

# *Waiting for the Dawn*



  
CENTURY OF SERVICE  
THE  
MADELEINE  
PARISH & SCHOOL

*Lent 2026*



*Dear Madeleine family and friends,*

*Just like the women who waited for the dawn of Easter morning so they could return to the tomb and care for the body of their beloved Jesus, we too, wait for Easter morning as we begin our forty-day Lenten journey. The reflections found within this booklet are meant to build your trust, give you hope, help you find peace and strengthen your faith and belief in Jesus Christ.*

*The Sunday meditations are based on the gospel readings for the day and meant to be shared. The daily reflections can be shared or thought about privately.*

*Thank you to the special people, parishioners, teachers, students and priests who have shared their faith on these pages. May their words make a difference in your life. A sincere thank you to Hugh Hammons, who once again blesses us with his artistic talent by bringing the theme visually alive. Thank you to those who worked behind the scenes editing and publishing, and last, but not least, thank you to Fr. B. who leads our parish with a kind and gentle hand.*

*Invite the Holy Spirit to journey with you these forty days, and may you feel the same joy and surprise the women felt, that dawn so long ago, when they discovered the empty tomb.*

*Marilyn Robb*

# A Weight is Lifted

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18—*Psalm 51:12* “A clean heart create for me O God; renew within me a steadfast spirit.”

David wrote Psalm 51 when he was truly sorry for his adultery with Bathsheba and for having Bathsheba’s husband murdered. David begged God to forgive him and in God’s infinite mercy He forgave David of these awful sins. Thank God for always being available and willing to listen to our confessions, wash our hearts and renew our spirits. Just like David, we need to ask God for forgiveness. I am often surprised by my negative, thoughtless words. Many times these words are directed at those I love the most (it would be rude to say them to a casual acquaintance). When I confess this to God, a weight is lifted off of me and my spirit is renewed.

*Thank you God. You are always available to cleanse and renew my spirit. Amen.*

—JENNY HUNTER

# Please Slap Me

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19—*Psalm 139:23* “Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me to everlasting life.”

You created me in your image and likeness. What an imperfect image and likeness I am.

Despite my imperfections and sins, you love and forgive me when I humbly repent. When the plank in my eye prevents me from seeing the ways I am unloving, unrighteously angry, unforgiving, selfish and more...please ‘slap me’ back into the awareness, that apart from you, I am empty and nothing.

Please forgive me, and remind me that ‘True peace and joy’ come through loving and serving you and your creation. Please never let me forget your suffering, death and resurrection, and ....your promise to me of the same.

*I am yours Lord. Thy will be done. Amen.*

—DARRELL MILLER

# Surrendering to God's Will

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20—*Matt. 11:28* “Come to me all who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.”

As I write this reflection, I am inspired by Buddhist monks who began a 2,300 mile peace march in Fort Worth, TX, last fall and will end it in Washington, DC this month. They are raising an awareness of peace, loving kindness and compassion, urgently hoping to unite us all.

New Hampshire's Episcopal Bishop Hirschfeld is ready to defend his community's most vulnerable by sacrificing all he has.

The Lord promises me too, the reward of deep peace, when I serve the vulnerable in his name, and shed what I cling to most.

*Guide me Lord, to be your servant in this world. Amen.*

—STEPHANIE FERNANDES

## Fogged In

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21—*Isaiah 44:22* “I have brushed away your offenses like a cloud and your sins like a mist; return to me for I have redeemed you.”

Clouds give the impression of solidity – they hide the sun and darken the landscape. They are only water vapor, but can cause freeway crashes, fog warnings, and flight delays. On a misty evening we may drive a familiar route but now everything has a mysterious aspect; open spaces are ominously full and once innocent trees appear menacing as they lean graspingly into our path. Are our sins like that? They obscure our shining soul. But the Redeemer, who is like the sun or the evening wind, can see who we really are. Our offenses are brushed away to reveal the truth.

*I will return to you, my Lord, for you have redeemed me. Amen.*

—SANDRA LAUBENTHAL

# First Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

## *The Dawn of Trust*

### Introduction

After thirty years, Jesus was finally ready to begin his ministry, but the Spirit had other plans and lead him into the desert for a time of testing.

Looking back on my life, I was reminded of a similar situation. Two months before I was to leave home for my freshman year of college, my doctor discovered a suspicious tumor in my lower abdomen. I spent the summer seeing medical specialists and undergoing a variety of tests. In the meantime, my roommate and I bought matching quilts and planned how we were going to decorate our dorm room. I never doubted that I wouldn't be leaving for college in the fall. The night before my surgery, I sat with my Bible and totally placed my trust in God. My parents had not shared their fears with me. They worried that the tumor would be cancerous and hoped that they would have enough money to cover medical bills.

Could this have been a time of testing before I began an exciting phase of my life? The surgery went well with no signs of cancer, and because the tumor was so unusual, it was sent away to be used for research, which covered the cost of my medical bills.

**Share:** When have you had to place your trust in God?

† **READ: Matt. 4:1-11**

**Share:** How did having the Spirit with Jesus make a difference?

## Commentary

We always begin our Lenten journey by accompanying Jesus to the desert for his time of testing. He had just been baptized by John and received the Holy Spirit, which “descended upon him like a dove.” It is that same Holy Spirit that leads him to the desert and remains with him as a defense against the evil one. Jesus placed his trust in the Holy Spirit to give him the strength and wisdom he would need to do battle with Satan.

