

CLOSING PRAYER:

~ A Prayer for Holy Week ~

Loving God,
lead us beyond ourselves
to care and protect,
to nourish and shape,
to challenge and energize
both the life and the world
You have given us.

God of light and God of darkness,
God of conscience and God of courage
lead us through this time
of spiritual confusion and public uncertainty.

Lead us beyond fear, apathy and defensiveness
to new hope in You and to hearts full of faith.

Give us the conscience it takes
to comprehend what we're facing,
to see what we're looking at
and to say what we see
so that others, hearing us,
may also brave the pressure that comes
with being out of public step.

Give us the courage we need
to confront those things
that compromise our consciences
or threaten our integrity.

Give us, most of all,
the courage to follow those before us
who challenged wrong and changed it,
whatever the cost to themselves.
Amen.

—Sister Joan Chittister, OS.B.

CAMPUS MINISTRY OFFICE:

The Campus Ministry Office is located in **Our Lady Chapel**.
phone: [440] 473-3560 [office] or 216-570-9276 [cell].

Our Lady Chapel



Our Lady Chapel is a Roman Catholic community founded in the love of the Father, centered in Christ, and rooted in the Holy Cross tenets of building family and embracing diversity. We are united in our journey of faith through prayer and sacrament, and we seek growth through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and outreach, while responding to the needs of humanity.

THE CHOSEN — SUNDAY, APRIL 13:

This Sunday, as part of our Lenten Journey, we are going to view an episode of *The Chosen*, and follow it up with a discussion. This will take place on **Sunday, April 13 [Palm Sunday] from 11:30 AM until 1 PM. A Pizza lunch will be provided.**

The Chosen is an American Christian historical drama television series. Created, directed, and co-written by filmmaker Dallas Jenkins, it is the first multi-season series about the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Primarily set in Judaea and Galilee in the 1st century, the series depicts the life of Jesus through the eyes of the people who interacted with him, including the apostles and disciples of Jesus, Jewish religious leaders, Roman government and military officials, and ordinary people.

In contrast with typical Bible-focused productions, Jenkins has given more depth to his scripts by adding backstories to various characters from the gospels without contradicting the material of the gospel.

Although the show has an evangelical tendency, there are consultants from three Christian faith traditions providing input. Acting as consultants are Messianic rabbi Jason Sobel from Fusion Global Ministries; Catholic priest and national director of Family Theater Productions Father David Guffey [a Holy Cross Priest]; and professor of New Testament at Biola University Dr. Doug Huffman. They review scripts and provide facts or context on the biblical, cultural, and socio-political history of the storyline.

It is hoped that this presentation will lead to other such presentations in the future. If you have any questions, please contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560].

PENANCE SERVICE — MONDAY, APRIL 14:

Our community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on **Monday, April 14th at 7:00 PM.** Our service is centered around reflections by the various characters involved in the passion and death of Jesus. There will also be songs and hymns, and a time to bring ourselves from our sinful ways back to the Lord. As we confront our own sinfulness, we realize that we, too, have a part to play in the death of Jesus. The service will last about 45 minutes. There will be a time for individual confessions following the service, for those who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Please join us.

SCHEDULE OF HOLY WEEK/EASTER SERVICES:

- **Palm Sunday — April 12th-13th — Mass at 5:00 PM Saturday and 10:00 AM Sunday.**
- **Communal Penance Service — Monday, April 14th at 7:00 PM**
- **Virtual Bible Study on the Theology of Holy Week in Scripture on Wednesday, April 16th at 6:30 PM.**
- **Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 17th at 7:00 PM.**
- **Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, April 18th at 1:00 PM.**
- **Proclamation of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross and Communion Service on Good Friday, April 18th at 3:00 PM.**
- **Easter Vigil Service will be at 8:45 PM on Saturday, April 19th.**
- **Easter Sunday Mass will be at 10:00 AM on Sunday, April 20th.**

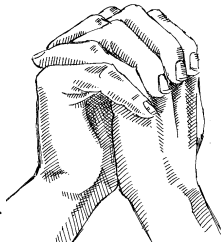


PRAYER REQUESTS:

Jesus calls us to pray for one another. Please keep all these people in your prayers.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:

- For Jill Thompson, who is undergoing treatment for mental health issues.
- For Mike Heryak, husband of Janet, father of Lillian ['09], Rosa ['12] and Edwin ['17] Heryak, who is seriously ill.
- For Josephine Fernando, who is seriously ill.
- For Nick Chiacchiari, father of Mark Chiacchiari ['94], father-in-law of Michelle Chiacchiari ['96], and grandfather of Aurelia ['28], and Olivia ['30] Chiacchiari, who is recovering from open heart surgery.
- For Thomas Noble who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Denise George, who is in rehab following a stroke.
- For Rick Shelby, who is recovering from open heart surgery
- For Brother Dan Kane, C.S.C., former long-time instructor at Gilmour, who is under hospice care.
- For Danielle Adams, who is recovering from surgery, and undergoing further testing.
- For Toddy McMonagle, wife of Judge James McMonagle ['62], mother of James ['80] Coakley, and sister of Francis ['67] and Clare ['72] Coakley, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Tara Hyland Zittel ['07] who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- For Jeff Overman, brother of Upper school teacher, John Overman, uncle of Jack ['25], and former Gilmour student, Michael Overman., who is critically ill.
- For Hailey Grasso, who is preparing for serious surgery
- For Sister Rosemary Hammer, H.M., former religion teacher, who is recovering from surgery.
- For Brother Carl Sternberg, C.S.C., who is seriously ill and undergoing medical testing.
- For Ted Potts, father of AVI Concession specialist, Ryane Potts, who is recovering from a stroke
- For Brother Bob McFadden, C.S.C., who is undergoing treatment for cancer.



PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED:

- For Jeff Juliano, son of former Women's Club president, Elizabeth Bares Juliano, brother of James ['67] and Richard ['85] Juliano, cousin of James Bares ['80], and Gilmour Religion Teacher, Eileen Pryatel
- For Edward Utterbach, former Holy Cross Brother
- For Christopher Keller, former trustee of Gilmour.
- For Robert Hillis ['71], brother of Deborah Hillis ['73]
- For Deacon Bob Kovach, St. Anselm Parish
- For Randy Wilkinson, brother of Father Rick Wilkinson, C.S.C.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS:

- For the victims of the earthquakes in Myanmar and Bangkok
- For an end to the war between Israel and Hamas, and Russia and Ukraine.
- For a greater respect for human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.
- For all caregivers.
- For an end to violence in our society in all of its forms.
- For all service men and women serving our country, and for their families.

