



**VIATORIAN
LENTEN
REFLECTIONS**

2011



This 2011 Lenten Booklet is available on our website at
www.viatorians.com



Lenten Reflections – 2011

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present to you, Youth Congress delegates and interns, associates and professed of the Viatorian Community, the 2011 Lenten Reflection Booklet. The reflections found within these pages are the result of over 40 Viatorian adults and youth submitting their prayerful thoughts for our common Lenten journey.

These reflections focus upon common themes: Jesus' 40 days spent fasting and praying in the desert and our own need for fasting, prayer and growth at Easter.

I am grateful to the many people who have submitted their prayerful reflections found within these pages. This booklet is one of those ways in which we nourish and support one another.

I am especially grateful to Associate Karen Cutler who coordinated and guided this project. Without her efforts, this Lenten guide would not have been available to us. Thank you, Karen.

Finally, my prayer is that the members of the Viatorian Community and all those who participated in our first Viatorian Youth Congress find time to reflect, listen, nourish and be nourished during this Holy Season. May the annual celebration of our Lord's life, death and resurrection give us and the world a deeper sense of peace and love for one another.

Fr. Thomas R. von Behren, c.s.v.

Fr. Thomas R. von Behren, CSV
Provincial

A PRAYER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Faithful God, may the renewal of our covenant with you, through prayer and fasting, bring us closer to you and to your people. We ask your help to remain faithful to our commitments and to grow in generosity and courage. We make this prayer in union with Jesus, whose passion, death, and resurrection opened the way for us. Amen.

LENTEN PRAYERS

Animated by your gospel, O Christ, we accept the challenges of this holy season. Through its graces, may we take up our daily crosses with generosity, courage, and love. May we draw nearer to you each day, preparing ourselves to live as people of resurrection. We ask this in your name, Jesus Christ, our model and guide. Amen.

Jesus, through your example, you taught us how to do good and to counter evil. Help us to persevere in this holy path that we may one day be united with you for all eternity. We make this prayer with hearts full of hope in that blessed day. Amen.

O God, we place ourselves in your hands without reserve. Help us draw near to you through prayer and good works, that we may one day enjoy the fullness of life with you forever. This we ask in the name of Jesus our Savior, who gave his life that we might find ours. Amen.

O God, through your mercy, we are forgiven and made whole. Through the example of Christ, we are shown the way of peace and reconciliation. Through the power of the Spirit, we are enabled to persevere in doing good. Be with us today and throughout our lives, we pray. Amen.

Jesus, our Savior, this season of Lent provides us with a new opportunity to renew our spirits in the light of your example of prayer and penance. Help us to resist temptation from every source and to draw closer to you during these forty days. We ask this with confidence in your constant care for us. Amen.

March 9, 2011 – Ash Wednesday

Gospel: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others.

Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

Reflection

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of our Lenten journey where we prepare for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. The ashes that we receive are a reminder of our own sinfulness, and some leave them on their foreheads all day as a sign of humility. We

do not wear the ashes as a sign that you are better or holier than others, but as a sign of reverence and respect.

When I read these two passages, I see the meaning as when you do things for others, do not do them to impress or boast. When fasting, do not do it to show others that you are fasting. When you give, do not do it to show others you are giving. I think these verses teach that when you make sacrifices, do it for yourself and for God. It explains that if you do not put up a false front and do these things out of the kindness of your heart then that is when you truly will get your reward.

As a teenager, Facebook and other social media have bombarded us with messages and influences from so many perspectives that it is overwhelming to take it all in. Facebook is like a trumpet used to announce every detail of your life in order to see your achievements or recognize what you are doing. Lent is a time to be deep in thought and reflect on your sins instead of your hype.

Giving and fasting are like praying in that they are a personal communication to God and does not need to be shared for the whole world to see. It is more of a secret with a special message intended for God alone. As the verse says, "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

A quote from Mother Teresa, reflects the sentiment of these passages when she said "The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway... You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway." She explained that doing good is not about the fame or gratitude that you may receive from these actions, but it is a way to show God that you are trying to follow in His ways and giving the glory to Him.

There are still many who silently give without any publicity, there are still countless people who pray intensely without anyone noticing, and there are still a lot who observe fasting without anyone knowing. We are here to serve others as Jesus did and to prayerfully

sacrifice in fasting to show respect for the one who sacrificed everything for us. These are the attitudes that Jesus wants us to have whenever we give or fast.

Joy Durkin, 17 - St. Thomas More Parish, Henderson, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because I want to try to be one of the people that Father Querbes sent out to spread the word of God. All over the world, there are clerics doing that exact thing and that is a kind of person that I would like to strive to be. I would like to encompass the qualities that mark a Viatorian with passion and enthusiasm, prayerfulness, humility, approachability, gentleness, love, and to be prophetic witness. Hopefully some day I will be an influential leader in the Viatorian community and lead others to these qualities that make me proud to be a Viatorian.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is reflecting on the year in prayer. I really want to look back and contemplate my actions so I can move forward in the future and pray so I have a closer relationship with God.*



Thursday, March 10, 2011

Gospel: Luke 9: 22-25

Jesus said to his disciples:

“The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.”

Then he said to all,

“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?”

Reflection

You must deny yourself and take up your cross daily.

The other day I was attending Mass at St. Francis Xavier Church in Corozal Town, Belize. It was first communion and the place was packed. The readings were being proclaimed and then it happened. Cecil, a begging street person who is severely addicted to crack and who frequently screams at the top of his lungs almost every night, wandered into the celebration and was headed straight to the steps in front of the altar. I was enraged that this was happening. I waited to see if someone else would move to escort him out. No one. I appointed myself to do the job. He turned to me as I approached, the reading still being proclaimed, and mumbled as normal while stretching out his hand that had a few dollar coins. Great, I thought. Now he's begging for money right here in church!

Jesus tells us we must deny ourselves if we wish to follow him. What do we need to deny? Don't we feed people who are homeless, teach children, assist with music in church, help families who are poor and

do many good things? Doesn't that count for denying ourselves? After all, we sacrifice our precious time to help other people in many ways. What more do we need to do?

As Cecil stretched out his hand, he was showing me the dollar coin and told me, in his limited, drug-fried brain way, that he came to church to give his donation to God. At that point he dropped the coin in front of the altar. I escorted him down the main aisle and out of the church. Cecil helped me to deny myself that day! I was totally worried about how to shield the people from this man. I was getting angry because I thought he was going to beg me for a dollar...right in church! Inside I was getting quite upset with his presence. Then his simple act of donating disarmed me. Cecil helped me to deny myself.

God reaches out to us through others every day. Are we able to detect this? My previous experiences of Cecil were not allowing me to see Jesus in him that day. Do our thoughts and feelings block us from truly following Christ? When we recognize our personal faults/issues, we are then invited to pick them up as our cross.

Questions for the Day: What am I being invited to deny today? What does my cross look like today?

Brother John Eustice, CSV serves at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Corozal Town, Belize

Friday, March 11, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 9: 14-15

The disciples of John approached Jesus and said, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Reflection

In the reading, Jesus is asked by followers of John the Baptist why his disciples don't fast often. Jesus replies, "Do you expect the guests at a wedding party to be sad as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." I believe Jesus is advising us to cherish the people, talents, blessings, and things that have been a part of our lives so far.

Lent is a time of fasting and repentance in preparation for Easter. However, I believe it's also a time to live in the present - to thank God for every little blessing he has granted us, to remember that life is short. Lillian Dickson said, "Life is like a coin. You can spend it anyway you wish, but you only spend it once." Jesus is telling us to live in the moment, to take each day as it is and make it a blessing.

As I finish my final year of high school at St. Viator, I look back at all the memories, activities, and new friendships that have come into my life since freshmen year. It's unbelievable how quickly time has passed. I must take Jesus' advice, live in the moment and cherish these last days before I begin a new chapter in my life.

I challenge everyone before we enter Lent to look at all the things that shape your life, especially your school, friends, family. Say a prayer to God thanking him for the blessing of life. Let's live Lent on

a positive note. Don't fear it. Embrace it just as Jesus embraced his death to offer us eternal life. As Marie Curie once said, "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood."

Brian Hansen, 17, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because knowledge and building a relationship with Christ is at the core of the Viator mission.*
- *One thing I will do to grow closer to God in this Lent is to carpe diem- "seize the day."*



Saturday, March 12, 2011

Gospel: Luke 5: 27-32

Jesus saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

Reflection

Like Levi, we are all called to be disciples. And like Levi, we don't need to be perfect.

It was during the first Viatorian Youth Congress that I realized I was doing the right thing by following Jesus' footsteps. One event that helped prove this was when we were in the workshop with Br. John Eustice and we experienced meditation. As I was putting myself in God's presence, I thought about all the events I have done in the past by volunteering at various places throughout Lake County. During my freshman year I had the opportunity to volunteer at EPIC Learning Center. I would babysit children while their parents would go to meet with teachers. Throughout these years of high school I attended places like this. Volunteering has become part of who I am today and has shaped my life in a way that I never would have thought. I feel that helping others through volunteering is a call from God. I enjoy what I do when I volunteer; the cost or distance does not matter. I am not doing this for my own benefit; I am just simply following Jesus' footsteps for the good of my community.

