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From Our Students

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This past summer I attended the Interfaith Understanding conference at Augustana College on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. While Shavuot does not receive as much attention as the other Jewish holidays, it is in fact the festival that commemorates God's giving of the Torah. It is the holiday where the Jews start their lives in the service of God. Many of us have questioned what it means to be servers of God. We have questioned our faith in search of God when he seems at times unapproachable. I sometimes feel that I am in a state of loneliness when it comes to my faith.

I want to introduce a section of *The Lonely Man of Faith* (Doubleday/Random House, 2006), written by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, where he uses the story of Adam and Eve in his innovative take on Genesis to guide the faithful in today's world:

It is here that the dialogue between man of faith and the man of culture comes to an end. Modern Adam, the second, as soon as he finished translating religion into the cultural vernacular and begins to talk the "foreign" language of faith, finds

himself lonely, forsaken, misunderstood, at times even ridiculed by Adam the first, by himself. When the hour of estrangement strikes, the ordeal of man of faith begins and he starts his withdrawal from society, from Adam the first—be he an outsider, be he himself. He returns, like Moses of old, to his solitary hiding and to the abode of loneliness. Yes, the loneliness of contemporary man of faith is a special kind. He experiences not only ontological loneliness but also social isolation, whenever he dares to deliver the genuine faith—kerygma. This is both the destiny and the human historical situation of the man who keeps a rendezvous with eternity, and who in spite of everything, continues tenaciously to bring the message of faith to majestic man. (100-101)

My journey as a Jew has been a combination of Adam I and Adam II where I am firmly grounded in my faith community while going out and experiencing the world and learning from those around me.