

INTRODUCTION

During Holy Week, the faithful Christians commemorate the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on Good Friday in reparation for the sins of the world and rose on Easter Sunday to give new life to all believers. Holy Week is solemn and sorrowful but it also anticipates the joy of Easter through the recognition of the Father's goodness in sending HIS Son to die for our salvation.

"The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of Good News that the apostles and the church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished 'once and for all' by the redemptive death of HIS Son Jesus Christ." (CCC 571)

In this time of the Holy Week, we can see in the passages how Jesus was accompanying the disciples in the mystery of HIS Passion, Death and Resurrection. Were we witness the true courage of Jesus going through this process in contrast with how the disciples react to all these. Some showed willingness but denied him, others betrayed him and everyone abandoned him. We see how Jesus showed courage to his disciples by embracing what he went through in order to conquer the world which brought salvation to all humanity forever. By his self-giving, he provoked in them the same courage he had in conquering sin and death.

As we remember this Holy Week that changed the world, may you bless us Lord with courage to embrace our cross every day, to fix our eyes on you and follow you carrying our cross on the narrow road, and to die to our sinfulness every day.

HOLY MONDAY

Anointing at Bethany

Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead.² They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table.³ Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was filled with the scent of the ointment.⁴ Then Judas Iscariot -- one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him--said,⁵ 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?'⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contents.⁷ So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; let her keep it for the day of my burial.⁸ You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.'⁹ Meanwhile a large number of Jews heard that he was there and came not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead.¹⁰ Then the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well,¹¹ since it was on his account that many of the Jews were leaving them and believing in Jesus.

(John 12:1-11)

Mary showed her passionate love for Jesus by anointing the feet of Jesus using costly perfume and wiping them with her hair. Not all Christians understand her gesture because we still have much to learn about loving Christ. Oftentimes, we are like Judas in line with giving to the poor. The Lord's command is not to give, but to LOVE. To love the poor is to reveal

to them their call from God --- to tell others of God's love. If we are not among them, we need conversion and true poverty to discover with them the Kingdom. How can we really love the poor unless we have passionate love for Jesus?

HOLY TUESDAY

Jesus proclaims his mission

"When Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to give new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's year of mercy.' Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, 'Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen.'" **(Luke 4:16-21)**

"When he (Judas) had left, Jesus said, now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. (If God is glorified in him) God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come', so now I say it to you! Simon Peter said to him, 'Master, where are you going?' Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you will follow later! Peter said to him, 'Master why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me?

Amen, amen I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times." **(John 13:31-36)**

Jesus has come to inaugurate a new age in which God becomes present and reconciles people. Jesus brings real liberation to everyone since his deeds urge each one of us to live in truth. Jesus is sent by the Father into the world to save sinners. Our compassionate Savior does not give up on us. "Our life must be a continuous renewal, a continuous conversion, a continuous resurrection." (BM, pp. 466-467)

HOLY WEDNESDAY

My Hour is Near

"When it was evening, Jesus sat at the table with the Twelve. While they were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you: one of you will betray me.' They were deeply distressed and asking him in turn, 'You do not mean me, do you, Lord?' He answered, 'He who will betray me is one of those who dips his bread in the dish with me. The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures say he will. But alas for that one who betrays the Son of Man; better for him not to have been born.' Judas, who was betraying him, also asked, 'You do not mean me, Master, do you?!' Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'

(Matthew 26:20-25)

"I offered my back to those who strike me, my cheeks to those who pulled my beard; neither did I shield my face from blows, spittle and disgrace." I have not despaired, for the Lord Yahweh comes to my help. So like a flint I set my face, knowing that I will not be disgraced." **(Isaiah 50:6-7)**

Betrayal is one of the worst and destructive crime to commit or experience. It tears us apart from our relationships of trust, love and security. SIN does that --- evil raises barriers. So we must seek the WORD daily, believing that God is near and is with us. Jesus has known betrayal of HIS own. Jesus tried desperately to salvage Judas from his despicable act --- and also us. Today, admit your sin and turn to God in sorrow.

HOLY THURSDAY

Wash One Another's Feet

"So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, 'Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master', and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

(John 13: 3-5, 12-15)

Our day-to-day dying to ourselves in loving service to others is a meaningful remembrance of the Lord's great sacrifice. There is no greater love than to give your life for others, "Jesus offers us this love from the cross. A love that is tried, tested and proven. He offers it as a gift to us. We do not deserve it." (Fr. James McTavish FMVD) "If you

understand this, how happy you will be if you put it into practice!" (John 13:17)

GOOD FRIDAY

God's mercy from the Cross

"Jesus knew all that was going to happen to him; he stepped forward and asked, 'Who are you looking for?' They answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' Jesus said, 'I am he'. Judas, who betrayed him, stood there with them. When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they moved back and fell to the ground. He then asked a second time, 'Who are you looking for?' and they answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene', Jesus replied, 'I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, let these others go.' So what Jesus had said came true: 'I have not lost one of those you gave me."

(John 18: 4-6)

"See, my servant will succeed; he will be exalted and highly praised. Just as many have been horrified at your disfigured appearance: Is this a man? He has no human likeness. So will nations be astounded, kings will stand speechless, for they will see something never told, they will witness something never heard of." **(Isaiah 52: 13-15)**

"Christ, in the days of his mortal life, offered his sacrifice with tears and cries. He prayed to him who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his humble submission. Although he was Son, he learned through suffering what obedience was, and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for those who obey him. **(Hebrews 5:7-9)**

This day is holy and good because in Jesus' obedience we are saved. Jesus is renewing the world with HIS Love as HE

tell us, "Look, I am making everything new." HE encourages us "Come and join me. Together we can make everything new." May we resolve to live with that same trust in the face of suffering, learn forgiveness, trusting that OUR FATHER is with us and Jesus' own Spirit is in our hearts and bodies.

HOLY SATURDAY

You shall be my witnesses

"As they went on talking about this, he himself stood in their midst. (And he said to them, 'Peace to you.') In their panic and fright they thought they were seeing a ghost, but he said to them, 'Why are you upset and why do such ideas cross your mind? Look at my hands and feet and see that is I myself. Touch me and see for yourselves that a ghost has no flesh and bones as I have.' You see what was written: the Messiah had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead. The repentance and forgiveness in his name would be proclaimed to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Now you shall be witnesses to this."

(Luke 24: 36-40. 46-48)

Jesus and the Resurrection comes at the end of a long history of compassion, being drawn to freedom, forgiven, shown mercy and made the beloved children of God. Death has been overcome and finally a renewed commitment to the mission entrusted to us. We need to reflect on the resurrection, for we are all called to be witnesses of Christ.

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday Readings:

First Reading: **Acts 10: 34-43**

Psalm: **Psalm 118: 1-23**

Second Reading: **Colossians 3: 1-4**

Gospel: **John 20: 1-9**

Verbon Dei
GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"I have conquered the world"

April 14-20, 2014

Objective of the week:

To Provoke in others the same courage of living out the Christian life as apostles of Christ.