

THE WITTENBERG WAY



Dear Grace Family,

You can tell when the climax of a story is drawing near. Time slows down so we can take it all in and feel its full effects. Such is the case with Holy Week. Far more than just rehearsing some facts about Jesus, the experience of Holy Week offers the greatest gifts of God -- life and salvation -- to all who relive, celebrate, and trust these saving realities. The events of this one week, culminating in Easter are the center and turning point of the whole Church year.

An early hymn writer, Ephrem of Edessa, put it this way:

"We give glory to You, Lord, who raised up Your cross to span the jaws of death like a bridge by which souls might pass from the region of the dead to the land of the living. We give glory to You who put on the body of a single mortal man and made it the source of life for every other mortal man."

Maundy Thursday is the beginning of the "Three Days" (*Triduum*), the ancient observance of the mystery of our salvation, which plunges the faithful into the death of Jesus and brings them with Him to resurrection life on Sunday morning. If you have never experienced all the services of Holy Week together, I pray this is the year you do. You won't regret it.

It is the resurrection of Jesus that is the Father's guarantee that His work was sufficient to redeem all people from the ravages of sin and from eternal death. Thus, we enter Holy Week recalling the unconditional love of our Savior as He has taken our place under the wrath of the Father towards sin. Because you have been united to Christ's death and resurrection in Holy Baptism, you also have died to sin and now live in His resurrection life (Rom 6:3-4).

A blessed Holy Week to you all!

Pastor Thomas

April 2022 Volume 9, Issue 3

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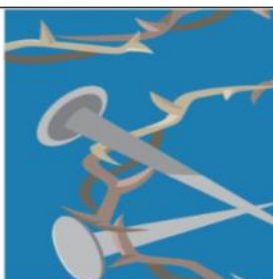
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Holy Week Schedule



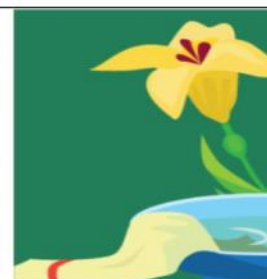
Maundy Thursday
6:00 p.m.



Good Friday
Noon & 6:00 p.m.



Easter Vigil
11:00 p.m.



Easter Sunday
8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

THE CHOSEN: A PASTORAL APPRECIATION

by Pr. Brian Thomas

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I'll begin with a confession. With apologies to Charlton Heston, I have never enjoyed a movie or television series based on the Bible. Until now.

Over the past year, several parishioners have asked me if I had seen, *The Chosen*, a crowd-funded series that follows the public ministry of Jesus that they really enjoyed. I thought that if I watched it I would have the typical hyper-critical response to it as I have with everything else I had watched. Surprisingly, I didn't. Our own member, Michael Tow, lent us the DVD of the first season and I absolutely loved it, so much so, that we are now watching the second season online.

The Chosen is the first-ever multi-season show about the life of Jesus. Created outside of the Hollywood system by filmmaker, Dallas Jenkins, *The Chosen* allows us to see Jesus through the eyes of those who knew Him. It is the highest-grossing crowd-funded television series or film project of all time and you can watch it online, through their app, or via numerous smart TV apps like Apple TV.

The Chosen brings the Gospel story vividly to life in a way that captures the wonder of the eye-witness accounts without sacrificing doctrinal accuracy or turning it into a sentimental Hallmark movie of the week. Here is what I enjoy about this series and why I would commend it to you, especially as we enter Holy Week and the season of Easter:

1. Jesus is presented as fully divine and fully human, and yet, one person. His divinity shines through in His miracles and teaching, and yet, He is also presented as a man with all the attendant struggles and temptations of being human. You get a glimpse through the eyes of His disciples why they were attracted to Him and the message He preached. The actor portraying Jesus does an excellent job capturing the multi-faceted person of our Lord--everything from being reverent to irreverent. You see both the joy He possessed along with the tension of the mission He was sent to fulfill.
2. Many episodes begin with a scene from the Old Testament and then it fast forwards to an episode in Jesus' ministry where you get to see how Jesus fulfills it. This shows how the Bible tells one unified story, and ultimately confirms Jesus' own interpretation of scripture: "Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

3. From Mary Magdalene to Nicodemus to the Apostle Peter, the disciples are portrayed with great diversity, character, and honesty. You get to see both the excitement and the heartache of following Jesus. Additionally, you get to see their maturity and our Lord's patience as they stumble along, not recognizing the ultimate cost that would come when Jesus said, "Follow me." The show, as you would expect, takes some liberties to explain the backstory of some of the characters, but this helps add to the significance of the biblical events even though it's fictitious. Nothing added comes at the expense of the truth. For example, St. Matthew in *The Chosen* suffers from Aspergers, an autism spectrum disorder, which the writers deftly use to explain his backstory and how/why he ended up a tax collector working for the Roman government in Capernaum. At first, this caught me off guard, but as the article that I've included in this newsletter on Matthew notes, it provides a unique look into the types of people Jesus chose to be His Apostles and why their inclusion into Jesus' ministry was so compelling.
4. The production quality of the sets, clothing, and background truly transport you back in time to first-century Israel. It is so real that I was surprised to learn that the principal filming locations for the first two seasons were done in Texas and Utah, where the topography closely resembles that of the Holy Land.