HEARD IT ALL BEFORE?

Well, Holy Week is upon us — so, before we enter into the most important week of the year, let’s take a quick quiz:

- 1. What miracle did Jesus work just prior to entering into Jerusalem — on Palm Sunday?
- 2. What did the people say as they laid their palms down in front of Christ?
- 3. How does Scripture say that Jesus spent the time between Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday?
- 4. How were the apostles to find the upper room for the Last Supper to take place?
- 5. Which is the only gospel to mention the washing of the apostles’ feet?
- 6. How far away were Peter, James and John from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane?
- 7. What was the name of the man who had his ear cut off by Peter’s sword?
- 8. What crime was Jesus charged with?
- 9. Who had a dream telling Pilate not to get involved with Jesus’ charges?
- 10. What languages were used on the sign on Christ’s cross?
- 11. What time of day was Jesus crucified?
- 12. What women [besides the Blessed Virgin Mary] were standing at the foot of the cross?
- 13. Following the crucifixion, who was the first person to proclaim Jesus the Son of God?
- 14. Who asked for Christ’s body to be taken off of the cross before sundown?
- 15. How many guards were stationed outside of the tomb?



How well did you do?

If you didn’t do too well, don’t beat yourself up. If you did well, congrats! Here’s the thing. When it comes to Palm Sunday and Holy Week, in general, most people operate from memory when it comes to the Passion — that is to say that many people “know the gist” of the story, but fail to really **enter into it**, spiritually.

Many of you reading this have heard the Passion account dozens of times — if not more. But when was the last time ***you sat down and read it?*** Normally, for most of us, we hear it proclaimed — which is very important — but we don’t really read it as part of our own prayer.

This year, try something different. Sit down and read through the different Passion accounts from the different evangelists. Note the differences. Pay attention to the verb choices, adjectives, characters and details of each gospel. Nothing is there by accident. Every word you read and every verse you pray was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I promise you that if you do this, your Holy Week will be blessed and your Easter will be far more joy-filled. Take a chance on the Scriptures; they won’t let you down.

Remember: It took a passionate love to die for you. It takes a passionate love to live for Him.
—The Bible Geek

GOD AND FORGIVENESS:

The Lord never gets tired of forgiving; it is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.
—Pope Francis

NEXT BIBLE STUDY — WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16th:

Our next Virtual Bible Study will be on Wednesday, April 16th at 6:30 PM. Bible Study continues to meet bi-weekly. The Bible Study is open to everyone — all middle and high school students, college students, young adults, and all adults. We will all come together to be enriched by God’s word. It’s a great time, and a good witness of our faith to others. If you can’t come at 6:30, come when you can. Gather your favorite snack and/or drink, but be prepared to be nourished on God’s word.



Our topic: **The Theology of Holy Week in Scripture**

Mark your calendars and be part of this wonderful activity that will deepen your spiritual journey. We usually will meet every other week — topic to be decided at the end of the previous meeting. Join us. You’ll have a blast, and celebrate your faith along the way..

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Sunday, April 13: Palm Sunday	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream
Monday, April 14:	NO MASS
Tuesday, April 15:	NO MASS
Wednesday, April 16:	NO MASS
Thursday, April 17: Holy Thursday	7:00 PM Mass of the Lord Supper
Friday, April 18: Good Friday	1:00 PM Stations of the Cross 3:00 PM Liturgy of Good Friday
Saturday, April 19: Holy Saturday	8:45 PM In Person & Live Stream
Sunday, April 20: Easter Sunday	10:00 AM In-Person & Live Stream

LENTEN REGULATIONS:

During this sacred time of Lent, each of us is called to spiritual growth — particularly through a turning away from sin. Lent is a time for “new beginnings” — a time to grow in our relationship with God and each other. There are 3 major spiritual practices during Lent to which Scripture calls us: **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.**



—LENTEN REGULATIONS:

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of **fast** for all between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine. Fasting means that one full meal for the day is allowed, along with two light meals [snacks]. No eating between meals. Those not included in these “ages” are encouraged to take upon themselves some aspects of the fast, whenever possible.

Ash Wednesday and All Fridays during Lent are days of **abstinence** from meat, for those who are fourteen and older. Again, those not included in these “ages” are encouraged to participate whenever possible.

REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THE WEEK:

The liturgy of Palm Sunday has two distinct, but related Gospels and themes [see Luke 19:28-40 and Luke 22:14-23:56]. We begin our observance of Holy Week by joining in the ancient tradition of recalling that “Jesus proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem.” This journey which began in Bethlehem and wound its way through the towns and villages of the country, always was moving upwards towards the Altar of Calvary.

We recall the Entrance Rite wherein Jesus — riding on a donkey — is proclaimed as the blessed “king who comes in the name of the Lord.” The people are shouting their praises for all the deeds they had seen Jesus perform. They cover the road in front of the procession with their cloaks and palm branches.

This ritual is meaningful for us only if we are celebrating what Jesus has done for us by being faithful to His journey. We hold our palms reverently and meaningfully when we recall that He would do it all again for each of us. The original liturgy of that ancient Palm Sunday was celebrated by those who knew what Jesus had done. We celebrate with palms in grateful anticipation for where His faithfulness will lead Him and what this will mean in our lives.

Our Scripture Readings for Palm Sunday begin with one of Isaiah’s Servant Songs [Isaiah 50:4-7]. It speaks of this servant of God as being resolute and determined. He will be beaten, but not dissuaded. The servant is faithful, because his God is faithful. The servant’s trusting frees him to resist discouragement and the abandoning of what he has heard.

Luke’s account of the final liturgy of His dying needs little explanation. What we hear brings up pictures of the Word Made Flesh — experiencing all that flesh fears. Proclamation turns to condemnation as Jesus moves from the intimacy of the Passover ritual and the sharing of His body and blood to the sharing of His life and spirit on the table of the Cross.

