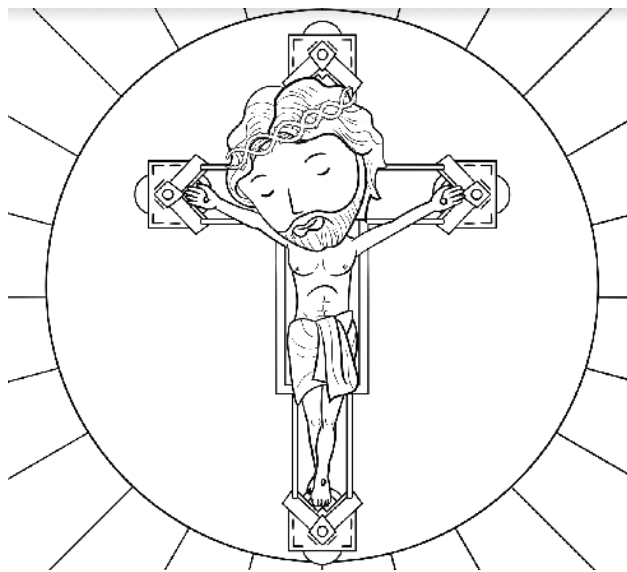


Jesus Tree According to John



Lenten Devotional for
Catholic Families

www.catholicprouts.com

**“There is no misery
that could be a
match for My
mercy.”**

Jesus to Faustina

Written by Nancy Bandzuch
Edited by Megan Swaim

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An Introduction to the Jesus Tree

Never heard of the Jesus Tree before? Don't worry, you're not alone.

To be completely honest, I dreamt up the Jesus Tree just a couple of years ago as a way to serve my own young family better during Lent. I loved the daily devotional of the Jesse Tree that we used during Advent and I was frustrated that nothing like that existed for Lent.

More than anything, the Jesus Tree is a systematic, daily devotional that encourages families to get to know Jesus Christ during the Lenten season. Just as the Jesse Tree invites families to get to know God the Father through a study of the Old Testament, the Jesus Tree invites families to get to know Jesus through a study of one of the Gospels.

This devotional focuses on the Gospel of John. A different story is assigned to each of the 40 days of Lent. Why does the Jesus Tree include the entire life of Jesus and not just His passion? Simply, Jesus came to Earth and took on human form to do more than just suffer and die for our sins. Jesus came to Earth to be our Teacher. Through every word He speaks and every action He takes, we are given a beautiful lesson to apply to our own lives.

Jesus is the Great Teacher. St. Basil the Great referred once to the Incarnation as the incomprehensible God desiring to be comprehended. Where God the Father can seem far away and hard to understand, Jesus - God the Son - came to Earth to live as we live and therefore show us HOW to live. This is the great gift of the Gospels. We can hear the words Jesus said, contemplate His actions, and in each of those moments there is a beautiful lesson waiting for us.

Jesus is the fulfillment of everything. I have chosen to call this devotional the Jesus Tree because we all are ultimately redeemed through the wood of the Cross, the true tree of our salvation.

The Gospel of John

Of the four Gospels, the Gospel of John is clearly the oddball. While the other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, share almost all of the same stories, and even the same structure, over seventy percent of the stories and teachings included in the Gospel of John can't be found anywhere else.

Why is this?

The Gospel of John was written by the 'Beloved Disciple'. Tradition tells us that this disciple's name was John. He was the son of Zebedee and one of Jesus's closest apostles. We know that after the Resurrection and Ascension, John the Apostle went out to preach the Good News. Tradition also holds that John took care of Mary in her later years. After the Assumption of Mary, John settled in Ephesus. While there he led a community and wrote the Epistles bearing his name. Later he was banished by the Roman Empire to the island of Patmos. While there he experienced remarkable visions and wrote the final book of the Bible, Revelation.

But what about his Gospel? Why, from the very beginning, does John seem to talk about Jesus differently?

Where the other three Gospels emphasize

Jesus's human nature, the Gospel of John makes it super clear that Jesus was God. He was not only sent by God, He was one with God. In fact, without the Gospel of John, it might be easy to forget about Jesus's divine nature, or at least downplay it. The Gospel of John is essential to our balanced understanding of Jesus, that He was indeed fully man and fully God.

So, why did this beloved follower of Jesus include such different stories in his Gospel, like the Wedding Feast at Cana, and the Raising of Lazarus?

The simple answer is that the Gospel of John was written MUCH later than the other Gospels. John was one of the youngest followers of Jesus, and he lived a long time, dying of natural causes, while most of the other disciples were martyred when they were relatively young. John lived and preached and taught about Jesus long after the first Gospels were written and shared. It is quite likely that, after years of thought, prayer, and preaching, John wrote his Gospel to share even more about Jesus, things he had experienced first hand.

We also might wonder, why does John not include the actual institution of the Eucharist during the account of the Last Supper?

John very likely didn't include the words of the Mass in his account because John's Gospel was written so much later. In fact, when he wrote his

Gospel, every Christian already believed in the Eucharist! There was no need to write it down!

From the very beginning, the Mass was a fundamental part of Christianity. Where there were Christians, there was the Mass. It probably didn't seem like Christians needed further convincing. Instead, John gives us the beautiful Bread of Life Discourse. The Bread of Life Discourse is direct teaching from Jesus while at the Last Supper. In fact, in John's Gospel, Jesus speaks for chapters and chapters during the Last Supper, loving His Disciples, and offering a beautiful final teaching.

The Gospel of John has often been referred to as the "Catholic Gospel". This is silly, of course, because ALL of the Gospels continue to shape and direct our Catholic Faith, but there is something special about the Gospel of John. Most likely, this Gospel is special because it was written later, after the Early Church was established. It speaks to the needs and questions and fears experienced by followers of Jesus.

Finally, why did John call himself the "Beloved Disciple"? It's important that we understand John wasn't boasting. Rather, John is inviting us to experience Jesus as he himself experienced Jesus--as a teacher and master, yes, but also as a tremendous force of Love! When we read the Gospel of John we are all invited to become Jesus' beloved disciple.

I pray that in your journey through the Gospel of John this Lent, you can step into the place of the

Beloved Disciple and stay close to Jesus. The Jesus Tree will take you through the entire public ministry of Jesus Christ. Listen to what He says. Watch as He heals and transforms, and beg Him to come and be with you and your family in a special way this Lenten season.

