



THE HILL SCHOOL
THE FAMILY BOARDING SCHOOL
2019 Lenten Devotional

Introduction

On Wednesday, March 6, 2019, the Lenten season will begin. As an aid to individual spiritual preparation for Easter, we have prepared a Lent Daily Devotional for The Hill community. This devotional will offer brief reflections and prayers written by students, faculty, staff, and alumni drawn from the School's Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christian communities. This year's book will focus on weekday reflections from Psalms and weekend reflections from the Gospels with each day including a reflection, a short prayer, and recommended scripture readings. We invite you to read, reflect, and to pray for God's Word to come through to speak into your life. Oftentimes people turn to devotionals to meet deep spiritual and personal needs. Whatever the reason, I truly believe that this devotional will guide our community into times of reflection and renewal during this holy season.

Sincerely,

Rev. Khristi L. Adams, M.Div.

Firestone Endowment Chaplain/

Instructor of Religious Studies

THE HILL SCHOOL

March 6

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.*

PSALM 51: 10

“I don’t know why I said that. It just came out of me.” These were the words of a famous comedian who responded in a shocking outburst at a performance when some hecklers interrupted his show. The words that came out of his mouth in response were vile and reprehensible and in our social media driven world, his words were also caught on video. Visibly remorseful and ashamed, he tried to make several attempts to apologize to the public, but his career inevitably suffered as a result. I, too, was disappointed by his outburst but also couldn’t help but empathize with his explanation. There are times when life’s pressures has caused me to respond in unbecoming ways, confused with my own responses or word choice. When this happens, I am always reminded of Jesus’ words when he reminded the people around him that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” As much as I don’t want to believe it, what comes out of my mouth is ultimately what is coming out of my heart. These moments of moral failure are always cues that my heart still needs some work. In Psalm 51:10, the psalmist petitions God in this simple prayer:

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.”*

In this day in age, I want a clean heart and a new and right spirit and only God, our creator, can clean the insides of our hearts. Perhaps my heart still holds some cynicisms reflecting the jaded world around me. Perhaps my heart still holds unforgiveness and I need God to help me learn to let go of things I’m holding on to. Perhaps my heart holds some misjudgment or ill will towards people that I don’t even know. This Lenten season, I pray that God would reveal to us the areas we need to grow in and that we would submit our hearts over to God’s spirit to clean us out.

The Reverend Khristi Adams

FIRESTONE ENDOWMENT CHAPLAIN/ INSTRUCTOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Today’s Prayer

Create in us clean hearts, oh God, and renew in us, righteous, peaceable, gentle and noble spirits that we may be able to do your good word and will in our lives. Amen.

March 7

*Oh, the joys of those who do not
follow the advice of the wicked,
or stand around with sinners,
or join in with mockers.*

*But they delight in the law of the LORD,
meditating on it day and night.*

*They are like trees planted along the riverbank,
bearing fruit each season.*

*Their leaves never wither,
and they prosper in all they do.*

PSALM 1:1-3

How would you finish this sentence? “Happy are those who...”

Most of us would say something like, “Happy are those who get into their first-choice college,” or “Happy are those who have the nicest clothes and biggest house,” or “Happy are those who beat Lawrenceville.” We tend to associate happiness, or blessedness, with the accumulation of material possessions and tangible accomplishments. But Psalm 1 gives us a very different perspective on what constitutes happiness. “Happy are those,” the psalmist writes, whose “delight is in the law [or teaching] of the LORD.”

I can’t help but notice, though, that the happiness promised here doesn’t come with a promise of material or tangible benefits. It is promised that we who delight in God’s teachings will yield fruit in due season, but I can’t help but ask: when is that season? I want some kind of assurance or guarantee of the benefits that will be coming my way.

A fuller understanding of this psalm hinges on the word “prosper” in verse 3. The word “prosper” suggests the promise of a reward for obedience, even a material reward, since “prosper” in English almost inevitably connotes money or material wealth. A better translation, however, is “thrives.”

The reward, if you can call it that, of a life lived in pursuit of God’s teachings will not be material. Rather, the reward is a life of security and confidence in the face of all that life brings. Our GPA, our win-loss record, and all the rest of our successes and failures do not define us. Rather, our roots define us. And, roots in God will not wither.

Rev. Anne Confer Martens ’02

WARNER ASSOCIATE CHAPLAIN
CHAIR OF THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

Today’s Prayer

Lord God, joy marks your presence; beauty, abundance, and peace are the tokens of your work in all creation. Work also in our lives, that by these signs we may see the splendor of your love and may praise you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

March 8

Give thanks to the Lord, His love endures forever.

PSALM 118:1

It sounds so simple that we ought to thank God. And yet, why is it that our first instinct in life is to complain, or to judge, or to critique, or to feel anger? The Psalmist's words to "give thanks to the Lord" can be read as an encouragement or even a command to take time to express gratitude for God and for all the blessings we have. In this time of Lent, we are called to remember how difficult the journey is for Christ during his Passion. On the other side of his preparation in the desert is tremendous pain and suffering, through the betrayal and weakness of his closest friends no less. But even in the darkest of times, even when things do not go as one plans—and we suffer deep loss and disappointment—blessings can come from that suffering. And that meditation often leads, as David suggests, to seeing that "His love endures forever." I've made it part of my morning prayer practice for the last year or so to meditate on three things that I am grateful for. It takes me just a few minutes each morning, but when I really do "give thanks," and truly meditate on those blessings, I come to realize what absolute gifts this world and our lives are. So like the Psalmist, for today I hope you will "give thanks" and meditate on three things that you are truly grateful for. Take a minute to think about each. You can be thankful for something as simple as the warm breeze on your face, or for the smile of your best friend. When we put ourselves in a state of gratitude, we can't be in a state of anger or despair. We open ourselves up to seeing that, indeed, "His love endures forever."

Len Miller

ASSOCIATE HEADMASTER

Today's Prayer

God of awesome deeds and unfailing love, you bring your people through the waters of salvation to the shores of new life. Hear our prayer, receive the praise we offer, and loosen our tongues to tell with joy the great things you have done for us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

MARK 9:2-10

There are many surprises in life and around every corner, and in every part of life, if we allow it, experiences of wonder are present. If we open up to the possibility of unexpected encounters, we will live fuller lives. When we become comfortable with the routine or expect the worst, we take those around us for granted and begin to make incorrect assumptions.

The three disciples in this passage, Peter, James, and John, spent a great deal of time with Jesus and thought they knew him well. They assumed a great deal about Jesus and thought they knew what to expect. Their journey to the mountaintop brought a great surprise. Not only do the disciples see Moses and Elijah, two other great prophets, but they also hear the word of the Lord proclaiming Jesus as his son.

As Peter, James, and John descend the mountain, they become confused by Jesus's request not to mention the event until after he has 'risen from the dead.' This moment is the first time the disciples hear a foreshadowing of what is to come. Life doesn't have all the answers, and we need to trust those around us. Christ leads us to the path of glory if we let him into our hearts, "but the road to that glory leads down the mountain into the mundane affairs and sufferings of life." In other words, life isn't always easy.

The message of this gospel is two-fold: to see, we must genuinely look and to hear, we need to listen. When the disciples ascend the mountain, they see Jesus in a whole new way. Jesus doesn't change, but Peter, James, and John can see him as the Son of God. I think about how quick we are to judge our peers! Be patient. Consider the buzzwords of the 21st century – be mindful, be present. To experience, we need to open our minds and hearts to the possibility of God's voice. Don't accept the ordinary; let go of the routine and embrace God's love.

Jennifer Lagor P'09 '10 '12 '21

ASSISTANT HEADMASTER FOR STUDENT LIFE

Today's Prayer

Dear God, We thank you for revealing your Son Jesus to us. Help us to live in his example during the Lenten season and throughout the year.
Amen

March 10

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

MARK I: 12-15

Preparation is something that all of us face. If we fail to prepare, we risk failure, harm, even potentially death. Imagine walking five miles in a blizzard without proper clothing. Or, consider a sports team entering a contest with no practice, no physical training, and no scouting of their opponent.

By preparing ourselves, we make it possible to realize our potential. The process of preparation may be short or long, arduous or easy. But it can't be skipped.

The Gospels teach us that Jesus did not start his earthly ministries until about age 30. Until then, he was reared by Mary and Joseph, became a carpenter, and studied the scriptures in the synagogue. Apart from a story in Luke 2 about Jesus at age 12 teaching in the temple, the Gospel writers saw nothing of significance to report about his life past infancy. But that one incident in the temple suggests Jesus was preparing diligently and patiently for his later work.

We learn in Chapter 1 of Mark that after Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan, “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.” Why? We are told two verses before that when Jesus came out of the river “... the Spirit descend[ed] upon him like a dove.” If he was empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry, why would he need to spend 40 days in the desert?

The answer, of course, is further preparation. Time spent in prayer, fasting, and temptation prepared Jesus for the “Big Event,” three years of teaching, healing, and casting out demons. It also prepared him to willingly sacrifice himself on a cross on that first Good Friday to fulfill God’s plan for humankind.