**Share:** How do you think this time of testing prepared Jesus for his ministry on earth?

## Reflection

As we begin this forty-day journey to the “dawn” of Easter, take time to think about your relationship with the Holy Spirit that you were given at your baptism. Have you taken time to recognize this silent companion who has been traveling with you every day and every night. I like to think of the Holy Spirit as a bodyguard ...but not just a protector of the body, but also of the mind and of the heart. Take time, during this journey to the “dawn” of Easter, to get acquainted with the Spirit of God that dwells within you. Place your trust in that spirit to guide you with strength and wisdom, just as Jesus was guided.

**Share:** What type of relationship do you have with the Spirit of God that dwells within you? How do you nourish that spirit?

*Come Spirit of God and make your presence known to me. Amen*

*“Thus says the Lord: Do what  
is right and just”*

# Tell Jesus Your Fears

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23—*Psalm 34:4 “I sought the Lord and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”*

When I hear about something that is happening with ICE, it makes me afraid. But if I tell Jesus about how I feel, he will take away my fear.

*Thank you, Jesus, for being with us all of the time, especially when we are afraid. Amen.*

—REINIER MARTINEZ  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

# Steadfast in His Presence

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24—*II Thessalonians 3:3 “The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.”*

During Lent, we are reminded that God is faithful. As Jesus faced temptation in the desert, we face despair in a world marked by suffering and brokenness- one that threatens to erode our trust in God. Yet the Holy Spirit was with Jesus and remains with us as God’s ever-present promise. In his presence, we find strength. At times, that strength feels like nothing more than endurance, but other times, through his strength, we find comfort and joy. As brothers and sisters in Christ, one of the greatest gifts we can offer is to hold faith for one another through prayer and presence, so that together we may discover his joy.

*Lord, when the world weakens our trust, hold us firm in your unwavering presence.*

—KELSIE STORM  
OCIA CANDIDATE

# Place Your Trust in God

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25—*Proverbs 3:5-6* “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of him and he will make straight your paths.”

A year ago, I couldn't have imagined how different things would be today. I certainly don't have the intelligence to fully understand it all. The answer? Trust in God and listen for his guidance.

However, we must not let fear of misunderstanding lead to inaction. The Bible holds the Word of God, and in Jeremiah 22:3 we read:

Thus says the Lord: Do what is right and just. Rescue the victims from the hands of their oppressors. Do not wrong or oppress the resident alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Lord, lead us in the ways of justice and peace, inspire us to break down all tyranny and oppression, to gain for every person what is due to them.

*May each live for all and all care for each. Amen.*

—LAUREL GUNDERSON

## Our Challenge

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26—*Psalms 139:7* “Though I walk in the midst of dangers, you guard my life when enemies rage. You stretch out your hand and save me.”

The term “trouble” seems so much closer to the heart. It is within ourselves that we often struggle. How do we forgive? How do we let go?

We see the dangers around us — the savageness toward immigrants, the pain of those in poverty. Our challenge lies in our humanity, just as likely as Jesus found, in the most human part of his nature as both God and man, in the Judaeen desert so long ago.

We cannot lose hope since the answer is clearly given. Rest gently as enemies internal and external rage, trust in God's grace. Trust and be saved.

*O Lord my God, when enemies rage, help me to rest in you. Amen.*

—DAVE ALBERTINE

# Trust in the Lord

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27—*Jeremiah 17:7a* “*Blest are those who trust in the Lord.*”

When I was in 3rd grade I started playing club Lacrosse. I have always felt included by my friends. I really enjoy playing Lacrosse and wanted to play more, so I joined a second team. I didn't know anyone on that team and felt very left out. When I came home, I told my mom and dad how I felt. It was fun, but I didn't know anyone. My mom said, “You don't always have to fit in. All you need to do is trust in the Lord.” Since then, I started trusting in the Lord more and I am fitting in more.

*Remind us, Lord, to always place our trust in you. Amen.*

—ANNIE WIKANDER  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

# Faith in the Darkest Hours

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28—*Psalms 27:1* “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*”

Jesus was betrayed by a government that was supposed to protect him. Jesus - the Savior, hope, and light - was instead publicly murdered. What hope could his followers have that their faith would prevail? Those hours after his death would be their absolute darkest. How helpless did they feel?

I imagine Mary Magdalene sitting beside his tomb, depleted and desolate - yet some seed of faith in her Lord kept her there, vigilant. During these troubled days, I pray the Lord give me faith like Mary's on that cold dark dawn, when the Son rose again, answering her cries.

*When I feel helpless, Lord, give me faith like Mary Magdalene. Amen.*

—CASH FREITAS  
OCIA CANDIDATE

# Second Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

## *The Dawn of Hope*

### Introduction

During our time as travelers on this planet, God will sometimes give us a glimpse of heaven. With that glimpse comes hope for what the future may hold, hope for what God has planned for us. When the disciples accompanied Jesus up the mountain, they were not just given a glimpse, but a full-blown performance.

One evening, the week before my husband died, our friend, Michael Kissinger stopped by the hospice center for a visit. While we were talking, a young nurse came into the room to check on my husband. It was about this time that my husband began to tell Michael and me about his special angel, who would come to be with him and was here in the room with us now. But the angel would soon leave and return another time to see if my husband was ready to leave. When the young nurse had completed her work and was ready to leave, she looked at Michael and me and asked if we were religious. We said we were. Her response was, “I thought so.”

