



LENTEN

REFLECTIONS

2023

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

COMMUNITY

During this season of Lent I would like to take a moment to slow down and realize the good things God has done for me in my time at Christian Brothers. As my time at CB is coming to an end, I have recently been reflecting on all the memories I have made at this great school. From Lock-In, to Holy Bowl, fun lunch activities, KBFT, homecoming and prom dances, etc. I have had such an amazing journey as a Falcon. I have always been grateful for these “normal” experiences and opportunities at CB, but as I have matured into a young adult, I really put into perspective how fortunate I am to be in the position I am to enjoy all of it. Additionally, the sense of community I feel walking into school every day is so comforting, and I am really going to miss it next year. I cannot thank the teachers, staff, and all my peers enough for my years as a Falcon. So as we navigate through this Lenten season, may we all take a moment to appreciate someone or something in the wonderful CB community.

*Drew Perry '23*

Everyone is faulty when it comes to recognizing the negatives of our lives, may it be not passing a test, having disagreements with friends, or even embarrassing yourself in front of others. Even though it may not be your brightest moment, it is human nature to recognize these faults, dwell, and reflect on them. However, this only feeds into the false idea that humanity should be perfect. A person has many faults, but it is up to you in order to highlight your best qualities. As written in this passage, *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* [Philippians 4:8]. As you continue to make mistakes, do not dwell on these negative actions, instead look for your positive qualities, not only in yourself but in the people that surround you. It is your choice to either focus on the negatives in life or enjoy God's gift and indulge yourself in the positives.

-Grace MacDonald '23

Lent is a time where we look in the mirror and ask God to be a part of all aspects of who we are in a deeper way – the good, the bad and the ugly. We can choose to make sacrifices by giving something up that we normally do (fasting) and/or adding more of something to our lives (almsgiving and prayer.) The goal is to stretch ourselves out of our comfort zone to make more room for God and to develop even more that relationship which leads to eternal life. What a blessing we offer to God when we are willing to ask Him to search our hearts and to help us become more acutely aware of our fragility and shortcomings. The true blessings is what He gives to us in that process. On the other hand, we are allowing for more opportunities of charity and prayer where we see God's light in us at such a greater capacity. Ultimately, Lent is a preparation for the Easter Resurrection which foreshadows our own in the love, mercy, and grace of God. Amen.

*-Paul Havey*

Have you ever stopped and reflected on the wonderful things God has given to you in your life? Do you thank God for the difficult moments and the good ones? Our lives become so busy every day that we become overwhelmed with everything that needs to be done like work, family, meetings, school, etc. We try to do everything and be superheroes in our daily lives. We don't stop and appreciate the beauty of the world around us. Do we appreciate a sunset, a sunrise, the smell of flowers, the laughs of our children, the dinner that was cooked for you, the car rides with your loved ones... everything is beautiful. Everything that happens every day in our lives has a purpose and meaning, even the difficult ones. Take a tiny moment every day and thank God for the blessings that you receive. Thank someone too. People feel very appreciative and happy when you spread thankfulness. It is a joy to say thank you to someone and most importantly to God. Give thanks always with a grateful heart!      *(Deuteronomy 26)*

*Claudia Ugarte*

**Colossians 3:12-15** *As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom he loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other if one of you has a complaint against another. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, put on love, the perfect bond. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts because it is for this that you were called together in one body. Always be thankful.*

In my family, Lent is a time of renewal and reflection. As we prepare to celebrate the Lord's resurrection, we re-center our focus on God, gratitude, and our community. Lord, let us always be thankful!

-Jana Morris

*God knows what you are capable of, and he is not going to command you things above your strength. If indeed they are difficult in themselves, it is up to him to impart to you the ability you need to carry them out.*

– John Baptist De La Salle, Meditation 10.3

Perhaps more than any other time of the year, Lent calls us to do hard things. This meditation from De La Salle hangs on my office wall and it reminds me that I am never alone when I face challenges and need to do hard things. God is not ever going to send me something that I cannot manage. When something feels too big or too difficult, I try to pause and give it a little time. In the time, God often provides the strength and direction for which I was searching. My Lenten prayer is to pause, be quiet and find the strength that God sends me when I am listening.

