



HOLY WEEK: APRIL 14 – APRIL 21, 2019

day 40 – "What's your Role?" (Palm Sunday)

READINGS:

LK 19:28-40 | IS 50:4-7 | PSALM 22 | PHIL 2:6-11 | LK 22:14- 23:56

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts..." (William Shakespeare)

OVERVIEW:

Every year I offer the same reflection on Palm Sunday... yet, every year it is going to be different for you. Why? Because we change, our role in the Passion changes, and we desire to one day not have to see ourselves on this hard journey with Jesus.

This is the beginning of Holy Week and the moment everything changes in our story. We see Jesus glorified one minute and crucified the next. How could it all change so quickly? How could His friends sell Him out and not stop the madness? He told them for a long time what would happen. Truth is, it had to happen and they all had to play their role in it.

Let today pull you in to the story of Christ's passion. May your convictions grow stronger because of all the preparation you have been doing. And if this is the beginning of your Lenten journey, that is okay too, it's an incredible place to start. May the role we play from this day forward be one of a faith-filled disciple sitting at the feet, trusting in our Master who will make all things new.

ACTION:

What person do you identify with most at this moment in your life? Allow it to humble you and see what God might be asking of you.

REFERENCE:

"We are the Bibles the world is reading; we are the creeds the world is needing; we are the sermons the world is heeding."

(Billy Graham)



day 41 - "Fulfillment & Understanding"

READINGS:

IS 42:1- 7 | PSALM 17 | JN 12:1-11

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation." (PS 27:1)

OVERVIEW:

If you are following along with the daily scripture readings, you will see that the prophet Isaiah begins to describe who the savior would be and what He will have to endure. He is telling the people all of these things hundreds of years before Jesus would ever walk the earth. When we read it now, it is part of the fulfillment and understanding to reveal the truth in what we believe.

Our understanding of faith will never be achieved while we are alive. We have to understand that and appreciate the mystery of faith. It's easy to believe when we see, but what if God is just laying the foundation for something that will happen a long time from now? Fulfillment and understanding isn't meant to always be grasped... this is where trust comes in. A trust that had the faithful and early Christians watching the one they love be ripped away from them and punished not for what He had done, but for loving the world enough to lead them to His Father... Our Father. Do the same, whatever the cost.

ACTION:

Let go of whatever frustrations you have currently about a specific situation that isn't changing fast enough. Entrust it to God and make peace that it will be done according to His plan.

REFERENCE:

"The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries. He makes everything converge on Christ: all the rituals and sacrifices, figures and symbols of the "First Covenant". He announces him through the mouths of the prophets who succeeded one another in Israel. Moreover, he awakens in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church #522)



day 42 - "It's Gettin' Real"

READINGS:

IS 49:1- 6 | PSALM 71 | JN 13:21-33,36-38

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"So Jesus said, 'What you are going to do, do quickly.'" (JN 13:27)

OVERVIEW:

The betrayal of Jesus is always before us. Immediately we think of Judas as the betrayer, but there are two different people that fit that description in today's Gospel. In the case of Judas, he struggles with selling out Jesus for his own personal greed. However, Peter is the other figure who feels so confident in his faith that he is oblivious to how quickly he will deny Christ to protect himself in a moment of fear.

For us, it reminds us that we are never too strong in our relationship with Jesus. Things can "get real" very quickly, changing instantly in ways we never expect when the evil one gets in our head. But just like the disciples, Christ knows our human struggles and that He must lead us in this journey by offering reconciliation after our sin. The same is true when we betray those we love on Earth. We don't always mean to hurt people, but our actions have consequences regardless of our mindset.

We don't always fall intentionally like Judas... sometimes we are like Peter, separated from Jesus because we missed the test in our midst. Either way, Christ will redeem us if we let him.

ACTION:

How do you relate to the two disciples during times you have sold Him out in what you believe? Maybe it was intentional by choosing the world over Jesus or possibly you denied Jesus when others spoke ill of Him and you didn't admit your love of Christ.

REFERENCE:

""Lots of people say they want to follow Jesus....But the reasons why you want to follow Jesus will only become clear in the hard times."

(Mike McKinley)



day 43 - "Will they Understand?"

READINGS:

IS 50:4-9a | PSALM 69 | MT 26:14-25

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"For your sake I bear insult, and shame covers my face. I have become an outcast to my brothers, a stranger to my mother's sons." (PS 69:8-9)

OVERVIEW:

In life we do kind things for people or help others and it isn't always appreciated the way we hoped. We may not get a "thank you" or even an acknowledgement for whatever it is we worked to do. This hurts, because we want them to know how hard we worked to share our gifts with them.

Jesus is aware at this point of the His journey what tomorrow night will set into motion. His heart is troubled wondering if people will really understand what He is doing. Not that He expects everyone to know right now, but in the story of our lives, will we continue to understand? Will there be an appreciation and a surrender to accept His love?

In your transformation and desire to live a Christ centered life, you will begin to share the same feelings Christ did. When the world shuns you or friends shy away from you because of the changes you are making in your life, it can be hard. If you work to do good and be the image of Christ for others, you will reflect on it at the end of a day and think, "Do they understand?" Just remember, even if they don't, you have to be you and find fulfillment in simply living your call. We don't do things so others will understand, we do it because it is who we want to be and what we want to do.

ACTION:

Let go of any ill feelings you have for someone who hasn't recognized what you have done for them. Pray to extend mercy and know you are living in the image of Christ to be a servant leader.

REFERENCE:

"Fear is a self imposed prison that will keep you from becoming what God intends for you to be. You must move against it with the weapons of faith and love."

