

Good afternoon. For those who don't know me, my name is Philip Lam and I have had the privilege of meeting many of you over the course of the past year as one of the ushers for the 4 PM mass. This is what my face actually looks like underneath the mask. It is an honor to be asked to give a reflection on today's readings as it relates to the closing of the Season of Creation, a time celebrated by Christian faiths all over the world. And for the past month, we have all been asked to take stock and think about ways that we treat our common home. Today, I want to focus on two themes: the families/communities that we share, and the choices that we make.

In today's first reading, we hear about the Creation story in Genesis 2, a story that we have all heard before. God created the world of man and animals and out of man created woman, and the two become one. I think literally, the implications here are quite clear: We are all born to one family and one community, descendants from Adam and Eve.

But if we look forward to the second reading, in the letter to the Hebrews, we have to think a bit more deeply. Jesus, was made "made lower than the angels" and was not ashamed to call his community his "brothers". And that I propose, is a choice that we all have to make on a regular basis, not only the families that we are born to, but the people who we consider our "brothers and sisters." I am proud to be part of the 4 PM community, subject to the nomadic life of the Boston College football schedule. I am proud that we were able to re-open the church last summer and so proud this past spring to see people embracing for the sign of peace again. These are easy choices.

But as I am sure that we have all experienced, sometimes loving those in the communities closest to us is not always easy. Loving a parent that who disagree with, especially given the charged nature of our society these days. It's difficult, but we try. Loving a child who has made life choices in a different direction than our own. It's difficult, but we try. However, I ask how hard we try to care for our fellow family members, descendants of Adam and Eve, who we don't see on a regular basis. How hard do we try to care for those who are not members of this community at Saint Ignatius, but those who have so much less than us? For those who are hungry, who are impoverished, who dream of a better future for their children, not just here, but over the world. These are our family members who have the most to lose as if we do not make the choice to care for our common home.

Now an astute listener will notice that I have left out the Gospel so far and I think that it provides us a path forward. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." I imagine a child walking into Saint Ignatius for the first time and being blown away by the beauty and vastness of this space. A child making friends for the first time in nursery school, without care of skin color or religious beliefs. A child picking up a plastic bottle off the side of the street, just because it's the right thing to do. How easily that we lose that innocence, but how beautiful it is. How good it truly is.

As we close on the Season of Creation, I ask all of us try to make the choice to view the world through the lens of a child and to see the good in the communities around us and to consider the wider community that are affected by our choices. Like we have taught children for generations, like I was taught growing up, this may be difficult, but we can certainly try.