Lent is our time to prepare to fully understand Jesus’ suffering and sacrifice, that we might also rejoice in the Easter message of redemption and salvation. So, whether it is putting on a winter coat, practicing for the game against Lawrenceville, or reading and praying during Lent, disciplined preparation will make all the difference in the ultimate outcome.

Preston G. Athey ’67

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Today’s Prayer

God give us the patience and openness to submit to your plan for our lives. Give us the mind to prepare for whatever it is you have for your plan for our lives. Allow us to be more disciplined individuals so that we may be fit to do ministry and service in this world. Amen.

March 11

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.*

PSALM 150:6

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

The book of Psalms ends with a long exaltation of praise. The psalmist praises God and invites us to sing a new song to the Lord in beginning of chapter 149. Praising God through music continues into the next chapter. This time, more people are invited to play various instruments and dance to be added to worship.

It's easy to imagine a choir singing with an orchestra performing music so moving and transcendent.

Who are these people praising the Lord? Are they the most gifted musicians?

No.

They are God's people, people who know their Savior and of His love.

They live in His amazing grace and live to tell others of His goodness. They forgive others because they were first forgiven, and walk this life to bless the Lord and others. They praise the Lord in all circumstances, giving thanks to Him.

Let us give thanks to the Lord today for the life we have in Him. Let us give thanks for each other to walk this life with. Let us make some joyful noise unto Him!

Yoon Lim P'17 '18

OAKLAWN-TUTTLE DIRECTOR OF VOCAL MUSIC
AND ATHEY FAMILY MASTER OF THE ARTS

Today's Prayer

Precious Lord, Thank you for your ending love. Thank you for hearing my off-key songs and softest praises. Thank you for being with me when my soul is so far away from you. Please fill my spirit with your spirit. I praise your holy name. Amen.

March 12

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the
testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple*

PSALM 19:7

God is trying to tell us that his teachings are complete and flawless and that if we follow his doctrines, we will be able to live without sin. God will lead us on a path in which we will be able to choose truth over error, righteousness over sin, and life over death. In the second part of the Psalm, we are told that the testimony, which was also referred earlier as the law, is not only flawless but also invariable and revealing. His words cannot be twisted toward evil because they are precise and powerful, they make “wise the simple.” Simple refers to those men or women whose minds are open to the entrance of both good and evil. They haven’t closed their hearts and minds to instruction, but they haven’t chosen a path yet and could be inclined to choose temptation. Wise are those who have chosen to follow His law towards the only true wisdom and salvation. During this time of reflection and preparation, God is reaffirming the power and truth in His teachings because he wants us to trust Him and follow Him on the path towards salvation. His words can be used in our daily lives, both at Hill and outside, God is telling us to resist temptation and to stay away from sin, to always try to choose right over wrong and to find guidance and comfort in His word.

Marina Mendez ’19

Today's Prayer

God, give us the mind trust your word and your truth with all our heart, minds and souls. Let us turn to your teaching in these times to guide us towards your path for righteousness sake. Forgive us for going in any other direction. Amen.

March 13

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?*

PSALM 22:1

Life can change in an instant. One day you are on the mountaintop thinking you have it made and the next day you find yourself in the depths of a dark valley where everything that could go wrong does go wrong. Two months ago, I found myself once again in a valley after my family was involved in a head-on collision as we traveled through an intersection only a mile from our home.

That accident was just a blip in time to the other three members of my family who were in the car with me, but I sustained more serious injuries and am still struggling each day with pain. Simple tasks are extremely painful. Sometimes when I get out of bed in the morning, I can't even stand. I can't sit for long periods of time, I can't bend over at all or even tie my shoes. It's extremely humbling to have your eleven-year-old put your shoes on.

A few weeks ago, I spent a day in a tremendous amount of pain. I laid on the couch and cried for nearly 24 hours. There was no rest or sleep. I wanted to scream at God, “Why is this happening, why can’t you take the pain away? Haven’t I been through enough in one lifetime?” My tears spoke volumes and my husband drove me to the emergency room. I was pretty much done with everything and everyone.

Everyone has times when they feel hopeless. You wonder if it will ever get better. It’s hard when you are in the moment and you can’t see what God is doing or the person you will become through the pain. You just have to trust Him. In hindsight, I can now look back at other hard times in my life and see every step that has led me to where I am today. Sometimes those steps were God’s alone carrying me. I can only hope that God is doing the same thing in this instance and molding me for something amazing. He can make beauty from ashes. It doesn’t take the pain away, but it gives purpose to the pain.

Many times, people don’t appreciate the lessons life teaches us. I have learned to be thankful during all seasons, on the mountaintop and in the valley. Praise God in those times, even if it is through tears, because God knows the person you are going to become when you come out the other side. You are not alone.

Amy Winter

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER FOR THE STUDENT LIFE OFFICE

Today's Prayer

Eternal God, your Son cried out in anguish from the cross, and you delivered him. Do not hide your face from those who cry out to you. By his death and resurrection bring life where there is death: feed the hungry, strengthen the weak, and break the chains of oppression, that all people may rejoice in your saving deeds through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 14

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

I will say of the LORD,

*“He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.”*

Surely he will save you

from the fowler’s snare

and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers,

and under his wings you will find refuge;

his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

“Because he loves me,” says the LORD,

“I will rescue him;

I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him.

With long life I will satisfy him

and show him my salvation.”

PSALM 91

In Psalm 91 we hear King David reminding himself and us that God is the one we can trust, run to, and seek shelter from when troubles inevitably come our way. A quick reading of this chapter might tempt you to say, “If I choose to follow God, I will never face

trouble,” but in verse 15 we see that the Lord promises us that He will be with us in trouble, so some trouble is coming to us all – as we well know and have likely experienced. But there is comforting news! Kind David experienced God as his refuge and fortress and in verse 14, we see that the Lord promises to rescue, protect, answer, be with, and deliver King David and us in and from that trouble. That said, I don’t just read about what God will do for us, but I read and hear a call to action on my part. I, like King David, must dwell in His shelter (v. 1), trust in Him (v. 2), love Him and acknowledge His name (v. 14), and call on Him (v. 15). All that sounds to me like a permanent relationship, that I should, in essence, move in to God’s shelter to dwell there, rather than just live somewhere else and run to His fortress when times get tough. We know from early passages in the Old Testament that David had that type of ongoing relationship and heart for God. David had figuratively moved in to dwell in God’s shelter and relied on Him through many difficult situations. David had experienced God’s rest, refuge and shield, but he still needed to remind himself, likely because he again was going through a hard time. The final imagery that speaks to me from this passage is that of God covering me with his feathers and providing shelter with his wings (v. 4). As a biologist, I have seen adult birds, shielding and protecting their more vulnerable chicks from bad weather or danger, putting themselves between their young and the trouble. It is easy for me to translate that into God’s protection of me as long as I am willing to stay under his cover and trust that He will be my shield.

David Allain P’18

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Today’s Prayer

Blessed indeed are they who put their trust in you, O God, our sure rock and refuge. Guard us from giving to any other the allegiance that belongs only to you. Shine upon us with the brightness of your light, that we may love you with a pure heart and praise you forever; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 15

*I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.*

PSALM 25:2

No one remembers elevator rides unless they get stuck on one. Elevators serve as a pretty mundane part of our lives, we use them when we need them, but they aren't anything too special. When I walked into an elevator on the way up to the surgical ward of Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, I also walked into the most vulnerable moment of my life, and an elevator ride that I certainly do remember.

I was on my way to my first spinal fusion, a surgery which consists of rods and screws aligning a crooked spine. The surgery is eight hours in length and accompanied by a long, difficult recovery. I panicked. As we went up each floor, a different scenario would play out in my mind. In a moment of panic, I turned to open ended questions and doubt, rather than doing the one thing I am commanded to do in the Bible 191 times. Trust.

I'll be blunt. Trusting is really hard. It's a lot easier to doubt and to worry than it is to trust, which is ironic considering worrying is quite frankly the more draining option. I am a worrier, not a "truster," but I'm also a believer in Jesus Christ which leaves me with one option: trust in Him.

If I truly believe that God is omniscient, then I need to also believe that he created my spine, he orchestrated the situation, and he will "not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies (or my doubts) triumph over me." David is clear in Psalms that he faces many literal, emotional, and physical battles. Sometimes we need those battles — in my case a very physical one — to realize the power that God holds. When one trusts in the Lord, it is a step to acknowledging that God is truly in control. He is greater than any situation or trial we may face. "I trust in you." Give your worries to God, He is greater.

Amelia Sniffin '19

Today's Prayer

God our Savior, we trust you with our whole hearts, minds and souls. Hear us when we cry to you day and night, when we are stripped of hope and life, that we may again know your presence and see your face; for you alone are God, and all our help comes from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 16

*See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’*

MARK I: 1-8

This passage recounts the story of John the Baptist calling the people of Judea to the wilderness where he baptizes them in the River Jordan. In doing so, he invites people to begin preparing the way for the arrival of their Savior, Jesus Christ.

