

On the mind of Seminarian Romy John Abraham...

This past week, I traveled to New Jersey for a choir rehearsal, as usual, taking the train from NY Penn Station. The train experienced a 15-minute delay, which I used as an opportunity to pray. I had a small **Book of Common Prayer** (BCP) that I received from Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn during my summer clinical pastoral education in 2026, and I used it for the evening prayer. Afterward, I felt good and was able to sing more clearly and with more energy during our practice of **Bach's St. John Passion**. There is power in prayer, which you and I sometimes underestimate.

This past Sunday, during our study led by Anne on the **Celebration of Discipline**, we were discussing "prayer," exploring "**Prayer as a learning process**." I particularly love the concept of "**Prayer as relinquishment**," which involves surrendering our own will and purifying ourselves to abide in God's will.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV): "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Initially, giving up my own will was challenging. It took years to come to terms with God's will because my mind has always been focused on plans, goals, and processes. Prayer helps me in discernment, as discernment is also about pursuing God's will and being open to service. However, God desires for me—and for all of us—to follow Him and be His children on this journey of faith. This is what I call "**Great Faith**." "Great" does not mean "big" in size; it signifies something very important, sacred, or deep. **Great Lent** revolves around three pillars: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

In this context, I am reminded to surrender my own will and to pursue prayer more diligently. **Prayer is a spiritual discipline**, as **Richard Foster** writes in *Celebration of Discipline*, the book we are meditating on during this Lenten journey. The more I pray, the less I dwell on uncertainties, especially in these times of chaos, confusion, conflict, and war. Prayer brings me serenity and helps me understand that God is certain and present with both the community and me.

Prayer strengthens me more than I can imagine. God hears every prayer, spoken or silent. What we need is patience, not panic. In our faith journey, replacing **panic** with **patience** makes all the difference.

Prayers fill me with positive energy. I sometimes experience this positive energy in communal prayer being transferred to me, and it has a profound impact on my spiritual life. My life is deeply rooted in community. Disciples and apostles prayed; **Jesus** himself prayed and gave us the Lord's Prayer. Saint Paul encourages us to pray to be mindful and watchful, as seen in his Pastoral and profound letters in the New Testament.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV): "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

These book studies, Bible studies, services, and daily offices strengthen my faith and spirituality. So, friends in Christ, be prayerful and pray in whatever ways you feel connected to God. As long as you feel the presence of God with you, it is considered a prayer. Always pray for yourself and for others because God loves us all. **Amen!**

Romy

TODAY AFTER CHURCH

12:30 to 1:15 p.m. Come to the Assembly Hall to help make sandwiches that we'll deliver to a nearby homeless drop-in center.

12:30 to 1:45 p.m. *Celebration of Discipline* Sunday Small Group meets in the Parish House Dining Room.

FAMILY FRIDAY: PAINTING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Friday, March 20, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The Stations of the Cross, also known as the “Way of the Cross,” depict fourteen scenes from the last events of Christ’s life. Children and parents are invited to the Assembly Hall “turned art studio” to create new Stations to display in the church. A pizza dinner will be provided.

We are eager to have children of all ages participate and paint a Station of their choice this Lent! If your family cannot attend, we are happy to provide art supplies for your child(ren) to create a Station in advance. Contact Amanda Bell at abell@churchoftheincarnation.org to RSVP or request art supplies.

NIGHTWATCH YOUTH EVENT

Friday, March 27, to Saturday, March 28, at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, 107 Amsterdam Ave. Nightwatch is an evening spent in the world’s largest Gothic Cathedral immersed in a faith-based program to deepen your spiritual connection with God. This one-night pilgrimage is **for students aged 12-18**. Go to stjohndivine.org/spiritual-life/nightwatch to learn more about the program. Incarnation will help with the cost! Contact Amanda Bell with interest or questions.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT INCARNATION

Palm Sunday, March 29

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Blessing of the Palms

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Blessing of the Palms, Palm Procession and Choral Passion

Spy Wednesday, April 1

12:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist, remembering Judas’ betrayal of Jesus

Maundy Thursday, April 2

6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar

8:00 to 10:00 p.m. Prayer Vigil in the Chapel of the Nativity

Good Friday, April 3

12:00 p.m. Solemn Liturgy for Good Friday

2:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross Prayer Service

The church will remain open for meditation until 3:00 p.m.

Easter Eve, April 4

6:30 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Sunday, April 5

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

11:00 a.m. Festal Eucharist with music for Organ, Brass and Choir

12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour and Easter Egg Hunt

20s/30s GROUP – SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, April 12, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Young adults in their twenties and thirties are invited to gather in the new Parish House Conference Room for a time of fellowship and faith formation. Lunch will be provided. Details to come! Speak to Seminarian Romy John Abraham to learn more and RSVP.