We may smile a bit as we hear the close friends of Jesus who have just received His commissioning them to remember Him in the blessing of bread and wine in thanksgiving for His life — they are walking towards the very conclusion of the saving liturgy, and they want to know who is to be considered “number one” [see Mark 9:34]. Jesus stays faithful even to their human selfishness, pride, and greed. He reinforces His own personal identity as “Servant of God.”

The rest of the liturgy within the Gospel is His living out to His death, His mission as Saving Servant. He is betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter. Jesus is taken before Pilate, who sends Him to Herod, who mocks Him and then sends Him back to Pilate, who sends Him to His final act of acceptance and trust of His Father. All this He did in praise of the One Who called Him “Beloved.”

Faithfulness can appear to be a form of obsession or delusion. Jesus held fast to His journey. The more He was handed over by his disciples and His enemies, the more He handed Himself over into the hands of His Father to Whom He had cried out in human terms both of fear and faith. The more He was rejected, the more He accepted who He was. The more the crowd grew in anger and dislike, the more Jesus became thankful for His life. This “Thanksgiving Sacrifice” on the altar at Calvary is the consummation of a total life leading to a death, and the whole of it is the one act by which we are saved. It is also the manner by which we who remember in liturgy, re-form that life and spirit in our own personal journeys.

We may be betrayed, denied, abandoned, rejected and handed over, ourselves. We may question ourselves as to whether we are obsessed, deluded, or simply faithful. The Servant of the Lord continued to be the One Who served at the Table of the first Eucharist and continues doing so this very day. We are invited to allow Him to serve us from the Cross and to serve us as we live our lives in the liturgy of our own lives with its crosses. We do so in proclamation of God’s being faithful in being the Servant to our fears and faith.

—edited from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet



A REFLECTION ON HOLY WEEK:

This week begins with the festive procession with olive branches — the entire populace welcomes Jesus and the children and young people sing, praising Jesus. But this week continues in the mystery of Jesus’ death and his resurrection. As he reflect on and listen to the many people who Jesus encounters this week. We might well ask ourselves just one question — Who am I? Who am I, before my Lord? Who am I, before Jesus who enters Jerusalem amid the enthusiasm of the crowd? Am I ready to express my joy, to praise him? Or do I stand back? Who am I, before the suffering Jesus?

There are many, many names. The group of leaders — some priests, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, who had decided to kill Jesus. They were waiting for the chance to arrest him. Am I like one of them? We have also heard another name — Judas. Thirty pieces of silver. Am I like Judas? We have heard other names too — the disciples who understand nothing, who fell asleep while the Lord was suffering. Has my life fallen asleep? Or am I like the disciples, who did not realize what it was to betray Jesus? Or like that other disciple, who wanted to settle everything with a sword? Am I like them? Am I like Judas, who feigns love and then kisses the Master in order to hand him over to betray him? Am I a traitor? Am I like those people in power who hastily summon a tribunal and seek false witnesses — am I like them? And when I do these things, if I do them, do I think that in this way I am saving the people?

Am I like Pilate? When I see that the situation is difficult, do I wash my hands and dodge my responsibility, allowing people to be condemned — or condemning them myself? Am I like that crowd which was not sure whether they were at a religious meeting, a trial or a circus, and then chose Barabbas? For them it was all the same — it was more entertaining to humiliate Jesus. Am I like the soldiers who strike the Lord, spit on him, insult him, who find entertainment in humiliating him? Am I like the Cyrenean, who was returning from work, weary, yet was good enough to help the Lord carry his cross? Am I like those who walked by the cross and mocked Jesus — “He was so courageous! Let him come down from the cross and then we will believe in him!”. Do I mock Jesus in my speech or actions?

Am I like those fearless women, and like the mother of Jesus, who were there, and who suffered in silence? Am I like Joseph, the hidden disciple, who lovingly carries the body of Jesus to give it burial? Am I like the two Marys, who remained at the Tomb, weeping and praying? Am I like those leaders who went the next day to Pilate and said: “Look, this man said that he was going to rise again. We cannot let another fraud take place!”, and who block life, who block the tomb, in order to maintain doctrine, lest life come forth?

Where is my heart? Which of these persons am I like? May this question remain with us throughout the entire week.

—Pope Francis

NOVENA TO BLESSED BASILE MOREAU:

Blessed Basile Moreau was the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, to which Fr. John and the Brothers at Gilmour belong. We have two booklets with Novenas to Blessed Basile Moreau. One is used for a personal intention or healing; the other is used when praying for the intention or healing of someone other than yourself. The Novenas were composed by Father Thomas Looney, C.S.C. Many have received blessings and healings through the intercession of Blessed Basile Moreau, and now we want to extend this invitation to you and your family.

Please see Father John and he will be glad to give you the booklets.



REDEMPTION:

Redemption does not come to people from outside or from above. God wants to use people in order to work on the completion of creation. Precisely for this reason God must also suffer with the creation.

—Dorothee Soelle

obedient surrender. They fled while he remained faithful. And we also continue the same struggle. For all the art and words, we still do not fully comprehend the embrace. We can catch fleeting emotions and ideas about what Jesus’ death means, but we have heard it all so often that the embrace can seem more like a handshake or simple nod. There is still some sleeping going on within us as we consider being loved so dearly. There is always the possibility and reality of our denials of his invitations to follow him. What do we do then; with what do we pray during these holy days of our eternal Passover?

We could just rest in the soft comfort of guilt and embarrassing shame. But that is too easy and too much of the secular. We could choose to enter into this “passage toward life”, letting it all be done onto each one of us again for the first time. We do not have the openness to take it all in at once, but we can allow some part, some word or action to embrace us this year. We pray for ourselves with the words which Jesus has spoken — “Forgive them, for they know not what I am doing.”

One of the prayerful ways to receive Jesus’ passion and death these Holy Week days is to consider how we might be at the bedside of a very sick or dying friend. We might want to fetch some water, plump up the pillow, straighten the bed clothing. Eventually the best and only thing we do is to sit there and watch with our memories. These memories may bring us some hope.

There is not much we can do with the memories that make up the mystery of Holy Week. Maybe the best thing we can do is to pray that we might stay more awake to what is being done, offered, and remembered. We know there will be a resurrection, but we know also that we are all invited to join this parade of walking faithfully with our crosses towards our own participation in that same Resurrection. Thank You, foolish Lover of us all.

