



Bringing Home the Word

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (B)

March 28, 2021

Acceptance of the Passion

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

There is a sharp contrast between Jesus' and Peter's acceptance of Christ's passion. Both are afraid, but while Jesus faces and embraces, Peter hides and denies.

We understand Peter's gloomy darkness and identify with the confusion and weakness leading to his failure. Like us, he tries to follow Jesus, but at a safe distance. He wants to be close, but not too close. He wants to feel he hasn't abandoned him, to be there—but remains on the fringe.

But following Jesus always leads to moments of truth. Jesus and life have a way of bringing us full circle to face our true selves. Are we in or out? How deep is our love? This time, Peter's love for Jesus fails. But like us, Jesus looks at him with understanding and gives him a chance to be honest, repent, and follow him once again.

Jesus' acceptance of his passion is our example. First, he suffers freely. He's not being forced into a fate he cannot escape. As a result, he is calm, self-possessed, in control of his heart, and patient. Second, he suffers peacefully without resentment. He isn't constantly recriminating against Judas, Peter, or John during his trial or flagellation. He doesn't seek blame or payback.

Not only is he not bitter or resentful, but he is full of compassion and focused on others: on the elderly women, his Mother, John the Apostle, forgiving his tormenters, and leading the good thief to heaven. Let's enter this holiest week following our Redeemer and imitating his example. +

A Word from Pope Francis

This celebration seems to combine stories of joy and suffering, mistakes and successes, which are part of our daily lives as disciples. It somehow expresses the contradictory feelings that we too, the men and women of today, experience: the capacity for great love...but also the ability to "wash our hands" at the right moment.

—Palm Sunday Homily, March 25, 2018



Sunday Readings

Mark 11:1–10 or John 12:12–16

Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Isaiah 50:4–7; Philippians 2:6–11

Rather, he emptied himself... becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Mark 14:1—15:47 or 15:1–39

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."

Not only is Jesus not bitter or resentful, but he is full of compassion and focused on others.

REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
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REFLECTION

- Do I value the infinite mercy of Jesus, who forgives me whenever I turn to him sincerely?

Journey to Joy

By Kathleen M. Basi

I first noticed it at Thanksgiving several years ago when everyone was posting what-I'm-thankful-for lists. Counting my blessings only seemed to underscore the sadness I was feeling on behalf of the multitudes whose lives consisted of suffering: refugees, sick children, communities torn apart by racism, and worlds blown apart by gunfire and suicide bombs. I felt powerless—and at the same time deeply aware that I really wasn't trying very hard to make a difference, especially considering how much I have been given.

Opening ourselves to joy also sensitizes us to sorrow—and vice versa. The two go hand in hand.

Holy Week illustrates this in a profound way. In a handful of days, we travel from the bleakest stage of the Christian journey to its most glorious. In fact, the power of the latter depends upon the apparent hopelessness of the former.

If we want to live the joy of the resurrection to its fullest, we have to be willing to shine a light on the dark underbelly of our own lives and clean up our acts. To recognize the ways in which our actions—or lack thereof—contribute to the pain of the world. We need to be willing to acknowledge that, all too often, we're part of the problem.



But wait—didn't we just spend all of Lent doing exactly that? It's Easter now. Isn't it time to move beyond penance and focus on, you know...joy?

The potential for great good and for great evil resides within every heart, and the opportunity to choose comes to us every day, regardless of the season. Jesus didn't endure the Way of the Cross to give us a fifty-day vacation from examining our consciences. He went through it to show us that the pathway to the fullness of life passes through pain: through dying to our sins, our selfishness, the grudges we hold, and the

preconceived lenses through which we view the world and the people in it.

To grieve for the suffering of others and acknowledge the ways in which our own failure to act can contribute to that suffering joins us to the heart of God. When we unite ourselves to the heart of God, we feel compelled to change—to act as God's hands and feet in the world. And it is through this action that we discover the full joy of the resurrection. +

*With all the bleakness,
how do we get to
the feast of joy that is
the resurrection?*

PRAYER

*Lord, you empty yourself out
in loving service to all people.
Give me a selfless spirit that
I may be of service to others.*

—From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day
of Lent and Easter*, Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 29–April 3

Monday of Holy Week:

Is 42:1–7 / Jn 12:1–11

Tuesday of Holy Week:

Is 49:1–6 / Jn 13:21–33, 36–38

Wednesday of Holy Week:

Is 50:4–9a / Mt 26:14–25

Holy Thursday: Ex 12:1–8, 11–14 /

1 Cor 11:23–26 / Jn 13:1–15

Good Friday: Is 52:13–53:12 /

Heb 4:14–16, 5:7–9 / Jn 18:1–19:42

Holy Saturday: Gn 1:1–2:2 or 1:1, 26–31a /

Gn 22:1–18 or 22:1–2, 9a, 10–13, 15–18 /
Ex 14:15–15:1 / Is 54:5–14 / Is 55:1–11 /
Bar 3:9–15, 32–4:4 / Ez 36:16–17a, 18–28 /
Rom 6:3–11 / Mk 16:1–7

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