Sharon Zavala, 18, St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because it sets values for which I live by every day. These values enable me to provide the warmth of support to others who are suffering.*
- *One thing I'm doing to grow closer to God during this Lenten Season is going to church every Sunday. This helps me refocus myself because I often get caught up with school and work that makes me forget to reserve time for God.*



First Sunday of Lent, March 13, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 4: 1-11

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written:

One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: *He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."*

Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, *You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test."* Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: *The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve."* Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Reflection

In a teenager's life, there are many temptations. Some teens are tempted with drugs or alcohol, while others are tempted to do other things that they feel are morally wrong. We are taught when we are young, not to give in to peer pressure, and to stick to our beliefs. But, sometimes we catch ourselves questioning our beliefs as we are faced with the temptation to "fit in" or "be cool". Personally, I think

that a person is awesome when they stand up for their beliefs and show their true selves to those around them – in other words – they don't follow the crowd. Jesus was like that. The Devil tempted him many times with power, food and water, and even religion, but he never caved and stuck to his beliefs.

Reina Hohener, 18, St. Viator Parish and Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV



Monday, March 14, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right,

'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me. And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'

Reflection

At VYC, one of many lessons that rang true for me educated me about the difference between service and justice. Service solves immediate needs and the effects of injustice, which commonly correlates with food shelves, emergency services, and shelter. On Maryland Parkway, in the heart of Las Vegas, stands the Bishop Gorman clothing bank, otherwise known as Matthew's Closet, named after this very reading. Among the community, we are known to be stocked to the brim with clothing for all sizes, sexes, and seasons, readily available to anyone on a weekly basis.

However, on the flip side of the coin, lies justice. Responding to long-term needs - justice promotes social change. But not everyone can take political action, can they? What we can do is serve justice on an individual basis. Working at the Closet requires more than folding, heavy lifting, and hanging. It requires interaction and creating relationships with people. It requires listening to that man looking for a more healthy activity to spend his time instead of relapsing. It requires assisting that woman who needs nice work attire for her job interview to support her family.

Along with his urging for us to serve others without judgment, Jesus does call on us to go beyond and welcome strangers to perhaps initiate the road to personal justice. Such a simple question, "When did we see you... naked and clothe you?" comes with a simple answer. We are all God's children, and we as Viatorians must find it in our hearts to share our blessings with all our brothers and sisters in need during and after the Lenten season.

Megan Flaviano, 18, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because it taught me about looking beyond the immediate needs of service to see that justice is addressed for those people, so that they might learn to help themselves.*

- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God this season is to work to train underclassmen to take leadership of Matthew's Closet.*



Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 6: 7-15

Jesus said to his disciples: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. “This is how you are to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

“If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”

Reflection

This gospel shows us how to pray by giving us the Lord’s Prayer. In this prayer it says “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name” This mean that God should be respected and honored. His name should not be spoken in a disrespectful way. “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven” We acknowledge that His kingdom is definitely coming and that we do not doubt him. We also show that we must learn to do things his way, by his will. We should stop being selfish and trying to satisfy our own desires because his

plan for us is much greater than we can imagine. “Give us today our daily bread” This not only means our necessities for life but also our spiritual necessities. We need our daily bread, Jesus, to nourish our souls and body. Without him our soul and body would be dying. “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” This acknowledges that we are sinners and that we should forgive those who have done wrong to us because we ourselves have done wrong to others. If you can’t forgive others, how can God forgive you? “And do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one”. In this we ask our Father to help us see all the wrong in the world so that we may stay away from it. The Lord’s Prayer was given to us so that we may talk to God in the most respectful way and to help us see what we really need.

Molly O’Connor, 17, & Rachel Breault, 17, St. Patrick Parish, Kankakee, IL

- *Being a Viatorian means that I have a life with prayer and service. I encourage students to participate in Taize and other Lenten prayer services. I also work on service projects with the youth group. Being a Viatorian has influenced my life greatly by helping me chose a path that works with others for others.*
- *For Lent I have decided to do liturgy of the hours so that I can grow closer to God and his word.*



Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Gospel: Luke 11: 29-32

While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them, “This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. At the judgment the queen of the south will rise with the men of this generation and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and there is something greater than Solomon here. At the judgment the men of Nineveh will arise with this generation and condemn it, because at the preaching of Jonah they repented, and there is something greater than Jonah here.”

Reflection

It seems like everyone in today’s world is looking for a sign. True faith is lacking when some need a “sign” of reassurance. This generation is looking for a sign to gain this reassurance. However, when they finally receive a genuine sign of God, they will deny it. When the Lord finally sends his Son down to the earth, the sign seeking population will ignore it. The queen thinks that the wisdom of Solomon is greater than the wisdom of the Lord. Her pride impedes receiving the true significance of God’s message. The Son of Man, the Savior, will be judged otherwise. They were eager to find a sign yet at the same time eager to dispel that a sign had been sent.

Similar to the generation in the passage, the modern people of the earth are at times trying to find that “sign.” Patience is not a virtue in this time. Following one’s own intuition has become the prevailing action over trusting the great Almighty God. Our inherent flaw is that we think that we know best. For example, teenagers always think they are smarter than their parents. They don’t see the

potential repercussions of some of their actions, but their parents do. After looking at the situation, the parents are right. We pray to God expecting him to answer our prayers, and he does answer them. But we don't want to acknowledge that he has answered them. He may have answered them in ways we don't approve of. "I wanted to become a doctor, but instead I am a teacher." In these circumstances, God saw fit for that person to devote their life to teach. God knows the path in our lives that we should take. One has to acknowledge that his or her life is in someone else's hands - God. God will lead one down the path that will benefit them to the fullest. He knows what is best for everyone. One has to have faith in God that the best decision will be made. Faith is not meant to be easy, but one that has faith in God will be well taken care of. Bumps and rough patches are bound to occur, but the result is a fine finished product.

The true sign was walking the earth talking to the crowds of this generation. The ever persistent sign seekers were staring right at the answer but still chose the incorrect response. This generation would not trust, but we have the ability to. When things seem like they are spirally downhill, we can take solace in the fact that God is in control of our lives. The true sign will appear and guide your life towards His vision. Let go, God will catch you.

Alex Pereszlenyi, 17 - St. Thomas More Parish, Henderson, NV.

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because it gives me a sense of purpose. It helps give me a vision for myself. I can see the work of the Viatorians and use that as motivation to take on things in my life.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is to pray a lot more consistently. In a busy day, sometimes one forgets to pray among the chaos. This is not a valid excuse, and I need to give God the time he deserves.*

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 7: 7-12

Jesus said to his disciples: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asked for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asked for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

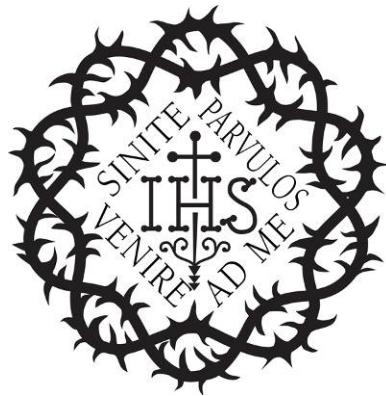
Reflection

Today’s gospel comes from the end of the famous Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is the New Moses, the teacher and preacher of the Kingdom of God. A clue to how this reading might speak to us today comes from the very end of the gospel. After reiterating the “golden rule” Jesus reminds his people that “this is the law and the prophets.” Actually everything he tells us in today’s gospel and in the entire Sermon on the Mount is “the law and the prophets.” Jesus has not come to present an entirely new God – the God of Jesus is the God of Israel from of old.

The God of Jesus is the God of Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. When Matthew’s community heard the words “ask, seek, and knock” they most likely began to think of the words of the prophets: “O people of Zion...God will be gracious to you when you cry out, as soon as he hears he will answer you.” (Is. 30:19) “You shall cry for help, and God will say: Here I am!” (Is. 58:9) “Before they call, I will answer, while they are yet speaking, I will hearken to them.” (Is. 65:24) and “When you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you.” (Jer. 29:13-14).

This is the God we seek – a gracious and giving God who does not make us jump through hoops and require that we develop complicated strategies for salvation. Our God is the God of Israel and Jesus – a God who hears the cry of the poor even before we cry out. And lest we think for a minute that all of the work of finding freedom, joy and salvation rests on our backs, we need to hear a voice from our Christian tradition: “In the first place it should be known that if anyone is seeking God, *the Beloved is seeking that person much more*” (John of the Cross).

Brother Daniel Lydon, CSV serves as the Coordinator of Vocation Ministry and Director of Association for the Viatorian Community



Friday, March 18, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 5: 20-26

Jesus said to his disciples: “I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.* But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, *Raqa*, will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.”

Reflection

Jesus claims that murder is not the only sin that will result in “judgment.” People who hold grudges and insult one another are also “liable for judgment.” This “judgment” is the mark of sin. Jesus is comparing murder with grudges and insults. This comparison might seem a little far-fetched, but in fact it is not. For every time we hold a grudge or insult someone we are “killing” them. Through grudges we are “killing” the friendship and peace that is possible. Through insults we are “murdering” spirits. Jesus not only wants us to be considerate of each other’s bodies, but also of each other’s spirits - because that is what is the most important.

