

April 5, 2023

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you and all those you love.

This spring, as we are enjoying the changing of the seasons and warmer weather, we are also commemorating a rare occurrence on the religious calendars of the three Abrahamic faith traditions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. We are in the midst of the convergence of the holy month of Ramadan (March 22 – April 20), Passover (April 5-13), and the Sacred Christian Triduum (April 7-9).

Muslims throughout the world, including our friends here at The University of Scranton, have been faithfully keeping a fast from sunrise until sunset each day in the season of Ramadan, and thereby encouraging greater charity and concern for the poor and the hungry. As tradition holds, the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad during this holy month. As those sacred texts reveal, “Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may develop God-consciousness” (Quran 2:183). This God-consciousness provides a sense of freedom for all who participate.

Likewise, our Jewish brothers and sisters now celebrate the holy days of Passover, which recalls the liberation of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. In the great Haggadah (the ritual book that Jewish families utilize in recalling the narrative each year), the central question posed is this: “Why is this night different from all other nights?” The commemoration of Passover leads to empathy, not just with those held captive millennia ago, but with all those searching for freedom today. We thank the Jewish members of our community here at Scranton and throughout the world for leading the way.

Finally, the most solemn days on the Christian calendar, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday culminate in the joy of the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday celebrations when Christians renew their baptismal promises, and new Christians (including here at Scranton) are baptized, confirmed, and welcomed into full communion in the Church. Humanity’s oldest fear must be the fear of death. So, conversely, our greatest hope is that death can somehow be overcome. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that hope is fulfilled! And because of Christ’s great sacrifice and victory, our University stands and moves forward as a beacon of hope in the Catholic and Jesuit identity that we espouse.

In our University community, we are blessed with members of these three historic faith traditions and with people of other faiths as well. What binds us all together is the freedom and the hope that comes from God. May your sacred holy days and holiday be filled with every grace and blessing!

Yours faithfully,

Joseph G. Marina, S.J.  
President