There are three dominant themes represented in this passage, all of which receive considerable attention elsewhere throughout the Gospel. The first is a message of hope. The impending arrival of Jesus Christ represents hope for eternal life. Secondly, baptism is the first step in preparing the heart for the arrival of Christ.

Lastly, the passage highlights the importance of seeking forgiveness. Through baptism, Christians can repent their sins and seek forgiveness for them. Remembering this fundamental principal of Christianity allows us not only to ask for forgiveness from the Lord, but also to learn to forgive others. In our daily lives, perhaps there is no more essential element to the faith than that of forgiveness.

Joe Lagor P'09 '10 '12 '21

HERBERT B. FINNEGAN INSTRUCTOR OF WORLD LANGUAGES
AND SENIOR MASTER OF WORLD LANGUAGES

Today's Prayer

God of compassion, you sent your Word into the world to announce the dawn of salvation. Do not leave us in the depths of our sins, but give to us the fullness of your redeeming grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."

Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."

JOHN 3:1-17

John 3:16 may be one of the most well-known and quoted verses in all of scripture. "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Most people would argue that this verse alone sums up the redemptive story that the entirety of the Bible paints. While this verse is extremely powerful and always worth looking at and

understanding, I would like to focus on John 3:14-15. Jesus said, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.” Jesus is calling his audience’s attention to the story in Numbers 21 when the people of Israel were wandering in the desert. The Israelites were complaining to God about taking them from Egypt to “die” in the wilderness. In response to their sinful complaints, God sent venomous snakes against the people and many were bitten and died. After the people pleaded with Moses, Moses pleaded with God on their behalf and God instructed Moses to make a bronze snake and lift it up among the people. Whoever looked at the bronze snake would live.

There have been many times in my life, and I would imagine in yours as well, when things seem worse now than they were before or perhaps worse than you ever imagined. Regardless of what provision and blessing God has given us before, if we are in a difficult season of life we tend to grumble and complain to God about such things; it is in our nature to do so. However, Christ came, died, and was resurrected so that we could have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). The eternal life that Christ promises those who look to him and call on His name is not only speaking of the life that is yet to come, but the one we are currently in as well. Even when life is breaking us down to a point, we feel we can’t go on, I encourage you to always look to Jesus who was lifted up for your sake and mine that we could have life and have it to the full.

Michael Webster
INSTRUCTOR OF MATHEMATICS

Today’s Prayer

O God, our leader and guide, you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

March 18

*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.*

PSALM 116:1

We often find ourselves in moments of doubt. Moments where we have to deal with difficult people, where our work days aren't going as planned, or trouble at home and with friends is getting us down. There are moments where we are struggling through grief. Moments where life has thrown all it can at us and we have doubted our faith. It is in these moments where we still find a way to rise in the morning, to love those around us and the work we do. The strength we are given to get back up after being knocked down is a true testament of the strength of God. He hears our cries, He hears us when we are down and gives us the strength to carry on. He gives us His hand and pulls us up when we are down. This Psalm really shows us the power of God, the ability He has to bring us out of our toughest times and show us that we should never lose faith in Him. When you doubt yourself or your faith, turn to Him and He will show you why you need to keep believing. When we need Him, He is there, guiding us every step of the way.

Chanel Erasmus

DONOR RELATIONS OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF SQUASH

Today's Prayer

O God, maker of heaven and earth, you help us in times of distress and watch over us day and night. Hold us securely in your mercy, that in the midst of fear and danger we may depend on you, our sure deliverer; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 19

*Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.
O Lord, make haste to help me!*

PSALM 70: 1

“Prayer is something we do in our time. The answers come in God’s time.” - Father Cavanaugh

The petitioner in Psalm 70 acknowledges his (or her) desperate state and pleads, repeatedly, for the Lord to act quickly. I recall a scene from a movie whose message, among other things, is about faith. In *Rudy*, the main character of a popular sports-drama about an undersized, underachieving yet persistent student-athlete who walks on to Notre Dame’s football team, befriends a Catholic priest who provides guidance and counsel - not to mention “ONE semester” at a nearby junior college.

Desperate for admission to his beloved Notre Dame and running out of time, Rudy sits in church and wonders if he has “prayed enough.” Father Cavanaugh, played by the late Robert Proske (who grew up in Manayunk, a Philadelphia neighborhood that I called home for 10 years), tells Rudy that “prayer is something we do in our time. The answers come in God’s time.”

The ancient Greeks had two words for time: χρόνος (chronos) and καιρός (kairos). Think of the former as a minute - easily measured; and the latter as a moment - hard to measure but easy to identify. When praying for help, we operate on our time and anxiously count the minutes or days — or even years — while awaiting a response.

I occasionally operate “chronologically” if you will, with my friends and family. If I need help — right now! — and my brother doesn’t immediately respond to a text or if a colleague takes three days to reply to an e-mail request for assistance, I tend to create villains of them, not too unlike the petitioner.

Urgent does not mean important, as many have said. And what may seem like an emergency to me may not be such a big deal to others. Whenever I may get an answer is not up to me - whether from above or from my inbox. And an arbitrary, self-imposed timeline not adhered to shouldn’t prevent me from asking - or praying - for help again.

Ed Turner

INSTRUCTOR OF CLASSICS

Today’s Prayer

God, give us the humility and strength of mind to turn to you for help in our time of need. You are the giver and sustainer of all things. In you we have all the help we need on earth because of your resources in heaven. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

March 20

*I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.*

PSALM 77:11

When you feel locked down by hopelessness, discouragement and uncertainty it is imperative to regain perspective. Where does your mind go when troubles pile up and just getting up in the morning seems like a chore? It leans toward how bad it is now and how the future will probably be too. This is the time to call a mental time-out and take a long look in the past at God's blessings on your life. Choose to redirect your thoughts in order to stoke your hope for the future. The Psalmist forced himself to review the past blessings of God's faithfulness, where hope for the future was reinforced. These are conscious acts that he chooses to do. This is the fight of faith and for delight. This is the opposition of passivity and resignation. This is the strategy of Life. He is no longer the victim of his feelings. The control of his life shifts from his heart to his head. He sees that the place to begin is not with himself or circumstances, as he has been doing, but with God. The proper order is not with prayer and then meditation, but the reverse: to begin with meditating about God, which leads to a humble prayer based on an understanding of who God is. When we are no longer defined by choices and circumstances from our past, how we live in the present really does change. Glean on how powerful and faithful your heavenly Father is. Remember Christ's death and ponder his resurrection. Meditate on this psalm. I WILL remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I WILL remember your wonders of old.

Storm Wisler

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES HELP DESK TECHNICIAN

Today's Prayer

"Father, teach me to start not with me and my own limited understanding, but with You."

Alignment

That I might know Christ and the power of His resurrection
That I might know Christ and the power of my resurrection in Him

March 21

*Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.*

PSALM 148:1

The Lenten season is a time of great sacrifice and almsgiving, but one that leads to the incredibly bright and joyous celebration of Easter. What we mainly know about the seasons of Lent, the Triduum, and Easter come to us through the Gospels and The Acts of the Apostles. As for the 40 days beforehand, our attention generally turns toward the latter portions of the gospels and to the Psalms. Throughout Lent, a great deal of time is dedicated towards reexamining the ways in which we live, and this is usually done through renewing certain Sacraments, or pouring through the Gospels to glean information about the nature in which we should live. A great emphasis on the Psalms follows, especially in worship.

The Psalms highlight not only the grace and mercy of God, but also tell us of the importance praising him. Praise is a theme which is found in the vast majority of them, most notably the last ten. Psalm 148 is no exception. It begins the same way as the two immediately before it, and the two following it, with, “Hallelujah!”

This beginning of course signals immediately that this is a song of praise. The first verse then follows, “Praise the Lord from the Heavens; praise him in the heights.” On its face, this Psalm seems like another song about the importance for us all to praise God all of the time — and this is important — but there’s more to it than that.

There are a few different ways this Psalm can be read, or rather, sung. No matter which way you choose to recite it, it first seems to be calling to the beings of the heavens to praise God just as those on Earth called. In looking at the rest of this Psalm we can see that it is in fact calling all of God’s creation to rejoice in him, but the final portion in particular is one which I think means something more. Praising the Lord in the heights could mean that God should be praised from the highest places so that we can be as close to him as possible. But, it also doesn’t mean just physically from the highest points, but from when we are in our highest spirits. This Psalm is incredibly important to reflect on in the Lenten season because it especially is a time where we are not celebrating. This Psalm is pertinent to sacrifice and almsgiving because it implicitly makes clear the importance of praising God from our depths. It’s easy to lift up prayers of thanksgiving and praise when the wind is at our backs, but when it’s the middle of March and you wake up on Sunday at 7:30 to a foot of snow on the ground and single degree weather it becomes more important than ever to still get to Church and sing songs of praise to the Lord. God constantly hears our prayers and answers them, but when things are bad and we ask for help, we also need to remember all he has done for us.