How to Use the Jesus Tree

This book was written specifically for families, although it can serve as a beautiful reflection for anyone wishing to enter into a more intimate relationship with Jesus over the course of the Lenten season.

The Jesus Tree assigns a different story from the life of Jesus to each day of Lent. To explore this story, you will be given a short scripture passage, an explanation of what we might learn from Jesus in this story, a prayer for the family, and an image placed on an ornament that can be colored and hung on a tree or the count-down cross.

Each day's devotional is intended to be read aloud. My family enjoys using the Jesus Tree as part of our evening prayers during Lent, but I know other families begin their day with the Jesus Tree reflection, use it as part of their homeschool day, or even read through the reflections while eating supper.

What should you use for your Jesus Tree?

There are several possibilities for hanging and displaying your printable Jesus Tree ornaments during Lent. The first two ideas will work well for the large ornaments. The final two ideas are for the mini ornaments.

1. My family uses a large branch we remove from one of our trees as our Jesus Tree. Once the branch is cut we place it in water and set it upright in our living room. This can be particularly cool because since it is part of a live tree, when we take it into the house in late winter, it has no leaves, but as it warms and drinks water, the leaves begin to sprout inside and become an exciting addition to our Easter decor.
2. You can also purchase a small light-up tree online. There are many options that are not pine trees.
3. Or, you can create a cross to display your ornaments, since the Cross is really the "Jesus Tree." One idea for doing this is placing boards together in a cross shape and pounding in nails at various places to hang the ornaments.
4. Finally, I designed the Printable Countdown Cross for the Mini Ornaments (find it in the files included with this purchase). Once put together, this cross will serve as a Countdown of sorts since there is a circle for each ornament in the Jesus Tree. Just paste on an ornament each day. There are 2 countdown crosses included--one to color and one that is already brown.

If you ever lose track of these digital files, you will always have access to them at

www.catholicsprouts.com/jesus-tree-resources-john

Suggested Daily Use

Please use this resource in the way that is best for your family. But, if it is helpful, here is what we suggest.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross
2. Sing “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”
3. Leader read the opening, and scripture.
4. Pause and reflect, and discuss (optional)
5. Read the reflection aloud
6. Read the concluding prayer, with the whole family joining in on the final line.
7. Add the day’s ornament to the tree.

Were You There?

Were you there when they
crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they
crucified my Lord?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to
tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they
crucified my Lord?

**“Renounce yourself in order to
follow Christ; discipline your
body; do not pamper yourself,
but love fasting. You must
relieve the lot of the poor,
clothe the naked, visit the sick,
and bury the dead. Go to help
the troubled and console the
sorrowing.”**

St. Benedict

The Word Became Flesh

Ash Wednesday



John 1:1-15

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Reflection

Imagine the very beginning of everything. Before the first human being, before animals and plants. But not just that, imagine the world before the world existed. Before land and water and sunshine. When all that existed was... God.

In that darkness and void, God took nothing and He created everything. In a pure act of love, He made all that you see and hear and touch. Everything. Even you. Sometimes we might think that Jesus didn't exist before His birth, but that isn't so. Jesus was there at the moment of creation. He is the very Word that called the world into being. He is Lord.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You loved me into being. Teach me to use my life for Your glory!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

The Baptism

Thursday after Ash Wednesday



John 1:29-34

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

Reflection

Think about the water John the Baptist used to baptize Jesus in the Jordan river - the actual drops that ran down His head. Now recall the water used during your baptism. The water used at these two events might seem very different and very far apart, but they aren't. When Jesus allowed His cousin to baptize Him, He created the sacrament of Baptism and blessed all the water that would baptize His followers, including you.

But here is the really incredible part. Other Gospels tell us that after Jesus is baptized, God the Father speaks from heaven and declares that Jesus is His beloved Son. Well, at your baptism He said the same thing about you. Washed clean by the water that Jesus made holy, you are also a beloved child of God.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for welcoming me into Your family through baptism.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Calling the Disciples

Friday after Ash Wednesday



John 1:35-39

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Reflection

The first time you have a friend over to your house can be a little nerve-wracking. You can pretend to be someone at school or on the soccer field, but once they are in your room, sitting on your bed and looking at your stuff, there is no hiding. Welcoming someone into your home is inviting them into your life.

This is exactly what Jesus does shortly after meeting two disciples. The disciples ask Jesus where He is staying and He says, "Come and see." Why? Because Jesus wants you to know who He really is. He has no intention of putting on appearances or pretending to be something He isn't. Jesus is eager to show you the Truth, and to welcome you into His love.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are welcome in my home and my heart.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Wedding At Cana

Saturday after Ash Wednesday



John 2:2-10

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'

Reflection

When we see something embarrassing happening to someone else, we have a couple options for how we choose to respond. We can look away, we can be glad that it isn't our problem, or we can try to help. At the wedding banquet in Cana, Mary was one of the first ones to notice that the wine had run out. This would have been seriously embarrassing for the married couple. When she saw this, Mary didn't look away. Even though she was powerless, she set out to help. And how did she help? By turning to Jesus.

There are many, many situations in life that we are powerless to do anything about, but we can always do what Mary did: turn to Jesus. When we call on Him with faith and confidence, He will answer. Be confident in His power, just like Mary.

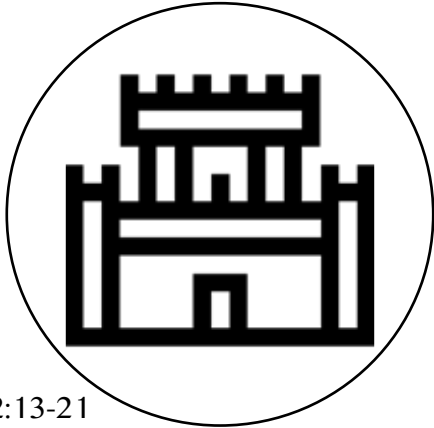
Prayer

Dear Jesus, when I am powerless I can still call on You, and You will hear me.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Cleansing the Temple

Monday of the First Week of Lent



John 2:13-21

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

Reflection

There are 168 hours in a week. We are up and active for at least 84 hours. And of all that time, we are required to spend only one hour in church at Holy Mass. Just one hour. How do you spend that time? Do you sing to the Lord and praise His name? Do you work to quiet yourself and listen to the Word of God? Do you humbly approach the altar of God and welcome the True Presence of Jesus Christ? Or not?

When Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem and saw people in this holy place NOT worshipping, He was furious. This is God's house! You are in His presence, and yet you are ignoring Him, or worse mocking Him by engaging in serious sins right in front of Him! Jesus could not tolerate this. He quickly made a whip and chased out all those in His Father's house who weren't worshipping God.

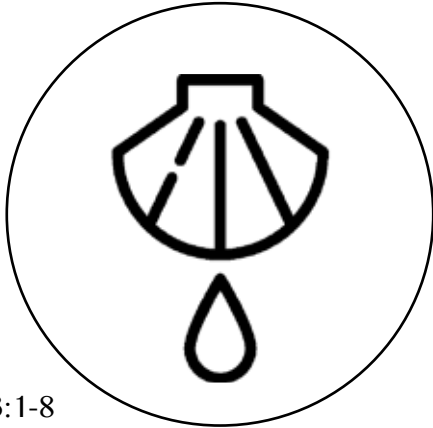
Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to fully enter into worship at Holy Mass.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Nicodemus

Tuesday of the First Week of Lent



John 3:1-8

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'

Reflection

If you are a baptized member of the Catholic Church, then you really have two birthdays. Did you know that? As Jesus explains to Nicodemus, there is the date your body was born, but then there is also the date you were born again in the Spirit. That was the day you were baptized. When you were baptized, something remarkable happened even though it was invisible. At your baptism you were welcomed into a new family: the family of God. On that day you became a beloved child of God and a part of God's kingdom here on earth.

The Kingdom of God is not just the eternal reward of heaven, it is also something we can experience right here and now. Every time we act in a way that is pleasing to our Heavenly Father by doing His Will and bringing His Love to others, we are bringing about His Kingdom here on earth. And this is what we were born to do when we were born again in the Spirit at our baptism.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I am a child of God. Teach me to do His Will.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Samaritan Woman

Wednesday of the First Week of Lent

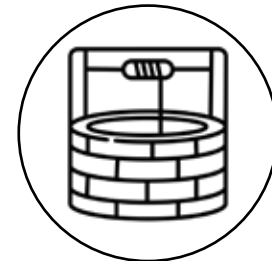
John 4:7,9-19, 24-26

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Jesus said to her, "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking with you."

Reflection

Jesus did some shocking things in the Gospels. When Jesus chose to speak to the Samaritan woman at the well, everyone involved was baffled. It was unheard of for a man to speak this way to a woman, especially a notoriously sinful woman like the Samaritan woman. And even stranger, the Jews hated the Samaritans and they never would have spoken to them.

But most amazing of all is what Jesus reveals to this woman. In a few words Jesus makes it clear that He knows her. He knows her sins and brokenness. He understands her thirst for love and the ways she has been hurt trying to quench this thirst. And He offers to heal her and make her whole. He also reveals to her that He is the Messiah. But, why? Why does He tell her He is the Messiah when He refuses to answer the questions of the Jewish leaders? Because she is ready to be transformed by His love.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, You know me and You love me.
Transform me with Your love!

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Healing the Official's Son

Thursday of the First Week of Lent



John 4:46-53

Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, 'Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.' The official said to him, 'Sir, come down before my little boy dies.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son will live.' The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, 'Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him.' The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, 'Your son will live.' So he himself believed, along with his whole household.

Reflection

It is natural to want proof, especially after our trust has been betrayed. We remember that others have made promises and then they didn't follow through. From the very beginning humans have struggled to trust God. We wonder, does God really love me? Does He really have my best interests in mind? We might even demand proof from God, but as we see with the Roman Official, God asks us to trust first.

In fact, trust is the very key that unlocks our hearts. If we trust, God's mercy and love flow into our hearts. If we trust, God is able to do remarkable things, like cure a sick boy with a single word! Jesus calls us to believe in Him and trust Him without signs. Trust in His love.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I trust in You! Increase my trust.
**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Healing on the Sabbath

Friday of the First Week of Lent

John 5:2-14

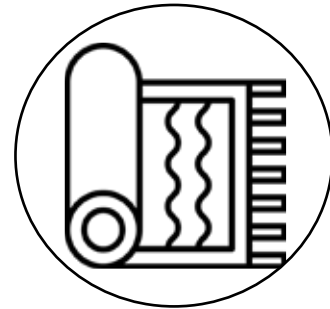
Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, ‘It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.’ But he answered them, ‘The man who made me well said to me, “Take up your mat and walk.”’ They asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, “Take it up and walk?”’ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.’

Reflection

“Do you want to be made well?” What a funny question for Jesus to ask. After all, the man has been sick for thirty-eight years! And all this time he has been trying to get into a pool to be healed while others push him out of the way. Of course he wants to be healed, we think.

But, does he say, “Yes! Heal me!”? No, he doesn’t. Instead he shares how sad and hard his life is... but doesn’t quite ask to be healed. Why would he hesitate to be healed? Because healing can be hard. Healing requires leaving behind the old and embracing the new, which can be scary. And what happens shortly after this man is healed? He gets in trouble with the Jews! Before, no one noticed him, but now life was different. With his life back, it was time to get to work living.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to desire healing and starting a new life in You!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Feeding the 5,000

Saturday of the First Week of Lent

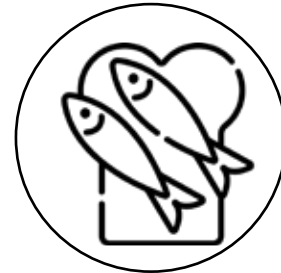
John 6:3-13

Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

Reflection

How much time do you spend fussing over what you will eat? Do you sneak snacks from the pantry, complain about what's for supper, or beg for a treat? Now, eating is good and enjoyable. We need to do it to stay alive. But notice the crowd in this story. Thousands of people have followed Jesus. They left their homes so quickly that they didn't grab anything to eat. And now, here they are, out in the middle of nowhere, hungry.

The crowd might seem pretty foolish, yet it was their great need that allowed Jesus to work a great miracle. Jesus is so pleased to feed the crowd that he even teases Philip. Can't you hear Him laughing when Philip answers Him? Of course we don't have enough money to feed them all! We are hopelessly unable to take care of this ourselves and therefore, it is a perfect opportunity to turn to God and ask Him to take care of us.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, I surrender myself to you. Take care of everything.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Jesus Walks on Water

Monday of the Second Week of Lent



John 6:16-21

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

Reflection

Have you ever rowed out into the middle of a large lake. All around you is water. Water laps up against the sides of the boat. Surrounded by that much water, you can feel trapped and alone. Below you is nothing but meters and meters of water. If the motor dies or you lose your oars, you'd be stuck. And at night, under the dark dome of the sky with faint star light reflecting off the waves, the loneliness is bigger and blacker.

