



THE LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
UNIVERSITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

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Thank you for picking up this copy of *The Lenten Devotional* and deciding to take this journey with us. Both students and faculty here at UIndy worked very hard to make this devotional possible, and for that I can't possibly thank you enough.

There are 40 entries included so that you may read, pray, and reflect upon one each day of this Lenten season, beginning Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter.

May God bless this time that you spend Him, as well as the time you spend with your fellow classmates and instructors, and may the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, be with you today and always.

Blessings,

Aaron Taylor
Lent 2015

Ash Wednesday

What is Lent? *by Michael Lynch*

As kids, we all went through the same yearly ritual of giving up something for Lent. Lent was about giving something up to break a bad habit, hopefully with the intention of bringing us closer to God. Aside from giving up chocolate, candy, or perhaps giving up a particular sin, what is Lent all about? Lent came from a word, *lencten*, referring to springtime. It is a 40 day spiritual journey for Christians all around the world in preparation of Easter. The 40 days goes back to the time when Jesus travels into the desert for 40 days to pray, fast, and be tempted by the devil after His baptism. We imitate His actions by typically taking this 40 day season to prepare ourselves to become better people before the Lord's resurrection. We can do this by giving alms, praying, and fasting. This idea, called the three pillars of Lent, comes out of Matthew 6:1-18.

Almsgiving- giving alms means taking care of those who are in need as an act of charity.

Almsgiving comes from a Greek word meaning "mercy", so giving alms can be viewed as showing mercy. Jesus says in his ministry, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners (Mark 2:17, Luke 5:31, Matthew 9:12). We must try to connect with people here on campus who may be looked down upon, just as Jesus did with his disciples early on.

Prayer- Growing up as Jews, it is expected that a person knows how to pray at a very young age. Yet as grown men, it is ironic that the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. This is where the "Our Father" comes from

(Matthew 6:9-14). Jesus shares this new prayer because the Jewish prayers were known by everyone, recited but not felt from the heart. This is a great time to focus on praying from the heart and not reciting empty words.

Fasting- Fasting is a form of sacrifice by denying ourselves something for a certain amount of time. It is usually associated with food though, and in that case it is described as eating one large meal, and two smaller meals that do not exceed the larger meal. Why? In Luke 5:35 and Matthew 9:14-15, Jesus tells the disciples that they will fast once He departs from them. Fasting is not about starving ourselves, or not eating at all, but rather cutting back to demonstrate to God that we are serious about growing in our faith and reliance on Him. Fasting can also be from worldly things that distract us so that we can focus more of our attention on God.

Through the process of giving alms, praying, and fasting during this Lent; we grow in our spiritual faith and become better followers of Jesus before the celebration of Christ conquering death on Easter Sunday.



First Thursday

Lenten Pilgrimage *by Jeremiah Gibbs*

Later this Spring, 15 UIndy faculty and students will be going on spiritual pilgrimage to Northern Spain. The Camino de Santiago is an 1100 year old walking pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James. More than 250,000 pilgrims walked the path this year.

As we've prepared, I've been thinking about life as pilgrimage. Lent is also a kind of pilgrimage: a passion journey to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus during Holy Week. I think these four principles of pilgrimage can be helpful for us we make our journey toward Easter.

1. **Spiritual pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place.** Unlike a tourist, a pilgrim goes on their journey with a purpose, first and foremost to meet with God. Pilgrimage is inherently a careful and considered journey. *Maybe your Lenten devotion can help you to see the holiness of Easter this year as you prepare to experience these holy moments of the Christian year.*
2. **Spiritual pilgrimage involves a transformation of the pilgrim.** If you return the same way that you went then something has come up short. The point of the journey is a change of heart and life. *As you observe Lent this year, take*

care that your disciplines (fasting, etc.) are leading you toward becoming more like Christ and not only keeping them for their own sake.

3. **Spiritual pilgrimage is supposed to be difficult.** The reason that pilgrimage is transformative is a combination of the first and third points. While Christians don't believe that you can "earn" God's grace through these acts (that wouldn't be grace!), going on a difficult journey to meet God changes a pilgrim. Pilgrimage welcomes these difficulties as an opportunity to look more like Jesus. *Lent too should be a difficult journey. Have you taken on a significant level of devotion that will challenge your spiritual growth this Lent?*

4. **Spiritual pilgrimage requires disconnecting from the routine.** Pilgrims leave work, friends, responsibilities, and media behind for a time. Often pilgrims take ruggedly slow methods of transportation like walking. These things work together to create an environment where you're more aware of your surroundings, and help the pilgrim pay attention to the presence of God. *Will your Lenten discipline alter your routine such that you can reconnect with God in greater ways than before?*



First Friday

Define Permanent *by Jera Shaw*

Exodus 20:2

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

What is your definition of permanent? Well, according to the dictionary, it is "lasting or intended to last or remain unchanged indefinitely." The only time limit I see in that means *forever*. Ironically enough, many people start out each New Year with a list of goals to better themselves that are meant to last forever. Sadly, most end a couple weeks, even a couple days, into January. Scientific proof shows that it takes a minimum of 3 weeks to create a habit, but year after year of failed goals; there is no lasting results. But this is nothing new... The children of Israel said they would worship God forever for getting them out of Egypt, but with each wind change, they seemed to change their minds. While it's not the start of a New Year anymore, today could be the day of your spiritual growth...if you are willing to put in the effort! Create *habits*. Make God permanent in your life!

First Saturday

Rest & Relaxation *by Aaron Taylor*

“The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed. On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done.” – Genesis 2:1-2

As we all know, on the seventh day God rested, and therefore we’ve all been called to rest as well. This time of rest is called a Sabbath, and God wants us to take one each week (He did write it in His law after all). Now, I don’t really attempt to question God, but this particular law makes me question “why?” Well, the Bible is God’s word, designed to show answer three basic, but very important questions: Who is God, who is humanity, and how do they relate to one another? Sabbath itself is designed to be a day of rest, but also it’s designed as a day to remember who you are, who God is, and to worship Him who created you. Once you begin to see this, I promise you that your Sabbath will begin to change as you begin to ask this of yourselves.

Let’s Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, I ask that you show us this day and always who You are, and humble us in a way that shows us who we are as well. Help us to worship you in everyday life, and to rest when you’ve called to rest. We love You, and in the beautiful name of your Son, Jesus, we pray; Amen.

