

Lent 2014

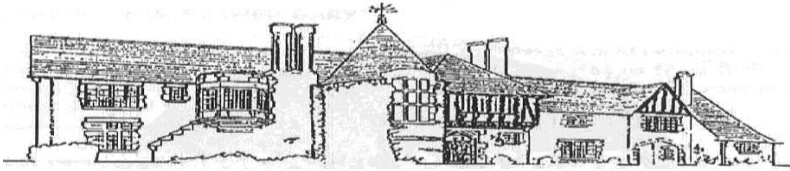
Daily Reflections



2014 Cover Artwork by Ezekiel Saucedo '17

Celebrate LENT

with the Catholic Student Center



Ash Wednesday – March 5th

12:05 pm Mass and Soup, Med. Campus, King center in Becker Medical library

12:10-12:45 pm Ecumenical Ashes Service, CSC Chapel

5:30 pm Mass and Soup, CSC Chapel

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 13th: 11:00 am & 9:00 pm Mass
beginning outside, on CSC Patio

Holy Thursday, April 17th : Mass 7:00 pm, CSC Chapel

Good Friday, April 18th : Service 7:00 pm, CSC Chapel

Easter Vigil, April 19th: Mass 7:30 pm, CSC Chapel

Easter Sunday, April 20th: Mass 9:30 am, Graham Chapel
Mass 11:30 am, Graham Chapel

*Check the CSC website www.washucsc.org, and weekly email for updated information on events and locations.

Weekly Ongoing Events

Sundays

Early Mass: 11am (CSC Chapel)

Student Mass: 9pm (CSC Chapel)

Mondays

Medical School Office Hours: 12-1pm

Check our Weekly E-mail for special events

Tuesdays

Mass and Soup: 5:15pm, except 3/11 (CSC meditation garden/living room)

RCIA: Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults 7-8:30pm (CSC Social Hall).

Wednesdays

Graduate Student/Young Adult Women's Bible Study: 7:30-9pm (CSC Living Room)

Lunch in the DUC: 11am-1pm.

Thursdays

Choir Practice: 7-8pm (CSC Chapel)

Fridays

Cod Squad (weekly Fish Fry Tour Group) – Every Friday in Lent, approx. 5:30-7pm – locations TBD – contact Troy (woytek@washucsc.org) for more info

Events for your calendar

Gay & Spiritual (Bi-Weekly): Begins 1/27, 6:30pm (CSC)

Deepening: Grad Student/Young Adult Retreat, 3/21-3/23.

Confession Marathon: 3/19, 2pm-Midnight.

Class of 2014- Endings and Beginnings: 3/23, 7-8:30pm

Spirituality and the Social Worker: Brown-bag lunch, 4/2 @ 12pm – 1pm, Goldfarb 36.

Table of Plenty: 3/26, 7-9pm

Catholic Student Union Fish Fry: 4/4, 5:30-7:30pm

Sacred Movements of Devotion (Contemporary Stations of the Cross using body movement) – 4/9, 8pm

Catholic Student Union Dollar Dinner: 4/30, 5:30-7pm

Grad Student/Young Adult Happy Hour: 5/2, 5:30-7:30pm

CLC (Christian Life Community): CLC (Christian Life Community): March 5th – April 20th. A program focused on the ideals of community, spirituality, and service. Each participant will be in a small group and meet once a week for an hour to discuss a topic of faith related to the Lenten Theme. Sign-ups will take place from Sunday, Feb. 3rd- Sunday, Feb. 10th. For more information, contact Anna Mazur at mazur@washucsc.org.

Online Resources

Readings Online:

www.usccb.org/nab/index.htm

St. Louis University Center for Liturgy:

www.liturgy.slu.edu

Creighton University Spirituality Resources:

www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online

Archdiocese of St. Louis Prayer Resources:

www.archstl.org/links

Good Ground Press:

www.goodgroundpress.com

Bread on the Waters – Meditations & Stations of the Cross:

www.cptryon.org/prayer/season/index.html

Sacred Space – Daily Prayer Online – in a number of languages

<http://sacredspace.ie/>

A Note from Father Gary

A good musician has the habit of testing the strings of his instrument from time to time to see if they need tightening or loosening in order to render the tone in perfect harmony. We too at times need to examine and consider all the affections of our soul to see if they are in tune with the values and direction of the Reign of God.

If that is something you would hold up as the guiding principle of your entire life, your North Star, then I ask you to concentrate on three things these 40 days and nights:

1) Are my friendships (including any dating relationship currently) making me a better woman or man? Are they bringing out the best in me and in others around me? Is it time to associate more with better people who try to do the right and loving thing than I do now? Hanging out with good people will make us good-er!

2) Am I spending 10-20 minutes every day in silence--unhooking and just being in the Holy Presence?

3) Ask yourself two questions at the end of every day: Where does it hurt to be me today? This question will always have an answer, for every day has its cross--sometimes the sword will be like a pin-prick but another like a sword through our hearts. And, the second meant to take you into sleep, where did I see Love today? In me for others, around me in the way people love others in their lives, and ways they have shown kindness to me. The answer to these two questions will take us into the Paschal Mystery--the dying and the rising that is how God is saving us.

These Lenten days, may we each live courageously and faithfully to the original stirrings of your hearts.

In a Crucified and Risen Lord,

Fr. Gary

A Note from the Catholic Student Union

And so begins the annual journey of Lent. These next several weeks serve as a time for us to quiet our busy lives so that we can take a few moments to reflect, pray, and open our hearts to receive God's love. To help guide you along this journey, we have collected daily reflections from a number of members of the Washington University Catholic Student Center community and compiled them in this booklet.

We, the Catholic Student Union, pray that these daily meditations will meet you wherever you may be in the process of deepening your relationship with God. The authors have given freely of their invaluable wisdom and unique experiences in the hopes that they may, in some small way, help you along this journey towards Christ.

Thank you to the Catholic Student Center staff, the Wash U Student Union, and the reflection writers without whom this book would not have been possible.

We wish you a fulfilling journey during this Lenten season—may you grow in faith and love and take comfort in the fact that God's boundless love will be supporting you every step of the way.

Love always,

Catholic Student Union



Wednesday, March 5th
ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:12-18
Psalm 51:3-6b, 12-14, 17
Second Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

“Even now says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart,” begins the reading from Joel. This first reading on the first day of Lent sets the tone for an entire forty days. This is the time where God calls us on His journey. This is the time for us to start new. We take these days as a chance to be cleansed, whether it be in thought, word, or action, in preparation for Christ’s Sacrifice and Resurrection. We are cleansed in preparation for a Salvation unearned but given by a loving God to those who seek Him.

In Psalm 51, David begs, “Thoroughly wash me of my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.” So too must we call on God to be cleansed, for it is not something man can do alone. Just as baptism is performed on us and not by us, the spiritual journey of Lent is not something we can travel individually. Look to friends. Look to family. Look to God.

In the Gospel, Christ calls us “not to perform righteous deeds in order that others may see them.” He tells us that when we give alms, we do so privately, even so far as we “do not let [our] left hand know what [our] right hand is doing.” When we pray, we do so in the seclusion of our homes and minds. When we fast, we carry on our business as though we were not fasting. Our cleansing in these forty days is not for the world to see our righteousness, but rather for God to see our piety and love. If we spend these days in earnest to love God, He will show us a true, timeless, unconditional love.

Dave D’Alessandro
WashU Class of 2015

Day of Fasting
Abstain from Meat

Thursday, March 6th

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Luke 9:22-25

To chocolate or not to chocolate? That seems to be the eternal, recurring question in life (Well, at least in my life!). It is a choice, and we have the power of free will to decide what happens.

Similarly, as the first reading points out, we have the choice to choose between “life and death.” Well, that seems obvious, doesn’t it? We want to live! Yet, what does it mean to truly live? And how do we accomplish this? Just how much do we need to indulge in the sweets of life to be happy?

The gospel reading reminds me that Lent is a great time to step back and assess what we want in life, and what is needed. We need to put aside (“deny”) some of our own desires and wants, and make room for God’s wishes.

“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

So, ask yourself this: What do we really need in life? Perhaps Life is sweet enough without all the sweeteners. Perhaps, all we need to do is have a scoop of self-reflection mixed with a healthy serving of thanksgiving for what we already have. Many Buddhists say that a simple life is a happy life; Jesus had a simple, extraordinary life. So friends,

Do you dare to live simply?

