

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY



**THE GLORY**  
**of GOD**

**JOURNEY INTO HIS PRESENCE & LIGHT**  
**A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL**

Lent 2016 begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10 and ends on  
Thursday, March 24

From the Midshipmen Community and Chaplain Staff  
Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD

# Community of Faith

Shalom!

**W**e are continually pleased and amazed at the diverse and excellent talents of the Midshipmen community at the Naval Academy. We are blessed with beautiful worship experiences every Sunday. Thoughtful and faithful sermons from inspired and inspiring Chaplains and soaring music from organ, piano and choir; indeed His presence and light is so real!

In my humble opinion, the best expression of faith from our Midshipmen is collected here. Our Midshipmen usually don't wear their piety for others to see but when it comes to writing these Lenten devotionals they absolutely shine!

I hope you will enjoy and be blessed with these daily devotionals. In these pages you will find stories, insights, hopes and dreams shared by the authors. Read their words, pray their prayers and allow yourself to walk a little further down the path God has set before you. This year's booklet will be available online.

Remain blessed!

Chaplain Johnson

## Preface: What is Lent?

**L**ent is first and foremost about the gospel making its way deeper into our lives. These devotionals were written with the intention to inspire your walk with Christ. Each day consists of Scripture readings, meditations and prayers—all aimed toward directing your heart to God and deepening your understanding of the events that led to Easter.

To put it simply: Lent is about Jesus.

On the Christian calendar, Lent (from an Old English word meaning “Spring”) is the forty days beginning on Ash Wednesday and leading up to Easter Sunday. Sundays themselves are not counted in these forty days, as they are generally set aside as days of renewal and celebration (“mini Easters” of sorts). When Sunday comes each week, feast on these great truths with much joy and celebration in your heart. Lent 2016 begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10 and ends on Thursday, March 24. Lent is only 40 days. However, you will find here devotionals to inspire you until Easter!

Did you ever wonder why the number forty carries great biblical significance? Think back to the Old Testament. Noah and company in the ark watched rain fall for forty days and forty nights. Jesus fasted forty days in the wilderness. Moses was up on Mount Sinai for forty days before receiving the Ten Commandments. The Israelites wandered around the desert for forty years. A woman carries her developing child for roughly 40 weeks before new life comes forth from her womb. Forty days, weeks or years have been used by God to represent a period of trial, testing, and preparation.

Likewise, Lent is a forty day season of preparation and repentance during which we anticipate the death (Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter Sunday) of Jesus. It is this very preparation coupled with repentance that helps us grasp the significance of the crucifixion and gives us a deep and powerful longing for the resurrection and the joy of Easter.

As the title of this devotional suggests, Lent is a journey into His Presence and Light.

We hope and pray these devotionals will be God’s tool to allow each of us to meditate on our sin and weakness while looking to Jesus as our perfect Savior. The journey of Lent helps us immerse ourselves in His Holy Presence that it might increase our appreciation of Easter and deepen our love for Jesus.

May we mourn the darkness in our hearts and rejoice in the light of God who came into the world to save us!

May the grace, love, and peace of Christ be with you, my brothers and sisters, as we take this journey together with our eyes fixed on Jesus. May we emerge from this journey into His Presence and Light!

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Scripture: Job 42:5-6

**T**he depravity and fragility of our state as human beings should naturally drive us to comprehend the necessity of Jesus' power in our world. More so, it urges us to witness and respond to the brilliant beauty of God's power and love since the beginning. All creation shouts the humbling and eye opening truth: we are "dust, and to dust we shall return!" Our lives are marked by the sweat of the brow and toiling of the soil; the same soil from which we came and will return. Yet all this was necessary for the glory of God we find leading up to his resurrection.

When Job underwent great suffering for a season he was given the opportunity to have his heart and eyes opened to hear and receive from the Lord. When God revealed but a small fraction of His glory to Job (Job 41), the response from Job is sobering and perhaps what we would expect to see in ourselves upon hearing the voice of the Almighty. His ears had heard but now his "eyes have seen You." The response from Job produces an image of nakedness and awe before God: "I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Many of us have moments where we might be able to relate to Job, falling flat on our faces in awe of the glory of our God. We know we are underserving of His grace. Yet, like the Israelites, even with this understanding we quickly to reorient the rightful praise of our Creator to the created; seeking glory for our mortal bodies. This is what Jesus encouraged his followers to stay away from. He did not want them behaving like some of the Pharisees of their time who enjoyed the achievement of their own adoration.

Jesus knew how easy it was for man to hunger after his own glory; so much so that he continually reminded his closest followers how the "least of these" was greatest in the kingdom and they become like children, full of awe for their creator. As Christ was not only speaking to followers in His age, we must continually remind ourselves of God's glory for our own good.

What we fail to comprehend is that God's glory and our own satisfaction go hand in hand. The more time we spend in the Word, the more we understand that we are dust and that our life eternally is a testament to God's abundant glory.

**Prayer:** God, thank you for Your brilliant glory that is demonstrated completely by Your love. Help us as dust to take joy in the power of Your Son Jesus and the glory He has in our lives. We know that many times we are the Pharisees who crave our own adoration but we know that we are full of the most joy when we delight in You. Reorient our hearts in this season towards the joy we have in Jesus who has raised us from dust to communion with You. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*David Sicher - BCM*

*Class of 2017 - Franklin County, VA*

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Scripture: Exodus 5:10-23

**T**he passage in Exodus highlights a critical point in Moses' time leading the people of Israel. As a young man, Moses saw the suffering of the Hebrews and tried to take matters into his own hands, killing an Egyptian who was beating one of the Israelites. As so often happens when we try to take matters into our own hands, Moses' self-reliant attempt backfired and Moses had to flee for his life. Later, God called Moses to leadership and Moses' fear of his past failures caused him to try multiple times to dodge God's call with excuses of inadequacy – "No one will believe me!", "I can't speak to inspire a crowd", and finally "Please Lord, send anyone else but me!" When Moses finally takes his first step in faith and obedience Pharaoh not only rejects Moses but punishes the people Moses is trying to free for Moses' request to let God's people go. Moses must have felt like his worst fears were confirmed. Surely if he was good enough his efforts wouldn't have blown up in his face and his past failures wouldn't continue to haunt his present.

We all know how Moses' story continues from this low point. What must have seemed to be a derailing disaster to Moses at the time was but a momentary pause in God's work through him. Fortunately, God promises He will never leave or forsake us but will cause all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His Purpose.

Unfortunately for Moses and for us, God makes no promises that the path He calls us to will handle with care our ego, our pride or our reputation. God will work through us and make big things happen but He will rarely let it happen without our humanity showing in the process.

Although it's rarely the path we would choose, God receives the most glory when we can look at something incredible that God has done in our lives and recognize that we cannot take the credit for it. As Chaplain Purvis always says "Your past shapes you but it doesn't define you." What a blessing that even when our tarnished history resurfaces in our redeemed life God can do and does amazing things through His kids when they trust Him!

**Prayer:** Father, thank you so much for being patient with Your children as they learn to walk in Your footsteps on redeemed legs. Thank you that our past mistakes, our difficult situations, even our weird little quirks are both forgiven by Your Son's sacrifice and integrated beautifully into Your plan and used for Your glory. Thank you for loving us too much to let us keep our selfish pride or try to reclaim our independence to do Your work by our own power. Guide us in our sanctification journey and keep us close to Your side. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Laura Stromback*

*Navigators, Protestant Chapel Choir*

*Class of 2016 - Chandler, AZ*

## Friday, February 12, 2016 (Morning)

Scripture: Psalm 91:1-2

**H**e who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust."

Psalm 91 is a psalm of exquisite beauty. Rather than looking at short segments we believe it should be read in its entirety to gain a full appreciation. It has been set to music in various forms. Mendelssohn used verses of this Psalm in his Oratorio, *Elijah*.

A contemporary use of this psalm is *On Eagles Wings*, written by Michael Joncas, a Roman Catholic Priest. Indeed, a demonstration of the universality of music and the Psalms in our common Christian universe.

We were privileged and inspired, as we heard this piece two days before writing this devotion, at the memorial service for a close relative, song by his grandson.

It is also strikingly done on occasions by our own Protestant Chapel Chorale. It was a favorite of a chorale member who found the gift of Eternal Life several years ago.

During this season of Lent we believe there is a dichotomy—though we are penitent and reflective of our sins, we need not ask for anything. We are redeemed by the grace of our Lord. Redemption has been given to us, free to all who have faith and believe.

He is our refuge and fortress. Therefore--

Rejoice, in the LORD always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Philippians 4:4 NIV

**Prayer:** Our Father Who Art in Heaven,  
We Praise You, We Adore You.  
We Have Sinned Against You in Thought, Word and Deed.  
We Give Thanks for Redemption Through Your Son,  
That Those Who Have Faith and Believe  
Will Receive the Gift of Eternal Life.  
Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*John and Jeanette Chambers*  
*Protestant Chapel Chorale*

## Friday, February 12, 2016 (Evening)

Scripture: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Exodus 6:1-13; Acts 7:35-42

**O**n this Friday in Lent, we meditate on scripture centered on trusting that the Lord is more than enough for our insufficiencies. He gives us strength that we know we don't have on our own; He makes the impossible possible; He gives us the power to conquer our enemies. When we rest in Him, no harm shall befall us; nothing dangerous shall come near us (Ps. 91:10). He is our shelter, our shade, our refuge, and our fortress (Ps. 91: 1-2).

Resting in Him, we have no choice but to be used for unimaginably great things. Since we cannot do anything without Him, He gives us what we need to complete His will. No matter how stubborn we are, or how unworthy we may see ourselves of His great tasks, He will see his plans through. If we are slow in speech, His strong hand will supplement our lacking (Ex. 6:10-12). He will ensure that we are given His authority to carry out His will, regardless of our current earthly authority (Acts 7:35).

When we see Him working in our lives and using us for the furthering of the Gospel, give thanks and rejoice! Even if we perceive that we end up in a worse place than when we started, praise Him that we are being used for His will (Acts 6:40-42). Better is a day in His courts than a thousand elsewhere (Ps. 84:10).

**Prayer:** Lord God, we call upon you and you will answer; You will be with us in distress; we will honor you; with length of days you will fill us with your saving power. In you we trust, and we supplicate for discernment of your will and for a listening heart. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Christian Forbush*

*Roman Catholic Community*

*Class of 2017 - Colorado Springs, CO*

Wednesday, February 13, 2016

Scripture: Romans 4:1-8

**W**e live in a works oriented society. We like to believe that the more we do or is “right” the more likely we are to get that promotion, to earn a better ranking, to have the good work reciprocated. But, what we often find is that no matter how hard we try, the works either do not produce the results we would like or we cannot even manage to be the good person we want to be. We spend so much time focusing on trying to “do right,” that we fail to notice that we have put God on the back burner. It is not necessarily intentional, but we say to God, “I believe in you, but I don’t trust you to take care of me.” In reality, this is contradictory.

