

Friday Meditations

2017-18



ABOUT THE MEDITATIONS

The meditations in this collection were given at the weekly student-led service of simple, sung Evensong on Fridays in the King's College Chapel. Although they appear here in written form, the meditations in this booklet were intended first of all as oral addresses to the students that gather to attend Evensong in the Chapel on Fridays.

All of the meditations in this booklet have been reproduced with the permission of their authors. Thank you also to Katie Merwin, Joe Blackwood, and Maria Bartholomew, whose meditations are not included in this collection, but remain in the hearts and memories of those who heard them.

Students become spiritually vulnerable when they stand up in front of their peers to speak of their own broken hearts. In that moment of another's vulnerability, we can only offer our attention. In this way, the Friday Evensong Meditations offer students a space to practice a healing attentiveness to one another.

With this printed collection of meditations, we invite you to enter into that space as well.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Ps. 19: 14

FRIDAY MEDITATIONS 2017-18

Katy Weatherly

3

Hannah Mills

5

Chloe Matamoros

8

Will Barton

11

Kate Jordan

14

Molly Cowles

17

Verity Thomson

19

Aaron Shenkman

21

Ginny Wilmhoff

24

Matthew Scott

28

Hilary Allister

29

Katie Cook

33

Charlotte Sullivan

35

Paul Rogers

38

Apolonia Perri

41

Leo Timmins

44

2

A word: Luke 19:28-40; Christ is entering Jerusalem. "The whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." Answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

A question: What happens when the church falls silent?

Silence.

A memory: Growing up in my particular religious sphere I was often told "Katy—life without God is meaningless." This is a thought I considered often and one which I eventually took on as my own.

A history: I grew up in a profusely religious context. The presence of God permeates even my earliest memories. My faith was, however, not merely circumstantial, but something that I gladly took up at a very young age. My deep love of God has always been the most true thing about me. Though I often threw myself upon various skeptical and heretical philosophies. God was, for me, was always present, in my wandering.

A breaking: But, over the course of last year—slowly, at first, and then abruptly—God went silent.

There was a myriad of reasons for this, pertaining to both my soul and the city. Suffice to say that

when I stopped seeing God's love in the body of the church, God disappeared.

Perhaps, some of you are more familiar than I am with the blessing of God's absence.

In any case, losing God was terrifying.

An interrogation of a memory: It is a dangerous thing to believe that life without God is meaningless. I say that from experience.

I have come to think that it is inevitable that, for each of us at some point, god will disappear.

Our images of God are too small to be eternal.

And, when my God shattered, it left me in harrowing pain and on a dangerous precipice.

It is untrue that the world without God is meaningless.

Over time, in the absence of God, a strange thing happened: I found the world to be still meaningful.

The world came alive in long walks on pleasant gray days.

The world came alive in my favourite childhood books.

The world came alive in those I love deeply.

The world came alive in those who loved and cared for me when I couldn't care for myself.

All this, without God.

An amendment to a memory: When I find myself wearing old habits of mind, I tell myself of this: Christ, by participating in the world, affirms the world's meaningfulness, even when the World is separated from God. The world without God is not meaningless. The world without God is bursting with meaning.

A resurrection: The church fell silent, God died, and the rocks cried out. It was in attending to the meaningfulness of the world that, for me, God rose from the grave.

A transfiguration: It was in attending to the meaningfulness of the world, that I discovered that the rocks too are the church—dancing lights amidst and within the body of Christ.

A poem:

I should have predicted the death of this city;
I could have predicted it if only
there had been no such pretty flowers,
no such squares filled with horses
and their golden riders.

Gwendolyn MacEwen

When Father Thorne asked me to speak, he said he hoped I would speak about climate change, and I was glad he asked that. You see, I don't think we can engage in any exploration of love, God, faith, any of these words, without acknowledging the climate crisis. But also, when I think about the implications of the climate crisis—its implications in my own life—I find myself drawing upon particular experiences I had within this Chapel.

In Matt Furlong's meditation last year, he said that these reflections can be a way of sharing a wound, and I think that's a really helpful way to approach this. But climate change is such a gaping ache that it's too hard to start there. So instead I'd like to share a smaller wound, my own, and work my way from that side.

I finished high school and started FYP in 2011. That year was also the start of a long period of obsessive rumination and depression. I felt trapped in my own mind and it gradually got worse and worse. There were always different reasons why I felt the way I did. Some of them stuck around longer than others, some I look back on and think "Really, Hannah?" Those subjects are not important to this talk, but I need to express where my mind was at that time. The point is that none of these anxieties or sadnesses seemed to fade; instead, a new one would build up on an old one and the whole mess would get compounded.

And, after a while, the problem became less about any particular problem in my life, and more about a narrative I started telling myself *about* my life. At some point, I started to believe, I would end my own life. It was never an immediate option. Rather when I tormented myself with whatever new problem I had created, I would tell myself that it didn't matter anyway, that I knew where I was going, ultimately, and that I knew how I would get there. I didn't want to be in my own mind anymore; I was driving myself mad. I imagined that one day I probably wouldn't be able to stand it anymore.

But, again, this is not the wound I want to describe.

In the winter of 2016, my mind, with a lot of outside help, began to heal. I started to look around me, I started to notice the richness of my own life. When I had one of those thoughts which had previously defined me I found I could put it aside.

The gravity of this change struck me at the Easter vigil. I remember that a young man was baptized. I forget his name but I am sure people here remember him, and remember this moment as well. A whole bunch of people were standing there at the back, around the baptismal font, holding candles. And as I watched Father Thorne place the kiss of

water on his forehead I felt like I was witnessing a birth—and inside, simultaneous with that birth, was a death as well. Looking around I was overwhelmed by the particularity of each person, each candlelit face, each individual birth and death together.

And I thought:

I want to be around for my whole life. I want to see it through. I want to meet my death having lived.

What a bold and perhaps foolish thing to say. It's basically asking for trouble, for a lightning bolt to come down. It's asking to be broken by the world. And, what's more, it's a promise we have no guarantee that we can keep. After all, we can't be sure we know what our life has in store for us until it's over, until we've died.

But that's the thought I had. And I don't think it is so different from the affirmation we make kneeling to take communion. A commitment made even as we acknowledge our utter inadequacy to the task, our unworthiness of even the crumbs of grace.

So I had this thought, this realization: I don't know when my life will end, but I plan to be around until it does.

And for me that thought meant looking at climate change.

Because we cannot throw ourselves into the future without looking at it... it's true and we know it. We know that we are experiencing a rate of warming which threatens civilization within this century, we know that we are living in a time of mass extinction—thousands of times the typical rate, we know that we have already gone too far, that our climate is already unstable, and we must move at unprecedented speed as a result. We see the human suffering caused by natural disasters and political conflicts... we see this, and we know this, but...

What would it mean to not only know these "facts," but to understand them? What would happen if we let them enter us and become truth? I am asking because I don't know. I both want to and I don't want to. I am afraid that it is possible to let the truth in, and I'm also afraid that it isn't possible. That fear is what I need to share.

There is a writer I like named Margaret Klein Salamon. She is a psychologist; and is also an activist. If you are interested you could look her up and read some of her stuff.

She has this term she uses: "climate truth." It describes that process of letting the "facts" in, letting them become true to us. I think this is a very helpful term.

Living with climate truth means allowing that our lives might look quite different than we once thought. That they will not look like our parents' lives. That the question of parenthood, itself, is changed.

It certainly, for me, has changed the way I approach the question of vocation. That maybe what vocation means in this present context is the call saying "your task is to fight like hell for everything else that you care about."

And here I want to emphasize that that call is the certainty—that our demise is not the certainty here. What's certain is the call to belong, our relation to all life on this planet, that pull to preserve that life, even if it means giving up our lives, or an idea of our lives, to do so.

So there's yet another bold statement, which brings me back here...

One thing I have learnt in the Chapel—and I mean this in the most friendly way—is that, in letting in any truth, we encounter our own failure.

It's pretty clear that human nature does not mix well with truth—we know this. In a series of careless moments we neglect our friends, we find ourselves doubting the Goodness which we know. We think of our own needs in a situation and then we realize it wasn't about us at all. Something I've been doing this entire speech, by the way—even now!

We encounter truth and we fail. And it seems that's why we come together in the Chapel, because we need a space which acknowledges both the truths that give our lives meaning, and our ongoing struggle to realize that meaning.

We need each other in this. We cannot live truth without love. We need each other to remind ourselves of this.

I don't think the chapel can be a space in which we show our wounds unless we explicitly name the climate crisis as a wound in our lives. Unless we admit that it is a truth which, whether we choose or not, will bring us to our knees. Unless we admit that climate truth has both moral and material implications in our immediate lives. And unless we challenge each other to transform our lives in light of this truth.

I think that challenge is what we can offer one another here, and is also what we can ask for. That possibility is why I have continued to return to this space... for the possibility of a conversion, of a turning, which allows a new light, or a richer darkness.

What does it mean to consider yourself a “Christian”? This past Sunday at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, the priest asked this question of a group of children. He taught that it means to be a follower of Jesus. What does that mean?

