

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 50:4-7; 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."*

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 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."*

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?"*

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."*

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."*

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."*

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."*

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



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