When God promises Abraham that he would be the father of more children than there are stars in the sky, Abraham had a choice: either believe that God was faithful to His word, or reject God’s plan and take control of his own life. Abraham takes the leap of faith and believes. Due to his faith, verse 2 says that Abraham was justified by his faith, which means he was made righteous. Abraham did not have to do good works, he did not have to go through any rituals... he did not have to do a single thing, but believe. We so often take the beauty of this truth for granted because we try so hard to make ourselves righteous, when the whole time we could just turn to God, offer up ourselves to Him, and believe.

During Lent, people often take the chance to give up something or quit a bad habit.

It is not wrong to do these things, but in light of this passage we need to remember that we are not required to give up something in order to be justified. Participating in Lent is just an outward way of expressing an inward change, it is a way to express belief in Christ and how you have been justified by that faith.

**Prayer:** Lord, as we consider this passage of Scripture help us to wrestle with the idea that our works do not earn us anything. It can be so hard to see that in a society that promotes the notion that hard work leads to the American dream. Help us to place our faith in You and to truly believe that You are capable of taking care of us. As we transfer control of our lives over to You, allow us to realize that You have justified us by our faith. Lord, we love You and offer You all our glory, honor, and praise. In Jesus name we pray. Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Grace Miller*

*CRU*

*Class of 2018 - Atlanta, GA*

Sunday, February 14, 2016

Scripture: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

**M**y father was a wandering Aramean.” That was the beginning of the first confession the Israelites were to make upon entering the Promised Land. They were to present an offering to the Lord and then recount how their father, a wandering Aramean, went down into Egypt, grew numerous over time, was enslaved by the Egyptians and was then delivered in the Exodus. In a word, the Israelites were to remember how far they had come with the saving help of Almighty God; not a bad thing to do at the beginning of their sojourn in the Promised Land; and not a bad thing to do during Lent.

My father wasn't a wandering Aramean; he was a factory worker. Returning from World War Two he found work in low end labor jobs doing his best to make ends meet for a wife and four hungry children. He worked on the shipping docks when I was a child, loading and unloading boxcars by hand. As you can imagine, it wasn't easy work. When I was five, he got a job at Alcoa marking great coils of aluminum as they came off the line and then sending them further down the way. I can't imagine that he enjoyed it very much but it paid as well as any job would for a man with little education. He never attended church – too busy I suppose – but came to faith late in life and then went home to glory. I'm proud to be his son.

Standing on my father's shoulders, I've come a long way with the help of God. As I said, my father had little education but he helped me through college. Today I have a Bachelor and two Master degrees. My father wasn't a wandering Aramean; he was a factory worker who labored with his hands to make ends meet. I'm in his debt. I've come a long way because of his sacrifice and God's blessing. For this I am very grateful. For what are you giving thanks in this holy Lenten season? Take some time to recount your history and give thanks for the help of others and the saving help of Almighty God. Amen.

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for all those who have made me who I am and especially for your blessing and help all along the way. Forgive me for taking too much for granted and give me a fresh spirit of thankfulness in this sacred season. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Chaplain Michael W. Gore*

*Senior Chaplain*

*United States Naval Academy*

Monday, February 15, 2016

Scripture: 1 John 2:1-6

**J**ohn lays out the purpose of his letter in verse 1: “that you may not sin. And if anyone does sin, we have an advocate in the father...” It is a call to holy living and a reminder of our justification. John doesn’t want us to sin because of the gross ramifications of our actions – separation from the one true God. As we see in 1 Chronicles, David has to deal with the sobering reality of his disposition toward sin and God’s reaction to it. Here we see God bring wrath upon Israel because of the sins of David. We are not called to live in sin but in holiness. As believers, God call us to account for the sin in our lives. He hopes that we will repent of our fleshly desires and come to him.

BUT, there is a second part to John’s purpose statement! That is, if we do sin, we have an advocate in Jesus Christ before the Father. What good news! John is aware of our ungodly nature and understands our struggle with sin. He does not want us to be ridden with guilt, but he wants us to be able to rest in the reality of our salvation. We have been justified by Christ and invited to live in eternity with the Lord. Our sins do not go unpunished since Jesus graciously took that punishment for us on the cross. We can now repent and rest in the sacrificial death of Christ when we slip up. John says earlier chapter 1, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” What a promise!

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Your Son to die for me. Thank you for the redemptive work You have done in my life. I repent of my sin and lay the ugly things that I have done at the foot of the cross. Give me the courage and the strength to turn away from sinful desires in my life as I strive to walk more fully in Your grace. Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Daniel Rose*

*Cru*

*Class of 2016 - Mobile, AL*

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

Scripture: 2 Peter 2:4-21 6

**A**s humans, we all falter and sin every day. We get caught up in our transgressions and even though we may know that Jesus Christ shed his blood and gave his life so that we may be as perfect as God, we still consciously and consistently choose sin over God's will. People have the tendency to question God's authority. We question whether He truly hates sin and if He truly is a God of judgment. Peter makes it clear that the God who did not spare His angels when they sinned, who brought the worldwide flood, the God who sent the plagues on Pharaoh's Egypt and the God who condemned the cities of Gomorrah and Sodom by burning them to ashes is the very same God that will judge you and me one day. Although God is a God of judgment, He is also a God of mercy, and those who hold their faith and trust in Him will be saved.

2 Peter 10-21 addresses those who willingly act against God's wishes without remorse and sin constantly. We see these people on a daily basis in our world, and we often pass our own judgment on them. People who commit acts of immorality, whether verbally, sexually, emotionally or physically. These people desire to gain from others or intentionally hurt others. Peter tells us that although the angels are stronger and more powerful than these people, they do not heap abuse on them when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. In the same way, we must be patient with these people.

We must love them like any of our own brothers and sisters in Christ and reveal to them the truth of the Gospel even if the message is not well received. Even these people are children of God and their hearts could change at any moment. It is not our place to judge these people. We are here to love them and pray for them. We can falter just like they can; we all need forgiveness from the Lord.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for the gift of Your grace and mercy. If it weren't for that we would not be able to recover from our sin in this broken world. Please give us as your children the strength and courage to love those around us, even if those around us blatantly speak and act against You and Your will. Lord God, you are the Creator of Heaven and Earth and You are more than capable of being the ultimate authority in all our lives. Help us to submit to You every day. In Your Holy name. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Marco Alejos*

*Officers Christian Fellowship*

*Class of 2016 - Indianapolis, IN*

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

Scripture: Luke 21:34

“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and the day come upon you suddenly like a trap.” Luke 21:34

**I**n the Scriptures we are warned about being those who have ears but do not hear and have eyes but do not see. Of being like the people of Israel who made idols while in covenant with the one true God. Of being like one of the thousands who heard Jesus speak truth and saw him act in love and power, yet left with unchanged hearts. These people experienced God - the Creator, the Truth, and the Savior of the world. They saw him and his works with their eyes. They heard his word, the word that created the world and longs to bring life to our souls. Yet they did not recognize him. They heard, they saw, and they left unchanged. And we do this too.

It takes a callous heart to not recognize the one who created it, the one who loves and redeems it. In Psalm 17 David describes these people as “those of this world whose reward is this life.” In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells us that it takes a conscious effort to stay attuned to God in this world because anxiety and drunkenness in the pleasures of this world are more common to the human heart. The proud heart, the anxious heart, the fulfilled heart – in none of these is there room for God. So they pass by unmoved by the truth that is spoken to them, by the salvation offered to them.

So what shall we do? Surely this is sin. We love and have faith in things that are not God, to the point that we no longer recognize His voice. In all this we need grace. Only grace can open our eyes and ears to these defects, can change a calloused heart, can set the sinner free. Unwarranted, un-repayable, completely redeeming grace. Grace like this cost much – the life of God himself as Jesus died to take our shame and sin on the cross.

Jesus died and rose again so that we could hear, see, and enjoy a relationship with God. A God that knows us and loves us all the same, that takes our calloused, anxious, proud hearts and makes them soft. So we come to Jesus in prayer again and again to experience the abundance of love and grace that keeps our hearts free, that reaches beyond the depth of any worldly pleasure or anxiety that our hearts could know.

**Prayer:** Father, We come before You now needing and desiring your grace. Keep our eyes and ears open to Your moving in our lives. Strip away the calloused parts of our hearts so that we may be fully Yours and that we may fully love others. We praise You for the glory of the story and life you have called us into. May we know You and seek You all our days and may the abundance of Your love and mercy keep us truly free of this world. We love You, we praise You, we stay amazed and grateful at the sacrifice You made for us at the cross. Keep us forever in Your will. In the name of Jesus we pray these things. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Jess Laney*

*BCMClass of 2017 - Dallas, Texas*

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Scripture: Genesis 13:1-7; Philippians 3:2-12; Psalm 27

**G**enesis: Abram and Lot are on one plot of land that is too small for their possessions.

Philippians: Paul speaks of his old life in comparison to his new life in Jesus. He counts all he has gained as a loss in light of Christ. Psalm: David looks to the Lord for his light and salvation in the midst of trouble and is not shaken. Times get hard and we wonder whether God is truly as faithful as He said He is.

When the skies turn gray and God feels far from us, we must always remember that He always keeps His promises. His promises lie outside of our roller coaster experiences and emotions. His promises are constant. When you come to the end of yourself and realize that you are in need of a Savior, His offered promise to save you from your sin still remains. At times we must wait for His promises, but nonetheless, He has promised and He will never break his promises.

**Prayer:** Dear Father, I pray that you help us to remember who You are, even in the midst of trying times. Help us to hold on to You when we feel like we are about to buckle under the pressures of this world. Please remind us of the glory that is waiting for Your children so that we can stay hopeful. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

Rixon Fletcher

*Navigators*

*Class of 2017 - Ft. Lauderdale, FL*

**Friday, 19 February, 2016**  
**Scripture: Psalm 27 & Philippians 3:17-20**

**A**s we continue our journey through Lent, we focus on Christ's conquering of sin and death through His sacrifice on the cross. This keeps us in joyful anticipation for His coming (Phil. 3:20). Daily, we wage a war on sin and temptation; but if the Lord is our light, what will we fear (Ps. 27:1, 3)? The greatest enemy we will ever have to face is death which Christ conquered. Therefore, nothing is unconquerable for Him.