To hearken to the reading today:

- (12) This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
- (13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
- (14) Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.
- (15) Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

I was baptised in the Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Toronto behind the Eaton Centre—a very “left wing” Anglican Church—very involved in social justice. Both my parents understood the value of being part of a community, though neither are very religious. I love the community and at 13 years old I was confirmed, but to me, as those around me validated, this did not mean I could not explore other faiths and seek out other spiritual teachings in Buddhism, or Paganism, for example. It simply affirmed that I was part of the Christian community there.

I felt hesitant to call myself a Christian because I felt women were under-represented in the Bible and it seemed to me that calling ourselves sinners was a way of inflicting feelings of guilt and shame on myself for reasons I did not understand.

I went travelling in my gap year to Guatemala and, through family connections (a distant cousin), found myself on a Mission Trip alone with a group of Evangelical people. My eyes were opened to a new understanding of the Christian faith through the experiences and conversations I had with these people who became my friends. I began to more deeply understand Jesus as someone demonstrating radical selfless love for the stranger as I found myself witnessing surgeons performing eye surgeries for people who could not afford them and explaining to me that they were doing this out of love by Jesus’ example. I could not however agree with the idea that following and believing in Jesus was the *only* right and true way to connect with God.

Last year, along with doing FYP, I sang in the King’s Chapel Choir. I found it very humbling to be part of the choir (for the musical demands were very great), and to be part of the Chapel; though I found myself wrestling with my ideas and beliefs concerning

the Christian faith, and trying to interpret the words I was required to sing every week. I tend towards the extreme, and, upon considering what it means to bear one another's burdens, I wondered: would that mean that if someone else was suffering and could not find joy, that I too should then refrain from feeling joy and try to remember that person's suffering every moment possible? How would that help them if I too became sad all the time? And was not this expectation of myself unrealistic?

Last April the King's Chapel Choir performed the Saint John Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach. Since I was young I have felt deeply touched, as are many, by the music of J.S. Bach. Through singing the Passion I came to understand how the passion of Christ—the suffering of Christ—is an internal struggle within each person seeking Divine Love. In Chorale number 11, the choir (representing “the people”) sing “*Wer hat dich so geschlagen, Mein Heil...*” or, “Who has struck you thus, My Saviour...” “... for you are not a sinner...” I understood through music and poetry that Christ represents perfect Divine love, which, as Christians—followers of Christ—we seek. Our human nature and instincts, however, get in the way of realizing this Divine selfless love—the love of one who would die for another—and thus by following our instincts, we hurt this love which is Jesus. During the second verse of Chorale number 11, the choir sang softly “*Ich, ich und meine Sunden, die sich wie Kornlein finden des Sandes an dem Meer...*” “It is I, I and my sins, that can be found as numerous as the grains of sand by the sea...”. I understood while I sang this over and over again that this violation of Divine love is something that happens at every moment because we are human and constantly getting distracted from that which is truly good and of God. In recognizing this shortcoming in such a violent image as that of Christ on the cross, we wake ourselves up to what we are seeking and longing for in our hearts.

Now, in what way do we seek this Love? I am lucky enough to be part of the chorus in the play *Murder in the Cathedral* (T.S. Eliot's telling of the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral), put on by the King's Theatrical Society. In the play, Thomas is visited by four tempters. Father Thorne came in to speak to the cast about the play and the following question came up: why does Thomas act as he does, and what is the temptation the fourth tempter represents? What does it mean to be a true martyr? As I learned from Father Thorne, many early Christians volunteered to die in the name of Christianity because they believed that that is how they would be sure to enter heaven. Father Thorne spoke of the true martyr as one who does not volunteer or orchestrate their own martyrdom but one who does not refuse or fight it either. Rather, the true martyr gives up their own will to God without seeking it out—but, if martyrdom is their fate, they humbly accept it. In the play *Murder in the Cathedral*, the question is: “Did Thomas Becket choose to die a martyr for glory, or did he accept his fate of martyrdom by giving over his life to God out of his faith in God—a complete surrender?”

I would like to now speak about the idea of giving up one's own will. I have been advised not to "giving up myself" but instead to "giving of myself." In the context I have been told this I have understood "giving up oneself" to be a cautionary note not to sacrifice one's own passion and integrity because of a feeling of obligation towards others.

But the motive behind a feeling of obligation is worth examining. If the motive is in the human realm and for reasons of fear of being judged negatively in the eyes of other people or for reasons of feeling an obligation to another because someone has flattered you or expects something of you, then I understand this to be "giving up yourself" for the wrong reason. Rather, "giving up oneself" for the right reasons would be "giving up oneself" to God out of love and a desire to live in selfless love in God through Jesus, through cultivating one's faith in a religious practice, and ultimately serving others out of love for God rather than out of fear of being disliked or rejected. And a fear of not being in the love of God is different than a fear of being not in the love of other people—and yet to love God is to strive to love others instead of striving to be loved by others.

I cannot say with any certainty I know what it means to be a Christian but I do know I have found a community of people in the Chapel who are willing to explore and to live as best they can what it means to truly love one another.

- (12) This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
- (15) Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

A saying of Anthony the Great:

Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we win our brother, we win God. If we cause our brother to stumble, we have sinned against Christ.

Two sayings of Abba Moses:

The monk must die to his neighbour and never judge him at all in any way whatever.

If you are occupied with your own faults, you have no time to see those of your neighbour.

A saying of John the Dwarf:

"You don't build a house by starting with the roof and working down. You start with the foundation."

They said, "What does that mean?"

He said, "The foundation is our neighbour whom we must win. The neighbour is where we start. Every commandment of Christ depends on this."

A saying of Abba Macarius the Great, when he was informed of a self-confident old monk whose counsel had depressed others:

When Abba Macarius was alone with him, he asked Theopemptus, "How are things going with you?" Theopemptus replied, "Thanks to your prayers, all is well." Abba Macarius asked, "Do you not have to battle with your fantasies?" He answered, "No, up to now all is well." He was afraid to admit anything. But Abba Macarius said to him, "I have lived for many years as an ascetic and everyone sings my praises, but, despite my age, I still have trouble with sexual fantasies." Theopemptus said, "Well, it is the same with me, to tell the truth." And Macarius went on admitting, one by one, all the other fantasies that caused him to struggle, until he had brought Theopemptus to admit all of them himself. Then he said, "What do you do about fasting?" "Nothing until the ninth hour," he replied. "Fast till evening and take some exercise," said Macarius. "Go over the words of the gospel and the rest of Scripture. And if an alien thought arises within you, don't look down but up: the Lord will come to your help."

A saying of Abba Poemen, confronted with a brother who admits having committed a great sin and wants to do three years' penance:

The old man said, "That's a lot." The brother said, "What about one year?" The old man said, "That's still quite a lot." Some other people suggested forty days; Poemen said, "That's a lot too." And he said, "What I think is that if someone repents with all one's heart and intends never to commit the sin again, perhaps God will be satisfied with only three days."

A saying of Abba Moses:

There was a brother at Scetis who had committed a fault. So they called a meeting and invited Abba Moses. He refused to go. The priest sent someone to say to him, "They're all waiting for you." So Moses got up and set off; he took a leaky jug and filled it with water and took it with him. The others came out to meet him and said, "What is this father?" The old man said to them, "My sins run out behind me and I cannot see them, yet here I am coming to sit in judgement on the mistakes of somebody else." When they heard this, they called off the meeting.

A saying of Abba Bessarion:

A brother who had sinned was turned out of the church by the priest. Abba Bessarion got up and followed him out; he said, "I too am a sinner."

Two sayings of Abba Poemen:

A brother questioned Abba Poemen, saying, "If I see my brother sinning, should I hide the fact?" The old man said, "At the moment when we hide a brother's fault, God hides our own. At the moment when we reveal a brother's fault, God reveals our own."

Some old men came to see Abba Poemen and said to him, "We see some of the brothers falling asleep during divine worship. Should we wake them up?" He said, "As for me, when I see a brother who is falling asleep during the Office, I lay his head on my knees and let him rest."

Two sayings of Abba Moses:

If you have enough sin in your own life and your own home, you have no need to go searching for it elsewhere.

If you have a corpse laid out in your own front room, you won't have leisure to go to a neighbour's funeral.

A saying of Abba Poemen:

A brother asked Abba Poemen, "What does it mean to be angry with your brother without a cause?" He said, If your brother hurts you by his arrogance and you are angry with him because of this, that is getting angry without a cause. If he pulls out your right eye and cuts off your right hand and you get angry with hi, that is getting angry without a cause. But if he cuts you off from God – then you have every right to be angry with him."

“For thy great mercies’ sake thou didst not...forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.” (Nehemiah 9.31)

If you had asked me, just over a year ago, where I would be on Christmas Eve, I might have told you that I would be in the kitchen with my father. Every year, we buy one litre of eggnog and drink it together, savouring it over the course of the last week leading up to Christmas Day. The best thing about it is how hard my father laughs every time he reads the French translation on the other side of the carton: “Chicken Milk.”

If you had asked me where I would be on Christmas Eve, I might have told you that I would be on the couch with my mother, reading “’Twas the Night Before Christmas,” as we have every Christmas Eve for the last twenty-one years. My brother, despite now being a 6’4” Queens Engineering Bro (a certain type of person I’m sure many of us are familiar with), would squeeze himself onto the couch with us, letting his bravado subside for one night.