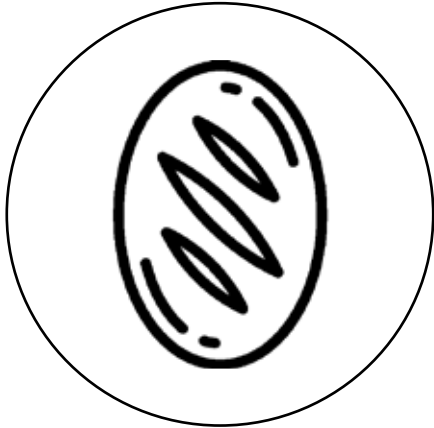
It is no wonder that the disciples were terrified when they saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. Many of them were fishermen. They had grown up in boats. They knew what to expect while on the lake and they were comfortable in that knowledge, but this! This defied all knowing. Here, in the loneliness of a lake at night, Jesus had come to them. But again, Jesus is proving His love and devotion. Jesus knew no limitation or barriers when He desired to be with His followers.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, come find me and be with me.
**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Bread of Life

Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent



John 6:25-27, 34-35

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Reflection

When I was a girl, we used to get a piece of candy every time we left my grandmother's house. We lived for that candy. Often my grandmother would stand by the candy bowl and demand a hug before we got our treat. She would tease us and say, "Did you come to see me or the candy?"

In this gospel passage we hear from the same crowd that Jesus fed miraculously on the hillside. The bread that fed those 5,000 must have been incredible, and they want more! But Jesus asks them the same question that my grandma used to ask me. Did your hearts lead you here, or your stomachs? Neither candy nor bread, no matter how good, lasts. Seek something that is eternal, something that will fill you up. Seek love. Seek Jesus, the source of love.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to seek things that last.
**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Bread of Life Continued

Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent

John 6:41-43, 48-58

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus answered them, I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.'

Reflection

Welcoming a stranger into your home for dinner can be the first step toward a relationship. When that person sits at your table, uses your silverware and eats the food you have prepared, they aren't strangers for long. Sitting around the table, you share who you are and listen as they share who they are. Likewise, stepping forward and pulling another person into a hug can create a powerful connection between two people.

But Jesus wants to be even closer to you than all of that. He doesn't want to just be near you. He wants to dwell in you. He wants our bodies to become adoration chapels where He can dwell and we can worship Him in the secret of our hearts. This way He can live through us.



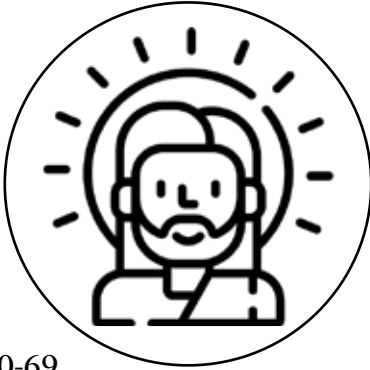
Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for the gift of Yourself in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Words of Eternal Life

Thursday of the Second Week of Lent



John 6:60-69

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Reflection

Each time we approach the altar to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the priest pauses, raises the consecrated host and says, "The Body of Christ." Maybe we are so used to hearing this that we have forgotten just how incredible it is. He is holding up a little circle of bread, and declaring that this isn't actually bread. This is the very Body of Jesus, God Himself, and that we are invited to eat it.

Think about that. Wow! Even at the beginning, when Jesus first started talking about the Eucharist, people thought this was crazy. Can you hear the Jews murmuring and turning away? They are horrified by what Jesus is saying. How can this be? Some Christians think that maybe Jesus didn't mean this, that He was speaking in metaphors to make a point. But notice that Jesus doesn't stop the followers that are leaving Him over this teaching. This isn't a metaphor. What He has said is Truth. He is the Bread of Life and He is truly present in the Eucharist.

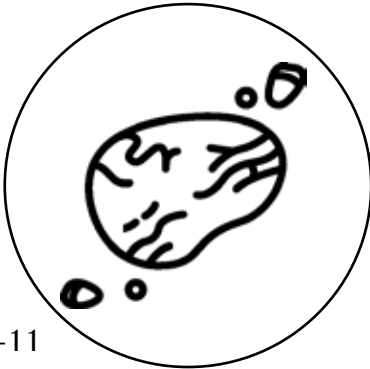
Prayer

Dear Jesus, I believe that You are fully present in the Eucharist. Increase my faith!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Woman Caught in Adultery

Friday of the Second Week of Lent



John 8:2-11

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

Reflection

Have you ever been caught "red-handed"? In the very act of naughtiness, you are found out and hauled before the authorities for punishment. You don't even try to make excuses. The evidence is clear. All you can do is sit in shame and await your terrible punishment.

As sinners we can all relate to the woman in this story. When our sins and crimes are brought out into the public, our friends and community members can turn on us and condemn us. But Jesus is the ultimate judge of our guilt. Like the woman, we are guilty and Jesus knows we are guilty. And yet, He doesn't pick up a stone. According to the Law of Moses, the woman should be stoned to death. Likewise, because of the many sins we have committed, we should not be allowed into heaven. But our God is a God of mercy. He forgives and encourages us to start again.

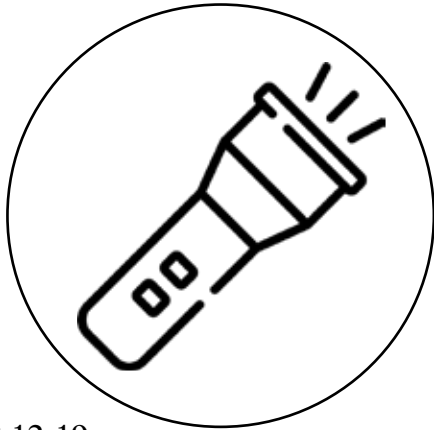
Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are the ultimate judge of my soul. Teach me to accept Your mercy and turn from sin.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Light of the World

Saturday of the Second Week of Lent



John 8:12-19

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' Then the Pharisees said to him, 'You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.' Jesus answered, 'Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.' Then they said to him, 'Where is your Father?' Jesus answered, 'You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.'

Reflection

"Oh yeah? Prove it!" When we hear whoppers, we often want someone else to confirm the story. Did he really eat fifteen pancakes? Did you see it happen?

