

# Read

Luke 19:28-40

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18,  
19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56 or 23:1-49

## LIVING THE WORD

# Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 14, 2019



## REFLECTION

Have you ever resisted doing something that you really did not want to do but were expected to do anyway? Maybe it was a retreat that a friend invited you to but you did not want to give up a weekend of relaxing and playing video games. Maybe it was a family reunion you would rather skip to hang out with your friends. We all have opportunities that we resist with great fanfare. Yet none of us has ever faced what Jesus faced in his passion story. We can really connect with Jesus as he goes to the Mount of Olives tormented by what he is about to endure. His humanity shines through as he sweats blood and prays fervently, "Father if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). After this incredibly vulnerable moment, Jesus enters fully into the passion story as he faces his torture and death. What strength, what faith, and what sacrifice Jesus not only endures but embraces. The next time you find yourself resisting an opportunity to be in fellowship with others and connect more to your purpose in life, pay attention to your resistance and find the strength to embrace the challenge.

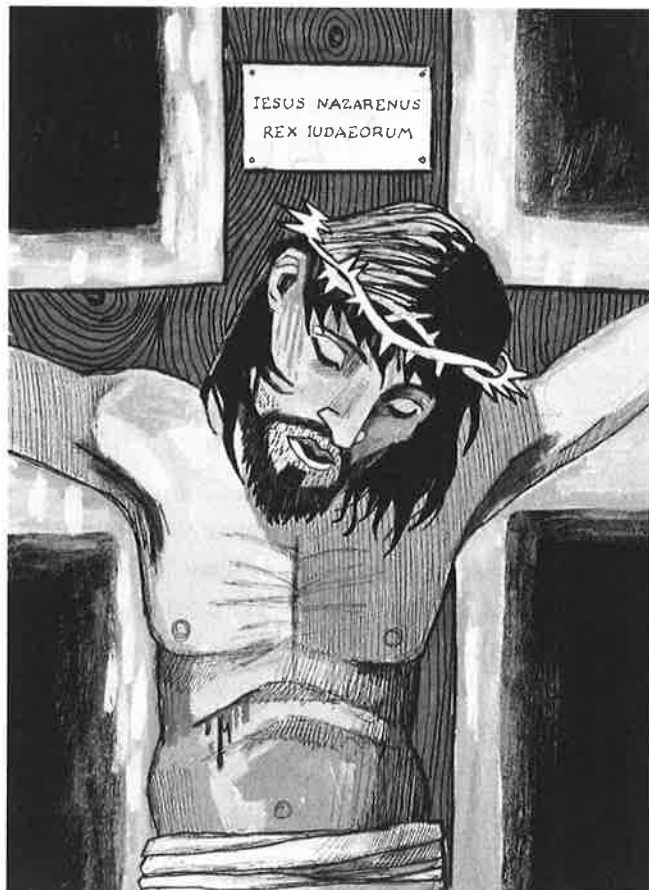
## ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does the passion of Christ mean to you?
- ❖ Which encounter do you most identify with on Jesus' journey to the cross?



## ACTION

Spend time this week reflecting on the movements of Jesus' final journey. Identify the Stations of the Cross through the passion story. See yourself in each encounter Jesus has. Do you identify with the guard who had his ear cut off? Peter's denial? Judas' betrayal? Or Simon's support of Jesus? Maybe you identify with the weeping women or the guards that torment Jesus? Draw one of these encounters to pray with each day this week.





April 14, 2019

# PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

## LECTIONARY #37C AND #38C

Luke 19:28–40 (at the Blessing of Palms)

Isaiah 50:4–7

Psalms 22:8–9, 17–18, 19–20, 23–24

Philippians 2:6–11

Luke 22:14–23:56 or 23:1–49

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Each reading today is making direct reference to the mystery and gift of the Cross: the greatest sacrifice and most profound moment this world has ever known. The Cross is the reason we gather today, the reason we have a Church at all. The Cross, the moment of seeming defeat, is the greatest victory God ever achieved, even though it looks like a moment of total failure. The prophet Isaiah directly prophesies what is to come, the letter to the Philippians shows the great power of what Christ did, and the Gospel from Luke tells the story of the most profound sacrifice ever made: the Son of God dying for the sins of all people. The Gospel of today is perhaps the most critical and pivotal moment in all of human history—the story of Jesus' crucifixion and death. It is a story that forces us to take stock of, and remember, the significance of the ultimate sacrifice that was made for us, and we are meant to reflect deeply on what Jesus did. He allowed himself to be humiliated, abandoned, and killed so that we could one day enter Paradise.