If you had asked me where I would be on Christmas Eve, I would *not* have said “sneaking out of my house.” But that was exactly what I was doing.

I had laid out an outfit. I had packed my purse. I had planned the route of escape. This was the sneaking out experience I never had in high school. Except that I wasn’t going to a party. I was sneaking out to go to church.

All of you remember the first time you felt like you belonged here, in this chapel. Maybe it was a gradual process. Maybe it was all at once. Maybe, like me, you came to a Thursday service once in first year and left after five minutes because it was too smoky and there were weird bells. Maybe you went back after a day. After a week. After four years.

I went on the Thanksgiving retreat last year and encountered love as I had never imagined it. I was welcomed with open arms—something for which I can never begin to thank you all enough. But as I entered this community, I found myself being squeezed out of another. As I returned to my parents’ house for Christmas, this became increasingly obvious.

As devoted atheists, my parents had raised me on a strict diet of “religion is a coping mechanism for people who aren’t strong enough to face reality.” I remember one particular moment last year when, after hearing I went on the Fall Retreat, my mother suggested that I seek psychological help. Even this past week—on Monday—I was

chatting with my father, who expressed deep concern that I was becoming dependent on the Church. It took me until about ten minutes into the conversation to realise that he was using much the same vocabulary he used to speak to my brother when he was concerned about my brother's burgeoning "marijuana addiction."

And so, you can imagine why, last Christmas Eve, as I grabbed my purse and tiptoed down the stairs, I felt a moment of confliction. Fourteen hundred kilometers away from this spiritual community, as I—literally—shut the door on my family, in that moment before the latch clicked, I had never felt so... entirely... alone.

We are no strangers to loneliness here in the Chapel.

That seems a strange thing to say, having just celebrated the Communion of Saints. But just as the liturgical year presents us with times of community, so too does it present us with loneliness. Only a month after All Saints—sometimes less—Advent begins. The season is the pause in the middle of a line in the psalms: a season of baited breath, of waiting... It is, to some, a season of loneliness.

In a conversation at Michaelmas that was mostly over my head, Fr. Ingalls mentioned the vital importance of a church's geography. The *place* of a church, he suggested, has a dramatic influence on the liturgical year celebrated in any place. And that is particularly true here, steeped as we are in the academic year. Its patterns guide us too; we have academic times of community and academic times of loneliness. This becomes especially apparent today, as many of us leave the city and the Chapel for Reading Week.

So, Advent, then, for us, is a time of double loneliness: liturgically, of distance from the Incarnation, and geographically, of absence from our own spiritual community. It is a time, for some, of fear. The stream of periods of loneliness and community mark the passing of time. And, for me, they are a reminder of the finitude of the Chapel as it is today. They are a reminder of the inherent transience and ephemerality of this community.

We are especially aware, this year, I think, that the Chapel is finite. We will not, all of us, continue to sing the psalms as we have today. We will not sing them with the same people. We may not sing them to the same tunes. We may not sing them at all. And in the face of this realisation, I think, we feel particularly alone. We have talked much of a sense of urgency which lies behind our doings this year. It cannot be that these two feelings—of loneliness, and of urgency—are separate.

It is only natural that we should try to plan to fill periods of loneliness. We do not like voids. We try to fill them.

It is easy to try to prepare. It is easy to try to fill our voids with plans and ambition. But when we try to prepare for these times of loneliness, we inevitably place ourselves at the centre of our plans. We close our eyes to those around us; by trying to avoid loneliness, we close ourselves off from community. By trying to fill our voids, we succeed only in propagating them.

It is easy to try to prepare. It is easy to try to fill our voids with plans and ambition. It is much, much harder to wait. But it is only by waiting *in* loneliness that the *end* to our loneliness can come. Advent must precede Christmas. We must pause before the rest of the psalm. We must wait on the Word.

We must forego this individual desire to plan for the voids that approach. But this is almost impossible to do. We are finite creatures, we are individuals. We are students, we are family members, we are artists, we are carpenters and music teachers and dons and we are...busy. We are not, as Father Thorne so often reminds us, monks. Reciting the psalms, as one, does not come easily to us. We continually fail to listen. We continually fail to live in community, to live in and for one another. We continually fail to hear and heed the Word of God.

We are like the Israelites of the first lesson today. We are shown miracle after miracle in our community, and yet we continue to fail one another. We continue to fail God.

And yet, we are not forsaken. We are offered, time and time again, the ability to love one another, the ability to live for one another. We are offered forgiveness.

It is a difficult thing to ask for. It is an even more difficult thing to accept. But it lies at the very heart of our community, and it is something we must learn if we are to face this loneliness, which is never far off.

It is good that we experience loneliness. It is good that we feel this sense of urgency. Perhaps it is even a good thing that we prepare. But we must consider *whom* we are preparing, rather than what we are preparing for. We prepare, not so that we can *avoid* the loneliness, but so that *we* can *embrace* it. When we read the psalms, we do not *skip* the *silence*. No. The whole of the psalm is to *shape* the *silence*, that pause, that...void. We embrace the silence so that we may hear the Word of God.

And so, let us prepare for our Advents, whatever they may be. Let us prepare one another, with one another, in one another. And as we fail, as we have, as we do, and as we will, let us ask forgiveness.

May we receive it. May we accept it. Amen.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O lord, my strength and my redeemer.

I would like to begin by speaking for a moment about my grandmother. She helped me find God, or rather, helped me to understand Him. She once told me that God is like this giant machine; all working parts and things we can barely understand. We humans are only able to see a very small piece of this machine, like a single knob or button. That is all we can comprehend of God and His plan. He is bigger than all of us.

And I have a quote here from C. S. Lewis. A young man seeking to enter heaven wishes to bring with him his talents and usefulness as a free inquirer and thinker. He bargains with the spirit, stating how he needs to use the talents God has given him and demands to be needed. The spirit simply shakes its head, "I can promise you none of these things. No sphere of usefulness: you are not needed there at all. No scope for your talents: only forgiveness for having perverted them. No atmosphere of inquiry, for I will bring you to the land not of questions but of answers, and you shall see the face of God."

God is bigger than all of us.

I have one more story here for you today. A ghost of Hell stands in Heaven and through its greed it tries to steal the golden apples to sell back in Hell.

Then came a real gust. The branches of the Tree began to toss. A moment later and half a dozen apples had fallen round the Ghost and on it. He gave a sharp cry, but suddenly checked it. I thought the weight of the golden fruit where it had fallen on him would have disabled him: and certainly, for a few minutes, he was unable to rise. He lay whimpering, nursing his wounds. But soon he was at work again. I could see him feverishly trying to fill his pockets with the apples. Of course it was useless. One could see how his ambitions were gradually forced down. He gave up the idea of a pocketful: two would have to do. He gave up the idea of two, he would take one, the largest. He gave up that hope. He was now looking for the smallest one. He was trying to find if there was one small enough to carry. The amazing thing was that he succeeded. When I remembered what the leaf had felt like when I tried to lift it, I could hardly help admiring this unhappy creature when I saw him rise staggering to his feet actually holding the smallest of the apples in his hands. He was lame from his hurts, and the weight bent him double. Yet even so, inch by inch, still availing himself of every scrap of cover, he set out on his via dolorosa to the bus, carrying his torture. 'Fool. Put it down,' said a great voice

suddenly. It was quite unlike any other voice I had heard so far. It was a thunderous yet liquid voice. With an appalling certainty I knew that the waterfall itself was speaking: and I saw now (though it did not cease to look like a waterfall) that it was also a bright angel who stood, like one crucified, against the rocks and poured himself perpetually down towards the forest with loud joy.

'Fool,' he said, 'put it down. You cannot take it back. There is not room for it in Hell. Stay here and learn to eat such apples. The very leaves and the blades of grass in the wood will delight to teach you.' Whether the Ghost heard or not, I don't know. At any rate, after pausing for a few minutes, it braced itself anew for its agonies and continued with even greater caution till I lost sight of it.

The weight and reality of Heaven is almost too heavy for this ghost.

Now, I would like to turn towards the readings today, or rather, turn towards the questioning and hesitating of the people to believe. I found this repetitive theme throughout these stories, though I can assure you I am no scholar, nor do I read the Bible on a frequent basis.

But the idea of so many refusing to believe or of making the choice to ignore what is right in front of them, made me question why. Why are we even given the choice to choose if so many choose the other path? Is this because of God's love for us? And if so, why would he love something so flawed? He made us, but why?

I have one more quote here from C. S. Lewis, and in case you haven't realized this yet, Lewis is one of my favorite authors. Here, a spirit describes how Hell is smaller than the size of an atom compared to Heaven, and I know that it sounds quite ridiculous at first, but Lewis explains it, saying,

And yet all loneliness, angers, hatreds, envies and itchings that [Hell] contains, if rolled into one single experience and put into the scale against the least moment of the joy that is felt by the least in Heaven, would have no weight that could be registered at all. Bad cannot succeed even in being bad as truly as good is good. If all Hell's miseries together entered the consciousness of yon wee yellow bird on the bough there, they would be swallowed up without trace, as if one drop of ink had been dropped into that Great Ocean to which your terrestrial Pacific itself is only a molecule.