Gus Kellerman ’19

Today’s Prayer

God Most High, by your Word you created a wondrous universe, and through your Spirit you breathed into it the breath of life. Accept creation’s hymn of praise from our lips, and let the praise that is sung in heaven resound in the heart of every creature on earth, to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

March 22

A song of ascents.

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

Lord, hear my voice.

*Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.*

PSALM 130: 1-2

When I first read this Psalm, I was taken by what felt like such a negative tone. The phrases “out of depths” and “cry for mercy” implied to me a struggle to be heard from a place of despair. I wanted the Psalm to offer hope and the more time I spent with it, the more I found the opportunity it presents. While reflecting I was introduced to a devotional passage titled “A New Beginning” that was timed to coincide with the New Year. In the passage, it implores that “learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new.” It asks that we imagine that we could live each day as a day full of promises. This is what we all cry out for.

As young adults in a community such as Hill, we can easily find ourselves “crying out” for answers. Students aren’t just looking for answers to questions their teachers ask in class or on tests, but are seeking answers to the bigger questions that relate to their meaning and purpose in the world. This Psalm echoes that call and asks that the cry be heard. And through the promise of faith, that call is heard.

I read this passage as a message of hope, knowing that the faith of God is there for all of us to speak to and that such faith can guide and support us.

Peter Benedict II '88 P'21

HILL SCHOOL TRUSTEE

Today's Prayer

God our maker, you crown the humble with honor and exalt the faithful who gather in your name. Because you have favored us with life, we dance before you in our joy and praise you with unending song for the victory of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 23

What do you think?

If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

MATTHEW 18: 12-14

One of the most well-known parables in the bible begins with a simple yet profound question, in which we are challenged to THINK - about our responsibilities, our roles, and our value both to one another and to God. Jesus, understands the enormity of this task and uses the story of the lost sheep and the shepherd as the pathway for us to begin this search for ourselves.

This story resonates on a deeply personal level as I arrived to The Hill as a 3rd former, very much the epitome of a lost sheep. My father had passed away months earlier just shy of 41 years old. For me, the path back to the flock was led by not one but many shepherds in the form of teachers, coaches, advisors and friends. As a result, one of the greatest lessons I learned from my time at The Hill was the importance of community.

Throughout our lives we will all connect to both the plight of the lost sheep, as well as the call of the shepherd. Yet it is only through walking in both roles are able to begin to understand and embrace this as ties that bind us as a community. One that is equally strong, reliant on our brothers and sisters and worthy of God's love.

Michael Barron '87

Today's Prayer

Compassionate Father, you forgive all our sins and put them far from us. As an eagle to her young, you nourish and renew us with your tender love. Sustain us each day of our mortal life, that we may seek your healing for all who are in need, and bring us at last with saints and angels to bless and praise you forever; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

March 24

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

MATTHEW 11:28-30

I am an engineer. I have been taught through formal education and through work experience over the course of my life to think in a very scientifically methodical way. I am very confident in my skills and I am very structured in my approach to resolving problems. Step 1, step, 2, step 3; problem solved! All problems have a solution, and I should be able to figure it out; just give me enough time.

Unfortunately, life is not always that way. There are not solutions for every problem we encounter on this earthly realm. Sometimes we carry heavy burdens because we want to figure things out on our own, thinking there is no one to help us. We want to be the engineer of our own life.

But Jesus offers us a different way! We don't have to remain burdened by loneliness, guilt, grief, depression, fear, jealousy, dependency, or feelings of inadequacy. When the burden is so heavy that prayers cannot even be formed, lean on Him. When you are too weary to lift your head, rest it on His shoulder. Know that somehow at some time, your burden will be shared, lifted and eventually eased. He has said so, and He is faithful to his promises. ALWAYS!

I imagine Jesus saying these words to me now. Jesus offers me rest for my weary, troubled soul. This invitation refreshes me by inspiring hope that God is always with me, no matter how low I might be.

I pray that anyone in The Hill family that is weighed down may hear the voice of Jesus. I pray that I may hear it too, and have the humility I need to ask for and to receive help.

Jeff Grimm

DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES SERVICES

Today's Prayer

Lord, during this Lenten Season let me share your work. Open my eyes to the burdens of others. Open my heart to the pain that cannot be shared, to the fear that cannot be spoken, and to those who face darkness alone.

March 25

*In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.*

PSALM 71:1

This verse was written by the psalmist David. Theologians believe that it was written in the later part of his life. If that is true, the verse takes on additional significance with the knowledge that David spent most of his life fleeing from his enemies. The Message translates the same verse as follows, “I run for dear life to God; I’ll never live to regret it.” Relying on God for help is a common theme in the Psalms and one that has resonated with individuals throughout the centuries.

Reflecting on this verse brings to mind the great hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” written by the reformer Martin Luther. The hymn is a celebration of the sovereign power of God over all earthly and spiritual forces, and of the sure hope we have in Him. Similar to David, Luther’s comparison of God to a refuge was born out of a time of trouble. The opening lines of the hymn compare God to a fortress.

*A mighty Fortress is our God,
A Bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.*

Luther and David both recognized that God is a present help in time of trouble. Often times we are overwhelmed with all that life brings. We are looking for somewhere to turn that will provide comfort and encouragement. During these moments, we too can turn to God as a source of assistance and guidance. In the second stanza Luther writes:

*Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing.*

There are times that we just can’t do it on our own. These are the times that we need to “run for dear life to God.” David’s words assure us that we will “never live to regret it.”

Shelley Baumgarten

DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Today’s Prayer

God our strong fortress, do not forsake us in youth or old age. Help us to follow your will through all our years and under all circumstances, that forever we may praise your faithfulness; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 26

*In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.*

PSALM 31:1

In times of strife and in times of joy, we can find comfort in knowing that we are all children of the Lord. In times of great loss, such as the passing of a family member or loved one, our faith can be tested. My father was diagnosed with terminal cancer six months before the happiest day of my life: my wedding day. Due to my father's illness, he was not able to join the celebration in person. A few weeks after my wedding, my father went to join our Heavenly Father. My father's passing thoroughly tested my faith. I was angry with God for having taken my father, particularly because my half-siblings were not yet teenagers at the time of his passing. I was angry not only on my behalf but for them as well, for they would grow up without their father in their lives. As I worked through the stages of grief, my anger towards God dissipated, and I came to have a new perspective on this journey of loss.

Psalm 31:1 reminds me that as I put my faith and trust in our Lord, I need not feel ashamed of my anger following my dad's passing. In times of joy it is easy for to put our faith in the Lord. In times of hardship, faith and trust are more difficult as we are too focused on the hardship instead of the blessings we have been given. Though I hope to not have such a tribulation again soon, I hope to remember that in times of distress, I only need place my trust in the Lord and maintain perspective that He is with me and will make my path bearable.

Daniel Delgadillo

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES HELP DESK MANAGER

Today's Prayer

O Lord our God, our times are in your hand. You saved your chosen one, Jesus Christ, when he commended himself to you. Let your face shine on all who suffer persecution, and give our hearts courage to confront evil. Lead us and guide us through all our weary years, that we may praise you for the wonders of your love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 27

*How priceless is your unfailing love, Oh God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*

PSALM 36:7
Part A Reflection

I remember when I was a little girl, climbing into my parents' bed and snuggling into my mom, her arm wrapped around me. There was no safer place, and everything felt better when I was enveloped by her. As a mom, I felt that I gave that same comfort to my own children. Now my son is a teenager who is 6'3" and growing, I can no longer "envelop" my son in my arms the way I did when he was four. I hug him, and we talk, but, as adult-sized beings, it is tough to reclaim that feeling. Throughout life we will pass through difficult moments of doubt and sadness and thus we will mourn that constant feeling of comfort and safety in childhood. Fortunately, we can always find it with God. With the fast paced life we live, and the stress to be the best we can be at all times, it is important to remember that we are exactly as God intended and the pressures of the outside world do not need to bring us down. When I feel scared, alone or worried, I remove myself from the distractions of television, phone, and even people. I find a quiet spot to sit and pray. And in the quiet, as I give my worries and questions to God, I feel the refuge and warm embrace of His wings. I can be that little girl again and I am safe in God's unfailing love. We never need to be alone in this world. God is ever-present in our lives and for that I have great gratitude.

Elizabeth Dollhopf P'21

GEORGE D. SENTER CHAIR OF MATHEMATICS
AND SENIOR MASTER OF MATHEMATICS

Today's Prayer

God of our hope, you bring the first light of dawn to those who live in the dark places of desolation and fear. Send your good Spirit to lead us on firm and level ground, that we may put our trust in you and do what is pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 28

*How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*

PSALM 36:7
Part B Reflection

When I think about a covering, I think about my parents and how they'd do anything to protect me. As a young child, whenever I would forget my umbrella, my father would use his entire body as a shield to protect me from the rain. However, despite his best efforts, I'd still end up getting wet. When I look back at those moments, I am reminded of my father's love and fondness for me. My father's efforts to protect me came from a place of love. Similarly, it is because of God's unfailing love and mercy that he covers his children with a shield of protection. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 states "the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one." The protection that God is promising is available to those who have the faith to believe, and the protection that he offers is boundless – just like his love.