First Monday

By Faith *by Gwen Debaun*

There are times when we just want answers right? We're not only college students in the midst of work, but we're also human. We want to know what the next step is, what to do to take that next step, where we'll be in five years, how our degree will help us, probably even who we're going to marry; right?

In Hebrews 11:1 we can see that we can have faith that we'll find these answers.

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Though we may not find the answer in the way we are looking for, perhaps in a textbook, we can know that we will be able to find it in Him, in our Papa. God has grand plans set out for us, (Jer 29:11). So as we transition from one stage to the next, whether it be different class, graduation, or marriage, we need to keep faith that it's all apart of God's plan. And though things may seem crazy (hem, finals week, midterms, that crazy project with a group that just doesn't seem to work) have faith that it will work. Look to the bright side of each day, the bright side of each moment.

Faith can move mountains. It can allow us to pray and know of what is to come in the distant future even when we truly have no idea how it could ever be possible. Faith is knowing how things in the moment are going to come to pass. God has His hand on your life, so have Faith that it will all work out.

First Tuesday

Wi-Fi *by Rachel Taller*

The Internet is a wonderful thing ... as long as the Wi-Fi is working. When the Wi-Fi isn't working, it is keeping me from something I need, such as getting my homework done. Wi-Fi can be an analogy for something in our own lives that gets in the way of what we need: Jesus. Is there something standing in between you and Jesus? Take a minute or two to think about what is keeping you from giving 100% of yourself to Him. Is it your rap music? Is it your dedication to perfection? Is it your significant other? These things can be good as long as they point to the Creator. But if they are taking your time away from worshipping Him, it is only hurting you and your relationship with Christ.

Even when I feel that I am being completely transparent with God and not hiding anything from him, I sometimes still feel far from him. I am not using my talents and resources to glorify and honor him. James 4:8 NIV says "Come near to God and he will come near to you." Are you willing to make the first move, or are you waiting for God to do something because you are still clinging to your earthly desires? Give up your baggage, be honest with God, and tell him that you don't want anything to get in between you and him.

Second Wednesday

Metanoia by Sarah Scarano

Lent is often looked at as a time of abstinence. Whether you are giving up soda, sweets, or bad habits – abstinence is often the first thing that comes to mind. This is definitely a wonderful discipline to practice, but there is much more to the Lenten season than giving up something. Another theme surrounding the season of Lent is that of *metanoia*. Metanoia is a Greek word, which essentially means “change of heart.” (1 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:2)

During Lent, we are called to reflect more about how we are living our lives. Metanoia requires a radical shift in thought. It requires you to examine your values and see how they match those of Jesus and his followers.

However, having a complete change of heart does not happen over night. It isn't like flipping a switch. We are human and we are bound to have selfish thoughts. I know that I often fall in into the pattern of trying to take control of my life and schedule every moment.

How is this affecting my relationship with others? How is this letting God into my life? How am I honoring Jesus' sacrifice by turning away from God and “taking control” of my life?

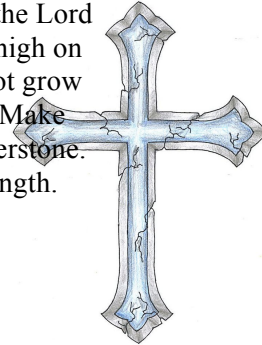
I encourage you to reflect and pray about this throughout Lent. Ask yourself where you have become selfish in your ways, and how you can work towards honoring God and others instead. Look at your values and ask, “Where do I need metanoia? Where do I need a change of heart?”

Second Thursday

The Solid Rock by *Olivia Jongkind*

“On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.” If you’re like me, you probably sang this song in church as a child. Maybe the elders sang it loudly with hands raised and eyes closed. And you looked around wondering why this song meant so much to those around you but asked when it would be put into practice in YOUR life. (I mean, that is the point right? To put those worship songs and sermons into practice?) Well, it’s hitting guys. This line from a song created long ago is hitting home. Nowadays we sing the verses of this hymn with a different chorus, ringing “Christ alone, Cornerstone. Weak made strong, in the Savior’s love. Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of All.” Holy cow. How often have I let these words come from my mouth but not really *sung* them, whole heart and all? It’s time we made Christ our solid Rock. It’s time we made Him our Cornerstone.

As school is hitting full force and we are constantly on the go, we need to rely on Him, not our own busy, stressed out, sinning selves. Isaiah 40:31 says “Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Make Him your Rock. Make Him your Cornerstone. Rely on Him and He will give you strength.



Second Friday

Reflection on 1 John 4:19 by Craig Westberry

“We love because He first loved us.” (NIV)

This is my favorite verse of the Bible, because it concisely explains how we live out our Christian lives and why. Other versions translate the verse as “We love *Him* because He first loved us.” God loved us before He created the universe, let alone before we were even born. With the NIV translation, I see an even deeper meaning: God gave us the ability to love people. God is a God of love, and being created in His image means love runs in our very being. If we are to be true Christ-followers, then we should love every person with the unconditional love of God. God gave us the ultimate gift of love by sacrificing Christ on the cross for us. As we are loved by Him, let us share and spread that love to others around us.

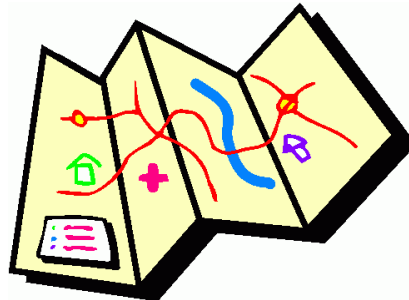
During this time, think of ways you can show love to others. Maybe it's holding a door for someone, smiling for someone who feels down, or swiping for meals for the people behind you. Whether in big ways or small, let us share the love and joy given to us by God.

Second Saturday

Maps by Madelyn Deckard

“For I know the plans I have for you” – this is the Lord’s declaration–“plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”
– Jeremiah 29:11 (HCSB)

We all want to know exactly where our life is going. We want to know what decisions to make and we want to know for sure they are the right ones. What we want is a map. We want to know where the turns are, where the dead ends are, and which road gets us to where we want to be. It would be so easy! But that's definitely never going to happen. We are going to have our life take unexpected turns and find ourselves in dead ends sometimes. God doesn't put these obstacles in front of us to make us angry or to make us miserable...He does it so that we look to Him when we run into the unexpected things and to look to Him even when things are going just fine. If we have faith and look to Him in all situations, those curves and dead ends will just be little bumps in the road on our way to what he has planned. We may not know where we are going exactly, but God has great things planned if we choose to live our life according to His will.



