Staff Reader of the Month for March

Giovanna Hill
Teacher of English, History and Geography
at SSC for 1 year

“I came to teaching with a strong desire to work with young people, to draw on the knowledge and skill I have acquired in my professional, personal and academic life, and give something back to community at large.”

List one book that has left a lasting impression on you and explain why it’s memorable

“A week ago, I was asked what my favorite novel was, I'd greatly struggle with it. I might consider Isabel Allende’s The House of the Spirits, Nabokov’s Lolita, or probably even Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary. I might give varying answers. It would probably depend on my mood, or the current focus of my stream of thoughts. But, alas! Now, now I have found it! A book, unquestionable enough to be the greatest novel and work of fiction that I have read.”

Crime and Punishment, Fyodor Dostoyevsky

I have read Crime and Punishment twice now. It has many messages and symbols that I think I recognized this second time around. The main character distances himself from others thinking himself to be a superman of sorts, and thinking himself such, kills a pawnbroker who he terms a "louse" and who cheats the poor out of their money."
He is alienated even more from society and his family by his guilt and self-loathing. He is a walking contradiction, doing good and evil, craving company and shunning all, being too busy to do any more because he is laying around all day.

The story though is one of redemption. I think the story shows that it is easier to take the punishment that society mandates or the repentance that God requires, than to live daily with the punishment that our own conscience and our minds mete out. It is worth it to take up our cross and expiate our crimes/sins and to feel true love and happiness that is the result. The story references the Bible story of Lazarus, and it really is the story of a man's soul rising from the dead.

There was a time in my life when I couldn’t get enough of reading Dostoevsky, maybe because his books made me think so deeply about being human and how we choose to live our lives. I began with Crime and Punishment, probably the work he is best known for.