

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

## Introduction

"While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them 'Why are you frightened and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'"

It was the time after the death of Jesus. His disciples were in the upper room reflecting on the events that had just happened. They were locked in the room, scared as they were afraid of what the Jews might do to his disciples. They were already in fear but can you imagine the fear rise dramatically when Jesus appears to them? They were terrified and doubtful. Our current situation will create a lot of fear and doubt, some outright terror, but Jesus reminds us that we have a safe haven with him. He can take all our fears, our anxieties, our confusion, our doubtfulness and offer them up to God. Our hope and faith are found in God.

As we navigate a new normal with many restrictions, our spiritual lives do not need to suffer. There are still ways to observe this Holy season of Lent. The traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are still possible. It is imperative that during this time, we continue with our Lenten practices and to use this trial as an opportunity to elevate, adapt and deepen our relationship with Jesus.

## Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process.

Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

**Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."**

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

**The Holy Gospel for April 5, 2020 (shorter version)**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer.

Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Christ?'

For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.'

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.'

Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.'

The people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.

After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene, named Simon: they compelled this man to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha, they offered him wine to drink mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots: then they sat down there and kept watch over him.

*(continued...)*

## At Home Sunday Faith Reflection

St. Gianna Beretta Molla Parish  
Palm Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*(The Holy Gospel according to Matthew continued...)*

Over his head, they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross.'

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 'He saved others: he can not save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the Cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's son.''

The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about 3 o'clock, Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'

That is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.'

At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.'

Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split.

The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the Saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection, they came out of the tombs and entered the Holy City and appeared to many.

Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earth quake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's son!'

The Gospel of the Lord

### **Family Activities**

\* Palm or Passion Sunday begins the most sacred week of the Church year, Holy Week. During these days, we prepare ourselves for Easter by prayerful reflection upon the events of Jesus' Passion and death. Display a crucifix in a prominent place this week, as a reminder of the salvation Christ won for us. The crucifix can also be the focal point for family prayer during Holy Week.

\* On the last Sunday of Lent, we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us when he accepted the cross. Throughout this week, Holy Week, we remember that Jesus was obedient even unto death so that our sins would be forgiven. Say a prayer to Jesus asking for his forgiveness.

\* Even though we will not receive blessed palm branches this Sunday, remember the people of Jerusalem used palms, because that was what was available to them. Celebrate Palm Sunday with branches from your own yard - bringing what you have available before the Lord.



Jesus sent two disciples into the city to find a donkey for Him to ride. The people were so happy to see Jesus! They waved palm branches and shouted, "HOSANNA!"