Facing temptation can be intimidating and frightening, but if we live a life in imitation of the Apostle Paul, who lived in imitation of the Lord, we envisage both the suffering of the Lord and His resurrection (Phil 3:17). Renouncing our earthly possessions removes many of the distractions that take our mind off Him. Do not let yourselves be one who loses focus and whose end is destruction (Phil. 3: 19). When we dwell in His presence and practice a life in imitation of Him, He will hide us in Him who has conquered sin and death (Ps. 27:5). Blessed is He who has delivered us from sin, and who has delivered our foe into our hands (Gen. 14:20)! Rejoice, and recognize the good things he has done for us!

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, you are glorious and everlasting. The psalmist sings for the Lord to deliver him from his foes; likewise, we must humbly ask that the Lord deliver us from evil and lead us not into temptation (Ps. 27:12). We sing to the Lord, praise Him in all circumstances and humbly pray that you keep our eyes focused on You. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Christian Forbush*

*Roman Catholic Community*

*Class of 2017 - Colorado Springs, CO*

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 27; Psalm 118:26-29; Matthew 23:37-39

**O**n this Saturday in Lent, let us find security and comfort knowing that the Lord is our eternal shield. In the face of evil and malice, He will keep us safe; He will give us courage to outlast fear; He will give us asylum in His grand wonder. By His love, those who seek to do us wrong will stumble and fall.

He shall not only be our shelter but our guide and our strength. For this we will seek Him, learn from Him and be lead on the simple path past our enemies. We will have courage, knowing He will forever fill our hearts with strength. (Ps. 27)

All those who praise Him and come forth in His name shall be blessed for we share the house of the Lord and the light He shines upon us. He offers up His light to us and joins us all in his love. We give thanks and praise to the Lord our God, for He is good, merciful and enduring (Ps. 118:26-29).

Those who wander astray from the Lord and refuse to accept His love will not see His face and will be left alone in their desolate homes. Let us rejoice, open our hearts, and exclaim, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." He is merciful, patient, and kind and will love all those who express love for Him. Come under the wing of the Lord and be unified, be loved and be enlightened. (Matthew 23:37-39)

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, in times of darkness You are our light. In the face of evil Your love is our shield, Your kindness our armor, and Your mercy our sword. In You we find strength, courage, peace and blessing. In You we love and trust until all may be lead from the darkness and gathered in Your house. This we pray. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Anna Lawence*

*Roman Catholic Community*

*Class of 2019 - Buffalo, NY*

## February 21, Second Sunday in Lent.

Scripture: Philippians 3:17-4:1

**F**asting, Prayer, & The Coming Kingdom. Traditionally Lent is a time for fasting and prayer in preparation for the celebration of Easter. Through prayer and fasting we put off the desires of our physical selves, the concerns of earthly endeavors and look toward our future hope, rooted in the expectation of Christ's return, a future glory as citizens of heaven. In the Philippians passage, Paul calls us to do this very thing in following his example. Paul was faithful to the cross of Christ and lived as if the world had been crucified to him and he to the world; (Galatians 6:14). In fact, Christ was Paul's only glory and not the physical selfishness of the world, (see verse 21), and his mind was set only on heavenly things, (verses 20-21), rooted in his clear understanding that he was a citizen of a different kingdom from this world, the Kingdom of Heaven, (verse 20).

This is not an easy thing to do! It is hard to imagine something that has not yet become a present reality. It is hard for us to focus upon something that has not yet become evident. This is especially true in the face of all the clearly visible difficulties and distractions we face every day. These difficulties often challenge our faith in Christ or lead us away from following him. It is easier to focus our minds on the present, on the things that are immediately before us, on our physical needs and earthly desires. But the Apostle Paul in the Philippians passage challenges us to set our minds upon our true citizenship in heaven and deny our earthly pain and humiliation.

And we accomplish this through prayer, with thanksgiving, and the denial of our earthly desires (e.g., fasting). When we do this we not only reorient our lives to the reality of our heavenly citizenship, we are comforted with the peace that surpasses all understanding; (Philippians 4:4-9).

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, in the glory of the cross Your Son embraced the power of death and broke its hold over Your people. Now in this time of repentance and fasting, draw all Your people to Yourself, that we who confess Jesus as Lord may put aside the deeds of death and accept the life of Your kingdom. Help us to see past our humble state to the reality of our true citizenship in Heaven. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Robert N. Burns Jr.*

*CDR CHC USN*

*Deputy Command Chaplain*

*United States Naval Academy*

Monday, February 22, 2016

Scriptures: Exodus 33:5

**F**or the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you.'" Reflection: Have we been a stiff-necked people (33:1-6)? Note the sarcasm "the people you brought up". Note God remembers his Promise to Abraham. Note that He will even send an angel, but He will not go. Observe the sadness of the people; and God's estimation of them: stiff-necked. The removal of their ornaments was permanent.

Ornaments they were given in Egypt on their departure were used to fashion the Golden Calf. The ornaments were an enabler to their sin.

The sin always causes sadness and regret. Some would see here the mandate not to wear jewelry. That is not the issue here. The issue is that anything which causes you to sin, strip off that ornament. Is it alcohol and drugs? Strip off that ornament.

Is it gambling? Strip off that ornament. Is it an illicit attraction? Strip off that ornament. Is it plagiarism? Strip off that ornament. Is it indifference with your spiritual family? Is it laziness to better understand the Word of God? Strip off that ornament. Strip off any ornament that distances you from your Lord. That is the challenge!

If you want to go on your own, the Lord will let you. He doesn't require that you lean on him. Would we go on, assuming our own self-sufficiency, and move forward without the Lord's presence or approval? How many of us in our own lives go forward every day in our own strength? I am not a theologian. I just want you to think! Can you?

**Prayer:** Dear God, make us see more clearly your will for us, not our own self-serving attitudes and actions. Amen!

**Submitted by:**

*Jose Medina*

*Christian Faith*

*Friend of the Naval Academy*

Tuesday, February 23, 2013

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

**T**here have been times in my walk with Christ when I have felt that God has left me stranded. His Word seemed inconsistent, my life comes apart at the seams, and I feel farther from Him than ever before. In times like these, it can appear that God has left me to my own devices and He could care less how I spend my time.

Doing my own thing seems justified – after all, He’s the one who walked out on me, not the other way around, right?

I’m sure this will come as a surprise, but I always end up being the wrong one in these situations. Today’s Scriptures are a perfect reminder of the fault in my habitual thinking. We serve a faithful God. He does not change. His Word is true, His promises are sound, and His attributes never change – including His opposition to evil. In Numbers, we read of the fate of those who disobeyed His divine commands. In 1 Corinthians, we learn that these transgressors experienced God in the same mighty ways as the Jewish faithful, yet did not please God. As a result, “their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”

What does this mean for you and me? Are we to be left scattered in the wilderness if we commit the same sins as the people of Israel? Thankfully, this is not the case, because we serve a faithful God. 1 John 1:9 reminds us that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from unrighteousness.” We have a new covenant with God through Christ – a covenant that makes us new creations in Him.

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are granted new life. His righteousness covers our sins, and we are clean in God’s sight.

One of my favorite phrases in the Bible is “Yet God, who is rich in mercy...” I know that when I hear this phrase, I am about to hear another moment of God’s unconditional love. There will be times when you and I will wander from God’s loving embrace. In these times, we can rest in the fact that we have come to another moment of God’s unconditional love. Take comfort in the fact that we serve a faithful God, and He loves you with all of His heart.

**Prayer:** Praise: Tell God how amazing he is. Get creative. (Psalm 105:1-9). Submission: Remind yourself and tell God that He controls every area of your life. (1 John 4:4). Take a few minutes to marvel at your salvation - that God saved you through grace. (Ephesians 2:4-9). Thanksgiving: Thank God specifically for His faithfulness and grace in your life. (Psalm 105: 8-15). Listen: Be alone with God. Allow thoughts of Him to fill your mind. Meditate on and listen to Him (Psalm 119:13-16).

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Zach Tyra*

*Officers’ Christian Fellowship*

*Class of 2018 – Indianapolis, IN*

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 105:1-15, 42

**O**ne of the most important aspects of fasting during the season of Lent is learning humility. As we give up objects of our affections in order to focus more on the infinite love of Christ, we try to not speak out too often about it. The reasoning behind this is so that we do not speak as though we are doing it because we are good people or because we are acting on our own behalf. Instead of being boastful we are humble in our fasting and give glory to God.

Sometimes though, in our attempt to be humble, we forget to speak of both ourselves and God. We do not give glory to ourselves but we still neglect to give glory to God. In Psalm 105:1-15 and 42 we see that we should be humble about how we act and should proclaim the great acts of God in our thankfulness and worship. In this time, where we focus so deeply on humility, we must not forget to praise God, sing to Him, and make His name known among the nations for all of His wonderful acts.

Take a moment and reflect on what God has done in your life, the way He has taken your heart of stone and made it soft, taken a sinner and made you a son or daughter and by His grace brought all who believe to Him so that we may be heirs with Christ. God deserves all of our praise and worship. No good thing can be done except through Christ including giving up the idols of our affection.

So we pray, we praise and we seek. Pray thankfully remembering that God did great things, does great things and will continue to do great things that we cannot even imagine and we are blessed enough just to be a part of it! Continue to ask Him to do great things. Pray boldly for His Kingdom to come and his love to come crashing into this world and our lives. Praise Him for these great things. Tell the world so that all can see the glory of God, His name will be made known and some may come to saving faith in Him through these proclamations. And always, continue to seek him and experience the amazing, beautiful, all fulfilling, all-encompassing joy that comes from knowing the God of the universe.

**Prayer:** Lord of All the Earth, Give me the boldness to proclaim Your good works among the nations. When I speak to those around me, may they know that You hold my soul and that the only reason I have hope in my future and in this life is because of what You have done for me. Thank you for giving me the chance to glorify You in this season by giving up what I have and relying on You for everything. Thank you for loving me. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Caleb Ingram*

*BCM*

*Class of 2018 - Colorado Springs, CO*

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 63:1-8

**L**oving God begins with Him—we love Him because He first loved us. When Lent began three weeks ago, and we entered the wilderness, we began denying ourselves a few things. Denying ourselves comforts does not come easily. This psalm of David was written while he was in the wilderness. Have you ever experienced the kind of longing for God David describes in the first verse? His soul thirsted for God. His flesh longed for Him.

Have you ever noticed that Jesus began His ministry hungry? And He ended His ministry feeling thirsty. In Psalm 63, David says he was thirsting for God, “in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” “Thirsting for God” does not mean that God can be purchased in 12 and 16 ounce bottles from soft drink machines. Did you ever watch a woman try to feed a spoiled child? “Please eat this, honey.” “No!” What she ought to do is take the food away and not give it anything until the next meal. Then it would eat, because it would be hungry and thirsty! Thirsting for God means we seek God. We are seeking both knowledge about God and an encounter with the living God. A person who is hungry and thirsty for Christ will find Christ every time!

