NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME
Now Is the Acceptable Time for us to spend a few quiet moments each day reflecting on our relationship with God and how that informs our interactions with the people and events that surround us. Many of these reflections were written at the end of the 2016 presidential campaign season. The campaigns were divisive, leaving many people along the full spectrum of politics and religion feeling isolation and hopelessness. As Christians, we are called to be people of joy. From Saint Augustine of Hippo, in the late fourth century, to Saint Pope John Paul II in his 1986 address in Adelaide, Australia, Christians are reminded that “We are an Easter people.” We know the end of the story. Good triumphs over evil.

As we take this Lenten journey, let’s keep each other in prayer as we heal as individuals, and as a country. While we reflect upon the themes of forgiveness and God’s mercy, let us be reminded that we keep the Door of Mercy open to all through our actions, our words, and our prayers. Remember that these 40 days of fasting and repentance are followed by 50 days of joyous celebration of the Easter season. God is good!

Siobhan K. DeWitt
Editor
Director of Campus Ministry

As a Catholic University founded by the Religious Sisters of Mercy, we participated in the closing of the Jubilee Year of Mercy last November. However, I suggest we are called to carry over to this Lenten season the inspiration and prayers of mercy that were highlighted during the Jubilee Year. Lent is the time when we are invited to return to the Lord with whole hearts and to deepen our relationships with Jesus. Pope Francis has emphasized that our conversion of heart will lead us to works of compassion and mercy, and has called us to “prayerful listening to God’s Word.”

In a time of great change and concerns of intolerance in our country and world, Lent offers us the opportunity to stop and reflect on both our life and the life of Jesus and His passion. In this Lenten season, we can choose not to remain indifferent to the pain and suffering around us.

Reflection and prayer are empty without action. We are called to reach out to those in need, the forgotten, the ill, the lonely, the dying. Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, challenged us that “spiritual and corporal works of mercy are the business of our lives.” Let’s draw upon that advice and in small (or large) ways show that by our actions and dialogue we have deepened our relationships with Jesus and carried out what he set as ever-present examples to attend to those in need.

May this journal, which includes the reflections of individuals within our Catholic Mercy community, augment your own Lenten journey with the Lord.

Suzanne K. Mellon, PhD
President, Carlow University
Too many times in my life, I have been guilty of saying the following: “God, I surrender to you…but not that part of me!”

All too often, we give God only portions of our lives. We withhold our brokenness, anger, loneliness, and lack of forgiveness. We covet our pride, our reputation, and our material goods. We focus on “looking our best” before God. We clean up and put on our good Sunday clothes.

Yet, the most beautiful thing about God is that He does not look at our appearance. He is not interested in how well we “play the part.” He only sees the truth of us, our hearts.

God is not interested in pieces of us; He wants to know the authentic person that we are. In the Scriptures, God cries out for us to return to Him with our whole hearts. What would it mean for you to tear off all the masks and let God see you, all of you? What in your life have you been hiding from God or desperately clinging to because you are afraid to let go? Lent is our time to turn back to God and recommit to living for Him!

Brenda Byrne
Center for Mercy Heritage and Service, Center for Service
Blessed are they who hope in the Lord. (Psalm 40:5a)

This past year has been a journey for me. I have recently started to test my faith. I have been trying so hard to figure out what I am going to do when I graduate in May and how everything will go. When I returned from Laredo, Texas, last March, I started to let the Lord into my life. At the beginning of the semester, He led me to the Mercy Volunteer Corps. I do not think that I would have begun to think about volunteering for years of service if the Lord had not rescued me.

Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

Katryna Marvel
Bachelor of Science in Biology/Autopsy Concentration
Class of 2017
Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry,  
bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house;  
Clothing the naked when you see them,  
and not turning your back on your own flesh?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your wound shall quickly be healed;  
Your vindication shall go before you,  
and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.  
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer,  
you shall cry for help, and he will say: “Here I am!”  
(Isaiah 58: 7-8)

In this passage, Isaiah speaks about how the people question the rewards they will reap from fasting and other religious practices. However, the Lord declares to them that there is more than fasting, but to help others, to pray, to follow what the Lord has shown to us to be good and prosperous.

I find that it this is true for not only fasting but also everything we do. Going the extra mile means doing good for ourselves, and hopefully for everyone around us.