When asked about it, Jenkins' said his goal in creating the show was to help people know Jesus better and love Scripture more. From what I have watched so far, I think he has succeeded. In the fall of next year, I plan to show episodes and create a Bible study on the events captured for the Wednesday morning Bible study. I encourage you all to check it out for yourselves. They are currently filming season 3 while raising funds for season 4 and beyond. The goal is to keep going until they can tell the whole story of Christ's ministry through the resurrection. I pray they make it to that glorious event.



Matthew (Adapting Biblical Characters)

by Kevin Keating

Out of all of the characters in *The Chosen*, the adaptation of Matthew is the most innovative and original. Although the Gospels give us relatively little information about who Matthew was or what his personality was like, *The Chosen* makes Matthew quite distinctive as a person with Asperger's Syndrome and a variety of accompanying tics and anxieties. What makes this creative choice effective is that it actually serves a role both in explaining the biblical account and in fitting into the kind of stories that *The Chosen* wants to tell.

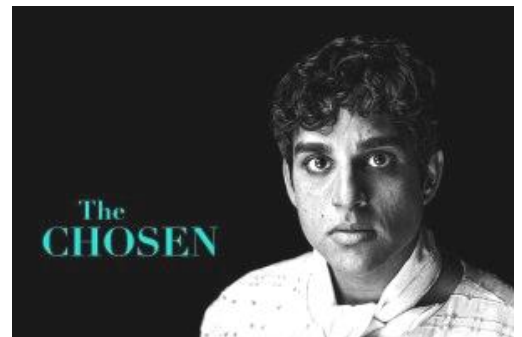
Explaining the Biblical Matthew

What we can actually know about Matthew based on the Gospels is relatively limited. The only story that he plays a dramatic role in is short and shows us very little about his character:

After this [Jesus] went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:27-32)

Based on this short story, we know a few things:

- Matthew was a tax collector working for the Roman Empire
- Matthew was rich enough to host a great feast on the spur of the moment
- Matthew had connections to other tax collectors and "sinners"
- Matthew was held in disrepute by the Pharisees, most likely because he was seen as a traitor working for the foreign occupation
- Matthew left his work for the Roman empire apparently on the spur of a moment to follow Jesus



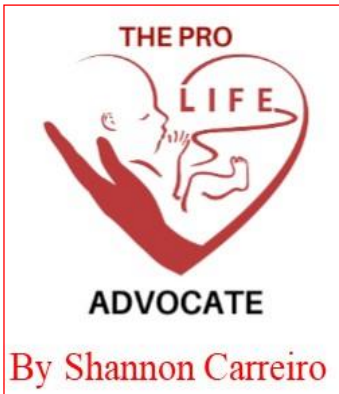
In addition to these explicit facts given to us in the Gospels, *The Chosen* also draws conclusions about Matthew's character based on the style of the Gospel of Matthew:

- Matthew had a good memory and was very attentive to detail, as is presumably seen in how his gospel is longer and more detailed than Mark and contains things like genealogies
- Matthew was fascinated with Jesus' teaching, as is presumably seen in how his gospel carries much more of what Jesus taught and more parables
- Matthew had detailed knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, as is seen in the amount of quotations and allusions present in his gospel
- Matthew was keenly aware of God's inclusion of sinners and other unlikely sorts, as is presumably seen in how his genealogy of Jesus includes figures like Tamar and Rahab.

In order to adapt Matthew's character, it's not enough to clump all these facts and conclusions together into one long list. By making Matthew into a person with Aspergers, *The Chosen* reconciles what might initially seem like desperate character details into a three-dimensional and realistic person.

Why would someone be willing to endure social alienation in order to serve the Roman Empire? *The Chosen* suggests it's because Matthew already was isolated and rejected because of his condition. This is also the explanation for why Matthew was so quick to abandon his service to Rome in order to follow Jesus. Contrary to what we might have assumed, he wasn't in it for the money; he was just looking for a place where he could belong and use his prodigious attention to detail – the kind of role that Jesus is able to provide him as his personal scribe. The ability of people with Asperger's to learn quickly also explains how Matthew, who as a tax collector presumably wasn't trained to be a Bible scholar, ended up becoming so prodigious in his knowledge of not only Jesus' teaching but also the Hebrew Scriptures.