This is what the Pharisees are upset about. Jesus is telling the crowd that He is the light of the world. The Pharisees smirk and smugly ask, "Oh yeah, says who? Who can verify that for us?"

Jesus's answer is simple: God. I came from God, I am returning to God, and everything that I do is in unity with God. That might sound like an unbelievable answer (it sure did to the Pharisees), but this was the ultimate answer. Jesus is saying, everything God has done throughout the entire created world and all of human history points to me. God has given you all the clues and evidence that I am the Messiah. Don't you see the miracles? Haven't you studied the scriptures? Will you allow yourself to see God's evidence? Will you allow Me to light your way?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, light the path for me, so that I might be near You and no longer walk in darkness.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Man Born Blind

Monday of the Third Week of Lent

John 9:1-3, 6-7, 13-14, 16, 24- 27, 34-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam'. Then he went and washed and came back able to see. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided.

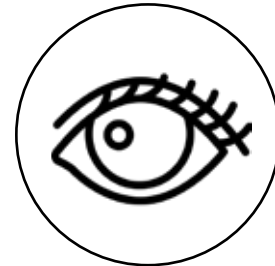
So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

Reflection

Sight is so important. Nearly everything we do depends on our ability to see. But, as Jesus teaches in this story, our ability to see and recognize the Truth is even more important than the function of our eyes.

Jesus had done something incredible: curing a man who was born blind. But the Pharisees reject this miracle. Why? Because He did it on the Sabbath, a day when Jews refrained from all types of work. The Pharisees are so fixated on the rules that they can't see anything else! God is among them, working miracles, and they can't see Him! They are blind to what really matters. Near the end of this story, Jesus reveals to the man born blind that He is the Son of Man. When Jesus healed this man, He did more than restore his eyesight. Jesus allowed the man to see what really mattered: God, Who came to earth, standing right in front of him.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to clear out the distractions in my life so that I can see You more clearly.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Good Shepherd

Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent



John 10:1-5, 11, 17-18

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

Reflection

Make a list in your mind of all the people whose voices you recognize instantly. If you picked up the phone and they were on the other end, you would know, just by hearing their voice, who they were. Maybe your list includes your parents, siblings, friends and teachers. Maybe even some cousins and neighbors. Now think about how you came to know their voices so well. Recall all the time you spend with that person talking and laughing.

In this passage, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, and as a Good Shepherd, He knows the name of each of His sheep and they recognize and trust His voice. If a stranger called to them, the sheep would not listen. But when the Good Shepherd calls, the sheep come running. Well, this isn't just a story. If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, then we are called to be His sheep. But do you recognize Jesus' voice when He calls to you? Have you spent time talking and laughing with Him so that you can pick out His voice in a crowd?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I am Your sheep. Teach me to always listen for Your voice!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Jesus is Almost Stoned

Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent

John 10:24-33, 37-39

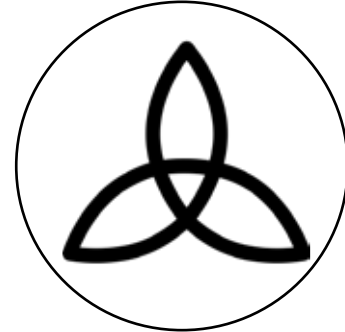
The Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?' The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.' Jesus answered 'If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.' Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

Reflection

Imagine the biggest, strongest hand possible, with fingers that are thick and muscular. A precious treasure rests in the palm of this mighty hand. The fingers wrap around the treasure and squeeze shut. Inside the hand, the treasure is secure and protected. No one is strong enough to pry open this hand.

As followers of Jesus, we are the treasure in the palm of God's hand. We are protected and nothing can snatch us from His grip. But there is a way to escape the hand of God: by rejecting Him. Again and again Jesus worked miracles and asked the Pharisees to believe and repent. But they refused and therefore, they rejected Jesus and God the Father.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, I want to be one with You, just as You are one with the Father!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Lazarus is Raised from the Dead

Thursday of the Third Week of Lent

John 11:17, 20-29, 33-35, 38-44

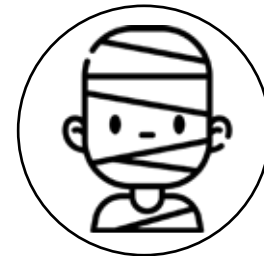
When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary. Mary got up quickly and went to him. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Reflection

In the verses that come just before this story, we hear that Jesus waited a few days before He left to see Lazarus. Surely if He had arrived sooner Lazarus could have lived, and everyone involved, including Jesus, would have been saved from a lot of pain and sadness. So, why did Jesus let his good friend Lazarus die?

Because being a follower of Jesus does not mean that we won't suffer. Pain and death are inescapable, and God often uses these things to pull us closer to His heart. But, though Jesus Christ, suffering and death is no longer the end of the story. Mary and Martha put their brother in the tomb thinking it was the end...but it wasn't. When Jesus arrived they learned if they had a close relationship with Jesus, they need not fear anything, even death! Likewise, when a loved one passes away, we know this is not the end for them either. Our God is bigger and stronger than anything, even death.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, I know that when I cry, You cry with me. Thank you for being with me in the pain.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

One Man to Die for a Nation

Friday of the Third Week of Lent



John 11:47-53

So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, "What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. So from that day on they planned to put him to death.

Reflection

Sometimes a person can become little more than an annoyance. We might even wish we could just get rid of that person. Perhaps you want to build a massive Lego creation on the floor, but the baby makes that impossible. 'Why does he have to be here?' you might wonder. You might even think, 'I wish he wasn't here at all!'

This is how the Pharisees saw Jesus. Jesus wasn't a person they were interested in listening to. To them, he was a problem that had to be dealt with. His teaching was radical and soon the Romans would notice, and that was dangerous. They didn't care that Jesus was raising people from the dead, restoring sight to the blind, and curing the lame. All they cared about was their way of life and their power, and Jesus threatened that; so He had to die.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to welcome Your love into my life, even if You challenge me to change.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Anointing at Bethany

Saturday of the Third Week of Lent



John 12:3-8

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Reflection

We all hate to see things go to waste. Sitting down to watch a movie with your family might seem like a waste of time when we could be working or learning. Spending money on a beautiful First Communion dress might also seem like a waste of money when we have other basic dresses. But neither of these things are actually wasteful. The way we spend our time and money demonstrate who and what we love.

