



AMDG
PALM SUNDAY OF THE
PASSION OF OUR LORD
YEAR A
5TH APRIL 2020



O Lord, do not leave me alone!

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty, ever-living God,
who as an example of humility for the human race to follow
caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross,
graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering
and so merit a share in his Resurrection.

This Sunday we begin the prayer of Holy Week as Jesus enters Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, accompanied by crowds shouting joyfully 'Hosanna!' and waving palm branches. Very soon, the mood of the people changes and their cry is 'Crucify him!' (*Gospel*). We accompany Jesus as he goes to his death.

The other readings help us to understand what is happening.

We see that Jesus fulfils the Old Testament prophecies of the suffering servant from Isaiah; in the face of his Passion, he knows and trusts that the Father will help him (*First Reading*).

Psalm 21 (22) moves from utter dejection: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' to praise and trust in God: 'Give him glory ... revere him!' You may wish to read the whole psalm from your Bible during Holy Week to understand the prayer that Jesus prayed from the cross.

St Paul's explanation of the meaning of Jesus's incarnation, death and Resurrection ends with a firm declaration of faith that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (*Second Reading*).

Even as we find ourselves confined and isolated, walking in sorrow with Jesus this Holy Week, we look forward to Easter joy in his Resurrection, the ultimate victory over death and suffering.

SECOND READING PHILIPPIANS 2: 6-1

His state was divine
yet Christ Jesus did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

As I come to my place of prayer, I remember that God is here, present with me. I allow myself as long as I need simply to become still and quiet. If I have been busy or preoccupied, this may take some time.

When I am ready, I read this passage slowly, noticing the phrases or lines to which I am drawn. I may like to place myself before a crucifix, or imagine standing before Jesus crucified as I do this.

Perhaps I use Paul's words to address our Lord with reverence and wonder: '*Your state was divine, yet you did not cling to your equality with God ... you became as human as I am ...*'

How do I feel moved to respond to my Lord, who has given everything for me? I may ponder how I have responded to him in the past; how I want to respond to him in the present moment; and how I might wish to respond to him even more fully in the future.

I speak with our Lord from my heart. I listen for what he might say to me.

I end my prayer slowly, asking for whatever graces are needed for others and for myself during this difficult time.

Glory be ...

GOSPEL MATTHEW 26: 14 – 27: 66 (part)

After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all lose faith in me this night.’ At this, Peter said, ‘Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith.’ Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you solemnly, this very night before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.’ Peter said to him, ‘Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.’ And all the disciples said the same.

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Stay here while I go over there to pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me.’ And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed: ‘My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.’ He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter: ‘So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test.’ Again a second time, he went away and prayed: ‘My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!’ And he came back again and found them sleeping. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, ‘Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is close at hand.’

After coming to some stillness in whatever way is best for me, I read this Gospel passage slowly, paying attention to my feelings and thoughts.

I take time to be in the scene in whatever way I can:

I notice the place, the surroundings, the smells, sounds and people.

Perhaps I imagine myself in the disciples’ place, or talk with one of them, or just remain alongside them as the story unfolds.

What do I notice about Jesus? I talk with my Lord about all that is in my mind and heart. Then perhaps I simply become still, just being with him, knowing he also suffered isolation and loneliness, and needed his friends.

I may wish to end by praying *Our Father* or the *Anima Christi* (see over).

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple.

First Reading

O Lord, do not leave me alone;
my strength, make haste to help me.

Psalm

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Isaiah 50: 4–7; Ps. 21 (22); Philippians 2: 6–11; Matthew 26: 14 – 27: 66

Lord Jesus, may all that is you
flow into me.
May your body and blood be
my food and drink.
May your Passion and death be
my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side,
enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be
the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the love
which you offer,
But hold me safe
from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings
shed your light and your love.
Deep calling to me until that day
comes, when, with your saints,
I may praise you forever. Amen.

*Anima Christi, transl.
David Fleming S.J.*



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