It is now Lent, a time of self-denial. We have gone with Jesus into the wilderness. It is in the wilderness, where we have nothing materialistic, that we experience the presence of Jesus in amazing ways. Jesus Christ is leading us into a spiritual wilderness. Will you follow Christ?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, give us the strength to do your will. We are longing for Your Presence and Power. We seek your Grace and Love. You are our hope and our reason to keep pressing forward. In Your Name, we pray. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Diogo Port*

*Contractor & Friend of the Naval Academy*

Friday, February 26, 2016  
Scripture: Psalm 63:1-8 Daniel 12:1-4  
Revelation 3:1-6

**S**everal years ago I underwent emergency surgery to repair a hole in my thyroid cartilage that had been torn during a medical procedure and become infected. Once the ear, nose and throat specialist to whom I had been referred had completed his tests he told me I needed surgery and I naively said “When?” His reply was “Immediately.” Five hours later I found myself in the ICU where I stayed for 11 days my body infused with antibiotics and unable to speak because of the tracheotomy that had been performed in addition to the thyroid repair. Perhaps, like David in Psalm 63, I was in my own personal desert during this experience. Like David, my comfort and peace through all of this was found by focusing on God.

Even though he was king of Israel at the time, David found himself in the wilderness of Judah fleeing from those who sought to kill him. Even in the midst of these difficult circumstances, David’s focus was not on himself but on God. David says: “earnestly I seek you”, “my soul thirsts for you”. He knows something of the character of God too: “you have been my help” and “your right hand upholds me”. He has most likely come to know God in a personal way as he had seen God work throughout his life.

What is your “desert?” Is it disappointment in a failed relationship? Is it in not getting the service assignment you had been striving for? Is it in facing a serious illness? During this Lenten season as you face your own “deserts” follow the example of David who, even in the midst of his desert experience turned to God in confidence and hope.

**Prayer:** Lord God, Holy Father, help us to keep our eyes on You as we face our own personal deserts in life. You are our help and Your right hand will sustain us just as it did David. Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Richard N. Lenham*

*0815 Protestant Communion Service Congregant*

*Friend of the Naval Academy*

*Sponsor Parent*

Saturday, February 27, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 63:1-8; Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 6:43-45

**I**n case there was ever any doubt, while reading the Isaiah passage we know that God loves us. In fact, this passage shows how He first loved us! God tended to the nation of Israel by first giving them everything they could possibly need to flourish. He gave them fertile land, clearing it of threats through His servants Saul and David, and providing them with clear instructions on how to lead lives in His service through His Word. Yet the Israelites continued to serve idols and disobey God's instructions.

This was the land and the times King David grew up in while he was only a shepherd boy. The same David – in between shepherd boy and king – wrote today's Psalm when he found himself in a barren desert. While finding himself in the barren land, David longed for God's presence, peace, and power. David's earnest desire for the reassurance provided by God dictated how he conducted himself: and this is what the prophet Isaiah means by fruits in today's scripture.

David acted like someone who knew and longed for God even when he felt God might be far away. But trees do not need the gardener to be present for the fruit's growth. So David produced good fruit, because the Gardener had planted a good tree in him, and provided it with everything he needed, despite the barren land.

As you go about today, check yourself and see what kind of fruit you are producing for the world around you to consume. Make sure that you are still the same good tree that Christ planted in your life while you wait for the Return of Christ. After all: "the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (Luke 6:45b), and the world should be able to see the joy Christ has brought into your life whether you are in a time of trial or on the mountaintop.

**Prayer:** Father, "On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night... I cling to you; your right hand upholds me." Thank you for giving me the light of eternal life. Thank you for giving me the grace to share it today with others around me. You mean more to me than life and I long for your presence in everything I do today. Work in me and allow me to make room for your work in my life today. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*MIDN D. T. Gartrell*  
*Protestant Choir*

Sunday, February 28, 2016

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-9

I have a confession to make. I like food. I love food. It is part of my Louisiana heritage to enjoy Cajun delicacies. As I spend my Navy career in exile from the homeland, I often dream of the food of my youth that is not readily available outside South Louisiana. During my trip home over Thanksgiving I returned to Annapolis with an ice chest full of smoked sausage to be ready for the gumbo season.

What do you desire? We all have cravings. Some are good as long as moderation is practiced. Others are not and must be resisted in totality. The real question for us today is how strong is your desire for God? The Psalmist in today's reading reflected "O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Do you truly yearn for God as you would for water on a parched summer day with not even an oasis in sight? Do you go to the same effort to spend time with God that you do to fulfill other desires in your life? Even worse, do you desire evil that darkens your heart? Paul warned the Corinthians of the people of old who were struck down because they turned to idolatry or sexual immorality rather than desiring God.

I am reminded of God's words through Jeremiah 2:13. "My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns than can hold no water."

Ask yourself today, "Do I desire things that will leave me empty and unfulfilled, or do I desire God with all of my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength?" Let your prayer today be, "Oh God, You are my God; I will earnestly seek You every day of my life."

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Reveal to me the broken cisterns in which I place my trust. Forgive me for desiring things of the flesh rather than desiring You. Forgive me for seeking temporal pleasures instead of Your presence. Forgive me for misplaced passions and desires. Guide me today. As I sleep and as I wake, may the meditation of my heart be on You. Renew me. Restore me. Oh God, You are my God. I praise you and seek You today. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Chaplain Jeff Jenkins*

*1st Battalion Chaplain*

*United States Naval Academy*

Monday, February 29, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 39:4

**L**et me know my end... Let me know how fleeting my life is! The Hebrew word “fleeting” also means to “leave off,” to be “frail,” to be “forsaken,” or “ceasing to live.” This Psalm describes the length to which the poet’s feelings have driven him. Here, our poet, King David, may have been driven to despair. This is conjecture, but perhaps he was in the same place as Elijah was when he said in his agony, “I have had enough, Lord. Let me die” (1 Kings 19:4). Have you ever felt like this? Have you ever been so distraught with your own disappointments, broken heart, rejections, tragedies, failures, pain or suffering, that you thought this? David knew many days like this. The Historical Books and his Lament Psalms record it. Tremper Longman wrote about David’s Lament Psalms: “The lament is the psalmist’s cry when in great distress and he has nowhere to turn but to God.”

In each Lament Psalm, David confesses his honest despair, doubts or emotions to God. However, he always makes a shift in focus from himself and his circumstances to what is right and true about the nature and character of God. His turn-around in this Psalm is verse 7: “And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you.”

Consider Elijah. After he said, “Let me die,” the Lord sent an angel to strengthen him. If your life is in a mess right now, perhaps it is time to emulate King David and create your own lament. Last year, after a semester of living through the most difficult relationship I had yet to experience, I created my own lament. Through that process I found healing, forgiveness, and ultimately reconciliation with the other person.

I encourage you to do the same. Empty your burdens, doubts and anger to Him. He is a kind and patient Father who absorbs our raw and unfiltered complaints. Then, make that shift in focus from yourself to what is right and true about His nature and character. Write it all down as your own Psalm of Lament. As you emulate King David, may God meet and heal you in a new way. Other examples of Laments are Lamentations 3 (turn-around in verses 21-26). Psalms 44, 90.

**Prayer:** If there is something in your life that you are running from or hiding from Him, bring it up in the most real and honest way you can in prayer. In a sense, hash it all out to Him. Then, turn the focus off of yourself and turn towards Him. Claim His promise that you are forgiven and free because of what Christ did for you. If you don’t feel any different or better, remember that you don’t live by feelings. You live by faith in His truth. Claim the truth that even “if we are faithless, He remains faithful.” Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Joel Davis*

*CRU*

*Class of 2017 - Minnetonka, MN*

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 39

**T**he Psalms are a wonderful array of words, situations and ideas of a People talking to and about their God. Here are God's people raging at God, loving God, asking for safety, praising God, hiding from God, putting their cares on God, pleading with God, even complaining to God. And now, today, we have this lament of despair : Psalm 39. The Psalmist lays out for us the utter despair and hopelessness that we can and perhaps have had in our lives. "Deliver me from all who do me wrong; make me no longer the butt of fools; plague me no more. Frown on me no more and let me smile again." How many of us have been in such despair that we lose all sense of our preciousness in God's sight? So deep into despair: Despair—we have it when we get a cancer diagnosis, when we learn our primary relationship is falling apart, when a loved one dies, when we have been abandoned.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the 20th century theologian who died in a German concentration camp, said that God allows suffering because it pulls us deep into His heart. In fact it is a step toward intimacy with the Father. And that is why Jesus so often addresses the weary and the broken hearted.

To you, I would say, Do not despair. God is our ever present strength and help. And so, we can only find hope in God's loving care for us. . . in God who loves each one of us as He knows every sparrow that falls. Our hope and journey back to health is through Jesus Christ, one who loves us totally and completely and who will hold your hand in the dark days and bring you into a peace that passes all understanding. "Hear my prayer , O Lord Listen to my cry. Frown on me no more and let me smile again." Only God can give us this peace and willingness to go on. Our hope is in Him.

This Lenten season, instead of getting depressed and giving up. Let us look more closely until we see that there is someone crying out to us, I am here. He is Mercy-made-flesh.

**Prayer:** Most Holy God, be with me in my times of despair. Hold me close and give me hope to go on, knowing that You are with me and that, only through You can I find my way back to the Peace of Christ. Be with me in this Lenten season. Help me to be constant in prayer. Guide me to perform simple acts of love and care for those around me. All this I pray through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Joan K. Townshend  
Naval Academy Choir  
Severna Park, MD*

**Wednesday, March 2, 2016**  
**Scripture: Luke 13:18-21; Numbers**  
**13:17-27; Psalm 39**

**T**hen He said, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.' And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened".

What a unique passage of scripture! Here we see Jesus abstractly describing a vision of Heaven in a synagogue. Jesus compares Heaven to a mustard seed. But why a mustard seed? The black mustard plant can grow up to 9 feet tall. But every single black mustard plant that grows, regardless of its height, begins as a very small mustard seed. Something so small, so defined, yet it turns into a magnificent creation. So, yes, Jesus compares heaven to the small mustard seed but, reading closer, Jesus also defines Heaven as the transition from the mustard seed to the plant. How amazing that God can take such a small insignificant seed and mold it into a beautiful creation. If we look at a mustard seed as ourselves, God cleanses us of our sins (the hard shell of the seed), works in our heart (the actual seed), and transforms our being (the growth from seed to plant).