Second Monday

Not Today Satan *by Steven Freck*

“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’ ”Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.” - Matthew: 10-11

In my own life, I have been reminded many times of the fact that God is always walking alongside me. In my prayers, I normally remember to ask for God’s guidance and direction in my day to day life. However, the story of Jesus’ temptation reminds us that we are a people at war. There is a spiritual being who is working against us on a daily basis. It is his goal to construct barriers between us and our Savior. He works to muddy the truths that our God speaks and will try to convince you that Christ’s love cannot possibly extend to you.

As believers, we must remember to pray out the evil forces that walk this Earth, before every meal, before every worship service, and at the beginning of every day. We cannot allow Satan or any of his helpers to maintain a grip on our lives.

Christ is the only King that may sit on the throne of our heart. Throughout this Lenten season, begin to pray that the presence of Satan may grow smaller and smaller in your own life and in the lives of those around you.



Second Tuesday

The Small Tasks of Lent *by Lang Brownlee*

One of the figures from the 20th century whom I admire the most is Helen Keller, a person who overcame the adversity of blindness and deafness to chart a course with her life that has served to inspire millions by her journey.

She once wrote, ‘I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.’ This thought comes easily to mind as I consider the ‘small tasks’ of Lent.

Let me put it this way: you can’t get more dramatic than an empty tomb. There’s no way one can top the shock value of a resurrected Lord! That central event of wonder-filled good news is the ‘great and noble’ marker of God’s grace through Jesus Christ, to be sure.

Yet, we pilgrims in the faith are called upon to attend to our hearts during a forty-day prequel to this incredible sign of divine power. To take on the humble tasks of prayer, Bible reading and reflection, fasting, and service -- these types of disciplines make up the chief duty of this season as we move forward this winter/spring.

Jesus assures us what Mahatma Gandhi penned in another context, that by keeping faith through the practice of these disciplines “in a gentle way, you can shake the world.”

This Lent, adopt those ‘small tasks’ that guide you, that connect you, and that even push you forward in your relationship with God. Know that these truly matter – and they ‘shake our world,’ for the good. They are ‘small tasks’ that make a difference.

Third Wednesday

Almsgiving by Sarah Scarano

An additional theme woven into the season of Lent for many Christians is the theme of “almsgiving,” or charity. Contrary to popular belief, this does not necessarily mean giving money. I know that as college students, we often shy away from anything involving letting go of our savings (a whole other topic to ponder). But in its most basic form, almsgiving is more about the action of serving others, especially those less fortunate.

Almsgiving in Greek is “*elimosyne*,” which translates to “doing acts of mercy.” Whether we give our time or our money to those in need, we are showing a sense of sacrifice. And it is a small sacrifice in comparison to the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

Lent is a time to look beyond our own needs and look at the needs of others. Look at the talents you possess and ask how you can use them to help those in need. Do you have some spare time during the week or on the weekends that you can spend serving others in the community?

Perhaps you can plan a time during the Lenten season to go out with some friends to a soup kitchen, organize or take part in a clothing drive, or volunteer at a homeless shelter. Take a walk downtown and you will find many people that could use your help. We all have something to offer. We all have the ability to give alms.

Third Thursday

Reflection on Matthew 4:1-11 *by Molly Wolfe*

Following his baptism, Jesus fasted for 40 days leaving him very hungry. After this, he began fighting with Satan. He tempted Jesus three times, and Jesus replied to all three temptations with scripture.

We also face similar temptations from both Satan and those around us while at college. Satan uses the time when we are the most vulnerable and at our weakest point us to tempt us. These times can often be while we are at college, away from the guidance of our family. These times can happen we are stressed, homesick, tired, and hungry. Temptations are anything that take away from our mission or anything that is not pleasing in His eyes. These can include things like parties, video games, alcohol, drugs, sex, and cussing. When tempted, Jesus resisted by quoting scripture. When we are tempted, perhaps we should also quote scripture in our heads on a daily basis. Having simple scripture memorized such as, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" could help us in those surprise moments of temptation. We should possibly be reminded that we are not supposed to put God aside for convenience sake. Many times worship or attending chapel can be pushed aside for other things like studying or spending times with friends. During this season, remember to not get distracted and face those temptations from Satan and those around you with scripture.

Dear Heavenly Father,
Please help us to remember to not give into Satan's temptations and always put you first in our lives.
Amen

Third Friday

Embracing Grace *by Zach Chapman*

In the book of James, we're warned about the dangers that come from a continued pursuit of worldly desires. In chapter four, verse four, we're told that being "a friend of the world" makes us "an enemy of God." However, we're told clearly in verse six that God gives us more and more grace, quoting Proverbs 3:34, saying, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

So what does it look like to deny friendship toward the world and embrace the grace of God?

James puts it this way: Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.

In the Message translation of the Bible, it's put in a simpler, direct way: Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.

The great part about grace is that it covers everything; it is sufficient. So when we cleanse our hands and purify our hearts, grace fills in the cracks where our weakness would tell us that it will be too hard. After all, His power is made perfect in our weakness. So consider it great to cut off a friendship to the world, no matter how much cleansing and purifying that means. He gives us more and more grace

through it all. In our weak moments of falling to our knees and crying our eyes out, His power is made perfect.

Embrace grace that defies all pleasures the world can offer. He is there through it all.



Third Monday

Reflections on Scripture by Katie Mehrlich

Psalm 54:4

Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my Life.

God has been teaching me, and by His grace alone I am beginning to learn some things. I'm humbled by the things He is showing me that I *thought* I already knew. And I am humbled by His comfort, assurance, strength, and love. This is what God has especially been teaching me this semester:

Sometimes you're in the dark. The dark, though, only trains you to *shine brighter*.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

At the beginning of the school year, I was feeling very defeated. I don't know that I've ever felt more weak. I would wake up in the morning and pray, asking God for strength. I felt like I couldn't get up otherwise. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 has held meaning for me since the first time I read it. But never as much as it does now. God will give you the strength that you need. Notice the "you need" in that promise. None of us are strong enough to get through this crazy, beautiful life in this crazy, terrible world. But we don't have to be..and I don't want to be. If Christ's power is made perfect in weakness, I'm more than happy to be weak on my own. Because though I am weak on my own, I am strong in Christ.

