Ka Mōhai Aloha- The Gift of Grace or the Gracious Sacrifice.

The Season of Lent is a time that we use to reflect on the gracious gift that God gave to us in His Son Jesus Christ. We celebrated his birth at Christmas and now at Easter, we mark his death. But unlike us humans, for whom physical death is final, Christ’s death was not. On the third day after Jesus was crucified, he was resurrected or rose again. This was a sign to us that we too will rise again. That life in Christ is eternal. The Season of Lent is designed to help us to reflect on what that gift truly means to us and how we might be better people while we still have the chance.

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter, lasting for 40 days (not counting Sundays). There are a variety of practices that the different faith groups have used to prepare for Easter. Some will give up something such as candy, sweets, ice cream or even meat. Others might add something to bolster their faith life, like prayer. For me, I’ll usually turn off my car radio on my way to work and use that time to pray. That’s 30 minutes talking with my Heavenly Father. Do whatever will work for you to strengthen your faith.

For these series of devotionals, we asked some of the leaders, faculty and staff of the various Kamehameha Schools programs to share their mana‘o of what Lent means to them. We hope this will provide you strength and encouragement during this special time.

Looking forward to Easter!
Nā Kahu Kordell Kekoa and Kalani Wong

Here are a few kid friendly web pages on Lent:
- [http://brightsadness.org/kids.html](http://brightsadness.org/kids.html)

Did you know…

…that the date of Easter changes every year? Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

…the day before Ash Wednesday is called a “Fat Tuesday” or “Shrove Tuesday”? In some places, pancakes are served. Here in Hawai‘i, malasadas are a tasty treat eaten by all. What else is that Tuesday known as?

…the ashes used on Ash Wednesday are made from burning the palms used on Palm Sunday the year prior?

…there are a number of events in the Bible that last 40 days including the amount of time that Jesus spent in the wilderness? What are the others?
**Heluhelu Baibala/Scripture Reading**

Ioane I 3:16-18

“No ia mea, ua ʻike kākou i ke aloha, no ka mea, ua waiho ihola ʻO ia i Kona ola no kākou; a he mea pono nō hoʻi iā kākou, ke waiho aʻe i ko kākou ola no ka poʻe hoahānau. ʻO ka mea i loaʻa iā ia ka waiwai o kēia ao, a ʻike aʻelua i ka nele o kona hoahānau, a papani aʻe i kona naʻau iā ia, pehea la ke aloha o ke Akua e noho ai i loko ona? E nā pōkiʻi oʻu, mai aloha kākou ma ka waha, ʻaʻole hoʻi ma ke alelo wale nō; akā, ma ka hana ʻana a me ka ʻoiaʻiʻo.”

1 John 3:16-18 New Living Translation (NLT)

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

**Manaʻo**

In Hawaiian we say “Aloha kekāhi i kekāhi” – “love one another.” Set to simple music, we teach this value to our keiki in the form of a children’s mele. But how much easier is this to sing than to live? Do we truly love one another in our daily lives? It’s easy to love our ʻohana and our friends. But how can we love strangers? And do we love people who are rude and offensive? Or how about those who have caused us harm? Do we love them too?

The New Testament of the Bible, originally written in Greek, uses several words for “love,” each with important distinctions. However, these differences are often “lost in translation.” Four types of love are mentioned in the Bible: *Eros* is romantic love, *Phileo* is the love between friends. *Storge* describes the love between family members.

But the type of love most often used in the Bible – more than two hundred times, in fact – is *agape* (agápe); and it is *agape* which is used to describe the very nature and character of God.

Our kūpuna, too, recognized that love takes many forms and that one word is inadequate to describe these nuances. Aside from romantic love (hoʻoipoipo) and brotherly love (hoaloha), our kupuna used words like aloha ʻāina (love and respect for our land), aloha menemene (compassionate love), or aloha pauʻole (endless love).

The *agape* love used in the Bible refers not to a feeling, but rather to a demonstration of love. *Agape* love is action-oriented and self-sacrificing. One source defines *agape* as “a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return.” God, our Father and Creator, loves us unconditionally – as a parent loves a
child. God does not need anything from us. He desires only that we love Him back. And to demonstrate His great love for His children, He sacrificed Himself for us through the person of Jesus Christ. This was Ka Mōhai Aloha.