Jonathan Vachon, WashU Class of 2016

Friday, March 7th

Isaiah 58:1-9a
Psalm 51:3-6b, 18-19
Matthew 9:14-15

Welcome to the first Friday of Lent! Whether meat, chocolate, or a bad habit, I hope this Friday finds your fasting off to a strong start. As the three pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, let us center our minds on the pillar the readings call us: fasting.

In the hospital, we often make patients “NPO” – *nil per os*. This means no food, no drink, but maybe an occasional ice chip or mouth swab to keep patients’ mouths from getting too dry. In the context of Lent, this makes me think of Jesus and His sacrifice, nailed to the cross with someone bringing a soaked sponge to his mouth after he uttered, “I thirst.” In the context of the hospital, however, I hear obese patients complaining that they haven’t eaten all day even though they are NPO for their safety and in preparation for an upcoming procedure to address the health problem that brought them to the hospital. May your fasting this Lent be selfless and lit by the flame of social justice, “releasing those bound unjustly” and “setting free the oppressed”.

NPO may sound to some like torture, but patients are still provided fluids through an IV, and most people can go a day or at least several hours without food. (In fact, there is even a new 5-2 diet being researched at WashU that supports fasting 2 days per week – not that Lent should be a venue for weight loss.) NPO is a necessary step for patients in preparation for diagnostic studies or treatments, an investment in their future health. Through fasting, “your wound shall quickly be healed.”

Austin Wesevich
School of Medicine
Class of 2015

Abstain from Meat

Saturday, March 8th

Isaiah 58:9b-14

Psalm 86:1-6

Luke 5:27-32

I want Sunday to be my day. After a long week, you know what I want to do? Watch Netflix, catch up on studying, eat brunch, clean the house, get ahead in work, go shopping. Sunday just might be my most selfish day of the week. It doesn't feel like so much to ask.

58: 13-14 says, *“If you hold back your foot on the Sabbath, from following your own pursuits on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight, and the LORD’s holy day honorable; if you honor it by not following your ways, seeking your own interests, or speaking with malice, then you shall delight in the LORD...”*

This can be so easy to forget sometimes. Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not worship idols – those make sense as commandments. I can certainly get on board with that. But Sunday? Why does God care? Why isn't an hour on Sunday good enough for Him?

Because He wants **all** of you and **all** of me. He longs for us, and He asks just for a day. Go for a walk and reflect upon the beauty of nature, say a rosary, take time with Scripture, make a Holy Hour with the Blessed Sacrament.

If you give Him your time, He will give it back to you in abundance. Let us pray today to remember in our busy world, that God calls, even commands, us to **rest**. Tomorrow, on Sunday, stop, be at peace and rest in Him.

Kasia Sullivan
Saint Louis University, MA - Theological Studies

Sunday, March 9th
1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7
Psalms 51: 3-6, 12-13, 17
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

Today's readings are a reminder to all of us of the constant pressure of temptation upon us. The Devil constantly seeks to lead us astray from God, and he attempts to gain dominion over us through our own failures.

Admittedly, this may seem a little depressing—no matter how hard we try, Satan is always there to try to make us fail. However, this isn't the message we're really meant to take away today. Rather, these readings remind us that everyone is tempted—Adam and Eve, David, even Jesus Himself. We may be tempted, but we are not alone in being tempted, and with and through Jesus Christ, we can be safe from the temptations of all those who seek to harm our souls.

Moreover, we are reassured that even when we sin—as we are all prone to do at some point, despite our vigilance—God will grant us forgiveness if we truly seek it. Paul informs us that, although sin was introduced to us through one man, so was sin forgiven through the sacrifice of Another. Through God's infinite generosity, no sin will ever be held against us if we are truly penitent.

As we journey through this Lent, let us be mindful of the temptation around us; but let us also remember that Jesus was tempted as well, that He will help us avoid temptation, and that even if we stumble, He will help us back to our feet so we may continue to follow Him. And, as David says so beautifully at the beginning of today's psalm, "Happy are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Mike Glassmoyer
WashU Class of 2016

Monday, March 10th

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18

Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15

Matthew 25:31-46

In today's reading from Leviticus, God lists a great many "shall nots" as instructions for how the Israelites should behave. This passage can be somewhat intimidating. God lays out a lot of rules, a lot of directions, a lot of strict mandates with not much wiggle room. But look for the positive commands: "Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy," "fear your God," and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." They're things we've heard before, and they're somewhat vague. How exactly do we go about being holy? How do we respect God and what God has to say about how we live our lives? How do we love our neighbors? When it comes to doing those things in our daily lives, all those "shall nots" are there to help. Their language may be out of date, but they are still concrete examples that help us translate those vague instructions so we can better carry them out and be the holy, respectful, loving people God created us as. How would you translate them to your modern life?

Today's gospel, the infamous sheep and goats reading, can also be intimidating at first. We worry, which group are we in, the good or the bad? There's another long list of what we should do to be good, so what if we haven't done those things? The thing to remember is, every day we have opportunities to choose to love others. We can begin again in every moment to love others as God has loved us.

Ellie Kincaid
WashU Class of 2014



Tuesday, March 11th

Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalm 34:4-7, 16-19

Matthew 6:7-15

In the first reading, God proclaims that His word shall be spread on earth, doing his will and bringing salvation to believers. The psalm says that God helps the distressed in their times of need. In the gospel, Jesus presents his followers with the Lord's Prayer and explains that they must forgive their fellow men before God will forgive them. These scripture passages comfort me. They remind me that God is there to pick me up in times of distress. They remind me that God loves me and that he is ever-present in my life.

I had a priest at my high school that got very sick with cancer during my senior year. I remember one day he told me that he was not worrying and instead was "leaving everything up to God, because God will take care of me." His words of steadfast faith struck me. At his funeral, I was comforted as I recalled these words. God had freed him of his pain and sent him up to Him.

I recalled this experience during the first reading, when God says that his word "shall not return void but shall do my will." This priest had indeed spread God's word. He had passed on an important message to me: have faith in God for he has a plan for all of us. We may not always understand that plan, but we must know that God is always there to take care of us.

It is important to take a step back from life every now and then to recognize God's presence. Just as these passages convey, God is always here to forgive us, to bring salvation to us, and to lift us up.

Sam Allen

WashU Class of 2014

Wednesday, March 12th

Jonah 3:1-10

Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19

Luke 11:29-32

The readings today speak about Jonah the prophet coming to the town of Nineveh, which he proclaims will be destroyed in forty days. Upon hearing the news, the people begin to repent, putting on sackcloth and partaking in wholehearted fasting. God sees their attempts to renounce their evil and spares the city.

The first reading describes the grandeur of the city of Nineveh, “a great city beyond compare; to cross it took three days” (Jon 3:3). Today, we live in Nineveh, a society so vast that it takes days to cross it. Social media and the 24-hour news stream have made us constantly in touch with all other parts of the world. No longer are we confined to our own small town or just our circle of friends and family. As a result, we are always seeing the newest flashy things, looking at what everyone else says and does and wanting to be and to look like them. We are quick to justify our actions by saying, “Everyone else is doing it.”

The problem with this attitude, and the problem of this constant communication is that it leads to an arrogance of individuals which proclaim themselves invincible; they can do no wrong. This is especially relevant to us college students. Every day we are confronted with choices good and bad, right and wrong that seemingly have no repercussions because no one will see them. Again we are quick to justify it: “This is what college students do.”

The readings today call us against that attitude. Instead of allowing ourselves to become engrossed in the blind arrogance of our society, we must submit ourselves to the recognition of our sin. The Ninevites put on sackcloth, a sign of submission and mourning in ancient Israel. In order to prevent ourselves to be consumed by this sense of arrogance, we too, must put on our sackcloths, and become “well aware of [our] offences, [our] sin constantly in mind” (Ps 51:3-4).

Through this recognition, by putting on our sackcloth, then we will be able to see Jesus right in front of us. The people in the gospel today are much like us, consumed in their arrogance such that they do not recognize Christ right in front of them. Only through actively recognizing our failures and our sins will we be able to see Christ. He is ever-present here, in the homeless man standing on the street corner, in the voice of the old man singing in the back pew, even in the smile of a friend when you are having a bad day. All we have to do is put on our sackcloth and look for him.

Brody Roush, WashU Class of 2017

Thursday, March 13th

Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25

Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8

Matthew 7:7-12

Today's readings begin with an earnest prayer from Esther that God help her. In the psalm, we hear that God always provides help when we seek it. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that like a loving parent, God gives us whatever we may need.

Something that can be hard for people, myself very much included, is to admit that sometimes we can't do it all on our own. Oftentimes, when a task is difficult or not going the way we imagined, we try to push harder and do everything we can by ourselves to fix it. I know that too often I try to struggle through difficulties by myself rather than seek the aid of God or others.

