

Guide to *Lectio Divina*

Choose a word or phrase of the Scriptures you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as you have no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God’s hands, not yours.

Read. Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina*, God is teaching us to listen, to seek him in silence. God does not reach out and grab us but gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Ponder. Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Pray. Whether you use words, ideas, or images — or all three — is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

It is not necessary to assess the quality of your *lectio divina*, as if you were “performing” or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Fr. Luke Dysinger

Lectio Divina: Palm Sunday (A)

Sunday, April 5, 2020

The narrative of the passion and death of Jesus
Rediscovering one's first love Matthew 26:14-27; 27:1-66

1. Opening prayer

Lord Jesus, send Your Spirit to help us to read the Scriptures with the same mind that You read them to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the light of the Word, written in the Bible, You helped them to discover the presence of God in the disturbing events of Your sentence and death. Thus, the cross that seemed to be the end of all hope became for them the source of life and of resurrection.

Create silence in us so that we may listen to Your voice in Creation and in the Scriptures, in events and in people, above all in the poor and suffering. May Your word guide us so that we too, like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, may experience the force of Your resurrection and witness to others that You are alive in our midst as source of fraternity, justice and peace. We ask this of You, Jesus, son of Mary, who revealed the Father to us and sent us Your Spirit. Amen.

2. Suggestions for Holy Week

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, a week that is different from all others. We are confronted with the deepest of all mysteries of our faith, the supreme revelation of the love of God manifested in Jesus (Rom 8:38-39).

In the Old Testament, at times of crisis, the people went back to meditating on and re-reading Exodus. In the New Testament we go back to the exodus represented by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. For the community of Christians of all times, the narrative of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus is the source where we renew our faith, hope and love.

Many times, from the time of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), Matthew's Gospel states that the aim of the New Law is love and mercy (Mt 5:43-48; 7:12; 9:13; 12:7; 22:34-40). Now, in this final section of the passion, death and resurrection, he describes how Jesus put love into practice, bringing the Law to fulfilment (Mt 5:17).



3. A reading of the Passion and Death of Jesus

A key to the reading:

In Holy Week, during the reading of the Passion and Death of Jesus, it is not fitting to take an attitude of research and rational investigation. It is more fitting to remain silent. Read the text several times, taking as only guide the short titles which seek to be a key to help us feel the text and experience again the love of God revealed in the attitude of Jesus towards those who capture Him, insult Him, torture Him and kill Him. As we read, let us not think only of Jesus, but also of the millions and millions of human beings who today are imprisoned, tortured, insulted and killed.

Matthew 26:14-16: Judas' betrayal

Love of money leads a friend to betray Jesus

14 Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand Him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, 16 and from then onwards he began to look for an opportunity to betray Him.

Matthew 26:17-19: The preparation for the Paschal Supper

Preparing well the last meeting with friends

17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for You to eat the Passover?' 18 He said, 'Go to a certain man in the city and say to him, "The Master says, My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with My disciples." ' 19 The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

Matthew 26:20-25: The proclamation of Judas' betrayal

Even though Jesus knows everything, He sits at table with the betrayer

20 When evening came He was at table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating He said, 'In truth I tell you, one of you is about to betray Me.' 22 They were greatly distressed and started asking Him in turn, 'Not me, Lord, surely?' 23 He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with Me will betray Me. 24 The Son of man is going to His fate, as the scriptures say He will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' 25 Judas, who was to betray Him, asked in his turn, 'Not me, Rabbi, surely?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say it.'

Matthew 26:26-29: The institution of the Eucharist

Between the betrayal of the one and the denial of the other, glows a sign of love

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had said the blessing He broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat,' He said, 'this is My body.' 27 Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He handed it to them saying, 'Drink from this, all of you, 28 for this is My blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 From now on, I tell you, I shall never again drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of My Father.'



