

Jubilaicum



Prayer Guide



Gospel Text

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (15:22-40)



They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross." Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him. At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down." Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" There were also women looking on from a distance."

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

A call to conversion!

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[TO TRANSFORM MY LIFE, TO RENEW THE MISSION]

Palm Sunday

There is still time to leave your comfort zone.

Jerusalem Relinquishing

Palm 2021



Which Jesus are you receiving in your life today?

Meditation and text of St. Paul of the Cross

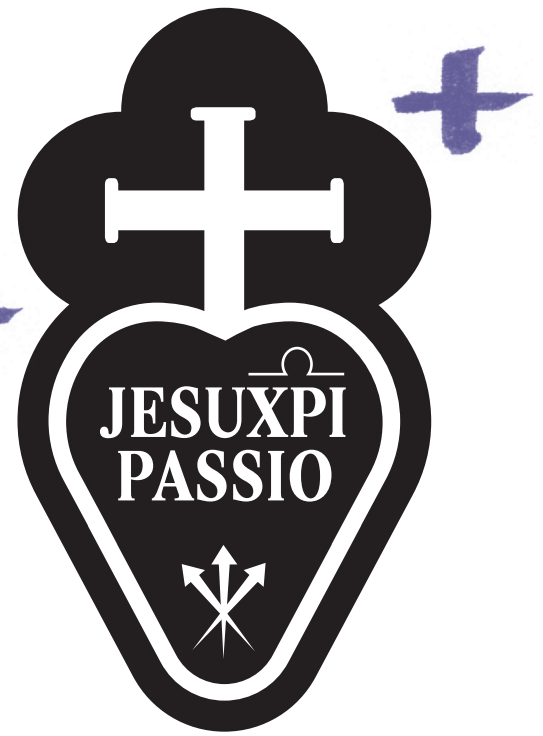
(FROM HIS SPIRITUAL DIARY AND LETTERS)

We begin Holy Week reading the account of **the Passion of Jesus** according to St. Mark. We focus on the moment of Jesus' death: accusations by the Jewish authorities, Pilate's declaration of innocence, the crowd that has called for Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus' condemnation and consignment, and the taunts and blows of the soldiers in the praetorium. We enter into the scene, see, listen, and feel what happens...



They brought him to the place of Golgotha. Jesus consciously and freely faces his own death, the consequence of his fidelity to the plan of the Father's Kingdom for his people. His claim to be the Son of God, his stance on the practice of religion and the law, his criticism of the ruling class and his choice for the marginalized had made others feel "uncomfortable" and therefore, he should be eliminated. He does not seek death with a suicidal attitude, but he does not evade it either. He does not defend or alter his life and mission. He is convinced that he will share with his disciples the true Passover meal when the definitive Kingdom of God is established (Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18).

There is a succession of **hostile gestures and words** that reveal the "dark night" and the desolation surrounding Jesus: "They crucified him" (v. 20); the absence of the disciples; and the forced help of Simon of Cyrene (v.21); the rejection of anesthetic myrrh; the stripping of his garments; the title "King of the Jews"; the provocations and taunts of the passers-by; high priests, teachers of the law, and those condemned with Him (vv. 23-32); the painful and infamous cross, reserved



for traitors and the worst criminals; the silence of Jesus, expressing the dignity of those who have been faithful, the trust of those who know that they are sustained by the Father; the wisdom of those who have understood the whole truth.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1). The expression of the total and hopeful abandonment of Jesus to the Father, in the midst of failure. Can we imagine God like this, abandoning, out of love, his Son into our hands? How can we look at Jesus abandoning himself completely and confidently to the Father? What a paradox He embodies! The more we feel distant from God and forgotten, the more He is present, embracing us and making our suffering his own.

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. It was not only the final cry of a dying man who was concluding his life, but a cry of confidence (Psalm 22:20-32), the culmination of what the life of Jesus had been and the meaning He had given to its entirety. Jesus does not die because the Father demands a "victim" but because He continued to love us even when we crucified His Son. *"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."* (2 Cor 5:19). The cry and death of the Crucified One were not "virtual" but real and current. In his cry was the cry of all the crucified people of history and the earth (those violated, immigrants, abandoned, rejected, excluded, oppressed...) the forgotten and abandoned victims, who suffer innocently and unjustly and who yearn for liberation.