So don't waste that strength. God has a plan for all of us:

Jeremiah 29: 11-13

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

God has a plan for you and He hears you. His plan is good..always:

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Psalms 25: 15

My eyes are ever towards the Lord, for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

Psalms 32:7

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Even in the dark..especially in the dark, be a light for Him!

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Third Tuesday

Taking Advice from Other Believers *by Nick Shelley*

Everyone comes upon occasions in their lifetime where serious, life-altering decisions need to be made. We probably face more of those decisions now as college students, than we have in years of our lives leading up to this point. However, this is not the Old Testament; God does not clearly direct us in a spoken word along our life journey. We are required to be observant listeners to hear Him and find his signs.

So through these strenuous decisions, we often turn to our friends and peers for unbiased opinions and advice, which is very important to engage in. We should be willing to consult with other Christians about our decisions, and talk to our friends who share the same values as we do in God. Proverbs 11:14 reads, “Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” There is no shame in vulnerability, as humans we all are vulnerable and fall short of worthiness. When we help each other through these scenarios, we keep our basis of decision at the values of Christianity and draw ourselves closer to God. We are able to provide situational analyses through viewpoints that may not be apparent to others. And most importantly, we help each other become better Christians.

Fourth Wednesday

Reflection on Lent *by Brett Hutson*

Lent to me is at the very center of Christianity, as it shows us the power of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many people look at this time as just simply a time where we give up items such as caffeine, junk food, or other external things and lose sight of what this season is truly about. This is a time for us to show our faith, repentance, and sacrifice for God. We do not do this just externally but also internally as we search to find the true meaning in our lives and relationship with God. The meaning of Lent is found more in what we gain than give up.

Jesus demonstrated this when he fasted from food and water for 40 days in the wilderness; it was not a religious ritual, it was a time where He showed us through His trials and temptations how He trusted God and was nourished by God. By focusing on God's strengths and what they are providing for us, we gain more than we lose.

So when thinking of different things to give up for Lent, think about whatever habits or things that build walls between you and God. Lent is not a time where we look at what we can do for Christ; it's about looking deeply at what he has done for us and finding ways to become closer to Him.

Fourth Thursday

Reflection on Micah 6:8 by *Emily Gipson*

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you? To act
justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly
with your God.” – Micah 6:8

Living out our Christian faith is not always simple. We often come across complex issues and all sorts of paradigms and paradoxes that confuse us and cause us to question what the Lord is asking us to do and what our ultimate purpose is on Earth. We get so bogged down with trying to do what is “right” and “good” that we forget that our ability to be “right” and “good” is not the reason Jesus died for us. It is also not, as this passage points out, what God asks of us when we live out our faith. God doesn’t require us to have everything figured out and always be at the top of our game. All He asks is that we are just, merciful, and in relationship with Him. The way that looks in people’s lives will inevitable vary, but the foundation of how the Lord wants His people to live won’t.

How can you more actively acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God?



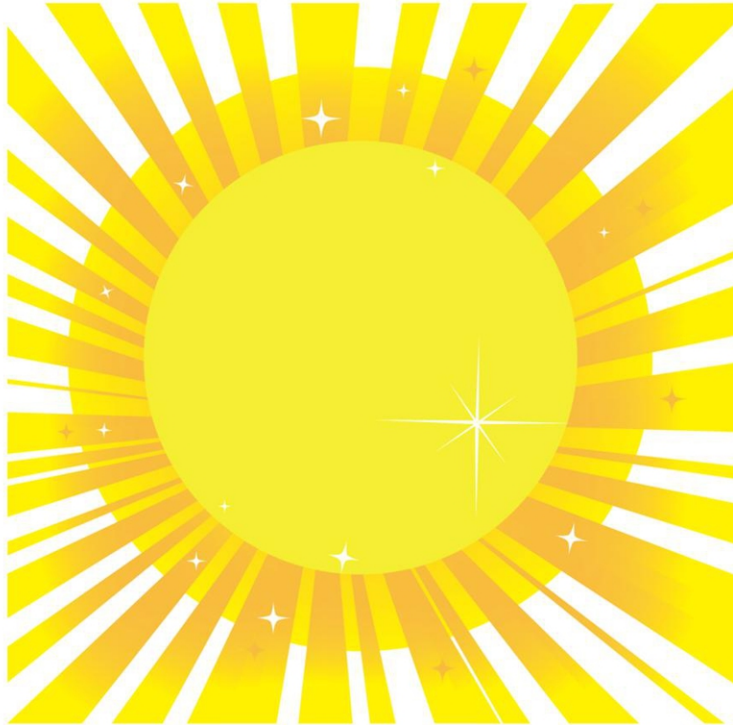
Fourth Friday

Tomorrow *by Emily Hiland*

If you're anything like me, you love to watch movies and find any possible free time to do just that. Not only do you love to watch movies, but you find some sort of weird connection to the movies that makes you want to watch them over and over and over again. As a child, for me, that movie was Annie. I loved watching the loveable red-haired girl sing and dance around New York. I would sing those songs to the point that I honestly believed I was going to play Annie when I got older. So, when the new Annie came out, I was super excited. Obviously, it wasn't exactly like the old one, but the same loveable songs were still there. One of the most known songs from the movie, "Tomorrow", was always my song of choice when I wanted to show my family my "skills" that with a five-year-old confidence I believed I had. But, when I was sitting in the theater, I found myself find new meaning in the song.

For those of you that don't know the song, some of the lyrics say, "The sun will come out, tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow, there'll be sun. Just thinking about tomorrow, clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow, till there's none." Something hit me while listening to those words for the millionth time. Whenever I am upset, or feel like nothing is going right, it doesn't help to sit and wallow in self-pity. Instead, I should look forward to the good that is going to come out of being able to live another day. This follows a lesson the Bible

teaches us. In Psalm 30:5, it says, “Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning.” God never promised us that this life was going to be easy. Instead, He promises that He will be there for us through it all. So, instead of feeling like the world is ending when something bad happens, we should take it as a learning opportunity. We need to realize that God will never give us more than we can handle, and that after the pain and the struggle, joy will come along with the morning.



