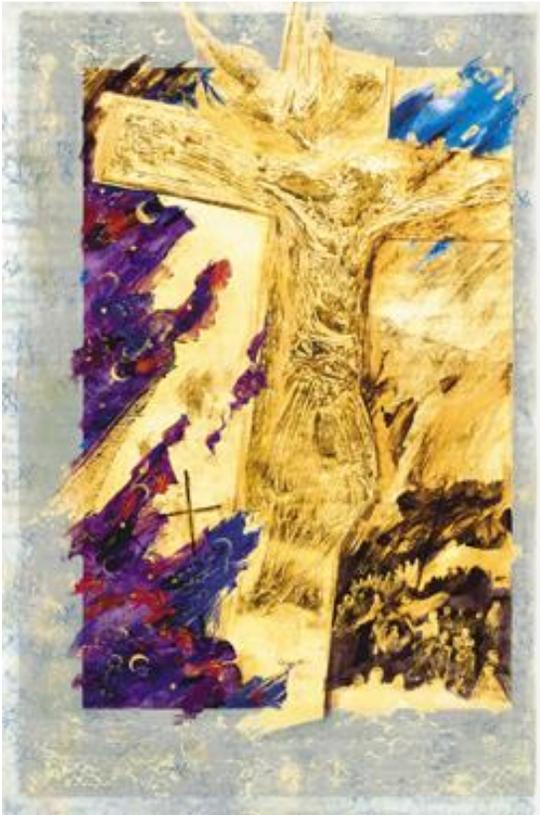


# *Lenten Reflections*

*March 26, 2019*



We know that God is love. But what does that mean, exactly? Jesus uses parables to show us what kind of a loving God we worship. In MT 18:21-35, we see that love involves forgiveness, over and over again (7x70). In the parable that Jesus tells Peter, a slave who owed a huge debt to his master begged for patience. In an act of mercy, the master forgave the debt. Nevertheless, that very slave turned around and demanded from a fellow slave who owed him money that he repay the debt. He did not show mercy or patience. That forgiven slave put his fellow servant in prison. Ah, the hypocrisy!

Jesus tells this story to show us that we should have mercy on each other because God (like the slave master) has mercy on us. God forgives us. He isn't an accountant who is keeping track of what we do wrong. We can't accept mercy for ourselves and then demand our own understanding of justice from others. We have to follow the leader (in this case, God, represented by the slave master). Because he has mercy on us, we can forgive one another, over and over if necessary.

My parents repeated this particular passage from the Bible to me as I was growing up because in my life, there are family members I have to forgive over and over. These individuals have major mental illness, and they can take their feelings out on me on a daily and sometimes hourly basis because "they know not what they do." I have read that what I'm doing is called "radical forgiveness," and though it is not easy, the more I practice it, the more instantaneous it becomes. Forgiveness is a shift in perception that allows me to understand that

people often don't know what they do. It does not mean that I put myself in harm's way or let myself be mistreated, but it does mean that I can surrender to the bigger picture that is unfolding exactly as it needs to. I am only responsible for myself, and if I hold onto my anger against another, I'm the one who actually suffers. It is all working together for my own growth, even the most uncomfortable things that happen in life. Who am I not to forgive when God forgives me?

*Dr. Julie O'Connell,  
Associate Professor for English*

## **Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent**

**Lectionary: 238**

### **Reading 1 [Dn 3:25, 34-43](#)**

Azariah stood up in the fire and prayed aloud:

"For your name's sake, O Lord, do not deliver us up forever,  
or make void your covenant.

Do not take away your mercy from us,  
for the sake of Abraham, your beloved,  
Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one,  
To whom you promised to multiply their offspring  
like the stars of heaven,  
or the sand on the shore of the sea.

For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation,  
brought low everywhere in the world this day  
because of our sins.

We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader,  
no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense,  
no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you.

But with contrite heart and humble spirit  
let us be received;

As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bullocks,  
or thousands of fat lambs,

So let our sacrifice be in your presence today  
as we follow you unreservedly;  
for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.

And now we follow you with our whole heart,  
we fear you and we pray to you.

Do not let us be put to shame,  
but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy.

Deliver us by your wonders,  
and bring glory to your name, O Lord."

**Responsorial Psalm [Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9](#)**

**R. (6a) Remember your mercies, O Lord.**

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;  
teach me your paths,  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my savior.

**R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.**

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,  
and your kindness are from of old.  
In your kindness remember me,  
because of your goodness, O LORD.

**R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.**

Good and upright is the LORD;  
thus he shows sinners the way.  
He guides the humble to justice,  
he teaches the humble his way.

**R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.**

**Verse Before the Gospel [Jl 2:12-13](#)**

Even now, says the LORD,  
return to me with your whole heart;  
for I am gracious and merciful.

**Gospel [Mt 18:21-35](#)**

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

Moved with compassion the master of that servant  
let him go and forgave him the loan.  
When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants  
who owed him a much smaller amount.  
He seized him and started to choke him, demanding,  
'Pay back what you owe.'  
Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him,  
'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'  
But he refused.  
Instead, he had him put in prison  
until he paid back the debt.  
Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened,  
they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master  
and reported the whole affair.  
His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant!  
I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.  
Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant,  
as I had pity on you?'  
Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers  
until he should pay back the whole debt.  
So will my heavenly Father do to you,  
unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."