**This article was adapted from www.thebibleartist.com*



WHAT IS LEGAL IS NOT ALWAYS MORAL

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American attitudes toward physician-assisted suicide have flipped over the past seven decades. When Gallup first polled Americans on the topic in 1947, only 37% approved of legally ending the life of a terminally ill patient. Last year, 65% supported it. What caused such a dramatic shift? Like every complex issue, this one has many contributing factors ranging from demographic to economic. But a more human way to understand the issue and the medical, legal and ethical controversies involved can be found in the stories of two young women.

Karen Ann Quinlan

In 1975, after a night out partying with friends, 21-year-old Karen Ann Quinlan passed out and stopped breathing. She was rushed to the hospital and put on life support. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and her coma was diagnosed as irreversible. Her parents, with the support of their priest, wanted to remove the respirator and let Karen Ann die in God's time. The county prosecutor said that would constitute murder. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled 7-0 that privacy rights gave individuals the right to forgo life support treatment; in Karen Ann's case, her parents could make the decision for her. But when the respirator was removed, Karen Ann continued to breathe on her own. She lived in a comatose state receiving compassionate care and nourishment for nine more years and passed away peacefully in a hospice.

Terri Schiavo

When his 26-year-old wife fell unconscious Michael Schiavo called the paramedics but did not perform CPR. Terri was resuscitated but never regained consciousness. That was February 1990. For the next 15 years, Terri was kept alive with an endoscopic feeding and hydration tube while her loved ones battled it out in court. Michael wanted all life sustaining treatment stopped. Terri's Catholic parents did not. Her endoscopic tube was removed and reinserted twice. National public protests ensued. Governor Jeb Bush and President George W. Bush took sides. Pope John Paul II weighed in. Ultimately, her food and hydration tube was removed for the third and final time by court order. It took Terri two weeks to die of starvation and dehydration.

Two different outcomes

Terri Schiavo has become a symbol in the right to die movement. Her name is invoked as a horrific example of what can happen when people are denied access to physician-assisted suicide. Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have legalized the practice.

Karen Ann Quinlan's death encouraged her parents to become champions in the modern hospice movement. Today there are over 6,000 hospice programs in all 50 states. They provide medical services, emotional support and spiritual resources for patients in the last stages of terminal illness along with practical support for family members. The focus is always on enhancing the quality of remaining life, not hastening its end.

Learn more about the two landmark cases at:

<https://karenannquinlanhospice.org/about/history/>

<https://doi.org/10.4065/80.11.1449>.



Travel the Triduum

Sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday is considered the most solemn part of the liturgical year. This three-day period is referred to as the *Sacred Triduum* (3 days). The *Triduum* is one great festival recounting the last three days of Jesus' life on earth, the events of his Passion and Resurrection when the Lamb of God laid down his life in atonement for our sins.



Maundy Thursday

Maundy comes from the Latin for "commandment" because on the night that Jesus gave His disciples what He called a "new commandment," that we love one another and used a basin and towel to wash their feet as an example.

On this night we remember the institution of the Lord's Supper, and partake in the Church's joyful eucharistic celebration of the Lamb of God's paschal sacrifice for our sins.



Good Friday

The day of Jesus' death we call "Good Friday." We hear the story of the Lord's Suffering Servant and shudder at the solemn thud of the tomb sealed that night.

The name for this day seems like a paradox, but God took the awful events of this day and made them work for the "good" of humanity, turning this into a truly good Friday.

Linguists suggest that "Good Friday" may be a form of "God's Friday," much as the old greeting "God be with you" has become "good-bye."



Easter Vigil

As the first service of Easter, Holy Saturday or the Easter Vigil, worshippers move from darkness to light.

We begin in evening darkness as we mark the Paschal candle for a new year, and then slowly come into the light through song, remembrance of Holy Baptism, and hearing the Good News that Christ has been raised.

On this holy night, the remembrance of Christ as the Light of the World takes on new meaning.

UPCOMING CLASSES

HOPE FOR THE HEREAFTER A Study of Heaven

What does it mean to have a resurrected body? Will I see my dog in heaven? Will I know my loved ones in heaven? Join Pr. Brian during the Easter season for a short study of what the Bible says about life after this life.

April 24 - May 29
Sunday 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Ceremony & Celebration A Study of the Historic Liturgy

Wednesdays
10:00 -11:00 a.m.

April 27 - May 25



FROM OUR TREASURER, RICHARD SEGARRA

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Grace. As the first quarter of the year is in the books, it is a good time to report how well our regular giving income is tracking against our budget. As you may recall, the 2022 budget factored in a 3% increase from the previous year's budget. Through March, regular giving, excluding one-time and restricted gifts, totaled \$55,476. This is slightly lower than the \$56,195 at the same point last year and about 9% lower than the \$61,107 estimated in the budget. While it is still early in the year and there is a bit of seasonality in church income, we will continue to monitor and communicate the results.

