfect beings, deserving of forgiveness without judgement. In this year of great hope, we should each work harder to not only forgive but to accept the faults of others as being with pure intention despite unintended outcomes.

*Victoria Palmisano, Associate Dean for Business, Communications and Innovation, School of Business*

## TUESDAY, MARCH 19

**Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a.** *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home..." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel had commanded him.*

In this passage, we see a glimpse of Joseph's character as a person of reflection, discernment and courage. His dilemma? How could he be true to his beliefs and at the same time protect Mary, given the questionable circumstances of her pregnancy. Yet, when he wakes from his dream with a new awareness, he acts with courage in keeping his commitment to Mary. This passage invites us to consider how we listen to the Spirit in the challenging circumstances of our lives. Do we take time to prayerfully reflect and discern personally and with others? Are there "dreams" in our lives calling us to act from a place of trust? Do we wake up to a new awareness of the decisions that will affect our lives and those of others? Do we act with courage, knowing we affect both our own lives and the larger Mystery to which we belong?

*Marie Louise Seckar, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, B.A., 1965*

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

**Daniel 3:16-18.** *The three young men – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – answered King Nebuchadnezzar, “There is no need for us to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king, may God save us! But even if God will not, know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up.”*

According to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the point is to obey God no matter what. No matter if they died. No matter if anyone ever knew they were right.

When Nebuchadnezzar gave them one last chance to change their minds, they did not presume to tell him what God would do because they did not know. They simply told him what they would not do, in the politest possible terms.

It was that simple, and as far as I am concerned the high point of the story was right then, when all three of them said, “We will not.” The moment of sparkling clarity was the moment when three stubborn human beings declared what – for the love of God – they would not do. Period.

*Barbara Brown Taylor, Bread of Angels, Cowley Publications, p. 20-21*

## THURSDAY, MARCH 21

**Genesis 17:7.** *I will maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting pact, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

Max L. Stackhouse, in *Globalization and Grace*, explores covenant as a notion that could be useful in humanity’s move from nationalism to globalism. He notes that covenantal relating formed a structure for the exercising of power that was about mutual obligation rather than coercion or force, and “a structured accountability that was intended to help all people to deal with one another.” What’s more, it was applicable in many relational contexts: “God-human, sovereign-citizen, group-group,...friend-friend. [As such, it bound] persons who were once strangers to new responsibilities and opportunities for reasonable, freely chosen affective associations.”

Talk of covenant has often left me cold. But, listen: I suspect “freely-chosen affective associations” is simply a more intellectual way of saying “love,” and I suspect “structured accountability” and “mutual obligation” are simply more pragmatic ways of saying “I love you.”

*Liz Goodman, Journal for Preachers, Lent 2015, p. 12*

## FRIDAY, MARCH 22

**Psalms 18:7.** *In my distress I called upon the LORD and cried out to my God; From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.*

O Creator of all living things, we are all hungry in a world full of abundance. The possibilities of food for bodies and souls overflow in this beautiful world. We ask for the grace to see the abundance of our world and enough awareness to acknowledge our sins of greed and fear.

Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts to be with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in pain. We ask for your intercession on behalf of every person hungry for earthly food and hungry for the taste of the Spirit of God. We give thanks that we can be part of that intercession. We come together in awe and wonder at the Creator who loves us so much that we are invited and urged to be co-creators with God in the care of our brothers and sisters. In the name of our tender God of all people who hears every cry, Amen.

*Marcelline Koch, O.P., Dominican Sister of Springfield, IL, Lent Reflections, Dominican Sisters of Springfield Website*

## SATURDAY, MARCH 23

**Ezekiel 37:26-27.** *I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them. I will multiply them and put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

God of hope and compassion, Holy One of Abraham and Sarah, we remember today the country of Iraq from which they were summoned, and call to mind our sisters and brothers in the East and with them look to a new future.

God of reconciliation, God of painful sacrifice uniting humankind, we long for the day when you will provide for all nations on earth your blessing of peace.

But now with strife and war at hand help us to see in each other a family likeness a common inheritance as children of God.

