St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church
Martinez, California

Palm Sunday

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Matthew 21:9

April 5, 2020

LITURGY SCHEDULE

SATURDAY: 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM
SUNDAY: 7:00 AM, 8:30 AM, 11:00 AM
1:00 PM (Spanish)

ADORATION: Thursdays from 12:00 - 8:00 PM
HOLY DAYS: VIGIL MASS 7:00 PM ; 8:00 AM , 7:00 PM
RECONCILIATION: Saturdays from 3:00 to 4:00 PM
PARISH OFFICE  (925) 228-2230  
FAX: (925) 228 - 1318

Fr. Anthony Huong Le,  
Parochial Administrator  -  Ext 6  
franthonyl@stcmtz.org

CHURCH LOCATION:  
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PARISH OFFICE/CENTER & MAILING ADDRESS:  
1125 Ferry Street  
Martinez, CA 94553-1720

PARISH WEBSITE:  www.stcmtz.org

OFFICE HOURS:  
THE PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

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ST. CATHERINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
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OFFICE HOURS: 9AM – 2 PM

SCHOOL WEBSITE:  http://school.stcatherinemartinez.com

ST. CATHERINE PRE-SCHOOL  
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Before serving or continuing in your ministry or organization, please complete the Diocesan required Safe Environment for Children Project Training @ www.virtusonline.org

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: www.virtusonline.org

Prayer for the Pandemic
Corona Virus situation

Almighty and merciful God,  
who show your love to all creation everywhere,  
hear graciously the prayers we make  
for all those affected by the corona Virus in various parts of the world.  
We come before you asking  
for quick control of the outbreak,  
for the healing of those affected,  
for the victims and their families.  
We pray for the doctors, nurses and healthcare workers  
that they may courageously and cautiously  
take care of those affected.  
We pray for those doing the research  
that an effective vaccine to combat the sickness is speedily found.  
We pray for the Government and health authorities  
that they take appropriate steps for the good of the People.  
Lord, we ask all these through the loving intercession of  
St. Catherine of Siena,  
St. Joseph, and Our Blessed Mother.  
Amen

Emergency and Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.  
Please call (925) 228 2230 Ext. 1006.

Though the office is closed, the office staff will be checking in on their phone messages to provide as much assistance as possible with this critical time. We ask that you please utilize the designated personnel extensions to leave our staff your message. Thank you

HELP OUT OUR ADVERTISERS

Our Sunday bulletin is an important way for us to communicate with you, especially during these days of the Coronavirus pandemic. It might be the only way that we can reach some of you. Every bulletin that you receive is paid for through the generosity of the businesses that you see advertised on the back cover. Most of these advertisers are members of our local community, and many belong to our parish. We urge you to think of them when you decide to have a meal or other item delivered to your door. Tell the business owners that you appreciate their support of our parish through their advertisements in the bulletin. This is one small way that we can work within our own community to weather the challenges that we face. Together we can help each other make it through.

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

MARCH 23, 2020
St. Catherine of Siena Parish

The challenges of these days of the COVID-19 pandemic continue for our nation and the world, therefore we are transitioning to new ways to offer our church services.

By the directive order of
The Most Reverend Bishop C. Michael Barber, SJ
and in collaboration with the State of California Health order to “Shelter in Place”:

All public masses in the Diocese of Oakland must be cancelled.

We ask for your cooperation. Please do not come to attend mass inside. No entry will be allowed.

Please join our community in prayer through one of our livestream platforms.

Parish Website: www.stcmtz.org 8:00 AM Daily Mass and Sunday, Holy Mass at 11:00 AM is Livestreaming on the Parish FACEBOOK. Click the FACEBOOK link. Or
Log onto our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/OfficialStCatherineofSienaChurch

Home Delivery of Holy Communion

Please provide your request no later than Saturday evening at 5 PM. Offered after the 11 AM (Livestream) Mass

Here are your options:
1) Please sign-up on our website: www.stcmtz.org
2) Call the office by Friday: (925) 228-2230 Ext 2 (leave your name, phone/address, #receiving communion)
3) You can also Email SylviaL@stcmtz.org to provide your information.

Drive-Thru Reconciliation / Confessions
Saturday’s 3:00-4:00PM
Please follow signs and remain in your car.
Our deacons or authorized parish employee will provide direction.