Something has ended: Darkness represents Israel that has not been able to see the light of the

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Kingdom. The veil torn in two from top to bottom symbolizes the breaking of a barrier that prevents us from seeing the true face of God and is the end of a model of religion that manipulates God, enslaves with the law, and leads to death.

Something new begins: This man was truly the Son of God. The Roman centurion, a pagan, looks intently at the Crucified One and his faith is awakened. When everything seemed to end, something new began; we hear the whisper of life; a light approaches, hope rises and tells the heart to wait for Easter.

There were also women looking on from a distance. (the gentle distance of love). The significant presence at that time of these women, with their helplessness, their resistance and fidelity! It is a link between the event of the Cross and that of the Resurrection, between the disciples who have abandoned Jesus in his Passion and crucifixion and the risen Jesus who wants to gather them again (16:1-8). They are a model of discipleship--they serve Him and accompany him to the end. They teach us about the discipleship that we are called to learn and imitate.

When Paul of the Cross speaks about God he compares Him to a *“sea of divine love, from which issues the sea of the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ – these two seas are one.”* (Letters, 4 July 1748) Again he writes— *“Love is a unitive virtue and causes a person to take on the pains of the well-Beloved [...] [It]will transform the lover into the Beloved, combining in a wonderful way love and sorrow, but so much so that you cannot distinguish love from sorrow or sorrow from love so that the loving soul rejoices in its sorrow and celebrates a feast over its sorrowful love.”* (Letters, 10 July 1743). He urges us Passionists to meditate on the Passion of Jesus and asks us to teach others to meditate on it, to *“Fish for the pearls of the virtues of Jesus [...] in order to be converted and to avoid sin.”* (Letters, 8 April 1758)

By the age of 26 he was deeply committed to maintaining an intimate relationship with the patient and crucified Lord. On 27 November 1720, during the retreat in Castellazzo, he wrote in his diary: *“I said to Jesus: ‘Your pains, my dear God, are the pledges of your love.’ I do not desire to know anything else nor to taste any consolation. I desire only to be crucified with Jesus.”* In his introduction to the original Passionist Rule of

1720, he wrote— *“He who really loves, whenever he brings Friday into his mind has reasons to die. To say “Friday” is to name the day when my God-Made-Man suffered so much for me that he gave up his life by dying on the hard wood of the cross.”*

Where do I stand and what is my role in the scenes of the account of the Passion of Jesus?

Which of the characters do I identify with and why?

What does the following of Jesus Crucified today and the task of renewing our lives and mission in the service of the Church and the world entail?

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





Gesto

[IMAGE]

Look at the picture. What does it have to do with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem?

Give it a name. Now close your eyes and imagine yourself at the entrance into Jerusalem. Listen to the people screaming. What are they saying? What is your reaction to the voices?

And what Jesus have you come out to meet? Do you remain silent, or do you yell? Watch Jesus. What feelings does He stir within you? Ask him to help you to live this moment and your life from his viewpoint.



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

Prayer Guide

Prayer

Bless, Lord, those who are gathered in your name on this special Palm Sunday.

Bless, Lord, the land that gives us life. Bless, Lord, the seeds and water that recreate nature.

Bless, Lord, the sun and light that fortify creation.

Bless, Lord, the moon and the darkness that nourish the universe.

Bless, Lord, the root and sap that invigorate nature.

Bless, Lord, the trunk and branches that shelter animals.

Bless, Lord, the leaves that offer oxygen and shade.

Bless, Lord, the new growth and the fruits that feed us.

Bless, Lord, especially these branches and make us aware of the need to care for creation, and may we reduce the level of aggression toward the earth so that we do not exhaust all its resources.

May our Passionist family be sensitive, intelligent, and loving as we live in this our common home. Amen.

Palm



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