However, today's readings remind us that if we seek Him, God is there to take care of us and answer our prayers. Whether directly, by giving us the strength and courage to keep moving forward, or indirectly, by working through those around us, God is always trying to help us when we need it.

These readings make clear that it is up to us to decide the role that we want God to play in our lives. Like a parent for a child, God stands ready to pick us up when we fall and put us back on our feet. We only have to ask for his assistance.

So the question is, how willing are we to ask God to be an active part of our lives?

Tori Cooke

WashU Class of 2016

Friday, March 14th

Ezekiel 18:21-28
Psalms 130:1-7a, 7bc-8
Matthew 5:20-26

So you bombed the organic exam. For a fourth time. But after standing up and declaring your undying love to the professor and every one of your classmates, you get the A. You pass. It's like a beautiful dream, right? But your friends who did everything right, scoring high on every test but the last—F's.

The first reading poses the question, "Is it my way that is unfair, or rather, are not your ways unfair?" God's way isn't a point system. As a cradle Catholic, I sometimes find that I've lost sight of the meaning behind the church's traditions, the "rules." At times, one can fall victim to extreme scrupulousness, wondering—am I doing everything right?—while at the same time comparing yourself to others, thinking, well at least I'm not that far gone, or at least I know better than *that*.

We're all on the same journey, no matter what path we've taken to get there. Question the "why" rather than the "what" of your actions, and hope to find the word love in your answer. Because there is really only one rule: love always. And it's never too late to start living it. Welcome others into your life, no matter where they've come from, with love and forgiveness. And don't forget to extend the same courtesy to yourself.

Abstain from Meat

Stephanie McCrate
WashU Class of 2016

Saturday, March 15th

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8

Matthew 5:43-48

At first, today's readings can seem like a tired reminder to obey all the rules and traditions that ostensibly define a Christian. This obligation can be overwhelming, bearing down and overcast on all of one's decisions and thoughts; indeed, many times we dismiss the call, but more importantly, we lose sight of the overarching goal, to do Justice under God. As the First Reading and the Psalm remind us, justice includes fulfilling our Covenant by following "the law of the Lord," but this is a hollow guide without the appreciation that the Gospel gives for what it means to live justly under that law. Jesus said love your enemies; that is justice. The Gospel reminds us that as God's children, we are ALL worthy and entitled to mutual respect, kindness, and consideration.

Growing up in a Jesuit high school, my classmates and I were constantly challenged to become 'men for others.' The beauty of this phrase lies in that it so fully encompasses the calling in today's readings about living out God's justice. 'Others' does not refer only to one's friends and family. It includes hostile customers, opponents on the gridiron or the podium, spiteful hecklers and malicious bullies, and it compassionately and poetically re-envisioning 'the other', those who seem alien, on the outside, or forgotten, as rightfully belonging to one's community. Through this lens, we can cast off the rigidity and complexity of the rules we often ascribe to living out the faith, substituted for a goal that realizes hope, consoles those in need, encourages the disheartened, and protects the vulnerable simply by envisioning ONE family under God. Indeed, today's readings call us all to be men [and women] for others.

Nelson Gomes

WashU Class of 2015

Sunday, March 16th
2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 12:1-4
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
2 Timothy 1:8-10
Matthew 17: 1-9

As I read today's Transfiguration gospel, I can't help but identify with Peter. I recently gave a talk on a retreat and was quite nervous, but I was blessed to have a few friends pray with me beforehand. The small, quiet room we prayed in became for me like the high mountain where Jesus took his disciples and was Transfigured. I felt the tremendous power of God in this space, and my fears and anxieties lost their grip as I felt God's splendor and love wash over me. Like Peter who just wanted to pitch some tents and camp out for a while in this grace, I wanted to remain here in communion with friends, bathed in God's love.

But my purpose at that moment was not to stay in this beautiful sanctuary – it was to come down from the mountain, so to speak, and deliver the talk on the retreat. But this prayerful encounter gave me the strength I needed to carry out that purpose. The disciples garnered strength from Christ's Transfiguration, prior to the trial of His crucifixion, and we too are called to draw upon the Lord to carry out our purpose and weather trials that come in our lives.

Today's second reading gently echoes this calling: "Beloved: **Bear your share** of hardship for the gospel with the **strength that comes from God.**" God works in our lives in ways greater than we can understand, but He still calls us to be a part of His perfect plan. As we hear the Transfiguration Gospel today, perhaps we can reflect on where God is calling us. Let us draw upon His strength, then, and have courage to go back down our own mountains to carry out His purpose in our lives this Lent.

Jackie Kading
WashU Class of 2013

Monday, March 17th

Daniel 9:4b-10

Psalms 79:8-9, 11, 13

Luke 6:36-38

Today's readings reflect a central tenant of our relationship with God, namely that we are imperfect, habitual sinners who are entirely dependent on the mercy of the Lord.

In the first reading, the prophet Daniel reminds us that the Lord God will forgive us our failures, but only if we acknowledge them ourselves. This makes perfect sense: we cannot be forgiven unless we say we are sorry. The Psalm instructs us that we are dependent on the help of God when it says, "Help us, God our Saviour, for the glory of your name; Yahweh, wipe away our sins, rescue us for the sake of your name".

Sometimes it's difficult for me to admit when I've erred, and it's even more difficult for me to admit that I am entirely dependent on God; I place tremendous value on my independence, and I dislike relying on others for help. Nonetheless, although it can be frustrating at first, I always find it cathartic to admit my wrongdoings since it allows God's grace to work through me, especially through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Furthermore, God reminds us that we do not have to be perfect to have a relationship with him; the first reading tells us of God's "faithful love towards those who love" Him.

However, per usual, Jesus pushes us one step farther in the Gospel reading. He tells us it is not sufficient to merely ask forgiveness from God, but rather that we must extend that same forgiveness and mercy to everyone around us. He establishes the teaching of Divine Judgment and Mercy when he says, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged... forgive, and you will be forgiven." In other words, the standards you use for others will be the standards used for you.

During the time of Lent, it is particularly important that we acknowledge our sins, ask God for mercy, and strive to treat everyone with the same degree of forgiveness and love as Jesus shows to us.

Confession Marathon will be happening at the CSC tomorrow. Priests will be available to hear confessions from 2pm-midnight.

Tuesday, March 18th

Isaiah 1:10, 16-20

Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23

Matthew 23:1-12

“Listen to the instruction of our God...let us set things right...”

Well everyone is really getting called out today aren't they? First the people of Sodom and Gomorrah being told to “cease doing evil; [and] learn to do good” and then the Pharisees for the discontinuity between what they practice and what they preach. Not the nicest of readings, but they do a great job of pointing to the virtue of obedience. “Obedience?!” you say, “Ew.” No, it's not the most palatable concept given our highly independent and individualistic mindsets of today, but it's incredibly important for us to grasp and to own.

Upon hearing stories like this, the rebellious-streak in me doesn't want to do what I've been told simply because I was told to do it. Sometimes you can't help but wonder why all the “rules” – does God even care about them? But here's what I think transforms these “rules” and rituals into vehicles of freedom – it's realizing that these things aren't for Him, they're for *us*. God doesn't *need* us to do any particular thing in any particular way, He's God. But, being the loving parent He is, He's spelled out a few things that are for our own good – things that will transform us, feed us, and bring us to something greater than what we can bring ourselves to if we will let them.

The choice to be obedient to what God and our Church ask of us isn't simply a choice to trust and blindly follow. Each act is an *opportunity* in and of itself for incredible spiritual growth. Obedience and saying "yes" is just the first step. Next that rebellious spirit gets us to question what we are to obey and in challenging something we find ownership of it. And it is in ownership that we find the goodness, fulfillment, and deeper purpose behind the "rule." If we look upon what is asked of us with hearts hungry after God, we will find in the prescriptions opportunities to take steps toward God, and ultimately, toward greater fulfillment and freedom! A lot of lessons can be learned from those times when you simply say, "God, I don't totally get it, but alright."

Obedience teaches us about relinquishing control. If we wish to transcend the limited fulfillment that this world can provide and attain the wholeness of what God and Love has to offer us, we in many ways have to let go of our own agendas. When we do, we become more free to trust in the wisdom handed down to us, to say "yes" to what God is asking, and to begin living lives unfettered by our own suspicions, our limited ability for self-direction, and pursuits of means of solely temporary happiness.