Here are your options:
Please sign-up on our website: www.stcmtz.org
You may also just show up in your car. Again, please remain in your vehicle.

For Emergency Anointing of the Sick
Please call (925) 228-2230 Ext 6

Throughout the day, please pray:
Prayer for the Pandemic Corona Virus situation

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

“I will be with you always” (Jesus)!

Yours in Christ,
Fr Anthony Le and Pastoral Staff
April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Today’s passage from Isaiah presents us with a common human dilemma: what do we do with our suffering? The speaker describes himself as God’s faithful servant, who suffers beatings and mockery. We can’t be sure who the speaker is, but we can see his extraordinary response. He chooses not to fight back, not to respond to violence with violence. He chooses to endure with hope that God, in God’s own way, will deliver and vindicate him. Christians later saw this passage as a poignant description of Jesus’ suffering in his passion.

We all have many experiences of tragic or undeserved suffering. We might desire to run from our pain, or to inflict suffering upon others, or to live in despair. In faith, we are invited to share in the suffering of Jesus, sharing also with all who suffer similarly. We can place our wounds in God’s hands. We may live in enduring hope that Christ is indeed present and accompanies us in our pain. In God’s own way, our suffering may be transformed, so to serve God’s purposes.

A NEW KINGDOM

The Gospel of Matthew, using various symbols from scripture, presents Jesus as the true and victorious king who begins a new kingdom. After his royal entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus ascends his scandalous and paradoxical throne, the cross. The cross reveals the nature of his kingdom, based on God’s forgiveness and sacrificial love. Evil forces thrive when violence stirs even more violence. By accepting his suffering and offering forgiveness, Jesus broke the primary cycle of violence. The Gospels proclaim that the powers of evil, though continuing their effects today, were decisively defeated on the cross.

The resurrection of Jesus launches the reign of God, which will be fully complete upon Jesus’ return. We are now offered a new path for being human by which, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we may partner with God to create new cycles of life and hope.


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5 de abril de 2020

Domingo de Ramos “de la Pasión del Señor”

El pasaje de hoy del profeta Isaías nos presenta un dilema humano común, ¿qué hacemos con nuestro sufrimiento? El profeta se describe a sí mismo como un fiel siervo de Dios, que sufre golpes y burlas. Exactamente no se sabe quién escribió este texto, pero podemos apreciar su extraordinaria respuesta. Él elige no contraatacar, no responder a la violencia con violencia. Él elige sobrellevar con esperanza que Dios, a la manera de Dios, cumpla y lo justifique. Tiempo después los cristianos vieron en este pasaje una descripción del sufrimiento y pasión de Jesús.

Todos tenemos muchas experiencias de un sufrimiento trágico o inmerecido. Podemos desear echarnos a correr y alejarnos de nuestro sufrimiento, o lastimar a la persona que nos provoca más o vivir con desesperación. Con fe, estamos invitados a compartir el sufrimiento de Jesús, y acompañar a aquellas personas que conocemos que están sufriendo. Podemos poner nuestras heridas en las manos de Dios. Podemos vivir con una esperanza persistente de que Cristo en verdad está presente y nos acompaña en nuestro dolor. A la manera de Dios, nuestro sufrimiento puede ser transformado, para que sirva para los propósitos de Dios.

UN NUEVO REINO

El Evangelio de Mateo, usando varios símbolos de las Escrituras, presenta a Jesús como el verdadero y victorioso rey que comienza un nuevo reino. Después de su entrada real a Jerusalén, Jesús asciende a un trono paradójico y escandaloso, la cruz. La cruz revela la naturaleza de su reino, basado en el perdón de Dios y su amor expiatorio. Las fuerzas del mal prosperan cuando la violencia suscita más violencia. Al aceptar su sufrimiento y al ofrecer perdón, Jesús rompe el círculo primario de la violencia. Los evangelios proclaman que las fuerzas del mal, aun cuando continúan sus efectos hasta hoy, fueron derrotadas en la cruz.

La resurrección de Jesús pone en marcha el reino de Dios, el cual será cumplido al regreso de Jesús. Ahora se nos ofrece, como seres humanos, un nuevo camino por medio del cual y empoderados por el Espíritu Santo, podemos ser colaboradores junto con Dios para crear ciclos nuevos de vida y esperanza.

FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO CELEBRATE HOLY WEEK AT HOME

Create a simple prayer space in your home, and gather there to pray during the week.

Palm Sunday: At your regular Mass time, read the first Palm Sunday Gospel (Mt 21:1–11) and meditate on or discuss what Jesus might be thinking as he enters Jerusalem for the last time.

Holy Thursday: Bake bread for sharing at dinner; make a ritual of stripping the dinner table of all cloths and decorations after dinner.

Good Friday: Pray the Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday: In the morning, read Psalm 64 and break your Good Friday fast solemnly with a simple meal.

Easter Sunday: Dress up the dinner table again. Include candles and crosses, so that the candy baskets aren’t the only festive items present. Sing Alleluia and read the Easter Gospel (Matthew 28:1-10) with solemnity and joy.

ENDURING HOPE

Today’s passage from Isaiah presents us with a common human dilemma: what do we do with our suffering? The speaker describes himself as God’s faithful servant, who suffers beatings and mockery. We can’t be sure who the speaker is, but we can see his extraordinary response. He chooses not to fight back, not to respond to violence with violence. He chooses to endure with hope that God, in God’s own way, will deliver and vindicate him. Christians later saw this passage as a poignant description of Jesus’ suffering in his passion.

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Dear Families in Christ,

The Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion, (Matthew 21:1-11) in today’s Gospel is a concrete and blunt Passion account. It’s an unadorned affliction. It is easy for us to be overwhelmed and be blinded by the painful sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cruelest, most miserable of all deaths—from the garden of betrayal to the garden of extravagant burial, one appropriate for a King: His body carefully dignified and adorned with spices, a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. This passion is a tale of tragedy and a story of Glory. The attendance of the daily and weekly liturgies around the world have not been impressive because of the CORONAVIRUS’ International crisis. The Holy Father Pope Francis is leading all of us at the Vatican in our fervent prayers to eradicate this invisible enemies during Lenten season.

The passion of Jesus sets the tone for all that is to happen: The Reconciliation of Penitents, the remembrance of the Passover, the First Eucharist, our celebration of dying to sin, the anxious expectant at the tomb, the welcoming and initiation of the elects, and the bright light overwhelming joy of Easter Sunday. The Passion of the Lord Jesus leads us to these tragedy and Glory. The Passion of Jesus enables us to recognize God’s presence in the humiliation and failings of life. The Passion of Jesus makes any passion we may undergo “Holy.” The Paschal mystery of the “Holy Week” has many dimensions. When Jesus completed the last 3 days of His life for our redemption is so profound and meaningful. We must enter them through our faith by our liturgical experience. This Holy Triduum is a very special time for our solemn prayers. The days of Holy Week are important days in “our house of prayers.” If we are truly alive in the practice of our faith, then the ardent celebration of Holy Week is a must. It is not only significant but a commitment to our faith.

On Holy Thursday we reflect on three-fold mystery which touches our Christian living. The body and blood of the Lord as our spiritual nourishment and the communion with God that implies for us each day of our lives. The Eucharistic mystery is the summit and the “high point,” of our liturgical life. Our beloved Father Anthony Le, who acts as mediator in the person of Jesus when he brings the sacrament, serves us in a manner so special and crucial for our sanctification and salvation. One must evoke heartfelt gratitude to the Lord and respect for that Saintly Priesthood. Our Priest, Father Anthony Le deserves tremendous honor and reverence every day and especially during this “Holy Week.” On Holy Thursday, we reflect on the mystery of fraternal charity, love of neighbors, symbolized in the washing of the feet at the Last Supper.

With Good Friday, we gaze upon the Crucifixion scene of our Lord Jesus. This is the one day when our church does not offer the holy mass. The Roman soldiers dividing of His garments and casting lots from Jesus’ seamless tunic. With our Lady, Holy Mary Mother of God, we stand at the foot of the Cross on this day. She remains silently grief-stricken at the foot of the Cross and reflects upon the price of our redemption—the shedding of the innocent blood of Christ. This Divine King reins on The Cross where He entered into class combat with enemies of God, battled them through forgiveness, non-violence and love. He will soon manifest His decisive victory. On Holy Saturday evening we celebrate the new light, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The Easter mystery breaks forth with great joy as we light the new fire and hear the beautiful accounts of our salvation History in the special readings from the Holy scriptures. It is a night for renewing our baptism and to adhere in faith to the Lord. Saint Catherine’s Parish rejoices in the beautiful, reverential, baptism of our Catechumens. The new and renewed life are the theme of this memorable Vigil celebration. We hope and pray that the Holy Week will inspire us. With open hearts and enlightened minds we will permit the Holy Spirit to make us truly Holy. Amen.