At my husband’s funeral several people told me about their final visit with him, and how he had told them about his special angel.

Sometimes it just takes that “sneak-peak” to give us hope for what lies ahead.

**Share:** What gives you hope?

† **READ: Matt. 17:1-9**

**Share:** For whom was this a “hopeful” experience...the disciples, Jesus?

## Commentary

Those dear disciples, followers of Jesus, traveling around with their “good buddy”, Jesus. They get excited when he performs miracles. They enjoy sitting around the fire in the evenings listening to him explain his parables. They had left their occupations and families to be with him. They never quite understood the times when he would leave them to go into the mountains to pray. They always wondered where he went and what he was doing. Then the day came when he invited Peter, James and John to join him. They were given a glimpse of who their “good buddy” truly was. It was beyond their human understanding and acceptance.

**Share:** Describe the Jesus you know.

## Reflection

That night in the hospice center, with my husband and his angel, gave Michael and I a glimpse of what awaits us when our journey on this planet is over. It gave us hope for what lies ahead. At the time, we could not fully grasp or understand what my husband now understood, but we knew that something glorious was waiting for us, and we need not fear death. It gave us hope for the gift that Jesus gave us when he died on the cross for our sins.

**Share:** What are your thoughts about death?

*Keep us hopeful Lord, for the glorious gift you have waiting for us.  
Amen.*

*“ I think it’s God asking us  
to love others just like he loves  
us.. ”*

# Hope in Things Unseen

MONDAY, MARCH 2—*Psalm 34:7* “*The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and he delivers them.*”

Years ago, when visiting my dying friend Bill, I arrived at the Hospice House at the same time as his wife Marilyn. Bill slept, so Marilyn and I talked. Moments later Bill stirred, lifted his hand, touched his face, and with eyes closed, whispered quietly. Drawing close to listen, we heard Bill say, “He’s in my ears, he’s in my mouth.” Marilyn and I stared. She asked Bill, “Can WE see him?” He replied, “No. You can’t see him.” We were awestruck. Speechless. But we knew an Angel – or Jesus – was there with us. Encamped, comforting, surrounding, and saving Bill.

*May we look forward to that day when we will be with you,  
Lord. Amen.*

—MICHAEL KISSINGER

## Two Gifts

TUESDAY, MARCH 3—*Romans 15:13* “*May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*”

This verse reminds me of two gifts. The first gift is that of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, given to us as He was dying upon the cross.

The second gift is Pope Leo XIV. A beautiful video of him singing the Regina Coeli can be found at: [www.bit.ly/regina-coeli](http://www.bit.ly/regina-coeli)

*Mary, Queen of Peace, pray with and for us. Amen.*

—THERESE FENZL

# A Resident Light

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4—*Daniel 2:22* “He reveals deep and hidden things and knows what is in the darkness, for light dwells in him.”

I wake up troubled by unrevealed things. Troubled because the light in me flickers unreliably and darkness is always there to navigate. The dark in which “deep and hidden things” reside, some kindly and others, perhaps, more sinister, which makes the forward path uncertain.

Yet I can’t help but think of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, brimming with light, interposing themselves against a looming violence much as the prophet Daniel did in Babylon. And maybe that is the deep and hidden thing revealed: love—God’s resident light—is the true way, the only way. Anything else is a lesser darkness.

*God, give me the strength to burn fiercely and long. Amen.*

—DAN O’BRIEN

# All About Hope

THURSDAY, MARCH 5—*Romans 12:12a* “Rejoice in hope.”

Hope is a joyous and wondrous thing that can lift a person’s spirit. Hope is believing in God to help guide you in the right direction. Rejoicing in hope can help you get through rough times. It can take your mind off of things if you just focus on positive things. Hope can make you feel loved and happy. You can have hope in everything if you choose to. We are surrounded by hope...it is in our heart.

*God, keep our hearts filled with hope from you. Amen.*

—MARLEE NGUYEN,  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

# Hope in the Lord

FRIDAY, MARCH 6—*Psalm 33:22* “*Let your steadfast love, O Lord be upon us, even as we hope in you.*”

As a teacher, my greatest task and joy is to help the children grow closer to God. I want them to know God’s loving and forgiving heart and to trust and hope in that special relationship. When asked about this verse, some children replied: “I think it means that God loves us so much that we can ask him for anything—like peace and hope.” “I think it’s God asking us to love others just like he loves us.” “I think it means that we can trust God to be there for us because he will always love us no matter what.” We all can hope in the Lord.

*Lord, may we always place our hope in you. Amen.*

—MARY WITKA,  
SECOND GRADE TEACHER, THE MADELEINE SCHOOL

## St. Francis, A Light in Darkness

SATURDAY, MARCH 7—*Colossians 2:2-3* “*They shall have the knowledge of God’s mystery, that is Christ, in whom are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*”

Eight hundred years ago, this year, St. Francis passed from this life to the next. He was a man who knew Christ - God’s mystery - so intimately, that he bore the actual wounds of the passion in his flesh, like nails driven through his hands and feet. But knowing Jesus, Francis suffered with hope that his passion would continue to bring redemption to the world. Many people suffer: unjust violence, disease, emotional distress. As a Church, with Francis let us lift these loved ones of God before the Cross, as we hope for their share - and ours - in the Resurrection.