Annika Ramani  
Class of 2017 (Eighth Grade)  
The Campus School of Carlow University
In Isaiah we read that we need to depend and trust in God our Heavenly Father. We are warned about doing things our own way, away from God. Throughout the bible, we see cases where the people turned away from God, and we see the end results. It is only by the Grace of God that we are saved through His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We live in an era where we can get information in a split second, unlike the people in past ages. One would think it is easier to understand and follow God’s way; yet we turn to our own ways. We need to be able to receive and accept God’s love and love Him in return with our whole hearts, souls, minds, and bodies. We must turn to our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. Spend time in silence with Him. Meditate on God’s Word and praise Him. Let Him take you into His love and love others as He has commanded us to do.

Kenneth J. Ference
Carlow University Police
Today, the second reading states that through the obedience of one, many will receive the abundance of grace of God. The spirit will wash over us all because of the sacrifice that Jesus made, despite our many and repeated failings as human beings.

Many of us are tempted to dwell on the negative aspects of our lives. We try to live as good people, yet it feels as though we are fated to make mistake after mistake. Maybe we wonder if God even notices our efforts, if we are doing well enough for Him. However, God breathes life into us for us. He sends His only son for us. We cannot get discouraged when we fail because the Spirit will wash over us yet. That is the strength of the Spirit and of our faith. Let us stop to think about the abundance of grace seen in our own lives.

Kara Murphy
Bachelor of Social Work with a Psychology Minor
Class of 2017
I love the taste of fresh honey on a piece of toast on a rainy morning. The sweetness is so sweet; a gulp of milk soothes my taste buds. God’s Word is much like honey. God tells us that His Word is pure and radiant. If we take time to listen to what God is telling us, we will be able to follow and spread His Word, according to His intent. During this time, ask God to guide your words to be the sweetness in someone else’s life like God’s Words guide you in your life.

Krista Burdett
Bachelor of Social Work, Crisis and Trauma Concentration
Class of 2018
In the Psalm verse, the obvious focus is on the repeated statement, “From all their distress God rescues the just.” Sounds good, doesn’t it? Soothing. Comforting.

It’s hard to accept the notion, the just are rescued. With so much evil, destruction, pain and suffering among those who may be deemed righteous and just, how can we believe it?

From a human perspective, our first inclination may even be to deny God rescues the just at all. After all, what does “rescue” mean but resolution of pain and suffering... now!

However, Lent is an opportunity to think about why suffering occurs and why our Lord suffered and died for us. Life on earth—with all its distress—is working toward what comes after...heavenly reward, or rescue! After we see it like that, it begins to make sense: “God rescues the just,” in His terms.

Kathy Chrisman
Graduate Admissions
Today’s readings seem harsh to me. I can hear Jonah and the king of Nineveh shouting God’s message of fasting and commanding people to turn from evil, so they may not perish as a civilization. And, in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus calls his generation “evil,” then, harkening back to Jonah’s days, he reminds his listeners of the need for repentance.

The saving grace for me is in the responsorial psalm. I particularly like the second verse:

“A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me; cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me.”
(Psalm 51:12-13)

With the psalmist, I realize that God’s compassion helps me to acknowledge my sins; God’s presence creates in me a resolve to do better; God’s Spirit moves me to accomplish good things for myself and others. No shouting necessary.

Micaela Young ’68
Jesus said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find” (Matthew 7:7).

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus says that we are to pray always and not to lose heart. Have there been times in your life when it seemed that your prayers were not heard? Do you believe that you have unanswered prayers? And yet, Jesus wants us to be persistent because he is telling us that all prayers are heard and answered. Yes, all because there are only three answers to prayer:

1. Yes.
2. Yes but not yet.
3. I have better plans for you.

Notice, there’s not a “No” in those answers, so be persistent but ready for an answer you didn’t expect.

Blessed Catherine McAuley said, “Your whole life should be a continual act of prayer and praise.”

Angie Giuffre
Vocations Promotions Assistant, Sisters of Mercy
Ezekiel 18:21-28; Psalm 130:1-7c, 8; Matthew 5:20-26

March 10, 2017

FIRST FRIDAY OF LENT

To live in Christ is to really live. To live with Him is to preserve my life. To live with Christ means to be forgiven and to live with forgiveness. His kindness draws me to Him, and I can be attentive to His voice in my life rather than the voices of regret and shame over the sins I have committed. The Lord is able to redeem and save me from everything that is concerning me. As I commune with Him, I learn to trust His word and His works of kindness in my life. My soul rests in the Lord while He preserves my life.

Delilah Miller
Master of Science in Professional Counseling
Class of 2018
When I read these verses in Matthew, the first thing I thought of was a saying that I heard many, many years ago: “You don’t have to like everyone, but you must love everyone.” I believe this is what Jesus is talking about in these verses.