Fourth Saturday

Reflection on Matthew 6:25-34 by *Hannah Rucker*

Before I begin to talk about this scripture, let me tell you something. I am a HUGE planner complete with daily and weekly to-do lists. I even have ongoing to-do list revolving around post-graduation plans. Reading this passage really convicted me because my tendency to need to plan everything can keep me from trusting God to provide and keeps me from being present today. Look at the amazing world we live in! In this passage Jesus makes us sound silly for worrying about necessities like food or clothes because God takes care of those things for the birds and the lilies, and we are much more valuable than they are. God knows you need food and a roof. Stressing about it will get you nowhere. Rather than finding our comfort for the future in planning we should find it in trusting God to provide. In vs. 34 God reminds us not to waste time worrying about the future. If we are not worried about tomorrow it is so much easier to be present today. I catch myself wasting time and rearranging priorities *because I am worried about tomorrow* even though I can do nothing about it today, and it keeps me from being present. By trusting God to take care of tomorrow (or a job and a home after graduation) then I am not only able to invest more in other people, but I am more at peace and more thankful today.

Fourth Monday

Reflection on 2 Timothy 4:17 by Eden Embree

In this passage, Paul is talking about how even when no one came to support him the Lord was there and gave him strength. I've read this passage many times and stopped processing the verse at precisely that point. I interpreted this verse as meaning, "even if you don't have friends or family with you, the Lord is with you and strengthens you, so be happy/fulfilled/joyful/etc." I've come to the realization, however, that this interpretation is a selfish one focused on what God has to offer ME. I don't believe that interpretation is correct at all. If you keep reading the very next phrase says, "so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth." It does not say, "so that I won't be sad and lonely." The Lord stood by Paul and strengthened him SO THAT Christ's message could be fully proclaimed to those who needed to hear it. This interpretation of the verse shifts the focus from us onto God and his purpose. The Lord gives us strength, so that his love and message of redemption can be spread, not so we can be comfortable and happy. This verse challenges me to keep my focus on God and keep a kingdom mindset. I hope that you meditate on this verse and let it challenge you to do the same.

Fourth Tuesday

Trust in Him *by Cassidy Smith*

Some days we overlook the true blessing it is to have the grace of God. When we become upset or lost in confusing situations, it's easy to lose sight of what is important. We need to trust in our Lord and know that he is always there holding our hand. James 1:5-6 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind." I find comfort in these verses quite often because I get caught up in the rush of schoolwork and activities, forgetting that the best de-stressor is trusting in what God has planned. The verses state that God gives generously and what better testimony is there than God giving us his only son. During this time of Lent, we not only focus on the grace of God, but the sacrifice Jesus made to enable the children of God to be forgiven of our sins. So whatever is on your mind, confess to God because he finds no faults. Trust in Him with all your heart, because if you don't, you will be tossed around like the waves of the sea. Jesus sacrificed his life so we could be forgiven our sins, and it is important that we acknowledge that sacrifice every day.

Fifth Wednesday

Reflection on Romans 12:1-2 by *Daniel Huckstep*

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” –Romans 12:1-2

I love this passage that Paul wrote because it lays out how we are supposed to live our lives. Jesus Christ himself came down from heaven to earth and offered up himself as a sacrifice. We are also called to be living sacrifices here on earth, and this one way we can worship God. Then the passage goes on to say that we should not live like the rest of society does, but instead when we see the beauty of God, it transforms our minds. Our minds control our actions. God wants us to not only change our actions, but our minds so that we can focus our thoughts in him. With our transformed minds, we then can determine what God’s plan is for our lives. God’s plans for our lives are perfect for us. They may not be what we always want, but the plans will allow us to be that living sacrifice that God wants us to be.

Fifth Thursday

Worry *by Zach Chapman*

As human beings, we worry. We worry about jobs, school, relationships, money. It comes natural. We usually don't think about it; we really just want to get on the other side and not worry anymore.

In Philippians 4:6, we're told not to worry about anything.

Take some time, ten seconds, one minute, however long it takes, to think about what life would look like if you never worried.

Now, consider that's how we're actually called to live.

Crazy, right? But it's spelled out simply for us. We're not just called to stop worrying, we're called to, "instead, pray about everything." Verses 6 and 7 follow in this way:

"Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

But why give it up? Even if we're promised peace, is there a concrete reason to drop it all?

1 Peter 5:7 tells us to give up our worries because of how much God cares about us.

God cares about you. Intensely. Enough to want all your worry so that you can completely follow what He has in store. Enough to replace all your worry with a perfect peace. Enough to be instead guarded through our lives, to be protected from worry instead of inviting it in.

So when we're face with worry, give it up for peace, not because it will be easy or because it will solve everything, but because God cares so much that He wants all of it.



Fifth Friday

Are You Too Busy For Jesus? By Steven Freck

“Hi! How are you?”

“Busy.”

Walking through the hallways, this is a conversation that you will often hear muttered as you watch people speed walk from one class to another. The reality is that as college students, we are very busy people. We juggle classes, jobs, relationships, extracurricular activities, social media, and about a million other things.

For many of us, including myself, our badge of ‘Busyness’ has become a source of pride and recognition. We enjoy the bragging rights that come with taking on a load of 18 credit hours, being on the leadership team of 5 organizations, working 20 hours a week, and being the nicest person on campus. However, at what point does our busyness become an obstacle in our relationship with God? At what point does it become an idol?

Hagaii 1:5-9 says *“Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.”*

Think about everything that you are involved with. Are you sowing a great deal? Now think about the consequences of those things, with which you are involved. How much are you harvesting?

Throughout this season of Lent, take some time to evaluate all of the commitments in your life. Is one of those commitments time with Jesus Christ? Is your time being spent on things that are ultimately growing the Kingdom of God? What practices do you need to begin during this Lenten season and which ones do you need to end?

Remember that there is nothing that you can do that will ever make our Heavenly Father love you more than He does right now in this moment.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 BUSY	3 BUSY	4 BUSY	5 BUSY	6 BUSY
7 BUSY	8 Election Day BUSY	9 BUSY	10 BUSY	11 BUSY
12 BUSY	13 BUSY	14 Veterans Day BUSY	15 BUSY	16 BUSY
17 BUSY	18 BUSY	19 BUSY	20 BUSY	21 BUSY
22 BUSY	23 BUSY	24 BUSY	25 BUSY	26 BUSY
27 BUSY	28 Thanksgiving Day BUSY	29 BUSY	30 BUSY	31 BUSY
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Fifth Saturday

Let It Rain by Jera Shaw

Psalms 72:6

“May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, Like showers that water the earth.”