Psalm 36:7 reminds us that our Father in heaven loves us, and that his love is true and unfailing. As an expression of his love for us, he offers protection to all those who seek refuge in him. In the eyes of God, you are his child, and fathers cover their children. Yet, unlike an earthly parent, his love and protection have no faults. His covering will not only stop you from getting wet but will secure your salvation. Cast your cares to the Lord and believe in His ultimate sacrifice, it is then that you will experience his loving kindness and security.

Ashley Delgado '19

Today's Prayer

Lord, I thank you for loving me and for covering me with your protection today and everyday. In Jesus name, Amen.

March 29

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?*

PSALM 13:1

Often, when I am facing a tough circumstance in my life, my first instinct is to cry out to God and ask him why he is not there to help, why he is allowing me to walk through this valley. Like King David wrote in the beginning of Psalm 13, I sometimes feel like the Lord has abandoned me, and I am forced to face my struggles alone while he “hides His face.” David’s complaint to God gives me confidence to air my own concerns, knowing that the Lord wants me to be completely transparent with Him. The silence and confusion may seem to last forever but then, out of nowhere, there is a breakthrough when I open up and communicate with the One who knows me better than I know myself. What I have learned through my experiences is that God does not go anywhere when the rough patches hit. In reality, He moves even closer to provide the strength I need at that specific moment. If God feels distant, the barrier comes from my lack of faith. With the breakthroughs, God shows me that he is worth trusting; he has a plan for my life that will come to fruition if I let go of control and let him do the fine-tuning. When I emerge from the dark place, I see how God was working on my behalf all along, and how he used the struggle to help me understand His unconditional love for me. As I read the rest of the Psalm, I learn that King David comes to the same conclusion. He ends with, “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for He has been good to me.”

Beth Allain P’18

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

Today’s Prayer

O God, our creator and redeemer, we look to you for all that we need. Look with favor on us, your servants, and give us your grace; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 30

Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have you?"

They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

MATTHEW 15:29-37

This passage is a total reflection of the common saying, “Things aren’t always what they seem.” I believe that we often become so worried and anxious about the outcome of a situation that we begin to put our faith in the hands of people and ideas; this often causes us to lose faith in God, which in reality causes chaos and confusion in our lives. In God’s word, it is shared that you only need faith the size of a mustard seed, and that faith will move mountains! (Matthew 17:20). In this particular passage, thousands of people depended on God to create a miracle. I am confident the majority of the folks in that crowd thought, “There’s no way I’m making my way out of this one!” How many times do we do this on a daily basis at Hill? We get so worked up about homework, tests, deadlines, college admissions decisions, and other people’s thoughts about us. When things do not look beautiful on the outside, God always has a greater plan, which in the end, will make us stronger and even more dependent on Him. Still within the midst of your “mess,” God will forever be faithful to you if you show faithfulness to him.

Jade Johnson

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING AND TESTING COORDINATOR

Today’s Prayer

Loving God, you are our Creator and Sustainer. When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing. And so we look to You whenever we are in need, trusting in your love and your abundant goodness. As you once fed the hungry crowds, we ask that you would again fill those who are hungry today: those who are physically, spiritually, or emotionally hungry. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

March 31

*Then the king will say to those at his right hand,
'Come, you that 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 something to drink, I was a
stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave
me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in
prison and you visited me.'*

MATTHEW 25: 31-46

Uncomfortable words.

In my tradition, the Episcopal Church, the service for Holy Communion used to include a moment where, after the confession and absolution, the priest went on to read four biblical passages

on forgiveness, introducing them with the formula, “Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ saith” When the “comfortable words” were selected, during the Reformation, “comfortable” meant something different from what it means today. We hear it with suggestions of fluffy pillows, but then “comfortable” meant something more like “fortifying.” The “comfortable words” were scriptural passages meant to strengthen worshipers whose belief in God’s mercy had become shaky; they served as testimony to support the part of the ceremony of forgiveness they concluded.

Similarly, this passage from Matthew began as a strengthener, as a “comfortable word” for the early Christians who were its original audience. Our ancestors heard Jesus’s comments about, “the least of these my brothers [and sisters]” as applying to them: with some exceptions, they were the poor, the imprisoned, the outcasts of their world and time. But by AD 380, when the Roman Emperors made Christianity the only legal religion, the situation had flipped: certainly, some Christians were still “the least of these,” but now all the power and wealth of the Empire were Christian, as well.

And so, when most Christians in the developed world read this passage today, we hear its message as “uncomfortable words,” as uncomfortable to us as the message of the prophet Amos was to the people of Samaria, when he warned them not to look forward to the day of God’s judgment, lest they themselves be judged. Certainly, the message of Good Friday and Easter is that Jesus himself has been judged in our behalf, substituting his righteousness for our sin: but our Baptism into his death and resurrection always summons us to respond by treating others as his, and our, brothers and sisters.

The Reverend John Houghton, Ph.D.

FIRESTONE ENDOWMENT CHAPLAIN *EMERITUS*

Today’s Prayer

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 1

*I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.*

PSALM 40: 1-2

This passage is very fitting for the new year. Jesus shows the teachers of law that bring him the women who had just committed adultery you may not punish someone if you are completely clear of sin yourself. When he says to the men who have brought this women upon him, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her," slowly they all walk away starting with the oldest one first. As the men reflected on their lives and realized their need for forgiveness, they turned and went away. Jesus is the one who never condemns, even when we are most condemnatory of ourselves. The look of Jesus to this condemned woman saved her - the look of divine and everlasting love. In prayer, we can bring all the shame and guilt of our lives to this story of forgiveness and hear words spoken to each of us – "I do not condemn you." During prayer, you are guided by the words of Jesus but, he is not showing you what you have done wrong or telling you that you will be punished for your mistake. Instead he shows you that he will not condemn you and because of this you must take the opportunity to make this time in your life to find a new version of yourself, and make yourself a better person to others and to god. Jesus loves us and trust that if he leads us away from sin we will be able to build a life of good for ourselves.

Avery Liggon '21

Today's Prayer

Thank you Jesus for forgiving and cleansing us of our sins. Thank you for not condemning us in our sin, but for giving us the promise of new life instead. Give us the strength to walk in that newness of life and not to turn to old ways. We praise you for the new promises and purpose we have to look forward to in you. Amen.

April 2

*I will extol the Lord with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.*

PSALM 111:1

Imagine a middle school student telling his language arts teacher that he did not like the classic canonical books of literature that were assigned for his study. Flannery O'Connor would find that situation regrettable. Most regrettable. She would say "his taste should not be consulted; it is being formed."

What is forming me? What is forming you?

The people of Israel were very much formed by the Psalms. The majority of the Psalms are elements in which despair, pain, and anger are directed at God. 'In this world of sugred lies' there is a lot to be upset about. But there is also time to give thanks.

Psalm 111 is such an outright song of praise to God.

"Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart in the company of the upright, I'm the congregation."

The psalm starts with praise and ends with praise. In-between the Psalmist recounts the great creative works of the Lord, Yahweh. Wondrous works, full of splendor and majesty, characterized by righteousness and justice, worthy to be studied.

Yahweh is described as being gracious and merciful, faithful in his covenant, desiring that his precepts are performed with justice/uprightness. The Psalmist says Yahweh has sent redemption to his people. On one hand, we could say that God 'deserves' such praise. True enough. But how does our giving praise to God, who apparently does not 'need' anything, affect us? How does the act of praise form us? We're given optimism that we're on the right side, despite the principalities and powers that appear so powerful around us.

We're reminded of the faithfulness of God's actions in our lives and in our world.

We need not live in a spiral of depression and fear.

And very importantly to my mind, we are encouraged to join in and engage on the side of justice and compassion.

And I find this bit humorous; we're said to have the 'beginning of wisdom.' Well, we need all the help we can get.

David Andersen '69

Today's Prayer

Gracious and holy God, feed us at the table of holy wisdom, that we may honor, love, and obey you as your children. May we remember your wonders and ponder your works, so that we delight to do what you ask of us, by the power given to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 3

*As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs
for you, O God.*

PSALM 42:1

I believe all people do long for God, very deeply. In fact, of all the things I believe as a Christian, it's what I'm most sure of! I've heard countless times from friends and strangers how much they are longing for God: for answers, comfort, guidance, and truth. Our wonder about God is one of the things that makes us human.

I was lucky to have a good experience with religion as a kid. The God I learned about through Jesus was loving, mysterious, and vast - vast enough to incorporate many perspectives. That became really important when I was at Hill encountering people from all around the world with different ideas about God. Because those people became my friends, religion wasn't "Islam," "Judaism," and "Hinduism" it was Omar, Adam, and Amish. I longed for a God that was big enough for them all - that offered respect and value to everyone's faith. I wanted us to all be on the same team.