Richard Segarra
Treasurer

FEBRUARY OFFERINGS UPDATE

February 2022 Actual	\$ 19,186
Budget	\$ 21,453
Shortfall	\$ 2,267

2022 Offering Budget
\$273,000

Giving to Grace

- Your weekly envelopes or those provided in the pews
- Online from your bank website
- Scan the QR code to the right
- Text the amount to 84321
- On the Grace Giving Page at: grace.sandiego.com



OUR MISSIONARY SUPPORT IN ITALY

AS OF MARCH 27, 2022
OUR DONATIONS TOTAL
\$1,648





Our longtime member and friend, Lorna Winterstein died on March 13, 2022 and a Celebration of Life was held on Saturday March 26th. A reception followed with a slide show and memorabilia of her life. At almost 102 years old, she continued as a steadfast prayer warrior until the time God called her home to glory.

*You are Invited to the
Grace Lutheran Annual
Easter Sunday Breakfast
April 17th
9 – 11am
Fellowship Hall*

*Worship and Celebrate a
Blessed and Happy Easter!
Sign up sheet to help
is at the Welcome Desk!*



Ronald David Smith III was born on April 5th at 4:45 pm. Baby and parents, RJ and Christine are both doing well.

Kelley Schmidt and John Barber hosted a Mexican Fiesta for their Grace Gatherings last month in the Fellowship Hall. The delicious dinner included a taco piñata. Elsy & Carl Lehman helped their son, Augie break it and gather the goodies.





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brianwilliamthomas@gmail.com

Director of Parish Music
Beth Schleusener
musicdirector.glc@gmail.com

Church Secretary
Gretchen Jordan
gjordan@gracesandiego.com

Sunday Divine Service
8:00 and 10:30 am

Sunday School
9:30 to 10:15 am

Nursery available

DR. JOHN HANSEN
Council President

RICHARD SEGARRA
Treasurer

SHANNON CARREIRO
Secretary

PAIGE HOOKS
School Board Chair

PAUL HIMMELBERGER
Trustee

KELLEY SCHMIDT
Fellowship/Activities

HEATH RUSSERT
Member-at-Large

TED NILSEN
Head Elder

JEREMY FULLAM
STEVE HOLLMAN
JASON HUNTLEY
DARYL NEWTON
TRAVIS WHEELER
Elders

PRAYERS

PRAYERS FOR STRENGTH AND HEALING

Joyce, Dave, Bill, Michael, Bernie, Paul, Pat,
Terry, Andrea, Christy, Julio, and Pr. Ken

PRAYERS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF A CHILD OF GOD

Jeremy & Alma Fullam

PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Rev. Tyler McMiller, Joshua Salas, Lorenzo Murrone, Luiz Lange,
Michael & Nance Morizio (Lutheran church planters & seminarians in Italy)

PRAYERS FOR OUR MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

William Baker, Tajy George, Jack George, Jr., Philip Hawthorne, Heath Russert
Dylan & Linka Jensen, Josh Martin, Matthew Morgan, Rev. Dave Schleusener,
and Dr. Holly Schmidt

PRAYERS FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND SERVICES

Joyce Rochester

BIRTHDAYS

APRIL

10- Steve Hollman
14- Linnette Hollman
20- Barbara Angelo
22- Rev. Yong Mo Lee
26- John Hansen

MAY

4- Valda Houts
10- Geary Thompson
10- Sol Cornelius
19- Paul Himmelberger
24- Kimberly Newton
27- Leslie Yoder
28- Michelle Thompson
29- Jeremy Belgau

EASTER LILIES



Please help
decorate the
church for Easter
Sunday by
bringing in Easter
lilies. Drop off at
the church Mon-
Wed from 9-2 or
at the Holy
Thursday or Good
Friday services.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

MAUNDY THURSDAY April 14, 2022

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 116:12-19

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:15-25

Gospel: Luke 22:7-20

GOOD FRIDAY April 15, 2022

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalm 22

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Gospel: John 18:1-19:42

EASTER VIGIL April 16, 2022

First Reading: Job 19:23-27

Psalm 118:15-29

Second Reading: 1 Cor 15:51-57

Gospel: John 20:1-18

EASTER April 17, 2022

First Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25

Psalm 16

Second Reading: 1 Cor 15:19-26

Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

EASTER 2 April 24, 2022

First Reading: Acts 5:12-20

Psalm 148

Second Reading: Rev 1:4-18

Gospel: John 20:19-31

EASTER 3 May 1, 2022

First Reading: Acts 9:1-22

Psalm 30

Second Reading: Rev 5:8-14

Gospel: John 21:1-14