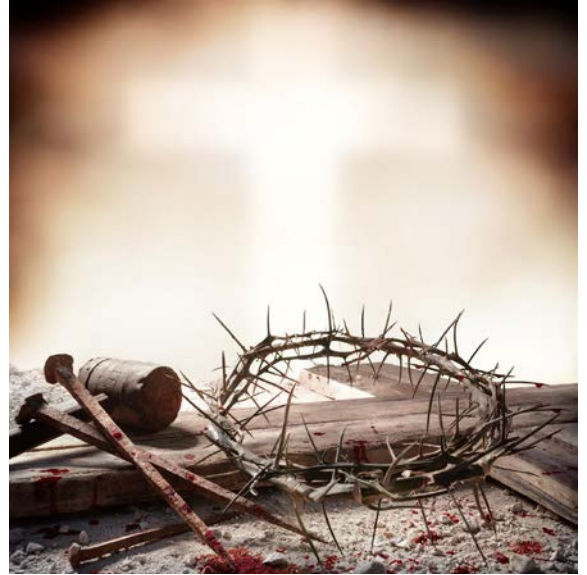


IN THIS PASSION SEASON

The most holy week in the life of our faith has begun. In the New Testament narrative, worlds are being upended and lives forever changed. We are there to bear powerful witness to it all. A change is sweeping over the city of Jerusalem and regions beyond in this Passion moment. It occurs swiftly, in a matter of minutes, hours, days. Jesus has come. Triumphant entry. Celebration. Coronation. Martyrdom. Condemnation. Crucifixion.

Now as then, many of us who would seek to know Jesus are scattered and at a loss again. We are searching for a way forward. We are humbly praying for connection. We enter into this Passion season uprooted, uncertain, and far from knowing what the future holds for us. For the moment we are undone, sheltering in place, self-quarantining, social distancing, the rhythms of life displaced. Life, family, work, education, recreation, celebration, have all been altered.



At Louisville Seminary, we are not exempt from the sweeping range of emotions and edicts changing people's lives. From the classroom and office to meetings and commencement, much of our way of life has moved on-line. As students, faculty and staff alike we are learning how to navigate in virtual ways these pandemic times, frightening times, most unprepared for times. We are looking at ways to celebrate our senior class, now and in the future, amidst our real sorrow and pain. Our continuing students, too, may wonder what comes next at LPTS.

All of us look to the future however dimly. None of us knows what will transpire. It is quite simply too soon to tell. What is certain is this: We are allowed to be sad and grieve this loss of semester as we once knew it and to acknowledge the horror and devastation wrought by the coronavirus crisis. We are learning in isolation what interdependence means, to miss the rites of passage of classmates, extended family and friends gathered together as the world valiantly fights to stem the outbreak. There is a sense of wholeness in honoring both recognitions. Fruition does not always come in the way we would want or imagine. It does come.

As Christians, we commemorate this Holy Week. For the Jewish community there is Passover. Across our many and varied traditions, the sacred will be made manifest this month: Ramadan (Islam). Ridvan (Bahá'í). Rama Navami (Hindu). Hanamatsuri (Jodo Shinshu Buddhism). Vaisakhi (Sikh). Houses of worship will be empty. Common feasts will not be held. Parades will not occur. Time-honored public celebrations will lie dormant. Our own campus looks very different now.

Another week and month have begun in the battle against the scourge called COVID-19. There is no exemption from suffering in the current social upheaval. What Holy Week reminds me is that our Christian faith is not lost to us in a time of pandemic but takes on delicate connective form: We practice stringent health measures. We stay apart to save each other and our world. We are socially distanced. We are together in place. We struggle. We do not lose heart. We stare into the abyss. We love and are loved. This is our story. The human spirit untrammelled. Beloved community as our hope. Beset, bereft and bereaved. Resurrection comes.

In the Presence,
Alton