*We pray for those who are suffering, and lift them up to you,  
Lord. Amen.*

—FR. BONAVENTURE

# Third Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

## *The Dawn of Peace*

### Introduction

The Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well, was not a woman who knew peace. She was living in turmoil and dissatisfaction. She had had several marriages, and nothing seemed to be working out. Her life was not going in the right direction. How many of us could use a little chat with Jesus to get our lives going in a better direction?

This past year, it has been my joy and pleasure to have coffee with Deacon Mike and his crew on Monday mornings. We have our meetings in the garage, turned workshop, on the Madeleine campus. This interesting space is lovingly called “World Headquarters”, where all things broken get fixed. The best thing about this unique space is that the men who work there are familiar with and know peace. They have faced the challenges of the world. They have had successful careers. They have raised and supported their families. Now they are doing exactly what they want and have the ability and experience to do. They are fixing the things at the Madeleine that are broken, cleaning what is dirty and making the campus welcoming and attractive both inside and out.

Unlike the woman at the well, they have found a way to satisfy their thirst and live in peace. They know Jesus, the carpenter and are sharing his love.

**Share:** Where and when have you had peace in your life?

† **READ: John 4:5-24**

**Share:** What part of this scripture speaks to you?

## Commentary

I wonder if Jesus knew ahead of time how this day was going to turn out? Did he know that he and his disciples would accept the hospitality of these Samaritans and spend a few days with them in their village? Perhaps Jesus was more relaxed and at peace being away from the Jewish leaders who were constantly challenging him. Finally, the woman at the well was cleansed, satisfied and whole, living in the peace that was offered to her by Jesus. The disciples were witnessing Jesus at work in what was considered “enemy territory.”

**Share:** How can this example set by Jesus, change your thoughts about your enemies?

## Reflection

What is the source of peace and where do you find it in your life, or are you still waiting for that “Dawn of Peace?” Jesus is waiting for you to come to him, just as the Samaritan woman came to the well. Even if you aren’t yet retired from your career or earthly responsibilities, Jesus is always waiting for you with the invitation to “take a break” and have a conversation. Jesus loves each one of us and would like nothing more than to guide us to a life where he can satisfy our thirst and give us peace.

**Share:** How do you satisfy your thirst...travel, shopping, food, games on your phone, etc.?

*Satisfy our thirst Lord and give us your peace. Amen*

“Imagine a single drop of  
grace that spreads until it covers  
everything.”

# One Inch

MONDAY, MARCH 9—*Psalm 42:2* “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?”

Wendell Berry’s poem “Spiritual Journey” captures how close God is to us. He recommends shedding old identities and yielding to mystery ... letting go of expected outcomes and embracing a belonging to God that is within and surrounds us.

*And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles,  
no matter how long,  
but only by a spiritual journey,  
a journey of one inch,  
very arduous and humbling and joyful,  
by which we arrive at the ground at our feet,  
and learn to be at home.*

Maybe our journey is toward presence and stillness, moving away from the distractions of the world to God, who is waiting right where we are.

*Make me comfortable Lord, “hanging out” with you. Amen.*

—DEACON MIKE

## A New (Changing) Perspective

TUESDAY, MARCH 10—*Romans 8:6* “The concern of the flesh is death, but the concern of the spirit is life and peace.”

When I am asked to share in work for others, for our community, the “flesh” may see it only as an obligation to meet because it is right. I might sense it as a burden, even feeling stressed about adding something else to my schedule. But I am learning to shift my focus onto those I am serving and those with whom I am working. By approaching the work as an act of Christian love, it can cease to be something I must do, and become something I want to do. Viewing our efforts as life-giving in some way brings peace.

*May we know your peace, Lord, when we share ourselves with others. Amen.*

—KEN BROWN

# Peace Begins With a Smile

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11—*Romans 14:19* “Let us pursue peace and the building up of one another.”

I cannot help but to think when Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar, Jesus first smiled at her before asking for a drink of water.

In this day and age, peace seems distant and sometimes hopeless. But it is the smallest things we do for each other that spread the seeds of peace. When we build up one another with a good word, supportive encouragement, a simple act of kindness or even a smile...is when someone in our community experiences a sense of peace.

These small gestures give us hope for greater peace.

*Make me a channel of your peace. Amen.*

—STEVE SLAVIK

## Look for the Good

THURSDAY, MARCH 12—*1Corinthians 14:33* “He is not a God of disorder, but of peace.”

This passage reminds us that God’s presence brings clarity rather than confusion. While life often feels chaotic—filled with competing voices, hurried decisions, and emotional noise—this verse reassures us that God’s nature is steady and calming. Peace here is more than the absence of conflict; it is a deep sense of alignment with God’s will. This verse challenges us to reflect God’s peace in our own lives—through patience, thoughtful action, and trust—even when circumstances feel unsettled. One thing I try to do is always look for good in everyone, even disagreeable people. It adds peace.

*Lord, help me to look for the good in everyone. Amen.*

—JIM LAUBENTHAL

# A Single Drop of Grace

FRIDAY, MARCH 13—*Jude 2* “May mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.”

This year’s Lenten theme is “Waiting for the Dawn.” The fleeting moment before dawn is a soft, glowing light when the sun is below the horizon, twilight. It is such a beautiful moment.