I can show the love of Jesus, to the best of my ability, in my daily life: Treat my family members with kindness and patience—always. Practice self-control (no yelling, swearing, or beeping) when I am cut-off in traffic or behind a slow driver! Pray for my cranky neighbor or coworker. Forgive the friend who gossiped about me. Be accepting of, and considerate to, people whose religious beliefs or political views differ from mine. Give my time and/or money to a charity to help strangers.

Throughout my day I try to choose love because that is what God asks of me. And practicing love gives me God’s peace.

“If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that?”
(Matthew 5:46)

Joyce Hallowes
Marketing and Communications
“Rise and do not be afraid.” (Matthew 17:7)

When we are faced with a challenge or uncertainty, it is very easy for us to just walk away or ignore it. We are called, despite our fear, to stand up and face life head on. Our society needs people who are willing to face adversity, fight injustice, and listen to the stories of those who feel the urge to share their experiences. This life can be scary and intimidating, but the end result will always leave us feeling accomplished. We will never know exactly where life will take us, but if we are brave and bold, we can change the world for the better.

Clarissa Moore
Bachelor of Arts in English
Class of 2019
President, Student Government Association, 2017
Ever since I was a child, I was taught to treat others the way you want to be treated. The idea was that everyone would follow suit, do the same, and create this never-ending cycle of kindness. Somewhere along the way, this seems to have gotten lost. In light of the recent election, I found myself judging people who disagreed with me and thinking less of people who would speak out about their beliefs that were different from mine.

It seems I was meant to write and think about these passages after the hateful campaigns. Letting go of judgement and giving all that I can is something that I need to be grounded in.

Just because someone has different beliefs than I do does not make them any less human and deserving of kindness. Americans are struggling to be kind and unified at this moment. Perhaps if I use this verse and put the words into action, compassion can be found again, not just in this nation but also in the human race.

Allison Fleming
Bachelor of Social Work and Art Therapy Preparation, Concentration in Crisis and Trauma
Class of 2017
Isaiah 1:10, 16-20; Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Matthew 23:1-12

March 14, 2017
SECOND TUESDAY OF LENT

I have chosen to reflect on the first reading, which is Isaiah 1:10, 16-20. This reading means, be the best person you can be and trust the Lord. If you trust the Lord and obey when told, you will get good in return. The reading says, “Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow...” This means, although you sin, the Lord will forgive you. This reading resonates with me because I am being confirmed this year, and I am trying to do my best. Recently I have been doing service for the school, which I have been enjoying. I anticipate being confirmed and graduated from Carlow Campus School in 2017.

Roman Casamayor
Class of 2017
8th Grade
The Campus School of Carlow University
Jesus was going up to Jerusalem with His twelve disciples. He actually revealed to the disciples His manner of death, to be followed by His resurrection. The mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John was apparently on this journey and did not hear the words of Jesus. Do we not also at times become so involved with others that we do not hear what is being said?

The mother interrupted the narrative and asked Jesus that her two sons be seated in the Kingdom, one on the right hand and the other on the left. What must the other ten disciples have felt at this time? Jesus, knowing their feelings call them to Him and said, “You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over their subjects. Among you, however, it shall not be so.”

How often are we insensitive to the feelings of others? In our culture today, we teach our children to be the first, the greatest, the smartest, the richest and the most powerful. Do we also teach them to be sensitive and loving?

Jesus teaches us that we have been put on this earth to serve and give life. Do we serve others, especially the poor and needy, the forgotten, the child rejected by other children, the immigrant and the abandoned? Let us this Lent strive each day to be more like Jesus.

Sr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, PhD
Professor Emerita
In the military when we give support to someone from behind, we say, “I got your six.” If you believe in something that is not the Lord, you will not be rewarded by getting into heaven. Jeremiah compares not believing in the Lord as being a bush in the wastelands. But if you believe in the Lord, you will be a tree that has no worries and your leaves will always stay green. Believing in the Lord, you never have to worry because the Lord upholds you and never lets you wither down like a bush in a desert. As long as you believe in the Lord, you will be rewarded by the Lord. It is clear that the Lord has your six.

Emily Slopek
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies
Class of 2017
President, Student Government Association, 2016
These passages are filled with violence, with people killing each other, stealing, and Joseph’s brothers putting him in a well. It can be easy to read these passages and miss the relevance to our own lives. Most of us will never beat or kill someone or steal their vineyards, and no matter how aggravated I might get with my brother, I will never dump him in a well.

