

PRAYER SERVICE

CHAPTER FIVE—The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ: Source of Our Salvation

THEME

Reader One:

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

This is what Jesus said, and this is what Jesus did for us and our salvation.

Let us take time to examine the depths of this mystery.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 53:1–5, 18–19, 22–23,

Reader Two:

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Who would believe what we have heard?

To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

He grew up like a sapling before him,

like a shoot from the parched earth;

He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye,

no beauty to draw us to him.

He was spurned and avoided by men,

a man of suffering, knowing pain,

Like one from whom you turn your face,

spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our pain that he bore,

our sufferings he endured.

We thought of him as stricken,

struck down by God and afflicted,

But he was pierced for our sins,

crushed for our iniquity.

He bore the punishment that makes us whole,

by his wounds we were healed.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

RESPONORIAL PSALM: Psalm 22 2–5, 8–9, 18–19, 29–30

Reader Three:

Response: Hear me, O Lord!

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why so far from my call for help,

from my cries of anguish?

Response: Hear me, O Lord!

My God, I call by day, but you do not answer;

by night, but I have no relief.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;

you are the glory of Israel.

In you our fathers trusted;

they trusted and you rescued them.

Response: Hear me, O Lord!

All who see me mock me;

they curl their lips and jeer;

they shake their heads at me:

“He relied on the LORD—let him deliver him;

if he loves him, let him rescue him.”

Response: Hear me, O Lord!

Save me from the lion’s mouth,

my poor life from the horns of wild bulls.

Then I will proclaim your name to my brethren;

in the assembly I will praise you:

For kingship belongs to the LORD,

the ruler over the nations.

And I will live for the LORD;

my descendants will serve you.

Response: Hear me, O Lord!

SECOND READING: Galatians 2:19–21

Reader Four:

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians.

For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

The Word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL Matthew 27:33-40, 45-50

Reader Five:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his

left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, [and] come down from the cross!” From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*”^{*} which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “This one is calling for Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.” But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION

Reader Six:

Take a moment to ponder the moment of Jesus’ Death. (*Pause for about 30 seconds then continue with the following.*)

The night before Jesus died he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane where he suffered great sorrow. He predicted that Peter would deny knowing him three times. But, Peter proclaimed, “Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.”

- Reflect on, or write about a time when you “denied” Christ. Was it out of fear, out of being mocked by others, out of wanting to just go along with the crowd? Relive the situation and write down what you could have done or said instead to not deny Christ. Devise a strategy and resolution to not do the same thing again.

In the Garden Jesus’ best friends fell asleep, while he was praying. Another of his followers betrayed him and had him arrested.

- Reflect or write about a time when you were “missing in action” for another person, basically, you were “missing in action” from Jesus himself. Write a letter of apology, or imagine in your mind a dialogue in which you apologize to that person and to Jesus.

PETITIONS

Reader Seven:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

For the times we have been unfaithful to you, Lord, we pray:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

For the times we have ignored you or others who are precious to you because of our own self-interest, we pray:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

For the times we have been indifferent to the needs of others, we pray:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

For the times we mocked or demeaned others motivated by meanness or popularity, we pray:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

For broken promises we made to you or others, we pray:

Response: Have mercy on us, Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER

Reader: Eight:

As we move through the ups and down of our days, and the joys and sorrows of our lives, may we always remember that Jesus has paid the price for our sins. May we have the grace to embrace our crosses, and to help others carry their crosses. May we unite our small and big trials with Jesus' suffering, always keenly aware of the enormity and depth of the Paschal Mystery: that the Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ has saved and the world. We ask this in his name.

Response: Amen.