*-Cecilia Powers*



I am a person who cherishes routine. Each weekend, my wife, daughter, and I take a trip to Davis to have breakfast at Nonna and Nonno's (my parents) house. We have the same breakfast every morning; espresso, home-made waffles, bacon, sunny side up eggs and hashbrowns. I relish this time spent all together. I savor the interactions between my wife, daughter, and parents. It brings me great joy to watch my four-year-old make waffles with her Mamma and Nonna while I play a quick game of chess with my Papa. It is my time of peace. After breakfast, my wife and I head over to UC Davis to play in a long-standing pick up soccer game; it is a special place for me. I've been playing in this particular game for almost 20 years and have befriended countless diverse people over the years. It is my community. Pickup soccer is acutely different from a competitive match. Yes, there is competition, but pickup offers all ages, skill levels, and walks of life to play in unison. The emphasis is less about winning the game and more about creating for one another. No referees allow for players to self-monitor their aggression and fouls are awarded through "crowd rule". A brilliant goal, no matter who scored, is often celebrated by everyone on the field. I am immersed in God's grace each time I walk through my parent's front door for Saturday breakfast. I see God in all the friendly faces who welcome me and my wife as we arrive at the soccer field. My weekend routine fills my aching soul with spirit. It sustains me through the challenges of the week. It allows me to see God and give thanks. -Luca Cerati

*John 15:12-13, 16 My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one more than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You did not choose me, but I chose you.*

Great comfort is drawn from this as the premise is so profound in its simplicity: simply to love one another; everywhere we go and every way that we can. How many opportunities do we have daily to reach out and show someone how much they mean to you? As I get older, I try (though often coming up short more often than I wish!) to tell a friend, a family member, a student that I love them- whether it is written or spoken- and how important they are to me. The realization that we were chosen by God to do this is just an amazing gift.

Bill Iliff

**Philippians 4:13:**

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (KJV)*

In life we are presented with numerous amounts of challenges. Ones that we may think in the moment we cannot overcome. With God's grace, mercy, and love guiding us through life's obstacles, we can overcome anything with which we are faced. He is our strength, and through him we are strong.

*-Alexia Sakurada*

Life can be stressful at times and it's important to take a moment to talk to God and let Him guide us. I have no control over some of the things I worry about. The worry only causes me internal stress which can be so damaging to my physical and mental well-being I must remind myself to talk to God and to have faith that God will guide me through the difficult times. Once I do this, I can be more present for myself and those people in my life who I love. I can live in the moment and live the life God intended for me.

When you are worried about something, think about what you can do to change it. If you can change things, go for it, but if the problem is beyond your control, then turn to God and let it go.

*Kelly Harrington*

***Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.***

***James 4:8***

*Meditation is a way of slowing down so as to descend into the depths of yourself in the present moment, where God lies waiting to grant you a deep experience of your eternal oneness with God. -James Finley*

This Lent, I am embracing the quiet contemplation and forward-looking anticipation that Lent calls us to and that creation is demonstrating to us in the changing of seasons. Being still in the last weeks of winter is an opportunity to be inward for a time, in a place to ask God to help me see what I still need to let go of. Changes in nature that alert us to the coming spring reminds me that I can ask the God the Creator to lead me to my own transformation.

*Sue Larson, Board of Trustees, CBHS*

High school is filled with uncertainty and anxiety. Teachers and students rush the halls trying to get to where they need to be and often we forget to take a moment to breathe. Our fears and doubts can become a distraction and can overcome us. However, over the past four years I have learned that God won't give us something we cannot handle. A grade does not define you as a person, our teachers have rough days, and students make mistakes; however, we are all here for one important reason. We are here to grow. From *Jeremiah 29:11* "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*" Our heavenly Father has great plans for us, and they are as beautiful and unique as everyone at Christian Brothers.