Keep hatred from the threshold of our hearts, and preserve within us a generous spirit which recognizes all peoples as children of God.

This we ask in the name of the One who came to offer us the costly gift of abundant life. Amen.

*Tecie Lardner, O.P., Dominican Sister of Blauvelt, NY, prayer from [www.domlife.org](http://www.domlife.org)*

## HOLY WEEK

## PALM SUNDAY | SUNDAY, MARCH 24

**Isaiah 50:4.** *The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.*

God has given Isaiah the gift of eloquence—"a well-trained tongue." This gift has come with great responsibilities and these responsibilities have not been easy for the prophet. Written during the Babylonian Exile, suffering and alienation were daily experiences for the people of Israel. But notice how the prophet is not passive in his suffering, but active: "I gave my back to those who beat me...my face I did not shield..." His suffering is an act of courage and rebellion, part of speaking truth to power. He has not shied away from the truth and has not tried to hide from those who would harm him for speaking the truth.

As a Dominican community, the passionate pursuit of truth is fundamental to who we are. This is a great gift and, like it is for the prophet, one that comes with responsibilities. The Venerable Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, O.P., admonished us to "set out for any place where the work is great and difficult," yet it is clear from his memoirs that this difficult work was not a drudgery but a source of great joy and gratitude for him. The end of our Lenten journey in the desert approaches as we enter Holy Week. As we continue our mission to pursue the truth and preach with compassion, let us be compelled by the words of Isaiah, inspired by the example of Fr. Samuel, and fortified by the victory over suffering that is coming on Easter Sunday.

*Andrew P. Manion, President, Edgewood College*

## MONDAY, MARCH 25

**Isaiah 42:6.** *I, your God, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.*

God speaks, ...he [Jesus] shall bring justice to the nation. God speaks to each one of us. We are challenged to accept a task, be it heavy or light, pleasurable or difficult, one time or ongoing but one that brings about justice. What shall it be: working for peace, or educating for justice or restoring health to the earth? The list is long. Add to it. You/we are Christ in the world and to all peoples. It is time to join the throngs of those who are a light for the nations." Choose! Work for justice.

*Virginia Pfluger, O.P., B.A. 1959, Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa*

## TUESDAY, MARCH 26

**Isaiah 49:1-4.** *The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb God gave me my name. God made of me a sharp-edged sword and concealed me in the shadow of God's arm...Though I thought I had toiled in vain...yet my reward is with God.*

In reading and reflecting on this text, I am struck by Isaiah's revelation. Before his birth, he says he was chosen by God, given weapons and concealment, and toiled tirelessly in vain. There is certainly an element of disappointment in his words. Yet, he continues to indicate that wonderful rewards are to be found in God. The essence of each person's life seems to be lived out in the manner that Isaiah describes. Though we are all blessed with different talents and opportunities, and we often examine our efforts and find them lacking, we have faith that these efforts will please God and our fellow humans. Isaiah reinforces the faith that includes the knowledge that rewards and recompense are with God, rather than in prestige, power, and wealth—regardless of our station in life.

*Bob Reif, Professor Emeritus, School of Education*

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

**Matthew 26:14-16.** *One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.*

"From that time on" Judas looks for a chance to hand Jesus over. Matthew used that phrase – from that time on– twice earlier in his Gospel, each time making an important shift.

The first was after Jesus' temptation in the desert. "From that time on Jesus began to preach." It marked the beginning of his public life. The second was when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter professed him to be the Son of God. From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly."

Today's Gospel reading uses the phrase for the third time at another turning point, the moment when Judas (who must have been thinking about this for quite some time) decides to betray Jesus.

Looking back on my own life, what are the turning points that marked a shift for good or for ill...the mileposts that I can look back to and say: From that time on...? A year from now, looking back to today, how would I like to be able to finish that sentence, From that time on...?