—edited from the writings of Father Larry Gillick, S.J., which appear on the internet



THE CROSS:

Once I asked some children if they know the first letter of the alphabet. They all responded: “A.” Then I asked: “But do you know what’s the first letter of God’s alphabet?” After a number of guesses, I told them — “It is the cross.” Pope St. John Paul said: “The Cross is the first letter of God’s alphabet, and it is written in the life of each person.”

No one can escape the cross, but you can choose how you respond. As we see in Luke’s Gospel [Luke 22:14-23:56], one man responds by mockery — “Are you not the Christ? The Messiah? Save yourself and us.”

It’s easy to see through people — to point out their evident inconsistencies. The hard thing is to actually see the other person. This, the good thief does. It begins with humility — “We have been condemned justly.” And from there he recognizes that it’s not about me; it’s about Jesus — “Jesus, remember me.”

The good thief embraces the cross. For sure, it means shame and suffering. Still, the cross contains everything we need — forgiveness, healing, hope, humility. To reject the cross results in self-exultation, rage and finally, despair.

You can run, but you can’t hide. In the end you and I face a choice. That choice involves the cross. Ultimately the cross confronts each one of us. After all, the Cross is the first letter of God’s alphabet, and it is written in the life of each person.

—taken from the writings of Father Phil Bloom, which appear on the internet

SERVING THE LORD IN THE POOR — SAT. APRIL 19th:

Our Savior Lutheran Church — across the street from the Chapel — has a Food Pantry which distributes food to the community on the **third Saturday of each month**. They welcome volunteers. **On Saturday morning at 9 AM, they need help unloading the trailers and setting up items for distribution and preparing for the food pantry to open. It serves around 150 clients each time. The food pantry serves clients from 9:30 AM—1:30 PM on Saturday.**



Our Savior Lutheran’s Food Pantry was formed to serve those in emergency situations and/or with on-going need in the cities of Mayfield Heights, Mayfield Village, Highland Heights and Gates Mills. The Food Pantry respects social and cultural diversity and upholds the worth and dignity of those it serves. All those in the area with need will be served equally, as supplies allow. The food pantry is a member of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Please join us for a great experience.

Please let us know in the Chapel office [440-473-3560] if you would like more information or if you would like to help. This is a wonderful way to serve others. Please consider this opportunity.

MEN’S RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, May 1st, from 6:00—8:30 PM will be our annual Spring Men’s Retreat. All men of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Men’s Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John.** There is no cost, but we are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **Sign up on the retreat sheet located on the easel in the narthex of Our Lady Chapel or contact Patty in the Chapel Office (440) 473-3560 or szaniszllop@gilmour.org**



WOMEN’S EVENING OF RETREAT — SAVE THE DATE:

Tuesday, May 6th from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM will be our annual Women’s Spring Retreat. All women of Our Lady Chapel and the Gilmour Academy Women’s Club and their guests are invited to join us. We will begin with **Mass in Our Lady Chapel at 6:00 PM, and then move to the Center for Performing Arts for a light supper, and our evening of discussion, led by Fr. John.** There is no cost, but we are requesting a free will offering for the evening. If you cannot make it for Mass or for dinner, you are still welcome to attend the evening of spiritual conversation — come when you are able! Mark the date on your calendars and give yourself a treat in the Lord! **We will post a sign up sheet on the Easel in the coming weeks. Or you may contact Patty in the Chapel Office at (440) 473-3560 or szaniszllop@gilmour.org**



FAITH EDUCATION — SCHEDULE:

Meeting dates for April & May are April 13th and 27th, and May 4th. Faith Education is an important part of every person’s formation. Please make sure that you have not forgotten this important responsibility for your children. Our Sessions go from **8:45—9:45 AM, on Sunday mornings**, with the hope that our children would then **participate in our 10:00 AM Family Mass.** Thank you for taking care of this important responsibility.



JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM:

On this Palm Sunday, we will read St Luke’s account of the Passion of Christ [Luke 22:14-23:56], and on Good Friday we will hear the version to be found in St John’s Gospel [John 18:1-19:42]. Both are very moving, and give us an enormous amount of material for meditation. It would be good to pray and think about Christ’s Passion very often in the coming week.

However, on Palm Sunday, there is another Gospel that is read as part of the blessing and procession of Palms [Luke 19:28-40]. It is the story of how Our Lord entered the Holy City of Jerusalem in order to face his suffering and death.

You will see that Jesus is completely in charge of the situation — he knows what he wants to achieve on that important day, and although there is no hint that he has made any arrangements in advance, he seems to know what will happen. This is evident as Jesus sends his disciples to get the donkey for him — Jesus knows exactly what his disciples will find and who they will meet.

What is being brought about is the formal entry of the Messiah in to his Holy City. He cannot do this on foot as any other pilgrim would normally do. No, he has to enter the city riding on a donkey as would be proper for a king. But you will notice that Jesus is somehow also well aware that this is no ordinary donkey but specifically one on which no one has sat — that means this animal is undefiled which is appropriate for a Messiah. Actually, this is the only occasion on which Jesus is described as having ridden an animal — throughout his ministry he only ever went on foot.

One oddity, though, is that this donkey wouldn’t have been trained, and they are notoriously stubborn animals. However, this particular donkey seems to be docile enough since there is no mention of any difficulty. Perhaps, as with the other characters in the story, it is willingly playing its part in the great drama that is unfolding on that auspicious day. And to add to this docility, so are the owners of the donkey — as they meekly give it up to the disciples simply because they say, as they have been instructed: “The Lord has need of it.”

After Jesus mounts the animal, the disciples spread their cloaks on the road for him to ride over. This is the sort of thing that the people would do when one of the ancient kings entered the city, so it is appropriate when this entry to the city is by the Messiah himself. The action of spreading a cloak on the ground for a king to ride over is an acknowledgement of submission to his rule. The clothes represent the person whom the king has dominion over.

The geography is also important. Bethany and Bethphage are to the east of Jerusalem, and so Jesus approaches the city by way of Mount Olivet — a place that has been long associated with the coming of the Messiah.

We are told that there was a multitude of disciples present on that day. It must have been that Jesus had sent word for all his followers to turn up for the occasion. Also, there must have been many onlookers who came for the event and together with the disciples these wave palms and joyfully cry out: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.” It must have been quite an occasion.