*Caroline Kramer '23*

## A Reflection on Guidance:

When referencing the Multiplication of Loaves in John's Gospel (6:1-15), St. John Baptist De La Salle reflects,

Jesus Christ did not hesitate to speak to his disciples to tell them to provide for the needs of the people, even though they were not able to do so. At the same time, he made use of them to distribute the bread that he had multiplied to feed everyone. This is how God wants you always to turn to those who guide you, represented in this Gospel by the Apostles, even though at times and in certain difficulties, doing this may seem to you quite useless. God wishes you always to use, insofar as you are able, the ordinary means that he provides for your guidance, even if this is without any success. (Meditations 20:1)

In school and elsewhere, may we be eager to humbly seek guidance from trusted companions – may we understand God's work even through ordinary means. Additionally, let us respond graciously in assisting those who approach us for guidance - may we be instruments of wisdom. May we always be grateful for those God has placed in our lives to guide us, and may we be generous with those He has called us to guide.

*-Thomas Guro*

*John 15:12-17 In essence, God has called you His friend. You did not choose me, but I chose you that you should go and bear fruit.*

When God calls you his friend, we must recognize that it is our turn to be God's friend because He has been the ultimate friend and gave his life in love for us. We must love one another as much as he loves us and live in harmony. Life throws many different obstacles in our path, whether it's the stressful homework your teacher assigned due the next day or the drowning home problems. Nonetheless, we must never lose sight of our brothers and sisters, or of the importance of peace and union. God chose us for a reason; he wants to see us thrive and succeed as we bear fruit because he knows we are capable. When I start to crumble and lose faith, I remember that there is someone who believes in me. Someone who wishes to see me succeed in life and recognizes my greatness. Nothing is more valuable than His unconditional support! My job is to be the best version of myself in everything I do and to pass that on to those around me, so that they too can feel that positive message. What else is better than creating an environment where there is engagement, trust, and care of everyone?

*-Jairi Anaya '24*



***Romans 5:3-4- And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.***

Perseverance... This has been a word that has carried me through so many of my darkest days. So many times I have found myself in need to persevere. Adversity is an ugly monster, and it creeps its way into our happiest moments. Robbing us of our smile and forcing us to truly discover who we are. I found that being still, talking with God, remembering who I am, and what I am meant to do brings the smile back to my face. My character is full of hope, full of love, full of passion. I found my hope when I was young. Living in a place where adversity was right outside of my door, waiting on me to make the wrong decision, and enrapture me into a world of statistics. I found my hope in the Bible, my escape was reading the images of heaven, because that was better than what I saw when I opened the door. Perseverance saved me, adversity molded me, hope is why I am here today.

*-Melissa Flowers*

Matthew 5: 43-44

*You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

I don't know that I have true enemies, but I do sometimes struggle to "forgive those who trespass against" me. It's easy to give kindness and forgiveness to friends and often strangers. It takes much more effort to love those who've proven that they don't love us. However, holding onto resentment for our 'trespassers' becomes a heavy burden. Jesus's direction to love our enemies, while difficult at first, allows us to unburden our hearts and live more freely.

*-Stephanie Hoekman*

One thing I have always appreciated about CB students is how supportive they are to their classmates and friends. I hear the encouragement they give one another every day in the stands, in the halls, and in the classroom. In my role as a teacher at Christian Brothers High School, I am often reminded of the Gospel of John 15: 12-13, when Jesus says, *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.”* Our friendships are an opportunity for us to reflect Jesus’ love to one another, and in this way become closer to God. I am grateful for friendship at CB.

*Maureen Wanket*

John 8:7 states:

*Let the one among you who is without sin cast the first stone.*

The Lenten season is a time of deep reflection for us as Christians. In the modern day, it is easy to be swept away by the tempest of bustling streets, busy work, and a sleepless cycle of media. When we feel we are at our wit's end, we must take the time to breathe and be thankful for the gifts God has given us and recognize that your peers are struggling to do the same. You are not alone in the tempest, and the best way to improve the situation for everyone is to add love to the world. We are told to remove the log from our own eye before removing the splinter in another's. Do not simply point the splinter out, take action, and give love. Remember to love God, yourself, and others in that order, and live in peace.