As God’s children, therefore, we are expected to show agape to others. In Romans 12:9 the Apostle Paul writes: “Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.”

Most of the time, this does not require tremendous sacrifice or grand gestures. We can show agape love through simple expressions of compassion and kindness as we move through each day. This is as easy as smiling and acknowledging others, not just those we see at work or in school, but the strangers we pass as we walk down the street. It is as easy as speaking words of kindness and encouragement instead of criticism and sarcasm. It is as easy as holding the door open for the person behind you, or waving to thank the person who just let you cut in traffic. “Live Aloha” is a popular expression and campaign here in Hawai‘i, but how many of us actually put this into practice? How different would our world be if we all began to consistently commit Random Acts of Aloha?

In 1895 our beloved Mō‘iwahine, Lili‘uokalani, was a model of agape following the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and her subsequent imprisonment in ‘Iolani Palace. In that difficult and painful season, Lili‘uokalani wrote “Ke Aloha o Ka Haku” – The Queen’s Prayer – perhaps her most famous composition. Her hymn, which expresses her deep love for, and unwavering faith in, Ke Akua during her time of despair, begins:

ʻO Kou aloha nō Your loving mercy
Aia i ka lani is as high as heaven
A ʻo Kou ʻoiaʻiʻo And your truth
He hemolele hoʻi So perfect

And in the third paukū of her mele, Lili‘uokalani affirms her agape aloha and huikala (forgiveness) towards her captors:

Mai nānā ʻinoʻino Behold not with malevolence
Nā hewa o kānaka The sins of man
Ākā e huikala But forgive
A maʻemaʻe nō And cleanse

So, as in the example set by Lili‘uokalani, agape is a choice we must make each day to actively love others as Christ loves us. It is an attitude of the heart and it is a call to action.

It was because of Jesus’ agape for each of us that He suffered and died on the cross so that we might live; washed clean and forgiven of every mistake and bad choice we’ve made in our lives. As we approach the coming Easter celebration, we would do well to remember Ka Mōhai Aloha a Ke Akua that was made on our behalf, not because we deserved it, but because God loves us and because God is love. Aloha Ke Akua.
He mau Ninau (Questions to Ponder)

- Do I love other people with the agape love that God has for me? If not, what holds me back?
- What Random Act of Aloha can I do this week to show agape love to another person?

Pule

E ke Akua Mana Loa, hemolele a maʻemaʻe. Mahalo for the love and grace you have extended to me, that You would give your precious son as Ka Mōhai Aloha, a sacrifice to cleanse us of our hewa. Please help me to see other people with your eyes and your heart. Show me how to love others the way you love me, and provide me with opportunities to put this love into action in my community and in the larger world. And in all things may I honor and glorify You. Ma ka inoa o ka Haku ‘o Iesū Kristo, ‘Āmene.

Keiki Activity

- Visit the “Live Aloha” homepage [http://www.atchawaii.com/LocalInfo/livealoha.html](http://www.atchawaii.com/LocalInfo/livealoha.html) and review the list of examples of random acts of kindness. Have keiki come up with a list of at least three Random Acts of Aloha that they might fulfill at school, at home or in the community between now and Easter to demonstrate agape love. This could be as simple as offering to wash the car of an elderly neighbor, or extending the hand of friendship to a classmate who is sometimes overlooked or excluded by other students.
- Implement a “Live Aloha” poster or poem contest in your class or school-wide;

Suggested Hīmeni

- “Ke Aloha o Ka Haku” (The Queen’s Prayer) No. 186 Nā Hīmeni o Ka ‘Ekalesia
- “He Aloha Ko Iesū” (Jesus Loves Me) No. 154 Nā Hīmeni o Ka ‘Ekalesia

He aloha ko Iesū Jesus loves
I ke keiki liʻiliʻi nō The little children
Kahe Kona koko noʻu His blood shed for me
I pau aʻe ka hewa oʻu To pay for my sins

Keiki aloha! Keiki aloha!
Keiki aloha! Ke aloha o Iesu!