This verse speaks to me as a powerful blessing. At times, mercy can feel rare, peace can seem fleeting, and love can seem twisted, but God is giving us all these in abundance. This verse is a source of strength and encouragement to me.

Imagine a single drop of grace that spreads until it covers everything. Just like ripples of water, small concentric circles that radiate outward from a point of disturbance. God’s grace reaches us where we are even in the hardest places.

*Lord, open our eyes to the dawn of your peace and grace.  
Amen.*

—JENN LANGHUS  
PRINCIPAL, THE MADELEINE SCHOOL

# Turn Your Thoughts to Jesus

SATURDAY, MARCH 14—*Psalm 34:15* “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

This verse reminds me that even when people are mad or having a bad time, they still have good inside of them. It also reminds me that you can always, always find peace in the world. It might be hard to find sometimes, but it is always there.

Jesus wanted peace in the world and that is what he taught the people who followed him. When you are having a bad day, just turn your thoughts to Jesus.

*Jesus, help us to always turn to you for peace. Amen.*

—FRANKIE BRAIA  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

# Fourth Sunday Of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

## *The Dawn of Faith*

### Introduction

My friend, Steve, recently had cataract surgery and has discovered a brighter, more defined world...a world that is more than he could handle at first without the calming filter of sunglasses. I remember my own cataract surgery and what a simple, miraculous procedure it was. I remember being awake and hearing the voices of professionals working on my eyes to improve my vision. At that moment my faith was in their training and experience.

When I think about the blind man in Sunday's gospel, I wonder what he was thinking when a group of men, whom he could not see approached him, and the one named Jesus made clay out of his saliva and placed it on the man's eyes? Did he think at first that it was a trick and they were making fun of him? Or perhaps it was the touch of Jesus' hands on his face that gave him the faith he needed to do what Jesus asked him to do? We too, have not seen Jesus, yet by faith, we are expected to do what Jesus is asking us to do.

**Share:** Have you ever experienced a time when your vision was made clearer?

† **READ: John 9:1-14**

**Share:** How do you think the blind man felt being a "celebrity"?

## Commentary

John spends forty-one verses writing about this miracle. Did it accomplish what God wanted it to accomplish? Jesus opens the eyes of his disciples by telling them that blindness is not caused by sin. The blind man has faith in Jesus, whom he cannot see, and receives his sight. The Pharisees are blinded by their beliefs and lack of faith to recognize Jesus as God's Son, the Messiah. When Jesus finally reveals himself to the blind man, he says that he has come into the world, so the blind may see and those who think they see will become blind.

**Share:** How can “following rules” as the Pharisees did, break down your faith in God?

## Reflection

What causes your blindness? Sometimes we can get so wrapped up in the things of this world that it is overwhelming and more than we can handle. We need sunglasses like my friend Steve to filter our vision. If we allow ourselves to be grasped by the media, we can be overcome with fear and confusion. Even the “rules” and things we have always believed can distort our vision and blind our sight to the things Jesus would like us to see. During the remaining weeks of Lent, examine the way you look at things. Put your faith in God to improve your vision.

**Share:** What blindness would you ask God to remove from your eyes, your life, your heart?

*Lord, my faith is in you. Take away my blindness and help me see.  
Amen.*

*“Faith is choosing to live from  
God’s promise when we cannot  
see the whole picture”*

# Learning to Walk in Lent

MONDAY, MARCH 16—*II Corinthians 5:6-7* “So we are always confident, even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight.”

When you can't see the road ahead, what convinces you to take the next step?

St. Paul says we can be “confident” even while we feel “away from the Lord.” This is a very human experience, we love God, yet life feels unfinished. Faith is not pretending everything is clear. Faith is choosing to live from God's promise when we cannot see the whole picture.

Here is a Lenten challenge. Choose one thing this week that causes you to be anxious because you cannot see the outcome. Pray, “Jesus I trust you here.” Then take one small step in faith, and God will meet you in the next step.

*Increase my faith, Lord, step by step. Amen.*

—FR. ANTHONY AHAMEFULE

## God Sees Differently

TUESDAY, MARCH 17—*1 Samuel 16:7b* “God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The Lord looks into the heart.”

After many years of watching children grow, I've learned that what really matters isn't always what shows on the outside. This verse reminds us that God sees differently than people do. We notice appearances, talents, and first impressions, but God looks into the heart. He sees our kindness, our honesty, and the choices we make when no one is watching. That's comforting, because it means God understands us even when we feel misunderstood. It's also a reminder to pay attention to our own hearts, making sure they are guided by compassion, humility, and a desire to do what's right.

*Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

—MARY HOGLUND

FIFTH GRADE TEACHER, THE MADELEINE SCHOOL

# The Power to Overcome Fear

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18—*Matthew 21:22* “Whatever you ask for in prayer, with faith you will receive.”

One time I was really worried about a math test, because I had forgotten my math book at school. When I woke up and went to school the next morning, everyone had studied hard. I didn’t want to tell my teacher, because it would make me seem careless, like I didn’t care if I got a bad grade. When my teacher was handing out the tests, I started having trouble breathing, because I hadn’t studied. But then a soft hollow sound stopped my jitters and enabled me to breathe. Suddenly I felt like I had the power to overcome all my fears.