Matthew 26:30-35: The denial by Peter

Even though Peter breaks away from Jesus, Jesus does not break away from Peter

30 After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away from Me tonight, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, 32 but after My resurrection I shall go ahead of you to Galilee.' 33 At this, Peter said to Him, 'Even if all fall away from You, I will never fall away.' 34 Jesus answered Him, 'In truth I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned Me three times.' 35 Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.' And all the disciples said the same.

Matthew 26:36-46: The agony in the Garden of Olives

Jesus chooses fidelity rather than flight

36 Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray.' 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him. And He began to feel sadness and anguish. 38 Then He said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and stay awake with Me.' 39 And going on a little farther He fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father,' He said, 'if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by. Nevertheless, let it be as You, not I, would have it.' 40 He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to stay awake with me for one hour? 41 Stay awake, and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.' 42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed. 'My Father,' He said, 'if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, Your will be done!' 43 And He came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. 44 Leaving them there, He went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. 45 Then He came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up! Let us go! Look, My betrayer is not far away.'

Matthew 26:47-56: Jesus' capture in the Garden

Even though He was innocent and good, Jesus is considered a bandit and criminal

47 And suddenly while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them saying, 'The one I kiss, He is the man. Arrest Him.' 49 So he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi,' and kissed Him. 50 Jesus said to Him, 'My friend, do what you are here for.' Then they came forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him. 51 And suddenly, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. 52 Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to My defense? 54 But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?' 55 It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a bandit, that you had to set out to capture Me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid a hand on Me.' 56 Now all this happened to fulfill the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted Him and ran away.

Matthew 26:57-68: Jesus before the Sanhedrin

The decision, which has already been made, of sentencing Jesus to death, is given a semblance of legality

57 The men who had arrested Jesus led Him off to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 Peter followed Him at a distance right to the high priest's palace, and he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be. 59 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might have Him executed. 60 But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two came forward 61 and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up." ' 62 The high priest then rose and said to Him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against You?' 63 But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to Him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.' 64 Jesus answered him, 'It is you who say it. But, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.' 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. 66 What is your opinion?' They answered, 'He deserves to die.' 67 Then they spat in His face and hit Him with their fists; others said as they struck Him, 68 'Prophecy to us, Christ! Who hit You then?'

Matthew 26:69-75: Peter's denial

At the moment of trial, Peter, the leader, denies knowing Jesus

69 Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him saying, 'You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean.' 70 But he denied it in front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about,' he said. 71 When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.' 72 And again, with an oath, he denied it, 'I do not know the man.' 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'You are certainly one of them too! Why, your accent gives you away.' 74 Then he started cursing and swearing, 'I do not know the man.' And at once the cock crowed, 75 and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned Me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Matthew 27:1-2: Jesus is led before Pilate

It is not the Jewish people but it is the élite who lead Jesus to His death

1 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. 2 They had Him bound and led Him away to hand Him over to Pilate, the governor.

Matthew 27:3-10: The death of Judas

A little of Judas lives in each one of us

3 When he found that Jesus had been condemned, then Judas, His betrayer, was filled with remorse and

took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders 4 saying, 'I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.' They replied, 'What is that to us? That is your concern.' 5 And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off, and went and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against the Law to put this into the treasury; it is blood-money.' 7 So they discussed the matter and with it bought the potter's field as a graveyard for foreigners, 8 and this is why the field is still called the Field of Blood. 9 The word spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by the children of Israel, 10 and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.

Matthew 27:11-26: Jesus before Pilate

Like the Servant of Yahweh, Jesus remains silent before those who accuse Him

11 Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to Him this question, 'Are You the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' 12 But when He was accused by the chief priests and the elders He refused to answer at all. 13 Pilate then said to Him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have made against You?' 14 But to the governor's amazement, He offered not a word in answer to any of the charges. 15 At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. 16 Now there was then a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' 18 For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed Him over. 19 Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that upright man; I have been extremely upset today by a dream that I had about Him.' 20 The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. 21 So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said, 'Barabbas.' 22 Pilate said to them, 'But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let Him be crucified!' 23 He asked, 'But what harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let Him be crucified!' 24 Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' 25 And the people, every one of them, shouted back, 'Let His blood be on us and on our children!' 26 Then he released Barabbas for them. After having Jesus scourged he handed Him over to be crucified.