Kayla Piorkowski
WashU Class of 2015

Wednesday, March 19th
FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH

2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16
Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, and 29
Roman 4:13, 16-18, 22
Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24
Luke 2:41-51

In a season of contemplative solemnity, the capital-S Solemnity of St. Joseph comes a little bit like a break in the clouds. It's as high a holiday as the Church has, as high as Christmas or Easter, though maybe not quite as celebrated. But it's more than just a day when technically it's okay to cheat a little on whatever we gave up. It's a day of family, to celebrate the father of the Holy Family and to celebrate the family in the Church and the greater Christian community. When I look at the readings, I see a promise of family that continues.

The promise starts in the first reading with God's promise to Nathan and David that Jesus, His own Son, would also be one of David's descendants. He claims David as one of His own whose "throne to all one will stand firm forever", just like Jesus's. Then St. Paul continues the promise not just to all the descendants of Abraham, but to all those "who follow the faith of Abraham," all his spiritual descendants, all the way down to us. For me, it's the same promise of a spiritual family that St. Joseph accepts when he accepts Mary in the Gospel. He knew that this child was not biologically his, but he trusted in God and took his part of the promise: raising the Son of God. He was part of the same family that we are now, a part of the family of Christ.

Lisa Moya
WashU Class of 2016

Thursday, March 20th

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Luke 16:19-31

“Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the Lord.”

I did not enjoy reading this verse, which opens the first reading. I like and trust many human beings. I am fortunate to know a lot of wonderful people, especially at the CSC. While I see some things in the world which could be improved, I also notice plenty of good things. Perhaps the key part of this verse is the last phrase, which mentions turning one's heart away from the Lord. During Lent, can we do more to keep our hearts in the right place?

The Gospel tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man. In life, Lazarus was a beggar, while the rich man had an easy life; the end of the story sees their situations reversed. Abraham refuses to send Lazarus from heaven to warn the rich man's brothers, saying: “if they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.”

My first impression is automatically to check the box for listening to the prophets and following the right path, but it might be useful to think about this a little more. Who are the poor in our lives, literally and figuratively? How can we learn from them? What do we or can we do to make a difference for people in our lives or in our community? Are there messages that we are not hearing?

John Walsh

CSC Community Member

Friday, March 21st

Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

Psalm 105:16-21

Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

As social beings, we rely on other greatly to get by in life. We value the people we have strong relationships with, such as friends, parents, and significant others. So it is not surprising that some of the most painful experiences involve betrayal, the act of deceiving a person and breaking what was thought to be an unbreakable bond. The theme of betrayal is central in today's readings. Joseph is betrayed and sold into slavery by his brothers, who perform such a cruel act out of jealousy and rage. Similarly, the tenants in Jesus' parable betray their vineyard owner's trust, going so far as to kill the master's own son for his inheritance. Jesus asks his audience, "What will the owner...do to those tenants?" And the crowd responded, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death..."

Sometimes, we are those wretched men. We betray the trust of those around us. It may not be to the extreme of Joseph's brothers or the evil tenants, but we still perform daily acts of betrayal. We may not give our honest opinion on someone's appearance, or insult people when they are not around. We even betray ourselves, by not realizing our full potential as people of Christ. Each of these daily acts of betrayal throws a wrench in our relationship with God. So ask yourselves: How do I betray my friends? My family? Myself? God? In what ways can I be a more honest and faithful follower of Christ? Jesus says that the Kingdom of God will only be given to those who produce its fruit. How do we become the good tenants?

Juan Masi
WashU Class of 2015



Abstain from Meat

Saturday, March 22nd

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

As we delve deeper into the Lenten season, we come across the familiar Parable of the Prodigal Son. I find it to be a story of many deep meanings depending on the perspective the reader takes. My first angle was of the younger son. I find myself to be in a similar position as him. Maybe I would not be as bold to ask my father for his money, but I find myself dreaming of going away from home and experiencing the world. Only, I find myself holding back in fear of catching myself wanting to dine with the swine. I do have to admire the bravery he shows in returning home to his father. Could I return home knowing that I had grievously sinned against my whole family?

Sometimes I see myself as the eldest son. I get frustrated when bad people have everything going right when I, the goody two shoes, do everything as properly expected. I have to remind myself that I must be content with everything I have. There are plenty of others who go through much suffering that I should appreciate the scarce times of happiness and joy. The lesson I learn here is that I should never look into someone else's bowl to see if they have more than I do, but to see if they have enough. In this parable, I should be rejoicing that my brother has come back and gladly give him his daily bread rather than begrudge him for taking what is mine. In this season, we should all remember to take compassion and make sure others have the comforts they need.

Jesse Burroughs

St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Class of 2015

Sunday, March 23th
3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Exodus 17:3-7
Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42

Dear Everyone,

So let's get real here. The whole "whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst" thing is a bit much. We're always going to thirst for water. Let's scale this back a bit.

When is the last time you complained about something? Why did you complain about it? Now, here's a harder question: Did you need to complain?

In the first reading, Moses's people complained about not having water. They believed Moses freed them from oppression to die of thirst. If Moses was a Sith Lord, he would find their lack of faith disturbing. Did they need to complain? No. Although God, the Tease, did wait until Moses was about to get stoned, everything turned out alright. Everything always turns out alright. I doubt anything I ever complained about was worth the effort of complaining. No matter how bad things get, I always find that I have everything I need. And so, I ask you:

Do you trust God as much as you trust the ground you stand on?

Why don't you? What if you did? Would you ever complain again? Would you ever thirst again?

I wish I could trust God that much. I am working on it. What more can I do? And it's okay if we can never have that much faith. Remember, that as much as we doubt, Jesus died for us, because he thinks we are so worth it.

Sincerely,
Daniel Sun, WashU Class of 2015

Monday, March 24th

Second Kings 5:1-15ab

Psalms 42:2-3; 43:3-4

Luke 4:24-30

Today's readings are asking us to take a look at the little things. In the first reading, Naaman takes the word of a little slave girl from Israel and seeks out the prophet Elisha. Elisha tells him to do the simplest of things to be cured of his debilitating disease, merely to bathe in the Jordan. Naaman, probably like anyone would, doubted such a simple solution. But as his servants reasoned with him, so we have to remind ourselves that sometimes God wants us to do the small things, the things we think no one will notice, the things that seem like a waste of time. Sometimes, it might be washing the dishes one more time, even though it's your roommate's turn. Or it might be sending a quick text message to someone who has been having a hard time. The little things can make a huge difference. A little slave girl and a bath in the Jordan River cured Naaman of his leprosy—how will the little things you do change your world and the world of those around you?

The Psalm and the Gospel readings bring forth another idea: where is God at work? All of us want to see God more often in our lives, so the psalm probably rings true for many people. But once again, maybe we will see God best in the little things that we don't expect. Jesus told the crowd, "No prophet is accepted in his own native place." Maybe this means that sometimes, God isn't working in the places where we would expect, but in the last place we would look.

Emily Schienvar

WashU, Class of 2017

Tuesday, March 25th
ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10
Psalms 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10,11
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Wow, the annunciation of our Lord. What a beautiful (and scary) thing for Mary to wake up to on that special morning. I often wonder if I wake up feeling the annunciations of God, of Love, around me in my life. A Love who permeates all of existence in an inherent manner, subtly filling up every moment and every particle, down to the very fiber of our being. A soft, affectionate, quiet, passionate, and caring Love that travels along an infinite and transcendent wavelength, laid out before us in a heartfelt invitation. Love rejoices in our spectrum of human wavelengths, and delights with a child-like fascination at our flaws and imperfections. In fact, our flaws announce the very existence of Love, because God wants to Love humans, not machines. I feel that oftentimes, flaws may be seen as negative attributes, traits that must be eradicated and forgotten. But I believe Love sees it differently. Love sees our imperfections as positive, unique reminders of how beautiful we humans really are. And Love accepts, grows, and desires to flourish within us through our imperfections. Thus I believe that as I slowly release, liberate, and open myself, I will be naturally carried along the wavelength of Love. And amidst my perceived “mediocrity”, I begin to see the true greatness that was present all along. I want no expectations of who I will become, and let Love show me who I am. I can just feel from the very core of my heart how every moment just teems with happiness, as I let Love show me how it shines through anything, little or big, obvious or subtle: Closing my laptop at the end of the day. Pouring myself a bowl of cereal. Going for a walk. Turning the knob to walk out the door. Eating a meal. Being a friend.

Where do you feel Love’s celebratory annunciations in your life? Do you love your wonderful imperfections? Have you let yourself feel free to naturally lead the joyful life that Love wants for you?