(Rick Warren)



day 44 - "Becoming Like Jesus" (Holy Thursday)

READINGS:

EX 12:1-8 | PSALM 16 | I COR 11:23-26 | JN 13:1-15

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"Fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist." (JN 13:3-4)

OVERVIEW:

The Last Supper invites us to think about what Jesus was telling the disciples and how it is found every time they share Holy Communion in "remembrance of Him." Christ came down to the disciples' level and removed His garments to show them the need for servant leadership to be a true follower. A reminder of the heart we need to have for others. Our faith isn't about having all the right answers or knowing the ins and outs of every word in scripture. It's about action, an outpouring of love Christ offered in His ministry, and ultimately on the cross.

When we receive the Eucharist, we consume everything Jesus Christ was, is, and forever shall be. Coming forth during mass isn't a symbol of the night he shared with His disciples, it is our "yes" to be part of the covenant He offers us through His body and blood. Church teaching tells us that in this action of receiving Him into us, we become ONE with Jesus in His humanity. Every miracle, every story, every look of compassion, and every teaching consume our being so we can be like Christ to the world. Find all of Jesus in Communion, so you can become more like Him in every way.

ACTION:

Pray today to be like Christ in every way by sharing his heart with these words, "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like yours in every way."

REFERENCE:

"Holy Communion augments our union with Christ. The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1391)



day 45 - "Take Up Your Cross" (Good Friday)

READINGS:

IS 52:13-53:-12 | PSALM 31 | HEB 4:14-16, 5:7-9 | JN 18:1-19:42

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way..." (HEB 4:15)

OVERVIEW:

It's time... All of our Lenten preparation leads us to this moment; Jesus on the cross. Have we remembered though He took OUR cross, the one which bore our weakness and sin? He was handed a wooden beam which was weighed down with the inequities of the world.

Christ never asks us to do anything He wasn't willing to do first. So, now is our time to take up our cross and journey this day side by side with Him to Calvary. There we will understand the emotion and power of the crucifixion. Not only because Jesus suffered, but He did it for us so we wouldn't have to endure the same type of torment.

Even if the torture is not the same, we have to carry our cross and then lay it down then realize everything it consists of in our life. Our fear, illness, sins, pain, ego, betrayal, and anything else that separates us from God's love. Make this day count and let Christ take it from you so you don't have to have it anymore. He will do that. In the end though, remember this moment and how it is necessary for the resurrection to occur. We only can have an Easter Sunday because there is a Good Friday... the same is true in life. For this chapter, the hardest part of our Lenten journey is over, and we share the same words Christ last spoke "It is finished..." (Jn 19:30)

ACTION:

Spend 15 minutes today just looking at Christ on the cross and fervently pray to place all your sin and pain at the foot of it and reflect on how much Christ loves you.

REFERENCE:

"The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men". But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow [him]", for "Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps." In fact Jesus desires to associate with his redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church #61)



day 46 - "Empty" (Holy Saturday)

READINGS:

JOB 33:21-22 | PSALM 88 | COL 1:12-14

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life" (Holy Saturday "Collect" Prayer)

OVERVIEW:

The reflection of Holy Saturday for me often is filled with confusion. I feel empty because I want Jesus back. I carry guilt about all the ways I haven't remained faithful or what I didn't do during my Lenten journey that could have made me stronger. This must be how the disciples felt with a fear of the unknown. We are blessed to know Christ rises but they didn't know that for sure.

It's almost like when someone we love is apart from us. We know they will return but we want them with us here and now. I need Jesus close to me and yet there is a stone that separates me from Him while He lies in the tomb. So, we are left to reflect... A reflection of how empty we are without Him. As we are taught throughout scripture though, even when we can't see or feel Jesus, we must trust. Today, we enter our tomb, rooting our self in Christ, so that when we celebrate Easter tomorrow, we spring forth as a new creation. No longer empty, but filled with the Spirit and fullness of Christ.

ACTION:

What would you tell Jesus if you had a chance to go in the tomb and hold the hand of His lifeless body? How can sitting with Him in this moment prepare you for the wonder that will be His resurrection?

REFERENCE:

"Just as when we were children, we were afraid to be alone in the dark and could only be assured by the presence of someone who loved us. Well this is exactly what happened on Holy Saturday, the voice of God resounded in the realm of death. The unimaginable occurred; namely, love penetrated Hell."

(Philip Yancey)



day 47 - "Let's Get to Work" (Easter Sunday)

READINGS:

ACTS 10:34A, 37: 43 | PSALM 118 | COS 3:1-4 | JN 20:1 – 9

REFLECTION QUOTE:

"He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name." (ACTS 10:42-43)

OVERVIEW:

Happy Easter! This day we must make a commitment to celebrate with purpose. Yes, we will proclaim our "Alleluia" of the excitement in Christ's rising, but that it is also our chant to say, "Lord, I know I must be your witness for the world." Where does this begin? The way we share our family time as we get ready for mass and travel to church...Not as a holiday obligation but a beautiful celebration of our faith and community. Then it continues as we gather for family meals.... How can we bring Christ into our celebration that takes us beyond the food that is being shared? We look for a courage to help those that may not believe yet in what we feel in our heart.

Today is the beginning of the Easter Season. It's not a one-day event, this season last's fifty days. We will hear about the action the disciples take after our Lord rises and comes to them. We will see the work they have to put in now on their own to carry Jesus to the world and continue the church He began. So, this day and time is our call to get to work and put the reflection and transformation of Lent behind and become about being who God created us to be in order to lead others by the hand, at our side, to His Kingdom.

Ultimately what we learn is that Lent doesn't have an end, it was always just the beginning of looking at ourselves, our faith and our relationship with Jesus in a new way.

ACTION:

What will you do this day to share the true beauty and faith-filled meaning of Easter with those around you?

REFERENCE:

"A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."

(Mahatma Gandhi)