*Bishop Ken Untener, The Little Black Book, Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, 2004*

## HOLY THURSDAY | THURSDAY, MARCH 28

**John 13:12-15.** *So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.*

In this intensely vulnerable moment, we see how Jesus chooses to spend his last moments with those closest to him. He knows that he will soon be betrayed and the fate that awaits him. Yet, we don't see him planning a getaway or plotting revenge. We don't see a grand speech applauding his personal achievements or a strategic planning meeting. Instead of focusing on himself at all, Jesus flips the script and, with a simple act of humility, shows everyone in the room what it truly means to be a leader. He shows us that a leader is willing to surrender control and ego, to be both a teacher and a learner, and to model compassion and love in the smallest of actions. What might our world look like if we looked for these qualities in our elected leaders? What might our world look like if each of us followed Jesus' model of relational and compassionate leadership?

*Laura Hermanns, Director of Campus Ministries*

## GOOD FRIDAY | FRIDAY, MARCH 29

**Hebrews 4:8.** *Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered.*

Good Friday, a day of holding suffering. As a child I would suffer when punished for my bad attitude or behavior. I find it interesting looking back that the scripture I was asked to reflect on was “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6). Ok, be kind, helpful, forgive and love. A good first step, but I always wondered about the “How To.” Today’s reading gives insight to the “How To.” Jesus in his suffering learned obedience, to listen deeply. Suffering is hard. The personal denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance is overwhelming. Jesus leads by example. In his suffering Jesus continued to listen to the will of God and was transformed. Joan Chittister explains that “Our task is to be obedient all our lives to the Will of God [which is Love] for the world.” When we learn to listen with dignity to one another we will transform the world!

*Michelle Horton, Dominican Associate, Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, B.A. 2013*

## HOLY SATURDAY | SATURDAY, MARCH 30

**Baruch 3:9, 15.** *Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life: listen, and know prudence! .... Who has found the place of wisdom, who has entered into her treasures?*

This astonishingly beautiful text from Baruch, proclaimed among a chorus of readings for our Easter Vigil, is filled with words, phrases, remembering and promises that at times sound harsh, challenging, sometimes rebuking as well as comforting and revealing.

It recalls for us the story of a wandering people, reaching back in history to a time of Exile. A people searching, seeking a clear direction. Wandering and wondering “where is our God?” Exile is a reality for many people in our world today. Daily we read and hear stories of people driven from their own land, separated from families, friends and cultures. Separated from all that is familiar. Although many of us do not experience physical exile, we do know personal challenges and losses that cause us to sometimes sense a disconnection and wonder ~ “where is God?” In this Easter Wisdom proclamation, we are reminded to look, listen and remember that our God is faithful and always with us. Like Mary standing

at the empty tomb, we too hear and discover anew the presence of God with us, surrounding us, throughout all of our life pilgrimage. We too are filled with deep peace and Wisdom.

*Maggie Hopkins, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, former Vice President for Dominican Life and Mission*

## EASTER SUNDAY | SUNDAY, MARCH 31

**John 20:9.** *For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.*

Though each of us knows well the Easter story, we struggle to fully grasp its meaning. Regardless of how Jesus might have instructed his followers while still with them, they couldn’t comprehend his suffering and death, to say nothing of his rising from the dead. Like these disciples, we come to the tomb expecting to find death and instead we find signs of life that we can’t fully comprehend. We really don’t know what to expect of this God of ours.

The power of the resurrection works in our lives today. Death does not have the final word, even if people think it does! Look at us today. The followers of Jesus had been taught by him to expect his death, and his rising from the dead. We are the signs of life today!!

*Mary Ann Nelson, O.P., Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa*

# *Thank you*

On behalf of the Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion, I would like to thank all those who contributed reflections over the years for our Lenten reflection booklet. We are so glad you have taken this Lenten journey with us into a landscape of reflection, thoughtful study, and action on behalf of others. Some have likened the spiritual journey to an ascent toward a mountain top whose lower geography is replete with valleys, forests, rugged terrain, rushing streams, deep rivers, and uneven, sometimes barely discernible pathways. This journey, the journey of life, is one we share together. God touches each one of our lives and encourages us toward the ascent.

We also welcome your feedback. Please email us at: [mvi@edgewood.edu](mailto:mvi@edgewood.edu).

In peace,  
Gretchen M. Baumgardt  
Interim Chief Mission and Ministry Officer  
Division of Mission, Values, and Inclusion

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