George Rizk, Wash U Class of 2015

Wednesday, March 26th

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Psalm 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20

Matthew 5:17-19

Today's Gospel reminds me that Jesus was a teacher. He was the best teacher because He taught His disciples how to live a fulfilling life and how to worship God. His teachings really hit home because here we are, 2,000 years later still remembering His everlasting life. With the help of God I hope to not only learn and attempt to follow His way as closely as I can, but also teach about the God and love I have come to know. It is a crucial step because it is through the sharing of experiences and relationships that the love of Jesus is spread around the world.

"But whoever obeys and *teaches* these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven." Teaching can take many forms and every individual has the responsibility to find his or her way(s) of teaching. What are some ways that you teach others the love of Jesus?

Ana Solorio, WashU Class of 2014

Thursday, March 27th

Jeremiah 7:23-28

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9

Luke 11:14-23

In today's reading, the Lord commanded His people to listen to him so that they may prosper, but the people turned their backs to the Lord. The reading appears to end in a tone of disappointment: "faithfulness has disappeared." However, the responsorial psalm is a joyful reflection on the reading. The psalm shares that Jer 7:23-28 calls us to listen to the Lord, face him, sing joyfully, and bow down in worship before the Lord. In what ways can you listen for the Lord in your daily life? How may you be shutting out opportunities to hear God's voice? Perhaps you may find God in nature's beauty, in meaningful conversation, or in a strangers' smile. Being present in each moment (rather than jumping to what is next on the to-do list) is a beautiful opportunity to see God working in your life.

In the Gospel, we are told that "whoever is not with me is against me." We are called to be active followers of Christ. How can you use your gifts to follow Christ? In your daily actions, in what ways can you show others the love of God? We are also reminded about the importance of following Christ; worldly possessions are only temporary comforts. "When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils." Listening to the way in which God asks us to serve him (as asked of us in the reading) and giving ourselves to others through these talents, friendship, love, and service (as asked of us in the Gospel) is the way to true joy.

Emily Kenney

WashU, Class of 2015

Friday, March 28th
Hosea 14:2-10
Psalm 81:6c-11b, 14, 17
Mark 12:28-34

The first reading reminds me of many instances where I have done wrong to others and have felt guilty for it. The reading from Hosea tells us that it is important to let go of the guilt you feel, and instead learn from it and use it as an experience to get you closer to God. Nothing can truly free us from our sins and guilt except for God and the love he possesses for us. God's love sets us free and allows us to flourish under the guidance of God's will; while sinners will stumble, those who are disciples of God will thrive.

When we ask God for help, God always does. He is there for us and loves us unconditionally; however, he does not always answer our calls in the way we want. He wants us to grow closer to him through these stressful and worrisome times, and acts in silent and subtle ways. It is important that we are vigilant and place our trust in God. He will rarely answer in the way we want him to, and we have to be cognizant and open to following God's will to grow closer to him through our journey he wants us to take.

The Golden Rule: Love God with all your mind, with all your heart, and will all your soul, and love your neighbor as yourself. These were the lines I memorized in 2nd grade and understood at that age. It is surprising how, 12 years have past, and how difficult it is to follow. For me, the hardest part is loving my neighbor as myself.

Not that I do not love my neighbors, I love all the people in the CSC community.

However, loving myself is something I have always struggled with; The Golden rule, while easily understood at first glance, encompasses a lot of time and intentional thinking, and most importantly, unconditional love for everyone, including yourself and especially God.

John Wieser
WashU, Class of 2016

Abstain from Meat

Saturday, March 29th

Hosea 6:1-6
Psalm 51:3-4, 18-21b
Luke 18:9-14

I recently read an interesting Facebook post by a Wash U professor. The professor had been walking behind a pair of students who were talking about a state college. They insinuated that students who attended that state school were dumb and that Wash U students were much smarter. Little did they know that a “dumb” graduate of this lowly state school was teaching a bunch of “smart” Wash U students, and he was walking right behind them.

This post and today’s readings have led me to reflect upon my own opinions of myself. Do I consider myself to be better than other people just because of the school I attend...or just because I go to church every Sunday?

In today’s first reading from Hosea, God says “for it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” To me, this means that the rituals and practices we take part in as Catholics, although meaningful, do not matter nearly as much as our love for God and for other people. It is possible to know God in a variety of ways. Just because we choose to fast on Ash Wednesday, abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent, and attend church doesn’t mean that those who do not are any less loved by God than we are... just like attending a state college doesn’t make you any less capable of achieving your full potential than a Wash U student.

So during this Lent, I hope to practice humility. I hope to ask God for mercy instead of asking him for affirmation of my goodness. I hope to love others and to know God.

Danielle Chirumbole
WashU, Class of 2015

Sunday, March 30th
4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

1 Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13a
Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

Think of your life. All of the intricacies, nuances, and complexities. Its history and its potential. Everything that you know and experience is felt by your skin and seen through your eyes. Now think of how many people there are in the world. Each of them are just as multifaceted as you are, and experience the world through their own eyes, producing an individually unique perception and understanding of life.

After being reminded of the fact that each of us walks a different path throughout our lives, it is easy to agree with the common saying “Don’t judge a person until you have walked a mile in their shoes.” And it is this same sentiment that is the common thread throughout the readings today. David was not judged to be worthy of anointment by his family. We were once in darkness, but now we walk in the light, transformed. The formerly blind man is ridiculed and thrown out of the temple by the Pharisees for recounting the miracle that Jesus performed on his very own eyes. All of these stories display the biases, prejudices, and pre-conceived notions that get in the way of us loving both our brothers and sisters and ourselves. With these judgments in the way, it is difficult to see the goodness and potential glinting within each other.

When was the last time you judged too quickly? What steps can be taken to gain a better understanding of people from different walks of life? When will you take those steps?

Caitlin Ward
WashU, graduating in May 2014

Monday, March 31th

Isaiah 65:17-21

Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12a, 13b

John 4:43-54

Our society seems to be obsessed with dwelling on things we could have done better or comparing our current self with what we view as a best past self. However, what do we do to utilize the past to better our current self?

In Isaiah, he says, “They shall live in the houses they build, and eat the fruit of the vineyards they plant”. This reinforces that we will always be a product of what we do. That past is a component of that, but so are the present and future. When building our house we need to recognize the value in the past. The lessons we have gleaned about loyalty, commitment, vulnerability, success and failure. These pieces are a part of us and they become the bricks in our house. They are essential for the foundation and stability of the house, but we must not dwell on them for there are more bricks to be laid and doors to be built. We must always remember that God has given us a purpose and the means to achieve it. We must not let the past burden us. Instead remember in this Lenten season that there is always new life within us to be created and lessons to be celebrated. Build your house without regret, instead with wisdom and faith of a life lived.

Tracy Burns-Yocum
WashU, Class of 2014



Tuesday, April 1st

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

John 5:1-16

A close friend once told me he was nervous about an upcoming job interview. He didn't think that he was good enough for the job, which was with Nike, but he wanted it.

We'd often shared that time-tested advice with each other: the worst they can say is no. I reiterated this, ending fervently with, "Look, you'll be great. Just... JUST DO IT!!" (After his laughter subsided, he informed his brand-illiterate friend what Nike's slogan is.)

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks a man who's been ill for years if the man wants to go to the nearby pool to ease some of the pain and aching. The man sighs, saying he can never make it to the pool. He is too slow, too weak. He'll never be rid of his pain.

Jesus sees this and tells the man, "Walk. Pick up your mat and walk." Simple, no questions.

Undoubtedly, the man is incredulous, but at that moment, he places his trust in God, and in what God knows is possible for him. The man becomes well, stands up, and walks. Jesus instructs him to embrace this new chance he now has.

In this way, Jesus tells us two things.

Miracles, large or small, are within your reach, if you are brave enough to give your ideas and aspirations an honest try. Embrace your God-given gifts, and they will transform you.

And...Realize your gratitude for your transformations through your actions.

We've been given these chances, these lives. These indestructible human spirits. There's no better praise than to believe in what God has given us, to believe in what we can do.

And then, to just do it.

Alainna Brown, WashU Class of 2014

Wednesday, April 2nd

Isaiah 49:8-15

Psalm 145:8-9, 13c-14, 17-18

John 5:17-30

Before beginning, find a comfortable position. Sit upright. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Hold. Then release through your mouth. Repeat two more times while imagining that you are breathing in peace and God's grace and releasing all your stresses and worries.
Read Is 49: 8-15

Imagine yourself as a child, sitting on the couch. What color is the couch? How does it feel? You are watching TV with someone. You look to your right and imagine your parent sitting there with you. How do you feel at that moment? Do you feel warm? Protected? Safe?