*-Ben Fernandez '23*

Lent is a Gift. In my heart I believe this, although at times I approach Lent as if it is a chore. I don't usually look forward to doing chores even though I know I will feel better when I finish. When doing chores, I set aside some time (making sure I don't miss out on something better), turn on some music, and "get er done." Is this how we approach Lent? What if we saw Lent as the Gift it is? What if we looked forward to this time with anticipation, as we excitedly anticipate opening a gift that someone presents to us.

Lent is a Gift. It is a time the Church gives us so we can bring ourselves closer to Jesus. It is time for us to pray as we work to be more like Jesus...more loving, more forgiving, more joyful, more kind, more encouraging. Even if we only make one small change, we will be better able to celebrate Easter with Joy. Let us anticipate this Gift of Lent and what the Lord can accomplish in us when we allow Him.

*Chris Thayer*

GRATITUDE – In the psalms we read *“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love endures forever.”* (Psalm 118:1, NIV)

Reminding myself to be grateful right as I start my day is something I have been working hard at. The sooner I get up and enter into the space of gratitude, the weight of the day is somehow lifted. Lent reminds me that *throughout the day, every day* I can practice gratitude for even the simplest gifts that have been bestowed on me. Running water, heat, warm clothing, a pet to walk, a loving family and friends, supportive community, a “Catholic School Moment”, or a smile or greeting as I begin my day. “God, I really am so grateful for these things.”

*Traci McMullen*

**1 John 4:20** - *But if we say we love God and don't love each other, we are liars. We cannot see God. So how can we love God if we don't love the people we can see?*

So often it has been challenging for me to love God due to my inability to see God. The verse above from the First Letter of John implies that I am not alone in this, and, for me, it provides hope that, if I love the people I see, then I in turn love God. I am at a point in my life where I believe that God is present in my family, friends, colleagues, and students. To quote Sister Joan Chittister, "It has taken me a lifetime to realize that God is what is standing in front of me." Let us all realize that God is in every person we encounter, including each one of us, and may we all respond accordingly in a spirit of wonder, love, and kindness.

*John Riley-Portal*

On October 23, 2021, one of the most traumatic experiences of my life happened. I was in the homecoming football game playing tight end, 32 seconds were left in the game, and we were down by 3. As a sophomore on varsity, I was already nervous. Jake Elorduy, our quarterback, threw the ball to me. When the ball touched my hands I had a feeling I was going to score but was knocked unconscious just short of the end zone, fumbling the game winning touchdown. After the incident happened, I could not do anything for a few weeks, due to a major concussion. During this time, I chose to strengthen my relationship with God. He inspired me to get back out and play football again. I feel He put me on a path for greatness. He knew that I would be back on that field one day. And that is exactly what happened. Without God, I would not be the person I am today. And with all thanks to Him, I am a better person, a smarter and more driven student, and an amazing football player.

*-Mason Vicari '24*



When I first converted to Catholicism, I was awed by the majesty of God's love and His abundant forgiveness. I did not realize I was truly worthy of love until I felt the immensity of God's love. As we progress on this journey of life, we must always remember that when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is, Jesus replied, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these*" (Matthew 12:30-31). Since Jesus calls us to emulate his life, we must remember to love God, and to love the people we interact with, even when it is challenging. Corinthians gives us a beautiful summation of love: *Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails* (Corinthians 13:4-8). Lent is a wonderful time to reflect on one's relationship with God, and I pray this reflection encourages you to reflect upon how you show and share your love with others. Remember we are all God's children, and we are all worthy of God's love. Go out and love each other as God loves you.

*With love, Ashley Rose Wake*

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

Lent is a time to reflect on Jesus' final days, especially all he sacrificed for us. It is also a time for us to slow down and reflect on our lives and ask for redemption. It is when we look back on our life that our vision is clearer. My journey has certainly not been a straight line. When I look back, I realize every experience I've had (good and bad) happened for a reason. Living in the moment, it is difficult to see the purpose of why we are going through something. When I look back at some of my most difficult experiences, how I picked myself up, and dusted myself off, and asked for forgiveness (of both God and myself) was the real reflection happened. Oftentimes I noticed it was a sign from God to change the direction of my life. During my low points it is easy to feel alone. When I look back, it was clear I was not alone. God sends experiences and people in our lives at just the right time. We have to be open to his offerings and fit them into our lives, even if it uncomfortable. My favorite story is called "Footprints" and the last line is especially meaningful. "My dear child, the times when you have seen only one set of footprints, that is when I carried you."