The joys which heaven gives us are larger than any misery we could cook up here on earth. God must be bigger than all of us. Now I don't have any fascinating insights or answers, just the simple fact that I know I will never be able to understand, just like I could only understand the single knob on the grand machine that is God. Thank you.

“And when he was come into Jerusalem all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?” (Matthew 21.10)

I feel I can only begin this meditation by expressing my profound gratitude for what has been shared during these Friday meditations this year. I have been deeply encouraged and awed by you this semester and am very thankful to be part of a community that can share so honestly with each other.

The second thing I need to say is an apology. The preparation for this meditation did not go as planned and what was supposed to be a meditation about the inexpressible turned out to be exactly that. The result is a fragmented collection of thoughts; please bear with me.

The year started with an inversion of all we thought we knew about caring for each other and for the world. The familiar story which begins,

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, **And who is my neighbour?**

Fr. Thorne challenged us to see the question of the lawyer not as “who do I have to love?” but as “*who will love me?*”.

When I heard these words in September, I had just returned from the desert. That is, my summer which I spent as a sleepwalker. Awake enough only to plan distractions to avoid confronting that achy hollowness of loneliness which I knew would end in only a few (hopefully short) months.

And as I listened to this first sermon from Fr. Thorne, I knew one thing for certain: he wasn't talking to me. If he only knew how terrible I was! What a state I was in—how I only ever think of myself, how I am only ever looking for people to carry *me*, love *me*, then he would never have encouraged such behavior. Oh no, his challenge was not for me but for that inner circle—the ones that really got it. Those who had achieved a deeper spiritual level than me and were so good at loving their neighbours that they needed a new challenge.

But, we have travelled this semester and we have changed. We have encountered Love and we have been transformed by it. I am not able to put that encounter into words, nor do I think you would want to hear my words about it. But, of course, that initial impulse to reject the idea of love offered by Jesus was overturned by the actually encountering Him in numerous ways all semester. I could say much more about this but didn't have the chance to sort through all my ideas leading up to the meditation. I do, however, want to point you back to the sermon Hannah Fisher gave at the Thanksgiving retreat. The way she beautifully expressed forgiveness was a key moment in my conversion this semester.

Now the semester is ending and we are departing. We return home. And for me, whenever I return home I find that that very inability to express what I have experienced the most difficult. The immensity of what has happened is so very real yet entirely inexpressible and invisible.

Yesterday in preparing for the service, Dean Hatt reminded me that our movement in the Eucharist is circular. We go out, experience and take part in something, and then return exactly where we started, changed by what we have done and by what God has done through us. This is often the feeling I have when returning home, as well. From what I gathered of Fr. Thorne and Fr. Curran's sermons this week, Advent is this return. After the long Trinity season where we learn and work at loving one another, we return to chaos and confusion; desolation and desire. Our beginning is the end and we meditate upon the apocalypse through lessons like the ones we read tonight. The world is ending, and soon. Our desires overtake us and hope seems far distant. Jesus too is making a return, but when we see him, We ask with the people of Jerusalem "Who is this?"

“Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.” (Hosea 8.1)

The nation of Israel repeatedly has trouble valuing the revelation of the Lord over the immediacy of the world. Time and time again, even in a moment of divine salvation at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the graspable and immediate image of the golden calf outweighs the anticipation of the Law. And these are not minor moments that colour the overall story of the Old Testament; rather, they entirely structure the series of laws and trials that will face the Israelites in the books to come. The Jews, having lost themselves in idolatry, are now bound by the commandments, that will come to structure their almost every relation to the world they inhabit. (Commandments, which, if we are to trust the kabbalists, are said to not have been present on the original tablets, but replaced pure revelation.)

We then find ourselves in what at least initially appears to be a dichotomy between nature and the divine, between the world and the word. The physical, blinding and binding us, turns us away from our relationship with God, and as a result we are fated to live under the Law, rather than in, perhaps, a celebration of the Lord. The world, it seems, insulates us, and turns our attention toward ourselves as individuals, attracted by shiny and seductive things, whose consumption is taken to be, in the moment, a satisfactory alternative to the divine. Because of these decisions, we now need to the laws to help correct our behaviour—we need to be corrected morally.

But none of you need to hear this; it is hardly an original thought. Yet what really amounts to just a school boy’s understanding of Plato becomes what I hope will be a much more interesting discussion of the nature between the divine and the natural, between good and evil. What I am about to say emerges out of a rather difficult passage in Giorgio Agamben’s *The Coming Community*, so, if you’ll indulge me, I need to begin with a concrete example:

This past September on the Cape Split Hike, I was struck for the first time by communion. There, with the ocean to his back, Father Thorne described how communion is not simply the transformation of wine into blood, as if Jesus was never present in the wine and then was made to appear. Rather, he spoke of how communion is really the act of making explicit in the wine what was already there implicitly. That is to say, the divine is not something foreign to the world, but something that has always already been there tacitly and is drawn out in the act of communion. In light of this, the distinction that I set up above seems to be a little problematic. How can the natural world of distracting

sensations be in opposition to the divine, when it itself is at the very least participating in the divine, if not entirely constituted by it!?

Again, this is nothing new, but I hope from this example to be able to now turn to Agamben:

“God or the good or the place,” he tells us, “does not take place, but is the taking-place of ... entities The being-worm of the worm, the being-stone of the stone, is divine. That the world is, that something can appear and have a face ... this is the good. Thus, precisely its being irreparably in the world is what transcends and exposes every worldly entity.”

While there is a heightened sense of individuality here, it seems contrary to the egotism that consumes the Israelites. I can no longer simply consume the world, and collect its shiny and tempting trinkets, rendering them as means to my end. Each individual thing is to be cherished in its taking-place, in its participation in the good, and in its communion with the divine.

In contrast, Agamben tells us about evil, which he writes “is the reduction of the taking-place of things to a fact like others, the forgetting of the transcendence inherent in the very taking-place of things.”

This relationship to nature is far more nefarious: it involves the subordination of nature and the corruption of the world for the sake of my pleasure, and the enslavement of another race—rendering them horrifically into chattel, each like the other—for my benefit. Where benevolent eyes previously saw the beauty of nature, now nefarious eyes see profit and insulation.

But Agamben is not finished: “With respect to these things,” he continues, “the good is not somewhere else; it is simply the point at which they grasp the taking-place proper to them, at which they touch their own non-transcendent matter. In this sense—and only in this sense—the good must be defined as a self-grasping of evil, and salvation as the coming of the place to itself.”

The good must be defined at the self-grasping of evil, and salvation as the coming of the place to itself: these words are amazing. Good and evil do not exist in different realms, nor does one triumph over the other; rather, the good draws out what is latent in evil, and allows the entity to appear as is it, and not be shaped by my desire to be what I want it to be.

The distinction here seems to be all about perspective. Nothing ostensibly changes in the world when we commit an act of goodness—the rock is still a rock, the worm still a

worm—but through a realignment of how we approach those very things, they can shine forth as more than just a material for a house, or a meal for a bird. To return to my earlier example, communion is not simply a rendering of wine into the blood of Christ for my salvation, but rather a conditioning of the soul to constantly reorient itself to the world, and to allow not just wine and bread, but nature itself to shine forth its divinity. To follow Paul’s exhortation to live and walk in Spirit, then perhaps does not mean to fix our gaze solely on God and away from the world, but the opposite: to tend to the world as closely as possible, and creating space whenever needed so that others too can have a place to appear.

But it is not this easy—we cannot simply leave the church refreshed and attentive, ready to affirm everything and everyone we meet. Just as the Israelites fall into idolatry over and over, so too do we fall back into self-centered individuality again and again every time we leave the chapel and re-enter the world. All too often after losing myself in the celebration that takes place here, I find myself sometimes only minutes later falling back into old habits, and losing my grasp on the good, which mere minutes before had felt so present. Yet again, I risk, in an act of evil, rendering things subordinate to me as objects of my desire, and in so doing commit a violence against friends, community members, and strangers alike. And I am only able to undo this evil by once again returning to the community, where I am, time and time again, granted a place of my own. Only here, in the presence of your goodness and generosity, can I once again begin relearning to be good and generous myself. As Paul tells us: “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Here, in the lap of my neighbours, I can’t say whether or not the law is fulfilled, but I certainly can say – even if just for an instant – that I am.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable to you, Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Wednesday was the feast day of St. Antony of Egypt, a fourth century ascetic, and it just so happens that I have spent the last two weeks mulling over an account of his life, *The Life of St. Antony* written by Athanasius. Born into a Christian family, St. Antony loses his parents in young adulthood. Walking to church one day, he considers the life of the apostles who forsook all in order to follow Jesus Christ and the disciples who sold all for the sake of those in need. When he entered the church, he heard the Gospel story of the rich young man who was told to sell all he had in order to obtain perfection. In response, Antony sold almost everything he had, keeping only a portion for his sister. Then, returning to church, he heard the passage, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow." In response, he sold the rest of his possessions and left his sister to the care of local virgins.