But we commit other sins, and we stand by as grievous sins are committed against others. The news is full of hate crimes committed around the country. Do we stand against this violence and work to end it? Do we truly embrace those of every nationality, race, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability?

It will not be enough to say that we, ourselves, do not contribute to the hate and violence, if we do not take affirmative steps to end it and to create a society that embraces every member. We must speak out against the hate we witness, volunteer for the causes close to our hearts, and hold our elected officials accountable.

Like the cornerstone in the Gospel, every member of our society is wonderful in God’s eyes, and we share responsibility to build a society in which everyone is valued. #CarlowUnited

Jennifer Carlo, PhD
Student Affairs
Too often we question our relationship with God, and how strong His love is for us. We sin and wonder if he’ll still forgive us. We stop attending services, stop building upon our faith, and wonder if He will want us back once we’ve left. We allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with negative emotions when our prayers aren’t met in the way we want them to be, even if they were answered. We question if He really is listening. God is truly kind and merciful. He is there for us, even when we don’t think He is. God forgives us for our sins and is there for us with open arms, even if we’ve struggled with our faith and questioned Him. He is there for us even when we’re angry with Him and tell Him to go away. God is always there for us, ready to show us His love.

Devon Jennings
Bachelor of Social Work
Class of 2019
Two thoughts strike me about these readings. The first is the statement by the Samaritans who came to see Jesus based on the testimony of the woman who met Jesus at the well. They told the woman, “no longer does our faith depend on your story. We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this really is the Savior of the world” (John 4:42). We all have come to believe in Jesus because of the testimony of others. But, eventually, we have to “beg him to stay with [us] awhile” so that we can see and hear for ourselves.

Second, both Exodus and John focus on water that fulfills both our physical and spiritual needs. Nearly 800 million people in the world do not have access to clean water. Nearly 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation. March 22 is World Water Day. Perhaps a Lenten sacrifice this year can be to support one of the several organizations working for clean water for all.

Jack Alverson, PhD
College of Learning and Innovation, Theology
According to these readings, faith is what is important. It would be inaccurate to judge the success of our endeavors by what we see in the here and now. God knows the impact of our actions on future generations. In a similar way, we don’t let the letter of the law be our only guide. On this Feast of St. Joseph our gospel gives us an example in Joseph’s actions. By law, he would be justified divorcing Mary because she became pregnant. He knew he was not the father—and no one would have faulted him for walking away from Mary. But he had faith. He had faith in the voice of the angel who assured him of the special role he was to take. He had faith that God would be with them through wherever this journey would take them. Do we take the time to listen to the voice of God in our lives? Can our faith be that steadfast?

Siobhan K. DeWitt, MA
Center for Mercy Heritage and Service, Campus Ministry
The Gospel reading from Matthew examines forgiveness. It is easy to see forgiveness as an act of generosity in that you are giving another person the gift of absolution. More than a negation, forgiveness is a blessing upon someone who justly deserves a punishment; thereby it is a doubled gift.

Is the recipient the only person who is blessed? Amazing things will happen for the forgiver as well! Making the choice to eliminate control over another person is selfless and, in earthly terms, can be perceived as choosing weakness. The forgiver loses his control by eliminating his advantage, but the forgiver’s heart grows as he makes the decision to bestow the blessing instead. The forgiver, who with one hand releases his power in the debt, is stronger in spirit as he chooses to walk in mercy with Jesus. To be the merciful forgiver is to live the good news.

Emily Szitas
Grace Library
“However, 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.”

(Deuteronomy 4:9)

We have all been shaped by what we have experienced or seen in life, but in our hectic lives how often do we take time to reflect on these gifts? This verse reminds me of all the wonderful things that God has done for me. It cautions me to remember that I have been shaped by both the good and the bad and in all things God has been present to guide and teach me. It also encourages me to share my appreciation of those gifts by the way I live and conduct myself in the world.

Lynn George, PhD, RN, CNE
College of Health and Wellness
From reading the Gospel of Luke, we reflect on the work of Jesus. During Jesus’ time, people questioned his power, and Jesus replied inspiringly that we depend on each other to make a greater difference. As fantastic as it would be to have human Jesus with us on Earth today, he isn’t physically by our side. He resonates with us in these Gospels and the daily activities we engage in each day.