Not only does he want us to not hold grudges or insult others, but he also calls us to be peacemakers. In verses 23-24 he says that if a friend “holds something against you,” take action to help reconcile the tension. He wants us to find out what is bothering others and try to work things out.

The passage ends with Jesus saying, “Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.” This is not actually talking about prison. It is talking about sin. We must try to fix the mistakes we have made. If we knowingly sin and are able to right that wrong, we must fix it. This is the “payment” Jesus is referring to. We must fix our mistakes and make right what we have done wrong.

Eric L. Loy, 18, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because it defines who and what I do for others. The way the Viatorian community gives back and helps others in need is something I love being part of, and will always try to do in the future. Being a Viatorian is something that is hard to explain in words, but very easy with actions.*
- *This Lent I will grow closer to God by reading a Bible verse each morning before I get out of bed.*



Saturday, March 19, 2011 Feast of Joseph, Husband of Mary

Gospel: Matthew 1: 16, 18-21, 24a

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

Second Sunday of Lent, March 20, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 17: 1-9

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Reflection

This reading is very special because Jesus let a few disciples in on a secret that he had that was miraculous and incredible. He trusted them enough to show them this secret, and trusted that they would not reveal this vision of Moses and Elijah until He had risen from the dead. Trust is a very important factor of fellowships that many people lack. Trust is what brings people happiness. Without trust we cannot be truly happy because we look for God in our neighbors, and the ones that we trust are the ones who make us happy and want the best for us.

Davey Martinez, 16, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because the Viatorians do an outstanding job of representing their faith in everyday life.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is giving more effort into my confirmation class because it is my commitment to God, and I have begun to pray more on a daily basis.*



Monday, March 21, 2011

Gospel: Luke 6: 36-38

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

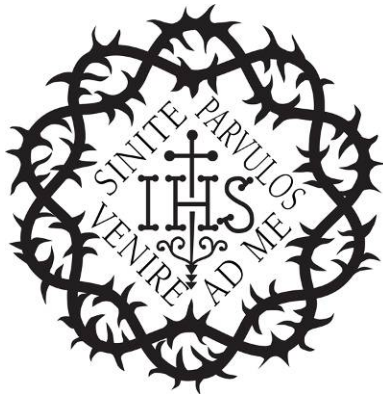
Reflection

Children often hear their parents say “Treat others they want to be treated”. This sounds like simple advice but sometimes it is the hardest thing I can do. Not only do I have to treat others well to begin with but even when others are being rude or if they are having a bad day I still have to forgive. It is hard to realize that when people are not being the best person they can be it is probably because of something that is going on in their life. It is hard sometimes for me not to jump to judging them and thinking that they are rude people that I would not want to get to know. The better thing to do is to stop for a moment and think why that person is acting that way and pray for the troubles they might be having.

Forgiveness is also a very difficult thing. God has so much power and love that no matter what I, or anyone does, he cannot love me or anyone any less and he will always forgive. There are many times when I am at school and someone bumps me in the hall and does not say sorry and my brain instantly thinks, “How rude!” but the truth is they might be thinking about something or maybe they think I ran into them, there is an infinite amount of possibilities to why they did not apologize and I have learned that I should not be so quick to judge others before “walking in their shoes”.

Sarah Maier, 17, St. Thomas More Parish, Henderson, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because Viatorians teach the same values that I live by. The Viatorian community is very welcoming and has a great history. Viatorians are big on teaching and educating, and learning is one of the greatest gifts we have. One day I hope to become a teacher in one way or another and being part of a Viatorian community helps get me going in that direction.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten season is that I am trying to be less judgmental of people's attitudes and actions because I never know what they are going through. I think by judging less I can grow closer to God through people that I might not even get to know if I do not look past previous judgments that I have made.*



Tuesday, March 22, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 23: 1-12

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation ‘Rabbi.’ As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi.’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Reflection

In this reading Matthew addresses the problem of hypocrisy and the value of being humble. The Pharisees in this reading were preaching about religious obligations, but not listening to their own teachings. They were being hypocrites. In James’ New Testament epistle he writes that “faith without works is dead.” This is Jesus’ message also. Christians should show their faith by doing works for God.

The reading also emphasizes the importance of being humble. The Pharisees were not humble. They showed off their jewels and garb. Jesus wants to teach us that we should not flaunt our faith. We should not stand on a street corner and act like a “Jesus Freak.” We

should instead pray silently or with a group, and work to better understand our religion. By better understanding our religion we will not be tempted to hypocrisy.

St. Viator and Fr. Louis Querbes both taught the importance of ministry to youth and service. I also believe these ministries are important. They can help us avoid hypocrisy and become true Catholics and Viatorians.

Through ministry you grow closer to God. Before high school I was not very faith-filled and didn't understand or want to understand my faith. When I came to St. Viator, I started to learn more about my faith through class, through Mass, and through Campus Ministry. By sophomore year I was completely turned around. I began to enjoy my faith and I had a passion for service.

Service is what really sparked my interest in faith. As I began our required service hours I thought it was a drag. But soon I realized the magnificent opportunity I had. I had the opportunity to help those less fortunate than me.

I have been extremely lucky to have a family that is stable financially and emotionally. But that is not true for everyone. During the summer I helped out kindergartners and second-graders at an inner city school. One girl was having a difficult time learning to subtract and was beating herself up about it. The teacher asked me to help her. When the girl was able to do the problem, she showed me her work. She had the biggest smile on her face. She was filled with so much pride and excitement. That is why I do service. It put a smile on that girl's face.

Libby Donnelly, 17, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian has helped me to understand grow my faith through service.*
- *This Lent I am going to pray more. Praying regularly has always been difficult for me. This Lent I am going to get into*

the rhythm of praying every day. I have decided to do this by using a notebook. As we enter the Lent I am going to write in it the names of people I need to pray for and people I am thankful for. Too many times people only ask God for something, instead of sitting back and thanking him for everything he has given. This season I am going to do that, Thank God.



Wednesday, March 23, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 20: 17-28

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, "What do you wish?" She answered him, "Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus said in reply, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?" They said to him, "We can." He replied, "My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Reflection

Jesus had done the unthinkable! He put together authority with service and with sacrifice. "The sacrifice of one's life for the sake of another." Authority without sacrificing love is hard and self-serving.

Also Jesus used blunt language to explain what kind of sacrifice he had in his head.

"His disciples must drink his cup if they expect to reign with him in his kingdom." The cup he had in mind was a bitter one involving crucifixion. What kind of cup does the Lord have in mind for us? For some disciples such a cup entails physical suffering and the struggle of martyrdom. But for many, it entails the long routine of the Christian life, with all its daily sacrifices, disappointments, set-backs, struggles, and temptations. A disciple must be ready to lay down his or her life in martyrdom and be ready to lay it down each and every day in the little and big sacrifices required. An early church father summed up Jesus' teaching with the expression: to serve is to reign with Christ. We share in God's reign by laying down our lives in humble service of one another as Jesus did for our sake. Are you ready to lay down your life and to serve others as Jesus did?

Rebecca Lychock, 18, St. Viator Parish, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian means everything to me! I feel being apart of this community has strengthened my faith and made me closer to God.*
- *This Lent I want to show that I'm more dedicated to my faith and family. So for Lent I will give up my phone every Sunday and clear out my schedule so it will be a family day. We will do activities and since my family doesn't really get together anymore for dinners I want to try and bring that back. :) Also we can go to morning mass and have breakfast or the evening mass and make dinner afterwards. It's a win, win situation.*

Thursday, March 24, 2011

Gospel: Luke 16: 19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: “There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Reflection

This Gospel says a lot to me about what Jesus has in store for each and every one of us. Whether our struggles in life may be like the poor man Lazarus, illness, or money, we all have to deal with something. It could be depression, a break-up, trouble finding a job – everyone has something. It is said in scripture, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for God’s Kingdom shall be theirs.”

God does not discriminate over money, race or any other issue. He accepts and loves us. He simply asks people to do what they can with what they have and where they are. These are the people who will be with our God. We should not praise money or objects, but praise and follow God. Material items are but a small part of our existence while we are on earth, but God is a part of our everything, for all time and will give us life after death and be with us eternally.

Stevi Portz, 15, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV



Friday, March 25, 2011 Annunciation of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Reflection

'May it be done to me according to your word.'

Is that a statement of faith, or what? I sometimes think that Mary sounds a little too unbelievable. But as I read this Gospel over and over, I was reminded that Mary didn't just jump up and agree to this. The line from the gospel is "but she was greatly troubled at what was

said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.” I believe she was scared – ‘how can this be?’ but she listened and trusted and had faith that God would be with her, take care of her and watch over her. With this in mind she could say with certainty ‘may it be done to me according to your word.’ Do we trust in God to that degree? Are we able to give ourselves over – completely – to God? I’m not so sure that I am able to give myself over completely all the time. This world we live in is a crazy, scary, mixed up place and it can be difficult to make decisions that reflect a love and trust of God. That is our challenge – and not just here in the season of Lent but every day - in every situation we find ourselves. We need to remember that God loves us - we need to trust and remember ‘nothing will be impossible for God.’