You've heard “let it rain” in songs, scripture, and religious conversations... but what if the phrase means more than asking God for droplets of water? What if the heavenly rain is meant for you to go to a higher place in God? For plants, rain is used for growth, but that requires patience and care. For mammals, including humans, the flood zone is *not* the place to be. When the downpour comes, you move to the next level of solid ground. So how does this science relate to your spiritual journey? Well, since God is the Living Water, He *wants* to water your soul and spend the time and effort on your growth; however, He may need to use a few rainstorms. Being wet usually makes people uncomfortable, which leads to a change... whether it be a change of clothes or change of attitude. Staying in the comfort zone forever does *not* strengthen your trust in God. "Let it rain" literally means that we want God to fill us to overflowing with His spirit. But now, ask God to take you higher, closer to Him. Change me, Oh God, to be more like You!



Fifth Monday

One Day At A Time *by Aaron Taylor*

“Jesus sent these twelve out and commanded them, “Don’t go among the Gentiles or into a Samaritan city. Go instead to the lost sheep, the people of Israel.” – Matthew 10:5-6

In Matthew 10: 5-6, Jesus tells his disciples NOT to go to the Gentiles but instead to the lost sheep of Israel. I’ve read the gospel of Matthew many times but a few months ago when I read this passage it hit me REALLY hard. Why would Jesus tell his disciples to stay away from the Gentiles? We know that salvation is for everyone, so what was Jesus’ purpose behind this? Simply put, he was taking things one day at a time. Jesus was giving his disciples the information that they needed to perform God’s will at that certain time. We know this to be true to due to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 28: 19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” It’s easier said than done, but God wants us to take things one step at a time. I mean, later in Matthew 10 Jesus tells his disciples not to worry about what say even because their words will come from the Spirit when they need them. God always gives us what we need, precisely when we need it. We live for an amazing, omnipotent God. So remember: one day at a time.

Let’s Pray: Dear Almighty God, thank you for always taking care of us when we need it most, and thank you for always being there when we call out for help. Fill us with your Holy Spirit daily, and instill upon us the wisdom and guidance we need to go throughout today. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray; Amen.

Fifth Tuesday

Connect The Dot by *Olivia Jongkind*

As a child, one of my favorite things to do was the “Connect the Dot” activities, the ones where you connect the 1 to the 2, 2 to 3, so on and so forth. Eventually you somehow end up with a picture that you never imagined when making the first line.

I always thought I would grow out of making the starfish, the flower, and the puppy. Well, I haven’t. Granted, the pictures I see now aren’t the animals or the childish icons; they are God’s plans for my life. God makes a beautiful picture out of all of our experiences put together, the good and the bad. He places certain people in your life, forces you to make a pit stop at Taco Bell at midnight just because you “had a hankering for it”, or makes that one song play over and over again on the radio until you finally understand how it applies to your life (after you become annoyed with that opening beat of course).

Jeremiah 1:5 says “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart.” God has a plan for us before we are even born (how awesome?!). Take a moment and reflect on how God has connected the dots in your life. How has He used a single statement to change your day, month, or summer? How has He used a single worship song on that one Sunday to show you what your future occupation will be? Praise God for every experience, the joyous and the horrible. The

piece of art He creates by connecting the dots will be breathtaking, I promise.



Sixth Wednesday

James 1:17 Reflection by *Aaron Taylor*

“Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” – James 1:17 (ESV)

I remember the first moment that I realized that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was also a gift of grace from God. I had an “Aha!” moment, finally realizing that this changes EVERYTHING. As the passage in James states, every good gift comes from the Father, and what Jesus had done was the greatest gift of all, the perfect gift! On that day when Jesus rose from the grave the world developed a new sense of hope; as well as a compelling urge to tell the world of this beautiful truth that is the resurrection of Christ. Therefore knowing this truth, and realizing that every gift comes from God completely undeserved, we are called to live a life of thankfulness. I spend most of my days within lent putting myself in the mindset of Jesus’ way to the cross, but at the same time attempting to live in the humility and thankfulness that is his gift to us, salvation and freedom from our sins against God. I continuously pray that you also join Jesus as he leads you to the cross time and time again.

Sixth Thursday

Reflection on Isaiah 1:18 *by Craig Westberry*

Isaiah 1:18 (NIV) “Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

We are all sinners. Each of us has committed treason against God and His laws. In Romans 6:23 you may read that “the wages of sin is death” so therefore we are all deserving of the second death, death of the spirit. Human depravity and the sinful nature run deep in each of us. We want to rebel. But God’s story does not stop at a hopeless note such as that. In His mercy, grace, and love, God the Father provided the way to life through Jesus the Son. We now have access to grace that can cleanse us of our sin. Though they stain deep, as deep as our blood, His blood is enough to remove its deathly consequence. And God provides us with the Holy Spirit, who allows us to walk as Jesus walked. With that, we are able to move closer to righteousness and closer to what humanity was meant to be. During this time, reflect on what sins are keeping you from a closer relationship with Jesus. Then remember that grace is not far away from you. Lift up your face, for the Lord loves you. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Sixth Friday

Identity *by Emily Hiland*

How many times have you looked at the world around you and gotten your identity from the earthly things? I think it is really hard not to. In this day and age, media is all around us telling us how we should act and who WE are. The expectation for physical appearance is what we see on a magazine cover. Being smart is based on test scores and letter grades. Relationships have to be defined in order for society to appreciate them. But, why should we let the world tell us who we are? We should be finding our identity in Christ.

God made us exactly in his image and we are absolutely perfect in His eyes. God has bigger plans for us than what this world can offer us. In Matthew 6:19-21, it says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We should be working to please the Creator, rather than the world around us. All the earthly stuff is nice, but will any of that matter once eternity comes? Lent is a time to give something up. But, it shouldn't be something that doesn't mean anything to you. Instead, give up something that is keeping all of your treasures from being stored in Heaven. Maybe it is a bad habit, maybe it is a negative influence,

or maybe it is guilt that you have felt for longer than you can remember.

Take this time to put yourself on God's team. Would you rather have you and everyone in the world against God... or you and God against the world?



Sixth Saturday

Psalm 77:11-12 by *Eden Embree*

“I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.”

Today, the devo is pretty simple: just do what the verse says. Take time to remember what God has done for you specifically in your life. Think about it, pray about it, journal about it, meditate on it, and be thankful. Be encouraged to go out into the world and live your life for Christ because of all of the mighty deeds he has done for you to get you to where you are today.