*-Courtney Hendry*

**John 13:34** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

If you have ever been in my office, you know that I have quotes, Bible verses and song lyrics posted on my wall. It is a quick reminder of a quality or characteristic that I want to focus on. One of my favorite songs right now is *Holy There Is No One Like You* by Housefires. The last lyric in the chorus is how I try to approach every new day (it's not easy). It is a gentle reminder to love people like Jesus loves me.

*...Holy there is no one like you,  
There is none besides you,  
Open up my eyes in wonder,  
And show me who you are and fill me,  
With your heart and lead me,  
In your love to those around me...*

Just think of the impact we could have on a student or coworker if by our words and actions we shared the love of Jesus with them.

-Carol Rians

I choose to believe in a loving God. I don't have evidence to prove God's existence in a scientific way. It is a fork in the road we all must deal with at some point; I have chosen the path of faith, a trust that life works out as it should. On the one hand, God's providence is hidden from us living in the physical world and given the truly horrific acts that occur in all times and everywhere on earth it is understandable how some conclude we are on our own. On the other hand, the eminence beauty and harmony of our universe begs the question: this cannot be random? Consider human consciousness and the gift of free will; we can choose to become a better version of ourselves. We can turn our backs on entrenched bad habits and behavior, deny our selfish instincts and make ourselves better and bring those around us to a more loving place. The quest to find God has left an amazing trail of stunning art, music, and literature. Philosophers and poets have given us guidelines that are not only practical but inspiring. We are not alone in our search for the Divine and belong to a community of seekers that is thousands of years old and found in every corner of our planet. Plus, we have the best holidays, so good are they that even non-believers want to join in the celebration. All are welcome.

*-Findlay McIntosh*

### Vy's Reflection:

I always pray to God when I open my eyes in the morning, before I go to bed, when I drive on the roads, before my tests, pretty much anytime I feel like I need God. "God, please be with me" is and will always be one of my favorite prayers to say. I know he will never leave me even if I don't ask him that because God loves everyone He created. However, I still like to say that prayer because it makes me feel safe in God as well as it makes me strongly believe in God's presence. Saying this prayer has tightened my relationship with God, and it helps me let God know that without him, I would never have today.

*-Thao vy ngoc Nguyen '25*

***I am with you always.*** Matthew 28:20

On Easter Sunday, the Risen Lord Jesus speaks these words to his apostles right after he commissions them to go out baptizing all nations. This is the first time most of the apostles have even seen Jesus since he was arrested three days before, and already he is telling them to go. Soon Jesus will ascend into heaven and will not be walking side-by-side with his friends anymore. Even though it looks different, Jesus is still with us. God always keeps his promises. As Lasallians we know that Jesus lives in our hearts forever, but it may not always feel like it. We have to call our attention to him to experience that presence because he is not going to force his way into our heart. God respects our freedom so much that he waits patiently for us to turn to him. There are so many ways we can put ourselves in the presence of Jesus, but the way that is most tangible is in the Eucharist. Even when we are not able to receive him in Holy Communion, we can still go visit him in the chapel, especially during Adoration. Sharing the same physical space as Christ's Body and letting his loving gaze rest upon you is literally heaven on earth.

*-Catherine Niu*

*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*  
Matthew 6:34

I heard once that high school is the fastest four years of your life. It felt like only a little while ago, I was meeting my best friends and new classmates at Lock In and then suddenly we were learning about walking across the stage at graduation. My four years at Christian Brothers flew by and I never took enough time to breathe. Lent is 40 days that allow us time to slow down and soak up all of the wonderful things about being a human being. Over my years at CBHS, I felt a lot of anxiety. Anxiety about grades, presentations in classes, sporting events, and what I would wear to the upcoming dance. I moved through each step of high school anticipating what was next, not taking the time to process and be thankful for each moment I was living. When I think about Lent and the wild ride of high school, I think about this quote from Matthew 6:34, I know that high school and everything beyond the gates of Christian Brothers can feel like a daunting leap into the future, so I encourage you to use this time of Lent as an opportunity to take a deep breath, live in each moment as it arrives, and give yourself the grace to keep on going.