Inevitably though, there are some Pharisees there who feel that things are out of control, and they instruct Jesus to rebuke his followers. You will notice that they do not refer to him as a king or as a Messiah — or even with the title Lord which Jesus used of himself. They address him as teacher — a much lesser distinction. It appears that they are well aware of what Jesus is doing and what this solemn



incidents in the life of Christ.

The week begins by our singing “Hosanna” and waving our Palms. We remember the scruffy procession that entered Jerusalem — that brought the King of Creation into the Holy City on the back of a humble donkey. We rejoice and we acknowledge that we are citizens of heaven — true members of his Kingdom of Love. And we ready ourselves to commemorate later in this week of weeks in a most solemn way the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and Christ’s glorious Resurrection.

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet

HOLY WEEK:

We are beginning Holy Week — an important time in God’s plan of salvation. We prepare by taking little “holy Moments” to experience our need for salvation. We are freed, not only from eternal separation from God, but also freed from being separated from ourselves, and from others. As we enter into this journey of the passion and death of Jesus, we ask for the grace to respond faithfully to the crosses of our humanity — and the humanity of others. We can reflect as well upon our acts of grateful fidelity to our families and friends, and our world in direct imitation of the whole life of Jesus.

Spring has sprung, and in many ways the renewal of life is like starting a new year. Spring is the new experience of time. The celebration of spring and the experience of Holy Week are very much intertwined. In many ways, Jesus’ life can be seen as an act of foolishness. He did some strange deeds and said some things which made people laugh or usually, sneer in anger. But love is foolish at times, and love does some strange things and goes beyond the usual — the socially acceptable.

Holy Week is much more than a week of remembering — it is a week of immersion. There are two parades described in the two Gospels of Palm Sunday. One parade leads into Jerusalem with Jesus’ being welcomed and proclaimed [Luke 19:28-40]. We could view Him as doing a foolish thing as He enters the city of His arrest, suffering, and death. This leads to the other picture where Jesus leaves Jerusalem days later in disgrace and abandoned [Luke 22:14-23:56]. The Liturgy of palms and the liturgy of the Passion bespeak the duality of our human response to God throughout history — sometimes we welcome him in, and other times we push him away.

The prophet Isaiah tells of a submissive prophetic figure who is given to speak, but suffers for what he knows. In Luke’s Gospel, we hear Jesus’ not rebelling, not turning back. The words he speaks are of his personal truth and not a defensive refuting. Jesus’ words are words of surrender and “handing over” — his teachings, his body in the Eucharist, his spirit on the cross. Judas hands him over as well, but refuses to take in that spirit.

A call to innocence runs through this surrender — Jesus lives his own way of doing “no harm” while walking through the shame and guilt which surround him. This is the major contrast then — the gentleness of Jesus colliding with the human resistance to purity and truth.

The root meaning of the word “innocence” is not “guiltless”, but “no harm”. This is a prism through which we can watch Jesus — He lived and died doing no harm and more positively, doing the infinitely good thing. How much ink, paint, marble, and glass have been used to attempt to express this theme?

Each conversation Jesus has, each action of his, each event of denial or injury, speaks the same reality. The apostles, the Jewish leaders, the soldiers all did not understand who he was for them. They never knew during these events what he was doing for them. The apostles slept while Jesus prayed his



THIS WEEK IS A JOURNEY:

We begin Holy Week by remembering Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem [Luke 19:28-40]. I say triumphal but actually it wasn’t very triumphal at all. It was much more like a procession of rag-tags greeted by the poor and downtrodden. But for all its hopelessness, it was indeed a procession, and it certainly marked the formal entry into Jerusalem of Christ, the long awaited Messiah.

The key concept we need to employ here is the one of paradox. If you want to understand anything about Jesus then you have to understand paradox. Everything is the opposite of what it seems, and everything that Jesus does appears to the outside world to be a contradiction.

If Christ is the Messiah, the long heralded King of Israel, the King of all Kings, then his entry into Jerusalem should have been accompanied by all the signs and trappings of earthly kingship. There should have been a splendid welcome laid on by the priests and the whole populace should have been out to meet him with the great and the good at the very front.

But what we actually have is a few rag-tag poor people waving palms and singing Hosanna. So inconsistent and unreliable a bunch were they that we have no trouble assuming that some of them might even have turned up in the crowd who shouted “Crucify him, crucify him” later that same week.

Jesus shuns the limelight, he avoids publicity, he is one who is completely uninterested in outward appearances and is only concerned with things of the heart. He is indeed the ultimate paradox. Here is a King who wants to rule by means of love alone; a King who wants not to dominate but to serve; a King whose greatest interest is in humility and lowliness rather than honor and power. Here is a King who gives his life for his people.

We begin a very serious week of prayer and increased devotion as we shift our focus more closely on to the suffering and death of Christ. It is a week during which we accompany Christ in his last hours and draw close to him in his suffering and death. It is a week during which we face up to our own sinfulness and express deep sorrow for our transgressions. It is a week of increased faith and trust in God.

Make a special effort this week to immerse yourself into the life of Christ. Yes we all have to go to work and do whatever it is we do during every other week of the year, but it is vital that we make this week different. It is essential that we make this a more spiritual week — a week of renewed prayer, a week of deep devotion.

The Church observes this Holy Week in its liturgy but also at certain times by its lack of liturgy. We celebrate Mass on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday as usual, but we do so thinking most especially about those days in Jerusalem and what they have come to mean. However, on Thursday we celebrate no Mass except the Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Supper in the evening after which the altar is stripped and the Blessed Sacrament removed to the Altar of Repose. Then on Good Friday again no Mass is celebrated, but instead we have the very moving Liturgy of the Passion at three o’clock during which we commemorate Christ’s death on the Cross in a most solemn way. Again on Holy Saturday there is one single liturgy of the Easter Vigil when we light the Easter Fire and celebrate as well as we can the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to attend these ceremonies; it is essential to mark these important events which are so vital for the life of the world.

For many of us, this is a time of spring break — a period of leisure time. But we must not neglect the liturgy; we must not neglect our Christian duty to commemorate in a liturgical way these crucial



entry into Jerusalem might mean.

