Welcome to our quarterly e-magazine!

We hope that AT THE CORE promotes thoughtful dialogue and discernment about the evolving mission of Sacred Heart education among and within our 24 school communities across the Network. Designed as an interactive resource, it is linked to many more materials for reading, watching, and listening. As you read, make sure to click. There’s lots here to explore!
Why Lent?

By now we find ourselves in the midst of Lent. Caught in the unrelenting pace of life, many of us are now wondering why Lent...what does this unique time offer us now? On Ash Wednesday in 2018, Pope Francis explained that the church gives Christians the 40 days of Lent as a time to reflect on "anything that could dampen or even corrode our believing heart. "Everyone experiences temptation," the pope said. Lent is a time to pause and step back from situations that lead to sin, a time to see how God is at work in others and in the world and, especially, a time to return to the Lord, knowing that his mercy is boundless. "Lent is the time," Francis continued, "to allow our hearts to beat once more in tune with the vibrant heart of Jesus."

Pope Francis: Lent is a time to "Pause", "See" and "Return" to the tenderness of God

Sin is a violation of relationships - our relationship with God, our relationship with our neighbor, our relationship with ourselves. Pope Francis has described sin as "severing" relationships. "Sin always severs, separates, divides."

Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need. The ultimate hope is that this analysis of our patterns of "sinfulness", of breaking relationships will enable us to transform our behavior.

The word in the scriptures used for this transformation is metanoia. While this Greek word is typically translated as "repentance," the word implies regret or remorse and the decision to move forward to the space where one experiences a change in one's very core. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

Pope Francis: Sin separates us from both God and neighbor

The call to transformation as Sacred Heart Educators

We are all invited to be Artisans of Hope in our blessed and broken home. Lent is the time to consider this call specifically:

"To acknowledge our complicity in systems that hurt, diminish, and disregard others and our earth is a sign of our capacity to respond to God's call in a new way - that of strength in weakness. Such awareness of our personal, communal, congregational, institutional complicity in unjust systems humbles us. It invites us to be more open to the transforming work of the Spirit in us and in the world."

- Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World, p. 13

Why the references to sin and repentance?

Lent is a time for deeper prayer, conversion and transforming action. The tone of Lent is penitential because we are focused on the Paschal Mystery, the extraordinary central mystery of Christian faith. Pondering Christ's suffering, death and resurrection elicits in us a transformation of our hearts and minds with a view to unite ourselves with Christ.
While Lent calls us to penance and repentance, the Scripture readings and examinations of conscience offered to us are often limited to our individual choices as they affect us and our immediate family and neighbors, and thus our relationship with God.

Kevin O'Brien, SJ, notes that "Sin is an inescapable reality of the human condition; we abuse the freedom God gives us and make choices that hurt God, others, and ourselves. God does not punish us for our sins; instead, we suffer the natural consequences that flow from our sinful choices and the sinful choices of others.

IguatianSpirituality.org"

Some of these choices also lead us to involvement in "Social Sin", involvement in the structures, systems, and traditions in society that perpetuate the oppression of human beings and the destruction of our natural world. We all participate in these systems, often blind to our own responsibility for questioning that participation since we often had nothing to do with creating these structures, systems, and traditions.

Lent is the time to recognize the systems that hurt, diminish, and disregard others and our earth and how we are involved in such structures. In order to engage in this reflection on "sinful" structures and our involvement, we need to step out of our own world and consider the world from the perspective of those who are oppressed and the earth that is being ravaged. Only then can we acknowledge our involvement, individually and collectively, as perpetuators of social sin, repent for our involvement, and move forward to act on behalf of justice and the common good.

"We cannot change our character, it is true, as easily as we change our clothes. It is the work of a lifetime. It is achieved with the grace of God and constant effort."

- St. Madeleine Sophie Barat
What attitudes of heart are essential for us during Lent?

During Lent we hear the invitation to penitence, repentance, remorse and transformation. To respond, we need time in silence and prayer. We also need to trust the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling deep within our hearts. It is in silence and through our openness to the Spirit that we can nurture the essential attitudes of the heart necessary for true metanoia or transformation.

We understand the Holy Spirit is God's power in action. In Scripture, the word "spirit" is translated from the Hebrew word ru'ach and the Greek word pneu'ma. Most often, those words refer to God's active force, or Holy Spirit. With the help of God's Spirit, we can draw upon grace - the free and undeserved gift that God gives us in the hope that we will respond.