Matthew 27:27-31: Jesus is crowned with thorns

To undress, torture and strike someone is what humiliates that person most

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort around Him. 28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet cloak around Him, 29 and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on His head and placed a reed in His right hand. To make fun of Him they knelt before Him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' 30 And they spat on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head with it. 31 And when they had finished making fun of Him, they took off the cloak and dressed Him in His own clothes and led Him away to crucifixion.

Matthew 27:32-38: Jesus is crucified

The law says that the one hanging on a cross is "cursed by God" (Deut 21:23)

32 On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, called Simon, and enlisted him to carry His cross. 33 When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, 34 they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall, which He tasted but refused to drink. 35 When they had finished crucifying Him they shared out His clothing by casting lots, 36 and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard

over Him. 37 Above His head was placed the charge against Him; it read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' 38 Then two bandits were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.

Matthew 27:39-44: Jesus is insulted

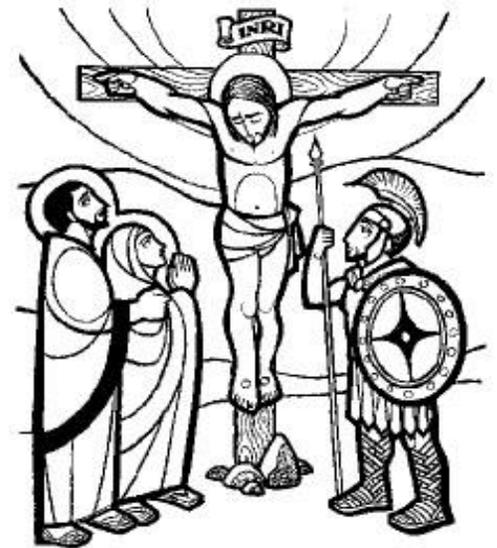
Hanging, naked, bared before all, defenseless, without any right

39 The passers-by jeered at Him; they shook their heads 40 and said, 'So You would destroy the Temple and in three days rebuild it! Then save Yourself if You are God's son and come down from the cross!' 41 The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked Him in the same way, 42 with the words, 'He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the king of Israel; let Him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in Him. 43 He has put His trust in God; now let God rescue Him if He wants Him. For He did say, "I am God's son." ' 44 Even the bandits who were crucified with Him taunted Him in the same way.

Matthew 27:45-56: The death of Jesus

"My God! Why have you forsaken Me?" He dies letting out a cry

45 From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?' 47 When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' 48 and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he filled with vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to Him to drink. 49 But the rest of them said, 'Wait! And see if Elijah will come to save Him.' 50 But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up His spirit. 51 And suddenly, the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, 52 the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy people rose from the dead, 53 and these, after His resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the holy city and appeared to a number of people. 54 The centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this man was son of God.' 55 And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after Him. 56 Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.



Matthew 27:57-61: Jesus is buried

Jesus is not even buried decently

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. 59 So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud 60 and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. 61 Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher.

Matthew 27:62-66: The guard of the tumult

Darkness, even the most intense, cannot extinguish life

62 Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate 63 and said to him, 'Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while He was still alive, "After three days I shall rise again." 64 Therefore give the order to have the sepulcher kept secure until the third day, for fear His disciples come and steal Him away and tell the people, "He has risen from the dead." This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.' 65 Pilate said to them, 'You may have your guard; go and make all as secure as you know how.' 66 So they went and made the sepulcher secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

4. Some thoughts to help us meditate and pray.

a) The death of Jesus:

From midday to three in the afternoon, it is dark over the whole earth. Even nature feels the effect of the agony and death of Jesus! Hanging on the cross, deprived of everything, a lament escapes from his lips: “Eli! Eli! Lama Sabachthani?” That is: “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” This is the first sentence of Psalm 22(21). Jesus goes into His death praying, expressing the forsakenness He feels. He prays in Hebrew. The soldiers who were standing by and who were guarding Him, say: “He is calling on Elijah!” The soldiers were foreigners, mercenaries on contract to the Romans. They did not understand the language of the Jews. They thought that **Eli** meant Elijah. Hanging on the cross, Jesus feels totally isolated. Even if He wanted to say something to someone, it was not possible. He was completely alone: Judas betrayed Him, Peter denied Him, the disciples ran away, friends kept themselves apart (v.55), the authorities derided Him, the passers by insulted Him, God himself abandoned Him, and His language was useless for communicating. This is the price He paid for being faithful to His decision to follow at all times the way of love and service in order to redeem His brothers and sisters. “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life for the redemption of many” (Mt 20:28). In the midst of abandonment and darkness, Jesus lets out a loud cry and dies. He dies letting out the cry of the poor because He knows that God listens to the cry of the poor (Ex 2:24; 3:7; 22:22,26). With this belief, Jesus enters into death, certain of being heard. The letter to the Hebrews says, “He offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the One who had the power to save Him from death, and, winning a hearing by His reverence, He learned obedience. (Heb 5:7). God heard His cry and “exalted Him” (Phil 2:9). The resurrection is God’s answer to prayer and to the offering Jesus made of His life. With the resurrection of Jesus, the Father proclaims to the whole world this Good News: Those who live like Jesus *servicing the brothers and sisters*, are victorious and will live forever, even though they may die and even though they may be killed! This is the Good News of the Kingdom born from the cross!

b) The significance of the death of Jesus:

On Calvary, we are before a tortured human being, one excluded from society, completely isolated, condemned as a heretic and subversive by the civil, military and religious courts. At the foot of the cross the religious authorities confirm for the last time a failed rebellion, and publicly renounce Him (Mt 27:41-43). And it is at this hour of death that a new significance comes to life again. The identity of Jesus is revealed by a pagan: “In truth this man was son of God!” (Mt 27:54). From this point on, if you *really* wish to meet the Son of God, do not seek Him up above in the far away heavens, nor in the Temple whose veil was torn, but seek Him close to you, in the excluded, disfigured, ugly human being. Seek Him in those who, like Jesus, give their lives for their brothers and sisters. It is there that God hides Himself and reveals Himself, and it is there that we can meet Him. There we find the disfigured image of God, of the Son of God. “*Greater love than this no one has than to give one’s life for the brothers and sisters!*”

5. The prayer of a Psalm

The psalms that Jesus recites on the Cross:

Psalm 22 (21): 2: “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Psalm 31 (30): 6: “Into Your hands I commend My spirit.”

6. Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the word that has enabled us to understand better the will of the Father. May Your Spirit enlighten our actions and grant us the strength to practice what Your Word has revealed to us. May we, like Mary, Your mother, not only listen to but also practice the Word. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

05Apr2020 **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**

Lord, have mercy

In any act of violence, there are victims and villains. As we meditate on Jesus' Passion, we can't ignore that Holy Week's villains may bear an uneasy resemblance to ourselves. We've often failed to champion the innocent. We may seek satisfaction in the peril of those who offend us. We endeavor to crush what we don't understand. We deny friends who seem too dangerous to claim. We avoid another's suffering to save ourselves. On Palm Sunday, we're the ones crying: "Crucify him!" Any way you can, support those who suffer most from the burdens of this pandemic.

Today's readings:

Procession: Matthew 21:1-11 (37); *Mass:* Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14—27:66 (38).
"I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard."