What is your favorite hobby or activity? No matter what it is, you have a goal that couldn’t be reached alone. Whether it is campus ministry making sandwiches for the homeless or an art club creating personal masterpieces, everyone has an ultimate goal that relies on the contributions from others. In this Gospel today, Jesus teaches us that no matter what we do, we must work together as a community to obtain the ultimate goal of the Kingdom of God.

Melanie Long
Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Class of 2020
Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 81:6c-11ab, 14, 17; Mark 12:28-34

March 24, 2017

THIRD FRIDAY OF LENT

The second Commandment is “Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:31). How do you love your neighbor? Through this personal experience I found that forgiveness is the key.

I carried a deep hate for Craig for twenty-six years. I wanted him dead. You see, he killed my friend Tim in 1978. I would see him occasionally and the hate was always there. In 2004, Jesus put it on my heart to forgive Craig, and every time I saw him I hurt less, until I had completely forgiven him. Jesus told me that I had to tell Craig that I forgave him! So I did! It was then that the hurt was gone. He was carrying that hurt as well, and it helped him heal too. He needed to hear from someone that they forgave him. Please, love your neighbor!

Dale Fredley
Facilities
Today we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, the day the angel Gabriel appeared
to Mary and told her she would bear a son, Jesus. This miracle has been written about
in many books of the bible. God fulfilled his promise to mankind by sending his Son to
save us. Mary was scared at first not understanding how she, as a virgin, could bear
a child, but soon her fear was dismissed as Gabriel spoke to her, and she embraced
her destiny. Mary was the chosen one, and she would bear the Son of God. This is the
greatest miracle of all.

Lynn Rush
Accounting
Class of 2020
Mailroom
When bad things happen in our own lives or in the lives of those near and dear to us, our human nature may question, “What have I or they done to deserve this pain and suffering?” We may feel punished or betrayed by God our Father. Our Lord Jesus has assured us, that we are part of God’s plan to manifest His works through us. What an honor that is! Through our hardships and earthly suffering, we cry out to God in prayer and ask for healing, patience, and acceptance. Each person that touches our lives is put there for a specific purpose. We need to model the trust of a small child and humbly turn our hardships and sufferings over to God and obey and follow his plan for us.

Angela Kelly, DNP, ’15
College of Health and Wellness, Nursing
There is something very sweet about calling on the name of Jesus. It does not matter the time or the place, I can call out His name and He will be there waiting with open arms. This scripture brings me a lot of peace; the words remind me that, although I may feel alone, I am never truly by myself because God sends His Holy Spirit to walk with me and guide me in every step. I am glad I worship a Lord who extends His grace and mercy to me, although I do not deserve it. He cares enough to rescue me from any mess because His love is unconditional. “I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me” is my favorite line. Focusing on “I will praise you” encourages me to keep my faith and to praise God before I enter into a sticky situation, praise Him while I am in the midst of the situation, and praise Him after He has delivered me through the situation. Every day I praise Him because He keeps sending down His grace to me. “When praises are sent up, blessings come down.” This Lenten season, I am encouraging myself to continue to take pride in praising God for the little things.

Breanne Thomas
Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Media
Class of 2018
The message I got from this reading was that God provides for us. In the first reading, a body of water turned into a river that flowed in all directions and was filled with living things. It watered trees that gave fruit to feed the people monthly. All the needs of the people were met.

Marque Coffey
Facilities
The response for the Responsorial Psalm, “The Lord is gracious and merciful,” has such a simple yet powerful message. Very often we are caught up in the tragic events of the world, but when we hear those words it puts things in perspective. I always tell my students that God is with us at every moment in our lives. It is extremely vital to know that although we may be going through a tough time, God is with us throughout our journey to show graciousness and mercy.

Katie Palermo
The Campus School of Carlow University
How many times do we find ourselves in situations in which we are so desperate to find the answers that we make choices that may not have been the best decision to make?

Yet, glory be to God for those like Moses, who are intercessors on our behalf when we can’t see clearly. Moses, like Jesus, has shown us that sometimes we need to pray for God to show his unmerited grace on those who aren’t able to “see” clearly enough to pray for themselves.

Today, let’s take time to thank God for his mercy and for the people that he has placed in our lives that pray for us when we fail to seek God first.

Lachelle Binion, ’03, ’11 MS, ’13 MBA
Advancement, Alumni Engagement
“When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.”
(Psalms 34:19)

Everyone goes through tough times, due to school, work, family, health, and the list goes on. These verses remind me that it is normal to go through a rough patch and that you need to stay in contact with the Lord. He delivers us from evil, listens to our troubles, and saves his children.