But Jesus has none of their protestations. He says: “If these were silent the very stones would cry out.” Jesus knows precisely what he is doing — he alone understands the full significance of the occasion. He has alluded to himself as the Messiah on many previous occasions during his public ministry — mostly in veiled terms. But this is the day when his identity is fully realized. Now there is no mistake, he enters Jerusalem as a king, as a Messiah, as a Savior.

We join with those followers of his and we too cry out with joy in our hearts: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

—taken from the writings of Father Alex McAllister, S.D.S., which appear on the internet.

THE PASSION OF JESUS AND YOU:

The Passion according to Luke — a narrative with great dramatic power — presents Jesus as a non-violent innocent victim, who continues to minister to others with remarkable compassion despite his own intense suffering [Luke 22:14-23:56]. At their farewell supper, Jesus prays for his disciples that they would have strength to recover from their failures. Describing the arrest of Jesus, only Luke tells us that Jesus healed the right ear of the servant of the high priest severed by one of his disciples [Luke 22:50-51]. After Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus looked at Peter with a glance that was, we can imagine, more compassionate than disapproving [Luke 22:61]. On his way to Calvary, Jesus comforted the Daughters of Jerusalem who were lamenting his fate [Luke 23:26]. He prayed for his executioners — “Father forgive them, they know not what they do” [Luke 23:34]. To the repentant criminal executed with him, Jesus said: “Amen I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” [Luke 23:43]. Throughout his whole public life and to the very end, Jesus was indeed the compassionate healer.

We can imagine hearers of Luke’s passion account being touched by particular scenes. An elderly man says: “I like to think that Christ has been praying for me as he did for the disciples that I could bounce back from my failures.” A woman dealing with breast cancer prays: “Lord you healed the servant’s ear, please grant me the gift of restored health.” A young adult trying once again to escape the drug scene thinks: “If the Lord gave Peter another chance maybe there is hope for me.” A single mother, worn out from holding a job and raising two kids prays: “Lord I need the kind of comfort you offered to the Daughters of Jerusalem.” A husband who ruined his marriage by repeated infidelities, reflects on Jesus forgiving his executioners and thinks to himself: “Maybe there is still a chance for me to make amends, to get my life together, and to be forgiven.” A retired philosophy professor, who is still struggling with doubts of faith as he faces death, reflects long and hard on the words of Jesus to the repentant thief and finds a glimmer of hope for his own salvation.

Which scene in Luke’s Passion speaks most powerfully to you? What difference does it make in your life?

—taken from the writings of Father Jim Bacik which appear on the internet



EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

We are currently discerning a new group of Eucharistic Ministers who would undergo training in the spring months. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to this ministry, we would be delighted to include you in that ministry here at Our Lady Chapel. Both adults and teens [must be a Senior in High School] are welcome to participate in this very special ministry. We are in need of ministers for both our Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. **Contact Father John or the chapel office [440-473-3560] if you feel called to this ministry.** We are always in need of Eucharistic Ministers.



HOW TO SAY: “I’LL PRAY FOR YOU” — AND MEAN IT:

“Can you pray for me?” I remember getting that text from my best friend Austin one night. There was a sense of vulnerability and authenticity that came with it — as he was eager to open up his heart to me about a struggle he was facing. Of course, sleep deprived, and with classes the next morning, I sent a text back with the words: “I’ll pray for you bro! :)” — and went right back to sleep.

Brotherly moment, ruined...

I can recall many moments where I’ve failed to live up to the promise of praying for someone else — whether it be a friend, family member, or coworker in the moment they reach out to ask. I’ve repeatedly found myself stuck in this cycle of making a promise with someone to pray for them — only to get caught up in the business of life, and then completely forgetting the promise I made the next time I’m in prayer.

Think back to the last encounter that comes to mind where someone asked you for prayers. Did you follow through with the promise you made, and offer up prayers for their intentions? Or did you forget to pray for them?

We as Catholics often fail to recognize the significance of our words when we’re in prayer — especially whenever we pray for others. Christ places a strong emphasis on this in the gospel of Matthew: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” [Matthew 18:20]. Our words in prayer contain power when we bring our worries — or the worries of others — to the foot of the cross. By praying for others, we invite the Holy Spirit to move with power in the lives of whoever it is we’re praying for. This is known as intercessory prayer.



Intercessory prayer enables us to radiate Christ’s love to those we encounter on our path in a radical way through the help of the Holy Spirit. Partaking in intercessory prayer is key throughout our spiritual journey of growing in discipleship as well as discipling others. It’s a challenge to live up to the promise of doing so. We tend to forget — it’s part of our human nature. To combat the forgetfulness we experience, here are a couple of ways to practice this yourself, and ultimately grow in the practice of offering intercessory prayer for friends, family, and others.

Be Present. Instead of saving the prayers for later, if a friend asks for prayer or you feel called to pray with them, immediately pray with that friend right in the moment! Yes — you heard me right. Pray in the moment you are with someone who is asking you for prayers!

You may be thinking: “Hold up Noah, what if we’re out where other people can see us? That’s kind of awkward! You don’t know what that’s like!” I somehow managed to spill coffee all over my jeans in the midst of praying with a buddy of mine one morning! — true story.

Praying with someone in the moment requires courage and vulnerability. But it can become a powerful encounter with God. If you encounter awkwardness, embrace it and brace yourself for how the Spirit will work through your prayer!

This is one of the most powerful, and beautiful ways to be able to start partaking in intercessory prayer. The next time you’re with a friend that’s reaching out to you for prayers, ask if you can pray with them right there. If they say yes, do it! Vocally ask for the Holy Spirit to intercede and guide, and pray over the situation that’s being discussed about in the moment.

Reach out as well! If you have a friend or someone you know that’s going through a time of trial, don’t hesitate to ask if you can pray for them — even if they don’t ask for prayers at first! The Holy Spirit has a funny way of showing us when the right time to pray will be.

A CALL TO FAITH:

Where had they gone — all those people who greeted the Lord with such exuberance during his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem? Where had they gone, now that He has left the city in a completely different type of triumph — the Triumph of the Cross? There were only a handful of people at the foot of the cross. The people who were there were the people who loved Him more than their own lives. The people who were there were people of faith — faith that God the Father would prevail even as Goodness was crucified. How horrible the other disciples of the Lord must have felt when they realized that they did not have enough faith to stand beneath the cross with Mary, John and those few others.