May God bless you all.

C.C. Salonga
Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has issued the following regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19):

With the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus, we are confronted once more with the fragility of our lives, and again we are reminded of our common humanity — that the peoples of this world are our brothers and sisters, that we are all one family under God.

God does not abandon us, he goes with us even now in this time of trial and testing. In this moment, it is important for us to anchor our hearts in the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Now is the time to intensify our prayers and sacrifices for the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Let us draw closer to one another in our love for him, and rediscover the things that truly matter in our lives.

United with our Holy Father Pope Francis, let us pray in solidarity for our brothers and sisters here and around the world who are sick. Let us pray for those who have lost loved ones to this virus. May God console them and grant them peace.

We pray also for doctors, nurses, and caregivers, for public health officials and all civic leaders. May God grant them courage and prudence as they seek to respond to this emergency with compassion and in service to the common good.

In this time of need, I invite all the faithful to seek together the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and I share this prayer with you:

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas. We fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.

Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind.

Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy.

Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.
To assure that our Church and facilities testify to the greater honor and glory of God.

Due to the grave health risk involved in public gatherings; All masses, liturgies, events, trainings, ministry and organization meetings are suspended until further notice. All facilities are closed to the public.


IN LIGHT OF COVID-19
We’re relying on our app to communicate with you

Please download our app and allow notifications.

To Download
Text “App” to 88202 or search “myParish” in your app store.

8 AM Daily Mass will be livestreamed Sunday Mass will be livestreamed at 11 AM

Vida Católica Cada Día  Catholic Life Every Day
St. Catherine of Siena App —

Messages
Fácilmente conecte todos la semana

Calendar
Eventos, ubicaciones, RSVP

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And Much More!

Search for "myParish" in the App Store or go to myparishapp.com to download

Baje nuestra app hoy! Disponible para aparatos Apple y Android

Download our app today! Available for Apple and Android devices.

St. Catherine of Siena has launched our own app for iPhone and Android smart phones.

This will allow us to better communicate with you throughout the week and keep you updated with relevant parish news or updates. The app is very well designed and very intuitive. It will be a great resource for parishioners by providing: daily Mass readings, Catholic news and prayers, convenient prayer and Confession reminders, our bulletins and so much more.

We hope for our new app to be a tool for fostering stronger parish life at St. Catherine of Siena Parish and School, and better engaging the New Evangelization.

Available in both English and Spanish
Litanies are prayers to our Lord, his Blessed Mother, and the saints consisting of a series of petitions and responses. Although they are traditionally used in church services, they can also be prayed in private devotions, and may be sung.

The word “litany” itself comes from the Greek word “litr,” meaning “prayer” or “supplication.” In public worship, one person recites the first part of the prayer, which is followed by a response from the congregation (such as “pray for us”).

These prayers have their roots in the pre-Christian era when Jews used this responsive pattern in public worship. The first Christian litanies probably consisted of the frequent repetition of the words Kyrie Eleison (Greek for “Lord have Mercy,” the same words we pray at Mass). The faithful added more and more prayers and petitions over time until there were over eighty different forms of litanies by the 17th century!

It was then, in 1601, that Pope Clement VIII officially forbade publication and public recitation of any of these other than the Litany of the Saints and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (also known as the Litany of Loreto).

Since then the Holy See has approved four additional ones for public use. These pay tribute to the Most Holy Name of Jesus, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Most Precious Blood of Jesus and St. Joseph. There are many others that can be used for private prayers, however, such as the Litany of St. Jude, the Litany of St. Michael, the Litany of St. Therese, a Litany for the Dying, and the Litany of Humility.

These prayers are rich in imagery. For example, the Blessed Virgin Mary is referred to as Mother, Virgin and Queen under various titles but also as a “spiritual vessel” “gate of heaven” and “refuge of sinners.” The Sacred Heart of Jesus is called the “Sacred Temple of God,” “the burning furnace of charity,” “victim for our sins” and most importantly “salvation of all who trust in Thee.”