*– Maile Shelley '17*

*(Current: Campus Ministry, De La Salle HS)*

**Psalm 46:10** *Be still, and know that I am God...*

It sounds easy, but in reality, it takes courage to pause... to let go... to surrender... We are so used to being in control of everything. We are always busy. This bible verse calls us to take time to pause and reflect; to remember, or maybe, to rediscover that God is still in control no matter what is happening in our lives. If only we take the time to be still, we would be able to connect with our faith, and we could find peace even amidst the chaos of life. In the silence of our heart, we can take a moment to be thankful for what we have, even our trials and tribulations. We can ask for guidance and strength, but especially we can listen to God whispering to our heart how much He loves us. In the silence we can discover God's plan for us and remember that we are not alone. God is always with us!

*-Sr. Maria Aguilar, SJS*



When I think of Lent, I think of how it makes me think I can be a better person. Forty years ago I was on a plane to New York City, sitting beside a shipmate, Rodney Nicholas. I said to Rodney, "New York is going to be scary; I wish we didn't have to go here." Rodney, a small 19 year old man with an acne problem who was five foot eight inches on a good day turns to me and says, "Bernie I'm six foot five and the best looking guy in New York City." I just laughed. The first night in New York we went into the city to eat and were told there was an hour wait; Nick walked up to a table of a couple and asked if we could sit with them. I was embarrassed that he did that, but they ended up buying us dinner and invited us to their home on Long Island. I asked Nick how you got the courage to do that, he said "I'm six foot five and the best looking guy in New York City." I laughed. A week later I was in a nightclub with Nick in Greenwich Village, we met a lot of people in that club because of Nick. It was getting time to go, and I couldn't find Nick, so I asked a girl whom he had been talking to if she knew where he was. She said, "you mean the tall, handsome guy over there?", as she pointed to Nick. Was Nick six foot five or five foot eight, was he handsome or not, I don't know the answer to that now, nor did I know the answer to that then, but he believed he was so everyone else believed he was. Everyone who met Nick thought he was amazing, and if you were to ask Nick why, he would say, "I'm six foot five and best looking guy you ever met." This is a 100% true story. By believing, Nick was and is an amazingly happy and fulfilled person. In the same way, by believing in the power of God, anything is possible.

*-Bernie Eckel*

*Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her.*      - Luke 1:45

During this season of Lent, I encourage each and every Catholic to smile and lift a prayer to someone in need. Often times in life, we struggle with our blessings that are given to us from God. Throughout my 18 years of life, I have been through difficult experiences such as bullying, losing numerous family members at a young age, breakups, being diagnosed with Scoliosis, ADHD, and much more. Somehow, even though I have overcome immense challenges and various mountains in my life, I am still here today. Some might call this luck. But as a Catholic, I am starting to realize that God has a big influence on my life. I often ask myself, "Why does God let all of this happen to me"? I consider myself being a nice and accepting person. "Why would people put me down"? and "Is this smile on my face just a form of makeup or is it my way of sharing God's word with other people"? The truth is, I have learned through these hardships that God has inspired me to shine a light onto those in need by offering a smile of comfort to those going through a difficult time. [continued, next page]

I strongly believe that my smile is a means of me conveying my pain through an act of kindness. What are my blessings from God you might ask? I am blessed to have a family who loves and cares for me. I have amazing teachers who are willing to work with me no matter what challenge I am experiencing. I have wonderful friends who care for me. I am a member of a youth group who are like family to me. But the ultimate blessing is having a Holy family in Heaven composed of various family members who look down on me as Guardian Angels and who know that I am a resilient young woman because of a God who created me. God fulfills our promise if we trust that they will be fulfilled and have faith in his Holy presence. Next time you feel down, I encourage you to pray to God and reflect on what is happening in your life because God has helped to heal me, and I am sure he will be there to heal you as well.

Believe in His Presence!!

*Gianna Negri '23*

Many thanks to  
Findlay McIntosh  
and his students for  
their wonderful cover art