This transformation, I believe, is what this passage is trying to highlight. Just like a mustard seed, God calls us, His sons and daughters, to grow and mature through Him so that we may become a large tree (spiritually). We become a large tree for Christ, so that we may touch those who come into contact with us with God's unconditional love. Just like the birds of the land, who flock to trees for rest; we should be that resting point. A resting point for those that are in pain, helplessness, and despair. A resting point for those to come and listen to the Truth that God provides for each and every one of us. We, as Christians, should strive to be that tree, rooted in faith, to provide a place of rejuvenation, so that others may go out and proclaim the way, the truth, and the life everlasting. Amen!

**Prayer.** Our Heavenly Father. Thank You for this week that You have given us. Thank You for placing opportunities in our lives to grow and mature through You, to accomplish Your plan for us. Lord, strip us of our hard sinful shell. Lord, cleanse us of our impurities. Lord, guide us in our actions so that we may grow to be a refuge for those that are seeking Your love. We love You, we praise You, and we thank You, for it's in Your name that we pray. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*MIDN 2/C Phillip Metcalfe*

*BCM*

*Class of 2017 - Dallas, TX*

Thursday, March 3, 2016 (Morning)

Scripture: Joshua 4:1-13; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Psalm 32

**W**hen we acknowledge our sin to the LORD he forgives us. When we uncover what we would like to keep covered, he removes his heavy hand from us and lifts us up from the great waters that surround us. He hides us from trouble and delivers us from sin. All that we must do to receive this

salvation is trust in the LORD. If we do, he surrounds us in his unending love and we are free to rejoice and shout for joy. So even if we are being buffeted by the troubles of the world and it seems that nothing is going our way, take comfort in knowing that the LORD is on your side if you trust in him and he will help you through any storm you might be going through.

When our sins have been forgiven and the debt has been covered by the butchering of Jesus of Nazareth, we are seen as blessed. When we are sanctified and genuinely trust in the LORD as our savior, we are blessed. Perhaps the hardest part of the process is having total confidence in our salvation; however, when we pray to GOD ceaselessly, he will surround us with shouts of deliverance. He promises to teach us and guide us. HE promises to watch over us continuously wherever we go and whatever we do. Lastly, just like King David, we are going to mess up. Despite our best efforts, we will fail countless times before we are brought forever into GOD's kingdom. It is important to try to prevent making mistakes, but it is far more important to avoid dwelling on the past and letting it impact both our own performance and, more importantly, our helpfulness to other people. When we sin, it is best to repent. When we do not, we waste away and sink lower and lower. When we repent, GOD lifts us up and immediately helps us get set on the path in the right direction, but this requires us to repent and turn around so that we may begin moving in the proper direction again. In short, pray to GOD for his guidance and protection, and when we sin, ask for HIS forgiveness, which HE will never withhold, so that we can be best equipped to carry out HIS will.

**Prayer:** Dear LORD, we ask that You be with us today as we go forth to live according to your commands. Grant us the peace that only You can as we face yet another day of tumultuous events. Please guide us through the day and allow us to be a beacon of light to those we encounter. Most importantly, allow us to build deeper relationships with those people close to us. Let us love our neighbors and help us to love You. To you be the glory, the power, and all of creation. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Joshua Cohen*

*Navigators*

*Second Class - Kalispell, MT*

Friday, March 4, 2016  
Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:6-15

**T**he basis for this passage is the important place that God should have in our lives. Verse six begins by explaining that while we are in our human and physical bodies we are away from the Lord and our spiritual body and that this does draw us apart from the Lord and the plan he has for us. This is also what shows us the need to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

However, this passage also tells us that we aim to please God and that is our purpose whether we are at home in our physical bodies, or in our spiritual bodies in prayer. We seek the judgement of Christ so that each of us may receive what is due to us. This is why we seek God’s forgiveness, and this is the theme of the season of Lent. The main idea behind Lent is that we, as humans, are sinful and in need of God’s forgiveness. This passage explains that the “love of Christ controls us... one has died for all therefore all have died... those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him.” We are very simple people. And though very often we think that we need a lot to satisfy us, we alone need God and his wisdom and promise that he will give us what we need. It is just as Joshua. The Lord kept his promise to Joshua and he became a great and wise leader, and because of this, he was raised up by his people to become the leader that they needed. God gave him what he needed in order to be successful and God guides Joshua and “dried up the sea until they passed over” (Joshua 4:23).

God does everything that he does in order to show that the “LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever” (Joshua 4:24). The underlying message of both of these passages is that we have to trust in the Lord and the power that he has to give us everything we need. It is our job to please God in a way that shows our gratitude for what he has given us. God will forgive us and we seek his judgement so that he may forgive us.

**Prayer:** God, I thank you for this day that you have made for us, and the beautiful people you have surrounded us with. In this season of Lent, please remind us to take time to reflect on what we have done, both the good and the bad. We ask that you forgive us of our sins, and lift our success up in order to praise you. We pray for those with problems in their lives that you may reassure them of the support they have in their classmates, co-workers, family, and in you. Let us rejoice and praise you for everything you have blessed us with. In Jesus’ name. Amen!

**Today’s Devotional was written by:**

MIDN 4/C Kennedy Bingham  
Virginia Beach, VA

Saturday, March 5, 2016

Scripture: Luke 15:1-10

“**T**here will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

The prodigal's return symbolizes deaf ears restored and tuned to the voice of God; eyes healed from the blindness of sin to see; one more stone heart turned to flesh to experience life changing love. Salvation is a miracle of God: “He was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.” This is a work that only God could do for us and it is only right to celebrate His grace and His power towards us, as well as our surrender to His love once and for all.

The brother's reaction to the prodigal's return is very real and very human. This was a man who had faithfully served his father all the days of his life. He had his father's trust and love and the responsibility along with authority to manage his father's fields. He had been working hard in the fields that day, in fact, when his wayward brother returns to their father's house, covered in the filth of the world. So when the righteous firstborn sees the joy with which his father greets the prodigal, he is confused and angry. God's grace troubles us. For some, like the prodigal, it is an undeserved reward. For others, such as the brother, it represents an unequal playing field. It seems unfair that the good works of a hundred are not as worthy of celebration as the salvation of a single man or woman. And because God's grace seems unfair, it becomes easy to wonder if a life of righteousness is worth it. This doubt is only magnified by the temptations of the world, and could eventually kill our faith with lies of futility. But the Lord assures us that our rewards are stored in heaven (Matt 5:10); everything done in secret will be brought to light (Luke 8:17), and the Son of Man will repay every man according to his deeds (Matt 16:27).

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, enable me to desire and to fulfill Your will for my life. Help me to accept Your grace for myself and for others. Help me to trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*MIDN Abigail Dickson*

*Officer Christian Fellowship*

*Class of 2018*

## Sunday, March 6, 2016

### Scripture: Psalm 126

**T**ake a moment to clear your mind of the noise of the day. Take a few deep breaths and allow your heartbeat to slow down, your shoulders to become relaxed, and your breathing to become steady and deep. Rest on these words, spoken by the loving creator God that made every fiber of your being: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine." With each intake of air, ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to truly believe these words. With each exhale, breathe out any fear or anxiety that has been keeping you from the loving presence of God.

Be thankful. The Psalmist writes, "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." What great things has the Lord done for you? Perhaps He has led you to a friend, saved you from an inner struggle, or healed a broken relationship. So often, God does great things for us and we forget to turn our eyes up towards Him and say "Thank you." We become focused only on ourselves, our feelings, and our own hopes and dreams. But our Creator wants us to be like His son Jesus. So, as you allow yourself to become filled with gratitude, think about the gifts that God has given you: a friend, a beautiful experience, a dream come true. Let your gratefulness fill you with a desire to, as Paul writes, look out for the interests of Jesus Christ and not just your own. Ask God to open the eyes of your heart to see and feel the struggles and the aspirations of the people in your life. These people are gifts from God who were summoned by name and are in need of love as much as you are. Let the selfless love of Jesus guide you as you seek to emulate him in this world by loving your neighbors. And especially today, remember that you are a beloved child of God.

**Prayer:** God teach us how to be thankful and always to remain in Your Presence. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Michael Wegner*  
*Navigators*  
*Class of 2019*

Monday, March 7, 2016

Scripture: Revelation 19:1-8

**D**uring the Lenten season many people give up doing certain habits or eating certain foods. If you were to ask many of these people why they are giving these things up they may not have an answer for you. I remember that in my youth my mother would simply tell me that this time of year you are supposed to give something up for God. I did not understand the context of this fasting until I was much older.

The point of the Lenten season is for believers to remember that we are by our human nature sinful and we need the forgiveness of God. In this Lenten season we need to not lose sight of this fact because in the end it will be the most important thing for us as believers. In remembrance of your salvation we should not be quiet; we should raise our voices to heaven and give a glorious sound of praise.

The sound should be a mark of the salvation that God has given us. This noise will resound in heaven and hallelujah will be heard all over the world as Christians praise him. We should lift up praises to him for this salvation and should give offerings willingly in this time. Because of the grace that he has given us we should fall down and worship him for he is seated on the throne of the Kingdom of Heaven. As it is said in Revelation 19: 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!" This season is not about giving things up because of tradition or because we are told to, this Lenten season is about giving praise and honor to the Father. For through the Father we have been given salvation and therefore will reside in Heaven with Him one day. Let us find rest in the fact of our salvation and lift up God for blessing us with this salvation too.

**Prayer:** Lord you bless those who believe in You with salvation through your son Jesus. Let this community of believers be at rest in this knowledge of Your salvation. You are great and You call us to strive for greatness. Give us the strength and will power to achieve Your calling. While You allow us to work for greatness also help us to find peace in You to renew our hearts and minds. Praise be to you our God for without You we are nothing. In you precious Son's name we pray. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Carson Taff*

*CRU*

*Class of 2018 - Houston Texas*

## Tuesday March 8th, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 53:1

**T**hroughout my life I have had my doubts about whether following Jesus is really worth it. I wonder why God doesn't allow us to do certain things that honestly seem harmless. I would question whether God really exists since he prevents me from doing those "harmless" things. I quickly realize that there is only short time satisfaction in those things while there is satisfaction for an eternity with God. We are reminded in Psalm 53:1 about those who do not believe, "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God" They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good." God is always for us and even in our most difficult time when we doubt because sin has over powered us and hope is lost, God always picks us up. Satan constantly tries to push us over but by God's grace we can overpower Satan head on. You may not see the reason for things happening or why he doesn't let you do "harmless" things but he is sovereign. He will never let you go and is always by your side.