In this story, Mary of Bethany wastes some expensive oil by dumping it on Jesus's feet. What a waste, right? Not at all. Mary has experienced Jesus' deep love for her, and in response she wants to give Him everything. She wants to do something that shows Him the depth of her love. So she offers the most precious thing she owns: this oil. Her act is not wasteful. Jesus receives all of her love, every drop of it.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, I love You above anything else. Teach me to give You all that I have and all that I am.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Entry to Jerusalem

Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent



John 12:12-14, 17-18

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!” Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him.

Reflection

It’s exciting to see someone in real-life that we’ve heard about. ‘Is that the guy that did that thing? Is that really him?’ we might wonder. It’s fascinating to see this person, in the flesh, no matter if what we heard was good or bad.

People gathered in the streets of Jerusalem that day to see Jesus because they had heard about Lazarus, the man who was dead for four days before Jesus brought him back to life. People were amazed and shouted out praise, but none of these people really knew Jesus. He was interesting, in the way a celebrity is interesting, but no one had a personal encounter with His love. It might seem remarkable that this same crowd would call for His crucifixion just a short time later, but this crowd gathered just to see something exciting, and a crucifixion is exciting too. Jesus desires to know and love each of us, individually, and if we hide from His love in a crowd, we will never know Him.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, reach into me and help me to know You in a real and deep way.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Grain of Wheat

Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent



John 12:23-26

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Reflection

Planting a seed allows us to witness a tiny miracle. The seed alone is basically nothing. It's a dried up, dead, lifeless speck. But then, when we push it into the earth and give it a drink of water, something incredible happens. New life pushes out of the earth! A green head peeks out of the ground and a plant that will bloom and bear fruit follows. From that fruit, amazingly, more seeds will come with the potential for more life.

God's beautiful plan for seeds offers us a powerful lesson. Right now we are all seeds still attached to a stalk of wheat. We are tiny, but we are green and alive. However, we have a choice. We can remain connected to the stalk of wheat, or we can accept God's plan for us. His plan asks us to die to ourselves, to die to our selfish desires for popularity, money, and possessions. That death might be painful and hard, but it is only when we, like a grain of wheat, die and fall to the ground that we can spring up into new life.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach my heart to long for the day I can join You in heaven.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Washing Feet

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent

John 13:1-17

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Reflection

Scrubbing a toilet is gross, humbling work. We know it is work that has to be done, but does it have to be done by me? Isn't cleaning the toilet...beneath me?

At the Last Supper, Jesus gathered His disciples and did the most humbling, lowly thing possible. He got down on His hands and knees and washed their filthy feet. Washing feet was the dirtiest job, usually given to the lowest servant in a household; and here was Jesus, God Himself, doing it. No wonder Peter protests. But Jesus washed His disciples feet to teach them something. In order to lead, you must serve. If we want to lead others to God, we need to humble ourselves and be the last, the servant to all. We aren't 'too good' for any type of work, no matter how dirty. We are called to love and to demonstrate that love through humble service.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, give me a humble heart willing to serve out of love for You.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Judas's Betrayal

Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent



John 13:21-27, 30

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Reflection

Have ever cracked open your bedroom door, only to find an unwanted sibling trying to barge in on the other side? You slam the door, but you aren't quick enough. The intruder is able to get their foot in the door and you are unable to shut them out. That move, sticking your foot in the door, is called getting a foot-hold, and of all the beings trying to get a foothold in our life, Satan is trying the hardest.

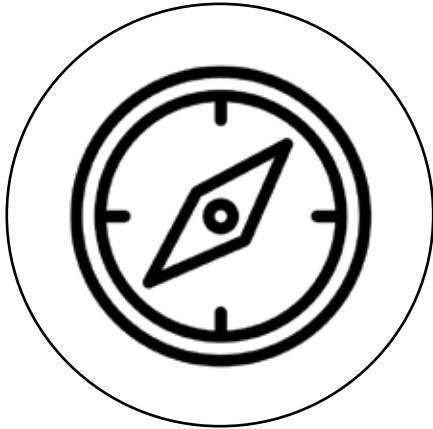
Satan uses all sorts of temptations to try and lure us away from Jesus Christ. His goal is to get us to crack open the door to his influence so he can stick his foot in and push his way through. Satan uses our desire to popularity, possessions, achievements and even our desire for money to tempt us to open the door to him. This is what he did to Judas. Even though Judas was a close companion of Jesus Christ, Satan was able to get a foot-hold in his life. We've already heard that Judas would steal money from the collective money pouch. And, when the opportunity arose to betray Jesus for some serious cash, Judas gave in to that terrible sin. And this is how Satan attacks us. He tempts us first with small sins, attempting to lead us down the path to fully betraying Jesus. Therefore, reject the temptation to commit even the smallest sin and refuse to let Satan get a foothold in your life.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, all the riches and possessions in the world are nothing compared to Your love for me!
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

The Way the Truth and the Life

Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent



John 14:1-7

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Reflection

Out in the wilderness, far from a path and surrounded by huge trees, it’s easy to get lost. For centuries, however, explorers have had a powerful tool that could guide them home, no matter how far they wandered. That tool is a compass. Using the earth’s natural magnetic fields, a compass allows an explorer to always find true north.

The ultimate compass for our life is Jesus Christ. Whether we are making a big decision about our future or performing the ordinary tasks of our day, His example, His words and His presence in our life will direct us. But He didn’t just show us a way, He told us He IS the WAY. The disciples ask Him, “How will we know the way to the Father?” Jesus’ answer is simple. I AM the way. Live in me, exist in my love, and I will take you there.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, teach me to use You as my compass.
**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

The Advocate

Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent



John 14:15-17, 26-27

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Reflection

The most peaceful place, for most of us, is wrapped tight in the arms of someone who loves us. Surrounded by those loving arms, we are able to let go of worry and stress. Peace fills us because we know we are loved, protected and valued.

When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, He knew that soon He would die on the cross and His disciples would feel abandoned. But Jesus tells them that even after He is gone, they will not be abandoned. God will send the Holy Spirit to continue what Jesus started and wrap them in love, security, and peace. The Holy Spirit is still with us today, and the work of the Holy Spirit is very much like a big bear-hug from the Father. The presence of the Holy Spirit reminds us that God will never stop loving, protecting and valuing us.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me to live united with the Spirit.
**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Vine and Branches

Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent



John 15:1-2, 4-5, 12-16

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

Reflection

Trees are expected to bear fruit. If we plant an apple tree, we expect apples after a few years. If the fruit never appears, then we will likely dig up the tree, throw it away, and plant something else.