*Thank you, Jesus, for helping us overcome our fears. Amen.*

—ASTER KERS  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

## God’s Wisdom

THURSDAY, MARCH 19—*1Corinthians 2:5* “May your faith rest not on human wisdom, but on the power of God.”

In life, we will seek to find the truth and meaning of our existence from scholars, friends, doctors, religious leaders and other cultural philosophies, despite the fact that humans are fallible. With the passage of time, our outdated and flawed viewpoints and knowledge are replaced by the latest innovations, adaptations, and scientific pursuits. Human knowledge is no comparison to God’s wisdom. We need to trust and have faith in God’s grace and divine wisdom to receive the guidance and experience our transformation as Christians through the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. We should not fear the unknown but draw strength from him.

*Lord, may we always turn to you for strength and wisdom.  
Amen.*

—MARY BRAUT

# Time in God's Creation

FRIDAY, MARCH 20—*Psalm 145:10* “All your works give you thanks,  
Lord, and your faithful bless you.”

Throughout my life, the natural beauty in our world has drawn me to an appreciation of God's creativity and love for all mankind.

As a child my father always took the month of August off work for our family vacation. We traveled to many of our country's national parks. We would stay up late getting lost in our amazing universe as we observed the night skies. We hiked in the August snow at Mt Rainer and went swimming in the cold Pacific Ocean. Traveling south, we climbed the ladder into the Pueblo people's sandstone cliff dwelling homes at Mesa Verde.

Always acknowledging that these are God's blessings and we are thankful for these gifts.

*My Lord and God, how great thou art! Amen.*

—BARBARA KYLER

## Love that Remains Forever

SATURDAY, MARCH 21—*1 Peter 1:20-21* “He was known before the  
foundation of the world but revealed in this final time for you.

As we travel these final days of Lent we can only imagine what the followers of Jesus were feeling, especially dear Peter, as they began to experience the mystery of the dawn of their faith and ours. It was only after the horror of the crucifixion, the shame of denying his precious Savior, and then knowing the joy of the Resurrection that Peter began to understand what had been revealed. With this revelation he was able to spread the joy of the gospel and share even unto us that our faith and hope can only be in God, for “the word of the Lord remains forever.”

*Keep us faithful to your Word, O Lord. Amen.*

—DONNA MARY MASON

# Fifth Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 22

## *The Dawn of Belief*

### Introduction

“I believe Lord. Help my unbelief.”

I am no different than the twelve disciples who, because they were afraid, tried to talk Jesus out of going to Bethany to heal Lazarus. Bethany was near Jerusalem. The last time Jesus was in Jerusalem, the Jews had threatened to kill him. The disciples were afraid of what would happen if they returned to Jerusalem. How often, in my fear, do I try to convince Jesus to do what I think is the safest, the least painful, and the easiest way to go?

“I believe Lord. Help my unbelief.”

I am no different than Mary and Martha, two dear friends of Jesus, who are disappointed that he didn't do what they had asked him to do. He didn't immediately respond to their request to come to Bethany and heal their brother, Lazarus. How often have I felt disappointed that Jesus didn't respond immediately to my requests, or use the timeline I suggested?

“I believe Lord. Help my unbelief.”

How often am I skeptical, even curious, like the Jews? How often does Jesus have to prove his love for me by being visible in my life? It is often a surprise that gladdens my heart or an unexpected change of direction. Sometimes, it is just opening my eyes to what is already visible.

**Share:** What are ways in which you try to manipulate God's plans for your life?

† **READ: John 11:1-45**

**Share:** What speaks to you in this scripture?

## Commentary

Jesus is nearing the final days of his time here on earth. He has one more miracle to perform that could possibly convince the Jews to believe in him. To perform this miracle, he ignores the pleas of the believers who are closest to him...his disciples and Mary and Martha. He makes the raising of Lazarus almost a theatrical production with tears and speaking in a loud voice to his Father...not like the Jesus who thought prayer should be done in private. Did the performance and miracle work? For some it did. John tells us that many of the Jews who were there began to believe in him

**Share:** What strengthens your belief in Jesus?

## Reflection

“I believe Lord, help my unbelief.” These words were spoken by the father with the demon-possessed son. They are also the words we often find ourselves saying or thinking. It is our humanity and sinfulness that make us unable to remain steadfast in our belief in God, the Holy One. As we near the end of our Lenten journey and walk toward the glorious dawn of Easter, let us remember that God is with us. Even in times of doubt, God is waiting to surprise us and perhaps lead us in a new direction.

**Share:** When has God’s answer to your prayer been better than you expected?

*I believe Lord. Help my unbelief. Amen*

*“Faith is the connecting thread  
in our journey...”*

# Prayer—A Lifetime Ministry

MONDAY, MARCH 23—*Mark 12:23* “Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe you will receive it and it shall be yours.”

My mother is a lifetime prayer warrior – faithfully praying the rosary for friends, family, casual acquaintances (and even the Seahawks!)

For 40 years, my mom brought pilgrims to Holy sites - many who were seeking healings and conversions.

When my mom prayed for a miracle to heal my sister’s cancer – she was led to a ministry involving healing crucifixes. She has given 2,000+ crucifixes to those in need of healing and prayers.

At age 100, prayer is my mom’s life purpose. She says, “I’m still here, so I guess God isn’t finished with me yet.” And she prays another rosary...