**Prayer:** God please help us to stay true to you in our time of doubt. Sin can become overpowering but we know that you will guide us through the storm. Thank you for never letting us go and picking us back up when we fall. We love You God, always. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Cade Warlick*

*OCF*

*Class of 2017 - California, MD*

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:1-7

**O**ur God provides for His people consistently, throughout all of history. In situations where His people are found helpless and with nowhere else to turn, God meets his people needs. In Kings, the godly woman is found helplessly in debt and facing the loss of her children to the creditor after her husband's death. With nowhere else to turn she seeks out Elijah, who through a prophecy of God, miraculously multiplies her oil to pay off her debts. We see the same situation again in Luke, where a hungry crowd of 5,000 is gathered in the wilderness without food. From the faithful contribution of five loaves and two fish, Jesus multiplies the food to feed the crowd. In these scenes people have great physical need, but how much greater are our spiritual needs? Who can provide for them? We are a wicked, fallen, and corrupt people that could never hope to provide for our own spiritual need.

With no hope for providing for our spiritual need and in the face of eternal death, how great is the promise that our Father provides for us through his Son! He promises to provide us with eternal life, even though we do not deserve it. He promises to redeem us from our wickedness, even though we deserve death. He has fulfilled his promise through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. How thankful should we be to have the promise of hope and eternal life in spite of our depravity and wickedness? All he asks is that we confess our faith in his Son, Jesus Christ and let our lives be changed as a reflection of this belief.

**Prayer:** Lord, Let us bring our physical needs before You, knowing that You may not grant us what we desire, but You will give to us what we need. Let us lay our burdens at Your feet, knowing that You love your people and have always provided for them. Above all else, let us be thankful for the hope of eternal life that You have provided us with through the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Austin Tortorici*

*BCM*

*Class of 2016 – Charleston, SC*

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-7

**W**hen I hear the word “redeem” outside of a Biblical context, in my mind’s eye I am instantly transported back to a time in the late 1960’s. I am the only child seated at my grandmother’s huge farmhouse kitchen table along with the women of my family. We are preparing to redeem countless S&H Green Stamps accumulated through the year. People earned these stamps as bonuses when purchasing groceries, gasoline, etc. – the more you bought, the more stamps you earned. The catch was that all of the stamps had to be placed in special books and that required hours of “licking and sticking”. While we worked the ladies considered the various items that they might acquire by redeeming the books of stamps. When all stamps were in the books, you would with green ink-stained fingers and sore tongue – travel to the redemption center to trade them for real merchandise. 24,000 stamps could get you a coffee maker!

Today’s Psalm details God’s wonderful power to redeem, restore, and protect His people. Through God’s plan of salvation by way of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we all have the opportunity to be redeemed. We are redeemed from our own sin and wrongdoing and reconciled to have a personal relationship God and enjoy eternity in His heavenly kingdom. The catch in this redemption plan was that Jesus had to sacrifice his life in trade for us to become children of God. Remember, you were expensive to redeem! The cost to Jesus was humiliation, physical wounds, a broken heart, and spiritual suffering. You were bought with a price and infinitely and eternally valued by God! Rejoice and sing the old words, “...since I have been redeemed I will glory in my Savior’s name!”

And yes... you can still use Green Stamps, except now they are on the internet in the form of Green Points! And yes...Jesus still provides for the redemption of people everywhere.

**Prayer:** “There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God’s own Son, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One. Thank You, O my Father, For giving us Your Son, And leaving us Your Spirit, ‘Til the work on earth is done.” Amen!

From “There is a Redeemer” by Melody Green

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Charlene “Momma” Carr*

*USNA Chapel Director of Religious Education – Protestant  
Stevensville, MD*

Friday, March 11, 2013

Scripture: Philippians 2:25

**A**s we read the Bible, it is sometimes hard to fathom the might of God: He can make the blind see and the deaf hear. He performs miracles, and He sent His Son to walk among men and bear the weight of our sins. God is so mighty, that it becomes easy for us to feel unworthy of His presence. Nevertheless, the Bible is a reminder of the way our sinful lives can be used for the better. Everyone sins, and we need God to forgive us, and it is important to realize that God is willing to hear our confessions and accept our pleas for forgiveness. Epaphroditus exemplifies our reliance on God's mercy in Philippians 2. Epaphroditus was once near death, but God allowed him to be saved physically and spiritually. Epaphroditus responds to God's mercy with an increased will to serve others in need. The remainder of the passage shows his outpouring of love as a direct result of Christ living in him. It reminds us that recipients of the mercy of God will have a new desire to help those in need. Epaphroditus is set on fire to help others who are sick once he has received the mercy of God in his own healing.

It is important to remember our fragility and God's power. He holds our lives in his palms and has the ability to save or destroy us. As a result of our sin and rebellion against him, he would be justified in destroying us. The good news is, he chooses a different route. God has a willingness to accept our pleas if we open our hearts to Him. In Isaiah 43:11 God says, "I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior." The Lord says that He is the only Savior. He reminds us that he is the only one who can save justly and that we must rely on Him. Oftentimes, we struggle with acknowledging God's willingness to hear our pleas. We don't think we deserve the mercy of God, but, the good news is, God speaks to everyone, and he specifically requests that those with blind eyes and broken hearts are led into his presence. This means that God wants everyone to seek his presence and he is willing to forgive and save all who appeal to Him. As with Epaphroditus, this love inevitably yields life change.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, Thank you for Your forgiveness when I fail and for always guiding me with your spiritual light, even when I'm unsure of Your presence. I ask that you use me to do Your work in showing others your grace and fellowship by leading me to the blind so that I can help them see. Give me the courage to speak openly about the ways You have changed my life so that I can use it to inspire others to seek Your plan for their lives. By Your grace and for Your glory. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

Alexandra Brunell

OCF

Class of 2019 - Seven Valleys, Pennsylvania

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 126; Exodus 12:21-27; John 11:45-57

**A**s we continue our walk during this Lenten season, we ready ourselves to rid from our lives the things holding us back from walking in line with what God has for us. His purpose and plan for our lives is a perfect one. And we are, well, imperfect people. We stray daily from the path, heading in directions that either set us back in our journey or bring us right back to where we started. Outside influences and we ourselves deter and detract us from the mission at hand: to live a life pleasing to God. Thankfully, with each new day, we are granted a fresh opportunity to get back on track. During Lent we repent for wrongs done and seek spiritual restoration and renewal. We lay claim to the redemption provided through the sacrifice of the Lamb and receive the forgiveness and grace His sacrifice affords us.

Each of us has vices in life - struggles, negative emotions, bad habits that act as road blocks on our path to righteousness. In our own might it is impossible to combat and gain complete victory over these things. What a blessing it is to know we are not in this fight alone. Something as simple as humbling oneself and seeking the help of the Lord, relinquishing every burden, every struggle, every sin over to Him can bring about a sure victory. Though it might not be the most pleasant experience, change and growth never are, the rejuvenation and restoration you will experience are most certainly worth it. Being willing to make the necessary changes in your life, operating in obedience to God's word, and trusting Him every step of the way, will lead to the fulfilling life we all seek.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father: We come today recognizing and offering our gratitude for the sacrifice You made at Calvary on our behalf. Prepare our hearts and minds daily to hear from You and to operate under the guidance of Your Holy Spirit. Thank you for your unending, never ending love. In Jesus' name. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Autumn M. Wilson LT, CHC, USN*

*3RD Battalion Chaplain*

*United States Naval Academy*

Sunday, March 13, 2016

Scripture: Isaiah 43:16-21

**O**ften in today's culture, the saying is, "It is not what you have done for me in the past but what are you going to do for me in the future." Commanding Officers do not want to know what you did last month or last week but how your current and future plans are going to impact the mission. In this passage, the Lord essentially tells His people, do not be concerned with the miracles of the past for they are nothing compared to what I am going to do in the future. In verse 19, the Lord says, "For I am about to do something new!" You may have experienced setbacks and failures in the past but God says, "I am about to do something new!" Your marriage might have failed, you might feel stuck at your current job or you are not sure why you made the decision to come to the Naval Academy - know that God is at work in your life.

Your past might shape you but do not allow it to define you. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." God is ready to do something new in your life; are you ready to receive it? The best is yet to come.

**Prayer:** Lord, our past success or failures do not define who we are in You. We are defined by our relationship with Your son Jesus Christ. Thank You for doing a new work in the lives of those who call you Father. Hear our prayer this day and those prayers going forward. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Bryan Purvis, LCDR, CHC, USN*

*United States Naval Academy*

Monday, March 14, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 20; Exodus 40:1-15; Hebrews 10:19-25

**A**s perpetual leaders-in-training, we are called to go into battle against sin and temptation (Ps. 20:1-5). Even after our baptism, we endure suffering from temptation (Heb. 10:32). We meditate on the Lord at all times, but especially in times of temptation, so that He might remember us and give us the readiness to act (Ps. 20:4).

God gives us the garments to conquer sin and death, but we must put them on (Ex. 40:13). Through our baptism, He has soaked us with water that cleans our bodies and drenched us with the love, mercy, and forgiveness that cleans our consciences. Put on the garments of His forgiveness as Aaron was clothed in the vestments of the priesthood (Ex. 40:13).

As Aaron approached the sanctuary with a heart full of trust in the Lord, we must also approach the Lord with a sincere heart full of trust which reflects our confidence in His omnipotence to conquer sin and death (Ex. 40:15; Heb. 10:22).

When He has conquered temptation through you, don't forget to shout out to Him with joy and praise, because all the glory for conquering sin is His! (Ps. 20:6)

Let the cleansing blood and water of his forgiveness overflow from His precious side in your lives this Lenten season. Let it flow freely and confidently into the hearts of everyone with whom you interact, so that you might arouse one another into love and good works (Heb. 10:24).

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we come to you with hearts open to receive the gift of your mercy as we meditate on Your sacrifice this season. Remember us today and give us the strength to conquer sin. We know that You will not only fill us with Your confidence, but give us more than we can possibly use on our own, thus moving us to share it with the rest of the world through love and good works. We love You, and we praise You for continuing to work in our lives. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Christian Forbush*

*Roman Catholic Community*

*Class of 2017, Colorado Springs, CO*

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Scripture: 1 John 2:18-285

In 1 John, the Apostle John gives us a warning about antichrists, those who have come to deceive Christians by denying that Jesus is Christ. In verse 19 he identifies that they went out from the church but were not part of it. This shows that those who attempt to deceive us can come from our very midst and will take the truth and distort it. They are liars and we must discern the truth and not be influenced by their lies.