Just like a tree, we were created to bear fruit. These fruits come when we live in Jesus and follow His example. The greatest example He gave us was when He laid down His life for us out of love. Likewise, our lives bear fruit when we deny ourselves and think of others first. When we fail to abide in the love of Jesus Christ and live out His commandments, we will not bear fruit; we will not be doing what we were created to do.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, unite my heart with Your heart and abide in me always.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

The World Will Hate You

Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent



John 15:18-21, 26-27

“If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

Reflection

Sometimes loving Jesus can be...embarrassing. A friend might smirk at you and say, ‘Do you really believe that?’ or maybe a classmate will joke about how lucky they are they don’t have to go to Mass on Sunday. In those situations you might have the desire to pretend like loving Jesus isn’t a big deal. Pretend that He doesn’t mean that much to you.

From the start, the world has hated Jesus. The Pharisees rejected Him and plotted His death. The Romans tortured and crucified Him. Even after He rose from the dead, many, many of His followers were killed for believing in Him. It has never been easy to follow Jesus, and Jesus makes it clear that it never will be easy. And yet, we know the truth. We know that Jesus is God, that He died for us and that He waits for us in heaven. This truth is the most important thing, and we can’t help but testify to that truth, no matter how the world might hate us.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, give me courage speak Your Name, even when it isn’t the popular thing to do.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

You Will be Scattered

Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent



John 16:31-33

Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”

Reflection

As a man, Jesus experienced every human emotion. Although He spoke these words surrounded by a group of friends whom He had taught and loved for years, soon they would all abandon Him. None of His friends would be there as He was whipped and crucified. And what’s worse, sitting there with His friends, Jesus knew that they would abandon Him! He knew that they would flee at the moment when He needed them most.

And yet, Jesus does not despair or speak as a victim. No, He speaks as a champion! For centuries the Jews had expected the Messiah to come as a warrior king that would trample the enemy underfoot, but Jesus knew that the real enemy was Satan, and the real battlefield was our hearts. Through love, obedience and sacrifice Jesus has conquered the world--He has defeated Satan and broke the chains of sin. Therefore, even though Jesus’s next days would be full of pain and sadness, there was no reason for regret or fear. Jesus is victorious, and His love for us is eternal.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are the king of my heart. Defeat Satan and protect me from his attacks.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Praying for His Followers

Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent



John 17:10-19

All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Reflection

Christians have been given the difficult task of 'living in the world, but not of the world.' What does this mean? As Jesus tells His disciples here, just before He leaves to pray in the garden, we live here on earth, eating food, working jobs and living in families, but we are destined for heaven. And while we are in the world, through God's protection, we are not under the control of the evil one. We reject Satan's lies that wealth, popularity, honor and pleasure will make us happy. Instead we are made holy and joyful in the Truth.

And what is Truth? Jesus Christ. The truth is that Jesus lived here on earth, that He was 100% human but, incredibly, at the same time 100% God. The truth is that He loved us enough to die for us and, through that sacrifice, we have been freed from the grip of sin. We refuse to let Satan undo what Jesus did. We live here on earth, but we live in the Truth that Jesus loves us and waits for us in heaven.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, sanctify me in the Truth!

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Jesus is Arrested

Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent

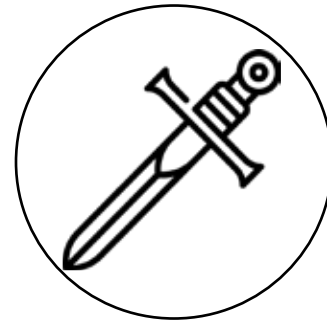
John 18:1-12

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

Reflection

It's night. Armed with swords and torches, a dozen or more trained guards leave for the garden. They arrive and find only a humble preacher and His followers kneeling in prayer. Confidently, the guards march up to the man they have come for, and yet when He utters a few words, their legs wobble and they fall to the ground. Confused, they get to their feet, but again, as He speaks they stumble.

The man stands before them, arms out. He admonishes His followers, forbidding them from violence for His sake. Getting back on their feet, the guards hesitate, but then rush upon the man. They grab His arms, but He doesn't struggle as they tie ropes around His wrists and waist. It seems that He has been waiting for them. Jesus, bound, looks directly at Judas as He is taken from the garden.



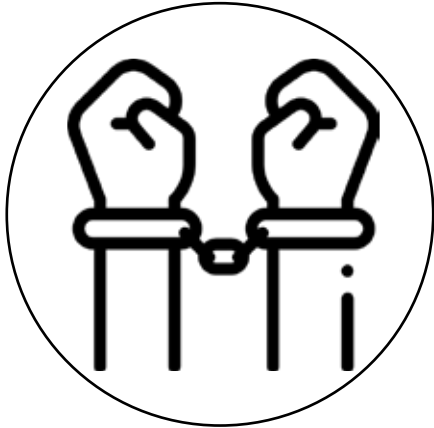
Prayer

Dear Jesus, You were betrayed by a friend. Teach me loyalty and faithfulness.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Before Annas

Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent



John 18:19-23

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Reflection

When we're accused of something we didn't do, it is natural to defend ourselves. Immediately we start to gather evidence to prove our innocence and argue for justice on our behalf.

But Jesus doesn't do this. Arrested in the middle of the night, He now stands before the leaders of the Jewish faith. It's unclear what He is on trial for, but it is clear that they want to get rid of Him. In this terrible position, Jesus seems unconcerned. He doesn't offer any evidence for His innocence, and He refuses to argue. After all, if the Pharisees weren't convinced by the miracles He worked in their midst, why would they be convinced now?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, when I am falsely accused, teach me to rely on You to come to my defense.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Peter Denies

Monday of Holy Week



John 18:17-18, 25-27

A woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Reflection

Most of the terrible things we do, we do in a sneaky, hidden way. We don’t insult someone to their face, but we can easily give in to gossip or bad-mouthing a person behind their back. We steal when no one is looking, or indulge in sinful pleasures when we are alone. We tell ourselves, “Since no one else knows about it, it’s not that big a deal.”