Fast solutions aren’t always the answer or what happens in real life. God may not give you the answers right away, but you have to have faith and believe that everything will work out. These verses don’t say when he will deliver the righteous from their troubles; it just says that he does. It is up to us to have faith in the Lord.

Allison Cox, ’15
Student Affairs
Today’s readings focus on Jesus as a prophet who was not accepted by those who heard him. Jeremiah foreshadows the plots against Jesus and his death.

The crowd proclaims Jesus as “prophet” and “the Christ.” His words are unlike any they have heard before. The temple police had been sent to arrest Jesus, but because “never before has anyone spoken like this man” they fear him. The Pharisees, members of the ruling class, write off Jesus as one who appeals to the masses who are “easily led astray.” Jesus was perceived as a Galilean, and the scriptures state that the Christ would come from Bethlehem, the village of King David. Few were aware of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem! No arrest happens now.

We are left to ponder the events to come in the next few weeks: suffering, crucifixion and death. Perhaps at that moment Jesus prayed with the psalmist: “O Lord, my God, in you I take refuge.”

Sometimes there are events in our own lives that we anticipate with trepidation but cannot stop. We have to remind ourselves at those times that, with Jesus, we can take refuge in God himself.

Sr. Susan Welsh, RSM
President and CEO, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System
I often forget who I am in Christ. I get caught up in the loudness of life, focusing on everything but my faith and spirituality.

While reading my assignment, a song popped into my head. The lyrics of “Same Power” by Jeremy Camp go, “The same power that rose Jesus from the grave, the same power that commands the dead to wake, lives in us.” It immediately brought me back to the second reading:

“But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of His righteousness. If the spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his spirit dwelling in you.” (Romans 8:8-11)

The key here is His spirit dwelling in you. How amazing is that? In all our sin, failure, shortcomings, pain we cause, or selfishness, remember, it can all be forgiven. Even on our worst days, in the worst circumstances, and in the lowest of lows, we are loved. We are forgiven and redeemed by God.

Kathleen Kelley ’14
Daniel 42-43

In today’s day and age, it seems more and more common to see judgments passed upon a person, a group of people, or a situation before all of the facts and information are received, and before hearing all sides of a story. One need only to turn on the news or look at Facebook, Twitter, or any other social media site, to see a case wherein someone jumped to conclusions only later to find out that that judgment was made in error. Unfortunately, those public judgments have a direct way of shaping our worldviews.

We must strive to be better and can do so starting from the ground up. Examine your own decisions and actions, as well as those of the people around you. Set examples for your friends and family with both your actions and your words. Speak out when you see injustices performed. Hear all sides of a story before passing judgment. Start small by practicing love, compassion, empathy, and mercy. Instead of passing judgment on others, we must stand together.

Alyson Clover
Barnes & Noble College Booksellers
The reading I chose to reflect upon is Psalm 102:16-21. This reading resonated with me because it really helps to portray the Lord’s generosity and caring nature. The line, “he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their supplication,” really stuck with me because all too often people will be irritated or annoyed when someone asks them for genuine help. While we all lead busy lives, we need to learn to slow down and to care for those in need, to live acting with mercy. One day you will be that person in need, looking to someone for help or guidance, and it is important to remember those times so that you can remain humble and caring.

Bob Thumpston
Business Management
Class of 2018
Information Technology, Customer Engagement
The Old Testament story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego reminds me of the courage it takes to hold onto faith in our Lord in the midst of great danger. These three men immediately accepted the punishment by King Nebuchadnezzar of being “instantly cast into the white hot furnace” for not worshiping his chosen god. They died holding on to their faith in God Himself.

Later, followers of Jesus suffered persecution because of their worship of Him. The book of Hebrews, written to encourage Jewish Christians who were being persecuted, gives a powerful description of Old Testament forerunners who were imprisoned, stoned to death, and even sawn in two, holding firmly to their faith in God (Hebrews 11:32-41). Later, many Christians also faced persecution like this.

Such faith amid persecution might seem like extreme examples to us now. But worldwide, there are many people facing life-threatening choices. In Syria, Africa, and Iraq, to name a few, families have been compelled by invaders, like ISIS, to give up their religion and way of life or be killed or imprisoned. Many of these, Christians and others alike, have become refugees.

Let us remember to pray for our brothers and sisters worldwide who are undergoing persecution because of their beliefs and also to pray to our Lord for stronger faith ourselves.