Karen Cutler, a Viatorian Associate since 2003 serves as Coordinator of Programs & Special Events for the Viatorian Community.



Saturday, March 26, 2011

Gospel: Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them Jesus addressed this parable.

"A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly, bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the

field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

Reflection

Often times the quote, "Life isn't fair," runs through our minds when we do not get the attention we feel we deserve. Just like the older son in this scripture passage from Luke, we all at one point or another find ourselves having the same feeling of unhappiness and overall jealousy. At home parents seem to "throw parties" for the lost son; at school staff spends extra time with a troubled student.

From the older son's perspective, it may not seem that he is acting out of jealousy. Rather, it might be the natural reaction of frustration at having so much effort and determination not get the recognition it deserves.

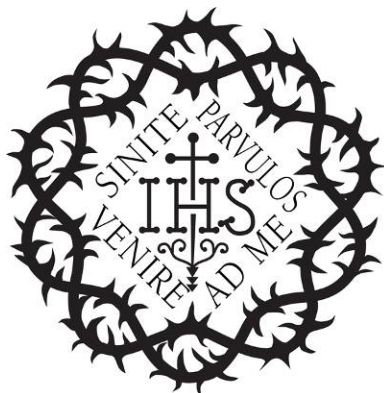
It is important, though, to recognize that our siblings and/or peers at school are not always on the right path. They are the ones who really do require more guidance to make better choices. And, when they finally do come around to realize it, a celebration is needed. It may come easy to blame parents or staff for favoritism, but it is vital to be aware of their intentions; they just want to help. We instead should be selfless and contribute to getting our siblings and/or peers back

on the right track as well because it contributes in making society a more caring and loving place.

We must seek what is best for all us even if it sometimes requires sacrifices. In the end, God is our Father. And even when we don't get the attention we yearn for, God shows His love to each of us through his Son, Jesus Christ, who lives in each of us.

Susana (Susy) Gonzales, 17, St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because of my growing relationship with God. Through the Viatorian Community, I have learned about the different forms of prayer allowing me to practice the one to which I feel most connected. I have also created new relationships with others who share the same faith as me, enabling me to be comfortable enough to seek them for advice.*
- *One thing that I am doing to grow closer to God during Lent is making sure that I give thanks to God both at the start and end of the day. Oftentimes, days pass by without taking a second of the day to express gratitude to God for the many blessings He gives me. I want to make sure I devote some time to Him.*



Third Sunday of Lent, March 27, 2011

Gospel: John 4: 5-42

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.

It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.— Jesus answered and said to her,

"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink, 'you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her,

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will

worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one speaking with you."

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?" They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.

Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.”

Reflection

There are two important messages in this Gospel. First, in the reading the woman is offered water from the well that will make her never thirst again. Jesus is offering her not nourishment for the body, but nourishment for the soul. Through the metaphorical “well,” Jesus is telling us that we do not have to go through life alone. There are times in our lives that we ask ourselves, “How can I go on?” or “Why me?” or we call out, “Somebody help me!” We do not have to draw life from “the well “on our own. All we have to do is ask God and he will be there, as he always will be, to help us.

Second, this reading is one of the many times we see Jesus breaking the rules of society and associating himself with people society at that time deemed unacceptable. The woman in this reading is a Samaritan and at that time Jews and Samaritans did not mingle. It was particularly wrong for a man and a woman from the two groups to speak alone in public. The woman in the Gospel was also known for having too many husbands. For those reasons, Jesus’ disciples are surprised he is talking to her. We must learn from this reading that God reaches out not only to Catholics and Jews. We must recognize that every person, no matter his or her religion or ethnicity, is a child of God. We must accept all people - sinners, saints, Christians, whites, blacks, Jews, Muslims, Asians, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists – all people! We are all made in the image of God and will return to him when we are called.

Grace Donnelly, 17, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *I am proud to be a Viatorian because Viatorians teach both of these lessons each day. Viatorians welcome all people*

regardless of race or social standing to join their community devoted to God. I am truly thankful that God allowed me to join their community.

- *This Lenten season to grow closer to God I will pray more often and work to be kinder and thankful for all he has created. That includes his people, animals, and environment. Hopefully, then I will appreciate a small amount of the countless things God does for us each day.*



Monday, March 28, 2011

Gospel: Luke 4: 24-30

Jesus said to the people in the synagogue at Nazareth: "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

Reflection

What I take away from this passage is that regardless of our differences and flaws, we are all God's children. We cannot let other people's views of us influence our lives because we are created in God's image and He created us the way he wanted us to be.

Erica Silvestri, 16, St. Viator Parish, Las Vegas, NV

- *To be a Viatorian means being a part of a family. It is a blessing and a gift to be part of a community that supports you, guides you in life and more importantly, your faith. I am proud and lucky to be a Viatorian.*
- *During Lent I vow to advantage of being a Viatorian and becoming more involved in my faith and church.*

Tuesday, March 29, 2010

Gospel: Matthew 18: 21-35

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said,

‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.’ Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, Pay back what you owe.’ Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened,

they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?’ Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”

Reflection

In this reading, Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who has sinned against him. Jesus answers that he should forgive others eleven times more than he thinks – not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

I used to think that forgiveness was an easy task. Hurt can heal with forgiveness, and God says to forgive. So that's what I would do. But now I know that I never understood the concept of forgiveness. I've found that forgiveness is a deep inner acceptance of oneself and one's actions, as well as an acceptance of another's self and actions, regardless of circumstances, feelings, or fear.

As I've grown older, I've attempted to understand the reasons behind people's actions. Why they hurt me. Why they've hurt those close to me. Why they've failed to show remorse for their actions. But in reflecting on this reading, I realize that I need to go back to the thoughts I had when I was young. Trying to understand the reasons behind everything can only go so far. God is the only one who knows the person.

It is right to look at each situation from another's point of view. And if I gain understanding, I am one step closer to forgiveness. But if I can't understand why someone has hurt me, I must recognize that I can't know everything about the person. I must trust God and forgive. I must forgive over and over and over, no matter how difficult.

Just as the master in the story automatically forgives the servant, we must automatically forgive. We must let hatred and anger go and replace them with love. In doing so, we will find that God will fill us with an inner peace.

I've come across people who have felt that forgiving over and over and over again is just not smart. Some think that we shouldn't make ourselves vulnerable to being hurt again. But this is when I think we must trust God and look to him for guidance. I don't think that it is

wise to ignore it when you are hurt. You should deal with it. But I think that the first step is forgiveness. And as Jesus says, we must forgive “not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Valerie Kiebala, 18, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because it continually reminds me of my values, my priorities, and the importance of my faith. The community that surrounds me strengthens my character, my understanding of myself, and my relationship with my God, while giving me meaning in life.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God this Lent is work on forgiving everyone who has wronged me or someone I love. These conflicts gnaw at me and I know that something must be done. So I am using this Lent to focus on a way to improve those relationships.*



Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 5: 17-19

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

Reflection

In this passage Jesus talks about Jewish religious law. Jesus is trying to convince his followers that his teaching doesn't contradict the Law, but actually promotes it. He also states that those who follow the Law will be rewarded greatly in Heaven and those who don't will be punished. I think that Jesus teaches this so he doesn't confuse his followers. If Jesus contradicted Jewish law, he most likely would have alienated them. The question for us is “How am I doing this Lent following the Law of Jesus?”

Mark Lakowske, 16, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian to me means that I have a calling to aid in the teaching of God's word to others. That doesn't mean reading the Bible to others. It means that I should 'preach' God's words by my actions. I have a responsibility to demonstrate God's will for us and make Jesus' law come alive in my life.*
- *One thing I am doing this Lent to grow closer to God is to follow through with the Viatorian calling more thoroughly. I am going to try to not just be nice to others. I am going to try to teach others to also follow my good examples.*

Thursday, March 31, 2011

Gospel: Luke 11, 14-23

Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, "By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons." Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

Reflection

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." I recently helped lead a Kairos retreat at my school, and I feel the meaning of this gospel directly relates to the experience of Kairos. Within our groups we were able to discuss the good and bad things that occur in our daily lives. Knowing the bad things, or demons in our daily lives gives us the ability to get rid of them and ask for God's help. Practicing the good things in our lives allows the Kingdom of God to truly come upon us. Be true to yourself, help others, and have faith in God. With God all things are possible. Those who believe will be happier in their daily lives. Kairos is God's time and it truly allows us to be with God. Never let your faith scatter.

Kerigan Kenny, 18, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because it allows me to practice my faith freely. The Viatorian Youth Conference gave me a new understanding of my Catholic beliefs.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is being active in my faith by helping others.*



Friday, April 1, 2011

Gospel: Mark 12: 28-34

One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?"

Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, 'He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Saturday, April 2, 2011

Gospel: Luke 18: 9-14

He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else.

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity--greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'

But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

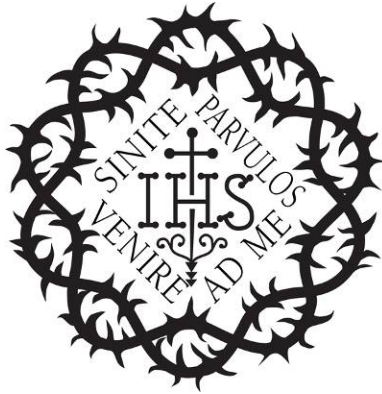
Reflection

When I reflect upon this passage from Luke, I am reminded of how looking at one's own personal sin can be a very humbling experience. Reflecting only on all the good one does can lead to self-righteousness. Even though the tax collector appears self-righteous in his daily life, he is actually one of the more humble people of the town. The Pharisee felt self-righteous because of the ignorance of his own sin.