Sixth Monday

Reflections on Philippians 4:6-7 by Emily Gipson

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:6-7

Life is exciting and magical, but also, at the same time, confusing and so unbelievably stressful. From figuring out what, if any, college to attend, to deciding what you want to do and who you want to be after you graduate, to determining where to live, what church to go to, and what relationships to build, there is a virtually infinite number of stressful situations that you can, and will, encounter in life. We far too often get overwhelmed by this continual stream of stress and try to cope with and eliminate this anxiety ourselves without ever consulting God, the One who has the ultimate ability to take it all away and care for us. This passage is a reminder that the God doesn't only care, but He cares about *everything* and wants us to come to Him with all that we are dealing with, so that he can present us with the purest and greatest form of peace, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding. This peace is far greater than any anxiety-coping mechanism we could ever construct because it comes from our Creator who knows us so much more deeply and intimately than we know ourselves. How can you more actively present your anxieties to God and live in the peace of God, which transcends all understanding?

Sixth Tuesday

Always Glorify God *by Michael Lynch*

When calling to mind faith in God, I can't help but think of the stories of Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Mary, the apostles, and many others. The story I want to share with you all though, is the story of Job. The Book of Job challenges the way of thinking that if you suffer, it was punishment from God for your sin. Job is a good man who was wealthy and had a great family. The story begins by God allowing all of Job's children to be killed, and his livestock was all stolen from him. Satan had predicted that Job would curse the Lord for what happened, instead, Job responded by falling to the ground and worshiping God. Then Job is infected with sores all over his body. Job pleads with God for an answer to why he has suffered. God eventually does come in order to show Job that he is too small to understand and comprehend God's plan. Job admits that he is wrong to question God, and his faith is rewarded by the Lord giving him double of what he had before.

From this story we can take that no matter how bad things get, we should continue to glorify God and not turn our back on Him. We cannot understand how or why bad things happen to good people, but we can accept God's blessings as well as the suffering, knowing that God will be there to reward us for our faith in Him.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. By faith we

understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

-Hebrews 11: 1, 3, 6



Seventh Wednesday

Reflection on Acts 1:8 *by Rachel Taller*

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 NIV

Witnessing can be a terrifying thing; wondering and worrying how your message will be taken. This is where faith comes in. Faith is believing in God’s truth and acting on it, despite your feelings. A little courage and knowing that God will provide is all you need to share the gospel. Sometimes we feel as though we must go to foreign countries to witness. If you have that calling, then that is fantastic! I will be perfectly honest and say that I do not have that calling. However, God can use me here in Indiana to witness to nonbelievers. It is all a part of his master plan.

I encourage you to pray and see where God is calling you to go. He may call you on a short or long trip across the globe. He may be calling you to simply stop at your neighbor’s place. Whatever the case, listen for God’s instructions and have faith that he will provide.

Because I feel that God is calling me to stay here and witness, I make sure to say an extra prayer for the missionaries around the world. May the goodness and truth about our Savior be heard around the world and everything that has breath praise his name forever!

HAVE
FAITH

Seventh Thursday

Passing Away by Joe Krall

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever. (1 John 2:16-17)

At the very start of Lent, I rise and go forward to receive the ashes. I am marked with a cross of ash upon my forehead. I am told “You are dust, and to dust you will return.”

Why do we do this? Is it a Christian virtue to be obsessed with death, to be obsessed with the end of it all? I read the Scripture from 1 John above, and my first thought is, “God does not care for my daily flesh-and-blood struggles. I shouldn’t either. I should rise above it, suck it up, and wait for heaven.”

This is a lie.

In fact, God has incredible, earth-moving, world-changing love for you.

In the Scripture above, John is saying is the world will pass away. What is “the world”? The world isn’t me and you.

The world is me versus you.

The world is you and I in our selfishness and our lust for power. Our desire to kill, break, and put down, our incessant search to gorge and satisfy ourselves at the cost of our neighbors, our desire to be our own gods, dependent on no one.

This is not of Love. This is not of God.

And – thank God – this hate, this death-in-life, this sin . . . all this will pass away. Dust we are, and to dust we will return. The weight of our sin will crumble into dust.

But the funny thing is, the dust itself doesn't go away. God takes our dust and makes beautiful things out of us. He takes what we meant for evil and makes it for good. He is shaping a new world. He is bringing heaven to earth. And He calls us to be part of it.

And our choice, during Lent and for the rest of our lives, is whether or not we will follow Him. Will we turn away from the love of God? Or will we follow Him into this earth, this wonderful, marvelous life we are given, and do His will? Will we love our neighbors? Will we give up our selfish desires for God? Will we show love to “the least of these”?

God's will is Love. And Love alone never fails.

Let us pray.



Seventh Friday

There is Darkness *by Lang Brownlee*

“From noon until three in the afternoon the whole earth was dark. At three, Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani,” which means, “My God, my God, why have you left me?” (Mark 15:33-34, CEB)

Earlier this winter, the power went off in our neighborhood. The late afternoon dimness suddenly got a lot darker! Usual shadows were now unexpected black, and there was a growing coldness in the house without the comfort of the furnace. I lit some candles. I put on another sweatshirt.

This season of Lent is coming to a close. This Friday called ‘Good’ gives attention to the torture and death of an innocent man. It culminates in this stark human reality: There are times as cold as a corpse. There are times as dark as a tomb.