Antony begins his life as an ascetic just outside his Egyptian village, learning from others with more experience of the ascetic life. At the age of thirty-five, Antony leaves the outskirts of the village to embark on the solitary life in an abandoned desert fortress. He spends almost 20 years there, wrestling with demons. The combat he undergoes in the desert inspires other Christians. Athanasius tells us: "And so, from then on, there were monasteries in the mountains and the desert was made a city by monks, who left their own people and registered themselves for the citizenship in the heavens."

The reason why Antony and those after him withdrew from the world is because the task of turning towards God is an internal one. The focus of the monk was not the world or the things of this world. Instead, the monk was focused on nurturing the virtues. Antony states, "For what benefit is there in possessing these things that we do not take with us [to heaven]? Why not rather own those things that we are able to take away with us – such things as prudence, justice, temperance, courage, understanding, love, concern for the poor, faith in Christ, freedom from anger, hospitality?"

It is important to understand that this withdrawal from the world was not an escape. Robert C. Gregg, a historian, writes, "The monk's retirement from the world is, at the very least, an ambiguous retreat for though he separates himself from the distractions and nagging pressures of ordinary human community, Athanasius labors to inform the reader that the wilderness which Antony flees holds more significant challenges and dangers."

The focus of *The Life of St. Antony* is the assaults of the devil and his demons. They are the ones with whom the monk does combat. Antony states, "For we have terrible and villainous enemies – the evil demons, and our *contending* is against these, as the Apostle said – *not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*" Soon after Antony takes up the ascetic life, demons begin to persecute him. The devil and his minions remind Antony of what he has left behind and the difficulty of the life he has taken up, attempting to persuade him to abandon asceticism. It is as if, leaving behind the world, Antony takes up the true enemy of the human being, the devil.

The devil only has as much power as the persecuted gives to them. One day, Antony asked Satan why he persecutes monks, and Satan replied with the following: "I am not the one tormenting them, but they disturb themselves..." The devil feeds on the vices of the monk which allows the demons to persecute the ascetic. The devil plays on the monk's own individual fears to bring him distress. As Gregg writes, "These threatening beings are capable of manifesting themselves in the guises of just those temptations to which individual monks are most susceptible.... Self-scrutiny is thus an essential and continuing part of progress and virtue." The monk can only ward off the devil, though, with the help of God's grace. The death and rising of Christ has permanently weakened the demons, and they do not have the power to act, only to threaten. William Harmless, a Jesuit scholar, states that although the text may seem to be obsessed with demons, the real theme of *The Life of St. Antony* is Christ's triumph over evil. Harmless writes, "This was a bold claim in the ancient world, for the fear of evil spirits was pervasive.... Ordinary people—including Christians—wore amulets and talismans to keep the demons' malevolence at bay. Here Athanasius puts into Antony's mouth his own cosmic optimism: that Christ has decimated Satan's kingdom, and that the devil is powerless, no matter how much noise he makes." If Antony but thought of Christ or made the sign of the cross, the devil was held at bay. Against those who are fortified with Christ, the demons can do no lasting harm.

Despite the fact that Christ has defeated the devil, at no point in Antony's life do the devil and his demons stop appearing to him. After Antony has lived in the desert for several years, the Lord arrives to rescue Antony. Antony asks God why He did not spare him this pain in the first place. The Lord answers as follows: "I was here, Antony, but I waited to watch your struggle. And now, since you persevered and were not defeated, I will be your helper forever, and I will make you famous everywhere." This encounter between God and St. Antony is the key of the text for me. We all have our own particular ways in which we turn away from God, our own particular vices, our own particular demons. And as my thesis advisor says, the world in which we live makes it even easier for us to give into those demons. We have fast food restaurants, pop machines, and gigantic grocery stores to serve our never ending appetites. We can use other people for our own

ends. We can fill our lives with work to distract ourselves from what is eating away at our souls. We can use drugs or alcohol to numb our own particular pain. And we can chase success instead of chasing God. And every institution in our society is structured to meet our insatiable hunger for more. God calls us to a different way of life. God wants us to turn towards Him, but in order to do so, we have to turn away from our vices. This is a process that requires a certain level of withdrawal, withdrawal from some of the things that tempt us. This withdrawal, though, is not a running away, but instead, it is a confrontation with those vices, with those demons, so we can develop the virtues that enable us to accept the grace of God. That grace is always available to us, but we have to be willing to accept it. St. Paul describes the process of virtue formation in the following way: "...[W]e glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).

St. Antony is an example of someone who undergoes this process. God's grace is always available to him, but he realizes that he needs to prepare himself in order to receive that grace. He says yes to God by leaving the world which would distract him from his goal of turning his soul towards God. He takes up ascetic practices: prayer, work, fasting, and memorizing Scripture. These practices are the ways in which he continually says yes to God. And eventually, he is deified, transformed through God's grace so that his soul is always turned towards Him. Athanasius describes the deified Antony thus: "...Antony came forth as though from some shrine, having been led into divine mysteries and inspired by God. ... When [visitors to the fortress] beheld him they were amazed to see that his body had maintained its former condition, neither fat from lack of exercise, nor emaciated from fasting and combat with demons, but was just as they had known him prior to his withdrawal....He maintained utter equilibrium, like one guided by reason and steadfast in that which accords with nature.

Of course, deification is extremely rare, and Fr. Thorne is always reminding us here at the Chapel that we are not monks. Some of us may take up the radical call to a religious life, while others here may not. But all of us can take up some of the same ascetic practices that can turn us towards God and away from the demons that haunt our lives. And we are blessed to share these practices with one another. We come together as a community twice a day for Morning and Evening Prayer; we fast together; we share in Holy Communion on a daily basis, holy food for daily living; and we are fed, too, by the Scriptures.

And when we take up these practices, we will be given new eyes, eyes which allow us to see the world in a new and different light. Instead of something that can feed our various vices, the world is something that is a reflection of the divine. We will be able to treat it

in the way that it deserves. If we take up these practices, we will be turned away from the distractions that can only harm us and towards the God who loves us and the beauty that is inherent in each and every one of us.

Good evening, ladies, and gentlemen. Tonight, I'd like to talk about the future and how we think about it. I'd like to talk about the end of the world.

Now, last semester, I had the privilege of taking a course on the apocalypse with Susan Dodd. It was incredibly instructive in viewing how we think about the future and the end of the world. We must begin, of course, with the original apocalypse, that of St. John.

Now, when you read the Book of Revelation, several things jump at you, or at least they did to me. The first is the absolute strangeness of the text, but most important is that the end of the world is a positive event. Time ends, the world ends, and the Kingdom of Heaven. This is something to look forward too. The future is moving towards a positive final event. This positive vision of the future is maintained for a long time. Hegel says we're moving towards the ultimate completion of something that's good, but I'd hesitate to say anything more about Hegel. Karl Marx draws on Hegel and I feel more confidence in describing his opinions. The ultimate triumph of the proletariat may lack something compared to the final triumph of God, but it remains a positive vision. This is what the future holds for us, something good, something positive.

Now, however, what is popular culture's vision of the future? In a word: bad. In two words: not good. In three: less than ideal.

From the Hunger Games to Mad Max, it's difficult to find a positive vision of the future. These futures are presented as warnings against what could happen. Dangerous possibilities lie in the future, and they must be avoided. Dangerous things can result from change. The message is that our present is ideal, but it's not. All I have to do is to walk down, and see the homeless on Quinpool, turn on the news to hears of war and destruction around the world. The present is not all that it could be, but we aren't presented anything better, only how much worse it could be.

Perhaps there's good reason for that: after all, grand utopian dreams have not turned out so well. Whatever positivity Marxism had died under Stalin and in the Cultural Revolution and under Pol Pot. When the cost could be so high, why bother?

Still, I think there needs to be some sort of way forward. Because, while Christ's Second Coming is certain, we live in this material world for the time being, and we ought to improve it. I don't know what to do, what could be done. All I can say is that there are many flaws with this world. Something has to be done. Something other than imagining all that could go wrong. Thank you.

Braced under a burden to which I have no claim, I ask myself, *Am I this weak?*
And, *What difference would it make to be strong?*

If I can hold through the fire I can wait for the rain, so to feel my singed flesh sizzle and pop at the slightest touch of relief, the coolest salve, the softest hand of tenderness

Because even the release is painful, because what is unfamiliar is painful, because it hurts to imagine this new place where the backbone of grief is tossed away in disregard

Because what is grieving that never pauses to reconsider life, and what is grief that attends to the living?