The simple lesson of this parable is that if you recognize your own wrongdoing and pray for forgiveness, then you become more humble and stop seeing only the good you do in life.

Jill Meyer, 17, St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because I love how we support giving young people the best life possible as well as the amount of time we spend praying and reflecting on our relationship with God. Also, our dedication to service is phenomenal.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God during Lent is to try to spread the Word of God to at least one of my friend's each day. I also plan on fasting from soda.*



Fourth Sunday of Lent, April 3, 2011

Gospel: John 9: 1-41

As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." So they said to him, "So how were your eyes opened?" He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see." And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know." They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees.

Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained

his sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Messiah, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him."

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from."

The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him.

Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become

blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

Reflection

Jesus healing the blind man is a well-known miracle. Even though we don't see Jesus' physical form anymore, we know that he continues to work miracles in our lives. The sad thing is that people don't always give him the credit. They think that everything can be explained through science and human effort, we think that we can take credit for God's work. After all, where did those brilliant minds come from that made all of these scientific discoveries? Who could come up with such a complex and beautiful thing as the human mind? God continues to bless us with miracles everyday of our lives. We just need to remember to open our hearts and our minds to remember from whom those gifts are really given.

Kim Martinez, a Viatorian Associate since 2009, serves as Campus Minister at Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because I get to be a part of a community of believers who have actively chosen to do God's work every day of their lives in every task they do. I know that I have the support of a community who supports me and loves me and believes in the work I do*
- *This Lenten season I plan to put time aside every day to go into the chapel and just spend some quiet time in God's presence. Listening with my heart to His plan for me.*

Monday, April 4, 2011

Gospel: John 4: 45-54

When he came into Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves had gone to the feast.

Then he returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death.

Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "You may go; your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and left.

While he was on his way back, his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live. He asked them when he began to recover. They told him, "The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon." The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live," and he and his whole household came to believe.

Now this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea.

Reflection

This passage from John's gospel is an example of Jesus performing miracles when needed, even if it means that is the only way people will believe in him. This makes me uncomfortable because people should not need miracles just to believe in God or because one's son is dying. I know losing a son is hard, but there is a reason why he is dying. It doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad reason, but there is a reason. People should believe in God without needing miracles because then one can truly believe in God.

However, I am impressed with the father's faith in this passage. He approaches Jesus, a stranger who performs miracles, because of the love for his son. To ask a complete stranger to cure one's son really takes a strong faith, or else one would just look a fool.

I am also struck that sometimes we look for big miracles, rather than small everyday miracles that we fail to recognize, to support our faith. Taking time from our day to open a door for somebody or complimenting somebody may be miracles, signs of God's presence, to others who are having a really tough day.

Perhaps we might want to think about how we can be a miracle for others rather than depending on miracles from God.

Alan Morales, 16, St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because now I believe in God more than I did earlier in my life. Since the Viatorian Youth Conference I've become a more religious person.*
- *One thing I want to do to grow closer to God this Lent is to pray more often. During VYC I learned to take some time out for myself and just reflect or have a conversation with God. I want to do more of that this Lent.*

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Gospel: John 5: 1-16

After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes. In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me."

Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your mat, and walk." Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked. Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The man who made me well told me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who told you, 'Take it up and walk'?" The man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away, since there was a crowd there.

After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him, "Look, you are well; do not sin any more, so that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well. Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he did this on a sabbath.

Reflection

Imagine a world without physical or spiritual illness. Is there such a place? Today we live in a society where there are people who feel left out, abandoned, out of place and without a purpose. How do we respond to them? Is it easy for us to notice who they are?

This scripture passage tells us to act as Jesus did when we see those who are excluded. This may take some effort on our part. Most people who are physically or spiritually ill do not find it easy to talk to others about their problems. They prefer to keep it bottled up inside. It is our responsibility to seek out those who need our help the most.

You may ask yourself, “Who are those in my life who are physically or spiritually ill?” Maybe it is the person sitting alone at meal times or the person who does not talk much. Maybe it is the former friend to whom you no longer talk. Whoever it is, we have to extend the compassion and mercy that God shows to us, just as Jesus showed mercy and healed the “one man who had been ill.”

So why are these people ill? Do they want to be well? No one wants to be ill forever. But maybe some people are “ill” because they aren’t looking at the right role models. Maybe they have struggled with their faith because of illness. Maybe they have chosen drugs or bad relationships to end their illness. This scripture passage calls us to bring others closer to Jesus. We are asked to “make them well” by leading them to true happiness and health – God.

That might call for personal sacrifices. Jesus was ridiculed when he healed on the Sabbath. We might be ridiculed if we help to “cure” the ill by sitting with the person who others think is “weird” at lunch, or by trying to rekindle a lost friendship. Helping to heal the ill may not always be the popular thing to do, but it is always the right thing to do.

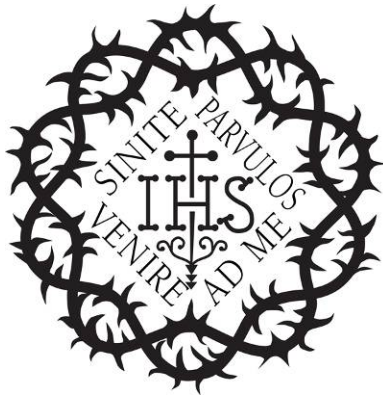
Jesus tells the man to “take up your mat and walk.” How are you helping yourself and those who need healing to do the same and “walk” into a closer relationship with God?

DJ Horstmann, 16, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because it allows me to be in a community where I can be myself and share my faith with others. In addition, being Viatorian is important because*

it offers me experiences and opportunities to help others that I would not have otherwise.

- *This Lenten Season I am going to take an extra five or ten minutes out of my day to pray. During this time I will try to use a different prayer style each day. In addition, I am going to talk to someone with whom I have never spoken at lunch so that I may walk toward more intimate relationships with God and others.*



Wednesday, April 6, 2011

Gospel: John 5: 17-30

But Jesus answered them, "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work." For this reason the Jews tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also. For the Father loves his Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes. Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life.

Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself. And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation. "I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

Reflection

I believe that Jesus was talking about how those who pick either God or Jesus don't actually believe. One does not go without the other. One cannot say that he believes in Jesus Christ but not believe in God. Also one cannot follow the teachings of one without acknowledging the other. In the end, those who believe in both and follow the teachings of both will have eternal life. Those who do not and do horrible things will be sent to hell.

**Molly O'Connor, 17 & Rachel Breault, 17, St. Patrick Parish,
Kankakee, IL**

- *Being a Viatorian means that I have a life with prayer and service. I encourage students to participate in Taize and other Lenten prayer services. I also work on service projects with the youth group. Being a Viatorian has influenced my life greatly by helping me chose a path that works with others for others.*
- *For Lent I have decided to do liturgy of the hours so that I can grow closer to God and his word.*



Thursday, April 7, 2011

Gospel: John 5: 31-47

"If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony cannot be verified. But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true. You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept testimony from a human being, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light. But I have testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and you do not have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent. You search the scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf. But you do not want to come to me to have life. "I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you.

I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept me; yet if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Reflection

Sometimes, even though we go to religion class, Sunday school and mass each week, and we go through all of the motions, we still refuse to hear Jesus' words and truly believe that he is the one who is in control of our lives. We really are denying him when we do this. I know that sometimes as a mom, I kind of go through the motions

too. My child may be telling me about something that is important to him, but I half listen as I go through my to-do list in my head or think about what I have to get done for work. What a silly thing to do! Right here in my life is the most wonderful gift that God has ever blessed me with, a sign of how loved I am, and yet I don't stop and listen with my full attention. Shame on me! I do that to Jesus, too. I know how much he loves me and wants me to be present to him – to hear what he is asking of me – yet I only partially listen, thinking that my own agenda is more important. At times we all need a gentle nudge to get us to remember the important priorities in our lives.

Kim Martinez, a Viatorian Associate since 2009, serves as Campus Minister at Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because I get to be a part of a community of believers who have actively chosen to do God's work every day of their lives in every task they do. I know that I have the support of a community who supports me and loves me and believes in the work I do*
- *This Lenten season I plan to put time aside every day to go into the chapel and just spend some quiet time in God's presence. Listening with my heart to His plan for me.*



Friday, April 8, 2011

Gospel: John 7: 1-2, 10, 25-30

After this, Jesus moved about within Galilee; but he did not wish to travel in Judea, because the Jews were trying to kill him. But the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was near.

But when his brothers had gone up to the feast, he himself also went up, not openly but as it were in secret.

So some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, "Is he not the one they are trying to kill? And look, he is speaking openly and they say nothing to him. Could the authorities have realized that he is the Messiah? But we know where he is from. When the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from."

So Jesus cried out in the temple area as he was teaching and said, "You know me and also know where I am from. Yet I did not come on my own, but the one who sent me, whom you do not know, is true. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come.

