

PALM SUNDAY

✧ YEAR B ✧



AT A CROSSROADS

PRAYER JOURNAL

OPENING PRAYER

All Glory Laud and Honor

Refrain:

All glory, laud, and honor
to thee, Redeemer, King!
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's Name comest,
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels
are praising thee on high;
and mortal men and all things
created make reply.

The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present.

To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise;
to thee, now high exalted,
our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises;
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest,
thou good and gracious King.

Refrain:

—Theodulph of Orleans, Hymn for Palm Sunday Liturgy

READINGS FOR PALM SUNDAY

AT THE PROCESSION WITH PALMS – GOSPEL

~Mark 11:1-10~

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it, you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone should say to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ reply, ‘The Master has need of it and will send it back here at once.’” So they went off and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” They answered them just as Jesus had told them to, and they permitted them to do it. So they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: “Hosanna! / Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! / Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! / Hosanna in the highest!”

AT THE MASS – FIRST READING

~Isaiah 50:4-7~

The Lord GOD has given me / a well-trained tongue, / that I might know how to speak to the weary / a word that will rouse them. / Morning after morning / he opens my ear that I may hear; / and I have not rebelled, / have not turned back. / I gave my back to those who beat me, / my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; / my face I did not shield / from buffets and spitting. / The Lord GOD is my help, / therefore I am not disgraced; / I have set my face like flint, / knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

~Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24~

R/ My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him.”

R/

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
they have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

R/

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

R/

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
“You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!”

R/

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.

GOSPEL

~Mark 14:1—15:47~

~Short-form option Mark 15: 1-39~

N. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time. So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death. They said,

C. "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."

N. When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head. There were some who were indignant.

C. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor."

N. They were infuriated with her. Jesus said,

J. “Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

N. Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them. When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him,

C. “Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

N. He sent two of his disciples and said to them,

J. “Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”’ Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there.”

N. The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he told them; and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one,

O. “Surely it is not I?”

N. He said to them,

J. “One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish. For the Son

of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born.”

N. While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said,

J. “Take it; this is my body.”

N. Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them,

J. “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

N. Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them,

J. “All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written: / I will strike the shepherd, / and the sheep will be dispersed. / But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.”

N. Peter said to him,

C. “Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be.”

N. Then Jesus said to him,

J. “Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.”

N. But he vehemently replied,

O. “Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.”

N. And they all spoke similarly.

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,

J. “Sit here while I pray.”

N. He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them,

J. “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.”

N. He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said,

J. “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.”

N. When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter,

J. “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”

N. Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them,

J. “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

N. Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying,

O. “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.”

N. He came and immediately went over to him and said,

O. “Rabbi.”

N. And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus said to them in reply,

J. “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me? Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.”

N. And they all left him and fled. Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest’s courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none. Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging,

C. “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.’ ”

N. Even so their testimony did not agree. The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying,

O. “Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?”

N. But he was silent and answered him nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him,

O. “Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?” Then Jesus answered,

J. “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man / seated at the right hand of the Power / and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ ”

N. At that the high priest tore his garments and said,

O. “What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

N. They all condemned him as deserving to die. Some began to spit on him. They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him,

C. “Prophecy!”

N. And the guards greeted him with blows.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest’s maids came along. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said,

O. “You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”

N. But he denied it saying,

O. “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.”

N. So he went out into the outer court. Then the cock crowed. The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders,

O. “This man is one of them.”

N. Once again he denied it. A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more,

O. “Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean.”

N. He began to curse and to swear,

O. “I do not know this man about whom you are talking.”

N. And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.” He broke down and wept.

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him,

O. “Are you the king of the Jews?”

N. He said to him in reply,

J. “You say so.”

N. The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him,

O. “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.”

N. Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered,

O. “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?”

N. For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply,

O. “Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?”

N. They shouted again,

C. “Crucify him.”

N. Pilate said to them,

O. “Why? What evil has he done?”

N. They only shouted the louder,

C. “Crucify him.”

N. So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with,

C. “Hail, King of the Jews!”

N. and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. 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.

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

They brought him to the place of Golgotha—which is translated Place of the Skull—. They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying,

C. “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross.”

N. Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said,

C. “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.”

N. Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

J. "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"

N. which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Some of the bystanders who heard it said,

C. "Look, he is calling Elijah."

N. One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying,

O. "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."

N. Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

N. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said,

O. "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

N. There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There was also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion,

he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus watched where he was laid.

