Welcome to the Chaplain’s Corner newsletter. If you have a joy or concern you’d like to share with our staff, send an e-mail or give us a call at Ext. 8348. We only share concerns with the campus community, via newsletter or e-mail, with permission. You can view previous and current issues of our newsletter (in PDF format), on the Spiritual Life page of the Lynchburg College website — www.lynchburg.edu/spirituallife.

Compassionate Hearts for Moral Injury Victims

This week I was fortunate to attend two different powerful presentations by women from different religious traditions but with very similar messages. On Monday, Christian minister Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock spoke about “Soul Repair” and the need for communities of faith to assist veterans in recovering from moral injury after war. The next evening Ellen Cassidy, noted Jewish scholar, playwright, and speech writer, shared her experiences of tracing her family tree in Lithuania and discovering the continued impact of the holocaust on both Jews and non-Jews in that country.

Both Cassidy and Nakashima Brock cautioned their audiences on the danger of glossing over, or worse yet, ignoring the impact of violence on those who experience war and other atrocities, whether as victims or as perpetrators or sometimes both. The two presenters would agree that it may take a lifetime to work through the complicated and messy wounds of violence. Post-traumatic stress syndrome is but one example of the consequences of horrible atrocities.

As people of faith, our task first involves a willingness to acknowledge that there are walking wounded among us. Some may be veterans of war, victims of anti-semitism, or others who suffer from violent abuse whether physical, mental, or emotional. Once we open our eyes to the hurting among us, we are then tasked with having open ears to listen deeply to their pain without trying to fix it, explain it, or dismiss it. With open eyes, and listening ears, we are better able to have compassionate hearts to help walk with others as they work through their own unique and sometimes lifelong journeys toward healing and wholeness.

To walk with others, to give witness to their struggles, to be willing to sit with them in times of confusion, despair, and even anguish is to participate in the powerful process of inner healing. As we prepare for the upcoming sacred season of both Jewish Passover and Christian Holy Week, may we pray for and journey beside them—those whose lives have been forever marked by violence but who look forward with hope to a time of peace.

Peace, Anne

By Anne Gibbons
Associate Chaplain and Director of the Bonner Leader Program

Palm Sunday Prayer

Dear Lord of Victory,

We gather here today waving palm branches of celebration. With these palms, we remember your Son’s triumphant ride into Jerusalem. Waving these palms we shout Hosanna, we rejoice and sing. However, Dear Father, we know during this Holy Week that the flesh of your Son’s palms will humbly wash the feet of his disciples. We know that His palms will break the bread of His Last Supper. We know that His palms will be folded in prayer one last time. And finally, we know that by week’s end His palms will bear the weight of His cross as he carries it to Calvary and it is there that His palms will be pierced and nailed to that cross. Be with us this hour and through this week and use OUR palms of flesh to pray for your world. Use our palms to heal the sick, feed the poor and pass Your peace. Use our palms to hold one another’s as we journey with your Son through this Holy Week of pain and sorrow, loss, fear and finally, victory. With our palms outstretched in praise, and in your Son’s holy name, we pray. Amen. (Prepared for Sunday’s worship service at First Christian Church, Lynchburg.)

By Neil Bodine ’81
Business Office

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

For a list of our regularly scheduled meetings during the academic year, go to the Spiritual Life webpage and click on “Spiritual Organizations on Campus.”