

NORBERTINEOUTREACHNM

Participating in The Passion

A PERSONAL LENTEN RETREAT INVITATION

March 27 & April 3

2PM INSTAGRAM LIVE

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2020 Lenten Retreat Reflection Guide

"Just as every week we have the little Easter of Sunday to rejoice in the Resurrection, we also have the little Good Friday of every Friday to remember Christ's passion."

Susanna Spencer, Blessed is She

Palm Sunday, Second Reading, Philippians 2:6-11

*Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Simon of Cyrene

We must remember that Christ was in his most human state here, when Simon was pulled from the crowd to help him carry the cross - He needed help, "he emptied himself"

Who was Simon? What words would we use to describe him?

Of these words, which would you use to describe yourself? Which words would you like to claim, or change?

In reference to Mark 15:21 - **They pressed into service...Simon, a Cyrenian:** a condemned person was constrained to bear his own instrument of torture, at least the crossbeam; Jesus was innocent. The precise naming of Simon and his sons is probably due to their being known among early Christian believers to whom Mark addressed his gospel. Rufus, Simon's son, is also mentioned by name among those of the early Church (Romans 16:13).

- We do not hear about Simon (or his sons) before this encounter. Did this encounter change him and even move him to evangelize his sons?

What can we learn from Simon about conversion?

The 3 C's of Conversion

1. CALL: Take up and carry your cross and follow Me (Luke 9:23-24).

Like Simon, sometimes we have to be pressed and given extra encouragement to our call as disciples of Christ. Whether invited, at the end of ourselves, or even seemingly pushed, we are each called to take up and carry our crosses in pursuing a life with Christ.

2. CARRY: Our call to humility and obedience, to open our hearts and minds, to step out in faith and trust that we do not carry our crosses alone; even after His own passion, Christ helps us.

To carry the cross requires humility and a spirit of obedience; it is an acknowledgment of sin in our lives and a response of love to what God has done to save us all (see John 14:21 and John 3:16); it is a confession of our most essential need and desire for God.

3. CHANGE: An encounter with Christ, who "God greatly exalted," who is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), always changes us.

To some degree. Perhaps we recognize that we need to be a little more patient, with others and ourselves; to love a little more intentionally; to extend or receive forgiveness; to change some of our habits or make a significant life change, etc. At some level, we are moved toward a change in how we think, how we feel, how we live.

The Way of the Cross

Take a look inside of your Bibles (or an online Bible). When referring to the “Way of the Cross” (as a section; see below) in New American Bible (NAB) versions of Scripture, Simon of Cyrene is the only part of this way mentioned in Matthew and Mark, and among those mentioned in Luke. We might say that it is with Simon, the eighth Scriptural station, that we associate the “way” – the nature of the cross and our relationship with it and with Christ. The “way” is not easy, but it is the journey of faith that we are called to (John 14:6).

Matthew 27:31-38 New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE)

³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

The Way of the Cross.^[a] ³² As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

The Crucifixion. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), ³⁴ they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall.^[b] But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. ³⁵ After they had crucified him, they divided his garments^[c] by casting lots; ³⁶ then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And they placed over his head the written charge^[d] against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. ³⁸ Two revolutionaries^[e] were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left.

Mark 15:20-27 New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE)

²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.

The Way of the Cross. ²¹ They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian,^[a] who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

The Crucifixion. ²² They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). ²³ They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴ ^[b] Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. ²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning^[c] when they crucified him. ²⁶ ^[d] The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷ With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left.

Luke 23:25-33 New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE)

²⁵ So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

The Way of the Cross.^[a] ²⁶ As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. ²⁸ Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, ²⁹ for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ ³⁰ At that time people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ ³¹ for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?” ³² Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed.

The Crucifixion. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left.

Personalize the Scriptural Stations of the Cross

The following stations of the cross are not those of the traditional devotion, but are based on those celebrated by Pope John Paul II on Good Friday 1991. They are meant to help us reflect more deeply on the Scriptural accounts of Christ's passion.

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane - Have I truly committed my will to God's will?

2. Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested - Have I forgiven when someone has hurt me, or have I acknowledged and asked forgiveness of someone I hurt, even unintentionally?

3. Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin - What has my response been when I've been wrongfully judged or condemned?

4. Jesus is Denied by Peter - Have I ever denied Christ?

5. Jesus is Judged by Pilate - Perhaps a reminder of our own mortality, a lesson in humility and acknowledgment of our total dependence on God.... This is an open invitation to deeply ponder the sacrifice God made for me. I must ask myself the deep questions about my own spiritual journey. Am I really responding as God wants?

6. Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns - Have I ever been mocked for my faith or mocked others because of something they value that I don't agree with?

7. Jesus Bears the Cross - Where in my life is my cross? Have I embraced it, or am I fighting it along the way?

8. Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross - Am I humble enough to allow another to help me? Can I ask for someone's help or offer my help without letting pride get in the way? Perhaps I can examine places where I am neglecting my neighbor instead of alleviating his or her burden?

9. Jesus meets the Women of Jerusalem - Jesus reminded the women of Jerusalem to properly direct their sorrow. I, too, may need to examine where I place my sorrows, frustration, and complaints. Is it rightfully directed? Where in my life can I better place my sorrow and efforts to help others?

10. Jesus is Crucified - Often it seems we are defeated with no way to regain our footing. This reflection can invite us to recall what was truly defeated on Jesus' cross. If I focus on what is truly good and holy, I participate in what was won on the cross. What unimportant matters in my life can I let go of?

11. Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief - Have I offered hope to someone lately? How do I think of or treat those who have done wrong but are seeking redemption?

12. Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciple - Have I turned to Mary recently? Can I become childlike and simple to fully receive the love of our Blessed Mother? What obstacles may be preventing me?

13. Jesus Dies on the Cross - A time of sorrow and mourning. In my own life, I may feel or have felt alone, even dead to the world. If I relate these to Jesus' sense of aloneness and remember I was created for eternity, not just our short time on earth, how does this change my perspective and approach to life?

14. Jesus is Placed in the Tomb - During a difficult period of trustful waiting, I need a great deal of patience. Where can I practice more patience in my life to better prepare me for future trials? What is a "death" in my life that I may need to put to rest?

The Road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-35

¹³ Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, ¹⁴ and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. ¹⁵ And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. ²² Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning ²³ and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. ²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. ³² Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" ³³ So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them ³⁴ who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Another Simon – Who is Simon in verse 34?

This is Simon Peter, who was referred to as Simon before Christ – Was he called Simon when he lacked faith or sinned? (Luke 22:33-34, 54-62 – remember, he denied Christ three times). By appearing to Simon Peter before the other disciples, Christ further shows us that he came into the world for "those who are sick" (Luke 5:31); he seeks out those who have sinned against him for love of them and to forgive them.

Think about a time when you encountered Christ but didn't realize it was Him until later. What happened? What made you realize it was Him? Think also about what conversion has looked like in your life. How would you describe it? Spend some time in prayerful reflection.

If you don't believe you've experienced such an encounter yet, think about what (or who) inspires/challenges you toward deeper faith? Could it be Christ?

Which encounter with Christ most reflects your journey right now, the Way of the Cross or the Road to Emmaus? How might we journey on no matter the nature of the encounter?

Resources for Further Prayer and Reflection

St. Pope John Paul II's Scriptural Stations of the Cross: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/scriptural-stations-of-the-cross.cfm?fbclid=IwAR2NHMlvDZ3MPKqhY-tlZZviEZgzXiagnaMiVeuhnqigByDKV2r0FzljzCl>

"2020 Personal Lenten Retreat" Spotify Playlist by Norbertine Outreach NM (with "Daily Mass: The road to Emmaus" Podcast episode from Catholic Inspiration):

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0Jj3ZWIOrBe6PAUI9q7Zz1?si=tqA0HG13QniUYzq-lq-mtQ>

1983 Code of Canon Law 1249-1253 - https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P4O.HTM