What John wrote is as true today as it was back then. The world lies to us. One of the ways that deceit comes is through the lie that all religions lead to God. So many people want to accept this in order to be 'inclusive', but in doing so they deny the need for Jesus. Even though it sounds like a good peaceful notion, it is a lie hidden under a mask of tolerance, like a wolf in sheep's clothing. This is a trap we must look out for because in saying that there are ways to the Father outside of Jesus, we deny who Christ is and we ignore the cost of the cross. Think of it like this, if there was another way to heaven besides Jesus coming to earth, living a perfect life, and becoming sin on the cross to die for us all why did Jesus come and die at all? It is unbiblical and illogical.

Shining light on this lie though shows how much we need Christ. Christ came to die for every single one of us because He loved us so much that he was able to do the one thing that could bring us back to Him. We are all in desperate need of Christ's payment for our sin, because without Him we would be utterly insufficient and unable to enter heaven.

We must keep this central truth before us, for without the cross we would be hopeless. If we believe the lies the enemy hurls at us, we would lose sight of the significance of Easter and Christ's death and resurrection. So we must heed John's warnings and abide in Christ, letting the Holy Spirit illuminate the truth so we may continue confessing the Son and the Father.

**Prayer.** Jesus, we confess you are the Christ, the Son of God. We thank you for the love you show us on the cross, for Your holy word and the Holy Spirit. We pray that we may not be deceived, but that we may abide in You as you abide in us. Lead us so that when the enemy tries to deceive us we will remember your word and bring You glory. In Jesus name. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*William Parker*

*Officer's Christian Fellowship*

*2016 Parker, CO*

Wednesday March 16, 2016

Scripture: Habakkuk 3:2-15

**H**abakkuk the prophet outlines the awesome nature of the wrath of God in his vision. Chapter 3 contains a description of a God who is glorious and mighty, eternally just and powerful. The whole of creation is subject to His power, for it is He who made it. While Habakkuk trembles in His presence, just as the mountains do, he recounts the mighty deeds of a God who overcomes the “leader of the land of wickedness.” Though it seems that God’s wrath is directed at the earth and the sea, Habakkuk shows that God’s wrath is the vehicle of salvation for His chosen people, His “anointed ones.”

This wrath, this awesome power of God, is the very wrath that was poured out upon Jesus at the time of his death. It is the price that had to be paid for man’s rebellion against God, the cause of our separation from our Creator. When Jesus gave his life, in accordance with the will of God, He overcame the wicked leader that was mentioned in the text, defeating death and rescuing the souls of man from eternal damnation and separation from God’s goodness.

We are blessed as Christians to be able to see the wrath of God in a different light after the sacrifice of Jesus. God’s wrath through Jesus’ sacrifice destroys the power of the Devil and allows us to be made whole again.

Since we know that we have been saved from the power of the Evil One, we must understand that he no longer has any power over us. We have the power, through the sacrifice of Jesus, to ward off his attacks and attempts to lead us astray. What areas of our lives do we continue to give to the “leader of the land of wickedness?” We must repent of our sins, and turn to the One who can cleanse us, turn to the One who created us.

**Prayer:** Lord, in this season as we remember the sacrifice of your Son Jesus on our behalf, we understand that we are fallen and helpless without You. Thank you for giving us a Savior who can avert your wrath that was focused on us and who can help us overcome the power of the Evil One. Allow us to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with You and those around us in this season of remembrance. Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Maxwell Bevill*

*BCM*

*Class of 2017 - Coral Springs, FL*

**Thursday, March 17, 2016**  
**Scripture: Isaiah 53:10-12 & Psalm 31: 9-16**

**R**un to what is True and Pure. Do not be bullied by pain or grief. Grief is a part of God's plan. Pain is fundamental to the life of all people, but especially to those in Christ. Why? Because we are called to be like Christ, and Christ Himself was made to suffer pain. Isaiah 53 points out that the love of God for us crushed His Son. It is that act of love, that anguish, that grief that is part of our sanctification. Hebrews 2 makes it even clearer that Christ went to the cross because His death was our deliverance, verse 10: "...make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering."

So, Christian, run to this truth. Sing this to yourself at night, in the morning, on the way to work: Christ's death and pain means that all of your pain is redeemed. That was the plan and that is what happened. In Psalm 31, David is pouring out his pain to God. His pain is drowning him. His pain is real. The cross does not mean your pain is imaginary, it means your pain is doing something.

Pain shows you weakness. Your need is laid bare in moments of pain and struggle. Let that weakness come out into the light for you to see. It's ugly. It may slap you in the face and leave you speechless; Christ is there with you anyway. He is not surprised. Do not hide from that kind of pain. Christ did not, and His past suffering is the reason we have hope.

Pain makes you rely on something or someone other than yourself. This is good when it pushes you to Christ. He is there. He is waiting, and His arm is not short and He is not mocked.

Pain has a way of focusing us. It can be hard to reflect on pleasurable things. It is good that what is wrong can bring pain, it makes us think. But more than that, pain makes you think about the cost. Not all good things are griefless, either. Life is costly. Love is costly. God named that price definitively when he sent His Son to the cross. Isaiah 53 spells that out for us. The best part is that Christ redeems it all. Every grief, every pain, every suffering for His sake. It's His too. He bought it (Heb 2:18).

**Prayer:** LORD God, bless You for your costly love. Thank you for making suffering about Your Son and Your glory and not merely about the pain. Thank you that my grief has been purchased in blood. Put this in my heart day by day. Father, help me to grow in my understanding of You this Lenten season. Give me grace to love others, to forgive as I am forgiven, and to bless those who cause my suffering. To You be the glory. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Noah Pehrson*

*Navigators*

*Class of 2018 - Apple Valley, Minnesota*

Friday, March 18, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 31:9-16

**T**here is something truly special about perseverance. To overcome a struggle, or state of anguish and become a renewed person with Christ is one of the purest expressions of beauty. Life is full of struggles and dark days but faith has the power to remove the darkest thoughts and replace them with Christ's unfailing love. You may feel like Christ has disappeared or abandoned you, but I assure you this is not the case. You must trust in the Lord and believe that His master plan will work. The Lord knows that you must have a little rain in your life to produce the most vibrant rainbows. There is always a purpose for every struggle in life.

Personally, I have learned a cornucopia of new things about myself through my struggles in life. I learned to reflect on my actions, and through an honest reflection, I could see what God had in store for me. I became selfless and I had a passion to help others. I persevered. The bliss and satisfaction that comes through perseverance and trust in the Lord is beautiful.

If you are struggling, know that there are a multitude of people willing to help you. God has placed His instruments all throughout your life, and you must seek them out. I ask you to never give up. The entire world could be weighing on your shoulders, but God only gives you this struggle, because he knows that you can overcome it. God made you in his image, and you are special. You possess amazing powers and can change the world but you cannot give up. The mountain that you are climbing is steep, but the view from the top makes it all worthwhile. The Lord will take your hand and deliver you from the hands of your enemies. You must trust. You must believe. You will persevere. I believe in you, and I am praying for you! The world is your oyster, now go out and find your pearls. Have a blessed and splendid day!

**Prayer:** Dear God, I am struggling. I need a saving grace. I need You. Right now, I feel like my world is crumbling around me and I am lost. I am coming to you with my burdens, struggles, and troubles. Renew my spirit in you and give me new strength. Let your love set me free and allow me to grow through you in spirit. Give me the strength, confidence, and ultimately hope to conquer my greatest fears and troubles. I am confident, that with You, I will find inner peace and grace. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*MIDN Andrew Harding*

*Roman Catholic Community*

*Class of 2019*

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 31:9-16

**D**avid, in this Psalm, finds himself in a place of distress and deep despair. He finds himself in a discouraging place, fearful for his life. However, despite how dark his fear is, he still finds strength to cast himself on the grace and mercy of God. In the midst of this praying Psalm, David stumbles upon a glimmer of hope. That hope is the fact that “by covenant, he expects the Lord to act.” What a great lesson for us to learn during this Lenten season! Our covenant with God, through his Son Jesus, obligates God to respond to our prayers. In fact, our covenant is like an insurance policy because it guarantees coverage in our time of need. Therefore, as we rise from the ashes of our own personal dark place, let us remember that there is no place God can’t reach us. As it is written in Psalm 139:8, even if we make our bed in Sheol (the depths of hell), God will be there.

David, through this lament, poured out his heart to God, but never lost heart. He somehow found hope in an unusual place, a dark place. It was there that he continued to look for the light.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, help us to see Your light in our own dark places. Help us to have hope and trust in You. Give us strength to abstain throughout this Lenten season as we deny ourselves to draw closer to You. Be our peace and guide. In Jesus’ name. Amen!

**Today’s devotional was written by:**

*Libya Ba’aqar*

*Friend of the Naval Academy*

## Palm Sunday, March 20, 2016

### Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8

In the reading of our Lord's Passion during Holy Week, we can see illustrated for us what is meant by the "Mind of Christ". The mind of Christ was the moving force behind the suffering that he endured for our salvation. In our world, influenced as we are by the language and concepts of Freudian Psychology, the "mind" is often portrayed in a bad light: it is a murky place, the location of repressed desires. Occasionally the darkness of the subconscious mind breaks out into reality in the form of antisocial or dangerous behavior. However, we see from Christ's Passion that the mind of Christ is a beautiful mind. It is a mind of humility and of divine love. The very essence of the Holy Trinity is Divine Love and by this Love he was willing to lay aside His glory and enter our world.

Our Lord came in this way in order to win men's loyalty by the glory of love and by that alone. Entering Jerusalem, he was received by acclamation rather than by proclamation. If these were to keep silent, the very stones would cry out. Having shared our human nature and all the outward circumstances of our lives, He further humbled himself to the ultimate test of humanity, which is death. In his death on a cross, He shared the terrible fate of any poor man who has been unjustly convicted. Yet, Christ's humility is the cause for His exaltation by those who love him. It is the sign of a true King that he appears "Kingly" even when he lays aside his crown and the trappings of power. When Christ left the throne of heaven to do his work on earth, He won an empire of human hearts. Christians have been given the opportunity to hear again the story of his Passion during Holy Week and to understand the mind of Christ. To know Him is to love Him, and may his mind come to be in us, as well.

**Prayer:** Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our nature and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of His great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of His suffering, and also share in His resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen! (from The Book of Common Prayer)

**Today's devotional was written by:**  
*LT Daniel McGrath, CHC, USN*

Monday, March 21, 2016

Scripture: Isaiah 42: 1-7

Isaiah 42 is the perfect scripture to reflect on as we celebrate this Lenten season. We see in verses 1-4 a prophetic description of the Messiah's character. The character of the servant is to be perfectly just, faithful, and gentle. This follows Chapter 41 where there is talk of Cyrus who is the King of Persia and in this scripture is referred to as "the one from the east". Cyrus was a pagan ruler, but he was a helper to the nation of Israel and God used him to protect his chosen people. This scripture suggests that the coming of this servant will be far greater than Cyrus and that He will ultimately redeem us all. Though Cyrus was great, the servant mentioned in chapter 42 is on a much higher level. In verses 5-7, God addresses the servant directly. He calls Him to be the light for the Gentiles.

