

LENT DEVOTIONAL

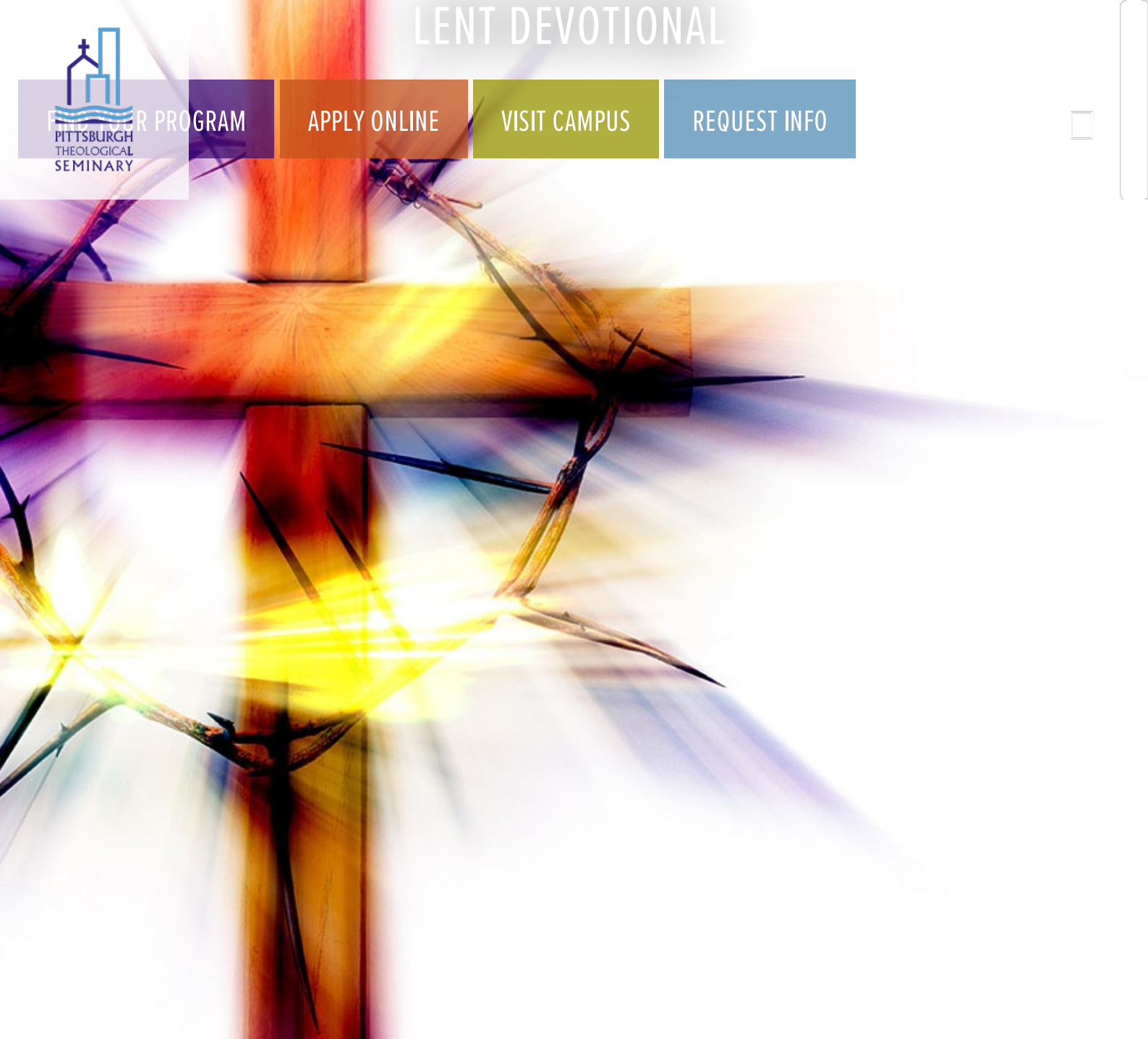


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LENT DEVOTIONAL APRIL 12, 2020

SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-18

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. John T. Campbell '74, Pastoral Ministry (1999)

During my very first week in Greek class with Dr. William Orr at Pittsburgh Seminary, we were required to memorize the first verses of John

1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This, for St. John, and for you and me, is set in the context of God’s creation, incarnation, and re-creation.

Easter morning demonstrates God continuing to give the gift of life to his people. This festival of re-creation is God’s celebration of humanity. It is God’s entrusting of God’s self to human beings—to you and to me—through God’s incarnation. Divinity was clothed in humanity so that humanity might be clothed in divinity. Easter means that you and I are holy and intended to be holy, not as an achievement on our own, but as a gift from God. This is the gift of Christmas that culminates in Easter—the gift that empowers us to become children of God.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a sacrament? Have you ever looked at someone across the street and said, “Hey, look! There is the sacramental image of God”? What is it that prevents us, do you think, from seeing that image in ourselves and each other? In Jewish tradition, rabbis recount that each person has a procession of angels walking ahead of him or her and crying out, “Make way for the image of God.” Can we even begin to imagine how very different our lives and our world might be if we lived with this as the reality and truth that guides our lives? It would mean that everywhere we go, God’s angels would go before us shouting out loudly and clearly, “Here comes an image of God!”

And so, what Easter morning means for us is the fulfillment of the Incarnation, that day known to us as Christmas, as “God with us” to share our joys and bear our sorrows. In truth, 33 years of “God with us” continues today, for us, in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit!

And so, if that is the truth of Easter for us, then it may also be the Easter truth for our next-door neighbor, for those we love, for those we fear, for those who are like us and those who are different, for the stranger, and yes, even for our enemies. It means that we cannot limit Easter to a one-day event. We must begin to think of the “Easter Son-Rise” as a style of daily living and a way of being. We must begin to understand Easter as a verb rather than a noun—and to live out our daily lives with that understanding.

PRAYER

Our Lord and our God, on this day when we celebrate your resurrection, help us to come to understand that Easter is much more than a one-day celebration each year. Help all of us to know and understand ourselves as an “image of You.” And empower us to live out our daily lives as your image to our family, friends, neighbors, strangers, and yes, even, our enemies. Amen.

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