Because it cannot be called death when it is lived over and over and over in the span of one catastrophic moment, because one moment one blinking moment is all any of us ever have

Because we must orient the tragedy and cacophony of life within the silent sigh of death within the indifferent happenings of time and space within the swirling chaos the muttering outrage of our hearts

Because one crying child is enough to break us open one ravaged body is enough to break open the whole world because one person is enough

Because one person is never enough

Because the violence of circumstance rises to meet the violence of our own hands

Because pain is pain is yours is mine and it is simply there and it hurts to receive and it hurts to give away

Because we do both because we hate ourselves for doing both because it is so hard to tell the difference

Because philosophy and religion and civil conversation cannot stop this cannot hold the weight of murder and apathy and hunger because we are all compromised

Because we watch the smoke billowing forth with glazed eyes we let the dust settle in our lungs we see the greasy smear of guilt in each pitiful cloud because someone somewhere just breathed their last breath

Because the tears run stale and slide down the rough-dug trenches of our cheeks and this is commonplace

Universal

Temporary television sensation

We could be swallowed, collectively, by a single drop of grief
We could do it
But someone must recite the news
And someone must listen
Be it strength, numbness, the meaningless necessity of a society that demands our acceptance
If we are to keep the clocks ticking and the systems running
We must only acknowledge the absences and, though we yearn so terribly to mask our paralysis in helplessness or ignorance
Though it sickens us to know
We all must listen

Let grief be our payment to the forgotten, take each their share
But it is not ours to possess

*

I have watched many people stand where I am standing over the past few years, and I have listened to them reference the work of famous philosophers, scholars, theologians, and other thinkers. However, the only words I feel comfortable using and interpreting here today are my own. The poem I just read is not derived from anything other than my thoughts and experiences, so at the very least, I can claim to be entirely truthful in these words. I've come to realize that one of my strongest motivations in life is the drive to understand and be understood. I find myself endlessly analyzing my own mind and the world we live in, in constant search of meaning, though the questions and contradictions unquestionably outnumber any answers that present themselves. I suppose this is due, in part, to my belief that human beings can survive almost anything, endure past their perceived limits, so long as they can be certain of two things: that their suffering has a purpose, and that it is bound by time; that it will end; that suffering has an expiration date.

The problem with this theory is that it seems only to apply to the individual. If one of us were to try and measure the suffering of every person that lives, has lived, and will live, the results would be inconceivable. At a certain point, the human brain simply shuts down, because we are functionally incapable of processing that much information. Regardless, we are offered no justification, no reprieve. No one can give enough reasons for that much suffering. There really is no way to justify so much pain. I can't attach a purpose to all of it, and this is when meaning seems to retreat altogether. Events become random and absurd in the eyes of the observer, and the suffering is so unbearable that we can no longer take exception to it; it is so all-encompassing that it becomes normal. I am not the first to remark on how easy is to lose ourselves in our individual pain, but in

a world so consumed by tragedy, in a time when tragedy has taken on an unimaginable scale, when tragedy is characterized more by statistics than emotions and we have free access to so much of it, how do we confront our most intimate disasters? Is there even such a thing as small tragedies? Can we fully appreciate and empathize on a personal level when our hearts and minds are over-saturated in violence of every kind? How do we avoid becoming utterly lost in the sadness, the grief, the trauma of others when we can barely manage to do so within the context of our own lives?

I don't know. These uncertainties come with no definitive conclusions, and I always have more questions to give. I've heard that the only solution is to cultivate love and community. I sincerely hope that is true, but love is also a difficult concept for me. I sometimes catch echoes of other people's pain and am blindsided by the depth of my feeling. It is not a challenge for me to look through the perspective of someone else's pain, perhaps because I lean so heavily into my own, and both these actions have the capacity to paralyze me. I am by no means alone in this practice, I am sure. We are all capable of empathy, but it is also important to recognize that it is impossible to fully know the pain that does not belong to us. In many ways, it feels like a violation to enter into the life or tragedy of another person and assume I understand. I worry that I am appropriating their emotions and experience for my own ends; to amplify my own adversities, to give myself a safer outlet in which to explore and expunge my own pain, or to find some cathartic satisfaction. I wish I could believe that my urge to help others is the sign of some selfless instinct.

On the other side of this equation, there is the question of how to receive love. One of the methods I use to learn about myself is writing, and this is a line from a poem I wrote a few months ago:

I would rather be treated badly than accept the kindness of people who cannot understand how revolting it feels to be loved when you are undeserving.

And another line, from a poem written around the same time:

*My love is defiled by guilt
And my guilt, sanctified through love.*

Love is a difficult concept for me.

It seems the lessons we learn through loving others must be learned again in order to receive such love. It's simple enough to pour our love into someone or something else, but when we are called to direct that love inwards, it becomes restless. Our relations to other people can be so different from our self-relations, yet these two connections are so essential to each other. There is a common saying that claims you cannot fully love

another until you learn to love yourself, but I believe that is utterly incorrect. In my experience, the more you try to love other people and appreciate them as individuals with as much depth and feeling as you have, the more empathy you have for yourself. Likewise, the harder you try to interpret the actions and motivations of other people with kindness and understanding, the more insight you gain into your own mind. The stronger your belief in the intrinsic value of every person, the easier it is to include yourself within that category. We are constantly negotiating this balance between identifying as independent beings and relating to a collective composed of other individuals on a global scale, which is anything but easy. Sometimes we are overwhelmed by the great weight of our lives, because one life can be both everything and nothing to different people, at different times, and in different ways. The burdens of one person are inarguably theirs, but somehow our burdens are also shared amongst everyone, and we are both helpless and completely responsible for each other. The world is heavy. We carry what we can, in weakness and in strength, and we suffer through all of it, we love through all of it. Of course it's unfair, it's absolutely absurd. It's outrageous, and it's scary, and it's unbearable until we bear it.

The only glimpse of the divine in my childhood home was of the Guadalupe, depicted on a blanket, a candle, and on both of my mothers' matching gold necklaces. Guadalupe wraps herself in a starry shawl, she stands on the back of an angel, and radiates light from her whole body, like rays of sunlight. Guadalupe has watched over my family for as long as I can remember, but we rarely speak of her. My mothers are self-proclaimed atheists, and yet Guadalupe somehow managed to evade this atheism. My mom's girlfriend, my second mom, as it were, brought Guadalupe into our home. She is Mexican-American, and the Guadalupe is an expression of her pride. I think the figure of the Guadalupe also holds the spirit of her mother, who died many years ago. The image of Guadalupe is a symbol of *her* pride and remembrance, but as a child *I* at least, imbued them with a greater significance. I felt that since she was the patron saint of Mexico, she could also be the patron saint of our family. To borrow an expression that I learned later on, I imagined that she guided us waking, and guarded us sleeping. I think I got this impression because she *really was* with my mothers wherever they went, concealed under the fabric of their shirts - a small pendant on a gold chain. In the evening, her image watched over us from the large blanket laid across the back of the love seat in the living room, and from the candle over the fireplace. So I guess our family, or I, at the least, have a little faith.

I like to have a little faith, to believe *a little* that when I light a candle, it changes something in the world. I like to believe *just a little* that when we sing the psalms, there is something in the air. But only a little. And I begin to think that faith is essential to being human, though I wouldn't have said so a few weeks ago. I'm happy nurturing this surprising little bit of faith which I have just come to notice, but it raises the question, how do I reconcile that little piece of belief which leads me to the chapel, with my practice in the chapel? I kneel but I do not pray, I recite but I do not believe. But, the acts alone—kneeling, speaking—do not lose their trace of the divine because of my unbelief. I catch the imprint, the trace, the perfume, of the divine in performing the acts of faith, without having to match every act with belief. I cannot match my acts with belief, because I would not know where to place it. I am in a chapel, yes, but while Guadalupe was taken up into Catholicism when Mexico was colonized, worship of Guadalupe predates colonization. What I *do* see particularly in Judaism and Christianity, however, is a responsibility when confronted with the other. This is what pushes me beyond an engagement merely with the physicality of worship, to an engagement with the words themselves.

Sarah spoke last night at the consultation on the chaplaincy of the life and death questions raised by our academic studies. It is indeed what I find in these texts that drives me most forcefully, most urgently (to borrow Sarah's words again), to this chapel. In my studies on ethics after the Holocaust, I found the words of Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt, who

insist that it is only by assuming the guilt of all human kind that we can evade the horror of the Holocaust. Arendt writes,

Perhaps those Jews, to whose forefathers we owe the first conception of the idea of humanity, knew somethings about that burden when each year they used to say “Our Father and King, we have sinned before you,” taking not only the sins of their own community but all human offences upon themselves.

And she goes on to say:

Upon them and only upon them, who are filled with a genuine fear of the inescapable guilt of the human race, can there be any reliance when it comes to fighting fearlessly, uncompromisingly, everywhere against the incalculable evil that men are capable of bringing about.

For Arendt, the insistence, in Judaism, that every individual take on the guilt of the world, is a means by which to oppose the evil of the Holocaust, which rejects and goes beyond guilt. It goes without saying that talk of the guilt of human kind sounds rather ominous. But, this guilt is not life-denying, but life-affirming. Guilt is responsibility, and responsibility is care. To care for the other is to affirm the life of the other, and thus the value of all life, including one’s own. Arendt speaks of this guilt in grave terms, in order to underline the importance and dire consequences of a lack of care. Preventing further genocide is a matter of life and death, and so caring for the other is a matter of life and death. This care, this responsibility for the other, is what I see in the liturgy, and in the daily practice of this chapel, especially in this Lenten season. Those who fast take on the guilt of the other, so that the other might go free, and live.

“Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke.”