Reflection

Sometimes we keep seeing coincidences in our lives. Things keep happening or something keeps showing up and we are not really sure why. Even though Jesus was told to stay out of sight, he still continued to show up. People did not understand and questioned why he was there, he was not the Messiah they expected to show up. Isn't that true in our lives? He never shows up where or when we expect him to, and when he does, we do not recognize him because he does not fit the image of what we think he should be. Is that not a lesson to us to be prepared? To expect the unexpected? Sometimes we are so busy in our own lives expecting our own vision of how God is supposed to fit into our lives, that we can totally miss

the unexpected gift of His presence in a most unexpected way.
Expect the unexpected!!!

Casey Tiefenthaler, 18, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *One of the best things about being a Viatorian is the excitement to go out and make a difference in the world.*



Saturday, April 9, 2011

Gospel: John 7: 40-53

Some in the crowd who heard these words said, "This is truly the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Messiah." But others said, "The Messiah will not come from Galilee, will he? Does not scripture say that the Messiah will be of David's family and come from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?"

So a division occurred in the crowd because of him. Some of them even wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. So the guards went to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not bring him?" The guards answered, "Never before has anyone spoken like this one." So the Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law, is accursed."

Nicodemus, one of their members who had come to him earlier, said to them, "Does our law condemn a person before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "You are not from Galilee also, are you? Look and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." Then each went to his own house.

Reflection

In this passage, the general public reacts to Jesus, pondering if the Messiah can come from a town such as Galilee. The Pharisees and the guards chose not to believe him, based on his origin. I know that this trait, the trait of judging people before knowing them, is all too common in my life. Being in a Catholic high school, much of my close friends have come with me from Catholic middle schools, so cliques are established almost immediately. The outsiders in school are always put down upon because of their being different, but no one attempts to "walk a mile" in his or her shoes.

I was blind to this injustice until I went on one of my school's Kairos retreats. This religious retreat taught me that deep down, every one goes through similar problems. It doesn't matter if you are the captain of the football team or the captain of the forensics team. Everyone should be judged by their heart, not their face or personality.

Because of God's influence in my life, I try every day to show love to someone who needs it. If more people did this, I believe we could become one step closer to having the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Erik Helling, 18, St. Viator Parish, Las Vegas, NV

- *To be a Viatorian to me, is for my religion to expand beyond Church and school. St. Viator Catholic Church is a humongous family. All of these random people from the city are brought together through one thing and one thing only: Love of God.*
- *For the past 3 months or so, I've been really busy at my school's theatre starring in our school's production of Godspell. Ironically, being Jesus in this production has given me no time to devote to St. Viator. So during Lent I plan on reacquainting myself with my Parish. Hopefully this will keep my spirit and heart close to the Lord and the St. Viator community.*



Fifth Sunday if Lent, April 10, 2011

Gospel: John 11: 1-45

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill."

When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him."

So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him.

So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see."

And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."

And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

Reflection

Death is cunning and powerful. It comes slowly. It sneaks in. It can claim us before we even know we're at risk. I'm talking about spiritual, not physical, death.

Our Church often warns that our society often promotes a "Culture of Death." You can see that culture in messages that promote money, sex, power, popularity, vengeance, nationalism and individualism, but belittle sacrifice, compassion, mercy, abstinence and peace. I recently learned about a video game in which a player can have sex with a prostitute and then kill her. Are you kidding me?

As humans we can easily let death take over our life. We are bombarded by ads, video games, television shows, music and politicians that lure us each day toward those values that can kill our relationship to God and others, those values that kill our ability or desire to build God's kingdom in the world. We rarely "die" all at once. Rather, we risk death decision by decision. And we can quickly rationalize choosing the values of death.

"Just this once."

"It's not really hurting anyone."

"No one will find out."

"It's my life."

“Everyone’s doing it.”

I know how cunning death is because I let its values control my life for many years in college. All that brought me was a great emptiness.

But that’s why today’s Gospel is so awesome. We serve the Lord of life, the Lord who conquered death and can help us do the same. He brought Lazarus out of the tomb. No one is too far from our Lord’s saving power. I know. He saved me.

This Lent let’s look honestly at whether we are letting death into our lives through our daily choices. Let’s ask Jesus to open our eyes so that we see the value of choosing his values. And let’s ask him to free us from any habits or mindsets that might be slowly entombing us.

Fr. Corey Brost, CSV serves at Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because it has helped me really “live” by surrounding me with the greatest friends and showing me how to build a better world.*
- *This Lent I will choose a Culture of Life value from above and end each day by reflecting on how I lived it.*



Monday, April 11, 2011

Gospel: John 8: 1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them.

Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"

They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

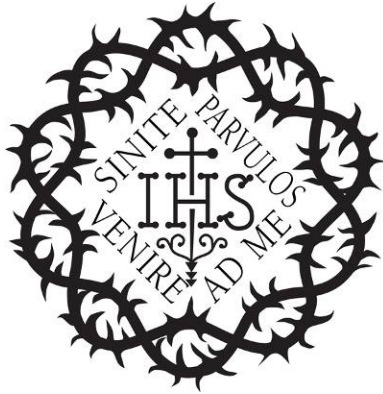
Reflection

Jesus knows that we make mistakes by sinning and turning away from him, but he trusts that we will always return home to him. No matter how long it takes for us to turn from sin, he will be waiting for us. He sets an example for us to not judge others and their sins, because we have also sinned and are not fit to be judges for anyone else. Jesus is the only one fit to judge us because he is without sin, but instead, he chooses to forgive us. Our God loves us so much that he is willing to watch us make mistakes until we are truly ready to

fully commit ourselves to Him. The Lenten season reminds us of God's love for us. During this Lenten season and beyond, it is important to remember God's unconditional love for us.

Anne Barnhorst, 17, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because the Viatorians promote service to others.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten season is to be more trusting in God to lead me in life.*



Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Gospel: John 8: 21-30

He said to them again, "I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come." So the Jews said, "He is not going to kill himself, is he, because he said, 'Where I am going you cannot come'?"

He said to them, "You belong to what is below, I belong to what is above. You belong to this world, but I do not belong to this world. That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins."

So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you in condemnation. But the one who sent me is true, and what I heard from him I tell the world." They did not realize that he was speaking to them of the Father.

So Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me. The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.

Reflection

I have realized how easy it is to stray from God. Our lives are never perfect; instead they are always unpredictable. We are often faced with bad times that bring us only sadness and anger. We become so overwhelmed by our sufferings that it is easy to lose hope. We surrender our faith in God and in all that is good. We doubt in his power and in his love. Worse of all, we doubt in his existence.

By distancing ourselves from God, we invite only more darkness into our lives. In the scripture passage from John, Jesus tells us how we are all sinners, but Jesus also tells us that through him, we can find

salvation. Jesus keeps reminding those around him that he is the Son of God, and despite their disbelief Jesus never stops calling them. Jesus calls us as well, and tries to get us to open our eyes everyday.

Although it is hard at times, I've learned not to blame God for my sorrows. Instead, I have come to understand that God is always there with me, especially when I make mistakes. I must continue to fight back against doubt and see the omniscient and all loving God that is always around me. Jesus said, "The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." We too can also say this. By following Jesus, we can also learn to please and love God. And even if we become lost, I believe that God will let us find Him.

Mayra Tenorio, 18, St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because I am able to better my relationship with God everyday, and I don't have to do it alone. As a Viatorian, I am part of a large of family of faith that helps and encourages me to find God.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is going to the Northern Illinois Food Bank. During Lent, I become aware of all the blessings God has given me, and I can distinguish what is truly important and necessary in my life. Volunteering at the food bank helps me care for others and allows me to share what God has given me.*

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Gospel: John 8: 31-42

Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free. I know that you are descendants of Abraham. But you are trying to kill me, because my word has no room among you. I tell you what I have seen in the Father's presence; then do what you have heard from the Father."

They answered and said to him, "Our father is Abraham." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father!" So they said to him, "We are not illegitimate. We have one Father, God."

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me.

Reflection

We have all been called by God to be disciples. I don't know about you, but if God came down from heaven and asked me to drop everything to follow him, I would be overwhelmed. In your own life, how are you following Christ everyday? We are all busy but not too busy for God. As Viatorian youth, we are called to teach the faith and proclaim the Gospel message. We have a responsibility to our church and St. Viator to help be disciples of Christ just as St. Viator was. We

are the future of the Catholic Church. My hope for all of us is to share the Viatorian charism with everyone we encounter and to listen to God more attentively as we follow him. May God and St. Viator be with you all throughout your life.

Anthony Gugino, 18, St. Viator Parish, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being Viatorian means a lot to me. I have been a parishioner of St. Viator with my whole family since I was born, 18 years ago. When I went to elementary school, my parents put me in St. Viator Elementary School. Now 18 years later, I am grateful for the sacrifice they made for me and my twin brother, Tommy. Without a Viatorian education, I would have not been the same person I am today. Viatorians are devoted to bettering themselves in not only their faith but in the way they serve the communities they are in. I am forever grateful for all of the Viatorians I have encountered and have set the path for me to go on in my life, always remembering that God is always with me no matter what.*
- *In Lent, our church usually holds Stations of the Cross on Friday evening. I plan on attending all of the ones I am able to make. I feel this will help me set the tone for me to reflect on what Lent really is. Sometimes I think I get caught up in all the talk about Spring Break and Easter. Ultimately, Lent leads up to Holy Week and Easter, but in 2011 I am challenging myself to keep the focus on Lent and the way Jesus suffered and died for us to one day live to hopefully become closer to God.*

Thursday, April 14, 2011

Gospel: John 8: 51-59

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever keeps my word will never see death."