Marilyn S. Marsh Noll
Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshop
In Genesis, we are told what God is saying, but not what Abraham says or thinks. It’s hard to imagine all of Abraham’s emotions and the level of stress he felt knowing that he was to be the “father of a host of nations.” Fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, teachers, students...we demand so much more of ourselves each day and of everyone around us, that we are slowly closing the door on God’s grace. God acts through us when we are at peace with our soul, but cultivating and maintaining peace can be a challenge today. This Lenten season, let us reclaim and hold onto our peace and joy through prayer, meditation, and with each other. Let us ask the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, to bestow upon us this Fruit of the Spirit...so that we may open wide the door to God’s grace.

DeAnna Kwiecinski
The Campus School of Carlow University
The Lord has rescued the life of the poor. How fortunate I am to be in love with a God that espouses the love and care of the most vulnerable people. Poor in health, in spirit, in wealth, in love. All of us have been or are experiencing that loss. The feeling of having less than others, being less than others, comparing ourselves to others and wishing we had more. It is our loving and merciful God that shows us that it is in that despair that we are to be saved. He provides for all that we need and trusting in him that he knows best. It is sometimes hard to feel okay with that, the blind trust that is so intrinsic to faith. But Jeremiah’s faith, like many of those before us, gives the peace and reassurance of God’s endless love.

Jennifer Holbert
Office of Career Development
“The Lord will guard us, as a shepherd guards his flock” (Jeremiah 31:10).

When I’m having a bad day, I often like to think back on this reading from the Gospel of John. It can be so easy to feel lost. It can sometimes even become habitual to feel as though we are alone when we feel hurt or upset. But, the Lord is always with us. He is always protecting us as a shepherd does his sheep. It is okay to feel broken, but we must always try to remember that God is there for us. He is always there to comfort us, to make us whole again. The Lord is our shepherd, and we shall not be afraid.

Rachel Kish
Bachelor of Social Work
Class of 2018
This is a day of waving palms and shouting crowds, of hosannas and hubbub. But amidst the readings describing the scene is a passage from Isaiah inviting us to attentiveness—not to the passing parade but to one another.

*God has given me a well-trained tongue,*  
*that I might know how to speak to the weary*  
*a word that will rouse them.*  
*Morning after morning*  
*God opens my ears that I may hear.*  
*(Isaiah 50:4)*

This reading calls us to the simple, yet profound, act of quiet listening to one another—to the hopes and joys, fears and insecurities that each of us carries. True listening is an expression of our value of hospitality. There is perhaps no more affirming or healing experience than that of feeling that we have been heard, knowing that our experiences are reverenced. Isaiah promises that, when we engage in this profound act of listening, God will give us the words we need to encourage one another, to rouse one another’s spirits, to unveil one another’s insights. In this last week of Lent, let’s pray for the gifts of open ears and gentle speech—making of each of us a welcoming, affirming presence in our campus community.

Sr. Sheila Carney, RSM  
Center for Mercy Heritage and Service
Of the readings for today, the Psalm resonates the most with me. Perhaps it is because from the beginning of time, we have cried out to God with hope and trust for help. I know that I call upon Him daily, sometimes hourly, if I am feeling “needy” and I receive substance through His grace.

I often thought about the “evildoers” only in the Old Testament context. However, who are those evildoers of today? Sometimes we are the enemy when we do not ask for or accept God’s will for us, or when we ignore those who are in need. If the need is something as simple as a kind word, do I offer that to the person in front of me? What if I don’t and that person is Jesus? Well, guess what? That person is Jesus, and I just ignored Him. If I need the Lord to be my light and salvation, I must be His light to others—to have Mercy written in my heart is not enough—it must be given as it is given to us.

Judi Halterlein  
Student HUB
Many years ago as a Catholic school student, our classes were ushered to church on the Fridays during Lent. Once there, we prayed the Stations of the Cross. Without fail, I found myself in tears because of all that Jesus suffered along his journey to be crucified. I was embarrassed but I could not contain the sadness I felt.

In the Gospel reading for today Jesus and Peter are in conversation as Jesus announces, “I will be with you only a little longer.” Peter wants to follow him but Jesus responds to him saying, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now.”

Jesus continues by saying, “I will lay down my life for you...will you lay down your life for me?” As a child I would weep at these words. As an adult I am challenged by them. Will I lay down my life for him? Will you?