Sunday



LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.

LECTIO DIVINA – MEDITATION

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #1

Take some time and look back over your Lenten journey. Recall this past Lent, starting with the beginning and going through all of the ups and downs of trying to keep your resolutions. Is yours a story of success, one of failure, or perhaps a mixture of both? What were some of the evident graces during this season for you?

Bring both your successes and failures to the foot of the Cross. Whether or not you were successful, you need Jesus. Jesus's grace from the Cross is what made any of your successes possible. And if you failed, Jesus isn't going to withhold any grace from you this week. His mercy extends even into our failures, and one of the gifts of Lent is to prepare

our hearts to receive his love. St. Teresa of Calcutta said that, “God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful.”

Reflect on your Lenten journey in this context. How can you enter this week with gratitude to Christ on the Cross, whether or not you succeeded in your resolutions?

SMALL GROUP QUESTION #2

St. Josemaria Escriva, who had a gift for getting to the heart of a matter, once wrote, “On this Palm Sunday, when our Lord begins the week which is so decisive for our salvation, let us put aside the more superficial aspects of the question and go right to the core, to what is really important. Look: what we have to try to do is to get to heaven. If we don’t, nothing is worthwhile. Faithfulness to Christ’s doctrine is absolutely essential to our getting to heaven. To be faithful is absolutely essential to striving doggedly against anything that blocks our way to eternal happiness.”

Ponder these words and let the Holy Spirit speak to you. Holy Week is the most important time of the year. It should be a time where we live very differently than usual, stop what we are doing as much as we can, and be with our Lord. But it can be so easy for us to get distracted by the busyness of life. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you can live your Holy Week in a way that focuses on our heavenly goal.

Are there any barriers in your life that might distract you from Jesus? Are there any ways that you think the Lord is calling you to live your life differently during this time?

LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

PRAYER

Ponder the Gospel of Jesus's Passion and Death today. This is a long reading, so take a moment and ask the Lord to call to mind one scene or person from this Gospel that he wants you to relate with today. There is the scene of the woman at Bethany with the alabaster jar, the man who provided the room for the Passover meal, the Last Supper, Gethsemane, Peter's denial, Pilate, Mary at the foot of the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea, or even Simon or Veronica.

Take a word that comes to mind and ponder on what it means to you personally. For example, perhaps you felt moved to reflect on the woman who poured oil on Jesus's head and were drawn to the words, "She has done what she could." Ask yourself what this means in your own life. How is Jesus encouraging you in the ways that you have loved him this Lent, no matter how small?

RESOLUTION

In a general audience during Holy Week, Pope Francis taught that “living Holy Week means entering ever more deeply into the logic of God, into the logic of the Cross, which is not primarily that of suffering and death, but rather that of love and of the gift of self which brings life. It means entering into the logic of the Gospel. Following and accompanying Christ, staying with him, demands ‘coming out of ourselves,’ requires us to be outgoing; to come out of ourselves, out of a dreary way of living faith that has become a habit, out of the temptation to withdraw into our own plans which end by shutting out God’s creative action. God came out of himself to come among us, he pitched his tent among us to bring to us his mercy that saves and gives hope.”

During this Holy Week, how can you come out of yourself? How can you make space in your everyday life to meet God so that he can fill you with the gift of himself? How can you put aside your own plans and give God permission to move in you and through you?

CLOSING PRAYER

I THIRST FOR YOU

I THIRST FOR YOU.

Yes, that is the only way to even begin to describe my love for you.

I THIRST FOR YOU.

I thirst to love you and to be loved by you—that is how precious you are to me.

I THIRST FOR YOU.

Come to me, and I will fill your heart and heal your wounds.

I will make you a new creation, and give you peace, even in all your trials.

I THIRST FOR YOU.

You must never doubt my mercy, my acceptance of you,
my desire to forgive, my longing to bless you and live my life in you.

I THIRST FOR YOU.

If you feel unimportant in the eyes of the world, that matters not at all.
For me, there is no one any more important in the entire world than you.

I THIRST FOR YOU.

Open to me, come to me, thirst for me, give me your life—
and I will prove to you how important you are to my heart.