It is easy for us to thank the Lord when we experience his wonders in our lives. Two young people experience a deeper love than ever before; they marry — and thank God. A child is born and brought to be baptized — and they thank God for this life. People experience the young — their young — taking their place in the world and thank God for guiding them.

But life also has challenges and crises. Life often calls us to Calvary — calls us to have faith in the Triumph of the Cross. We have many very sick people in our faith family — from children up to senior citizens. Family and friends pray for their loved ones — uniting their pain to the pain of the cross. They are called to have faith that just as the Father transformed grief into joy and death into life, so also, God will bring joy despite the present suffering.



The cross of the Lord is a call to faith. When crises hit our lives, our faith is challenged. It takes tremendous courage and tremendous faith to hold on to Jesus when we are called to stand with Him on Calvary — when we are called to unite our pain and suffering to His. Michelle Tumes wrote a song: “You’ve got to hold on to Jesus // When your heart is crying, // your world is dying // You’ve got to hold on to Jesus. When your life has had enough, we’ve got to hold on to Jesus.”

When we consider the challenges that life throws at us, we realize that it is more important for us to be with the Lord on Calvary than with the crowd during the entry into Jerusalem. During this Holy Week, we ask God for faith — faith to hold on to him when we would rather run and hide, faith to hold on to him when faith itself becomes difficult and demanding.

We enter Holy Week now not just reflecting on events of the past, but uniting our present to His eternal presence.

—taken from the writings for Father Joseph Pellegrino, which appear on the internet.

ENVELOPES:

- When you need a **new supply** of envelopes, please feel free to take a supply of them from the table in the vestibule, or call Father John at the Campus Ministry Office [473-3560].
- When you **use** your envelope, please make sure that **your number** is on it. If you need to know your number, please call the Campus Ministry Office. Thanks.

WEEKLY OFFERING:

A collection box is located just inside the center door when you enter the chapel. Please place your offering in the collection box. Baskets will not be passed during the offertory time. Your offering will help offset chapel daily operating expenses. When you choose to use the envelopes, you can request a printout of your offerings for the year to submit to the IRS. God bless you.

Total Offerings: Saturday [4/5/25] _____ \$ 180.00
Total Offerings: Sunday [4/6/25] _____ \$ 665.00

- **I am Joseph of Arimathea** [Matthew 27:59]. Again, only by God’s grace, I can be selflessly compassionate — putting others’ needs before my own. Moved by God, I will use what He has given me in the service of others. My time, talent, and treasure are all for Him.

The reality is that I am every character in the story of the passion and death of Christ. And I think that’s the whole point. Why wouldn’t every dimension of the human heart be represented in the greatest story of all time? It only makes sense because the story is timeless. We have to apply it to our lives today and every day because the reality of its events matter today.

This isn’t just a story in some history book — it’s the story of your salvation — how God saw the good and the bad in our humanity and He came anyway. He died anyway.

I killed Jesus. But I am also the reason He rose from the dead.

Do you have the courage to see yourself in these characters? Can you blame yourself for the nails in His hands? The stripes in His flesh? Do you realize that your sins killed Him, also? And that because of you — because of His intense, unending love for you — He rose again

—taken from the writings of Christina Mead, an associate of the Bible Geek.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK:

- Monday:** Isaiah 42:1-7, John 12:1-11
- Tuesday:** Isaiah 49:1-6, John 13:21-33, 36-38
- Wednesday:** Isaiah 50:4-9a, Matthew 26:14-25
- Thursday:** Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-15
- Friday:** Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42
- Saturday:** Genesis 1:1-2:2, Genesis 22:1-18, Exodus 14:15-15:1, Isaiah 54:5-14, Isaiah 55:1-11, Baruch 3:9-4:4, Ezekiel 36:16-28, Romans 6:3-11, Luke 24:1-12
- Easter Sunday:** Luke 19:28-40, Isaiah 50:4-7, Philippians 2:6-11, Luke 22:14-23:56

EASTER FLOWERS:

Once again this year we are offering an opportunity for you to make a memorial offering toward our **Easter flowers** and the **Flowers that will be planted outside surrounding the chapel**. Just make a list of those loved ones whom you would like to remember and include it with your donation toward the flowers in an envelope marked: **Easter Flowers**. You can either give it to Father John or drop it in the offering basket at Mass. We will publish a list of the loved ones whom you wish to remember during the first part of the Easter season.



A LITTLE TIDBIT:

You know well enough that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, but at the love with which we do them

—St. Therese

Take Note of Prayer Intentions. I mentioned earlier I used to struggle a lot with remembering prayer requests. If a friend reaches out to me asking for prayers I’d always end up saying: “I’ll pray for you!” Then I’d find myself later on in the adoration chapel trying to remember what I was exactly praying for. As a way to help me remember, I started writing things down on my phone. Then whenever I would spend time in prayer, I’d pull the list out and pray for each person on that list.

If you’re like me, and you have trouble remembering prayer requests, write them down and keep track of it in your phone or a prayer journal. The next time you’re spending time in prayer, pull those notes out, and spend some time praying through each intention.

Carve Out Time in your Prayer Life. If you’re struggling to find the time to pray for others, make the time. Think of the amount of time you spend in personal prayer during the week, and pick a day to carve out the same amount of time toward praying in intercessory prayer. Another way to do this would be to offer up a Mass or Holy Hour for the intentions you want to pray for.

The Holy Spirit has a way of calling us out of our comfort zone, leading us to encounter those that are seeking out Jesus. By praying for others, we can grow in trust with God — knowing that he’s bigger than the worries and fears we face. The next time you’re presented with an opportunity to pray for a friend, family member, or maybe even stranger, follow through with your promise. Open up in prayer: “Come Holy Spirit.”

—taken from the writings of Noah Salas, a college student

A YOUNG ADULT GROUP:

A Young Adult group has formed at Our Lady Chapel. **This Sunday, we will be attending the presentation of “The Chosen” after Mass, and join in the lunch and discussion afterwards.**



During Lent, the group has formed prayer buddies so that they can journey together back to God. We celebrate this opportunity to get together, share some time in faith, and also to support each other in life’s journey, as we continue to grow and become the people that God wants us to be. If you are interested and would like to be part of this new adventure, please join us at our next meeting, or contact members Richard Jones, Stephanie Leonor, Joe Gurney, or Edwin Heryak. Of course, you can also contact Father John at the chapel if that would be easier for you. God bless you.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN ALTAR SERVER or LECTOR?