**Q FOCUS:** *Jesus was obedient even unto death.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This is Palm Sunday, the day when Jesus Christ triumphantly enters into Jerusalem before he goes to Calvary on Good Friday. And yet, the primary Gospel reading for today is the story of Jesus Christ dying on that Cross he will carry. His triumph is presented through the lens of seeming defeat. We are nearing the end of our Lenten journey as we enter Holy Week. Lent ends as the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday begins. This begins the Sacred Paschal Triduum, the Three Days, a continuous celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

### Church Teaching Connection

"All the troubles, for all time, of humanity enslaved by sin and death, all the petitions and intercessions of salvation history are summed up in this cry of the incarnate Word. Here the Father accepts them and, beyond all hope, answers them by raising his Son" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2606).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand. Please note that because of the length of today's reading, only an excerpt has been provided here. For a greater context, you may wish to proclaim from the Lectionary.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory.**

## Gospel

Luke 23:33-49

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They divided his garments by casting lots. The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God." Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

*Here all kneel and pause for a short time.*

The centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, "This man was innocent beyond doubt." When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; but all his acquaintances stood at a distance, including the

women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events.

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

► **Do you have a crucifix or cross hanging in your home? Where? Why is it there? Or do you wear a crucifix or cross around your neck? Why?**

The death of Jesus is something remarkably familiar and also strikingly strange, all at the same time. And every time we see the Cross, we are reminded of just how striking and strange this event was.

► **Why has an ancient torture device used to execute criminals become the central image of our faith, symbolizing the greatest sacrifice ever made for each and every one of us? Why do we hang our crosses and read this Gospel on Palm Sunday?**

Because one man died upon a cross, we now have the chance to be eternally united with God. And so, we hang crosses or crucifixes in our homes, we wear them around our necks, we have them in and upon our churches, and we consider them the universal image of our faith (*you might note to teens the difference between a cross [bare] and a crucifix [body]*). We don't forget what occurred when we look upon the Cross, and when we read the passion narrative on Palm Sunday (and Good Friday) we are allowing ourselves to be swept up in the story of our salvation.

► **What does Jesus say throughout Luke's telling of the passion? Whom does he speak to? Why do you think he speaks to them?**

Jesus speaks to Pilate, who eventually allows the Jews to take him to his death. Jesus consoles the

weeping women, telling them that what he is suffering now will result in greater things to come. He speaks to the criminal hanging on a cross next to his, promising him eternal life because he repented. Lastly, Jesus cries out to the Father and commends his spirit to him as he dies. Each thing Jesus says shows us why he died in this way. Something greater is at work here, for he is taking the form of a slave (as the Second Reading says) so that our knees would one day bend in honor and acceptance of this great gift.

► Who is converted when he sees the events of the Cross?

► A lowly centurion soldier, who witnessed the moment of Jesus' death, is the model for us. In seeing what is occurring, the soldier knows without any doubt that Jesus has gone to his death innocently. He bends his knee in adoration of the Lord hanging before him on the Cross, and so should we.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 174.*

The Cross marks the central sacrifice of Christ's life and the greatest gift we have ever been given. We must read the story of the passion with new eyes and hear it with new ears each time, because it reminds us of what occurred for us.

**When Jesus hangs upon the Cross, he gives his spirit to the Father. In that moment, everything is converging and all of salvation history up to that point is gaining new meaning as everything from before is fulfilled.**

**Christ empties himself for us, and our response should be nothing less than bending the knee and adoring him, grateful for what he has done. We may not understand how death can be good, or how seeming defeat is actually grand victory, but that is what the Cross is and we must respond with total faith.**

## Act on the Word

*Because of the complexities of today's Gospel and the solemnity of the celebration, there is no activity for today's session. Instead, refer to the handout for today and encourage teens to continue to reflect on the Gospel. Provide teens with the parish schedule for the Triduum liturgies and encourage them to attend.*

## Closing Prayer

*Loving God,  
as we contemplate the cost Jesus, your Son,  
paid for our sins,  
may our hearts always be open to give of  
ourselves to all in need.  
Through Christ our Lord  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*