As we grow older, we start to form our own path and often we move away from our parents. We get angry at them; we ignore them. We believe that we know what is best. They don't know me. They don't know what is best. We don't need them.

We are in the fourth week of Lent. Close to the end but not there yet. Today, let us reflect on the essential love behind Jesus' suffering, God the Father's love for us. In Isaiah, God wishes only the best for us. He loves us so much, even more than a mother's love for her child. He gives us so much in hope that we would return to him. How much love does God have to even give us his son, his only son, to rescue us who have forgotten God?

How often do we say to him, "He doesn't know me; he does not know what is best; we don't need him"? How much does he have to hurt to let us go? How much does he have to love us to constantly wish us back into his arms? How much does he hate to see us reject his warmth, protection, and his safety?

God loves us very much. We are God's child, and he promises us wonderful things as stated in Isaiah, things that can only be given to those who accept his love. He is calling us, wishing us to accept his love. How do we choose to respond?

Thursday, April 3rd

Exodus 32:7-14

Psalm 106:19-23

John 5:31-47

The first reading and responsorial psalm for today take us back to the days of the Exodus and building of the golden calf. The Lord is angered by this, but Moses testifies on behalf of the people, he intercedes for them. This theme is echoed in the words of the gospel, Jesus speaks of testimony. He says to the people that if he testifies on his own behalf, his testimony is not true or will not be believed.

This makes me think on how much we influence each other's thoughts. How what we say on behalf of another can make them or break them in the eyes others. As people, we are cautious of self-reported events or characteristics. After all we can build up images and idols of ourselves in our hubris, arrogance, and pride. The words just don't ring as true when we say something about ourselves, as when we hear them from another. We need someone else to help us see things more as they are, to have the interdependence for perspective instead of total independence or dependence.

This is an incredible power that we have, the ability to influence how can be seen. Words seem truer when we hear them from another person. We can use this for good or ill.

We can be advocates for each other. For the times someone falls, we can let the individual know they are loved, and say to others that a person is more than his or her mistakes or this one moment. We can implore for mercy on behalf of another person, and show compassion. We can call for justice and liberty for the oppressed. We can ask for forgiveness on behalf of someone who is ashamed.

I think this can be the action of the Holy Spirit within each of us. The Spirit is the Advocate, the Paraclete. This means the one who encourages, comforts, uplifts, or intercedes for another. This is our role as well, as the spirit is alive within us.

This is my challenge for you for at least today, if you can try for the rest of lent and beyond: Be an advocate for another person. If someone is being spoken about negatively, at work or school, intercede on their behalf. If someone seems down, comfort them. Say something positive and uplift another. Write a letter to someone, on behalf of a person or group that is in need. Do something on behalf of another, and they need not know that you have done a thing.

Jonathan R. Day, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Class of 2014

Friday, April 4th

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22
Psalm 34: 17-21, 23
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

In the first reading, the wicked want to test the “just” one, but they didn’t know all of God’s power because their wickedness blinded them. Similarly, in the Gospel, the Jews were trying to arrest and kill Jesus, but they were unable to “because his hour had not yet come.” The idea that speaks to me from this passage is the fact that God had a plan for Jesus. Despite the Jew’s desire to harm Jesus, nothing happened to him because it was not in God’s plan yet.

What do you think about God having a plan? Do you believe there is one set path for everyone? It certainly seems like God had a plan for Jesus that was followed very precisely. There are times in life where it feels like God doesn’t have a plan, though. Maybe a project goes poorly, or someone gets hurt, and it feels like God has abandoned you. But like the wicked in the first reading, we cannot know every aspect of God’s plan. Sometimes it feels like God has abandoned his plan for us, when in reality we just can’t see what is in store for us in the future.

Have you felt this way before? Think about a time when you felt like God had abandoned you. How did you handle those feelings? Did God show himself eventually? By talking to people and praying, I’m able to trust in God’s plan. What can you do when God’s plan seems unclear?

Kathleen Szabo
WashU, Class of 2015

Abstain from meat

Saturday, April 5th

Jeremiah 11:18-20

Psalm 7:2-3, 9b-12

John 7:40-53

For me, there is simultaneous relief and terror found in placing complete faith in something outside myself. Unfortunately, the terror often squashes the relief that comes with this level of trust. In today's readings, God repeats over and over: trust me... *trust me...* trust me... *trust me*. This message is easy to hear but exceedingly difficult to put into action. In a life filled with plans, ambitions, ideas, choices, and doubts, it is all too easy for me to (try to) figure it all out for myself – to determine what I *should* be doing and establish control over my future. The first and perhaps most important realization in this journey toward complete trust is realizing that *I am not in control*. It is only in the realization that I was never in control in the first place that I can find relief and comfort in “letting go and letting God”.

No matter how hard I try, I will never fully be able to grasp God's plan for my life – and He doesn't ask me to! All He asks is that I trust Him and be open to all He has in store for me. So, during this Lenten season, I challenge you to accept the surprising opportunities God has already placed on your doorstep. All you have to do is open the door.

McKenna Rogan

WashU, Class of 2016

christ became
obedient
for us unto
death,
even to death
on a CROSS

Sunday, April 6th
5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Ezekiel 37: 12-14

Psalms 130:1-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

“O LORD, my God, in you I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and rescue me.” If you take refuge in God, who or what can really harm you? But sometimes we forget this because we are surrounded by an arguing mob and guards who were sent to arrest us, as Jesus was in today’s Gospel—maybe not literally, but we surely all have things that make us forget the peace of resting in God.

But see what Jesus does: he continued to preach so that even the guards sent to arrest him return empty handed to the Pharisees saying “Never before has anyone spoken like this man.” How amazing it must have been to hear him! The guards were willing to disobey their superiors because of his preaching alone! What would that have been like, to hear him speak? There’s much to savor in meditation and imagination here.

Let us also turn our minds to preaching in our own time. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* writes that “A renewal of preaching can offer believers, as well as the lukewarm and the non-practising, new joy in the faith.” (11) How could one go about doing this in the here and now? Maybe something like inviting a non-practicing friend to come with you on Sunday to mass. Everyone thirsts for the peace that comes from taking refuge in God; show someone you care by offering them the Good News in some way.

Will Gomes
WashU, Class of 2013
Kenrick Seminary, Pre-Theology I

Monday, April 7th

Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 3:41c-62

Psalm 23:1-6

John 8:12-20

"Let the one who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her..."
Imagine a stone in your hand. When you hear Jesus' words the stone's weight increases, it seems impossible to throw now.

I am not without sin.

For me judgment comes from misunderstanding, unfamiliarity, and jealousy. At its worst in me, judgment comes from intolerance, an unwillingness to accept something I see as different, and I call it wrong.

When I judge someone or something I make it an enemy within myself. When I judge someone or something I get tense, like a great injustice has been cast upon me. When I judge someone or something my heart is heavy, the hurt and harm is inside, on me, more than I intended it to be when I "corrected" someone for their poor choice. "Let the one who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her..." Jesus is setting us free in the most direct way with these words, don't bear the burden of self-righteousness any longer. Today place your stone on the ground and turn away. Tomorrow, place your stone on the ground and start a conversation. The next, place your stone on the ground and come to a new understanding.

I am not without sin, but I will not be without love.

Anna Cychowski
CSC Intern

Tuesday, April 8th

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalms 102:2-3, 16-21
John 8:21-30

The children of Israel as they wandered through the desert cried out for help. When I am in my own deserts, a desert of confusion, frustration, or despair, help me to look for you. Allow me to not drown in my own depths, but to look for you. Help me to surrender my own control. Perhaps it is in this act of looking outward that I may see your light, a light which will help me to put my concerns in perspective, find solutions, or even consolation. The Psalm today reminds us to invite God into our personal struggles. "O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you." After revealing my own vulnerabilities, help me to listen for your response. Help me understand the difference between what I think I need and what you know I need, that I may understand that your face is not hidden, but that I cannot recognize it. Help me find you and understand your will. Let me surrender my will to yours. It is in this act of surrender that I may begin to understand, to experience, to embrace my time here. As Jesus says in John, Chapter 8 "He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." Let me surrender to you Lord, that I may seek your will."

Micaela Heery
WashU, Class of 2016

Wednesday, April 9th

Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95

(Psalm) Daniel 3:52-56

John 8:31-42

In the readings today we see two great examples of courage and fortitude. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are asked to bow down to an idol or be cast into a furnace to die. They put their trust in God and explain that if He wants too, God could come down and save them from the furnace. However they also understand that this might not be his will but believe in him anyways and do not demand a miracle. After they are thrown into the fire the King notices them walking unhurt through the flames with an angel, God had saved them. In the gospel reading Jesus attempts to convert the Jewish people even though he knows that they want to kill him and are arguing against him. Jesus and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego defend their God and preach his glory to those who do not believe.