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

“So, in thinking about Christ’s death, we find ourselves invited to take a good hard look at our everyday activities and to be serious about the faith we profess. Holy Week cannot be a kind of ‘religious interlude’; time taken out from a life which is completely caught up in human affairs. It must be an opportunity to understand more profoundly the love of God, so that we’ll be able to show that love to other people through what we do and say.”

—St. Josemaria Escriva

Monday

Today Jesus goes into Jerusalem and cleanses the Temple. At night he returns to Bethany, where the woman had broken the alabaster jar over him a few days before. Jesus will spend the next few nights in Bethany in preparation for his Passion.

Call to mind Jesus's words: "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me." Since he kept going back there every night this week, we can speculate that Jesus was loved by his friends at Bethany, and even felt at home there. How can you make your heart a home for Jesus as he prepares to enter into his Passion?

"I try always to be a Bethany for Jesus, so that He may rest here after all His labors."

—St. Faustina

Tuesday

In the Second Reading for this week St. Paul says that Jesus "humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Today, meditate on these words in your own life. The Christian life presents countless moments where we can die and rise with Jesus. As we die to our sin, we rise to new life.

Have you allowed yourself truly to die with Jesus? How is Jesus calling you to die to this Easter so that you may rise with him?

"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

—1 Corinthians 1:18 (RSV-CE)

Wednesday

At this point in Lent things can seem very dark. It is important to remember that even as we enter into the very real darkness of sin and evil, God is still there. We have every reason to hope.

Look at the Psalm for this week, particularly the words, “The Lord God is my help, / therefore I am not disgraced; / I have set my face like flint, / knowing that I shall not be put to shame.” These words are the key to being able to suffer with Jesus. Jesus relied on his Father in his sufferings. How can you also rely on our Father in your sufferings?

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

—Romans 8:15-17 (RSV-CE)

Thursday

Today begins the Easter Triduum. Holy Thursday is the day that Christ ate the Passover meal with his disciples and instituted the Eucharist. Tonight, he will go to Gethsemane and pray to his Father and ours. It is there that he will be betrayed and taken to the Sanhedrin and kept in prison overnight.

Today, try to enter in to these events as they would happen in real time. In each event, particularly ponder Jesus's words from the Last Supper as he gives us his own Body and Blood for food. How do these words take on new meaning with each moment of his Passion?

"[St. Francis of Assisi] was one day found by a gentleman shedding tears, and crying out with a loud voice: being asked the cause, "I weep," he answers, "over the sorrow and disgraces of my Lord: and what cause me the greatest sorrow is, that men, for whom he suffered so much, live in forgetfulness of him." And on saying this he wept the more, so that this gentleman began also himself to weep."

—St. Alphonsus de Liguori

Friday

Today Jesus is taken to the Romans. After being sent back and forth between Herod and Pilate, he is finally condemned to scourging and crucifixion. Jesus carries his Cross, is crucified, and dies. His side is pierced and the veil in the Temple is torn. He is taken off the Cross and buried.

Try to stay close to Jesus throughout your day. You can read through the Gospel throughout your day at the time certain events would be happening. Jesus saw each one of us as he died for us, and he sees you now from the Cross. Be with him in these moments.

"At this most difficult time He proclaimed, 'I thirst.' And people thought He was thirsty in an ordinary way and they gave him vinegar straight away; but it was not for that thirst; it was for our love, our affection, that intimate attachment to Him, and that sharing of His passion. He used, 'I thirst,' instead of 'Give Me your love'... 'I thirst.' Let us hear Him saying it to me and saying it to you."

—St. Teresa of Calcutta

Saturday

Today is a day of silence and waiting. Jesus is going to open the gates of Heaven and release all the dead to new life. But on earth all of his disciples are left to mourn.

Holy Saturday is a special day to spend with Jesus's mother. Today, try to stay by Mary's side, both in her sorrow and her eager expectation. She may not have known what was coming, but she knew that evil had not won. Ask her to teach you how she hoped even in this darkness. Ask her to teach you how to let your heart grow with expectation for the joy that will come in the morning.

"Confessing our sins may be difficult for us, but it brings us peace. We are sinners and we need God's forgiveness."

—Pope Francis, Twitter, November 18, 2013