St. Joseph, “Spouse of the Mother of God,” is given due honor as the “Head of the Holy family,” the “Diligent protector of Christ,” and “patron of the dying” (one of the many titles of his patronage).

Whether prayed publicly or privately, these prayers give us a wonderful overview of the attributes that make our Lady, our Lord, and His Church so special.

A Litany to Pray Frequently in Time of Health Pandemic

This may be prayed individually or in alternation with others.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us. Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

O God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, have mercy on us.
O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
O God the Holy Spirit, Sanctifier of the faithful, have mercy on us.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

From all evil, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
From every sin, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
From everlasting death, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By your Incarnation, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By your Death and Resurrection, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Lord, deliver us, we pray.

Holy Mary, pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, pray for us.
Mother of the Church, pray for us.
Mother of Christians, pray for us.
Mother of the human family, pray for us.
Refuge of sinners, pray for us.
Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.
Consolation of the lonely, pray for us.
Solace of the fearful, pray for us.
Hope of the poor, pray for us.
Health of the sick, pray for us.
Companion of the dying, pray for us.
Strength of caregivers, pray for us.
Help of Christians, pray for us.

Queen of angels, pray for us.
Queen of apostles, pray for us.
Queen of martyrs, pray for us.
Queen of virgins, pray for us.
Queen of all saints, pray for us.
Queen of Heaven, pray for us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.
Compiled from liturgical and traditional sources by Anthony Ruff, Saint John’s
Pray Chaplet of the Divine Mercy everyday at 3 PM.
We would like to invite all of us to pray together at this hour
to emerge the world in the ocean of the Lord’s Divine Mercy.
May the mercy of God bring us consolation and peace.

Mysteries of the
Holy Rosary

JOYFUL MYSTERIES
(Monday, Thursday)

Annunciation
Visitation
Birth of
Our Lord
Presentation in
the Temple
Finding of
Our Lord

HUMILITY
Fraternal Charity
Esteem of
spiritual values
Purity and
Obedience
Fidelity to
one’s duties

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES
(Tuesday, Friday)

Agony of Our Lord
Scourging at
the pillar
Crowning
with thorns
Carrying of
the Cross
Crucifixion

Sorrow for sin
Mortification of
the senses
Love of
humiliations
Bearing of trials
Forgiveness of
injuries

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES
(Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday)

Resurrection
Ascension
into Heaven
Descent of the
Holy Ghost
Assumption
Crowning of
Our Blessed Lady

Faith and Hope
Desire of
Heaven
The Gifts of
the Holy Ghost
Devotion to Mary
Perseverance

3 Hail Mary’s
2 Hail Mary’s
1 Our Father
& Glory Be

4 Hail Mary’s
5 Our Father
& Glory Be

10 Hail Mary’s
11 Our Father
& Glory Be

12 Our Father
& Glory Be

13 10 Hail Mary’s

14 Hail Mary’s

http://LesTresAveMarias.blogspot.com
**Sunday, Apr 05, 2020  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 the villains of Holy Week bear an uneasy resemblance to ourselves. Too often, we fail to stand with the innocent. We’re content to benefit from the peril of those who offend us. We seek to destroy what we don’t understand. We deny friends who seem too dangerous to embrace. We run from another’s crisis to save ourselves. On Palm Sunday, we’re the ones crying: “Crucify him!” Raise your voice today for the innocent.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** Procession: Matthew 21:1-11 (37); Mass: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Matthew 26:14—27:66 (38). “I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard.”

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**Monday, Apr 06, 2020  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. Fittingly, 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. 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.”

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**Tuesday, Apr 07, 2020  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, 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 times of trial.

**TODAY’S READINGS:** Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38 (258). “Will you lay down your life for me?”

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**Wednesday, Apr 08, 2020  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 or planning an ambush in keeping with the story. Along with the Mass of the day, today may include an 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. 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.”

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**Thursday, Apr 09, 2020**

**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—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.”

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**Friday, Apr 10, 2020**

**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. 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 was born and for this I came into the world.”

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**Saturday, Apr 11, 2020**

**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. The service 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. Whether it’s your first time, your favorite night of the church year, or somewhere in between, this is a night to remember. Don’t miss it.

**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). “As day was dawning, Mary Magdalene came with the other Mary to inspect the tomb. . . . Do not be frightened . . . he has been raised.”
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