Perhaps Peter felt this way as he warmed himself at the fire. It didn’t matter what he said to these people. Why should he worry about telling them the truth? But then, as the cock crowed, Peter remembered Jesus’s warning. Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him. Like Peter, our sins are never hidden from Jesus. He knows the things we do, even if they are done in the secret of our hearts. Jesus asks us to live in truth and honesty, in public and in private.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You know the secrets of my heart. Forgive hidden sins that only You know I commit.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Before Pilate

Tuesday of Holy Week

John 18:29-31, 33-40

Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

Reflection

Jesus came to this world to do battle with the real enemy: the father of lies, Satan. Satan is constantly at work tempting us and lying to us. One of the biggest lies he tells us is repeated by Pilate in this passage, "What is truth?" With this small question Pilate speaks for Satan, gently bringing into question all that we believe. How can we be certain? How can we know for sure that there is Truth, and not just a lot of opinions?

But there is Truth, and we know His name. Jesus Christ told us that He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." God's endless love for us, the love that sent Jesus to earth to die for us, is the Truth. We can be confident in the truth that God values us enough to die for us.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are the Truth. Remind me always of the great way You love me.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Crowning with Thorns

Wednesday of Holy Week

John 19:1-16

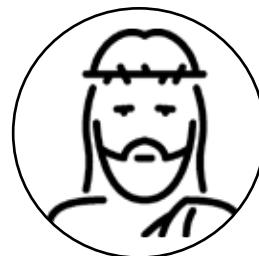
Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Reflection

Does this scene startle you? It should. Jesus, King and Creator of the Universe, is not seated on a throne, crowned with gold and attended by legends of angels. Instead He is tied to a pillar and whipped. Then soldiers weave a crown of thorns and beat it onto His head. Thorns dig into His scalp and brow. Getting to His feet, Jesus stumbles, and the soldiers wrap a purple cloak around His shoulders as a joke. They kneel down before Him and mock Him.

After this, Jesus is brought before the Jews, God's chosen people. Jesus, the fulfillment of all that had been promised to them, is standing right in front of them, and they reject Him. They scream for Him to be killed! Pilate introduces Jesus as the king of the Jews, and the Jewish leaders reject Him, claiming to have no king but the Roman Emperor.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, the way You were treated and rejected breaks my heart. Forgive me for the ways I treat You and reject You.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Crucifixion

Holy Thursday

John 19:17-19, 23-30

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots."

And that is what the soldiers did.

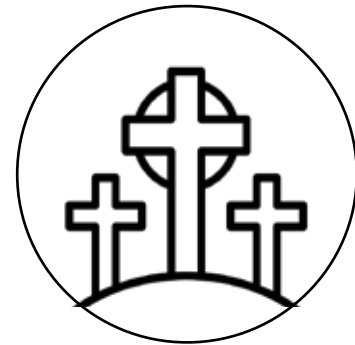
Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflection

Perhaps the only comfort Jesus had while He suffered and died on the cross was that His mother was near. Mary had been on this journey with her Son from the beginning. As His first disciple, she lived out His calling to holiness perfectly, and she stood at the foot of the cross on that fateful day, uniting her suffering with His.

And yet, just before He died, when He had already given us so much, Jesus also gave us His mother. Looking down at His beloved disciple John, Jesus gave him, and all of the Church, Mary as his own mother. After this, with nothing left to give or suffer, "Jesus declared, "It is finished," and He bowed His head and died."



Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for the gift of Your mother.
Teach me to rely on her just as you did.

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Water and Blood

Good Friday



John 19:31-34

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

Reflection

Over a thousand years later, Jesus appeared to a simple nun in Poland. The nun's name was Maria Faustina and the visions she had of Jesus have become known as the Divine Mercy. In one of those conversations, Jesus explained, "My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls, and especially for poor sinners. If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy."

Even while He hung in agony, rejected and abandoned by everyone, Jesus's heart overflowed with love and mercy, so much so that when a soldier pierced His side with a spear, that mercy flowed out in the form of blood and water. Even when we are deep in sin, even when we have betrayed Him, Jesus begs us to return and accept His mercy. His love is an ocean of mercy, waiting to wash us clean and offer us a new beginning.

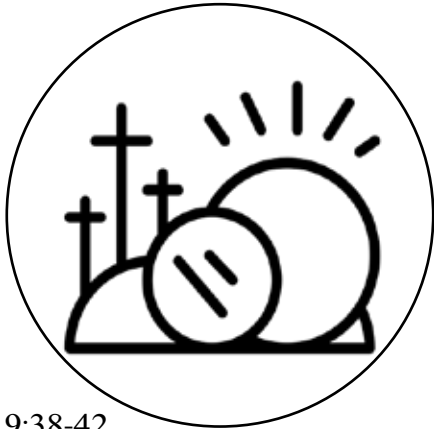
Prayer

Dear Jesus, soften my heart. Teach me to accept Your mercy and start again.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Burial

Holy Saturday



John 19:38-42

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Reflection

Imagine the broken, lifeless body of Jesus Christ as it was taken down from the cross. Joseph and Nicodemus pry the nails out from His hands and feet and tie ropes under His arms. Slowly Jesus's body is lowered to the ground. Mary, who has never left her Son's side, reaches for Him. Overcome with grief, she falls to her knees under His weight. She screams and pulls her Son to her, rocking Him as she did years ago.

Gently, Joseph and Nicodemus lift Jesus's body into a wagon. The tomb is not far away, and once they reach it they hurry inside. Mary Magdalene and others have arrived with clean linen, ointment and herbs. In silence they clean blood and dirt from Jesus's body and begin to wrap it, as is the Jewish tradition. When the work is done, they pause at the entrance to the tomb and weep once more.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You gave everything out of love for me. Bring me close to Your heart tonight, so that I can offer some consolation for all You suffered.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless Glory!

Resurrection

Easter Sunday

John 20:1,11-18

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her.

Reflection

At first she didn't recognize Him. Jesus Christ, the man Mary Magdalene had followed all the way to the cross, the man she had wept over for three days, He stood talking to her, and she didn't recognize Him!

This Easter, let's reflect on how many times we find ourselves standing in front of Jesus and fail to recognize Him. When we celebrate Holy Mass, do we recognize Jesus fully present in the Eucharist? When we find someone suffering with hunger and loneliness, do we recognize Jesus in that person?

Let's reflect also on how Mary Magdalene suddenly recognized her Lord: He spoke her name. Likewise, Jesus knows your name and He speaks it to you today and every day, calling for you to see Him standing before you.



Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are the resurrection and the light!
Help me to recognize You standing before me.

**Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of
endless Glory!**

Catholic Sprouts



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