



**EQSAINTS**

## Good Friday

**Liturgical Text:** The Adoration of the Holy Cross

*17. Then, accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the Priest or the Deacon carries the Cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or to another suitable place and there puts it down or hands it over to the ministers to hold. Candles are placed on the right and left sides of the Cross.*

*18. For the Adoration of the Cross, first the Priest Celebrant alone approaches, with the chasuble and his shoes removed, if appropriate. Then the clergy, the lay ministers, and the faithful approach, moving as if in procession, and showing reverence to the Cross by a simple genuflection or by some other sign appropriate to the usage of the region, for example, by kissing the Cross.*

### **ANTIPHON**

We adore your Cross, O Lord,  
we praise and glorify your holy Resurrection,  
for behold, because of the wood of a tree  
joy has come to the whole world.

To imitate the manner in which the Cross is displayed in the church, you place a cross from your home in a place that is central to where the family is seated while it is flanked by two candles.

Also, ask everyone in the group to have their Bibles with them. Ask one person to read the first passage out loud and then ask someone else to read the second passage. Encourage them to have their pens and to underline things that strike them, especially later in the Bible when you go through the key words and phrases. Also, encourage them to make notes.

After the reading of the passage is complete, explain the context.

**Scripture Passage:**       **Hebrews 4:14-16 and 5:7-9**  
                                      **John 19:28-35**

### **Context:**

In the earlier liturgy study, it had been mentioned that the Holy Thursday liturgy is the memorial of the night Jesus was betrayed. He gave us the new commandment to love another as he has loved us and he instituted the Eucharist in the context of the meal. He gave the Apostles and through them he gave the Church the ongoing way that people can have a living encounter with His Real Presence. Bread ceases to be bread and wine ceases to be wine. They become the actually body and blood of Christ. Day after day and week after week, the Church transcends time and space and it enters into this moment. Day after day, except for today, Good Friday.

After last night's great celebration of Jesus giving himself in the Eucharist, we suddenly do not consecrate bread and wine. The Holy Communion that is shared on Good Friday was consecrated during Holy Thursday. It seems strange not have Mass in memorial of Jesus's death, especially after the night we have so much focus on the Eucharist. For Good Friday, everything is focused on the Cross of Christ.

On Holy Thursday, two of the key words were "emptied" and "being pour out". The model that Jesus gave did not stop at the Washing of the Feet. His self-emptying reached its conclusion on the Cross when he bowed his head and handed over his spirit and when soldier pierced Jesus's side. All attention is on the Cross and we mourn the death of Christ though an absence of the Eucharist being offered. Tonight we adore the Cross, the place where the selfless love of God was fully shown.

If you and your members have Bibles, you can look up the references together.

### **Key New Testament Words and Phrases:**

- *Tested*: Found in Hebrews 4:15, the Greek word "Peira" (PEI-rah) is the root. It can be translated as "tested", "tempted", or "enticed".
- *Suffered*: Found in Hebrews 5:8, the Greek word is "epathen" (ep-AH-then). It is having an outside force act upon the person.
- *Perfect*: Found in Hebrews 5:9, the Greek root is "teleos" (TELL-ee-ohs) which is the word for goal. It is to reach completion.
- *It is finished*: Found in John 19:30, the Greek word is "tetelestai" (tet-EL-eh-sty) which also has "teleos" as its root. It means to be brought to its goal or to its completion. In the passage to the Letter to the Hebrews mentioned above, the word gets translated as "made perfect".
- *Blood and water*: Found in John 19:34, the phrase on Greek is "haima kai hydor" (HY-mah ky HOO-dore). Similar to the English usage, blood also conveys "kinship".

Now you may provide the following interpretation.

### **Interpretation:**

Hidden within these readings and the entirety of the Good Friday is the fact Jesus knows what it is like to suffer as we have suffer. It can often be thought that Jesus acted in way that is somewhat removed from human experience until the night of the betrayal. The events of Holy Thursday and Good Friday are the beginning of Jesus's human suffering. These are the fulfillment of his human suffering. From his conception, he was the savior, but he was not fully the savior until his passion and resurrection. His work had not been perfected, yet. He healed and he taught. These were both part of his

work of being our savior, but his work and his identity as the savior was not brought to completion, to perfection until the events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter.

Every religion must provide an answer for human suffering. In the past, Christianity has given a lot of energy to answering human suffering by providing philosophical theories as to why we suffer or where suffering comes from. These are important questions; however, they do not ultimately provide a why that helps us to cope with the human condition. The only real answer to human suffering for the Christian is Jesus himself.

He has been tempted, tested, tried, and scrutinized in every way as you and I have been. This testing occurred through out Jesus's life and it reached its final destination in the ultimate human suffering, a painful and humiliating death. We do not know where suffering comes from or why. What the Christian is left with is the fact that in Jesus, God suffers, too. He not only knows what it is like to suffer, he provides the pathway and the hope to the other side of human suffering: everlasting life. In the blood, he shows that he has kinship with our humanity and in the water, he offers us kinship with his divinity.

Read the two passages again. After reading these readings with this interpretation in mind, please lead a discussion based on these questions:

#### **Application to Real Life:**

- What is most frustrating to you about this time of social distancing?
- Besides this time of coronavirus, how else have you felt tested by life?
- Is it easy or difficult to imagine Jesus being tested in the same way that you feel tested? Why did you answer the way you did?

At this point, take the cross and pass it from person to person. Each person will answer the following question while holding the cross.

- If Jesus was sitting in front of you, what would want to say to him regarding the things you are going through right now? What do you think he would say back?
- If Jesus was brought to his completion through what he suffered, what do you think God is doing inside of you during this time of frustration or suffering?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Ask someone else to read Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9 for a final time and then pray the following prayer.

Almighty God, when you spoke to Moses in the Burning Bush, you said that you see the affliction of your people and that you know well our suffering. During this time of frustration and suffering, we turn our attention to your son and our savior Jesus. Help us to know him as the one who can rescue us during this time. May he be a source of comfort for the sick and the isolated, and may he be a source of protection for health

care workers and others who are selflessly working during this time. We pray all these things of you, Father through the name of your son Jesus, and in communion with the Holy Spirit. Amen.