So the Jews said to him, "Now we are sure that you are possessed. Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? Or the prophets, who died? Who do you make yourself out to be?"

Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' You do not know him, but I know him. And if I should say that I do not know him, I would be like you a liar. But I do know him and I keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.

So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area.

Reflection

Jesus made some bold statements in this Gospel. First he makes a statement that only God could make... ***"If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."*** It was so bold that the Jewish religious leaders reacted by asking Him....***"Who do you think you are?"*** Jesus answers even more boldly by proclaiming that He is God.....***"Before Abraham, I AM."*** They wanted to stone Him for blasphemy.

Who is Jesus to you? Lent is an opportunity to discover who Christ is to us and who we are in Him. Jesus is God made flesh. He became man for our sake and for our salvation because God loves us. His life, His death and His resurrection are what makes it possible for us to

share in eternal life. That is the foundation of His life and His mission on earth.

This reading makes me personally ponder two questions:

1. *Do I thirst to know God personally and to understand the depth of His love for me?*

God created us to know Him and He gives us the gift of faith and understanding to grow to know Him better. When we look at the life of Jesus, we see how God wishes us to live. In Jesus alone we see what God wants us to know and who He wants us to be.

2. *Do I keep the Word of Jesus and obey it with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength?*

In order to live and obey the Word of God, I need to make His word part of my everyday life. It needs to be etched into my heart, mind and soul. I must know his Word to obey His Word.

How can I know God better and keep His Word? When I asked that question as I was writing this reflection, the words I kept hearing were SEEK and SERVE.

To seek Him, I must spend quality time in prayer, in reading the Bible and in attending Mass. It will take my own self denial of "I" to acknowledge Jesus as the **I AM**. Each day I must put aside my own pleasure-seeking lifestyle to acknowledge Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

To serve Him, I must take on a servant attitude and serve His people. This Lent I seek to serve my family, my co-workers and those in my ministry with joy and without complaining. I am busy with a lot of things in my life, even things for God, but I do not always accomplish these tasks with the right attitude. This is a real conviction for me.

Lent is about growing closer to God by following Jesus, by hungering and thirsting for Him above all other things

Dear Lord, help me to Seek You and to Serve You every day of my life. Give me strength and conviction to put You first in my life. Amen

Cathy Abrahamian, a Viatorian Associate since 2002, serves at Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL



Friday, April 15, 2011

Gospel: John 10: 31-42

The Jews again picked up rocks to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?"

The Jews answered him, "We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

Then they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power. He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. Many came to him and said, "John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true." And many there began to believe in him.

Reflection

"He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained."

In the temple, Jesus is misunderstood, accused, threatened with death by the angry crowds. (A part of the story I was surprised to read again. Before being arrested and crucified, Jesus was about to be stoned to death by the crowds at the temple!) Then he escapes and crosses the Jordan; he enters the wilderness. A shift in place. A shift in attitude, from aggression to openness. Here, the people accept him, appreciate him, believe in him.

When do we find ourselves “on the attack?” Defensive, quick to judge, ready to hurl stones? Maybe we’re ready to attack people, or their ideas, or their ideologies. When you feel this way, what do you need to do to “cross the Jordan,” to move away from the hot-headed crowds of the temple to a more peaceful place? To cool off? To find Jesus, the Prince of Peace, in the depths of your own heart?

Jesus guides and empowers us to live as sons and daughters of God, peacemakers who do the good works of God, so that God lives in us and we live in God. May you continue your journey this Lent through the wilderness of God’s profound love, and may you remain close to Jesus by your works of peace.

Jim Dippold serves as the Campus Minister at St. Martin de Porres High School, Waukegan, IL



Saturday, April 16, 2011

Gospel: John 11: 45-56

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and said, "What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing, nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish." He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

So from that day on they planned to kill him. So Jesus no longer walked about in public among the Jews, but he left for the region near the desert, to a town called Ephraim, and there he remained with his disciples.

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before Passover to purify themselves. They looked for Jesus and said to one another as they were in the temple area, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?"

Reflection

Confusion and understanding are often mixed with fear. When children are asked to go into a dark place, they are frightened because they don't know what to expect and their imaginations run wild. I believe this is the same thing that happened with Caiaphas and the Pharisees.

They saw a man gathering believers and uniting people. He had no official position or financial power. He just united people through his teachings and his message. Had the high priests opened their hearts and given him a chance, the nations might have been united and the Kingdom of Heaven might exist on earth.

Today, I ask God to give me courage. I understand that at times things will be confusing and scary. I understand, also, that I cannot do anything about that. But, I also understand that He have a plan for all of us, and to live the life He have given me means that I must take a leap of faith. With faith in God, the Father, these leaps will be much easier.

Erik Helling, 18, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because The Viatorian Community serves an awesome double purpose. The Viatorians strive for serving God, while also striving to serve their fellow man. The best feeling for me is feeling that I have helped someone. With the Viatorians, I feel like I am helping not only my Viatorian family, but serving the Lord as well.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God this Lenten season is playing Jesus in my parish's production of the Stations of the Cross. I have played Jesus before, and every time I do it, I feel like I am propelling myself closer to God.*

Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

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

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.'" The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when

I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, “This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken, for it is written: *I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed*; but after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to him in reply, “Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be.” Jesus said to him, “Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.” And all the disciples spoke likewise.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!” Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open.

He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him." Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must come to pass in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter was following him at a distance as far as the high priest's courtyard, and going inside he sat down with the servants to see the outcome.

The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward who stated, "This man said, 'I can destroy the temple of God and within three days rebuild it.'"

The high priest rose and addressed him, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him in reply, "You have said so.

But I tell you: From now on you will see 'the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming on the clouds of heaven.'" Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?" They said in reply, "He deserves to die!" Then they spat in his face and struck him, while some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy for us, Christ: who is it that struck you?"

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times."

He went out and began to weep bitterly.

When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of

silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? Look to it yourself." Flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself. The chief priests gathered up the money, but said, "It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple treasury, for it is the price of blood." After consultation, they used it to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why that field even today is called the Field of Blood. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet,

And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by some of the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as the Lord had commanded me.

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?" But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?"

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They answered, Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?" They all said, "Let

him be crucified!” But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Let him be crucified!” When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.” And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha —which means Place of the Skull —, they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!” Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. So

he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "This one is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him." But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his

new tomb that he had hewn in the rock.

Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

The next day, the one following the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’ Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’ This last imposture would be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “The guard is yours; go, secure it as best you can.” So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.

Reflection

This scripture shows that Jesus was very much human. He did not want to go through the pain and suffering that was awaiting him. He was betrayed by a good friend. He did not want his mother to see him in pain nor did he want anyone else. But what showed he was divine was that despite all the pain and humiliation he still took up his cross. He showed so much love for his Father to do his will that he went through a horrible death. All of us should take this scripture and read it as a tragic love story. Jesus’ loved his Father so much and new that His plan was good that he sacrificed himself. Jesus did not doubt his Father. As a Catholic we may come into many situations where we might doubt god and his plan. But through this scripture we remember that doubting god is not needed. He is the truth.

**Molly O’Connor 17, & Rachel Breault, 17, St. Patrick Parish,
Kankakee, IL**

- *Being a Viatorian means that I have a life with prayer and service. I encourage students to participate in Taize and*

other Lenten prayer services. I also work on service projects with the youth group. Being a Viatorian has influenced my life greatly by helping me chose a path that works with others for others.

- *For Lent I have decided to do liturgy of the hours so that I can grow closer to God and his word.*



Monday of Holy Week, April 18, 2011

Gospel: John 12: 1-11

Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, "Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?" He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

Reflection

Every day we see people in need. We see people who have nothing, and are living on the streets while there are others out there who don't have a care in the world about what happens to those people. But, there are some who would give their only dollar or whatever they could give, no matter the amount to someone who needs it. If you were to see a young mother on the streets with no money, no job, and no way to support her child, and her only option was to go on the streets and beg for money, what would you do? We tend to

not pay attention to those around us. We want only the best for ourselves, no matter what the cost. What if a young boy really wanted a new game or a new toy, and he thought the only option was to take money when no one was looking, from collection at Mass or from a school charity event? Would he think about the consequences of his action? Would he think about who this could effect? Sometimes we don't know the outcome of our actions when all we are thinking about is ourselves. At times we need to step aside and look at the bigger picture and think about who we can really benefit with the money we use to go towards something we know we don't really need and know we'll never use.

Jesus did things that made some people go out and do good in their community. Imagine, if we did that, having one person do something good and just, and because of that someone else may do something good to someone else is like in the movie *Pay It Forward*. Everything has a ripple effect. By doing that one good thing you are making the world a better place. Do something to benefit someone else. You'd be surprised at what the outcome could be.

