

LIFE AT THE SEM

April 2019

Ryan and Kari Maser

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Patience and focus on our everyday tasks as we look forward to our Vicarage placement (May 1st).
- Kari as she continues her teaching and responsibilities at school.
- Ryan as he continues with his studies, that his desire for the Word and the Gospel would continue to grow and flourish.
- Students from Concordia Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary – Ft. Wayne who will be accepting vicarage placements, deaconess internships, and calls.

YOUR GRACE IS ENOUGH

To be perfectly honest, these four words do not look like much on paper (or on a screen). They form a complete sentence, but without any context they leave the reader wondering who the “your” is referring to and why that person’s grace is just plain “enough.” As it so happens, these four words are the name of a popular Christian contemporary song released by Chris Tomlin in 2004. In this song, Tomlin speaks of how God draws the sinner to repentance and implores God to remember His promises made because of his steadfast love and mercy. The words “your grace is enough” are not meant to show how we are given God’s scraps and leftovers, but it is the bold confession that God’s grace is the foundation to our life and salvation. We are all confronted by things in our lives that distance us from God’s grace, things that make our hearts anxious, our souls restless, and our bodies exhausted. It is God’s grace that we stand on, where we find our soul’s only rest. As St. Augustine once said, “Our heart is restless until it rests in you.” (from St. Augustine’s *Confessions*). No doubt, this time of year brings many unanswered questions, moments of fear for the unknown, and inevitable change that challenge us to stand on and rest in God’s grace for us.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. – Ephesians 2:4-7

MUCH TO PRAISE GOD FOR

All things considered, life has not changed a whole lot since our last newsletter. However, God has given us much in the last month that is worthy of thanks and praise. Here is but a snapshot of what we praise God for:

- We praise God for the classes, homework assignments, and projects that continue to prepare me for vicarage and beyond.
- We praise God for dear, close friends on campus who encourage us and spend precious time with us.
- We praise God for books and the occasional opportunity to read a “fun” (non-required reading) book.
- We praise God for safe travels to and from Gretna (Omaha), and for the time spent with family and friends over the Easter Break. It was a joy to see so many people, including a day spent with our nephew and niece.
- We praise God for the progress Kari has seen in her students, and how much they have learned and grown since August (believe her when she says it has been transformational in many of her students!).
- We praise God for the opportunity to host several people in our home on the weekends, including two Concordia-Nebraska students visiting campus for choir tour and Kari’s dad, Craig.
- We praise God for the beautiful spring weather in St. Louis, for the growth of garden plants, sunny days for intramural softball, and several bonfires on the patio.



- We praise God for our upcoming vicarage, wherever that may be!
- Most importantly, we praise God for the death and resurrection of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which we remember and celebrate in this Easter season.

BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED – EPHESIANS 2:4-7

This is a portion of scripture that we all have been familiar with at some point in our lives. The verse that immediately follows verse seven is the famed “For grace you have been saved. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,” which inspired Martin Luther to proclaim grace through faith alone and spearhead the Reformation movement. However, in this Easter season, it is important to take a step back and look at what St. Paul is saying before this oft-cited verse. Paul asserts that is solely out of God’s great love and compassion for humanity that he sent Jesus to suffer and die in our place. Humanity

was dead in its wayward ways, cut off, left to rot, but God gave his Son to reconcile the world to himself. After living through the events of Holy Week once again, the message of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday still resonate within us – the betrayal by Judas, the arrest of Jesus, the guilty sentence, and the unimaginable death upon the cross. But, the tomb couldn’t contain what happened a few short days later – Christ’s conquering of death, so that all who believe in him will also rise with him into new life. While we await the day when Christ’s return will usher in the restored heavens and earth and we will be made new and whole, we can be assured that it is by God’s grace that we are His. God’s grace is certainly enough, even when we don’t feel it or see it or when we become consumed by the uncertainties of life. God’s grace is more than enough for you and I today, tomorrow, and always, because of what Christ has done for us.

WE THANK GOD FOR YOU

Your prayers have been greatly appreciated in the last few months and weeks as we look forward to finding out our vicarage assignment. It is crazy to think that in a few short days we will know the church I will be serving and the town/city we will live for a year. Even after Call Day, there will be much to finish up here (end of semester) and to plan, such as when we will move, what our summer will look like, and what and where Kari will be teaching. Through it all, we give God thanks for your constant prayers and support, knowing that God has placed each and every one of you in our lives to build up His kingdom and to further His mission. Thank you!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Ryan and Kari

PS – We encourage you to watch the Vicarage and Internship Assignment Service on Wednesday, May 1st at 3:00 pm CDT. The service will be live-streamed on Concordia Seminary’s website. Go to <https://callday.csl.edu/> to watch and learn more about the vicars, deaconess interns, and pastoral candidates who will be given their placement as servants in our Lord’s church!

*We pray all is well
at King of Kings!
We think of you all
often. God's blessings!*