Israel had also been referred to as God's servant. God chose Israel to serve Him and spread His light and message to the Gentiles, but because of their sin and brokenness, they failed. But God loved us, the sinners, the lost, the Gentiles, so much that He sent His Son to fulfill this mission. He did this so that all of those who are in darkness can see the light and no longer be ruled by sin.

Throughout my time at the Academy, I have studied numerous military leaders. All of them are very impressive in their own way. They have all had successful careers and great moral character, but none were perfect. Each has wavered, faltered, and stumbled. And who can blame them? They are human. Though they strive, none of them are the perfect leader. That's where Jesus comes in. He is the only perfect example of a leader. I'm so very thankful for His life as an example. It is my prayer that as believers and military officers, we embody the character that Jesus showed us by example in His life. This is what our nation and what our military desperately needs. God, I ask for the strength of your Spirit, I ask that I can be an example of your love and your character in this dark world. And I thank you for allowing us to be a part of Your kingdom and of Your mission here on Earth.

**Prayer:** "Lord, I thank you for loving us. I thank you for caring for us enough to send your Son to earth. He is an example of perfect character. He is our Savior and our Redeemer. I ask that during this season You keep Him at the forefront of our mind. Help us to live a life that reflects Him everyday. I ask these things in Your Son's precious, holy name. Amen!"

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Moira Kimmell*

*Class of 2016*

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Scripture: Psalm 71:1-2; Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 71: 1-2

**L**ife is a tumultuous journey. This is a well-known truth. The path is different for everyone, but there is pain all the same. Without God who gives us hope? Who gives us protection? Who gives us a purpose in life? God is the only one who can do that. God has heard the cries of His people, and He sent his Son to answer that call with His life. This is a great gift, and we should share it with the world.

It is an awesome calling to be able to spread this great news with all other people. This mission comes from a source greater than any other. God has given us the hope, the protection and the purpose we need in life.

**Prayer.** Lord, thank you for all the gifts you have given us. Thank you for blessing us with the sacrifice of your one and only son, Jesus. Speak to us Lord, and show us your will for our lives. Let it be your will and not ours. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Taylor Adams*

*OCF*

*Class of 2017 - Little Rock, AR*

## Wednesday, March 23, 2016

### Scripture: Matthew 26:14-25

**T**he Gospel of Matthew and Mark both precede Judas deciding to betray Jesus (v. 14) with Jesus' anointing by the woman at Bethany (vv. 6-13). The arrangement of these events should not be overlooked because of the comparison provided between Judas and the woman who anointed Jesus. Matthew describes how Jesus disciples "were indignant" (v. 8) at the woman pouring expensive perfume on Jesus head because "it could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor" (v. 9). Jesus, however, tells them her action is "a beautiful thing" (v. 10) and exhorts her because she has rightly used her time in His presence to worship Him. Conversely, Judas who spends a considerably greater amount time in Jesus's presence fails to respond in worship or adoration of the Lord, but instead hands him over to the chief priests (v.15). While it is easy to meet the actions of Jesus betrayer with reproach, we do not always respond to the presence of God in worship either. After Jesus died and was resurrected, God bestowed His Holy Spirit upon the Church, therefore His Spirit indwells us all. When we worship in the presence of God we effectively acknowledge that His unwarranted grace is the only thing which bridges the gap between our sinfulness and His holiness.

Like the woman at Bethany, we must realize that Jesus changes everything! We have access to our Creator and Redeemer! Let us not forget this fact, but instead, as His holy church, we must respond to the power of Christ within us in faithful obedience as we keep in the forefront of our minds that we serve a risen Savior!

**Prayer:** Dear God, Please teach us to be aware of Your presence and show us how to worship You in both thought and deed. Change our affections so that worship of You wouldn't be just something that we do as Christians but that it would be the only thing. May we be always be mindful that Your infinite love and grace is forever worthy of our love and praise. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Derek Moore*

*BCM*

*Class of 2016 - Wellsville, KS*

Thursday, March 24, 2016

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26; Psalm 116: 12-13

**T**he Lord's Supper - As the table is set in the presence of our enemies and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is given our hungry souls, what words could come but those of thankfulness for the unmerited love of our God? Oh how sincere the wonder we ought to have, seeing the bread and cup our Lord Jesus has given us to freely partake of! Such glorious mercy and grace, why do we daily forget how our Savior has loved us? Let us today be mindful of the power of the name upon which our justification and redemption lies.

Do our feeble minds fail to see the depth with which He loves? Surely we can cry with the Psalmist that we lie down to rest and rise again only as the Lord sustains us. Fully dependent on our God for rest, for nourishment, the very breath in our bodies even as we read. "What is man that you are mindful of him" oh Lord? For in your hand is my very life and the "breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). And yet, the Lord takes thought for us, giving a sign of the perfect and all-sufficient work he has already done that we may see and seek him. The body of the Savior was broken for us, that our bodies may be mended for Him. By faith we are first united with Christ in a death like his and then we celebrate his resurrection that we may know true life. We should let neither the cup nor the bread pass our lips without effect. Rather, in remembrance of the gift of God, let us seek to glorify Christ as our highest treasure and be humbled at his love.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, you alone have given us freely from Your storehouses of faith. Surely they are always full so a man might take all that he can carry and never return hungry! Remind us daily of the cross. Give us hearts of flesh that we would be humbled at the foot of the glorious tree. In our weakness, help us understand how you have loved, even as we walked in darkness. Lord, make our heart's desire to gain Christ and no more, for a man whose gain is Christ has gained the most precious treasure. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Seth Adams*

*Navigators*

*2017/Cleveland, NY*

# Good Friday, March 25, 2016

Scripture: John 18:1-19:42

**T**oday is Good Friday. So every year on Good Friday we gather to hear the story, to be reminded of the crucifixion and to make a choice. Today, the suffering, violence and brutality that we human beings inflict on one another are caught up in remembering the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. So what does it all mean? What difference does the crucifixion make? Does God love us more because Jesus died on the cross? Are we somehow more acceptable, more tolerable, to God because Jesus suffered?

Good Friday neither appeases God nor improves humanity. It reveals the depth of God's love even in the midst of rejection. Today, the sacrifice of Christ is saying: "I have seen your tears and heard your cries. I have listened to your questions. I have held your hands and hugged you. I have watched death take from you what you did not want to give up!" The years, the deaths, the suffering, the tears, the betrayal, the violence, the darkness and the Good Fridays have taught me that no matter how far or fast we run we can never get away. Through the repeated inquiry, "Were you there?" each one of us is invited to stand at Golgotha and admit our collusion in its evil. Thank God that we are NEVER abandoned. Golgotha reveals that security is in vulnerability, freedom is in surrender, and life is in death.

**Prayer:** Lord, on this Good Friday, we are kneeling before the broken, crucified body of Jesus. Empower us to feel your love and join in thanksgiving for your wondrous love. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Eric Johnson*

*Protestant Chapel Congregant – 1100 Worship Service*

*Annapolis, MD*

Saturday, March 26, 2016

Scripture: Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42

**D**uring this special time of the year, many Christians pay attention to the more emphasized days of the Holy Week: Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We observe Good Friday as the day that Jesus was crucified and died and Easter Sunday as the day on which He rose again. But how much time do we spend reflecting on this in-between time? Scripture says that when Christ's body was taken down from the cross, one of His disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, wrapped it with myrrh and aloe, and then placed it in a new garden tomb. For all intents and purposes, Joseph embalmed Christ's body like he would with any other deceased person.

Imagine you were there as a bystander on the day after Christ's death. For some time before, you had heard the good news that this man, Jesus Christ, was the Son of God. You had heard that He was performing miracles - healing the sick, making the blind man see. And you had heard that He had come to save the world from death and to bring the gift of everlasting life to those who believe in Him.

Then you watched Him being nailed to the cross, saw the crown of thorns draw blood from His brow, and heard His final cry. The One whom you believed would be your Savior now appeared to be just a lifeless body being prepared for the tomb. Would you not feel that your hopes of salvation would be buried with Him as well?

Of course, we have the advantage now of knowing how the story goes: It would not be long before Christ would rise to be among the living. But if you were in that moment, would you ever have been able to fathom the plan that God would unfold for His Son in just a few days? Would you ever be able to guess that this Man could actually be resurrected from a tomb that was supposed to seal His body away forever? That He would defeat death itself, not only for Him but for all of humanity? As you go about this Saturday, take time to reflect on this. Our lives are all pieces of God's story. If God could surprise you in the ultimate way by raising Jesus from the dead for your salvation, what other unseen plans does He have in store for your life?

**Prayer:** Father, I know I am a part of Your bigger story, and that You have a plan for my life. But it's easy to get caught up in the busyness of this world and feel like my work, my relationships, or my obligations are the things that are in control. Take me in your arms, O Lord. Give me faith to take refuge in You, because I cannot do this alone. Help me to realize that You are the one who is actually in control, and You have things in store for me that I cannot even imagine. You are my strength and my shield, O Lord, and I am thankful for the peace that You provide me. Amen!

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Christopher Goodale*  
*Protestant Chapel Choir*  
*Class of 2017*

**March 27, Sunday, Easter**  
**Scripture: John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

**A** story is told about a college professor who wished to communicate the essence of Christianity. His best student, a star athlete, scholar and devout Christian was very popular. As a willing participant for an in-class presentation, he agreed to perform push-ups in sets of ten. Two hundred pushups were his nightly routine; however, this challenge would push him well beyond his normal regimen.

As the professor sequentially offered each member of the class a doughnut, ten pushups were completed by the star pupil. Initially, students accepted the gift with ease. However, doughnuts were declined once the magnitude of the price was considered. Regardless, ten push-ups were performed, even if the gift was refused.

Students began to weep as they watched their hero struggle with each repetition. As other students entered the class to observe the spectacle, it only added to his strain. Although several insisted, the professor allowed no-one else to perform pushups. When all students (in excess of thirty) had received a doughnut, the professor commended his star pupil, saying, "Well done my good and faithful servant."

The class was astounded when the professor explained, "Jesus Christ was the only One who could perform what was required. Jesus was put to death on the cross; but God raised him on the third day. Through Christ's death and resurrection, God offers the gift of salvation."

**CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED. HALLELUIAH!**

**Today's devotional was written by:**

*Rev. Thomas K. Frizzell, Jr.*

*Chapel Pastor, U.S. Naval Academy*

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# YOUR NOTES



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