A common metaphor about God is that there are many roads but one mountain - many religions but one unifying ultimate being. But in my study of faith I've come to question whether that needs to be true. It feels good to think all religions are pointing to the same God, but such thinking can be a dangerous oversimplification that might make us inadvertently shoe horn other traditions into our own belief systems.

We need not all agree on who God is or if God exists, but by connecting to the essentially human wonder about that which is divine, extraordinary, and unknowable we can find a simple, unforced commonality.

Whether you're longing for God now or not, I hope the diverse people of Hill will stick with you to humanize the essentially human activity of longing for God.

William Bouvel '00

POSTULANT FOR ORDINATION IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF CHICAGO

Today's Prayer

God Most High, by your Word you created a wondrous universe, and through your Spirit you breathed into it the breath of life. Accept creation's hymn of praise from our lips, and let the praise that is sung in heaven resound in the heart of every creature on earth, to the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

April 4

*Who is he, this King of glory?
The Lord Almighty—
he is the King of glory.*

PSALM 24:10

Who is God? For many people, the essential mystery and meaning of life issue from this ineffably profound question. “Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory,” writes the psalmist. “Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors that the King of glory may come in.” But here we have a paradox worth pondering for a lifetime: the suggestion of lifting gates and doors as if granting permission for this “King of glory” to enter a place from which he could actually be denied access. What ramparts and redoubts could ever thwart the one of whom the psalmist also writes “Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” How could this be if “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”?

Perhaps only the kingdom of the heart would be granted such amnesty by one who would deign to knock at the door rather than trample the gate of a realm where true love can exist only in authentic freedom. And until we contemplate the nature of such a Lord Almighty, we cannot awaken to the essential joy of being loved by Loving Being, and then welcome this King of Glory into the kingdom of our hearts.

Chris Chirieleison’85 P ’18 ’19 ’21

ATHEY FAMILY MASTER OF HISTORY

Today’s Prayer

God of all creation, open our hearts that Christ, the King of glory, may enter and rule our lives. Give us clean hands and pure hearts, that we may stand in your presence and receive your blessing through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 5

*Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path,
because of mine enemies*

PSALM 27:11

This Psalm of David is a cry for strength, courage, and guidance. He asks to be taught the way of the Lord, the path he should follow.

How can we know the way of the Lord? How does David expect to know the way?

In context, David is surrounded by his enemies. They are strong and numerous, provoking fear. But David is confident in his God. He keeps the glory of the LORD in the front of his consciousness always. By acknowledging God's glory and power and seeking Him face to face, David is assured that he will be guided in his present circumstances.

David refers to his God as his "Light" and "Salvation." His desire is to worship and meditate on the glory of the Lord, focusing on God's protection and the idea of not being forsaken. David seeks God's face or presence and is willing to "wait on the LORD and be of good courage" because he is confident in God's character.

What are my "enemies?" Are they related to work, finances, relationships, health? As we seek to know who God is, experience His presence, and grow in our trust in His character, we can move ahead with confidence and strength in the One who is greater than us, who promises to protect us, teach us, and guide us through this life.

Patricia and Doug Beaver '73

Today's Prayer

Lord God, our light and our salvation, grant that your servants who seek your face in times of trouble may see your goodness in the land of the living, and that we may be set safely on the rock of our faith, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 6

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

MATTHEW 17:1-9

I like movies. Especially those with stories about a hero in disguise. Strider in the *Lord of the Rings* is not just a scruffy ranger. He's the rightful king. King Richard who comes in disguise at the end of *Robin Hood* ... no one knows who he is until he pulls back the hood of his cloak and reveals himself. All throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, he is, in a way, disguised. He is the poor carpenter's son. He is a wise but humble teacher. But here, on the mountain with his closest disciples, Jesus pulls back the hood and reveals his true identity. He is none other than the one true king and the Son of God. Even at this point his disciples miss the true gravity of the moment until God himself speaks from the cloud. It is at this point the disciples (as any respectable 1st century Jew would know from their history of God speaking to His people from the cloud of glory) finally understand who is speaking and fall to their knees in terror (and rightly so). And what exactly does God say? What is his ominous command? He affirms the true identity of Jesus and gives a command so simple that literally anyone can do it. God says, "Listen to Jesus!"

I am always amazed at how simple and easy it is to be "admitted" into the Christian faith. The way to Christianity is never through some great work or thing we have to do. It is merely to accept who the Son of God is and what he has done on our behalf. To listen to him. Really listen to him. As you reflect on this passage today, the question is simple. Are you listening to Jesus in your life?

The Reverend Ji Lim P'17'18

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, you promised your kingdom to those who are like children. Never let pride reign in our hearts, but, holding us with a mother's embrace, teach us to live in quietness and humility now and forever. Amen.

April 7

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2

There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.

JOHN 12:1-8

When reading this passage, one may find themselves almost subconsciously siding with Judas. After all, if what he is saying is true, Mary just used a full year's worth of money on perfume and did not even use it on herself. Surely that money, even if not donated to charity, would have better uses? It seems like a bad purchase gone worse at face value, but one must understand the connection that this passage has to Jesus' actual death and burial, and the importance that brings.

Jesus is not telling us to ignore the overall plight of the poor. Think of what perfume was used for: the anointing of corpses. Notice where in the narrative this passage takes place, and we can see that there is a connection between this use of perfume and Easter. At this point, Jesus knows he is going to die, and the purpose of Mary anointing him serves to show him as a body, being prepared for burial by his close friends. This passage also shows the devotion Mary has to Jesus, willing to spend a year's worth of work on him, to put her own financial stability aside to celebrate a greater cause: the cause of Jesus Christ. Compare this to Judas, who seems to be upset that he simply could not spend the money on himself, while masking it in a false sense of justice. This attitude is similar to that of the Pharisees, a group Judas will soon conspire with himself.

Tucker Dunn '19

Today's Prayer

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 8

*The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.*

PSALM 126:3

Lent is a time of reflection, a time of preparation, and also a time of cleansing. During Lent, I think of the time that Jesus spent in the desert. When people think of Lent, many think of a solemn or sad time. When I think of Lent, I think of a time to give thanks.

During Lent, as I try to mirror Jesus time in the desert, I try to live my life with prudence, with discretion and with attention to being thankful for life, for love, for God and his love for us.

This verse reflects thanks, reflects joy and also reflects God's greatness.

"The Lord has done great things for us." He brought us into this world, breathed life into us, loved us. In response, we should love ourselves and love others which demonstrates our love for God.

"The Lord has done great things for us." During Jesus time in the desert, he prepared for his passage to Hell and his return from Hell also. We can use Lent as a time to prepare for our death and resurrection as Jesus did. Preparing for our death and resurrection means living life full of love, and giving thanks always and being filled with joy.

"And we are filled with joy." Joy is usually not a term which describes Lent. Lent is a time of preparation but joy is the result of our preparation. As we prepare, we are filled with joy. As we live each day, we are filled with joy.

Why? Because God loved us so that we can feel his love inside of us, which fills us with joy.

"And we are filled with joy." Our journey on this earth is not alone. He is always with us. We are filled with joy because he is with us.

May we always give thanks and be filled with joy because the Lord has done great things for us.

Paul Lee '91

Today's Prayer

Shepherd of your people, strengthen us on our journey, we pray. Give us more joy, hope and love than we can ever hope or imagine. Amen.

April 9

*He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand generations*

PSALM 105:8

If you don't know much about Bible history, you might not have known that the "covenant" mentioned is between God and Abraham. God zeros in on one man, Abram, and makes an agreement:

"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, I am going to bless you, and through you bring blessing to the whole world."

And with that begins the history of the people of Israel.

Who then are the heirs of the precious and very great promises made to Abraham and to his seed? You are. To whom can it be said: Your sins are forgiven; God is for you; with all his power, goodness, and mercy he will pursue you all your life. All the promises are yours, for you are Christ's and Christ is God.

Abraham and his people seem far away from our lives, but the psalm promises that God remembers each and every one of us. God's love runs on forever, even to "a thousand generations." So might we. Remember every day God's wondrous works and give thanks for his promises.

Winnie and Dick O'Shaughnessy '50 P'73 '76 '80
GP'05 '10 '13

Today's Prayer

God of our salvation, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you continue to fulfill your covenant promise to redeem the world from slavery and to lead your people into the promised land. Grant us living water from the rock and bread from heaven, that we may survive our desert pilgrimage and praise you forever; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 10

*What is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.*

PSALM 8:4-5

I've always loved Psalm 8, mostly because it reminds me of warm summer nights spent laying out underneath the stars, admiring the vast and beautiful universe. The psalmist, reflecting on the glory of the "heavens, the work of [God's] fingers, the moon and the stars that [God has] established," wondered, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" In other words, who am I in comparison to all of this beauty that you, God, have made?

This tendency to wonder about who we are, especially in terms of our place in the universe, comes from a very healthy place, I think. It stems from the fact that we understand that God is so very different from us. I've never made the heavens and the earth before. I've never parted a sea or flooded the earth or brought someone back from the dead.