*Keep me faithful to you Lord, as I journey on this earth. Amen.*

—MARIA MANZO

## Belief Before Seeing

TUESDAY, MARCH 24—*John 20:29* “Jesus said to Thomas, ‘Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen yet believe!’”

One morning I went out for a run before sunrise, guided more by habit than certainty. The path was dark and I couldn’t see very far, but I kept moving, trusting the trail would be there step by step. As the sky slowly got brighter, what felt uncertain became clear.

Lent invites a similar kind of faith. Like Thomas, I often want proof before I believe. But this season challenges us to keep moving even when we can’t see the whole picture. Trust that belief doesn’t always come from seeing first, but from choosing to go forward and letting the light meet us along the way.

*Help me keep my eyes on you, Lord. Amen.*

—DAVOR BRAUT

# The Dawn of Belief

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25—*Romans 10:9* “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

This verse packs so much into a very few lines. Reflecting on it, I look at it from two angles. To me, confessing with our mouths translates to loving our neighbor. It is in our actions that Christ accompanies us in the world. Believing in our hearts is to look at the world, even when it’s burning up around us, and to feel the seed of his love in the very deepest part of our hearts. When all evidence seems to lead us to despair, it is the quiet voice inside reassuring us that we need not be afraid.

*Lord, we need your constant reassurance that you are with us always. Amen.*

—MARY LEVY

## Faith-Desire-Prayer

THURSDAY, MARCH 26—*Hebrews 11:6b* “Anyone who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

To have faith in God’s existence; no doubt a good starting place to unwrap this passage. Faith is the substance for things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. Like a migratory bird who sets off on a cold, foggy night, across unknown lands and seas, to find its predestined winter nesting place. Seeking safety, confident in the journey, and fully believing in their chosen path.

Faith is the connecting thread in our journey as well. We seek what we desire, not fame or worldly possessions, but God’s unconditional love. The stronger our desire, the harder we work to understand God’s plan for us, this, according to Hebrews, pleases God.

*This Lenten season, may we open our hearts to God’s promise. Amen.*

—LISA HAWKINS

# Truth

FRIDAY, MARCH 27—*John 20:31* “*These things are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.*”

I watch the news with a fair amount of skepticism these days. Was this video altered? Was the story generated by AI? What is the producer’s agenda? Is this the whole story? What is true? As we wait for the Dawn of Easter, once again, we remember the words recorded for us. The story of the man born blind. Doubting Thomas. The woman at the well. The raising of Lazarus. The empty tomb. I am the bread of life. Do this in remembrance of me. True 2000 years ago, true today. It is enough.

*Thank you Lord for your Word that helps us believe. Amen.*

—CHRISTI BOHMBACH

## The Desire to Believe

SATURDAY, MARCH 28—*Mark 9:24* “*I believe Lord, help my unbelief.*”

How often do we have doubt or fear in our faith? This verse reminds me that faith does not have to be perfect; you simply need the desire to believe.

As a parent, I admire the strength that this father demonstrated. He was vulnerable about his belief as he begs for Jesus to rid his son of the evil spirit, and his prayers were answered when Jesus did so. We can be honest about our faith and our doubts, but we must have hope and hunger to believe.

Jesus said all things are possible for those who believe.

*Jesus, thank you for giving us strength. Amen.*

—EMILY FELLMAN  
OCIA CANDIDATE

# Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29

## *The Dawn of Salvation*

### Introduction

They watched the sun slowly drop below the western horizon, sending up the gentle pastels of twilight. Another Sabbath had ended and now it was time for the women to gather their supplies and wait for the dawn, so they could return to the tomb and properly care for the body of their beloved Jesus.

They spoke once more of the horrific experience they had been through the previous week. They had sung Hosanna's with the bystanders as Jesus entered Jerusalem. They had witnessed, from the shadows, the final supper Jesus had eaten with his disciples. They saw Judas leave, and heard Peter profess his faithfulness. They listened to the reassuring words Jesus spoke to the remaining disciples. When the men left to pray in the garden, the women cleared the table and put the food away. They were resting by the fire, when one of the disciples returned to tell them that Jesus had been arrested. He cautioned them to stay inside the upper room and keep the door locked. They tried to rest but could not sleep. As dawn approached the disciple returned to tell them that Jesus was going to be crucified. They gathered leftover food into a basket, wrapped up in their shawls and began the walk to Golgotha to watch the day unfold.

**Share:** What are your thoughts about the women's involvement in the last days of Jesus' life?

† **READ:** You choose what part of *The Passion Story* to read.

**Share:** Let your imagination take you deeper into *The Passion Story*.

## Commentary

We know so much, yet we know so little about the women who God chose to play an important part in the resurrection story. Mary, the mother of Jesus is not mentioned after the crucifixion. In her sorrow, did she obey her son's request, and go with John to his home to be cared for in her exhaustion and grief? The other women carry on, as women so often do during a time of crises. They witnessed the pain and grief at the foot of the cross. They thought of bringing food and water to care for the people around them. Through their sorrow and exhaustion, they prepared to leave at dawn on Easter morning to do what needed to be done to the body of Jesus.

