

Jubilaem



A call to conversion!

5

[TO TRANSFORM MY LIFE, TO RENEW THE MISSION]

5th Sunday of Lent

There is still time to leave your comfort zone.

Prayer Guide



Gospel Text

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (12:20-33)



Now there were some Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again."

The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

Praying with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

Crucified Wheat

Lent 2021



How do you manage pain?

Meditation and text of St. Paul of the Cross

(FROM HIS SPIRITUAL DIARY)

At the end of Lent, after narrating the scene of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the Evangelist John refers to the appearance of Greeks who want to "see" Jesus. Jesus then poignantly declares the profound meaning of his whole life and his upcoming death.

"We would like to see Jesus." Who is this Jesus that we want to see? We are moved by the deep desire to know up close the mystery that is within that God-man and that attracts us to Him -- his faithful and dedicated love for the Father and his merciful presence to his brothers and sisters. His life that is about to be destroyed, a word that will be "silenced" and "buried" in the depths of the earth in order to bear the fruit of abundant life.

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified [...]. Father, glorify your name." ("holy be your Name" Mt. 6:9) The "hour" of Jesus is the moment when the Father will give the greatest proof of his love for humanity and fulfill the glorification of his Son in the very event of his Passion and Cross, before the Resurrection, when he freely and consciously offered himself. When Jesus is raised up, everyone will be able to clearly see his true greatness and glory. It is not a glory in the purely human sense; rather it is a glory that is revealed through suffering and death.



"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies..." As with the natural germination process of wheat, it is only when the seed is planted, absorbs moisture, and breaks open that all its vitality is released. Jesus uses this image to refer to himself; it is his own story. Like a grain of wheat, He descended into the earth in his Passion and death and produced much fruit by his Resurrection. This must also be the dynamic process of the life of every disciple of Jesus who wants to serve Him and be alive in Him. We only know Jesus to the extent that we follow Him. *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* (Mt. 16:25)

Descending into the ground and dying to selfishness is the way to bear fruit that will be preserved for eternal life. (Jn 12:25). If the disciple, like Jesus, is "sown," becomes hidden from sight, he will emerge to new life. We must be emptied of ourselves and our own interests in order to move beyond ourselves and encounter and serve others. We must "transcend" and fight the narcissistic temptation of "self-absorption". *"We would like to see Jesus"* cannot remain on a level of mere curiosity or intellectual knowledge; it requires taking a step towards transcendence for the sake of missionary service. *"Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be."* (Jn.12:26)

"I am troubled now. Yet what should I say?" It is not easy for anyone to suffer; our human nature rebels. Jesus also felt horror as He confronted a painful and humiliating death. We observe the shivering, trembling, and fatigue of the Lord that the Synoptics also note in his prayer in the

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Garden of Gethsemane (Mk.14: 32-42; Mt. 26:36-46; Lk. 22:39-46). Jesus resembles me and everyone who is vulnerable, fearful. However He faces this anguish by “trusting” and remaining faithful to the Father and to humanity, asserting that this is his project and that his whole life is oriented precisely toward this moment.

“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” What is hidden in the Crucified One that is so attractive? Only one thing-- his love that He sacrificed for mankind; his dedicated life that generates hope and freedom. Jesus will make disciples by attraction. The “hour” of Jesus is also the “hour” of each of us who follow Him. It is the “hour” of the new man who lives in authentic affiliation with God the Father and works to make his Kingdom a reality.

St. Paul of the Cross, based on his life experience, discovered that he had a particular understanding and experienced great empathy in his relationship with Jesus Christ in the mystery of the Passion. From the perspective of Jesus, he understood his own life, grew in faith, developed spiritually, and planned his life project. Jesus Crucified was his origin and foundation and it would be so for the Congregation founded by him. The element of “forgetting” is one of the particularly salient points that he highlights – *“The cause of the evils of our time is forgetting the Passion of Jesus”*, to which he proposes the “Memory of the Passion”, as an *“effective remedy for these evils”*. Similarly, he recommends loving meditation on the Passion -- *“The Passion is the greatest work of God’s love”*.

From his Spiritual Journal, written during the retreat at Castellazzo, we know that in those days his contemplation of Jesus Crucified and his personal relationship with Him was quite focused and accentuated. We read: “I had a keen infused knowledge of the sufferings of my Jesus, and I felt so ardently a desire to be perfectly united with him that I wished to actually feel his suffering and to be on the cross with him.” (6 December) “In offering the sufferings which my Jesus endured, I felt moved to tears, likewise in praying for the needs of my neighbor. At Holy Communion I was particularly recollected, especially in a sorrowful and loving remembrance of the sufferings of my Jesus...” (8 December)

Praying with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

What does Jesus Crucified mean for you today, and how do you relate to Him? What is the “attraction” he exerts over you?

How do you apply the image of Jesus as the grain of wheat sown in the earth in your own life and history?

We are a few days away from the beginning of Holy Week. What moves you in this text and where does it take you?





Gesture [SEEDS]

You can recover the soil or ashes from Ash Wednesday and make small piles for as many as members as there are in the community or those gathered for prayer. Each person is given a seed with the intention of sowing it in one of the previously prepared places. Once everyone has deposited the seed, the leader will propose the following questions for reflection: Do we leave each planted seed in one place or do we spread the individual plantings into a single sown field? From now on, with creativity, imagination, passion, and faith... Will we have to water? Who will do this?

Prayer Guide

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

Prayer for the Congregation

Loving father, who, according to your marvelous plan of salvation, choose what is weak and insignificant in the world in order to confuse what seems strong and powerful; look kindly upon this little flock, gathered under the sign of the holy Cross and Passion of your Son Jesus Christ.

Help us, gathered in your name, to grow in perfection, so that, by your mercy, we may come to You, who are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Show the strength of your arm, Lord; glorify and benignly extend your hand upon us, so that we may be able to place our lives at the service of your Church. Dispel the evils of your people, convert the enemies of the Cross and inspire in the hearts of your faithful love for the Passion of Christ.

Show us what we must do and suffer for your Name, so that the world may recognize You, God, strong, eternal, and holy and your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Lent



Jubilaecum