Sr. Donna Marie Vaillancourt, RSM
Well of Mercy Retreat Center
Alternative Spring Break Work Site, 2015, 2016
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. (Matthew 26:14-16)

Hearing the story of Holy Week, would any of us choose to be Judas—the villain of the piece? And yet Judas is all-too familiar, all-too human—all-too us. “From that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.” How disturbingly familiar is the great deliberation, care, and planning involved in carrying out plans I know were wrong. Judas “looked for an opportunity to hand him over.” And so do you and me when we choose to belittle, condemn, ignore or deny a sister or brother. Fortunately, we have a Savior who knows us and yet, in His great love, is still willing to forgive us.

Peter Gilmore, PhD
College of Learning and Innovation, History
Today we enter into the most Holy days of the entire Church year. We are celebrating “Holy Thursday,” the day that we remember the Last Supper of our Blessed Lord with his chosen Apostles. The Apostles were literally the best friends of Jesus. The Apostles had been through thick and thin with Christ and next to his own Mother they were the closest people to Jesus on this Earth. The Last Supper is certainly a joyous event when we remember the institution of the Eucharist, however, it is also very sad because we know that one of our Lord’s closest friends betrayed him right after this very dinner. Is it not extraordinary that our Blessed Lord knew who would betray Him, yet, He still invited Judas to the dinner and He still wanted Judas to be near Him during this hour? Perhaps we can naturally wonder why. Like so many things in our faith it is really a mystery; yet, we know that it is perhaps to show us what true charity is. True charity is forgiving even the deepest hurt, true charity is loving even our enemies, and true charity is giving all for everyone no matter what they have done.

Rev. Adam M. Verona
University Chaplain
The reading of The Passion today tells me that God is always there for us. He took the worst beating, so we can be freed from our sins. In John, it describes how the people were calling Jesus bad names and beating Him. They didn’t know who He was or why He was there. One line from Isaiah that struck me was, “If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him” (Isaiah 53:10). This verse is our faith.

Another thing I found comforting in these readings is that they spoke about Jesus walking the same ground that we walk. He did this to show he loved us. He suffers for us and with us. The Psalm reading tells us that we should trust in the Lord and we should give Him everything. Overall, these readings tell me that God cares about us in the small and little things. He cares about what matters to us.

Zaneen Brown
Bachelor of Social Work
Class of 2020
Isaiah 55:1-11

My sister cries out as the birth pains quicken, “Let this baby come.” Remembering my grandmother dying, her labored breathing, did she whisper, “Let this death come”? In the vigils of our lives, we wait. We yearn to act. Even waiting, we seek the Lord. Perhaps he will come.

So many births and deaths, sometimes similar to T.S. Eliot’s poem “Journey of the Magi,” we are not sure which is which. These events are higher, deeper than our imaginations can take us. “As high above my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

Waiting in transition, we struggle at critical times, of childbirth, life, and death. But wait. Is that a stranger who approaches, in the fading darkness? Familiar, like a gardener, yet with the newness of a stranger. A quickened cry: “It is the Lord?” The One who has kept vigil for us, seeking us—and we are found with New Life.

Maureen Crossen, PhD
College of Learning and Social Change, Theology
These Easter Sunday readings remind us that the resurrection changed everything. To the early followers of Jesus, God’s raising Jesus from the dead was not just a one-time miracle; it signaled that the long-awaited renewal of all things had begun. The promises of the prophets were in the process of being fulfilled. As they reflected together on the significance of this event they became convinced that all who followed this risen Savior could live into the mystery of the resurrection even as they wrestled with the painful realities of life in this world and still awaited the ultimate renewal to come. Remarkably, today’s readings remind us that followers of the risen Jesus are to consider themselves as already “raised with Christ” (Col 3:1). This new view of our lives calls forth a heavenly perspective in which all are invited to live now as citizens of the new age; to go “all in” on God’s priorities for this world, and to live accordingly. The command to “Think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Col 3:2) is thus not a call to ignore this world, but rather to live in this world in light of the ultimate reality of the resurrection. This same idea has inspired Carlow’s motto: Ad superna non superba. Easter reminds us that we can live our lives in the present as renewed people awaiting and participating in the renewal of all things.

Matthew E. Gordley, PhD
College of Learning and Innovation
works of Mercy

**Corporal Works of Mercy**

Feed the hungry.
Give drink to the thirsty.
Clothe the naked.
Shelter the homeless.
Visit the sick.
Visit the imprisoned.
Bury the dead.

**Spiritual Works of Mercy**

Convert the sinner.
Instruct the ignorant.
Counsel the doubtful.
Comfort the sorrowful.
Bear wrongs patiently.
Forgive injuries.
Pray for the living and the dead.
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