"While we seek the transformation of systems and structures, we also recognize the significance of our day-to-day gestures of care for the earth, others and one another. These experiences help to humanize the social fabric which, in turn, allows us to move towards global transformation."

Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World, p. 2

Endowed with grace, we can choose to adopt these essential attitudes of heart:

- **Patience** - the sad, humble realization of and regret for my actions that have inflicted hurt.
- **Repentance** - the recognition of my wrongdoing united with my resolve to change my behavior.
- **Contrition** - the sorrowful regret for my wrongful actions rooted in the profound realization that relationships have been severed.
- **Remorse** - sustained, insistent self-reproach and anguish for past wrongdoing, especially in cases where the hurt cannot be remedied.

The choice to respond to grace is ours to make. Before we can move beyond our sinfulness, we must experience contrition. Contrition is essentially sorrow. Like grief, contrition is truly painful. This grief of the soul wakes us up and inspires us to resolve to amend our ways and to address the severed relationships. The recognition that our wrongful actions have harmed others. God's creation and ourselves encourages us to try and live life anew with the insight that wrongdoing is harmful on all levels. With God's help and God's mercy, we can move forward towards Easter in hope.

"The color of our thoughts dyes our soul; the color of our soul dyes our world."

- Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ
Transforming Our Hearts: Sacred Heart Examen on Social Sin

Designed to be used over four weeks taking one level of Gregory Baum's four levels of social sin a week and one reflection question each day.

Sacred Heart Examen

Sophie Talk
Sacred Heart Education and Mission
By Erin Everson
A new video illustrating how our Network Schools are an expression of our shared mission with the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Watch video

Resources
- At The Core 2019 Lent Issue
- RSCJ International 2019 Lent Issue
- FocusOnCampus.org Ten Ideas for Lent
- University of Notre Dame Lenten Living
- Daily Reflection Prompts
- Ignatian Solidarity Network Radical Hope: Lent 2020
- Network Lobby Lent 2020, Becoming Spirit-Filled Voters: Our Faith and Election Day

More Lent Resources
For Your Reflection
We invite you to consider the following questions individually or in groups:

1. What do you imagine Lent offers to you?

2. What attitudes of heart do you hope to nourish during Lent?

3. How might this Lent support your growth as an Artisan of Hope?

“Day by day we write the story of our lives; no day in our life is without influence on the last, for ourselves as well as others.”
- Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ

Three Steps to Engage with the Network:

1. LOG - IN to SACREDHEARTUSC.EDUCATION
All faculty and staff already have an online account on sacredheartusc.education. Click on the link below for instructions on how to log-in.

2. COMMUNITY GROUPS
Here you can join community groups to connect and share expertise with colleagues, view more resources, and register for upcoming programs.

3. NETWORK NEWS
Keep a look out for our bi-monthly newsletter Network News, which showcases upcoming programs, new resources, and opportunities to engage with your colleagues across our 24 schools.
Conference of Sacred Heart Leadership Teams
June 18-20, 2020
St. Charles, MO

An historic opportunity for all the Network Schools Leadership/Administrative Teams to gather as Sacred Heart Leaders to consider the 2020 Goals and Criteria.

This meeting is being planned for the leadership/Administrative Teams of our schools by Meg Brudney - Duchesne, Omaha, Nat Wilburn – Sacred Heart Schools, Chicago, and Suzanne Cooke, RSCJ, Head of Conference.

School leaders will have the opportunity to discuss and examine the new criteria both as leadership teams and within role groups.


Click here for more information and to register.

Roots That Give Us Wings
June 21 – 24, 2020
St. Charles, MO

Roots is a program for new(ish) members of your school community to introduce them to our Founding Mothers (Sophie and Philippine) and the history, traditions, spirituality, and pedagogy of Sacred Heart education. This is an excellent orientation opportunity for faculty, staff and administrators and a time to connect with the broader Network of Sacred Heart Schools in Canada and the United States.

Time is spent at both the Academy of the Sacred Heart and Villa Duchesne–Oak Hill. A significant addition to the Roots Program will be Building Community in Truth - Learning from our Past - Living in the Present - Preparing for the Future. The presentation's format includes conversation and Q & A throughout. The intention is to tell the full story of the Society's arrival in 1818 to the new world, our participation in the historic sin of slavery in Louisiana and Missouri and the on-going issue of structural and systematic racism in the United States.

Click here for more information and to register.

Find this issue and all its resources by logging into sacredheartusc.education
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