It takes a lot of courage to stand up for what you believe in when confronted with other people's doubt or disbelief. When was the last time someone made an offensive comment about something I believed in and I just dismissed it out of hand? Five weeks into lent these great people show us the power of standing up for what we believe in. If at times it seems too difficult we can remember the courage of Jesus and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when faced with adversity. I can stand up for my faith.

Jacob Miller
WashU, Class of 2016

Thursday, April 10th

Genesis 17: 3-9

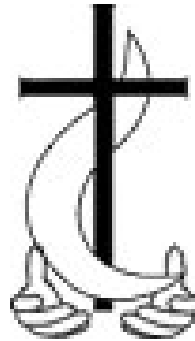
Psalm 105:4-9

John 8:51-59

“The Lord remembers His covenant forever.” For me, the idea that God always remembers his promises surprises me. I say this because I know of my own lack of faithfulness. How many times have I made promises to be somewhere, see someone, do something and then I forget, don’t want to, or find something better to do etc. Thankfully, however, God isn’t the same way. Even when I am unfaithful, when I forget that I’ve made a promise, no matter how small, God remains faithful. God even goes so far as to constantly remind me of his faithfulness.

For Abraham in today’s first reading, the remembrance of God’s covenant is made evident by the new name he receives. Abraham, which literally means “father of a multitude”, will always recall the promise God made to him, namely, that God will make Abraham the “father of a host of nations.” As I read Abraham’s story and the words of the psalms, I realize God is beyond worthy of my trust in all the moments that make up my daily life. If I’m honest, I know I tend to make God small and doubt his promises; yet, God remains constant in his love and fidelity. Are you as surprised as I am?

Anna Mazur
CSC Intern



Friday, April 11th

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalm 18:2-7

John 10:31-42

Both the passage from Jeremiah and the responsorial Psalm speak about God rescuing the authors during hard times in their lives. I think that most of us can relate to Jeremiah, who felt betrayed by friends who he trusted, and to David, who felt powerless against a frightening and uncertain situation. The response of both of these men was to call out to God during their time of need. I find that it's easy for me to feel close to God while singing at mass or while reading the Bible, but oftentimes I forget that God is present during my day at school or while out with my friends or during the challenges in my own life as well. After all, what do my personal struggles on this physical earth have to do with a transcendent and spiritual God? But for David and Jeremiah, God was their primary source of strength in every situation they found themselves in. These passages remind me that God is not only present in "spiritual" moments, but that he is always here on this earth in our day to day lives and that he cares for us. We are able to call upon God for strength no matter what situation we find ourselves in and he will be near to us.

Mara Nelson
WashU, Class of 2016

Abstain from Meat

Saturday, April 12th

Ezekiel 37:21-28
Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-56

Unbuntu is an African philosophy that stands for "I am what I am because of who we all are." It is an aspect of community that goes above our perceptions of what community actually is. We recognize our human identity through our interactions with others. God recognizes us all as one collective. "I am their God, they shall be my people". There isn't anything in there about a few people or groups of people uniting under God, there is one nation, ONE. We should be united together in love and in God. It shouldn't only be about my own personal struggles and ambitions but the collective good for my brothers and sisters.

I find it ironic that the high priest Caiaphas talks about how one man's death is better than a whole nation dying. In reality he is talking of the Roman power, his own power along with the other priests. But ultimately that's what happens. We are all saved from death because one man's death. Not from mortal death, but from our separation from God. In that act of love I, We, are united as one. Who we are stems from the idea that we are all united in Christ.

Unbuntu...I am what I am because who we all are... we are God's people...what I am is simple...I am one of you.

Duncan Fischley
CSC Intern

Sunday, April 13th
PALM SUNDAY

(Procession) Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22: 8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

It is easy to lose faith. Judas lost faith in the vision of Jesus. Peter lost faith in the physical absence of his own rock while Jesus was interrogated. Jesus viscerally felt the pressure of his imminent and terrible death.

While we may have the inclination to look back and blame others or, just as dangerously, blame ourselves, we must consider how we respond when we lose faith. Consider how these biblical figures responded after losing faith. Judas, realizing his flaw, returns the silver pieces. Peter withdraws and weeps before eventually taking on the responsibility of leading the church. The guards watching over Jesus on the cross, who had no faith to begin with, realized their own foolishness and were seized with the realization that, "truly, this is the son of God." Only Jesus held steadfast in His actions, despite the loss of faith He felt in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross as He died.

How do we respond when we lose faith in coworkers? In friends? Significant others? In God? Do we blame the other? Or do we hold true to what we know to be right, despite the loss of faith?

Brian Wieliczka
WashU, PhD 2017

Monday, April 14th

Isaiah 42:1-7

Psalm 27:1-3, 13-14

John 12:1-11

“You always have the poor with you?” “A bruised reed he shall not break?”

As I come to know my own weaknesses (Poverties of Spirit), I’ve to realize my weaknesses cannot be enemies I defeat, but they must be companions I bring on a journey. As an example, I cannot defeat my impure thoughts without also hindering my attraction to people. As the second half of Isaiah suggests, we need to bring light to these dark corners of our hearts “to bring out prisoners from confinement.” In order to not be trapped by compulsive thinking and resulting guilt, I need to be aware of how I am viewing people in order to choose how I wish to view people: appreciating my attraction but respecting the dignity of others. Then, I can be free to love and welcome God into my heart.

As Christians, we have the same hope for our human society. Weaknesses of our world (hunger , poverty, and war) remind us there is still work to be done. However, a “War on War” does not solve the problem. We need to become enlightened to our own compulsions that lead to these conditions (people wanting more than they need or people choosing vengeance over forgiveness). It is only when we bring light to these dark corners of our hearts can we begin to be free to realize the LORD’s kingdom of justice and peace.

What’s in dark corner of your heart? Will you let light (God) in?

Chris Place
CSC Intern

Tuesday, April 15th

Isaiah 49:1-6

Psalm 71:1-4a, 5-6ab, 15, 17

John 13:21-33, 36-38

The Gospel reading leaves us with a cold, hopeless, and abrupt ending: Simon Peter, the rock of the Church, will deny Christ. Jesus' most beloved apostle, a mere breath after offering Christ a life debt, is told one flat and unfathomable predication. How could Jesus's most beloved apostle, the first of the apostles to recognize Christ as the Messiah, and who would later die as a martyr for the sake of Jesus, be so short-sighted to deny him thrice?

And after all they have experienced! The miracles upon miracles witnessed firsthand by Simon Peter! The teachings at the feet of Jesus over the arrival of the kingdom of heaven on earth! These Gospel stories, left to faith for us, were experienced directly by Simon Peter. But upon the arrest of Peter's Messiah, despite those countless, unsurpassed encounters with God in flesh, as the prediction goes, Peter will be unable to see past the calamity of the moment. He will exclaim: "I do not know the man!"

Let this be an encouragement to us all. We will fall short. We are hamstrung so egregiously by our fears built into our worldly bodies that we deny even acknowledging the very goodness which flows true light. But it will not be much longer until we collide into the good news, where the plights of sinners are provided the opportunity to become the highest of Saints through the atonement of Christ.

John Morelli
University College

Wednesday, April 16th

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34

Matthew 26:14-25

Growing up, these readings were always tough for me to understand. Why would someone allow those terrible things to happen to themselves? In both the reading and psalm, there is this overwhelming innocent response to the acts of ridicule, hatred, and anger.

Maybe that's why I've never understood, because I've never been good at being passive in the face of aggression. To put my trust in the Lord that I would be kept safe has only been skin deep. Bumps, scraps, and bruises are nothing compared to the emotional head game of most social interactions these day. Curses, insults of race and sexuality, questions of intelligence or "being different"...these utterances in casual conversation every day understandably all too easily break down someone's façade.

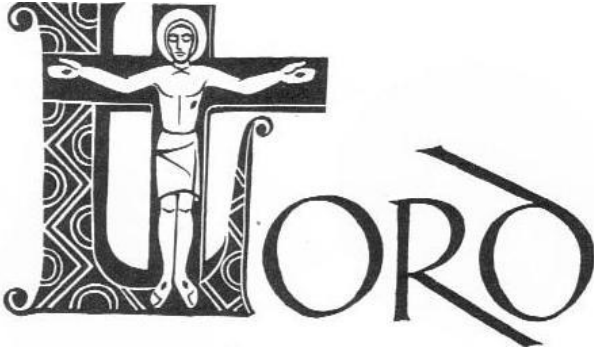
But Jesus seemingly never flinches. He is ready to be willingly handed over for a very brutal punishment, emotionally and physically. He ruffled feathers because he challenged norms; changed history all because he went against the grain. Can you expect to make a giant impact if you don't challenge convention?