But the challenge raised by the fact that God is different from us is that God can feel distant from us. How can we know this God, this majestic God, who has made the heavens, the moon, and the stars? And, how can we know that this God, this majestic God, cares about us, especially when it's so clear that we pale in comparison?

Praising God, the psalmist writes, "Yet you have made [humans] a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas." God entrusts us with responsibility. God has given us work to do. We are "a little lower than God." We are, as one commentator put it, God's "understudy." God's "stand in." No, I don't think the psalmist is suggesting that we are gods-in-training. But I do think the psalmist is suggesting that God cares about us so much that God gives us meaningful work to do. In our common, daily lives – at work, at home, at school – we are doing work that God has called us to do. We are doing sacred, holy work.

The psalmist celebrates that we have a God who has created us in God's image and who cares enough about us to give us work to do. God's action gives us dignity and meaning and purpose in caring for this world and those whom God has created.

Rev. Anne Confer Martens '02

WARNER ASSOCIATE CHAPLAIN
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND PHILOSOPHY

Today's Prayer

God of majesty, amid the grandeur of your creation you sought us out, and by the coming of your Son you adorned us with glory and honor, giving us dominion over your works. Enable us so to care for the earth that all creation may radiate the splendor of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 11

*O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you,
in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

PSALM 63:1

I remember being captivated by awe-inspiring beauty on a number of occasions as a Hill Student. My favorite moments were catching a perfect sunset from the Headmaster's Garden, and facing the back of the Hill Chapel at a time when the sun perfectly shined through the large stained-class window. I recall feeling comforted in these moments and being at peace. I was inspired to praise Him for the beauty of His creation. Moments like these are favorite type of reminder that there is a living creator God who loves us.

While I reflected often on the beauty of His creation, I also recall reflecting on the imperfections in this world: Envy, Jealousy, Deceit, Pain, Loss. They make me long for what cannot be fulfilled on this earth. It's a longing that only God can satisfy. The psalmist says, "Earnestly I seek you."

In Psalm 63, we see that the deepest desire of David's soul was to be nearer to God. David wrote this prayer while hungry and thirsty in the desert. He demonstrates his faith by seeking God over his own bodily needs. "My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Theologian James Boice comments, "Most people do not even know that it is God their souls truly desire. They are seeking satisfaction in other things."

Psalm 63 challenges me to seek Him first, ahead of everything else. This is a radical way of living, but one that leads to personal fulfillment.

Peter Griffin '07

Today's Prayer

Oh God, help me to seek you in the hard places when the road is long and uncertain. Let me set my eyes on you, my real source of comfort and strength. For you will strengthen me and guide me if I but trust and obey the Shepherd of my soul. For Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Amen

April 12

*Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time on and forevermore.
From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the LORD is to be praised.
The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens.*

PSALM 113:2-4

I recently went to visit a friend who lives in another state and had to take a flight to get there at a very early time in the morning. It was so early in fact that it was still dark outside when the plane took off. As I sat in my window seat and stared out the window I had the opportunity to watch the dark skies transition into day. I watched in awe as the sun rose over the distance in the midst of the puffiest clouds. The sky's color seemed like it was out of a painting with its mixture of pink, orange and blue. I watched amazed and reminded of this passage in Psalm 113; "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised." Sometimes all we have to do is pause and marvel at God's creation to be reminded of God's glory. Our busy schedules don't often allow room for us to stop to look up at the sky or look around at the wonderful creation of God all around us. Too often, when I do get a free moment, my own head is stuck in my cell phone which prevents me from taking moments to look around and see God in what is around me. Go into today looking for God in the midst of God's creation all around you. If we would only pay attention, then we would see that God's creation around us is a metaphor for God's power and existence.

The Reverend Khristi Adams

FIRESTONE ENDOWMENT CHAPLAIN/ INSTRUCTOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Today's Prayer

God, teach us and speak to us through your creation all around us. Open our eyes so that we would appreciate and pay attention to the beautiful earth that you have provided us with. Remind us that from the rising of the sun to its setting that your name will continue to be praised forever and ever. Amen.

April 13

*Jesus straightened up and said to her,
“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”*

She said, “No one, sir.”

*And Jesus said,
“Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now
on do not sin again.”*

JOHN 8:1-11

The gospel of John brings us an intimate history of Jesus' life, and that's an opportunity to reflect on the enormity of his presence on Earth. Existing as much man as he was God, experiencing every temptation but never yielding. Jesus asks the men at the Mount of Olives to reflect on their own moral soundness, in effect, to realize their hypocrisy in condemning the sin of another. This has echoes of the moment in Mathew 7 where Jesus asks, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" Indeed, Jesus is the only man ever to have existed absolutely without blame, and therefore the only one who can condemn righteously. Yet the glory of God's grace shines: Jesus does not condemn her. He does not give her a price to pay for her freedom (because He will pay the all-fulfilling price in the end), but instead he asks her to change her heart and aspire to "sin no more". Soon, his death will pay our ransom to have communion with the Father, and, incredibly, become co-heirs to His kingdom. How precious is the news that we are children of an endlessly loving and gracious God!

Sophia Gantenbein

WORLD LANGUAGES FELLOW

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, your Son blessed the peacemakers and called them your children. Give us that peace which the world cannot give, so that, freed from the schemes of the arrogant and devoted to works of peace, we may go forward joyfully to meet you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 14

*The crowds that went ahead of him and that
followed were shouting,*

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

*When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil,
asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying,*

“This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

MATTHEW 21:1-11

As we read this Palm Sunday narrative and reflect on its value for our lives today, we are reminded that the reign of Christ is superior to anything we can conceive and also discover God had a very different plan of bringing salvation to all who believe in Him. Reflect on a time in your life and when you thought I wish I had known then what I know now? Sometimes a situation is not what it seems and we conclude the wrong meaning. Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem might have been one of those times for the disciples. Perhaps they believed the Messiah had come to reestablish Israel's power in the world.

The disciples weren't the only ones who had misconceptions about the Messiah. Many Jews expected Him to be an earthly king. Consider a time when Jesus does not meet your definition of a Messiah. Do you water down the image of Jesus to a nice teacher or friend and cast off the Jesus that challenges our wants and beliefs? When Jesus answers our prayers, we praise Him. When Jesus reminds us of our obligation to God and each other, and our prayers are not answered in the way we would like, are we still standing there with our palm branches and praising Him?

Think back to a time when a situation appeared one way but turned out to be something else. Recall what it was like to realize God was different than you imagined; a time where you experienced His will unfold in amazing new ways. Reflect on the times when you've waved the palm branches because it was easy, and consider the times when you've laid them down because being a disciple was too hard.

Andrea Chirieleison P'18 '19 '21

STRATEGY MANAGEMENT AND ADMISSION LIAISON

Today's Prayer

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 15

*The LORD is king, he is robed in majesty;
the LORD is robed, he is girded with strength.
He has established the world; it shall never be moved;
your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.*

PSALM 93:1-2

Fickle. Uncertain. Unstable. Discord. These are the words I think of, when I reflect on where we are as humanity and as a society. Then I read passages like Psalm 93 and I see words like, majesty, strength and everlasting. I need these words to remind me that it doesn't matter how tumultuous the word gets around me, that God is eternal and all powerful. Those words give me hope and recall the words of Isaiah in Isaiah 26:3; "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on you." A close friend of mine recently lost her mother suddenly. The days following seemed like years as each hour was another slow reminder that her mother had gone. I checked in on my friend every day to see how she was doing even though I knew the answer. One day she surprised me with her response when I asked her how she was. She told me that she was at peace because though death took away her mother, she knew the power of God. God's presence and love is so everlasting, that not even death can negate God's power. My prayer is that in good times and challenging times, we would lean on the words that describe our God from this Psalm to help sustain us: majesty, strength, everlasting.

Rev. Khristi Adams

FIRESTONE ENDOWMENT CHAPLAIN/ INSTRUCTOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Today's Prayer

You are God from everlasting to everlasting. No matter what situation confronts us, the truth of your majestic power will never fade. Help us to lean in knowing who you are and that you set forth a plan for this world and our lives long before its inception. Amen

April 16

*My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.*

PSALM 119:28
(Part A Reflection)

A Hopeful Heartbeat

Time for vital signs. Step One, are you alive? Well, take your pulse. See if you can find it on the inside of your wrist, or just under your jawbone. Got it? Good news! Now breathe into your pulse and become aware of some of what is stirring in you right now. Exhaustion? Joy? Energy? Anger? Gratitude? What else? How about sadness?

Every night after dinner my wife and I briefly take our respective emotional pulses. We check in with one another in terms of joy, anger, fear and sadness. No questions or comments, just a number, one to ten. Done daily it is a useful benchmarking tool.

It is the sadness piece that the text for today draws our attention to: the ache at the other end of joy, the cloud in a once sunny sky, or the weight on the spirit that makes concentration on the task at hand, and appreciation for the people near us, difficult.

