

Sunday, Mar 28, 2021

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Remember kindly

None of us needs a reminder that life is full of suffering and loss. We'll all have a generous share of sorrow before we're through. What bears constant reminding is that seeds of kindness are sown each hour as well. In the final days before his Passion, an unnamed woman anointed Jesus with costly perfumed oil. It was a symbolic act, signaling his role as God's anointed and one prepared for death. It was also a gentle act in a week that would hold much cruelty. Seed the world with small kindnesses to testify against the darkness.

TODAY'S READINGS: Procession: Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16 (37); Mass: Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Mark 14:1—15:47 (38).
"Wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Monday, Mar 29, 2021

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

A most worthy work of mercy

Among the corporal works of mercy, there's one you might take for granted: bury the dead. We bury our own friends and family, but what about those in your community who die with no one to bury them? There are pallbearer ministries—sometimes named after Saint Joseph of Arimathea, who provided a tomb for Jesus' burial—for the homeless, often veterans, and others left alone in the world who need someone to see them home one final time. See what your parish and local funeral home does for those who die alone. Can you offer them the dignity of your presence or, at the very least, during this time of COVID, your specific prayers?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11 (257). *"Let her keep this for the day of my burial."*

Tuesday, Mar 30, 2021

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Can I get an amen?

We know the word *amen* typically ends a prayer. It's there to signal a shared agreement to what's been said, as in: "Yes, it's so." But what about an *amen* at the beginning of a statement? And what if it's used twice, as is common in the Gospel of John? "Amen, amen, I say to you," Jesus says repeatedly. According to scripture scholar Raymond Brown, Jesus uses the phrase to show he speaks with the authority of God. Jesus speaks God's truth—which is why some translations say "Truly, truly" instead. Listen closely for God's truth this Holy Week.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38 (258).
"Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

Wednesday, Mar 31, 2021

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Patience, people

Tomorrow being Holy Thursday, today is the last full day of Lent. And how was our Lent? Do you feel relief that your Lenten resolutions can be set aside? Saddened to lose the extra time set aside for prayer? Perhaps regret that your anticipated Lenten practices got lost in the daily commotion of the past six weeks? Here is the important question: Is your heart open to God and God's love? Lent is a gift of time, to be sure, but the opportunity to

fast, pray, and give alms, to grow in the love of God is ours every day. The words of Saint Francis de Sales come to mind: "Have patience with all things, but first of all with yourself."

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Matthew 26:14-25 (259).
"Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear."

Thursday, Apr 01, 2021

HOLY THURSDAY; EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Get down and dirty

Some parishes have trouble finding parishioners willing to have the priest wash their feet at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. The idea of washing hands instead has been proposed. But the church has been firm: The stooping down to wash lowly, possibly dusty feet sends the message of humble, loving service that Christ intended when he performed this act himself. The next time you are called on to wash dishes, take out the garbage, or do a bit of dirty work, see it as a chance to live the spirit of Christ's act of washing his disciples' feet.

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 02, 2021

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

Mercy me

Mercy is not always something we think about—until we are in need of it. Mercy refers to God's compassion and kindness toward us, especially when we have not been our best selves. On Good Friday, we see clearly, though painfully, the extent of God's mercy in a love so great that Jesus, God's beloved, is willing to go to the cross. We keep ourselves ever mindful of mercy as a way to understand a God whose fundamental "disposition" is one of loving kindness—no matter what. As you pray through this holy day, remember your own experiences of God's mercy.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42 (40). *"And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit."*

Saturday, Apr 03, 2021

HOLY SATURDAY; EASTER VIGIL

This holy in-between time

Scripture commentator John T. Squires calls Holy Saturday a "liminal space" marked by waiting and not knowing. This is the quiet, uncertain day between Crucifixion and Resurrection. In some sense, this entire past year has been a liminal year, as we are caught between the emergence of a history-changing virus and its hoped-for suppression. What can we learn from the disciples who waited and prayed? They prayed that life would emerge victorious over death. Let that be our prayer as well.

TODAY'S READINGS: Vigil: Genesis 1:1—2:2; Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 14:15—15:1; Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18; 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; Mark 16:1-7 (41). *"Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."*

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



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