



Looking at the *long, long, long* Passion Gospel of this Palm Sunday we can see that there are many people who caused the suffering and death of the Lord. If we realize and accept that it was our sins that crucified Jesus, Son of God, then—and only then—will we see these different people in the Passion as representing our sins which caused Jesus to die. Then—our hearts will be stricken—then we will know to turn to Him and repent.

Think of Judas:

When he met Jesus in Gethsemane he kissed Jesus but it was a deceitful and treacherous kiss. It was not a kiss of love because Judas' heart was far from Jesus. When we come to Mass we kiss the Lord, especially when we receive him in Holy Communion and as Mass ends we are invited to "Go and serve the Lord", and—yet—how often we go, instead, and sin. We can see ourselves in Judas. Now, today, we cannot go to Church and kiss Him in holy communion. Let us tell Him of our sorrow for the sin in the past with which we have kissed Him in holy communion. He will be so pleased with us when we do this.

Think of Peter:

He promised that even if all lost faith in Jesus he would not. Yet when Peter was in the courtyard of the high priest's house he denied Jesus three times when he was under threat and afraid. In the Greek word used in Mark's Gospel, Peter's third denial is unclear and could even mean that Peter cursed Jesus. Hear are his words in Matthew's Gospel today, "I do know what you are talking about"—and—"I do not know the man".

Like Peter—there are some of us who say they did *not know* it is a serious sin to miss Mass on Sundays and Holy-days; like Peter, there are some who say they did *not know* it is a serious sin to have intimate relations before marriage. When we sin, *it is* because of a lapse of faith, because our faith was weak—just like Peter. But later, after the Resurrection, Jesus asked for Peter's repentance three times because of his threefold denial. Just as Peter was forgiven and restored by Jesus we too are forgiven and restored by Jesus. But we are to repent. Each day and every day we have to ask God for grace to repent. In these days of isolation, through our increased fear, it is so much more easy to see our need of His presence.

Think of the Soldiers:

They mocked Him. This may remind us of the insults many—and possibly ourselves—have thrown at the Church. *'They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"'*

Jesus founded the Church; he said to Peter, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church". If we love Jesus—surely we must love the Church too?!. St. Paul tells us the Church is the Body of Christ. When Paul—persecuting Christians—was converted he heard Jesus say to him, "Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me". To attack the Church is to attack Jesus.

In the past few years, many have abandoned the Church condemning it for its weaknesses and failures. But the Church is a gift from Jesus to us. If we reject the Church we reject Jesus. Jesus said to the Apostles, "Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me." Today, in this time of our greatest need of Jesus, let us ask the Lord to turn all those hearts that are bitter and have rejected His Church to love Him in His Church.

Let us—who have not turned away—humbly ask the Lord to preserve us in His Church. If we humbly ask this of Him, we will become a home in which He will find a welcome—He will find a humble, contrite, broken spirit in us. This makes us open and when we are in this condition He finds us irresistible. He comes and give us His peace, the peace the world cannot give.

Think of the Liars:

They lied by twisting Jesus' words into a false accusation against Him. "*This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'*" Jesus had predicted that the temple would be destroyed but never said he would destroy the temple. They misunderstood Jesus and made false accusations against him.

Many have misunderstood the Church's teaching and misrepresented it and therefore wrongfully accused the Church. Sometimes we ourselves have been guilty of this. But what is the reality? Simply this: the Church is a caring mother and all her teaching is given out of love, asking us to look beyond our selfishness to the real meaning of who we are as humans—children of God; the Church challenges and encourages us to live in a way that reflects who we really are—children of God. Even though they falsely accused Jesus He was right, and even if people now misrepresent the Church's teaching her teaching is still true.

Think of the Early Christians—And today's Christians:

When the early Christians looked back, so many events of Jesus' Passion became clearer. As we look at the Passion of Jesus so much more becomes clearer for us, we realize that it was our sins that crucified Jesus: and we see these different people in the Passion as representing our sins which caused Jesus to die.

To make reparation for our crucifixion of the Lord, let us remember the love of the Lord for us which caused him to suffer for our sins and let us turn to the Lord in love. May our meditation on Jesus' Passion this week encourage us to renew our lives with Jesus and leave sin behind to rise with his new life this coming Easter Sunday.

The week we are beginning—in these most unusual times—is Holy Week. Try to make it a Holy Week. Through the Archdiocese of Toronto livestreaming, watch the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday; the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday; the celebration of Jesus' resurrection during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night, and the Easter Sunday Mass. Doing this will unite us in the Spirit of Jesus, make us one in His Body—and, therefore, defeating the sin in us that separates and divides us from ourselves and one another.



Prayer of the Faithful
PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION
APRIL 5, 2020



Leader:

We know that God will never abandon us,
so we cry out with our needs and the needs of the world
knowing that we will be heard.

LECTOR: Lord, Hear Our Prayer.

For your Church, may the celebration of this Holy Week mystery lead us
to a deeper appreciation of our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ:

We pray...

Guide the leaders of nations, may their decisions bring safety, food, medicine
and justice to all—especially the poor:

We pray...

Unite our community of JXXIII—separated from each other at this time—
to be one in your Holy Spirit

We pray...

Be with those suffering mental, physical, or spiritual anguish:

We pray...

Bless us with a spirit of penance, reflection, and gratitude during
these Holy days:

We pray...

Comfort the sick and their families (especially) Candelabra Ferolino; Munchie Reyes;
Aisha Miranda; Samuel Jareno; _____

We pray...

Give your life to the faithful departed (especially): those who have died from
the virus; _____

Leader:

Lord and Father,
with serene courage your Son went forth to die for us.
Grant us a share in his strength as we bring
these prayers before you.

We ask this, through Christ our Lord. Amen