Imagine writing a poem in which every line (176 of them!) plays on the word Love. Psalm 119 is a 176-line poem riffing on the Word of the one who is known as Love. And here, in our verse, the riff is on that reality of sadness and sorrow; a soul melting, spirit defeating presence.

The psalmist asks for strength to face the sadness, strength that might be found in the presence of a greater love than that we might muster with our own weary resources, in the presence of a grace greater than our own awareness, and as sure as our steady pulse.

My sadness has a place to rest, greater than my own awareness.

Peter Pierson '69

Today's Prayer

Holy God, you are just in all your ways and your commandments are the greatest of treasures. Teach us to love you with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 17

*I weep with sorrow;
encourage me by your word.*

PSALM 119, VERSE 28
(Part B Reflection)

Psalm 119 is new to me, I am embarrassed to admit. But I intend to make up for lost time by reading and re-reading it frequently. It is that important. That's because the psalm corrects a big problem in our modern understanding of man and the nature of freedom. I will call that problem the mirage of the autonomous individual. This contemporary world view, which is embraced by mainstream sectors of law, media and education, holds that each of us can be self-made and self-defined without regard to history, tradition and even biology. The psalmist begs to differ. He has heard the argument, or an ancient version of it, and wants no part. He expresses an alternative understanding of man and freedom.

The psalmist prays to God for strength to follow the precepts, decrees, ordinances, commandments, statutes, words, ways and judgments (words from the psalm) that shaped his father, and his father before him, all the way back to the time of Abraham. These rules are themselves the source of true freedom, he says, and they are not a matter of choice. But what if the precepts, decrees, statutes, et al., are inconvenient? Or, old fashioned? Yes, even then, says the psalmist, the rules must be followed, all of them. It is not up to us to pick and choose.

This is not an easy message. It makes demands on us, including humility, even submission. The psalmist recognizes the difficulty and in verse 28 promises that obedience to God's precepts "will give strength again to the soul wasted in sorrow." Amen.

Mark O'Brien '69

Today's Prayer

Lord, I reach out to you for your guidance. Please show me which way to turn. Calm my anxious thoughts, come speak into my mind. Strengthen me as I falter and feel weary. May I feel strength rising up within my heart. I trust that you are with me, no matter where I go. Amen

April 18

*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

PSALM 139: 1-2

Everyone longs to be known. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, a private person, or someone who spills too much, we long to be known and understood by people in our lives. I think that's how God wired us as human beings. We go through life and relationships trying to be relational, pouring ourselves into other people, having other people pour into us, just to be known and understood. And often times, we fall short. We can't possibly know what someone is thinking or what they are doing every second of everyday, no matter how strong of a longing that is for us.

How crazy would it be to think that we are known and loved already, to know that there is a God out there that knows every single detail about you? Psalm 139 starts with "You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar..." and it goes on and on about every single thing that God already knows about us! We go throughout our lives yearning and looking for this type of relationship, to be relational with someone and to be loved and known deeply, when here right in front of us is the Lord of all the earth who loves us and knows every detail about us! Imagine the love and acceptance you could feel if you stopped searching in the wrong places and accepted God's love for you. I find such comfort in this passage and pray that we would run to God's open arms of love and comfort.

Natalie Webster

Today's Prayer

Almighty God, creator of the universe, we are filled with wonder at all your works and overwhelmed by your infinite wisdom. We praise you for your majesty; yet even more we rejoice that you do not forget us, yet desire to know and care for us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

April 19

*To you, Lord, I call; you are my Rock,
do not turn a deaf ear to me.*

*For if you remain silent,
I will be like those who go down to the pit.*

PSALM 28:1

What a gift this collection of songs and prayers – The Psalms. In the Psalms I am offered a diversity that covers just about every possible expression of the human condition; a wild variety of comments, cries for help and justice, and celebrations. This particular Psalm could be an offering by an individual or a communal offering but either way, it is both a plea for mercy and a reminder of the strength and fortitude of the Lord. This hymn makes clear that evil, wicked and false people exist and effect our lives. I am not too comfortable praying for the destruction of my enemies, in fact, I hope I do not have enemies as this will potentially make me even more critical and mean but, wow, Psalm 28 lets it rip. As I become one with the psalter who makes a plea for mercy and a justification for justice to be served to those who reject the righteousness of the Lord, I am reminded that the Lord is my strength and my shield. The Lord is my go to. My heart trusts and I am helped because as in Psalm 23 I know I have a Shepherd who hears my cry when I am feeling conquered and lost. A shepherd who will carry me when I am beaten down, never failing, never falling, never giving up and going home, always ready with righteous indignation and straight out raw anger when and where needed. I am promised deliverance.

Dr. Rebecca Smith P'09 '13

DIRECTOR OF COUNSELING

Today's Prayer

Lord our God, we come before you with thanksgiving and praise, for you have created us as your people and you sustain us with your hand. Nourish us in your rich pasture and keep us in your steadfast love, that we may bless your name and serve you with gladness day after day; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

April 20

*No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

JOHN 15:13

The love of a hero and a savior

In December 2007, I attended a Memorial Service for a bright, athletic teenager from Pennsylvania much like many Hill students. Ross McGinnis was a Soldier who had died days before in Adhamiyah, Iraq. Ross was riding in the turret of an armored vehicle when an enemy grenade entered the vehicle. Ross shouted "GRENADE" into his helmet's microphone to warn his comrades, but one replied that he couldn't locate the grenade. Ross was the only one in that moment with a clear path to safety, but instantaneously, Ross made the decision NOT to escape through the turret. Instead, he threw his body downward on to the grenade. Ross died absorbing the blast, but he saved his four fellow Soldiers. In June 2008, Ross was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his sacrifice; our Nation's highest honor.

Why do we honor and instinctively respect people like Ross? Our minds respect self-sacrifice, because our souls ultimately sense their need of a Savior. Grenades separate us from life, sin separates us from life with God. Like Ross, Jesus Christ disavowed the path of safety and chose the path of self-sacrifice for those He loves. Ross died on a road in Iraq. Christ died on the Cross on a hill called Golgotha. Ross bravely saved four men. Christ sacrificed for all who submit to Him as their Savior. Ross never came home to Pennsylvania. He lies in an honored grave in Arlington National Cemetery. Christ rose from the grave, so that through faith in Him, we may live forever in His heavenly home. Ross is a great hero of this country. Christ is the ultimate hero of all history. This Lenten season embrace the love of the Christ: the selfless Savior who loves you and died that you may live forever.

Colonel Peter R. Sniffin '81 P'19
U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN

Today's Prayer

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

April 21

*As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in
a white robe, sitting on the right side;
and they were alarmed.*

But he said to them,

*“Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth,
who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.*

Look, there is the place they laid him.

MARK 16:1-7

The women who came to prepare Jesus for burial worried, “Who will roll away the stone?” It was obviously too heavy for the three of them. It would, logically, also be too much for the crucified and buried Jesus, as well. So, how was it moved? Like most conundrums in my life, I find the answer in the Holy Spirit. Theologians agree that God bestowed the Holy Spirit upon Jesus when John baptized him in the river Jordan. His miracles only occurred after this. Just as Jesus’ followers, his church, and his government left him to be crucified on the cross, I believe the Holy Spirit left him as well. Although divine, Jesus was human. Given the torment of the crucifixion, I find it hard to believe that in his darkest moments, he didn’t succumb to his humanity and attempt to save himself. At the end, I think he called upon the Spirit and it didn’t answer, causing him to ask: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Just as Judas’ betrayal and Pilate’s inaction were required for him to die and be resurrected, I think the Holy Spirit left him, allowing Jesus a human death that fulfill the scriptures and God’s divine plan.

Jesus emphasized the power of the Holy Spirit. In this passage, the women are instructed to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. There, on Pentecost, he would bestow The Spirit upon them. We're told that the Holy Spirit was there in the beginning. It is the "Logos" or "Word" in John's gospel. It is the "Helper, Comforter, and Advocate" that Jesus foretells saying, "Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."

On this Easter day, I urge everyone to remember the Holy Spirit, and how it was the final gift Jesus left here with us. As I learned at The Hill, in Father John Riegel's Dimensions course (still the best course of my academic life), the Holy Spirit is the thing that can bind us all if we are open to it. Everything from Quantum Physics, Jungian Psychology, and Joseph Campbell to our own personal stories of the "Hand of God" do nothing but affirm its existence and power.

Despite its power, it appears that the Spirit does not act alone. It worked with God in creation and through Jesus in his miracles and resurrection. It was left with us, but it also needs us to seek it, and allow it to work through us to fulfill its purpose.

In the coming year, I urge each of us to remain open to possibility. We might be called to be Fitzgerald's "Tuning Fork Struck Upon the Stars:" either as the instrument, or target of the Spirit's message. If we all listen for the Spirit's urging and instruction, allowing it to guide how we speak and act, we'll all get closer to creating a little more heaven here on earth, and there will be no stone too large for us to move.

Jason Smith '91

Today's Prayer

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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