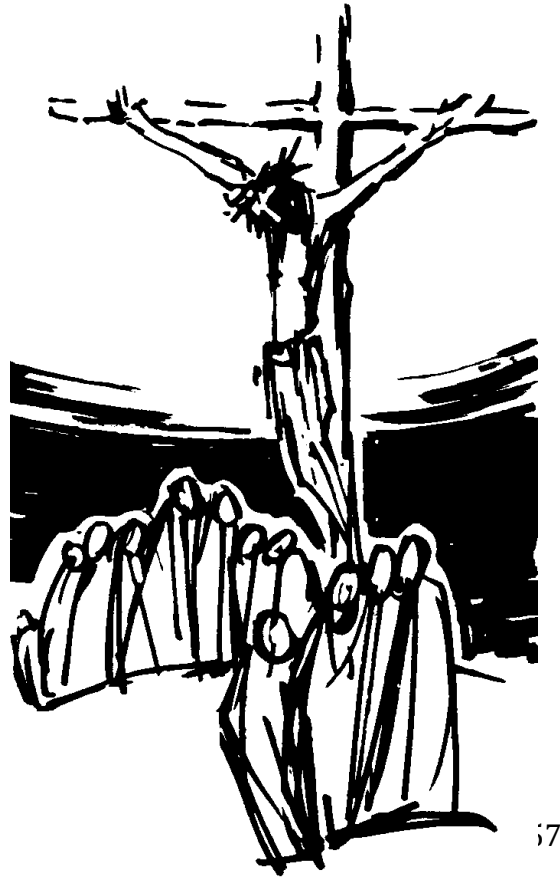
What do you think Jesus felt? Abandoned? Scared? Suffering and pain? Cold and darkness? The one whose intimate relationship with God was that of Son to Father cried out, *Where are you, God? Why did you leave?*

Before the brightness and warmth of Easter sunrise, you and I need to stay with this moment Jesus faced, to reflect upon its meaning and power, if just for a bit. By doing so, we remember that the pain, suffering, isolation,

brokenness, and fear that we humans have faced through the centuries was truly known by this one Jesus. And we as people of faith attest that all of this was, and is, known by God, too, through this event on the Friday we call 'Good.'

Jesus profoundly felt God's absence. We may, at times, feel the same and ask God, *Why have you left me?*

In the cold, in the dark – we wait. 'Wait' – a Lenten discipline at the end. And in three days, God does answer with a resounding: *I'm Here!*



Seventh Saturday

Called to Disciple Everywhere by Gwen Debaun

Acts 1: 8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth.”

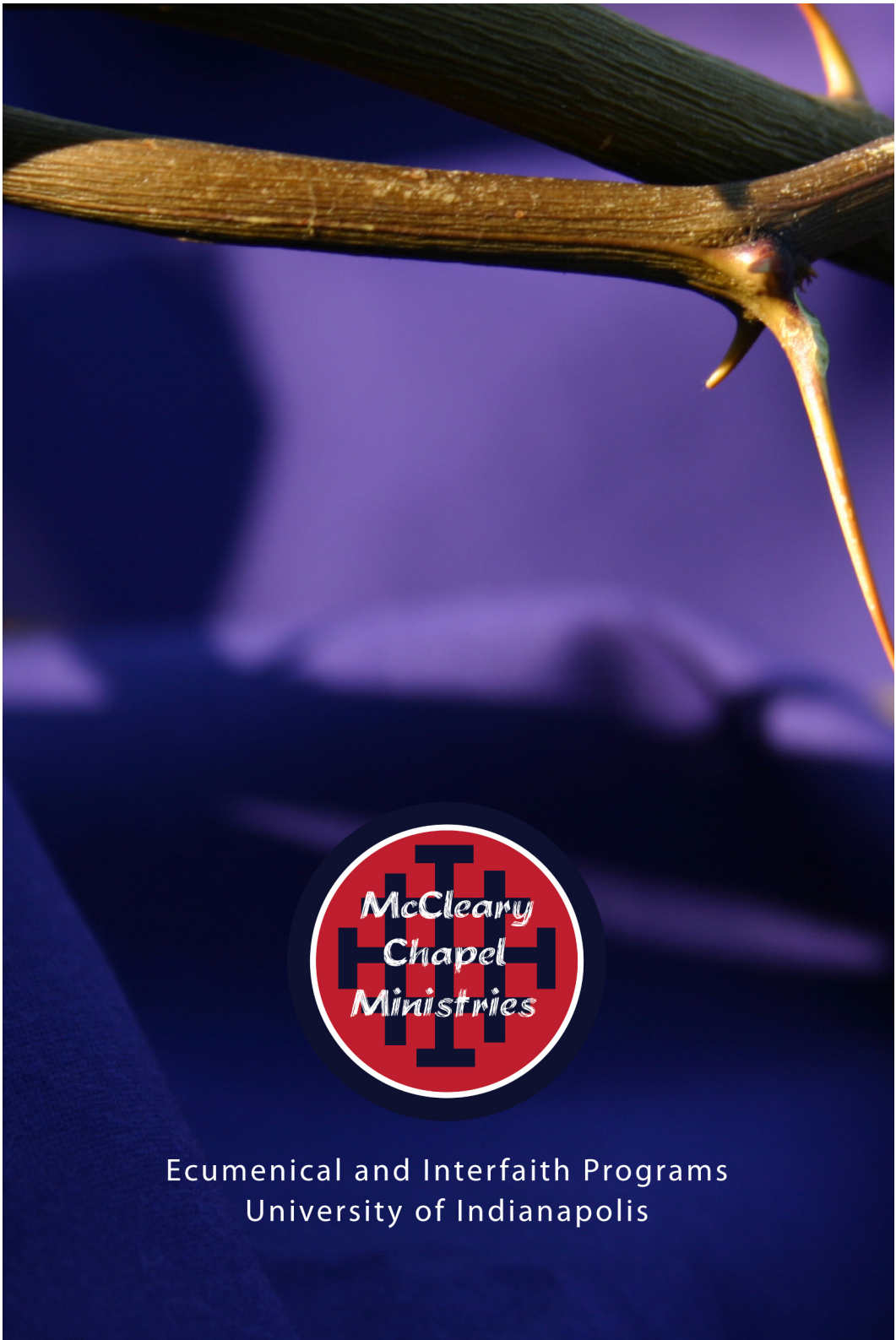
Think of your everyday routine. You get up, eat breakfast, get coffee, go to class, sit in the same seat you’ve sat in since the beginning year, eat lunch with the same people since the beginning of the year, only talk to the same people in class and walk the same ones too. It’s called a routine.

Well what if you broke it. Here’s why.

We’re called to be disciples. Not sitting on the couch, letting people walk by us, but disciples: actively seeking Christ and actively sharing His Gospel.

In Acts 1:8 we are called to spread the good news and act like a disciple *everywhere* we go; on our way to class or work, while we’re in class or at our job, and even internationally. The call to be a disciple doesn’t happen only within the hour services in the chapel during the week or on Sundays. It’s an *everyday* event. So, the next time you’re considering ‘paying it forward’ do so! Imagine the ripple effect it could bring, or even, talking to the person behind you in line, or inviting someone to come and eat with you who normally sits alone. The options are endless and all it takes is a little change.

NOTES:



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