I was four years old the first time I flirted with agnosticism. I had recently decided that I was going to become a paleontologist, and I had spent several weeks poring over books containing lists of dinosaurs. Often there was no scientific information, just lists that explained whether the dinosaur ate leaves, or if it ate other dinosaurs, or if it could fly. For context, my family is extremely Catholic. My father's whole family is composed of Irish-Catholics from Herring Cove, and my mother is a French-Canadian from rural Quebec. Catholicism is practically a hereditary trait at this point. So here I was, Catholic, four years old, obsessed with dinosaurs, and I started doing the math one day when I was bored. For some reason, I was convinced that NO ONE in my family had ever established a discrepancy between the few thousand years between Adam and Eve's time and now and the several thousand more from when dinosaurs roamed the Earth (pre-civilization, I thought). I began to fantasize about revealing this absolutely novel information to my family. I had this vision of myself approaching my mother in the kitchen and explaining my thoughts on dinosaurs opposite the Creation story, and then watching her eyes widen rapturously. In this completely outlandish and deluded fantasy, my whole family would immediately recede to a purely secular life in which I never had to sit through Sunday mass again.

You must be wondering why I'm opening with this totally blasphemous anecdote. Honestly, I kind of am too. A few months ago, Karis emailed me to ask if I'd be interested in giving a Friday meditation at the Chapel and I was delighted to accept. I distinctly remember thinking, you have two months to come up with a short, appropriate topic for a meditation. Somehow, I kept circling back to my complicated relationship with the church and with my faith. I kept trying to shut that topic down in my brain. Like, of COURSE it's inappropriate to publicly question the existence of God in a church. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered why I was so focused on this one aspect of my life. Why couldn't I think of something more appropriate, more interesting, more compelling to talk about?

You could ask me to talk about just about anything and I'd probably have a fully-fledged opinion to give. The more controversial the topic, the better. The one thing I find it difficult to speak about is myself. The slightest indication that I might be asked to talk about something personal makes me recoil. I've never been good at expressing my feelings, and my father once described me as "lacking basic empathy." Insulting, but not entirely untrue. I've spent the last number of years building myself out of the carcass of who I was in my early adolescence, when I fully went off the rails and spent a good chunk of time doing all of the things you're not supposed to do: binge drinking, drugs, theft, running away from home... the list just keeps on going. In order to move on from my

past, I've completely thrown myself into my work. For the last few years, I juggled six courses a semester with sitting on society executives, a lot of chairing, volunteering, and part-time work. People often tell me that I must be exhausted, and the truth is that I am. I manage it because keeping myself so busy allows me to avoid thinking about the things in myself that I'm most afraid of.

So this is where I circle back to the whole God thing. After my paleontology-fuelled childhood fantasies, I spent a number of years weaving in and out of faith. Catholicism, of course, was perhaps not the best sect of Christianity to deal with my conflicted internal feelings. I regularly had to squeeze into a little dark booth and confess my sins to a priest who came over to my house for dinner on a regular basis. And it's not like he didn't know who I was just because there was a screen between us: I was an altar server in a small town parish. Of course he recognized me. I didn't want to tell him anything. I didn't know how to avoid guilt, or shame, or resentment. I felt uncomfortable with being honest about my shortcomings and about my problems. I became more and more closed off, unsure who to talk to, and found within my Church a community of hypocrites who had no idea how to love unconditionally, how to be kind and attentive to one another through hard times.

The Chapel here at King's really changed that for me. Last year, I decided (very much at the last minute) to go on the Chapel's Urban Poverty Awareness Week trip to Toronto. I wasn't particularly close to anyone in the Chapel community, but I knew that you didn't have to be a practicing Christian to attend and I was really interested in the focus on social justice and the premise of the trip. It was a really emotional, difficult week. The part that struck me the most, however, was internal to the group I was travelling with. I had never been around a group of people who were so honest and open with one another before. It was, frankly, really jarring. When someone asked how someone's day was going, I never once heard a typical answer. People spoke with such ease and with such trust.

I began that week of reflection, of giving, and of caring thinking that I would never truly open like that. But as the days went by, I noticed that some of what I looked forward to the most were things like listening to each other check in with one another at the end of the day, expressing the innermost thoughts; or the quiet solace of evening prayer after an emotionally exhausting day. I thought of God, and I felt quietude instead of unease. I made peace with so much of the discomfort I felt at the thought of faith that week. I wondered if people who have a god feel more comfortable living with their selves. I wondered when I stopped feeling, when I stopped being able to speak, when I stopped being able to express. Perhaps when you find comfort in faith, in something beautiful and enduring, is when you find yourself again.

It's been a full year since I came back from Toronto and I still think about it every day. I can't say that I've fully reconciled myself with the church of my childhood or with believing in God, or believing in anything, really. But it's the first time I've allowed myself to interrogate, and to forgive, and to consider opening to the world and thinking seriously about the things that used to terrify me.

I struggled somewhat while writing this because I don't want to come across as preachy. I don't really know anything about anything but I'd like to share some ideas that are important to me in case they might resonate with someone on some level. In terms of overarching spiritual belief I would never presume to lecture anyone except to say that it's important to trust and pursue with your whole heart the truth as it is shown to you. For almost my whole life I allowed myself to feel ashamed of my relationship to god because of the things I couldn't come to terms with within the institutional church. I allowed that which rankled me and pushed my buttons to keep me from my relationship with the beautiful. In any case the best part of this talk is definitely the quotes from other people.

As some of you already know, during Reading Week I went to BC to say goodbye to my longtime partner of seven years. We had broken up in the fall after she went out west. We broke up during a telephone conversation and the reason for my going to BC was to say goodbye to her in person. I don't want to talk about that exactly but I wanted to give you some context for how/why I found myself on an airplane last Monday afternoon.

How many of you know that feeling when you're on a plane and it has taxied to the runway and then starts that intense acceleration for takeoff? Your body is jammed back against your seat with the force of it and you think: This is it! I'm going to die! I'm going miles high in the air in this ridiculous contraption and there's no turning back. I'm committed. As I sat there flirting with my fear of death it suddenly seemed a little too real and I needed something to ease my mind...something rational. So I focused on one of my earlier points: "I've committed and there's no turning back." Whatever happens here is beyond my control. If I die it will be quick and I will see what happens next. What good will worrying do? My fate is in god's hands now.

It worked! I released my fear of death (in this context at least) and felt a certain peace for a little while. That is, until I thought: What if the plane crashes and I actually survive but I've broken my neck and am paralyzed for life? What if I survive but the plane has crashed in the middle of nowhere and I face some bizarre wilderness survival situation for which I'm very poorly equipped? What if nothing goes wrong with the flight and I land safely and still have to have this hard conversation with my ex partner?

The last came out of left field. It suddenly struck me that I'm not so much afraid of death, but I am very afraid of life. I'm afraid of living in this world gone mad with fear and greed and hatred. I'm afraid of my emotions and of confrontation. I'm afraid of facing the many responsibilities I feel pressing in on me from all sides. Afraid of letting people

down. Afraid I'm not good enough. Fundamentally I'm afraid of showing my true nature, thoughts, feelings, and character for fear of some ultimate personal rejection.

This was so NOT rational. I had no choice but to sit with the unglorious truth of it and wonder why? Why am I scared to show who I really am? Why am I my own worst critic? Where does this come from or has it always been there? I think not but it goes back quite a ways. I believe that we're all born with a clean slate, so to speak, and in our formative years we take in much of what informs our sense of self and the world through the examples given to us by our parents/guardians.

My parents did the best they could to support us (my sisters and me) and give us better lives than their own while dealing with their own struggles. I love them both deeply, but it is important to understand that in their relationship with one another and also with us kids they were not emotionally present. And so, despite the best of intentions they passed on their unresolved issues. Parents cannot give their children what they do not have themselves including things like self-worth, self-love and emotional presence. And so it is that many of us grow up with deeply embedded tendencies to shut down some fundamental parts of ourselves. Boys are taught not to cry and to "man up" because showing emotion other than anger is weak and effeminate. Girls are taught not to show strength or leadership because these qualities are unattractive. All of these "teachings" are driven home until the child agrees and adopts them as personal truth. The child has little choice but to agree because to do otherwise would cut him or her off from a relationship totally necessary for survival. I believe all of these "teachings" arise in response to some part of the child's natural personality which hits too close to someone else's fear or insecurity. Turns out nobody can give something that they do not have themselves.

I believe that undoing these harmful "teachings" and reconnecting with our true selves, that precious pearl within ourselves that contains our essence, is the most important calling in our lives. You might think that that seems self-absorbed and that the greater good will be found by focusing outwards and self-improvement can wait. Shouldn't we go out into the world and help people, do something? That IS a noble calling and I'm not saying we shouldn't put ourselves out there, but how can we do it in a meaningful way if we do not know our own hearts? If we do not know our own hearts how can we be sure that the values we put out there are authentically our own or if they were chosen for us? If we're not working consciously with our own issues, how can we avoid unconsciously spreading our pain to others as happened to us?