We are resuming our need for Servers and Lectors. Each and every week, we always are finding that we have a need. Ever since COVID, people seem to not have the same interest and/or desire. But these 2 ministers are so grace-filled — both from God and personally. **Any student who is in the 3rd [and up] grade is invited to become an Altar Server; any student who is in the 5th [and up] grade is invited to become a Lector.**



Adults are also welcome to join in our Lectoring ministry. These are both wonderful ministries — a great way to serve God and the faith community. If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, **please give your name to Father John**. You do not have to attend Gilmour to be an Altar Server, Lector, or to be involved in any other Ministry at Our Lady Chapel. **Please call the Chapel office [440-473-3560].**

TRUTH:

In every situation, there are always two stories—the story you see and the story God sees.

PASSION:

Like any living language, English can be as curious as the next one. The meaning of words can shift and change — seemingly overnight. New words are added to the vocabulary, even as old ones take on meanings that are only obliquely related to their original. For example: “chill” was originally a noun meaning “cold”; and now is more often used as an imperative verb meaning “calm down”. In a similar vein, words that were once exclusively nouns have become common verbs, radically changing their place as a part of speech. For example, despite the multiple definitions of “text” in the past, all of them defined the word as a noun — that is until the present day, where its use as a verb is now much more common.

The word “passion” first came into English from the Latin as a description of the sufferings of Christ — the Passion of Jesus in the Gospels. The Latin root meaning to “suffer” or “endure” was aptly applied to the final hours of the life of Jesus.

Later, the word’s meaning was enlarged to include a description of the sufferings of martyrs, who endured their own passion leading to death. Whenever a martyr suffered, to was connected to the suffering of Christ, and thus it too became known as a Passion.

About seven hundred years ago, the unique meaning of the word in English began to deteriorate. No longer was “Passion” only used to characterize the suffering and death of Christ — or by analogy that of one of the martyrs. The word took on a secular meaning, divorced from its original religious context — Passion was used to describe a strong emotion or desire. It is the way we most often hear the word used today.

A job counselor might ask someone recently displaced from industry who is now beginning retraining: “What do you have a passion for?” The question is meant to provoke a reconsideration of the job seeker’s direction in life. A teacher might encourage his or her students to be passionate about a subject — to really commit themselves to learning about one thing, and finding out all that they can about it. A major category for Harlequin novels is “passion” — with well over three hundred titles. Their stock in trade is romance and love.

What is important here is that we take time throughout this Holy Week — beginning with our Palm Sunday observances — that “passion” begins with what was endured by Christ. In our own suffering we are connected to him. And in him we discover our true direction . With all our heart we commit ourselves to him. We find in him the truest meaning of love — love that emptied itself for us, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **Loving God, the passion and death of your Son brought life to all humankind. Help all who follow him to be faithful through trial and suffering. May our lives reveal the depth of love that your Son had. Amen.**

I KILLED JESUS:

I think it’s easy to read the Bible like it’s a history book. Moses parted the sea, Jesus died on a cross, Columbus sailed across the ocean. I know that the Bible is more than an account of historic events, but I often struggle to see how it applies to my life. “They” — that collective, scholarly, holy group of people — say that when you read the Bible you should place yourself in the story. So the other day I was doing that while I read the story of Christ’s passion and death in the gospel of Matthew. I was looking for myself in the story. Which character am I? What is God trying to teach me?

Well, I think that I am every character in the story of the passion and death of Christ. And I think that’s the whole point. Let me explain.



- **I am an apostle, sleeping in the Garden of Gethsemane** [Matthew 26:40]. I’m prone to give in to laziness in the presence of holiness. In the most sacred places — like before Christ in the Eucharist — I allow my flesh to dictate how attentive my soul is. I don’t put up a fight against the pull of distractions — or sometimes even sleep.
- **I am Judas.** Jesus has every right to call me both “friend” and “betrayer” barely 30 seconds apart [Matthew 26:46, 50]. My heart is fickle and weak, and sometimes my commitment to being Jesus’ friend is blown off on the whim of an emotion.
- **I am Caiaphas, the high priest.** I want Jesus to prove Himself to me [Matthew 26:63]. I want signs and wonders to know that I really can trust Him. I want my prayers answered in my way. I want concrete proof over humble faith.
- **I am Peter.** Sometimes I deny Jesus [Matthew 26:72]. I deny Him in the face of the homeless when I chose to look away. I deny that I know Him when I don’t pray before eating in a restaurant. I deny Him when I am afraid of being judged and condemned by those around me.
- **I am in the crowd yelling: “crucify Him”** [Matthew 27:21-23]. And I say it again and again every time I knowingly choose to sin.
- **I am Barabbas.** I am chained in sin and holed up in the prison of my own pride. And instead of suffering the full punishment for my sins for which I am guilty, Christ takes my place [Matthew 27:26]. And I often forget to thank Him.
- **I am Pilate.** I want to give up when life is too challenging [Matthew 27:24]. I’m ready to wash my hands of Christianity when being a follower of Jesus means pursuing virtue over mediocrity, a life of prayer over a life of pleasure.
- **I am Simon of Cyrene** [Matthew 27:32]. I suffer reluctantly. I will take the cross, but I won’t seek it. I’ll only take it if it’s been placed on my shoulders — and I don’t love it.
- **I am a passer-by.** These passers-by mocked Jesus while He was hanging on the cross [Matthew 27:30]. How quickly they had forgotten all the good works that Jesus had done among their cities and towns. When popular opinion about Jesus changed, they followed suite. How quickly I forget the good He’s done for me. In a brief moment of pain all my gratitude is forgotten and replaced by resentment.
- **I am one of the Roman soldiers** [Matthew 27:35]. I killed Jesus. My sins were the reason that He was nailed to that cross. It was my fault and I know it.



But sometimes...

- **I am the centurion.** My eyes are opened to who Jesus is in my life [Matthew 27:54]. My heart swells with the truth that God became man and died for me. And this knowledge brings me peace and a resignation to amend my life.
- **I am one of the women standing by the cross** [Matthew 27:55-56]. When I’m open to God’s grace, I can be a faithful and constant Christian. In the midst of pain and suffering, I can stay close to the cross. Jesus, my beloved, is my strength and He’s all I need.