And so I pray: Lord, please help me understand that hatred and anger only breed hatred and anger. Not everyone will agree with everything I say. But in that vein, help me to discern my true path. Let me not be swayed by ridicule, peer pressure or social norms, but to understand your resolve in fulfilling your mission is something I should echo in my daily life. Amen.

Eddie Falkowski
WashU, Class of 2016

Tomorrow's Chrism Mass Explanation

Chrism Mass: This Mass is celebrated once a year on the morning of Holy Thursday at the Cathedral in each diocese. During the Mass, the local bishop will bless the oil of catechumens, the oil of the sick, and the oil of chrism (only the bishop may do this blessing). We use the first for adult catechumens and infants, the second for anointing the sick, and the sacred oil of chrism for baptism, confirmation, the ordination of priests, and the consecration of altars. In recent years, this Mass has also acknowledged the ministry of priests. It invites them to renew their commitment of service and to receive the prayers and support of the people. The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at 10am at the Cathedral Basilica on Holy Thursday here in St. Louis and all are welcome to attend this ancient tradition.



Thursday, April 17th
HOLY THURSDAY

Mass of Christm

Isaiah 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9
Psalm 89:21-22, 25, 27
Revelation 1:5-8
Luke 4:16-21

Mass of the Lord's Supper

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Last year, newly elected Pope Francis stunned Catholics around the globe when he washed the feet of young offenders at the Casal de Marmo prison. Instead of adhering strictly to the tradition of washing the feet of twelve priests (symbolic of the twelve apostles), the pope chose to leave behind the grandeur of the Basilica and humble himself to serve incarcerated young men and women. Some were scandalized by this blatant deviation from tradition, but isn't that exactly what Jesus would have done?

Instead of cowering in despair in the face of his looming fate, Jesus chose to spend one of his last nights sharing a meal and washing the feet of his friends. Let us then, in the midst of the chaos that is the end of the semester, break free (or at least take a break) from being consumed by worry about the next exam or paper and instead look for ways in which we can serve others. Something as simple as making time for a meal with a friend who may be just as stressed as you are can be a powerful way love like Jesus. In our lives, there will always be that next impending deadline or project. The question is, do we allow our stress about what the future may hold to blind us to the world surrounding us, or do we follow the model of Christ and seek ways to act as humble servants for others?

Sarah Eichinger
WashU, Class 2016

Friday, April 18th

GOOD FRIDAY

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalms 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25

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

John 18:1-19:42

What is the cross, the thing we venerate today, really about? What is Jesus doing for us?

If you look at the Passion Narrative for today closely you will see that Jesus keeps inviting us into his humanity. Jesus doesn't teach us to be God, but to live our humanity as he did, in the image and likeness of the truly loving One.

From the beginning Jesus makes the soldiers confront his humanity – he does not hide his identity or fight back which would make it easier for them, and us, to see him only as an enemy. No, instead he confronts them and looks them in the face. How often do we overlook someone's humanity because of our anger, jealousy, or lust?

Next Jesus hides nothing of who he is, pointing to all the things he has done and said in public, that he has never held anything back, never deceived anyone. He risked it all, his most true and vulnerable self all the time and anyone who experienced him could testify to that. Ironically, we see the antithetical witness to Jesus' message of humanity happening in Peter at the same time of Jesus' testimony. What will people say of us when we die? Will we be known for risking it all to simply be our best selves? For being our truest most vulnerable self to the world? Or will we die in fear of revealing who we really are; who God is calling us to be? Do we live insecure and enslaved as Peter was in that moment of denial?

As he is being questioned by Pilate Jesus displays two important aspects of his humanity, humility and that he belongs to God. Power is a dangerous thing and humans abuse it often, in this part of the story we see how people's jealousy, anger, and fear can tear someone down completely. We see how humans can use power (in this case the crowd and Pilate's position) to destroy, to de-humanize people. Jesus never uses his power to de-humanize; only to build up, only to heal. After all he belongs to a God whose power is only about love. How much do we cling to power? Do we play God in the lives of others?

And finally we see humanity at its best in Christ crucified: sacrificial love. Despite the cost to himself Jesus gives his life for us, for you, for me. Why? So that we could know what true love looks like, to give of ourselves for the sake of others. No matter what the situation is, every choice we make boils down to what we want our humanity to look like: a life for myself or a life for others.

The Cross brings us back - back to our true humanity.

Troy Woytek, CSC Campus Minister
Day of fasting, Abstain from meat

Saturday, April 19th
HOLY SATURDAY

1st Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:2 or 1:1, 26-31a

Responsorial: Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35c or Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22

2nd Reading: Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9a, 0-13, 15-18

Responsorial: Psalm 16:5, 8-11

3rd Reading: Exodus 14:15-15:1

Responsorial: Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18

4th Reading: Isaiah 54:5-14

Responsorial: Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-12, 13

5th Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11

Responsorial: Isaiah 12:2-3, 4-6

6th Reading: Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4

Responsorial: Psalm 19:8-11

7th Reading: Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28

Responsorial: Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3, 4 or Psalm 51:12-15, 18-19

Epistle: Romans 6:3-11

Responsorial: Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

So many readings, that is literally the first thing that I think of when I looked up the readings for the Easter Vigil. 7 readings one Epistle and a Gospel, that is too much for just 250 words to digest. But each story, each tale brings an interesting look at Balance.

From death, comes life, from despair, hope, from nothing come everything. Each tale paints a picture of how God allows for balance to occur in our world. From nothing came everything. Land and sea, trees and animals, man and woman. Abraham was about to give up his only son, only to be told he would have more descendants than stars in the sky. From slavery, the Jewish people were brought into freedom. From Death, there was Life in Christ

There is nothing that God does better than making the scales even. With all the hurts and crosses I have had, there is still good to be found. My life is never all good or bad, rather it is recognizing that in all the misfortune I find myself in there is still love to be found in God. My suffering is not just something I wallow in but something I try to offer up to God. In doing I am grateful for the good, in doing so I find balance.

Duncan Fischley, CSC Intern

Sunday, April 20th
EASTER SUNDAY

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or First Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9 or Luke 24:1-12 or Luke 24: 13-35

I have often been threatened with death. I must tell you, as a Christian, I do not believe in a death without resurrection. If I am killed, I shall arise again in the Salvadoran people. A bishop will die, but God's church, which is the people, will never perish. -Archbishop Oscar Romero, two weeks before his murder

In response to overwhelming political and economic injustice and violent repression, the people of El Salvador rose up against the government, which led to a bloody, devastating civil war from 1979-1992. Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, was one of the few individuals in a position of authority who denounced the government's repressive regime, spoke out for justice on behalf of the poor and marginalized, and called all people to forgiveness and peaceful resolutions. For his denouncement of the violent repression of the poor and marginalized who were organizing for justice, Romero was assassinated on March 24, 1980 while celebrating Mass.

During the winter break service immersion trip to El Salvador, it was so powerful to see how true Romero's words are. Throughout the war, and even 34 years since his murder, he has remained alive and well in the people of El Salvador. We probably saw more depictions of Oscar Romero than we saw crucifixes. Make no mistake. This is not idolatry. Rather, it is a testament to the extraordinary power of Romero's love. His courage and his commitment to justice, peace, and forgiveness embody what so many Salvadorans today continue to devote their lives to. His memory is preserved as a model for how they too want to live their lives and what they are willing to sacrifice for justice.

The earliest followers of Jesus were called people of "the Way". They stood out for their radical dedication to loving their neighbor and caring for the poor. This is the Way which Jesus embodied and to which Jesus calls us. And it cost him his life. His reward was a brutal torture and death.

It is a Way of tremendous faith, courage, and love, a Way to which we are all called, a Way that Romero fully embodied, knowing it would cost him his life as well. He knew it. He was so terrified that he couldn't sleep alone at night. But that fear did not stop him. Because he knew that **death never has the final word.**

The beauty of our faith is this: that in every death we experience – literal or figurative, big or small – there is new life that grows. **Death is never the end of the story.** Every suffering carries with it the seeds of new life. As people of "the Way", let us love without limits as Jesus showed us. As Easter People, let us face whatever sacrifices may be part of that Way of life, living as people who, just like Oscar Romero, "do not believe in death without resurrection".

Mark Zaegel, CSC Campus Minister



*Catholic
Student
Union*