**Share:** Who are the resilient women in your life?

## Reflection

Here we are at the Dawn of Easter. We have traveled these forty days to get to this destination. How are you different from when you began this journey? Have you established a more secure trust in God? Are you able to look to the future with hope? Are you accepting the peace Jesus offers you? Is your faith stronger than it was on Ash Wednesday? Are you sharing your plans with God, but content to accept the plans God has for you? The women's plans were certainly changed that morning when they found the empty tomb. That empty tomb has also changed our plans. We no longer need to fear death. Our resurrected Savior has won for us eternal life with him in heaven.

*We praise you, O Lord, with thanksgiving and love!!! Amen.*

*“When I read the Bible, the more I read, the more I realize how much he protects me.”*

# Jesus, the Humble One, Our Savior

MONDAY, MARCH 30—*Philippines 2:7,8* “Being found in human form, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient unto death.”

Jesus is the light of the world, he overcame the darkness, and became our light. His love is eternal and everlasting, when he sacrificed himself on the cross for our sins, he showed the love that God has for us and will never give up on us no matter what. The promise Jesus made is one he will never break because of the unconditional love that he has for us, even if I’m not having the best day. The saving grace that God presents to us represents that we are all his children, and he loves us so much that he will come look for us if we are lost.

*Thank you Jesus, for loving us so much that you died for us on the cross. Amen.*

—MIKAYLA NGUYEN  
CONFIRMATION CLASS

## A Meaningful Life

TUESDAY, MARCH 31—*Romans 14:7,8* “None of us lives for oneself and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so whether we live or die we are the Lord’s.”

After my mother died, 14 years before my dad, he struggled greatly with living what he called “this useless life.” His role as a loving husband had been stripped away. Later, as his health deteriorated, he felt increasingly “useless.” I often reminded him that to love and be loved are the most important roles we have in life, and that nothing could ever take them away. Our worth doesn’t fluctuate with health, strength, independence or age. “We belong to the Lord.” Aren’t those comforting words? They remind me that my life, and the lives of all of us, are meaningful.

*Lord, remind us often, that we belong to you. Amen.*

—JANET MILLER

# Waiting in Confidence

WEDNESDAY APRIL 1—*John 3:17* “For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

Even when we hear nothing but horrible news, we can wait in confidence for the dawn because our Lord came to rescue us. This promise is for “the world.” All people, all creatures, all creation. Time, too, is God’s creation, so salvation is also for the Chinese farmer of 4000 BC. Just think of all the gifts that we have received through Grace as signs of salvation; give thanks, worship and determine to follow him!

*Thank you for your “amazing grace.” Amen.*

—BILL HUNTER

# Jesus Protects Me

HOLY THURSDAY APRIL 2—*1 Peter 2:24b* “By his wounds you have been healed.”

What this means to me, is that if I believe and have faith, Jesus will always protect me. When I read the Bible, the more I read, the more I realize how much he protects me. Now, I don’t take what I have for granted. I know that Jesus suffered and died for me and for the whole world.

*Thank you, Jesus. Amen.*

—HARPER KORB  
MADELEINE FIFTH GRADE

# Choice in Dying

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3—*Romans 4:24b* “He was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification”

This verse reads like a reporter’s news flash of what happened Passover weekend 33 CE. A man who went around doing good for others ends up a victim of state (in)justice. God steps in, raises him from the dead and accepts his death as putting humans right with God.

Wait! There’s the inside story.

Jesus himself says, “I lay down my life for the sheep...No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own.” (Jn. 10)

He actively hands over his life. His death reveals that we too have the power to hand over our lives in love for others. At our end, we have a choice in dying.

*Lord, make me generous with my love. Amen.*

—JOAN SPIERING, RGS

# Beyond My Wildest Dream!

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, EASTER EVE—*Psalms 51:14a* “Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”

The Apostles were huddled in fear. Before dawn the women were about the “heavy work,” the anointing of the dead body of Jesus. In their grief, they were not thinking clearly. What about that heavy stone? Those women never imagined that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb!

I am now in the last stage of my own journey, my days are numbered. Jesus will take me to my new life, and my spirit will live forever. I have no idea what that life will be like, none at all. But soon and very soon my Risen Jesus will take me to my life beyond my wildest dreams, the fullness of Joy. Now I wait, now I ready myself, Risen Jesus, you are my salvation!

*The Dawn is here and heaven awaits our arrival! Thanks be to God! Alleluia!*

—FATHER JOHN MCGRANN

# *We Wait for Dawn*

2026 LENTEN THEME • WORDS MARILYN ROBB  
TO THE TUNE “BEYOND THE MOON AND STARS”

## CHORUS:

We wait for dawn, O Lord,  
Your light to see.  
From shadowed life on earth,  
You set us free.  
In times of doubt and fear,  
Out faith renew.  
We wait for dawn, O Lord,  
To be with you.

## VERSE 1

We place our trust in you,  
Show us the way,  
So, when we're tested. Lord,  
We will not stray.

## VERSE 2

We look to you with hope  
For things to come.  
You take us higher, Lord.  
Thy will be done.

## VERSE 3

You satisfy our thirst.  
You grant us peace.  
Come live within us, Lord,  
Our faith increase.

## VERSE 4

We do not know your plans,  
But keep us wise.  
If we believe in you,  
We too shall rise.



*Thank you to Marilyn Robb  
for her tireless work in preparing this  
Lenten gift to The Madeleine.*

*And to all those who  
contributed daily reflections,  
our utmost appreciation  
for your heartfelt  
inspirations.*