06Apr2020 **MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

Rise to the occasion

"The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ," the Catechism of the Catholic Church states. Never more so than at a time when death is ever present in our lives, of all the things Christians believe, the idea that the dead can be brought back to life requires the greatest leap of faith. Jesus helped his followers prepare for this mind-blowing concept by raising Lazarus from the dead—the last of his big miracles before his own death. It was an ultimate sign of his power and identity to leave them with. It helps us, too, get ready for the stunning reality that all who die will rise.

Today's readings:

Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11 (257).

"The chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him."

07Apr2020 **TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

Now is the time

It's not easy to admit when we have turned our hearts from God. As we make the journey of Christ's Passion in this season of the pandemic, it is time to release our grip on the sins that we cling to in fear or shame. Instead, let us cling to the mercy of Christ. Jesus himself faced many forms of sin, especially during his Passion, including betrayal, denial, and abandonment by his own friends. Yet the church says emphatically that at this dark hour, Jesus gives his life and "becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly" ([Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1851](#)). Turn to Jesus in this time of great trial.

Today's readings:

Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38 (258).

"Will you lay down your life for me?"

08Apr2020 **WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK**

I spy the darkness

Today is sometimes known as Spy Wednesday, a reference to today's gospel story of Judas plotting with the Sanhedrin to have Jesus arrested and put on trial. The word "spy" carries a meaning of laying a snare in keeping

with the story. Most of us will be unable to worship together in person this sacred week, but perhaps you will be able to connect online for the traditional evening service called “[Tenebrae](#).” In this ceremony, which may consist of hymns, readings, prayers, and reflections, such as “The Seven Last Words,” a number of lighted candles are gradually extinguished to leave the assembly in total darkness. Then loud noises are made symbolizing the earthquake that followed the Crucifixion. Whether alone or connected with others, spend time today reflecting on the suffering and death of Jesus.

Today's readings:

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Matthew 26:14-25 ([259](#)).

“He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me.”

09Apr2020 **HOLY THURSDAY; EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Wash “down” for supper

Jesus commanded his disciples to follow his example and wash each other’s feet—though this year will be an exception—and laypeople, priests, and even popes have been doing it for centuries as a sign of humility and service. In 2015, Pope Francis made headlines when he broke norms and washed the feet of women and Muslims in Rome—proof positive that simple gestures (even ones that are 2,000 years old!) can be powerful acts of inclusion. Show your authority as a follower of Christ and make yourself meek to the excluded.

Today's readings:

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15 ([39](#)).

“If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet.”

10Apr2020 **FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION (GOOD FRIDAY); DAY OF ABSTINENCE**

For God so loved the world

If not for love—a love worth dying for—the horror of Good Friday would make no sense, nor would the horror unfolding before our eyes daily. Jesus could have saved himself but chose not to. Jesus could have conquered evildoers with almighty power, but instead refused to answer violence with violence. “The cross is the school of love,” wrote Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Because of Jesus, we know that real love expresses itself through sacrifice. What will you do today to honor the love of him who loved us most?

Today's readings:

Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42 ([40](#)).

“For this I came into the world.”

11Apr2020 **HOLY SATURDAY; EASTER VIGIL**

Be on the watch

The Easter Vigil—not Easter Sunday or Christmas Day, but tonight’s vigil—is the greatest of all church celebrations. Though your faith community has had to make other plans for this year, we can still marvel in our collective memory at the beauty of the service, which begins in darkness as the faithful keep vigil, “looking for the light of the Lord when he returns.” As candles are extinguished, lights come up and scripture tells the stories of what God has done for us throughout time. Then new members are baptized and for the first time join everyone at the table of the Eucharist. This year more than ever, this is a night to remember. Celebrate it in your own special and memorable way.

Today's readings:

Genesis 1:1—2:2; Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 14:15—15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14; Isaiah 55:1-11; Baruch 3:9-15, 32—4:4; Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28; Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:1-10 ([41](#)).

“Mary Magdalene came with the other Mary to inspect the tomb. . . . Do not be frightened . . . he has been raised.”