Lent is a time to do something good, just as Jesus did good for us by dying on the cross. We should stop and picture how we could be make someone's day or take maybe just a fraction of stress off of someone's shoulders by trying to feed their family by or helping them out. The Lenten season makes us look at a community that could grow happier and more stable, and this could be just what we need to come closer to God.

Ciara Bax, 15, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because we are a community who brings attention to causes that need help and we strongly put our faith into what we stand for.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is relying more on God and talking to Him when I need Him.*

Tuesday of Holy Week, April 19, 2011

Gospel: John 13: 21-33, 36-38

Reclining at table with his disciples, Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, at a loss as to whom he meant. One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus' side. So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. He leaned back against Jesus' chest and said to him, "Master, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it." So he dipped the morsel and took it and handed it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. After Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him. So Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or to give something to the poor. So Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.

When he had left, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you."

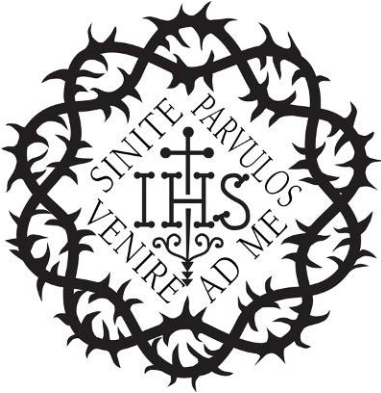
Simon Peter said to him, "Master, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you will follow later." Peter said to him, "Master, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times."

Reflection

In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples that one of them will betray and deny him.

There are times when we betray or even deny Jesus. We may not mean it, but it happens - maybe in a big way or maybe in a very small way. We have all made mistakes or messed up in life. We need to have the strength to never let our faith be shaken. Always know there is someone there who shares in your beliefs. There will always be someone you can rely on or lean on for support. Know that if you keep your faith strong, you will end up right next to Jesus!

Sara Strysniewicz, 23, St. Viator Parish, Las Vegas, NV, was one of the student leaders at the Viatorian Youth Congress.



Wednesday of Holy Week, April 20, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 26: 14-25

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

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.'" The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He answered, "You have said so."

Reflection

Today's passage from Matthew recounts the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. When I was taught this passage as a young child, I pictured Judas as a terrible person. He was cast as the evil one. It was easy to distance him from others and dislike him. He was one of a kind.

As I reflect on this passage today, I realize that many share Judas' traits, at least how they are portrayed in this passage. Betrayal tends to come too easy in our world today. It is a common theme in songs, plays, novels, and movies. Moreover, entire countries have been betrayed by those in power to pad their off shore bank accounts. Large corporations take advantage of their employees constantly. Migrants workers suffer injustice at the hands of unscrupulous farmers. Schools fail to provide an education for their students. The list goes on and on.

And, if I am honest with myself, I must admit that I, too, have betrayed others in pursuit of my own agenda at times. How many times have I been less than honest and let others take the fall for something I have done?

Yes, betrayal comes easy; making up for it does not. After Judas betrays Jesus, Judas attempts to return the thirty pieces of silver with which he was rewarded before hanging himself. And, as Judas' death by his own hand illustrates, nobody wins.

My betrayals have not been as dramatic as Judas' betrayal of Jesus; no one has died. But, people have been hurt. This Lent, I am going to focus less on Judas' betrayal of Jesus and focus more on what I need to do to avoid betraying others. And more importantly, I need to take responsibility for the times I have betrayed others by making things right between us.

While Scripture teaches us that Jesus died to redeem the world, his death does not take me off the hook for my failings.

Brother Michael Gosch, CSV, serves as Assistant Provincial and a social worker at St. Martin de Porres High School in Waukegan, IL.

Holy Thursday, April 21, 2011

Gospel: John 13: 1-15

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

Reflection

In this passage Jesus acknowledges his imminent death and leaves his disciples knowing that they must "wash one another's feet." To me this shows the need for us to spread the word of God and the message of salvation. In this passage Jesus builds the community aspect of the church. This is important to me because I really value the community of the church. There are stories about people who go back to the church because it has been a source of stability and community in their life. And that to me is very powerful.

Jesus also forgives Peter for what he will do and washes his feet. This is so powerful because although Peter may not seem to have complete faith in Jesus, Jesus shows his love and forgiveness to Peter. We all have sinned. But this passage assures us that Jesus forgives us and still loves us. We need to accept the fact that even though we have messed up, Jesus still loves us. We need to work to love him each day.

Connor Romenesko, 18, Saint Viator High School, Arlington Heights, IL

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because in the past four years I have been able to grow unbelievably in my faith. Being a Viatorian has introduced me to service I never thought I would experience that has really shaped who I am today.*
- *Throughout Lent I am going to grow closer to God by finding the little things in life I take for granted and being thankful for these things that pass by me every day. I also plan on doing service to assure that those in the local community can have an enjoyable, safe Lenten season.*



Good Friday, April 22, 2011

Gospel: John 18: 1-19, 42

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees

and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." He said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, "I AM, "

they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, "Who are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?"

So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So

the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said." When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. And they said to him, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

They answered and said to him, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you. At this, Pilate said to

them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." The Jews answered him, "We do not have the right to execute anyone," in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die.

So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this one but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, "Behold, the man!" When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him."

The Jews answered,
“We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die,
because he made himself the Son of God.” Now when Pilate heard
this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the
praetorium and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” Jesus did not
answer him. So Pilate said to him, “Do you not speak to me? Do you
not know that I have power to release you and I have power to
crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over
me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the
one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.” Consequently,
Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out, “If you release
him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a
king opposes Caesar.”

When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him
on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew,
Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about
noon. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!”
They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!”
Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests
answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over
to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to
what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.
There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either
side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written
and put on the cross. It read,
“Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” Now many of the Jews
read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified
was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So
the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of

the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews'." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: *They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.* This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he

is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: *Not a bone of it will be broken*. And again another passage says: *They will look upon him whom they have pierced*.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body.

Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

Reflection

On this day, our Lord was abandoned, tortured, crucified to death; nailed to the splintered wood of the cross. The son of David so long awaited, breathes his last, and dies, hung on a cross. The cross is the representation of known human suffering. Death by suffocation, crucified on a cross, was a slow and tortuous death, compared with a quick death by stoning or sword. Jesus' last expression of solidarity with the least and lowest, suffering on the cross, would widen his reach so completely that no one, anywhere, could ever suffer anything that hadn't already been suffered by him, granting us the comfort of his understanding and presence through every step of our mortal lives. Jesus came not to take away suffering, but to be present in it.

However, his suffering on the cross was more than just that. The cross was like a key, the only key, fitting the lock of heaven's gate. Jesus' arms stretched the breadth of that cross, gathering up in love

all God's children, all God's creation, into his saving grace. This is why this terrible instrument of torture is holy and blessed. Only through Jesus' death on the cross, were we all forgiven, purified, made ready for our return to God.

David Bacero Osman II, 18, St. Thomas More Parish, Henderson, NV

- *Being Viatorian is important to me because we represent and care for those who are accounted of no importance in our world. If we wish to see the world as God sees it, then we must look again at Jesus and the Kingdom that he announced. God's gratuitous choice is extended to those whom the world looks down upon.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is spending more meditative time with the Lord.*



Holy Saturday, April 23, 2011

Gospel: Matthew 28: 1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you." Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Reflection

In our lives it is sometimes hard not to have doubt. It is hard not to question the things we don't understand. We want all the answers, fast. Sometimes it is challenging for us to stay committed to people or things if there is fear or question involved. We want things proven or shown to us. But, sometimes, if we just believe, we might just find the hope we are looking for.

Mary and the disciples didn't question the angel when he said Jesus had risen. They went quickly to tell everyone in their community.

They were afraid, but joyful, that Jesus had risen just like He said he would.

In Gaels Theatre Guild at Bishop Gorman High School we are working on the musical **Godspell**. Working on this production together has reinforced the sense of community and hope among the disciples (in our community). They learn to practice Jesus' teachings of hope, community and love. Jesus was the ultimate teacher of building a community of love and trust. When we learn to trust God, we will be able to trust in God's plan and remember to keep him present in our lives.

Bridget Cirone, 17, Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV

- *Being a Viatorian is important to me because of the sense of community you get with a group of people all over the world and getting to share that community with my parish and school.*
- *One thing I am doing to grow closer to God in this Lenten Season is getting away from the business of everyday life to take the time to find the trust and hope in God.*



Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011

Gospel: John 20: 1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Reflection

This scripture tells us so much. Our faith comes alive because the tomb was empty. Empty -- not from faith -- but empty from the body of Jesus that laid there. Our faith can be filled because even if we don't understand it will be revealed. The last line, "for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead." Wow . . . how much goes on in our lives that we do not YET understand. Looking back I can remember many situations I did not understand but now they make so much sense. I believe this scripture allows us to be a little uneasy and to shake with confusion a little in our faith because eventually it will make sense.

Being part of our Viatorian community we are given a great gift of fellowship to help us in our times of struggle. When it is difficult to understand something our Viatorian brothers and sisters are a

phone call, email or Facebook message away. I am glad we are part of a community that unites our differences and excels in educating us in our faith, religion and social justice so that we can help to be a witness to others.

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