For me there have been two great teachers which continue to guide me on my path to reconnecting with myself. My practice of prayer and my pain. Specifically, shifting my attitude towards my pain. For many years I considered pain as something to be avoided at all costs. Now I see it as something that ought to be engaged with at all costs. Whenever

we make an agreement to repress part of our nature like so many of us did as kids, it causes a deep wound. The pain from which does not go away. It might fade and sink below the surface and be forgotten, but it is still there in our bodies and it holds the key to unlocking that part of ourselves which sank down with it. Prayer, when I'm successful in surrendering my urge to control it, to stay somehow above the things I'm praying for, helps me to open my heart and go into myself and once in a while I find a nugget of pain down there. When I find the pain, sadness, anger, or whatever it show up as I try to bring it up gently, hold it, honour it, love it and let it move up and through my crown chakra on a breath and a prayer. I cast my burden up to the divine one nugget at a time like an archeologist digging up a ruin. I hand over my nugget of pain and I'm handed back some small piece of myself.

But wait a second! What happened to my fear of life? I sound like I've got it all figured out....

If you believe that, I've got a car to sell you.

I'm not perfect so I have a fear of life. I will never be perfect so I will always be afraid. But being perfect is not the goal and if I can shift my attitude towards pain I can shift my attitude towards fear. Instead of running from things I am afraid of, sometimes I can see them as opportunities to practice courage. Not grandiose courage, but that ordinary courage which Brené Brown, in her book *The Gifts of Imperfection*, defines as, "speaking one's mind by telling all one's heart...putting our vulnerability on the line (not our lives)."

It's going to take a lot of this ordinary courage but I believe it's this vulnerability that will save us in the end. If we can be vulnerable and acknowledge where we truly are to ourselves and god and, eventually, to others, then we have already begun this spiritual journey. As Father Thorne was once kind enough to point out: "Love can only come to us where we are. It knows no other place."

I've been thinking about how I can ground the whirlwind of my recent thoughts and experiences, but it seems nearly impossible. I feel like I've been growing at a rate so beyond my ability to restrain it into meaningful language. This year has challenged me to face myself and be conscious of who I'm becoming as my studies and relationships unfold. In the lessons this week, Paul's first letters to Timothy specifically resonated with me in two moments. What particularly moved me were Timothy's words; "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God's word and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4). Earlier, we also heard him say, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience" (1 Timothy 2:15).

So I want to let myself talk about Gratitude, and Patience.

But first I want to share one of Karis's recent daily poems, which have been nourishing us and sustaining our souls with terrible beauty throughout Lent. I picked it up today as I was entering the Chapel before the service, and it seems to echo my sentiments beautifully:

Mediations

R. S. Thomas

And to one God says: Come
to me by numbers and
figures; see my beauty
in the angles between
stars, in the equations
of my kingdom. Bring
your lenses to the worship
of my dimensions: far
out and far in, there
is always more of me
in proportion. And to another:
I am the bush burning
at the centre of
your existence; you must put
your knowledge off and come

to me with your mind
bare. And to this one
he says: Because of
your high stomach, the bleakness
of your emotions, I
will come to you in the simplest
things, in the body
of a man hung on a tall
tree you have converted to
timber and you shall not know me.

Paul tells Timothy to accept everything with thanksgiving, and all things will be good provided we are grateful. How do we suspend our judgment to worship God in such a way? It can be difficult to look past ourselves and be grateful for all the pains we undergo as we change. But this year and the space in the Chapel have been teaching me to direct myself outwards and pay attention, so that I may be grateful. I've been learning to see God's beauty in the equations of his kingdom and find him at the centre of our existence. So I want to be grateful for the presence of the divine in all things, as God dwells among us as we sit by the fire in our humble cave. I'm learning to let go of the future and use the past as a way to be grateful for the present as it unfolds. Everything that has happened has been leading to where we are now. I want to be grateful for the terrifying synchronicity of grace. The cosmos whispers its truth everywhere, and I'm grateful for every occasion to pay attention to the beauty of the divine in the angles between the stars, by numbers and figures. The grace and splendor of the Chapel and of my friendships remind me that it would be blind and selfish to reject the pain of the past. Suffering is what pushes human love beyond itself to reveal imperfection, but further, it slowly converts and reshapes us to reveal its ultimate perfection. Rather than existing as a shade, constantly thwarted by the weak will of my anxieties and by the impulses of my fear, I want to be grateful for the constancy of Love that flows between us all.

I also want to be grateful for my inability to know this love. In this unknowable way it can only be revealed to me as I grow, and I'm learning to *feel* it as it seeks me out. I'm grateful even for the lapses in vision and the blindness of fear that prevent us from knowing God and recognizing the balance that flows between all things. This flux drags us as we hurt and as we get hurt, but I want to be grateful for the strength of its force. I want to be grateful for the inattention that inhibits me from acknowledging and praising God's ultimate wisdom in the unfolding of our lives.

And may God give us mercy, because I've been also been sensing the despair that seems to undercut all attempts at this gratitude. I don't know if it's because of school, or because of Lent, or because the suffering of the world and of my own heart can seem so sharp it

takes my breath away and makes me incoherent. I feel a restlessness and an impatience, as if this rate we're all changing isn't sufficiently shaping our desire towards the good. My sense is that even as we learn all the painful lessons and sacrifices demanded by life, and even I as feel myself and my friends growing into ourselves at this incredible pace, it can never really be *enough* . But as Paul says, "I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience." May God give us mercy, so that we may inherit this patience through Christ. May we be patient with ourselves as we deny love, and as it torments us, so that we can continue to learn and be grateful. May we be thankful for the careful and unqualified persistence of the divine in the simplest of things, and patient with ourselves as we discover how to pay attention to it.

I finally want to thank you, for helping me to recollect these thoughts and embody them.

We enter this space as individuals
shaped by our triumphs and trauma
some possessing great understanding and composure
others broken and consumed with the doubt in this world.

The process of entering the chapel is unique to each person
one might notice the faint smell of incense from a previous service,
the silence,
the cross, the ceiling that resembles a ship's hull
or a smiling face that is reflected back at your own
Gradually we orient ourselves by stepping from the ante chapel into the great choir
here we become a participant in worship
by positioning ourselves towards the other.

I have had the privilege of witnessing others' initial interactions with the chapel.
Some were deeply moved by the music and the movement of prayer
others resistant to join the rigidity of the chapels worship.
But most were humbled by the power they experienced.

This power eludes expression upon a first encounter
but many have meditated on its nature.

Last month at a WUSC fundraiser a gentlemen who had come from Syria to Canada
expressed how he experienced the chapel.
He commented on how the chapel seemed untouched by time like the temples that lay
secluded in mountains
giving it an eternal nature.

One my close friends experienced this energy as pure and unperverted by the
wickedness of the exterior world
Entering the space as Muslim he was unable to identify with certain traditions, but he
was immediately perceptive of the power that this place possessed
This energy was identifiable because he had experienced it at home through the Islamic
religion
showing that this power is present in many sacred places across the world.

What I have meditated on is the source of this energy.

Is it in the building itself?

The building certainly contains the energy, but is it the source?

Could it be the ship that provides the energy to guide us through time and space?

I think not, because, like a real ship, the chapels parts are constantly being replaced

Even the stones that hold up the roof will eventually crumble if they are neglected

Is it in the individual?

The great figures that contribute to the legacy of the chapel

Those that breathe life into each experience we have with this space

No, for they also pass away.

Is it in the tradition?

The way in which we worship being upheld

No, for the traditions within the chapel have gone through many changes.

If this energy source is not isolatable in particulars then there must be a constant force that binds us together.

This is community.

The community changes the repairs the foundation and maintains the space

Like the crew of a ship

The community lights the candle for the individual that has passed

The community upholds and adapts traditions to suit the needs of the people who participate within it

This is done out of love.

Then how do we uphold this congregation and maintain a place of worship?

A place to contemplate the state of this world and to meditate on our position within it.

It would seem the answer is in the conservation of love and friendship

the passing of care and compassion to those new to the space

the encouragement for others to participate

We may be able to maintain this love between one another, but how do we bring it out into this world of great suffering?

How do we help those who need our love more than those closest to us?

Today's lessons give us examples of how we carry that love

We see God's love shining through Jesus, when he restore life in the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17) and we see that same love in Elisha who also revives a boy (2 Kings 4:8-37).

These examples of sharing divine love are great deeds done through devotion and care. We can find examples of how to share our love within the bible and through our community.

But we must ultimately find that source within ourselves. When we step out into this spring day and experience the growth and life surrounding us We must also remember those who are experiencing decay within themselves and their communities

With the examples left by Jesus, Elisha and our dear friends, we are shown how to share the love we possess. This love for the community has been carried down through the centuries and we are now tasked with sharing it.

If I Needed You

Townes Van Zandt

Well, if I needed you
Would you come to me
Would you come to me
And ease my pain?

If you needed me
I would come to you
I would swim the seas
For to ease your pain

Well, in the night forlorn
Oh, the morning's born
And the morning shines
With the lights of love

And you will miss sunrise
If you close your eyes
And that would break
My heart in two



*University of King's College Chapel
6350 Coburg Rd, Halifax, NS*

*Fr. Gary Thorne, Chaplain.
Meditations compiled by Karis Tees, Chapel Administrator.*

*Photos of Cape Split Hike & Thanksgiving Retreat:
Imogene Broberg-Hull, Chapel Artist-in-Residence 2016-17.*